

From Inter-Disciplinarity Towards Trans-Disciplinarity in Arts and Sciences: Presumptions for the Artistic Research and Doctoral Studies in Arts¹

Vytautas Michelkevičius

Vilnius Academy of Arts, Department of Photography, Animation and Media Art

Maironio st. 6, LT-01124 Vilnius

vytautas.michelkevicius@vda.lt

Aldis Gedutis

Klaipėda University, Centre for the Studies of Social Change

Herkus Mantas St. 84, LT-92294 Klaipėda

aldis.gedutis@ku.lt

This paper overviews the development of the notion of trans-disciplinarity in Lithuania and its neighbouring contexts, and makes an attempt to identify its current relation to science and art.

The paper analyses the ways in which artistic research, without being a discipline in its own right, can nonetheless both provide a basis for the doctoral studies in arts, and liberate it from the traditions and disciplines of the humanities and other sciences. Furthermore, the paper argues that doctoral studies in arts are inherently trans-disciplinary and thus able to accommodate the traditional traits of the doctorate studies in the areas as different as humanities, social sciences, and even natural sciences. Lastly, the paper builds the case for artistic research as both the basis for the doctoral studies in arts and a unique research paradigm, itself able to produce new research traditions.

Keywords: disciplinarily, philosophy of science, interdisciplinary art, trans-disciplinary work (research), trans-disciplinarity in science, trans-disciplinarity in art, post-disciplinarity, communities, disciplines, guilds.

1 This article has been written as a part of "The Impact of Artistic Research on Humanities and Visual Arts. The Case of Lithuania in the Global Context", a joint project by the Vilnius Academy of Arts and Klaipėda University. The funding has been provided by the Research Council of Lithuania (contract number S-LIP-20-19).

As an attempt to redefine the doctoral studies in the arts, this article discusses the problematic relationship between artistic research and various forms of disciplinarity. This is achieved by first defining the notion of interdisciplinarity in both art and science, then comparing the respective definitions, and finally attempting to see how this situation is affected by the arrival of post-disciplinarity and trans-disciplinarity. Lastly, the paper discusses the potential for artistic research to become the unified space for both artistic and scientific practices. It is worth noting that due to the sheer breadth of the subject, the result is inevitably fragmentary, yet we hope that this shortcoming will be compensated for by the generously panoramic approach towards the noble cause of building bridges between the disciplines. The reader should also bear in mind that some of the questions and cases discussed here are local.

By means of a chronological analysis of interdisciplinarity in science and art, the article aims to articulate the key conditions for the emergence of artistic research in post-disciplinary field. This “reconstruction” also allows us to better grasp the “discipline” of artistic research in contemporary academia and beyond.

The problem of interdisciplinarity is pertinent in both science and art, and a person would be right to ask whether artistic research is able to solve it or if it only complicates matters more. Both art and science have their own definitions of interdisciplinarity; while sharing some similarities, they distinctly differ. For instance, in art, a discipline can be defined through practical skills traditionally shaped and transferred by guilds and workshops. Today these functions are carried out by research institutes, academies, and higher education departments.

While in the fields of both art and science we have to comply to the disciplinary logic (particularly when it comes to finance and assessment), our lives, research and creativity has been multi-, inter-, trans-, and post-disciplinary for at least few decades already. Yet in the practice of assessment in science and art we will barely find any of these “multi-”, “inter-”, “trans-” and “post-” – after all, we need to decide on a certain point of reference and pick a discipline (or two) closest to the research problem.

At first glance, doctoral studies in the arts might seem like a compound of two disciplines or practices: the arts (practice) and the humanities (theory). At least such is the antiquated understanding still prevalent in the educational traditions where doctoral studies in the arts evolved along (or from) the doctorate in the humanities; thereby artistic writing is often considered an affair closest to the department of humanities and closest to the legitimate form of written articulation of research. This confusion often appears due to the relative closeness between art theory and artistic practice, although they appear close only from the distance, or at first glance. First, the object of art theory is artistic practices, while the object of artistic research can be any number of questions pertaining our world and other sciences too. Second, art theoretical research methods are rarely suitable for the artist-researchers who base their method on their practice.

And yet we are left with the question whether the work of artist-researchers amounts to positing an entirely new discipline, or is it merely what happens when visiting the sphere of the humanities before returning the familiar discipline of artistic practice?

The Promises of X-Disciplinarity

In the trendy post-newspeak, the problem would sound something like “the inter-disciplinarity of trans-disciplinary practice makes way for the post-disciplinary approach towards multi-disciplinary problems.” Anyone who braves the task of reviewing the literature on x-disciplinarity² knows the difficulty of reading through such verbiage. The reader will find no such overview in this paper. Our goal is rather to dispel the mist surrounding all the x-disciplinarity (at least in the Lithuanian as East Central European context) and offer some sound disciplinary premises for artistic research and doctoral studies in the arts. While our focus will be primarily on the questions of artistic practice, we will also touch upon the cases when these practices interlink with the humanities and social sciences. Apart from our previous research, we will also draw from our publishing practice which, to a large extent, is dedicated to the questions of disciplinarity.³

2 Please insert ‘inter-’, ‘trans-’, ‘multi-’, etc. instead of ‘x’.

3 During his 2010–2016 term as the Chair of [LTKMS], Vytautas Michelkevičius had witnessed many cases of problems and solutions related to interdisciplinarity in art.

Our relationship with disciplinarity can be expressed via a range of prefixes. Most were identified by Vytautas Michelkevičius in his *Postdisciplinary Lexicon*⁴ (Lithuanian Interdisciplinary Artists' Association [LTKMS, 2017]). Whenever discussing the disciplines and practices, we are free to choose a prefix – from “alt-“ to “zoo-“ – and speculate on the resulting semantic constellations. Which prefix suits you most in this case, in this particular situation? Is it a “meta-discipline” or perhaps “poly-discipline” or even “ultra-discipline”? All of the variations are there to help you clarify your relationship with the chosen discipline and its context.

However, before moving on and discussing concepts like transversality, we should first try to define the notion of discipline and identify its systemic range.

TURINYS

Alt-	Intra-
Ambi-	Iso-
Ana-	Juxta-
Apo-	Kūrybinės industrijos
Auto-	Leksikonas
Bi-	Macro-
Bio-	Mega-
Circum-	Meninis tyrimas
Co-	Meta-
Contra-	Micro-
Cosenter-	Milt-
Crypto-	Multi-
De-	Naudotojystė
Dis-	Neo-
Dys-	Non-
Ecto-	Para-
Egzodisciplininis menas	Poly-
Ekstrateritorinis	Post-
abipusiskumas	Pre-
Endo-	Primi-
Entropija	Psichoanalas
Epi-	Re-
Ex-	Semi-
Extra-	Sab-
Hemi-	Supra-
Hetero-	Sym-
Homeo-	Tarpdisciplininis menas
Homo-	Trans*
Hyper-	Ultra-
Hypo-	Uni-
Im-	Ur-
Infrastruktūros	Xeno-
Inter-	Zoo-

1. “The cloud of prefixes
in Table of Contents in
Postdisciplinary Lexicon”

4 Michelkevičius V., *Postdisciplininis leksikonas* (Lietuvos tarpdisciplinio meno kūrėjų sąjunga (LTKMS), 2017), <https://www.letmekoo.lt/leidiniai/postdisciplininis-leksikonas-sudvytautas-michelkevicius/>.

Discipline and Guild: The Perspective and Position of Artistic Research

The notion of discipline implies the imposition of a hierarchy and the enactment of power. The term itself derives from the Latin *disciplina*, the instruction given to a disciple by a senior individual. This process involves the use of specialized and valuable knowledge that only some have. Meanwhile interdisciplinarity implies breaking with tradition and going beyond the preset limitations in pursuit of new knowledge and new methodologies.

