

Editorial: Practices of Phenomenological and Artistic Research

Alex Arteaga, University of the Arts Helsinki, Finland
Email: info@alex-arteaga-net

Emma Cocker, Nottingham Trent University, UK
Email: emma.cocker@ntu.ac.uk

Introduction

How do the commonalities between practices of artistic and phenomenological research manifest? How can phenomenological research be accomplished in artistic media and by artistic means? How can artistic research extend the scope of phenomenology as a field of research practices? In turn, how can phenomenology contribute to further develop artistic research practices? This Special Issue explores existing and possible connections between two different sets of practices: phenomenological research practice and artistic research practice. On the one hand, both sets of practices share a basic aspect: they approach their object of research as phenomena, that is, through their phenomenal presences. On the other hand, these sets of practice are configured by different forms of action developed in different media — among many others, written or oral language, drawing, video, photography, sound or body movement. This Special Issue is understood as a continuation of the work initiated by *Through Phenomena Themselves*, one of the research cells within the Research Pavilion #3, a catalyst of emerging cooperations in the field of artistic research hosted by the University of the Arts Helsinki in the framework of the Venice Biennale, 2019 (www.researchpavilion.fi). *Through Phenomena Themselves* was conceived to explore new possibilities of mutual transformation between artistic and phenomenological research practices. Reengaging the questions outlined in the original call, alongside the challenge of “How to *publish practices*?”, this Editorial text takes the form of a research artifact resulting from the activation of a practice. Or rather, it crystallizes an affinity between two language-based artistic research practices presented within this Special Issue: Alex Arteaga’s practice of *Exploratory Essay Writing* and Emma Cocker’s practice of *Conversation-as-Material*. The article is wholly comprised of transcript material generated through a series of conversations between Arteaga and Cocker. The original conversation transcripts were distilled gradually through a combination of marking and redaction, where the gaps of omitted words are left intact, in turn heightening attention to the agency of both the fragment and of the spacing itself. As with many of the other contributions to this Special Issue, a parallel attempt is made to *show* the practice itself through an “exposition” on the Research Catalogue, an online platform for publishing artistic research, which can be encountered here: <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/1582275/1582276>

An
aesthetic dialogue: not to elaborate discursively but to see how
these issues resonate. Resonance or reflection — in terms of *giving back*. Resonances
more than constructing discourse.

Going
back to the call:

What arises from the fresh encounter with those ideas?

What can be understood of the call with the hindsight of the journey traveled?

Where the journey started was in preparation for the Research
Pavilion in Venice, 2019, and the proposal for the research cell, *Through Phenomena
Themselves*. There is
some continuity:

the call crystallizes some of those developments and discussions.

This Special Issue is itself an enquiry, not only a form of publishing or
disseminating — it *is* a research endeavor.

Researching *through* practices,
researching *through* a Special Issue,
publishing practices *through* a Special Issue.

Through a Special Issue in a journal we research:

How are the possible affinities between
artistic and phenomenological research practices? And, how to publish practices?

To what effect? What is at stake?

Why are we doing this?

In pushing this subject matter, are we
contributing to an original methodological development of both fields: artistic research
and phenomenology?

Part I: Varieties of Affinity

This journey is an attempt to explore a field
of research, which takes two references
outlined as autonomous fields: one is artistic research or aesthetic research, and the other
is phenomenology.

It is guided by an intuition that there is a common field,
that there is something in common.

How is

this ‘in common’?

How does this sense of ‘in common’
manifest?

At times the sense of ‘common’ is manifested in its opposite —
it is demonstrated through differences, as an
attempt to delineate the difference between artistic research and phenomenological
practice.

Different registers of ‘being in common’,
of being-in-touch,
and what that mode of being-in-touch might open up?

Almost like a Venn diagram, two spheres of practice — different
possibilities emerge depending on how these two spheres of practice overlap.

Thinking about magnets — is there a pull between these two fields of
practice

, towards some kind of contact, or is it like
with magnets, sometimes the closer you bring them, only then the repellent
force becomes evident, and they push themselves away?

While there was a little distance, the commonalities seem strong, but where
there is an attempt to bring the two together, the differences might become more
magnified.

