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(article starts on next page)

Developing Making Scholarship

From Making Disciplines to Field-specific Research in Creative Practices

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This paper describes a project which will result in a book with the intentions to present and discuss certain developments in establishing field-specific scholarship within architecture, design and the arts. The idea is that the book will address three periods which differed in their degree of maturing towards a more established and “self-confident” scholarly culture in several schools of architecture in Belgium, Sweden and Norway, where the authors have had the opportunity to teach at the level of doctoral studies. The intention of the book is that each period studied will be illustrated by cases of “excellent research practice” which we regard to have played the role of turning points in the development of the recent decades. These cases will not be discussed in this paper, since its aim is to present the overall set-up of the project and our stance in relation to its different aspects.

The book project builds on the authors’ own writings from the period 2001–2012 and will be supplied by commentaries on the role we have played in developing a certain model of understanding what field-specific research in creative practices could be.

The first period (1990 – 2005)

The first period of the development is the fifteen years starting from 1990, and here we will especially describe how a doctoral curriculum was defined for and practiced by PhD students, recruited first solely from architecture, and later on, from other creative practices of designers of various kinds and artists. The challenge was to legitimize this curriculum as “academic enough” first and foremost with regard to the academia of the established, discipline-based bodies of decision-makers. In this period, attempts were made to formulate frameworks for researchability for practice-embedded issues. A concept of Making Disciplines was developed at certain Scandinavian schools of architecture which co-operated on research education at their doctoral programmes. This concept was meant to attend both to the academic standards of research and to creative practice-relevance of the output of this research derived from these creative practices (Dunin-Woyseth & Michl 2001b; Dunin-Woyseth & Nilsson 2011b).

The description of this period will be based on several writings. The point of departure will be grounded in the publication “Towards a Disciplinary Identity of the Making Professions” (Dunin-Woyseth & Michl 2001a). This publication consists of several chapters which all address the issue of knowledge in the so-called *making* professions. The term has been applied to the fields of art production, object design, industrial design, architecture, landscape architecture etc. These fields of professional expertise are responsible for design and production of remarkable variety and volume of artefacts and man-made environments. Of the authors’ special interest was the kind of

knowledge with which the *making* professions are concerned, i.e. *making* knowledge. Following Gilbert Ryle's famous distinction between *knowing how* and *knowing that* (Ryle 1971) the authors maintained that *making* knowledge belonged to the broader category of *knowledge-how*. The fields of contrasting *knowledge-that* have over decades constituted academic disciplines. The authors found it worthwhile to propose establishing *making disciplines* on the base of *making knowledge*, belonging to *knowledge-how*.

Making disciplines would have to fill the demands of professional relevance posed by the *making* professions. On the other hand, they would have to abide by the rules of the academic world. The contributors to the publication discuss how these dual demands have been sought to be fulfilled in architecture, industrial design and spatial planning.

Another publication which developed the concept of the *making disciplines* is "Architectural scholarship 'the doctorate way' – the challenges and responses in a Scandinavian context" (Dunin-Woyseth 2005). It elaborates on the relationships between *making*, *making disciplines* and academic disciplines. It examines the notion of the triadic concept of knowledge base in architecture, developed in the Anglo-Saxon literature since the 1960s, i.e. History, Theory and Criticism. It then dwells on how architectural scholarship can be considered in broader epistemological categories of mono- and interdisciplinarity. It announces the need for new, more field-specific scholarship which should go beyond these academic categories of knowledge, and the concepts of transdisciplinarity, Mode 1 and Mode 2 were introduced as new frameworks for discussion.

The exploration of Mode 2 of knowledge production began at the Scandinavian schools of architecture in their doctoral programmes with a Nordic course devoted to this issue. The article "Looking back, looking forward" (Dunin-Woyseth 2002) describes how a group of Scandinavian architect scholars and doctoral students tried to understand what this mode of knowledge production could offer to architectural and design scholarship, and whether the notion of making disciplines could be useful in this context.

The first period is finally discussed in a publication which examines scholarly opportunities for architectural research in the context of Mode 2. "Discussing transdisciplinarity: Making professions and the new mode of knowledge production" (Dunin-Woyseth & Nielsen 2004) and especially its chapter "Transdisciplinarity and architectural design – On knowledge production through the practice of architecture" (Nilsson 2004) propose transdisciplinarity as a promising approach to field-specific architectural research. The role of the *making disciplines* has been examined and elucidated in this context.

Another promising concept for developing a more field-specific architectural research was recognized in the notion of "a continuum from scientific research to creative practice" (Frayling et al. 1997) and discussed in the article "Professional Relevance vs. Academic Intersubjectivity" (Dunin-Woyseth 2003). This notion opens up for other integrations of and dialogues between different perspectives within research contexts.