In this context, the definition should be specified and narrowed down to “academic discipline” and “art discipline.” In a wider sense, a discipline is defined as the field or area of knowledge,⁵ and in a narrower sense of an academic discipline, it is an area of knowledge taught and researched by academics both in art schools and universities. It is common for a discipline to be described in one or a few specific terms, but when encountering the phenomenon we call “artistic research”, we find it difficult to call it a “discipline” as it does not have a single and clear definition of its field of knowledge, nor does it have a single commonly agreed object of research or a unified methodology.

It is commonly agreed to see artistic research as grounded in other established disciplines of art and science. First, it is artistic practice along with the theories that can come from a whole variety of other academic disciplines: art history and theory, philosophy, sociology, anthropology, and even the natural and technical sciences.

In their book *The Methodology of Artistic Research: Narrative, Power, Audience*,⁶ the Finnish authors, philosophers, and pedagogists Hannula, Suoranta, and Vadén propose defining the uniqueness of artistic research by focusing on its methodological ties to the notion of power. According to these authors, artistic research might be able to combine the good qualities of both science and art. The uniqueness of artistic research lies in the fact that it enables and permits many things that no other types of research, nor art itself are able to permit.

5 Oxford reference, accessed December 21, 2021, <https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095721587>.

6 Mika Hannula, Juha Suoranta, and Tere Vadén, *Artistic research Methodology: Narrative, Power and the Public* (New York: Peter Lang, 2014).

Hannula, Suoranta, and Vadén propose considering the methodology of artistic research as something that liberates us from the two key areas that shape our knowledge and produce expertise: one belongs to guilds (manufacture workshops), and other to the traditional (natural and social) sciences and the humanities.⁷ The authors describe these areas by countering them against each other. In the guild model, skill formation is based on the master-apprentice relationship, and the level of learnedness is evaluated and assessed intersubjectively. A successful student thus becomes an apprentice, and then an artisan, a traveling free trader. The achievement of creating a masterpiece grants them membership in the guild (upon agreement between its members), thus giving them right to open up their own workshop. It means that the guild system is similar to that of academies and universities. It enables knowledge and skill transfer from generation to generation and preserves tradition to ensure the continuity of the process. It also educates and supports the community. Some higher education formats in art are based on similar principles – masterclasses in music are as strong a tradition as ever, meanwhile in some visual arts (and especially media arts), the role of mastery is no longer as important.

However, the guild model is lacking in some of the features that are important in research. First, the guild model does not foster critical judgment, progress, and change, because its purpose is to preserve and transfer traditions, not change or undermine them. Second, this model is too hermetic: the guild membership is difficult to acquire and does not imply successful progress. One of the key principles in a guild is keeping certain things secret, which utterly contradicts the academic ideal – its methods need to remain transparent, free to be transferred and adapted by other researchers. However, this is exactly how the guild remains in power: it possesses skills and knowledge, ensures their transfer, and cultivates the tradition. (Cf. Becher & Trowler “Academic Tribes and Territories”). Similarly to the guild model, the natural sciences (NS) foster the transfer of skills (the becoming of the scholar) and knowledge (theories, models). They also shape the communities where education is often identical to that of the guild. However, NS fundamentally differ from guilds in the sense that

7 Hannula et al., *Artistic research Methodology: Narrative, Power and the Public*, p. 55.

their ideal lies in making the communities open and critically minded. Anyone can join it, and its methodological principles are open to the public. The systemic task of the research methodology is to make the research as transparent and open as possible. The purpose of making the methods open to public judgment is to have a way of seeing whether the research has been carried out by a “master” or a “novice.” This form of judging the skills and knowledge is both inter-subjective (although many would deem it objective) and public.

The abovementioned Finnish philosophers and art pedagogists proceed with employing Thomas Kuhn’s idea of paradigm evolution, change, and collapse⁸ and comparing different fields of science. According to these authors, natural scientists usually agree on the key disciplinary paradigm, its concepts, and its methods as long as they are progressive and contribute to the accumulation of knowledge. In the social sciences, it is the other way around: not only there is no dissensus regarding the key concepts and methods, there is barely any agreement on the content and notions that comprise a scientific object (what is a society, an individual, etc.). The development of social sciences is driven by this inner disagreement of varying degree, as the aim of the sciences appears to be precisely that: question all ideas and theories. However, these disagreements are not “terminal”, because the openness and critical judgment are always encouraged. If some of the natural sciences (physics, geometry, astronomy, etc.) permit the existence of only one paradigm at a time, in social sciences allow for the existence of multiple incongruent paradigms.

In the social sciences, some methodologies are closer to the natural sciences, while others to those of the arts. As we are trodding around the territory of the humanities, it would be absurd and inefficient to demand a wider or even final agreement. The aim of humanities research is to articulate and defend the argument, interpretation, and point of view as openly and masterfully as is possible, as well as to support the arguments with existing research. It means that, here too, we expect openness and critical judgment, although the latter are considered as the consequence of the empirical experiments and measurability in natural sciences. Here, openness

8 T. S. Kuhn, *The structure of scientific revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

is a linguistic phenomenon; it is the very structure of the argument. Meanwhile critical judgment draws on a person's acquaintance with tradition: here, we rarely encounter knock-down arguments, and nothing really "dies." Furthermore, style and rhetoric are of particular importance: content is inseparable from its delivery, which also means that the methodological skills are inseparable from craftsmanship. Speaking of power relations, the humanities allow for research on virtually any topic, and their "masters" are not as untouchable as the guild members because they can be – and are encouraged to get – challenged. The debates are brought out in public, and judgments are made after hearing out all the arguments. Sometimes the disagreements get resolved, other times they only deepen, but that is precisely the whole point of the humanities.

Hannula, Suoranta, and Vadén conclude that with its topics and approaches, artistic research remains closest to the model of the humanities.⁹ Here we will rarely encounter the natural scientific methods, unless when they are the object of research. According to Hannula et al., the methods of the social sciences are closer to artistic research, although when considered along with artistic practice, the research itself starts getting closer to the humanities, where the objects of study are humanity and its cultural artifacts (how can we redefine this now in the post-anthropocentric context?).

However, such view is nonetheless limited, and it is likely the result of the insufficient acquaintance with the trans-disciplinary art projects. If we took a closer look at the AR methods, we see that they differ strongly from those of the humanities. Particularly if we agree with the opinion of most AR theorists that, similarly to how a geological field work is the key method for the geology researcher, in AR, the main method is artistic practice itself.

In this sense, artistic research might bear similarities with the practice-based sciences (particularly those that research material artifacts). In their research, artists often engage with material artifacts and technologies. Which is why they can easily find like-minded researchers in practice-based disciplines such as anthropology (*Between Matter and Method: Encounters in Anthropology and Art*, 2017), archaeology (*Artistic*

9 Hannula et al., *Artistic research Methodology: Narrative, Power and the Public*, 59.

Practices and Archaeological Research, 2019), and even geography (*Geography, Art, Research: Artistic Research in the GeoHumanities*, 2020), geology or engineering.

We should bear in mind that the methods employed by artists are often (auto)ethnographic and even (auto)archaeological, as they too analyze the ready-made artifacts in order to draw conclusions about such factors as the context or historical period.

What conclusions in the context of artistic disciplines can we draw at this point? The changes in visual art strategies that took place over the past few decades are now affecting the academies and other educational institutions, where the skill formation cultivated and controlled by guilds has been gradually giving way to openness and a critical approach towards the discipline (the “deskilling movement” in the art schools from the 1960s¹⁰). The art disciplines have reinvented themselves along with their creative and evaluative methodologies. The importance of an artist’s rhetoric and argumentative powers have also grown, and we see this not only in the emergence of artistic writing (particularly after the heyday of conceptualism in the 1960-70s), but also in the rising number of cases of artists making public comments about their work and various societal problems. We can therefore conclude that the contemporary artistic practice has been gradually adopting the traits typically seen only in sciences, while AR has been taking steps in developing them further.