Different registers of in-touch-ness, or connection, or contact, or
commonality, and what these different registers might open up in terms of how we think
about these fields of practice, or even what might exist in between?

This intuition of an affinity between these two fields of practice.

‘Common’ is already a form of affinity.

Two different problematics inhabit each of these fields,

that come into expression when this affinity is explored. On the one hand, for artistic and/or aesthetic practices — practices are not questioned in this sphere, however the tension is between these practices and these practices being practices of research.

How can artistic and aesthetic practices be affirmed as practices of research? The other field is a field of philosophy.

Phenomenology was born and was mainly developed as a philosophical endeavor.

It is not a question that this is a form of research:

the question there is of practices.

The system of philosophy is not so used to identifying practices or accepting that philosophers are practitioners.

Accordingly, there could be an assumption that artists are ‘practitioners’ and that philosophers are ‘theorists,’ which is then not to be practitioners. This tension comes to take different forms of expression demarcating differences when we explore the possibilities of affinities.

Qualifying the nuance:

not only artistic practices but artistic research practices; not only artistic research practices but artistic research practices that have a particular relationship to phenomenology.

The relationship *between* artistic research and phenomenology could be a different way of describing it.

Not only artistic research practices but artistic ‘hyphen’ phenomenological research practices, or is it phenomenologically-oriented artistic research practices, or is it artistic research practices with an affinity to phenomenology?

The relationship with phenomenology opens up a range of possibilities: this closeness to or distance from phenomenology — whether artistic research practices also have to be phenomenological research practices? Or is it this range of relation that we are exploring? Closeness to, distance from, difference from, proximity *but* difference — there is a whole set of nuances there that feels generative.

The sense of orientation or the directionality between artistic research and phenomenological research:

a sense of mutuality, mutual transformation, reciprocity, cross-contamination, hybridization, where the sense of the one to the other is less defined and more like a passage between both.

Does the directionality from artistic research towards phenomenological research indicate hierarchy?

Consider terms like ‘not enough’ or ‘not phenomenological enough.’

Does this sense of ‘not being phenomenological enough’ signal the failure to be phenomenological? Or is there something about the distinctiveness of certain artistic research practices where rather than this being a deficit or a failure, this might point instead to what artistic research *does*, that might be different from phenomenology?

Is there something about

withholding or holding back or not quite following through into a phenomenological insight?

Artistic research practices

seem to hold things open but not then follow all the way through into conclusion.

This ‘not enough’ also speaks of a ‘not yet’.

We take this for granted:

there is artistic research, there is phenomenology.

How is this

expressed in a normative

definitional way?

The positive side of ‘not enough’ is research, this *is* phenomenology.

‘this *is*’ — this *is* artistic

The definition of both fields has always been a question. So

What is phenomenology?’

‘What is

artistic research?’.

We keep asking this.

This should make it difficult to affirm that this is *not* phenomenology or this is not phenomenological enough.

This definitional openness about

these two spheres could be, or probably should be point for enquiry into these affinities.

a necessary starting

As a rule of the game,

it cannot be said it is not phenomenological or it is not artistic enough. Nevertheless, this rule should always be possible to be violated.

Even affirming the

impossibility of really saying ‘this is artistic’ or ‘this is phenomenological,’ we are still

using these terms. So there is a demarcation — a sense of ‘what is’ and ‘what is not.’

This sense of negative affirmation: what artistic research is *not*.
 The possibility of saying declaratively that artistic research is *not* phenomenology.

Is to say that artistic research is not phenomenology
 a precondition for exploring the relationship between?
 Can there be any *relationship* between artistic research and phenomenology if they are considered as one and the same practice? Is this *not-ness* a precondition for exploring relations, for exploring connection or affinity?

What I am seeing is a triangle. One vertex of the triangle is *definition*.
 How defined or how open are these fields of artistic research and phenomenological research?
 ?

A second vertex is the operations *between* them: mutual transformation, hybridization, being-in-touch, 'addition' — that is, phenomenology *plus* artistic research, artistic research *plus* phenomenology.

The third vertex includes the four possibilities of expression that result from the performance of these affinities : artistic-phenomenological research; phenomenology- or phenomenologically-based or -informed or -oriented artistic

research; aesthetic phenomenology (that we can also invert as
phenomenological art or phenomenological aesthetics); and this 'third,'
this unnamed function, this unnamed possibility.

