

Estonian Artistic Research Framework Agreement

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Introduction

The Estonian Artistic Research Framework Agreement was prepared by the Estonian Academy of Arts, the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre and the Baltic Film, Media and Arts School of Tallinn University for the purpose of defining and developing artistic research and related doctoral studies.

In recent decades, intra- and interdisciplinary artistic research practices and related doctoral curricula have developed rapidly around the world. The number of publications based on or related to artistic research has also increased. In addition to the growing number of projects focused on artistic research, the perspective and methods of artistic research are increasingly being incorporated into both academic and applied research projects.

Artistic research is one of the important outputs of a diversifying research landscape, combining creative practices and research that have so far been considered separate. Artistic research is in line with the main definitions of R&D activities, but needs more detailed criteria for setting objectives and evaluating results.

Definition and objectives

Artistic research is research expressed in and based on creative activity, the aim of which is to create new knowledge, new forms of culture and new creative and research methods or techniques, and thereby contribute to the development of research fields, society and economy.

The output of artistic research is a creative practice or work, a creative process (e.g., developments in technologies, materials, models, prototypes) or a product or service, and a (generally written) part that conveys and elucidates new knowledge created during the research, which together form an integral whole.

Artistic research is multidisciplinary and may use methods from one or more creative disciplines, scientific disciplines or other fields, and create new creative techniques. The disciplines involved and their interrelationships shape the specifics and outcomes of artistic research. Artistic research can be done either individually or as group work.

The methodology of artistic research is usually hybrid and is developed based on the research project and in dialogue with the research material and problem. Artistic research can use various empirical, experimental and other research tools and combine them with creative practice, but within a single research project the choice and use of methods must be reasoned and systematic.

The objective of artistic research is to create and share new knowledge important for society and culture, to enrich culture with new forms and practices, and sustainable development of the living environment and products or services (including development of innovative technological solutions necessary for this purpose). Artistic research connects creative fields with wider societal processes and problems and takes a critical awareness regarding the role of creative activity around the world.

Artistic research practice is also denoted by terms such as *arts-related research*, *art-based research*, *creative practice research*, *creative arts practice as research*, *practice-based research*, *practice-led research*, *practice as research*, *research by practice*, *performative research*, etc. They all have their own specific fields of meaning, but we will use “artistic research” as the umbrella term.

Objectives of artistic research:

- development of creative fields;
- reflection on and analysis of the creative process, development and research of new creative techniques and methods;
- creation and development of new artistic and cultural forms;
- understanding of the creative role of the creative practitioner, studying their field of activity and impact, and connecting it with other spheres of life;
- formation of a new understanding of historical and modern social and cultural phenomena through creative methods and different modalities;
- innovative and sustainable experimental development of materials, technologies and the living environment as a whole.

In most cases, artistic research serves more than one purpose.

Artistic research consists of:

creative work(s) (in both established and emerging creative fields, including theatre and dance, contemporary performing arts, various creative writing practices, composing, interpretive art, visual arts, architecture, design, audiovisual art, etc.);

work, (generally) in written form, that explores and opens the contexts, goals or uses of the creative process and creative methods. It presents research results in a broader scientific or societal context and develops a specific field of research and practice. Written analysis can focus on the researcher's self-reflection or place it in a broader context, including tying the creative work with knowledge and research created in other ways using empirical or experimental methods.

Assessment of artistic research shall take into account:

- a meaningful and productive connection between research and creative practice,
- the originality and salience of the ideas and compelling and refined execution,
- the contribution of the artistic research project to the development of the field,
- an active, enlightening or socially engaged relationship with social processes,
- risk appetite and broadening the ways in which knowledge is generated.

Doctoral studies in artistic research

Doctoral studies in artistic research at the Estonian Academy of Arts, the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre and the Film, Media and Arts School of Tallinn University enable larger artistic research projects in an environment that supports and develops doctoral students through a structured curriculum, group work, individual counselling, international communication and allows the student to join research groups already formed at the university. Artistic research, in turn, enriches the academic environment and broadens the perspectives, methodologies and problem positions in the humanities, social studies, STEM fields and other disciplines. Based on the thematic connection, the cooperation of artistic researchers with other fields of research is encouraged. In doctoral studies, an artistic research project is produced in dialogue with the supervisor, co-doctoral students, lecturers, colleagues, and is evaluated and defended according to the procedure established at the university, involving international experts.

In the course of doctoral studies in artistic research, new creative practices, techniques and methods come into existence along with new ways of researching, analysing, interpreting, teaching and communicating them. The practical output of an artistic doctoral dissertation shall be presented to the general public, depending on the specifics of the research, through exhibitions, performances, environmental or product development outputs, etc. As a rule, the dissertation shall undergo a written peer review and is then allowed for defence, this being a public debate with an opponent.

An artistic doctoral dissertation:

- highlights salient research issues and challenges in the field,
- introduces previous similar research and the theoretical background of the topic,
- develops the methodology used in the work based on the research question and creative practice,
- conducts the research in symbiosis with the creative process,
- reflects the course and results of research in creative practice and documents them in a clearly structured and reasoned written research paper.

Artistic research doctoral theses are evaluated according to the general principles of evaluation of artistic research. The evaluation of the written part takes into account the relevance and salience of the selected topic, the clarity and comprehensibility of the problem statement, the contribution made by the written part to analysis of the research problem and the reflection of the creative process, the reasoning behind the methodology and theoretical framework, the scale and systematic presentation of various knowledge, and the conformity of the work to academic standards established in the university.

Future perspectives

All the above-mentioned universities shall develop the main directions of artistic research, and research groups (laboratories, research centres) shall be established, which involve foreign experts and collaborate with other universities, institutions and companies.

In cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Research, the Estonian Research Agency and universities, a sustainable funding model for the development of artistic research shall be developed with a view to both baseline funding and targeted financing, and a research funding system will be established for artistic projects or projects that incorporate artistic research.

In order to popularize artistic research, a web platform will be developed in cooperation with universities, which will consolidate materials, publications and project overviews related to artistic research.

In cooperation with the Estonian Research Agency and universities, principles, necessary classifications and technical means for recognizing artistic research in the Estonian Research Information System shall be developed.

Other documents on artistic research

The Vienna Declaration on Artistic Research:

https://cultureactioneurope.org/files/2020/06/Vienna-Declaration-on-AR_corrected-version_24-June-20-1.pdf

Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen: White paper on Artistic Research:

<https://www.aec-music.eu/userfiles/File/Key%20Concepts/White%20Paper%20AR%20-%20Key%20Concepts%20for%20AEC%20Members%20-%20EN.pdf>

SHARE Handbook for Artistic Research Education:

<http://www.sharenetwork.eu/resources/share-handbook>