The academic debates have acquired a more public character and started engaging the audiences outside academia too. Academia periodically has its open (studio) days, student work presentations turn into exhibitions and performative events, and the general public gets invited to the artists’ studios. Only a few decades ago, students of the Vilnius Academy of Arts and other higher education institutions were not allowed to be present during their work presentation and discussion, and their work was assessed by a jury panel behind closed doors. Today the artwork is no longer left to “speak for itself” in front of a viewer; now the artists are allowed to communicate their intentions and creative contexts and have an active dialogue with their audience. Meanwhile the doctoral studies in arts extends these

10 John Roberts, *The Intangibilities of Form: Skill and Deskilling in Art after the Readymade* (London: Verso, 2007).

debates even further by engaging with the professional researchers from other disciplines of art and science.

To summarize, we can conclude that artist-researchers do not identify with any of the traditional guilds but are rather communicators or informers active between different guilds, as their methods transgress different areas of art and science. Which is a yet another argument in favor of the trans-disciplinary nature of all the activity and research that takes place during AR.

Communities and Boundaries: From Discipline to the Expanded Field and Discourse

If for centuries art disciplines have been shaped by the paradigms of manufacturing workshops and guilds, then during the second half of the twentieth century the latter were gradually substituted with the epistemic (or interpretational) communities and discourses. During the period between the end of modernism and the emergence of contemporary art (the Global North 1960-70s, and the Lithuanian 1980-90s), the values of purity and disciplinarity have gradually lost their sway due to their inherent hermeticity and the new creative arsenal that had emerged in the art field at that time. Now literally anything could become an artistic tool, method, and the object of inquiry (and, consequently, that of research).

If we were to give a quick historical overview of the transformation of art as it moved from guilds to post-disciplines, we would see that some art disciplines have transgressed their own borders and become actors in the expanded field of art. Sculpture was one of such cases (Rosalind Krauss, *Sculpture in the Expanded Field*, 1979), followed by photography (George Baker, *Photography's Expanded Field*, 2005), and then the rest of the (visual) arts (Natalie Loveless, *Art in the Expanded Field*, 2019), until finally the entire art field became post-disciplinary or post-media (Rosalind Krauss, *Post-Medium Condition*, 1999).¹¹

Thus, the categorization of art disciplines was substituted with discursivity; in other words, the priority is now given to certain topics and/or problems that particular artworks touched upon or analyze.

11 Rosalind E. Krauss, "A Voyage on the North Sea", in *Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1999).

Discursivity – the thematization of particular phenomena and questions – became the new *spiritus movens*. For instance, instead of organizing their shows according to the disciplines, both artists and curators started focusing on the current problems of the times (human rights, post-colonialism, post-racism, new materialism, etc.). This is reflected in how the subheadings “painting exhibition” or “photography show” in the show titles were gradually substituted with topics and themes.

By the same token, the activity of artistic research cannot be defined from the position of any particular discipline because its questions and methods transgress the disciplinary limitations. Sculpture, photography, painting – none is practiced in a safe comfort zone the single discipline provides. This is where the demand for the trans-disciplinary and trans-epistemic communities comes from.

This also happens because there is still no consensus about attributing artistic research to a particular field: is it a yet another form of artistic practice, or is it a form of academic research?

Some say AR is the very borderlands of academia,¹² while others call it an avant-garde and experimental activity¹³ where we test the new methods of making art and contributing to knowledge. For instance, if these methods are found to be successful in AR, then they might as well be transferred to other research paradigms. Whichever way we look at it, it is clear that AR is by no means a matter of a single discipline, or a guild.

In support of this argument, we proceed to an overview of another prominent phenomenon in art – interdisciplinary art, already known to have successfully been crossing the limits of art guilds long ago.

Let us therefore recall and analyze the situation with the interdisciplinary art discourse in Lithuania over the last three decades.

Interdisciplinary Art as a Symptom (of the Times): Key Definitions

Many would perhaps agree that, during those three decades of its use in Lithuania (and elsewhere), the notion of “interdisciplinarity” became devalued and is no longer associated with innovation, quality and

12 “Artistic Research as Academic Borderlands | JAR.”, *www.jar-Online.net*, accessed May 9, 2021, <https://www.jar-online.net/en/artistic-research-academic-borderlands>.

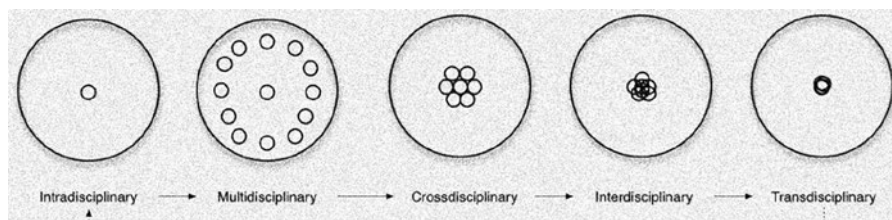
13 Michael Schwab et al., *Experimental Systems: Future Knowledge in Artistic Research* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2013).

other trendy buzzwords, when describing art. Who can forget the metaphorical image once suggested by the exhibition title “In the Graveyards of Interdisciplinarity (?)” (2013).¹⁴ The show was organized by [LTMKS] and curated by Danutė Gambickaitė and Gintarė Matulaitytė. Yet all attempts at burying interdisciplinarity have been clearly unsuccessful, as we still find ourselves restricted by this notion that just keeps tagging along.

However, can artistic practice be regarded as a single discipline? The answer depends on our perspective. From the perspective of science as a whole, the answer would be yes, but if we looked closer from the perspective of art theorists and the artists themselves, artistic practice appears as a conglomerate of many otherwise unrelated disciplines and sub-disciplines. Such is the case with, for example, sculpture, painting, graphics, photography, installation, sound art, virtual reality, media art, bio-art, theater, music, cinema, and dance. Each has its own traditions, methods, networks, infrastructures, and communities. In the case of the founding or early disciplines, there seems to be no question regarding their limits, but in today’s world we see how the disciplinary limits are beginning to fade and find the new disciplines that emerged over the past few decades so difficult to define.

When considering the disciplines from the point of view of collaboration, as displayed in this simplified model, we see that intra-disciplinarity differs from trans-disciplinarity due to only a tighter collaboration between the disciplines. But is that really enough? Here we can see that, first, the interactions occur within the discipline (intra-disciplinarity), then the research into a single phenomenon might lead to a conglomeration of several disciplines that do not yet collaborate with each other (multi-disciplinarity), until finally the disciplines’ representatives meet at the table, where they can discuss the problem at the safe distance from each other (cross-disciplinarity). Only the fourth form of interaction allows for the transgression of boundaries and makes way for the development of interdisciplinarity, which even lead to the formation of new disciplines. Finally, in the fifth circle we see a total disciplinary integration and the emergence of a new trans-discipline. This model could be the first step towards understanding

14 Catalogue of the exhibition, <https://www.letmekoo.lt/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/tarp-discipliniskumo-kapinynuos-lt.pdf>.



2. The collaboration between disciplines. Designed by Jensenius¹⁵

the links between the disciplines, but in order to fully understand our subject, some further analysis is due.