We are constantly between these three
fields of operation: definition, relation and resulting entanglement.
These three elements have a systemic dynamic:
they are mutual conditions of possibility and results.

Within this Special Issue
we are not interested in art-based
phenomenology, or phenomenology of artistic research, but in
different research fields or practices *being*
in touch.

‘Ecologies of practices’:

an ecological language for thinking about their relation. A spontaneous ecology of in-touch-ness differentiated from a more instrumental sense of how one field of practice might ‘use’ another.

Different species or

varieties of symbiosis might be

a different way of describing these mutual, reciprocal, transformative relations. Symbiosis has a whole set of sub-categories — there are three main forms: commensalism, parasitism and mutualism.

The nature of symbiosis varies in degrees of relationship, of hierarchy, of harm, or mutual benefit, which makes it interesting for considering the in-touch-ness of practices.

There is a kind of predatory or parasitic form — ‘using’ the other for one’s own ends, an instrumentalized relation to the other, perhaps even causing harm to the other.

There is also a form which is more like mimicry

— where one field of practice mimics or appropriates the practices, approaches, methods, languages of the other. Within both of these forms, reciprocity is lacking.

Is this about artists making phenomenology? Or is this about artists trying to *be* phenomenologists, which implies a clear hierarchy? So, by means of elevation, is art elevated to an implicitly higher category which is philosophy?

Neither of these two fields
is more valuable or superior to the other.

To conceive of a kind of taxonomy or typology of possible
connections between these two fields of practices,
between artistic research and phenomenology:
How is the mode of touch or contact between artistic and phenomenological research
practices?
To what
effect?

How much does transformation function or operate therein?
The use of one practice within
another — how does it actually transform or open up?

To force an
opening or a rethinking or a re-evaluation of ways of doing things: it doesn't leave the
practices intact, it requires transformation.

These modalities of relationship and the
operations that lead or might lead to them.

The Special Issue itself is not a means of dissemination but a means of research, for researching these relations.

Variety of Affinity: Orientation

What we call the ‘soft variety’ has two variants:

a phenomenologically-oriented or -based artistic research practice or the other way — an artistically-oriented or -based or -informed phenomenological research practice.

Phenomenologically-oriented: this impulse comes from artistic research, from artistic researchers, to refer to *them*.

Phenomenologically-oriented or -based or -informed practices expresses this reference; from practices that are not born in this field, but attend to it, refer to it, to phenomenology.

This sense of leaning in the direction of, or facing in the direction of ... artistic research facing in the direction of phenomenology. There is something about orientation.

Phenomenologically-oriented, -informed, -influenced or -based artistic research practices.

This relationship can be inverted — you could also have arts-oriented, -informed, -influenced or -based phenomenological research practices.

There is a tendency within phenomenology,
 within language-based phenomenology, or phenomenology within philosophy,
 a tendency of phenomenology to be literary. A move from phenomenology
 to the arts — when philosophy
 becomes literature,
thinking through writing.

It proves that this inversion takes place.

In the phenomenologically-oriented or
 artistically-oriented variation or in the case of aesthetic phenomenology or the inverse
 with phenomenological aesthetics, the order, this inversion matters. And it
 indicates
 a certain hierarchy.

‘Not really’ or ‘not enough’ is probably best expressed in the
 phenomenologically-oriented variation ... It is not really phenomenology,
 but it is phenomenologically-oriented.

Phenomenologically-oriented doesn't
 need to depart from a comprehensive definition of phenomenology —
 it can depart from certain traits.

Variety of Affinity: Hyphenation

The second variety: the hyphenated variation or ‘strong variety’.

With hyphenation we have two variations: we could say it’s the same because the order does not matter, but it matters. Artistic ‘hyphen’ phenomenological research practices, or phenomenological ‘hyphen’ artistic research practices. We can say it is the same, but we can say it is not. We can say that this order matters or has a meaning or value.

The strong variety: we affirm that there are research practices that *at the same time* are artistic and phenomenological. Artistic-phenomenological practice is both — fully or at least enough.

This hyphenation invites exploration.

Hyphenation has a dual function : it holds the two things together but it also keeps them apart.

Holding in relation and also holding in separation.

