Editorial: Research in Art and Experience

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This special issue has been edited based on presentations given at the two Research in Art and Experience (RAE) open seminars held at Aalto University, in Finland, on 26 March 2018¹ and 29 April 2019.² The seminars were organised in collaboration with the doctoral programme of the Aalto University School of Art, Design and Architecture, the Aalto Experience Platform³ and The Finnish Experience Research Network.⁴ The Aalto Experience Platform is an open community of experience research, combining scientific, artistic, business, and technological approaches to human experience. The Finnish network of experience research brings together researchers from versatile disciplines from Finnish Universities such as the University of Jyväskylä, University of Oulu, University of Tampere, Sibelius Academy and University of
Lapland. We would also like to thank the Jenny and Antti Wihuri Foundation for funding the seminars.

The demand for the seminars came through our work as researchers, artists and pedagogues where we often found ourselves bridge-builders between artistic/art-based research and other disciplines in the human and natural sciences. For example art practitioners who work in universities often emphasise experientiality as an important element of the methodological steering and content of their research. But at the same time, many researchers in art haven’t considered bringing their work into the context of experience research. On the other hand, for some branches in experience research, it is a new discussion to posit experience or experientiality as anything other than an object or material for research.

With these open seminars we wanted to give an opportunity to discuss artistic and art-based research as a developing but yet distinctive approach and possibility for experience research. At the same time, we wanted to challenge researchers and professionals in art to introduce and critically reflect on their work with experiences in a way that is accessible for researchers of experience from a variety of research traditions. We were happy to have a multidisciplinary audience, with a total of 210 registered participants.

Together these two seminars offered 19 talks from presenters at different stages of their academic careers from doctoral students, through post-doc researchers, lecturers to professors from Aalto University, the University of Arts Helsinki and Tampere University from different arts: visual art, music, dance, literature and performance. The invited cutting-edge keynote speakers also presented seminal ways to combine multidisciplinary aspects to discuss questions of art, research and experience, Dr. Alex Arteaga\(^5\) (UdK Berlin) in 2018 and Prof. Alva Noë\(^6\) (Berkeley, CU) in 2019.

After the seminars, we asked the presenters to develop their talks into articles to continue and promote the interesting discourse the seminar had made possible. The peer-reviewed sub-
missions for this issue have gone through one round of critical peer reviews. This special issue now includes seven articles in which the authors present their research work and themes as examples of how professionals in art employ, challenge and assess experience and its role in contemporary research design.

Heidi Fast writes about how her artistic work, non-verbal vocal practice, turned into a research methodology in the context of psychiatric healthcare. She explores how the shared vocal practice modifies the ways in which participants experience the boundaries between each other. Tomi Slotte Dufva and Mikko Dufva reflect on the assumptions and beliefs about society, economy and the world that the inevitability of the coming AI era seems to entail. They introduce the concept of digi-grasping as a method to bring embodied knowledge into discussions about AI. Annette Arlander explores the use of a video essay, asking whether combining a theoretical discussion on feminist and new materialist notions as a voice-over with a compilation of videos could provide a more experiential and effective approach to sharing research. Kirsi Heimonen circles around the notion of silence as ungraspable, although lived in the flesh, by letting language move and resonate something of the experience of moving in the context of a somatic practice. Ira A. Virtanen and Jarkko Toikkanen have co-created a dialogue which reflects on the origins of the book, Kokemuksen tutkimus VI: Kokemuksen käsite ja käyttö. The authors edited the book in 2018 which brought seventeen authors together to define experience and argue for the sake of words in the experience. Leena Rouhiainen’s text unfolds a phenomenology of the alien and pathic experience in relation to art and research practice in which the singularity of artistic processes and interest in knowledge production entail a tense relationship. Denise Ziegler argues for the recognition of experiences that did not take place, and presents a research process where she uses her artistic practice to recollect and restage the fictional event her experience evoked together with human-constructed structures and elements of nature in urban space.
To conclude, what makes this issue special is the way in which experience becomes thematised by bringing the work of these very different kinds of professionals, practices and interests in arts together. By doing this, we are not framing the authors under pre-meditated given political topics or concepts. Rather we want to ask how art and experience are interlinked in research and how they are interlinking different fields of speciality, procedures, materials, mediums and means of communicating as well as audiences and contexts. We also encouraged the authors to write about research work in which relevance is above all experiential. This approach has created a variety of articles which together bring forth a research attitude each of the authors seems to emanate and develop in their own way, when working and researching in the actuality of experience.

Notes

1 http://kuvataidekasvatus.fi/2018/03/16/rae-2018-open-seminar-on-intertwinings-of-artistic-research-and-experience-research/
2 https://experience.aalto.fi/rae2019/
3 https://experience.aalto.fi
4 https://kokemus.wordpress.com
5 https://www.udk-berlin.de/en/people/detail/person/show/alex-arteaga/
6 http://www.alvanoe.com
7 https://lauda.ualapland.fi/handle/10024/63420