Before we continue, it is worth mentioning that concepts are born and they may die when they become institutionalized. For instance, for a period of time (c. 1993–2022), “interdisciplinary art” (in Lithuanian *Tarpdisciplininis menas*) enjoyed the status of a discipline in its own right, or even a style with its own approach towards art and creativity. This lasted until 2022, when one of the main arts funding bodies, the Lithuanian Council for Culture (LKT), merged individually funded sub-branches called “Interdisciplinary Art”, “Fine Art”, and “Photography” under the wider category of “Visual Arts”, which happened to become a landmark event in the history of art funding. Furthermore, in 1997, a group of young artists established the Lithuanian Interdisciplinary Artists’ Association¹⁶ in response to the clear boundaries set by the Lithuanian Artists’ Union, which still had (at least until 2022) its traditional discipline-based structure.¹⁷ In Vytautas Michelkevičius’s research project (commissioned by the Lithuanian Council for Culture) on interdisciplinary art as a notion and a phenomenon, he reviewed its development and links with other neighboring concepts.¹⁸ The study has shown that the idea of interdisciplinary art designated the shift of the visual arts paradigms, as the notion of “fine art” was no longer sufficient to describe the rapid developments of art in Lithuania and abroad. The notion of “contemporary art” seemed too politicized and ideologized, so it was decided to distinguish between the forms of art via their respective disciplines; as it turned out, this just as problematic.

15 Alexander R. Jensenius, “Disciplinarity: Intra, Cross, Multi, Inter, Trans”, blog post, accessed October 29, 2021, <https://www.arj.no/2012/03/12/disciplinarity-2/>.

16 <https://www.letmekoo.lt/about/>

17 <https://www.ldsajunga.com/k%C5%ABrybin%C4%97s-grup%C4%97s>

18 <https://www.ltk.lt/sriciu-apzvalgos/vizualieji-menai/tarpdisciplininis-menas>

Therefore, interdisciplinary art marked both the process of blurring the disciplinary boundaries in art and a general movement from isolation and specificity toward discursivity. As the aforementioned study defines,

Historically, interdisciplinary art came from visual art. It is the area that constantly transgresses not only the disciplines happens to encompass, but also other disciplines of art and science, along with various areas of activity, both practical and theoretical. The key criteria are the following ones: interdisciplinarity between art and other areas of art and science; a respective institution or context for creation and exposition; anti-specialisation and anti-isolation.

Here we should note that interdisciplinary art is not multi-disciplinary art that formally conjoins several disciplines or areas; it is rather a way of creating and thinking that spills over the boundaries of a given discipline, manufacturing workshop, or guild.

Although some of the activities and contexts in interdisciplinary art overlap with contemporary art, it is impossible to define interdisciplinary art through the notion of contemporary art alone, as the latter never stops changing and is highly dependent on the ideological and institutional positions.

Here we must add a remark about the difference between the area and discipline. According to the classification by the Lithuanian Council for Culture,¹⁹ several of the largest subdivisions (areas) of art have their own distinct traditions and contexts, such as the stage arts (theater, dance, circus), music, literature, the visual arts (fine art, interdisciplinary art, photography), and the applied arts (design, architecture). In comparison, according to the Lithuanian Council for Research (LMT), art is classified into two general areas²⁰: Stage and Screen Arts (under the code C 000) and Visual Arts (V 000). The Visual Arts are then divided into broad disciplines, such as fine art, design, and architecture. It is obvious that disciplinization is more detailed in the Culture sector than Research probably because the community of practice is better represented by the Council for Culture.

The notion of interdisciplinary art differs from the definition of fine art primarily because it involves the forms of expression that go beyond not

19 <https://www.ltkk.lt/projektu-finansavimas/finansuoti-projektai>

20 Accessed December 21, 2022, <https://www.lmt.lt/lt/mokslo-politika/mokslo-ir-meno-sri-ciu-ir-krypciu-klasifikacija/2321>.

only the genre of fine art but also that of visual art (e.g., the cases of sound art or audio-visual art). Meanwhile photography can be regarded as the first form of interdisciplinary art, as it is based in the interaction between the disciplines of art and science. Only this would be valid in the cases when photography is used by visual art, in contrast to its application in journalism or archiving, for example.

The very definition of interdisciplinary art has partially stabilized, and while interdisciplinary art has become part of the cultural tradition in Lithuania, its global popularity has decreased. It is synonymous with particular connotations with scientific and educational subjects, although when speaking of artistic expression (e.g., photography or sculpture), its forms are called disciplines rather than subjects, which makes the adjective “interdisciplinary” the most fitting choice in this context. Meanwhile, these disciplines can be referred to as “subjects” in the context of the university curriculum.

The neighboring countries in the same discussion employ other terms. For example, Poland and some other countries use the terms “intermedia” and “intermedia art” to designate either the new forms of visual art, such as media art or performance, or forms of art that cross the boundaries of a particular area or discipline. This notion was introduced in the 1960s by the Fluxus artist Dick Higgins (1966). Higgins offered many examples of how different disciplines (which included many other, not only visual, areas of art) get joined together and argued that this “intermedia” mentality is indicative of our times because art is continuous rather than categorized, and it is the viewer’s own problem if they are unable to accept these tendencies due to their sectionalized (disciplinary) mindset. In 1995, Higgins drew a diagram²¹ to illustrate the merging of different media into a singular art world and show how disciplines can collaborate with their immediate neighbors. He identified the collaboration between art and science, which might also be seen as a basis for the notion of artistic research.

While terms such as “media art”, “Art & Science” or “intermedia art” are partially synonymous and overlapping with interdisciplinary art, they are all specific to their contexts and are defined slightly differently.

21 Dick Higgins (1995), accessed December 21, 2022, <https://dickhiggins.org/intermedia>.

Yet that which each new concept of art tries to encompass does not remain stable – it includes the category of the “emerging arts” or “unstable arts” that shifts each time new technologies, media, or phenomena are introduced into the field of art as their new methods, means, or topics.

Creating and thinking within the boundaries of a single discipline can be comparable to a person living in the safety of their home.²² Meanwhile, exposure to other disciplines is tantamount to a curious journey outside the disciplinary limits in search of new forms of expression and new modalities of knowledge. In a way, it is like choosing to go outside and live a life of danger and adventure. Thus, interdisciplinary art can never be defined through a list, however comprehensive, of all the sub-sections it is comprised of.

So, what are the disciplines that the “interdisciplinary art” interconnects? Surely, it involves the interconnections between the disciplines both within (painting, sculpture, graphics, etc.) and outside the area visual arts:

- Visual Arts and Performative (Stage) Arts;
- Visual Arts and Music (Sound Art, Fluxus, Happening, Performance);
- Visual Arts and Film (Video Art, Experimental Animation, and Extended Reality [including Augmented Reality, Virtual Reality, etc.], as well as Artists’ Films [shown mostly in the gallery context]);
- Visual Arts and Literature (many conceptual artists used language and literature as means of expression; we also saw the emergence of new genres of writing, such as “art writing”). Here we might as well recall the famous sentence by Sol Lewitt from his *35 Sentences on Conceptual Art* (1967): “If words are used, and they proceed from ideas about art, then they are art and not literature; numbers are not mathematics.”²³ (“Sentences on Conceptual Art”, no. 16).

The interdisciplinary link can also emerge between the base discipline of visual arts and various scientific disciplines and form a new art discipline such as bio art (link with biology), generative or A.I. art (informatics), and geo art (geography or geology).

While interdisciplinary artwork creates ties with other art disciplines, the discipline of the visual arts remains at its basis. If the basis

22 Natalie Loveless, *How to Make Art at the End of the World: A Manifesto for Research-Creation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019), 46.

23 Sol LeWitt, “Sentences on Conceptual Art”. *Artforum* 5, no. 10 (June 1967): 79–83.

belongs to a different discipline (e.g., theater or film), the artwork is likely to be regarded from the respective disciplinary position too. It is important to note that if a single event involves a film viewing, a poetry reading, and a photography or painting exhibition, it can be called an “interdisciplinary event” but not an “interdisciplinary art show”, as it is a collection of works from different disciplines that do not necessarily form a unitary artwork stemming from the visual arts.