Is there something about the irreconcilability of the two sides of the hyphen, the impossibility of synthesis?

The hyphen might suggest that artistic and phenomenological practices are one and the same within a certain set of practices. But then maybe the difference matters? How might this difference matter?

How is the quality of this hyphen — what does it indicate? There is an additive dimension: of both-ness, of combination, this quality of plus-ness, artistic research *plus* phenomenology. To say something is artistic ‘and’ phenomenological could suggest ‘at the same time’: it is both at the same time. It is both artistic ‘and’ phenomenological. But there is the question of *how*? Is that through combination, or through integration, or through synthesis? So the nature of this ‘and-as-both’ is open to a whole set of variations.

There are these two fields and I take this and this and this and this and this, and with this I work, not with the whole.

In this sense, it could be also said that this is not ‘fully’ phenomenology. And it could also be said the same way — it is not fully art. ‘Not fully’ is different from ‘not enough’.

This selection and organization of constitutive traits of both fields might be one way in which this affinity between both fields is expressed.

There are enough elements of artistic research practices and enough of phenomenological research practices to affirm that these practices crystallize

an affinity between artistic research and phenomenology. This is different than to say this practice *is* artistic and *is* phenomenological.

The
artistic-phenomenological variation (or the other way around)
implies that it is enough
artistic and it is enough phenomenological.

Enough crystallizes the sense of affinity between the two fields of practice, but not so fully as to *be*.

A refusal of this category of *being*: of artistic research *is*, or phenomenology *is*.

If the model is based on transformation or on contamination,
it is necessary to have a certain definitional softness.

The constitutive parts of artistic research and phenomenology may be transformed
, but there is not the production of a ‘third’ possibility as described in the fourth variety. So the mode is combination or addition but not the birth of the new, no-name yet.

Combination or both-ness or even

mutual transformation, but not necessarily producing properties that are distinct from those constitutive fields of practice.

Variety of Affinity: Adjectivization

An aesthetic phenomenology: this is a third variety,
phenomenology instantiated aesthetically.

An ‘and’ which is not ‘additive’ — it is aesthetic phenomenology or artistic phenomenology. The hyphen has disappeared here in a way. There is the emergence of a new species which is not the in-touch-ness of two separate fields of practice but the emergence of a fully integrated or synthesized form that has its own autonomy. The hyphen has disappeared but there is a substantive and an adjective, and this implies a hierarchy. The adjective qualifies the substantive.

Phenomenology, but aesthetically, *and* aesthetically.

Is there a way of conceiving of aesthetic phenomenology to avoid this hierarchization?

Aesthetic phenomenology means the transformation of phenomenology. For example, phenomenological practices can be realized in other media and not only in the media of language. Or, even in the medium of language, with different practices of language which are not propositional or discursive.

It is phenomenology but transformed.

Phenomenology instantiated artistically or aesthetically, in other media.

What might it mean to do phenomenology through other media than language, or with language in other ways beyond discursive, propositional forms?

Does this lead to 'new' forms, new practices?

'Artistic phenomenology' differentiated from 'aesthetic phenomenology'.

One differentiation between aesthetic and artistic, maybe the most fundamental one: there are practices that remain, that dwell with phenomena, and there are those that construct on this basis. There are two different common grounds between phenomenology and artistic research, two distinctive varieties of affinity: one follows the *aisthetic* trajectory; another follows the route of the artistic with a closer link to the imaginal and imagination.

What we tend to qualify as aesthetic research, or denominate as aesthetic research, places emphasis in perception: *perceiving-sensing-feeling*. Not so much grounded in imagination or speculation.

Variety of Affinity: The “Third”, “No-name”, Liminal

There could be a fourth possibility,

one for which there is no name (yet).

The fourth variation would be this *third*, something that cannot properly be described as artistic or aesthetic nor as phenomenology.

The highest point of autonomy is in this fourth variation, this ‘third’,
 that cannot be, or should not be named as either artistic nor phenomenological —
 without using the
 terms phenomenology and art.

This ‘no name’ possibility is needed. The operation there
 is not of transformation.

Acknowledging that in its genealogy phenomenology and artistic research can be found,
 that these fields are the origin of this new one.
 Due to this genealogy it is connected to them, but it is *not the same*.

