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UNDERSTANDING INFORMATION-SHARING OF ARTIST-RESEARCHERS: EMERGING THEMES

Abstract

This poster describes the research design and identifies emerging themes of a work-in-progress dissertation study, titled *Understanding information-sharing of artist-researchers*¹. The doctoral research study will provide an account and analysis of how artist-researchers share (or do not share) information among themselves and others by exploring the conditions that encourage and discourage sharing. The study considers what it means to share and be shared with, and brings attention to obscured aspects of the research process.

Introduction

The ongoing dissertation research considers uncovers currently hidden aspects of the research process by investigating the information-sharing of artist-researchers engaged in research-creation (RC)—a methodological approach that brings together creative and academic research procedures and processes². In particular, I examine how artist-researchers in a university context share information as they engage with artistic methodologies and methods, negotiate academia, and conceptualize expertise. Through qualitative, exploratory approaches—including semi-structured interviews, photographs, and arts-based autoethnography—I seek to understand the ways in which artist-researchers share information—including artifacts that are materially tangible (e.g., sculpture) or ephemeral (e.g. live performance), as well as intangible elements (e.g., knowledge, beliefs, opinions)—and their motivations for doing so. The poster features the emerging themes from results of Phase 1 study, with particular focus on *who* is sharing and *with whom*.

Information-sharing + non-sharing

Information-sharing involves a wide range of behaviours, from intentional sharing to accidental encountering (Talja, 2002; Savolainen, 2017; Sonnenwald, 2006). Conversely, non-sharing is an absence that can illuminate an intentional withholding or the non-existence of information (Talja, 2002; Almeahadi et al., 2014). Exploring the boundaries of information-

¹ In the context of this study artist-researcher includes individuals who self-identify as enmeshing artistic and scholarly approaches to research.

² In 2003, Canada's federal funding agency, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), responded to calls from Canadian researchers who felt that their research did not fit within existing granting categories by developing a research-creation category (Picard-Aitken & Bertrand, 2008). SSHRC (2021) defines research-creation (RC) as: "an approach to research that combines creative and academic research practices, and supports the development of knowledge and innovation through artistic expression, scholarly investigation, and experimentation." However, this definition, and indeed a funding bodies' authority to generate it, is debated.

sharing and non-sharing can also be informative regarding what is appropriate for sharing and with whom (cf. Christen, 2012).

This focus on sharing and non-sharing draws attention to the private labour of knowledge generation and reflection, the translation work throughout the research process (e.g., visual artistic practice to textual articulations), and the social aspects of research. Examining information-sharing activities provides an avenue to identify sharing dynamics, including *what* is shared, by and with *whom*, and in which *locations* the sharing takes place (Pilerot, 2012). This understanding, in turn, turns attention towards the human interactions that form the foundation of research work.

Artist-researchers + Research-creation

Exploring the boundary spanning practices of artist-researchers is a particularly fruitful context to learn about information-sharing. Research-creation has an existing focus on challenging the authority and prevalence of text as a way of generating and sharing research and draws on emergent and exploratory means of research by involving diverse forms of knowledge including embodied and sensory ways of knowing (Loveless, 2019; Loveless, 2020; Chapman & Sawchuk, 2012).

There is an ongoing debate around who should be able to attempt research-creation: Is it exclusively for artists to draw on arts-based methods throughout the research process or artistic outputs of research? By gaining understanding about the information-sharing of artist-researchers, we can learn about the complexity of navigating the multiple roles they occupy (i.e., researcher, and/or artist) and how/if that influences information-sharing activities. By asking questions about information-sharing of artist-researchers, this doctoral research has potential to inform, and be informed by, creative practice, and contribute to ongoing discussion of whether arts-based methods exist exclusively for artists.

Previous scholarship in Information Science range from the information seeking of artists (Hemmig, 2009), personal information management of visual artists (Hellmich & Dinneen, 2023), to using arts-based methods (e.g., write-and-draw technique) to explore concepts of information (Hartel, 2014). Thinking with art making as documentation (Gorichanaz, 2017) and the connection between the development of Information Science and fine art disciplines (Berryman, 2018) are also explored. However, previous work has not studied artist-researchers practicing RC, but rather studying hobbyists (Kolyvas & Kostagiolas, 2023), professionals (Hemmig, 2009), or art world contexts (Berryman, 2018). Though some scholars have examined artists working in post-secondary education (cf. Hemmig, 2009, Cowan, 2004), none were looking at artist-researchers and their particular information-sharing activities.

Methodology + Research design

This project uses exploratory research design, which welcomes emergent approaches—reflective of RC principles—and requires regular re-examination of approach and framing of exploration. The research questions explored in this study include: What information-sharing

(and non-sharing) activities are present in artist-researchers' research process? What is shared? Who is sharing? Where is the location of sharing (i.e., material conditions)?

This project unfolds over 2 phases, though the poster is focused on Phase 1. Phase 1 consists of semi-structured interviews of 10 self-described artist-researchers and take place in artist-researchers' studios. These may be spaces in institutions, rented rooms, bedrooms, shared spaces, artist-run collectives, etc. (Jacob & Grabner, 2010). Using a polaroid camera, the participants and I take photographs of their studio space throughout the interview to share with me as part of the data collection. Through the audio-recorded interviews I explore and gather experiential narrative, material, and stories or anecdotes that may serve to achieve a richer and deeper understanding of information-sharing of artist-researchers. The poster focuses particularly on the information-sharing aspect of *those who are sharing—by and with whom*. The question of *those who are sharing* involves consideration of the social relations (i.e. commonalities including “common interests, mutual beliefs, and shared norms including motivational forces and incentives” Pilerot, 2012, p. 574). The poster will explore discussions including friendship, tensions with institutional requirements, and notions of belonging. As the work is evolving and dynamic in nature, sharing the preliminary findings in poster format invites the opportunity to benefit from conversations and input by others in the Information Science field.

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