It would be difficult to regard interdisciplinary art as an entirely new and independent discipline in its own right because each new project brings new creative links between a yet another set of disciplines, while these interrelations are usually temporary or project based. They are conjoined and reconnected for the purpose of reaching a particular goal, and in this sense, interdisciplinary art could be seen as a field of activity or a way of thinking. Meanwhile *trans-disciplinary art* could be understood as the emergence of a new discipline that can no longer be contained within the traditional disciplinary borders of such forms of art as photography, painting, or sculpture.

The institutional context typically has the last word in deciding whether the specific artistic phenomenon is interdisciplinary art. For instance, if a theater chooses to produce and put on stage a piece that qualifies as interdisciplinary art, the piece is regarded as part of the theater production discourse, and if a theatrical performance (i.e., formally similar to a stage play) is created and displayed in the interdisciplinary art space, then it is considered as interdisciplinary art.

Science also considers interdisciplinarity without a dedicated concept of “interdisciplinary science”

While the notions of disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity are relatively new, we can find similar problems being addressed in the earlier historical debates on the general versus specialized knowledge. Since the times of antiquity, philosophy has been typically regarded as “the science of sciences”, a universal form of knowledge that encompasses and unifies all other kinds of knowledge. Philosophy was eventually challenged by competitors, typically in the form of other traditional university departments,

such as theology, law and, medicine. All those other areas we know today as individual disciplines (physics, mathematics, geography, history, etc.) were still under the umbrella of philosophy. In the social sciences and humanities, the phenomenon of specialization and disciplinization took place around the period of late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when it became clear that Hegel's attempt at unifying all knowledge into a single philosophical system was unsuccessful, because by that time, the amount of scientific and philosophical knowledge had reached such an extent that further specialization was no longer avoidable. Meanwhile, the discrepancies of the Hegelian system could only be resolved at the price of sacrificing the idea of universality. This can be achieved by narrowing down the object of research and imposing certain methodological restrictions – in other words, by disciplinization. By the mid-twentieth century, (scientific) disciplines already had acquired their strict boundaries. This might have been the end of the process, but disciplinary fragmentation also produced some alternative ideas that leaned towards universality. The classical positivists (A. Comte and J.S. Mill) or logical empiricists (the Vienna Circle) defended the idea of unified science and grounded their position with philosophical arguments about ontology, epistemology, and methodology. The key flaw of *disciplinization* is the loss of a wider perspective, a somewhat universal point of view. When it turned out that certain aspects and methods in some disciplines were doubling on those of others, while the disciplines themselves remained oblivious about what was happening in their neighborhood, the demand arose for a more general, more unifying view. After WW2, this view is labelled as interdisciplinarity. We should note that, differently from unified science or philosophy as the science of sciences, interdisciplinary attempts certainly do not claim to reach the same heights of abstraction. Instead, interdisciplinary research positions itself between the general/universal and specialized/disciplinary approaches.

For example, in his landmark essay “Blurred Genres: The Refiguration of Social Thought” (1980), Clifford Geertz concluded that the intellectual life erases the genre boundaries and liberates the disciplines from

isolation.²⁴ The debates on interdisciplinarity were summarized by Andrew Delano Abbot in his book *Chaos of Disciplines* (2001), and developed further by James Chandler and Arnold I. Davidson in “The Fate of Disciplines”, a dedicated issue of *Critical Inquiry* (2009).²⁵

Compared to art, science defines its disciplines differently. Here, the definitions are more precise and often focused on a single research object or methodology. Science too saw the emergence of interdisciplinary – based on a combination of several disciplines – fields of biochemistry, geophysics, or bioinformatics. Meanwhile, in science interdisciplinarity was approached with a different strategy: a research area is oriented in accordance to the research question/problem (media studies, gender studies, post-colonial studies, Asian studies, etc.). In these cases, we could call such an approach discursive or multi-disciplinary, as the analysis of a particular question/topic/problem employs multiple disciplines. Yet in science, these processes took on a different shape, as the new disciplines were developing on the basis of the old ones. This tendency is already evident in their names (like “biochemistry”). Meanwhile, in art, we saw no such joint identities (e.g., “sculpt-painting” or “photo-sculpture”).

According to Mittelstrass, interdisciplinarity is a dialogue between the disciplines from a safe distance,²⁶ but because today nearly every phenomenon is called interdisciplinary without due consideration of the requirements and meanings, this notion seems to keep losing its momentum and value.

As we have already stated, if in interdisciplinary art the disciplines have lost their power and importance, artistic research pushed things even further, as art disciplines not only reject their guild-based traditions but also cooperate with science disciplines, for example, by meeting at the joint artistic-scientific committee table during the final defense of the doctoral thesis (*Viva Voce*). That’s how artists started using the methods of scientific

24 Clifford Geertz, *The American Scholar*, vol. 49, no. 2 (Spring 1980): 165–179, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41210607>.

25 “The Fate of Disciplines”, in *Critical Inquiry*, eds. James Chandler and Arnold I. Davidson, vol. 35, no. 4 (Summer 2009), accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/598771>.

26 Jürgen Mittelstrass, “From Disciplinarity and Interdisciplinarity to Transdisciplinarity and Back Again”, in *Between / Beyond / Hybrid. New Essays on Transdisciplinarity*, ed. Hartmut von Sass (Zürich: Diaphanes, 2019), 25.

research and vice versa – scientists started employing artistic practices. Naturally, the criticism from both sides is unavoidable. Artists blame AR for the excessive academization of art, while scientists feel that in AR their scientific methodologies lose their precision and clarity.

Post-Disciplinarity

It is worth noting that, during the last few decades, both contemporary art and interdisciplinary art came to be regarded as post-disciplinary (cf. Rosalind Krauss, *A Voyage on the North Sea: Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition*, 2000). This is the case with most of the contemporary art (sometimes still called “fine art”) studies in higher education, where students first study artistic practice discursively (about themes/problems), and then proceed with picking a discipline (and/or tools) for further development of the artistic practice or involve other practitioners (craftspeople) to express their idea in material form.

Therefore, in some cases like in contemporary art schools, the disciplinary differentiation of phenomena that are inherently spread across multiple disciplines and socio-cultural layers is simply unproductive.

According to Silvio R. Waisbord, in science, post-disciplinarity implies that the disciplinary limits are fluid.²⁷ The key difference with interdisciplinarity is that, while the latter transgresses the traditional disciplinary limits, it still retains their theoretical and analytical parameters.

In his book *Communication: Post-discipline*, Waisbord briefly reviews the history of post-disciplinarity in science.²⁸ Its first offshoots appeared in the 1960s, amid the student protests in academia, and later developed with the clear understanding that no discipline is capable of facing global social problems (social alienation, racism, human rights, environmental protection) on its own. This way, art practices also contribute to the post-disciplinary research potential because the problems have become too complex for the methodological grasp of a single discipline. It is important to note that post-disciplinarity does not attack the disciplines, nor does it deny their existence; it rather implies that our focus on the analysis of a specific phenomenon is more important than the limiting and stiff disciplinary regulations.

27 Silvio R. Waisbord, *Communication: A Post-Discipline* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2019), 101.

28 Ibid., 101–102.

In his book, Waisbord defines communication studies as a post-disciplinary paradigm of research, but he still remains within the field of sciences. Meanwhile, the question of how we should integrate art disciplines and other practices still remains open.