Thinking of ‘composite’ —
 of a research practice as a bricolage of other research practices or as an assemblage.
 A bricolaged practice or an assemblage has its own identity even though it
 is
 a composite of parts.

Hybridization: there is something new, and
 this something new comes from something established or something already existing.
 A hybrid is something that is neither/nor but both at the same time.
 Not transformation but
 a new birth.

The organism
 of lichen

is symbiotic —

it is comprised of fungus and algae, and yet it has properties that are distinct from either of them.

It preserves the presence of its two constitutive parts — fungus and algae (or we might think of artistic research and phenomenology) — and yet at the same time it has characteristics that are not properties of either.

To be precise about the nature of the relation : the two things are not synthesized, they are not reconciled.

They are held in relation where they are allowed to retain their distinctiveness, and yet there is *something else* which is neither the property of the one nor the other.

The nature of the in-touch could have a quality of conversation or of dialogue, where in that meeting of the one and the other, there is something that emerges that does not belong to the one or the other but emerges through the nature of the contact.

Like a conversation which is more than my talk and your talk. There we have the lichen.

This is the logic of this ‘unnamed variation’.

‘Not longer and not yet’: Victor Turner’s term for describing the liminal could be in relation to this ‘third other’ or the ‘not-yet-named’.

The positivity of the liminal — trying to reject the ‘not enough’.
 Going in the direction of the ‘enough’ but not in the sense of affirming this practice as *being* phenomenology. *Enough* as a realization of affinity. Enough refers to the *affinity*, not to the defined terms.

It is enough phenomenological and enough artistic to be considered in this space, this liminal space, this third space, this space of affinity.

Affirming a kind of autonomy of this third space:

the idea of the lichen as the inspiration, as a model.

Something not fully constituted in one side or the other.

Something new departing from the affirmation of a common ground, a minimal, or even empty common ground.

This
not fully, this ‘no longer and not yet’,
 this idea of liminality can be related to this *through*.

What if we do not depart from common ground, but from a void?

The starting point would not be the hypothesis of an existing common ground but of a liminal space between artistic research and phenomenological research.

This is thinkable. The practices that realize this affinity through liminality, would inhabit this liminal space.

A liminal space is not only an empty space: it is a framed space.

It is in touch with the two sides — the ‘no longer and not yet’.

It is not an absolute void. It is a contact space; it is a space in contact.

Not to begin with characteristics but with a radically generative practice that inhabits this ‘not knowing’. Not aiming at any form of addition or hybridization or any kind of concrete operation in relation to artistic research and phenomenological research but being in touch.

It is at least thinkable and intriguing and attractive .

This sense of *through*, this emphasis on *through* folded back to the liminal: an emphasis on *passage*, in the sense of throughness in relation to liminality, in that the liminal is also understood as part of a rite of passage.

Porous in the sense of passage.

Liminality is the middle phase of a rite of passage.

Is there a way that this might connect with the movement of epoché and reduction?

The first stage of a rite of passage is a practice of separation, so radical disassociation with all structural ways of being and structural knowledge, in order to enter this liminal phase, as an initiate, as someone with no knowledge. The third phase of the rite of passage is reaggregation or ‘return’, where you return with those knowledges gleaned from the liminal phase. I don’t know, it feels as if epoché somehow affects a kind of separation, but is then to do with extending or dwelling in the space of liminality that this separation enables or opens up.

Is this to say that the radical ground of this particular variation (this no-name variation) is a kind of epoché, in the sense that what is bracketed is all preconceptions and conventions of either artistic research or phenomenological research?

Inhabiting this liminal space
would mean to suspend my knowledge about artistic research and
phenomenology. Suspending
it but being in touch.

It is an incipient intuition.

This liminal space could have this character of a medium, but a medium which maybe does not exist yet, a medium in its own constitution, through the suspension — yes, that might be an epoché — of established media or the media of media, in terms of understanding artistic research as media and phenomenological research as media.

This language of medium, of the medial,
this middle: this open space between phenomenological research practices
and artistic research ... and how that middle space is inhabited?

The
case of

the artistic-phenomenological variety

is based on ‘I know what artistic research is, and I know what phenomenological research is and I bring the two together.’ Now we are in the completely opposite situation in which we say ‘I don’t know what artistic research is, and I don’t know what phenomenological research is. And I don’t know where I am.’

