

## History, development & concepts in Finnish Arts-based research

Annina Suominen & Mira Kallio-Tavin

In this presentation we describe historical developments and current perspectives to the Finnish Arts-based research formulated within the academic community of art education scholars at the Aalto University. Much of the reflections and articulation presented have been formulated in dialogic relationships with faculty and doctoral students from other Finnish universities, especially in collaboration with the University of the Arts, Helsinki, and the University of Lapland, Rovaniemi. In addition, many similarities between the evolution of Finnish views and practices of ABR and AR research have taken shape compared to the developments of similar research conducted in the United States and Canada. However, it should be noted that the roots of arts-based and artistic research practices in Finland are equally established within their local context and not a result of or reaction to the developments in other countries. Whilst the timeframe is somewhat similar, and criteria and requirements mostly alike, these developments evolved partially separately. The presenters discuss the particular characteristics and aims of arts-based research in the academic community of art education, specifically in the Department of Art at Aalto University with emphasis on the presenters contextualized perspectives.

The presentation begins with the presenters personal experiences from the early development of arts-based research from 1990's and early 2000 and progresses towards the present time. In addition to the refigurations and reconceptualizations that have taken place over the last few decades it is essential that the formulation of thoughts and ideals is understood in relation to the related discourses and disciplines. We will discuss the theoretical traditions and perspectives and their philosophical background. Partnered with the historical and contextual positions we describe the foundational ideas, potentiality, and challenges of the new methodology, such as how artistic, visual, multi-sensorial and practice-based knowledge have been difficult to articulate, especially in terms of what sort of knowledge they formulate or introduce to research. The presentation also explores how this kind of knowledge was traditionally excluded from scientific definitions of research as something too vague to pin down or unreachable for sufficient articulation, measurement, and validation. We will arrive at the proposal that suggests that through art practice and by embracing artistic orientations to research and knowledge, ABR and AR researchers can touch, create openings, and gain access to her/his topic on a different level than just engaging in non-arts-related research and writing about it.

For the current emerging perspectives and principles we will propose and argue ten statements:

- 1) Arts-based research is foundationally and essentially interdisciplinary in its methodological orientation
- 2) Openness and intentional rejection of fixed definitions is substantial to arts-based research
- 3) Artistry and art knowledge, -understanding, -processes, and communication are essentially and meaningfully present in all aspects and stages of the research process
- 4) Interplay between insights/closeness and distancing is required

- 5) Immediacy & retrospect create an essential balance
- 6) There is a strong presence of researcher(s) professional and personal inclinations, preferences, orientations, and practices in defining what the research process, methods, and presentation of knowledge looks and feels like and communicates
- 7) Institutional production and presentation of artwork is not the goal for ABR
- 8) Arts-based research is 'born' out of deep interest and passion for an encounter, relationality, sensation, phenomenon or issue, rather than a quest to answer a question or address a problem
- 9) Arts-based research is analytical and critically/holistically reflexive throughout
- 10) Arts-based research utilizes many 'languages' and modes of communication