Similarly, when defining interdisciplinary art, we might argue that in art, the disciplinary boundaries can be fluid too. However, we can still use the notion of post-disciplinarity in order to define interdisciplinary art because, as we have demonstrated above, this cannot be achieved by merely listing various forms of interdisciplinary art (from sound art to participatory art). When discussing interdisciplinary art, the key point would be to avoid getting stuck with “interdisciplinarity” and not use it as a sole criterion when judging the phenomenon, because this notion should be considered in the company of “art context.” Over the last few decades, we saw multiple attempts at exploiting the notion of “interdisciplinarity” and positing it as a sign of quality (e.g., in the cases of “interdisciplinary festival”, “interdisciplinary show”). We can clearly observe this tendency when looking through the list of projects funded by the Lithuanian Council for Culture and other regional and international funding bodies.²⁹ Oftentimes project introductions and descriptions use trendy buzzwords yet have no concreteness and clarity. Other cases involved funding proposals for what essentially were multi-disciplinary projects – that is, implying the use of several disciplines that nonetheless did not interact between each other, and thus did not produce a new “interdisciplinary” practice or discipline. Therefore, it was decided to regard – at least on an operational (funding) level – the visual arts from a post-disciplinary conceptual position and, starting with 2022, stop dividing them into disciplinary subsections. This also included interdisciplinary art that essentially outgrew its “native discipline of the visual arts.

Furthermore, the question of post-disciplinarity was one of the key questions raised by the panelists at the “To Research or Not to Research in the Post-disciplinary Academy?”, the first international congress on artistic research held at the Vilnius Academy of Art in 2021 (the very same on which this issue of the AAVV journal is based on). The congress also showed how different disciplines can coexist side by side in artistic research

29 Accessed December 21, 2022, <https://www.ltk.lt/projektu-finansavimas/finansuoti-projektai>.

and, despite their specificities, can contribute to solving the commonly shared questions.³⁰

Trans-disciplinary and Inter-disciplinary Art – a Step Towards Artistic Research: Differences and Similarities

We cannot claim that all interdisciplinary art is or has turned into artistic research, but in interdisciplinary art, we can certainly see many research-based artistic practices as well as their embryos. One of the traits interdisciplinary art shares with artistic research is a project-based, multi-year, and multi-level thinking process because in both interdisciplinary art and AR, projects often take the form of long-lasting creative endeavors that revolve around a single or several concrete problems that are being addressed through artistic practices and methods. That's how doctoral dissertations in the arts can resemble a long-term research-based artistic project.

We can see similarities in their very nature too, as both interdisciplinary art and AR have always been trying to question and test the disciplinary boundaries. We can consider it as the inherent interdisciplinary curiosity.

Where do we position artistic research in this field of trans-disciplinary interaction? Does it belong with science or art? What discipline does it represent? Is it interdisciplinary, multi-disciplinary, or perhaps trans-disciplinary? We have more questions than answers, but in this stage, when the field is still young and in search of its identity, it is important to pick the right questions.

However, it is not prerequisite for an artistic research project to be interdisciplinary. In the case when the research revolves around a concrete question within a single discipline, such a project can be called intra-disciplinary, although it is important to note that artistic research is essentially trans-disciplinary practice that maintains a trans-disciplinary approach toward its research objects.

Mittelstrass defines trans-disciplinarity as a way of carrying out research that concerns common global problems and addresses, for example, the questions of environmental protection, energy or health, while at the

30 See the info on the program, accessed December 21, 2022, <https://www.vda.lt/en/doctoral-studies/congress-2021/programme>.

same time adhering to the formats of scientific knowledge and research.³¹ Trans-disciplinarity comes in handy when the problem is impossible to define or resolve within the limits of a particular subject or discipline. Furthermore, Mittelstrass stresses that trans-disciplinarity differs from intra-disciplinarity in one key respect: the former is an integrative notion/concept and, in the name of a common goal, and it is capable of eliminating the disciplinary isolation and specialization that has emerged during the history of scientific practice.

In trans-disciplinarity, disciplines do lose their dominant status, but they certainly do not get profaned. They rather give up their powers for the sake of collaboration and the sense of joint effort while solving a common problem. This brings trans-disciplinarity closer to artistic research, particularly when the latter is concerned with “wider problems” rather than merely the artist’s own practice and creative methodologies.

According to Mittelstrass, trans-disciplinarity can be defined as “strong interdisciplinarity” – not simply a bunch of disciplines stomping around their territories, but a core-level cooperation capable of changing those territories and shifting their borders.³² It can be seen as a follower of interdisciplinarity, its more up-to-date version that is more in tune with the *zeitgeist*. Such a collaboration can occur when multiple researchers and practices are employed to address a single problem and when the project leads to shifts in the researcher’s worldviews, paradigms, and methodologies on the one hand, and the growth of the “native” disciplines on the other. At the very least, it is a chance for a person to familiarize themselves with the methods used by their colleagues.

If Mittelstrass talks about trans-disciplinary collaboration exclusively in the isolated context of science, then Florian Dombois calls us to leave the zone of scientific knowledge altogether and claims that trans-disciplinarity offers solutions for the real-world problems by letting the academic disciplines interact with the non-academic ones, whatever they were.³³

31 Jürgen Mittelstrass, “From Disciplinarity and Interdisciplinarity to Transdisciplinarity and Back Again”, in *Between / Beyond / Hybrid: New Essays on Transdisciplinarity*, ed. Hartmut von Sass (Zürich: Diaphanes, 2019), 43.

32 Ibid., 42.

33 Florian Dombois, “Art with Some T? A 35-Minute Essay”, in *Between / Beyond / Hybrid: New Essays on Transdisciplinarity*, ed. Hartmut von Sass (Zurich: Diaphanes, 2019), 53–70.

Here he talks about practice-based activity, which is exactly what artists happen to be engaged in.

When thinking about trans-disciplinarity, Dombois introduces the metaphor of the “blind spot”³⁴ and claims that every researcher and discipline have their own “blind spots” and boundaries that hinders the comprehensive understanding of a research problem, which is why both researchers and disciplines should seek them out and see through them. Furthermore, Dombois argues that the prefix “trans-” should indicate our thinking to go beyond the discipline.

Artistic research involves several disciplines and joins them up in a new way; this usually starts taking place at the stage of doctoral studies in the arts. Firstly, this involves artistic practice, then (academic) writing practice (which is not necessarily identified as art), philosophy, and one or several other specific areas of scientific research, or perhaps even “non-scientific” knowledge practices, such as traditional medicine, food conservation, or religious practice.

For example, in their practical work, a photographer employs disciplinary methods and knowledge, while their research might also refer to other scientific discourses, and when presenting the results of their artistic research in writing, they become a practitioner of writing. Should we use the term “writer”? Or perhaps “artist-writer” or “writing practitioner”? Debate about the role of academic writing in art education could be resolved in the following way: if an artist has not already been trained in academic writing – that is, they did not study “academic writing” as a discipline (which is mostly the case) – then they are free to pursue writing as a non-academic practice. Furthermore, an artist collaborates with the entire variety of scientists and their knowledge systems in order to resolve the chosen problem or question. The collaboration usually takes place in either student-tutor or the student-student (e.g., meeting colleagues in conferences) formats. Because doctoral studies in arts combine artistic, scientific, and beyond-academic disciplines, they qualify as trans-disciplinary research.

34 Mika Elo, “Ineffable dispositions”, in *Transpositions: Aesthetico-Epistemic Operators in Artistic Research*, ed. Michael Schwab (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2018), 282–290.

The same approach could be applied to artistic research. This is supported by Mika Elo's definition of artistic research as a transpositional frame that can shift its positions and move from one domain or area to another.³⁵ Here, the prefix "trans-" indicates the capacity to change our understanding of disciplinary isolation.

It is clear that, in doctoral studies in the arts, all attempts at disciplining, or in other words imposing, unfamiliar methods and approaches will be counter-productive. Only a trans-disciplinary approach can help us find the necessary consensus and support artistic research as an emerging research culture.

