

Outi Koivisto

MA Student

Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture

Email: outi.e.koivisto@gmail.com

## Artistic and Arts-Based Methodologies in Art Education Master's Theses in the Aalto University During 2010-2015

In my master's thesis I analyze art education master's theses that use arts-based and artistic research, which have been made in the Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture during 2010-2015. During that period, there were made total of 219 master's theses, 81 of which employ artistic research methods. The use of artistic research is often justified by stating that it is a different way of knowing. What does this different way of knowing mean? My research questions are: What does the data reveal about the traditions and the ways of conducting artistic research? What kind of topics, key concepts, and theories are in use in the theses? What kinds of conceptions of knowledge are they based on? How is knowledge being produced through art?

I have thematized the theses according to their topics and central concepts. My research shows that research topics, concepts and the literature used in the theses are often homogenous. I have composed a fictional master's thesis which exemplifies the typical qualities and characteristics of the theses. This fictional thesis serves as an object of my analysis. The common concepts emerging from the data include artistic process, experience, embodiment, tacit knowledge, and the difficulty of writing about or articulating them. The theses often adhere to a hermeneutic and/or phenomenological approach. I critically examine these conventions of artistic research using the methodological literature employed in the theses.

My research shows that there are clearly distinguishable themes and similar literature used in these theses. Artistic research methods are seen in a narrow sense, typically including producing artworks and arranging an exhibition. It is common among the theses to research one's artistic process, which often includes reflection on one's different roles, such as that of a teacher and an artist. The art education master's theses using artistic methods incorporate,

on the one hand, methodological literature from the doctoral program of the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts from the early 2000s, and on the other hand, an art education discourse which is influenced by North American arts-based research.