The second period (2005 – 2010)

The second period (2005 – 2010) began when we joined Sint-Lucas School of Architecture in Brussels / Ghent as visiting professors and were given an opportunity to develop an independent research educational unit within their broader programme of Research Training Sessions. This "curriculum in the curriculum" was, later on, introduced at three other Scandinavian institutions training "makers" in various creative practices. This curriculum opened for a more explorative research education, less

anxious of academic legitimization, and more engaged in developing a more field-specific research in these practices. A new balance has been sought, that of architecture as a making discipline and material practice (Dunin-Woyseth & Nilsson 2011a; Dunin-Woyseth & Nilsson 2012c).

During this period we reported on the process of developing our ideas on what a field-specific architectural research could be. We explored especially how Mode 2 of knowledge production, as well as the concept of “a continuum from scientific research to creative practice”, could open for such a research. We considered these two notions in the light of the ongoing debate on research by arts / research by design. The journal series *Reflections +*, published at the Sint-Lucas School of Architecture has been a splendid arena for communicating results of our studies.

In the first of our contributions to this journal we described what kind of research culture we met on the onset of establishing doctoral studies at this institution as represented by the first cohort of prospective doctoral students, all of them teachers of architecture at the school and practitioners. We also described the principles of our concept of introductory research training for practitioners in the publication “Thinking, Doing, Writing, Researching. The Brussels experiments in forms and processes of knowledge” (Dunin-Woyseth & Nilsson 2006).

We recognized early in our engagement time at the institution a strong wish on the part of the Sint-Lucas milieu that we, as teachers, should present our epistemological stance with regard to what we meant by field-specific research in architecture and design. We formulated this stance in another article, “Some notes on practice-based architectural research: Four ‘arrows’ of knowledge” (Dunin-Woyseth & Nilsson 2008).

A consequent thing to do was to describe and discuss how we communicate this stance in a research pedagogical context. It was formulated in the article “Visual thinking as bridge building – Testing a pedagogical concept, drawing some new insight” (Dunin-Woyseth & Nilsson 2009). We presented more broadly and discussed deeper our views on research education in support for field-specific research in the publication “Building a culture of doctoral scholarship in architecture and design. A Belgian-Scandinavian case” (Dunin-Woyseth & Nilsson 2011a).

At that time we wished to remind that building a new field of inquiry was not only its epistemological or educational aspects, but also its social context, the histories of “what happened when and where” in this development process (Kaiser 2000; Walker 1989). This reminder was published as “Research by Design. Progress in establishing field-specific research in architecture and design – an update on four national scenes” (Dunin-Woyseth & Nilsson 2011c), these being observed in the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Belgium. This diachronically arranged review and the consequent discussion on the subject were broadened in the text “On the emergence of research by design and practice-based research approaches in architecture and urban design” (Dunin-Woyseth & Nilsson 2012c).

The emerging research approaches and collaborations had been difficult to discuss and acknowledge in more traditional academic frameworks, but the discourses since the mid-1990s in theory of science as well as in collaborations between academics and practitioners had elaborated concepts and notions supporting development of new theoretical and methodological frameworks. In our earlier mentioned text “Some notes on practice-based architectural research: Four ‘arrows’ of knowledge”, and subsequently in “Building (Trans)Disciplinary Architectural Research - Introducing Mode 1 and Mode 2 to Design Practitioners” (Dunin-Woyseth & Nilsson 2011b), we tentatively delineated a framework showing the possibility to integrate research approaches previously considered outside of academic and scholarly research. The poles of disciplinarity and transdisciplinarity as well as scientific research and creative

practice can be seen as tension points in overlapped continua onto which different research approaches can be mapped.

In this period we recognized the potential of making disciplines as one of the “stakeholders” in a complex, collective research process where various types of knowledge and insight co-operate in order to develop new insights, solutions and visions.

The third period (2010 -)

The third period (2010 –) has begun recently. It was partly initiated by a research programme under the name of “Architecture in the Making. Architecture as a Making Discipline and Material Practice”, that succeeded in achieving a so-called strong research environment grant for 2011-2016 from the Swedish Research Council Formas. This research environment, in a national collaboration between the four schools of architecture in Sweden, has the aim to develop theories and methods from the perspective of and in collaboration with architectural practice to strengthen architectural research. In this programme training of new researchers, recruited from the creative practices, converge with research co-operation with post-doc fellows and other senior researchers as well as with practitioners. Together they develop “permeable practices” of design practitioners and research practitioners in the creative fields. Field-specific scholarship is being developed in this milieu with a stronger self-confidence which promises new, justifiable, field-specific academic independence, instead of the earlier tradition of “emulated scholarship” of the earlier periods (Dunin-Woyseth & Nilsson 2011a).

