



In the presentation of his PhD project, Bjørn Blikstad states that a possible reason for the applied arts for ceasing to interest itself for the crafts, may be explained by the incapability to situate artistic choices beyond its own subject. Kurt Schwitters' work exemplified this ambivalence. [Urlauten & Merzbau](#).

The logic of the [radicant](#) is to work, move and continue the work: the ensuing disconnection still communicates if there is a *site*. It re/pairs. Site-specific means communicative in the sense that each task works on defining a partly shared problem. So that it makes sense to ask: [which problem are you working on?](#) Even as the 'problem' defines as a *conglomerate* encounter between tasks and occasions. In some aspects *declared*, in other aspects *undeclared*. The multiplication that takes place *between* sites and *within* sites, however, is clearly in need of [precision](#).

At one end of the spectrum the problem **p** is *designed* in *both* its declared and undeclared aspects. At the other end, the problem falls apart, doesn't define, the add-on of tasks is largely *accidental* -**p**. Some artists, like Kurt Schwitters, have been working out the parameters of such spectra, featuring Merzbau (MERZ, let us remember, derives from Commerzbank) playing the boundaries to -**p** while working conjointly with **p**. The former having a more obvious [critical impact](#) in creating awareness of the new forms following in the commercial trail, than his landscapes from Scotland.

Here, knowledge of the context is clearly a determining factor of how art at the edge of chaos, will hit and impact. Testifying to the dependency on a growing corpus of theory that we have seen cropping up alongside modern art. In making this observation the point is clearly not to invite a return to figurative art (which is more self-explanatory and "pretty" than the bulk of modernist expressions). It is rather that the sum of the art-work and the work pledged to access it, has promoted dependencies between professionals and educations that are quite *different* in path/goal.

A 3<sup>rd</sup> possibility is pointed out: the possibility that *artistic research* will promote generations of practitioners working *jointly* on *producing* and *accessing* art-work. The reflection submitted before—and during—the PhD *viva* in artistic research is largely targets a form of *desired* access, which is an *integral* part of the work. In sum, the compound achievement of the candidate lies in a balance between a *production* and its reflective access; featuring essentially its *design*. Significantly fostering a dependency of artistic research on design (in this expanded sense). The point being to take stock of the situation (and not festooning design).



Kurt Schwitters (1942): Lake District Landscape. Photo: [Lakeland Arts](#)

A variable of this turn is arguably the reliance on, importance and quality of a theory that is indigenous to art-work, in artistic research. What concerns us here is not whether the theoretical level grazes a *foundation course*-level—or, an undergraduate

level—but whether the PhD-candidate seeks an *accountability* for their project, or alternatively do not seek to argue/demonstrate their project but *extend* it unto professional arenas where it applies beyond the primary level of the assignments of the PhD project proposal, as *artistic propositions*.

The latter option is less about arguing for the value balance struck in matching a 3-4 year *salary* with accountable *work*. Proposing an alternative, it aims at exposing the potential of [transposing aesthetico-epistemic](#) operators developed in their work, unto areas/domains *beyond* it. This movement within and beyond the artistic *core*, features a potential of spanning and initiating *strategic* collaborations on other arenas, and also spanning the *environmental* affordances of what they have achieved through their work. In fact, this possibility may help define our present errand.

The two-step of moving **1) within** and **2) beyond** the work—instead of seeking to *square the circle* of artistic research—moves to the *core* of what has been achieved, to research for a tested potential *beyond* that horizon. Without going *within* there will be *no* heritage to constitute a *provenance*, as the work moves on (beyond its initial confines). From failure of moving *beyond*, artistic research will likely be trapped by the circle of its own legitimation. This will work only as long as there are policies for subventing artistic research. And yields no theory of interest beyond this circle.

On the other hand, the efforts at *compressing* the outcome in a *synthesis* will not only move unto the *core* of the work, but will also reach *beyond* it: thus conceived, artistic research will be on a journey beyond the already existing arenas where it is convertible (BlackBox, WhiteCube, workshops, conferences and fairs). Siri Hermansen at the National Library of Norway, in connection with the §112-series (the environmental paragraph of the Norwegian constitution). Ane Thon Knutsen at the University Library along with literary theorists. Bjørn Blikstad in a *homing*-project.

There are likely a number of other important examples of the mushrooming and proliferation of *sites* where artistic research makes art-work convertible in aspects that are unpredicted by the above-mentioned spaces. Insisting on this tendency beyond the economic rationality of multiplying job-opportunities for professionals with a PhD-degree, is of the essence. For instance, what is the design of hosting a *vernissage* for a custom-made kitchen sideboard in someone's home (besides underscoring the original meaning of the term as a *private* view before *public* exhibition)?

In his homage to Igory Mansotti, PhD candidate Bjørn Blikstad could readily be seen as the sort of application that one would expect of a professional with a background in *furniture design*. But there is *no* PhD in furniture design. There is only a PhD in *artistic research* at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts (KHIO). So, how would we define the application of the outcomes from the assignments PhD fellows give themselves, if it is not in their field of specialisation? How do we

conceive this searching *within* to move *beyond*, which defines artistic research when set on a journey (or, what is traditionally called *theoria* [[Thompson, 2011](#)])? A scholarly journey.



If we locate a work **X** (homage to Igory Mansotti) between its designed **p** and accidental **-p** dimensions, the strategic collaboration **a** with *HULIAS* and the environmental pledge **b** to *reuse* defines a cross-pressure in which the homage establishes/defines the resident principle in the above kitchen, in declared “ ” and undeclared **-(-)** aspects.

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If the [HULIAS](#) gallery is a strategic partner **a** for the project, the environmental profile **b** is warranted by the re-use of an old chest of drawers (from the apothecary of an old hospital pharmacy) while the new wooden elements are leftovers. It is within the tensional space between **a** and **b**, that hosts the candidate's moving within and beyond his PhD project [Level up](#). The idea that the work is in no way derived from these is the intended ‘proof of the pudding’ warranting the vernissage. In the sense that the work is given the chance to set its *own premises*; given the chance of articulating in the cross-pressure of **a** and **b**.

That is, the chance of reformulating what [Norman Potter](#) called *resident principles*. These are site-specific, to be sure. But while Potter sought resident principles to *respect* these and find them in the work itself “where they belong”, Bjørn Blikstad establishes the ‘resident principles’ for what is *already* there: the older *and* the newer elements in the room alike. With the possibility that artistic research does not set the work on a journey, but moves within and beyond the work, to set the *space itself* on journey.