The Presumptions for Doctoral Studies in the Arts: Artistic Research as a Trans-epistemic Community

Let us once again try to determine which traditional scientific discipline artistic research is closest to. Finnish theorists Hannula, Suoranta, and Vadén conclude that artistic research is closest to the model of the humanities.³⁶ They claim that the methods of the natural sciences are rarely applied here, unless as research objects. However, if we consider the experimental nature of artistic research and practice-based methods, we see that artistic research can be seen as close to the natural sciences. This is evident from the large number of doctoral study programs for artists offered by universities of technology and the natural sciences (for example, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in New York or KTH Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm). Both artists and natural science researchers get their hands dirty in practice and draw conclusions from their experimental practice.

If we agree with the aforementioned Finnish researchers, artistic research has a lot in common with the methods of social science, but insofar as it is related to artistic practice and is oriented towards society and cultural artifacts, it bears similarity with the humanities. Here we can conclude that artistic research has the same methodological flaws and advantages as the humanities. As the ability of a person to research within the given tradition and find their place in the wider context, scholarship is just as important as the ability to think. While the humanities deal with linguistic

35 Ibid., 68.

36 Hannula et al., *Artistic Research Methodology: Narrative, Power, and the Public, Critical Qualitative Research*, 59.

and writerly skills, artistic research employs other media too, and the two areas become closer only when there comes a time to engage in (academic) writing. These skills and the criteria that come with them are part and parcel of the artistic practice itself: it is impossible to clearly define what is a piece of good writing in the humanities, just as it is impossible to define what is good writing or rendering in artistic research. Good arguments can be recognized but never prescribed or predetermined. In earlier days art education (and in some art schools still today) were naturally inclined towards the manufacturing workshop model because working with or along the master is the best way to acquire those precious skills that get shaped by a long-term practice. However, all attempts at combining scientific research and time in the workshop are usually doomed because those two areas are based on two radically different ideals. The scientific ideal dictates that “masters” are responsible for their activity and ensure the transparency when transferring their knowledge and skills. This way, the tradition, instead of being set out in stone, is cultivated in the most articulated and open way possible. From this point of view, artistic research appears to be an unusual conglomerate of manufacturing workshops and a whole range of epistemic communities (humanities, natural sciences, social sciences, etc.) because its roots lie in the workshop model that keeps evolving towards being more open and self-critical, while the artistic research itself is carried out similarly to humanities research, except for the fact that when it comes to presenting the research results, it might leave the domain of language or borrow the methods from social sciences.

It should be clear by now that artistic research cannot be fully grounded in any of the existing traditions of research because it always tends to draw from the other areas and include new elements. The methods that can be used in artistic research depend on an individual “workshop” or field of art. Therefore, the phenomenon of artistic research should be regarded only as a subject of trans-epistemic community comprised of the open-minded members of many other disciplines and workshops.

Here we can see that the relation between artistic research and other disciplines can be analyzed from the perspective of the epistemic, practice,³⁷

37 Etienne Wenger, *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning and identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

and interpretational communities. In our case, the first type seems to be the most relevant one. The epistemic community³⁸ can be understood as a group of people engaged in sharing their knowledge, beliefs, and opinions about the world. The scientific or artistic community can be seen as the largest group that contains many other epistemic micro-communities.

This might appear similar with the case of old workshops or guilds, but in our case, people are brought into communities not by a specific material or a discipline but by a way of thinking. Apart from belonging to the community of some particular practice, artist-researchers are primarily members of the respective epistemic community.

By “community”, we mean a group of people that share the same values and worldviews. The values involve cultural, ontological, and epistemological beliefs as our modes of interacting with the world.

Over time, the academic research community and the communities of various practices have developed their own understanding about their activities and goals, and now with the emergence of “artistic research”, we have to deal with the clashing dissonance of views and general lack of coherence.

Different communities have different goals and conventions (often based on different values) regarding certain practices, and when their methods fail to deliver, or when someone breaks the rules, tensions arise between the epistemes and the communities they represent.

Artistic research is an intersection of many epistemic communities, and it surely takes some effort for them to agree. Until we have a clearly defined epistemic community of artistic research (in some countries and research traditions, some clarity has already been achieved due to the several decades of continuing activities [e.g., UK, Austria, and Finland], while others are still catching up [e.g., Germany and Latvia]), it will be comprised of the members of other communities that bring their own epistemic insights and understanding about how should their research be carried out and assessed.

One thing is clear: if we agree that artistic research is trans-disciplinary, and the artist-researcher has to draw on various other disciplines and

38 Oxford reference, accessed January 6, 2022, <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095755941>.

(non-academic) practices while pursuing a common goal, then the (trans-) epistemic communities will have less difficulty communicating and will abstain from drawing the artist-researcher into the territories they might find miry and unfamiliar.

In order to establish itself, does artistic research have to clash, fight, and compete with various epistemic communities? Is it really possible for a new community to emerge in these difficult times? Perhaps it would suffice for artistic research to be defined (nurtured) by a non-binary (belonging neither to art nor science/research) trans-epistemic community that transcends the limits of traditional epistemic communities? The prefix “trans-” also implies the convergence of not only the artistic and scientific communities, but the communities of everyday practice (such as field trips and walking,³⁹ crafts,⁴⁰ traditional medicine, yoga, spiritual and religious practices,⁴¹ shamanism, and everything that goes beyond art and scientific knowledge). As we know today, when making art and carrying out research, artists make use of many different extra-academic practices. In some doctoral programs, students have two supervisors, and in some cases one of them comes from the arts community (an established artist can supervise even while outside academia), while the other comes from the sciences (a scientific researcher). Sometimes doctoral students work with consultants from a particular practical area relevant to the research project, thus further expanding the trans-epistemic community that is pursuing a common goal.

On Our Way Out the Tangles of X-Disciplinarity

In summary of this discussion, we could argue that artistic research is a trans-disciplinary activity carried out by bringing various academic, scientific, artistic, and practical disciplines together for integral research on a specific question. Here we disregard the disciplinary hierarchies and

- 39 Vitalij Červiakov, “Walking as pretext and space in contemporaneity” (doctoral thesis), accessed January 6, 2022, <https://talpykla.elaba.lt/elaba-fedora/objects/elaba:125240232/datastreams/MAIN/content>.
- 40 Ieva Bertašiūtė-Grosbaha, “What the woman artist’s hands know: Material intelligence and tacit knowledge in creative practice” (doctoral thesis), accessed January 6, 2022, <https://talpykla.elaba.lt/elaba-fedora/objects/elaba:115652584/datastreams/MAIN/content>.
- 41 Saulius Leonavičius, “Vydūnas’ Diet 2.0” (doctoral thesis), accessed January 6, 2022, <https://talpykla.elaba.lt/elaba-fedora/objects/elaba:70280403/datastreams/MAIN/content>.

powers and aim for focused research on a particular real-world problem while employing all the relevant methods of artistic practice and whatever the supplementary methods from other research areas we deem necessary.

For a long time, in both the arts and sciences, specialization meant further isolation from other disciplines, which is why the trend of interdisciplinarity (and later trans-disciplinarity) helped everyone to find common ground and pursue a common goal by establishing the links between different disciplines, practices, and their research cultures.

Of course, in trans-disciplinary work, we also encounter the problem of mastering other (non-native) disciplines, but we shall assume that during doctoral studies in the arts it can be resolved with the help of a trans-disciplinary team: the doctoral student and their two supervisors (in the context of Lithuania or other country which support group supervising or advising), one of which is often an experienced scientist, and the other an established artist; they both are responsible for the research and creative parts of the dissertation respectively. This way, we can witness the emergence of a trans-epistemic community that manages to combine their different knowledges and practices, thus creating new bridges between disciplines.