The research environment is developed in close collaboration with practice and international networks, but not least between the four schools of architecture in Sweden where also the research environment “Architecture in Effect” and the research school “ResArc” are developed. While “Architecture in the Making” takes a point of departure from and perspective of architectural practice when developing theories and methods, “Architecture in Effect” has a more socio-political and cultural-theoretical stance, which gives complementary perspectives between the environments. The Swedish research school in architecture, “ResArc”, forms a platform for interactions. Together with other scholars within “Architecture in the Making” we were part of the organizing team responsible for the doctoral course “Approaches. Scholarly Craft and Criticism” held autumn 2012, which built upon and further developed our experiences from courses in Belgium, Norway and Sweden.

Research within the environment includes doctoral projects, post-doc projects and projects for senior researchers. Some of the doctoral projects are industrial PhDs in cooperation with architectural offices or part-time projects for architectural practitioners. Among the post-doc projects one currently finds international collaboration projects where architects elaborate theories and methods from practice-based PhDs (e.g. Janssens 2012) as well as projects run by historians of ideas on theoretical and technical aspects of the practical use of as well as professional discussions on parametric tools in design. Senior research projects include articulation of knowledge frameworks from research material collected since many years of research in academia and practice contexts, but where sufficient time and resources for more gathered reflection and coherent elaboration have been lacking until now. Projects are also set up as new collaborations between different departments, including both practitioners and theoreticians from the fields of architecture, arts and philosophy. Seminars, symposia and conferences are arranged around central themes, and material from the projects and events have started to be published in various formats, e.g. as a theme issue of *Nordic Journal of Architecture* on “Alteration” (Anstey & Gabriellsson 2012).

So within the environment, several different perspectives are arranged to meet, exchange views and develop frameworks based both in traditional academia and the emerging approaches of research by design and practice-based investigations. One of the ongoing projects is our “Doctorateness in the Making Disciplines”, building on our previous work in research education developed into a Nordic collaboration research project including a practice-based post-doc scholar and a PhD student.

While we have earlier argued for a field-specific, practice-based research in architecture and design, we have acknowledged early on that in order to reach recognition for results of this research both on the part of practitioners and of architectural researchers (and other scholars), principles for assessment of this kind of research should be discussed in a broader debate and some consensus be met among these two “worlds”, that of design practice and (design) academia. In one of the most recent volumes of *Reflections* we describe and discuss in the text “Creating stronger awareness of traditional and ‘by design’ scholarship. Investing ‘doctorateness’ in Belgium, Sweden and Norway” (Dunin-Woyseth & Nilsson 2012a) criticism of doctoral work, produced both in traditional academic modes and as research by art or research by design. It is the latter which we recognize as the field-specific research, where various practices – research and design practices, discursive and making practices, hermeneutic and material practices (Allen 2000) – are “permeable” and demand specific criticism and assessment, to provide a competent, just, and adequate judgment, better tuned to “permeability” than for two different, “parallel” modes of practice. These “permeable practices” work over the borders between research and professional practice, making some previous distinctions obsolete and putting scientific inquiries and creative work in new relations. Therefore we claim that adequate assessment of research results in practice-based, creative fields should build on a double judgment of both practitioners and scholars through negotiations between connoisseurship and criticism (Eisner 1976).

We see “making scholarship” as a broad and inclusive field of inquiry where there is place for traditional research and the most innovative experiments led by research by art / by design. We also see in this new landscape of making scholarship a place for “hybrid modes of research” which do not have ambition of reconciling these two epistemological poles, but let juxtapose various knowledge stances. This making scholarship should open for various positioning within the “continuum from scientific research to creative practice”.

What we hope this book to be

The project intends to inform younger practitioners and practice-based scholars about the near history of research education in creative practices as well as strengthen their awareness about the dynamic fields of practice and research in their continuous interplay, changing notion of what is being regarded as “good research”, and the changes of epistemological stances occurring over time. The project also aims at contributing to the ongoing developments of theoretical and methodological frameworks for research in creative fields, with the objectives to support the elucidation of knowledge in the making disciplines, and to strengthen the field-specific research based in creative practices in relation to other disciplines. We hope that the contents of the book will support young research professionals in developing a stronger intellectual self-confidence. But, first and foremost, we would like to strengthen an awareness of where we are today, seen from our point of view.

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