In the context of the last few decades, we can see that the artistic research emerged from both interdisciplinary “movement” in scientific research along with the subsequent “softening” of disciplinary boundaries and the post-disciplinary tendencies in visual arts. They were most visible in interdisciplinary art (at least in the Lithuanian context) – it allowed artists to escape the boundaries of a single discipline and expand its expressive range (skills and trades). In Lithuania, along with interdisciplinary art came the artistic transformations described by the Western theorists in the 1970-80s. At first referred to as “discipline in an expanded field”, later they became known as post-disciplinary or post-media practices.

The visual arts saw a gradual demise of disciplinary logic (in both creation and assessment), followed by the general orientation towards the problem and discourse. Similar changes occurred in the performative arts too, although these changes would require a separate discussion.

Furthermore, a similar tendency was noticed when scientific research started involving multiple disciplines in order to solve complex problems.

The changes in visual arts that started in the 1960-70s were likely inspired by the post-disciplinary thinking, developed largely by the humanities, particularly the critical theories. However, this claim would require extensive research in its own right.

The establishment or at least partial institutionalization of artistic research as doctoral studies in arts (third-cycle higher education) – in both an academic and practical sense – was made possible by the desire among the scientific and artistic disciplines to transcend their own limits and collaborate. Along with openness and curiosity, these are the inherent traits of both interdisciplinary art and interdisciplinary science. However, the discussion should be carried out further on what the status of artistic research is in contemporary academia. Can it be defined as a “discipline”, a “research mode”, or a “paradigm”?

We also see how artistic research unifies two different approaches: the discipline as practice (often in the context of art), and the discipline as a particular knowledge-producing community (often in the context of science). Lastly, the trans-disciplinary perspective would allow us to abolish the contradiction and artistic research would become a ground for a cumulative and organic interaction between different disciplinary traditions.

Received — 05 01 2022

Bibliography

- Abbot, Andrew Delano. *Chaos of Disciplines*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001.
- Baker, George. "Photography's Expanded Field". In *October* 114 (Fall 2005), 120–140.
- Bakke, Gretchen, and Marina Peterson, eds. *Between Matter and Method: Encounters in Anthropology and Art*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017.
- Becher, Tony, and Paul Trowler. *Academic Tribes and Territories: Intellectual Enquiry and the Culture of Disciplines*. Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2011.
- Gheorghiu, Dragos, and Theodor Barth, eds. *Artistic Practices and Archaeological Research*. Oxford: Archaeopress, 2019.
- Biggs, Michael, and Karlsson Henrik, eds. *The Routledge Companion to Research in the Arts*. New York: Routledge, 2011.
- Chandler, James, and Arnold I. Davidson, eds. "The Fate of Disciplines". In *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 35, no. 4 (Summer 2009).
- Dombois, Florian. "Art with Some T? A 35-Minute Essay". In *Between / Beyond / Hybrid: New Essays on Transdisciplinarity*. Ed. Hartmut von Sass, 53–70. Zurich: Diaphanes, 2019.
- Elo, Mika. "Ineffable Dispositions". In *Transpositions. Aesthetico-Epistemic Operators in Artistic Research*. Ed. Michael Schwab, 281–95. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2018.
- Jenseniuss, A. R. *Disciplinarity: intra, cross, multi, inter, trans*. Accessed 27/11/2021. <https://www.arj.no/2012/03/12/disciplinarity-2/>.
- Geertz, Clifford. "Blurred Genres: The Refiguration of Social Thought". In *The American Scholar*, vol. 49, no. 2 (Spring 1980), 165–179.
- Hannula, Mika; Juha Suoranta, Tere Vadén, eds. *Artistic research Methodology: Narrative, Power and the Public*. New York: Peter Lang, 2014.
- Higgins, Dick. "Intermedia". In *From The Something Else Newsletter*, vol. 1, no. 1 (February 1966). Accessed 21/12/2021. <https://dickhiggins.org/intermedia>
- Loveless, Natalie. *How to make art at the end of the world : a manifesto for research-creation*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2019.
- Michelkevičius, Vytautas. *Postdisciplininis leksikonas*. Lietuvos tarpdisciplinio meno kūrėjų sąjunga, 2017.
- Mittelstrass, Jürgen. "From Disciplinarity and Interdisciplinarity to Transdisciplinarity and Back Again". In *Between / Beyond / Hybrid: New Essays on Transdisciplinarity*. Ed. Hartmut von Sass, 25–42. Zürich: Diaphanes, 2019.
- Sol LeWitt. "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art". In *Artforum* 5, no. 10 (1967), 79–83.
- Slager, Henk. *The Pleasure of Research*. Helsinki: Finnish Academy of Fine Arts, 2011.
- „Epistemic Community”. In *Oxford Reference*. Accessed 27/12/2021. <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095755941>
- Krauss, Rosalind. "Sculpture in the Expanded Field". *October* 8 (Spring 1979), 30–44.
- . *A trip on the North Sea: Art in the Age of the post-medium condition*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2000.
- Kuhn, T. S. *The structure of scientific revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962.
- Veselá, Lenka. "Artistic Research as Academic Borderlands". In *Journal for Artistic Research* (2021). Accessed 24/07/2021. <https://www.jar-online.net/en/artistic-research-academic-borderlands>.

Santrauka

Nuo tarpdiscipliniškumo link transdiscipliniškumo mene ir moksle: meninio tyrimo ir meno doktorantūros prielaidos

Vytautas Michelkevičius, Aldis Gedutis

Reikšminiai žodžiai: discipliniškumas, mokslo filosofija, tarpdisciplininis menas, transdisciplininė veikla (tyrimas), transdiscipliniškumas moksle, tarpdiscipliniškumas mene, postdiscipliniškumas, episteminės bendruomenės, disciplinos ir gildijos.

Šiame straipsnyje keliama santykio tarp meninio tyrimo ir įvairių discipliniškumo formų problema ir siekiama apibrėžti meno doktorantūros prielaidas. Tai atliekama sprendžiant išsikeltus uždavinius: atskirai apibrėžiant tarpdiscipliniškumą mene ir moksle, ieškant sąsajų tarp jų, bandant pažvelgti, kaip situaciją keičia postdiscipliniškumas ir transdiscipliniškumas. Galiausiai aptariamos meninio tyrimo galimybės tapti meno ir mokslo praktikų jungiamąja erdve.

Šis straipsnis atskleidžia, kaip Lietuvoje ir aplinkiniuose kontekstuose kito tarpdiscipliniškumo samprata ir kokioje santykio su mokslu ir menu stadijoje ji atsидūrė.

Straipsnyje analizuojama, kaip meninis tyrimas, nebūdamas disciplina, gali tapti meno doktorantūros pagrindu, drauge išlaisvindamas meno doktorantūrą nuo humanitarinių mokslų doktorantūrų tradicijų ir disciplinų. Be to, keliama prielaida, kad meno doktorantūra yra transdisciplininės prigimties ir gali tarpusavyje suderinti skirtingų tradicijų doktorantūrų požymius (ne tik humanitarinių, bet ir socialinių ar net gamtos mokslų). Drauge nagrinėjamas klausimas, kiek meno doktorantai turi ir gali sekti kitų disciplinų doktorantūrų tradicijomis (menotyra ar filosofija, tai iki šiol daryta dažniausiai), o kiek konstruoti savo kelius, kad ir kokie multidisciplininiai brūzgynai jiems trukdytų. Postdiscipliniškumo logika ir galimybės bendradarbiauti čia tampa vienu iš svarbiausių akcentų. Galiausiai iškeliami mintis, kad meninis tyrimas galėtų tapti meno doktorantūros pagrindu ir lygiagrečiai tyrimo paradigma kitoms tyrimų tradicijoms.