It is also a variety that activates the hyphen. In the formulation of the artistic-phenomenological variety, the hyphen is very short, however, here the emphasis is on the hyphen as a space of opening which is in touch with both of these terrains of practice, but it is opening up this space of possibility that is not-yet defined or is no longer and not yet.

The hyphen becomes an empty space, something that separates.

The hyphen can bring together or mark a difference.

It could be an exaggeration of marking a difference, opening up a space in between which is unknown. It defines itself originally only as being 'in between', in touch but without this touch meaning a form of participation in.

It is through osmosis,

through these porous boundaries, that this liminal space exists. To mobilize the porosity of these membranes in order to enable a spontaneous process of osmosis, as if this space attracts what is beyond the membranes. Attracts but not extracts.

There is something like a ground zero dimension to it, where the characteristics of a practice emerge in total fidelity to the pursuit of a certain *truth* in a way.

Stripping it all away and if the enquiry is around unveiling, the characteristics will be present.

The characteristic of wonder is immanent.

Observation is a process that leads to the constitution of the practices that inhabit this space. Through being in touch, through spontaneous osmosis. ‘I don’t know anything.’ ‘I observe what happens.’ This practice will not begin knowing itself. It is a radical space of not knowing, a space that mobilizes the agency of not knowing, the constitutive agency of not knowing. ‘I don’t know and I inhabit this space in between. I know it is a space in between, and I know the other spaces, but I suspend these knowledges.’

Does the neutral relate to the liminal, the ‘no-name’?

One expression of the neutral might be ignorance or delusion. It is neither moving in the direction of craving or aversion, it is ‘I don’t know’, ‘I don’t know what I am feeling.’ It is neither craving or aversion but a neutral space. Maybe there is something there about practicing in complete ignorance of either phenomenology or artistic research. The positive expression of neutral is equanimity, or availability. This sense of neutral anticipates the positive: ‘I feel it, I am here, and I am available.’

We affirm this ‘no named’ variety, this ‘third’,
 which is not only contributing to known fields of phenomenology
 and artistic research but also to research in general, in which
 new and unknown varieties of research might appear through the realization or
 instantiation of these affinities. We did not foresee this
 when we wrote the call.

Part II: Common Characteristics

A list of
 characteristics — is this towards the ‘what-ness’
 of this field of practice?

The attempt of the characterizing would not be a definition of a new form
 of research, which crystallizes a form of affinity between artistic research and
 phenomenology.

It would be a list of characteristics.

Always an intricate relationship between the
 ‘what’ and the ‘how’: ‘what is this practice? or is the question more ‘how is this
 practice?’

There is a corresponding list of *hows*:
 the tending or tendencies of practice, or the
 inclination or leaning of a practice, and whether that is closer to a sense of a
 shared attitude between artistic research and phenomenological research practices.

A shared tendency or a shared attitude — is this the same as describing the characteristics? Where is the overlap between these two registers of identification?

What characteristic traits of artistic research, and of phenomenology are to be found in this practice?

What characteristics and traits might be in common?

Characteristics can be used as criteria. There are characteristics of artistic research that can be identified, there are characteristics of phenomenological research that can be identified.

The possibility of recognizing these characteristics is considered one criterion for the publication.

There are possible common characteristics : embodiment, or lived-through-ness, or an engagement with the pre-reflective.

We can continue this listing of possible common characteristics of affinity, so common characteristics of phenomenological and artistic research practices.

Through Phenomena

Both sets of practices share a basic aspect, they approach their object of research as phenomena, that is, *through* their phenomenal presences.

This *through-ness*, this '*through phenomena*':

we are interested in practices that crystallize, in specific forms, this affinity between these two fields, that depart from phenomena, that operate with or on phenomena. This is an unquestionable characteristic of the kinds of practices that we are interested in.

Can the phenomenon that is taken as the core of this particular enquiry be identified?

What is the phenomenon that is taken as the object of study or as the object of enquiry?

It works with phenomena — to be aware, and to be coherent with this awareness, that I am working with an appearance, with something that appears.

The kinds of

practice that we want to explore *through* the Special Issue work *with* phenomena.

Some artistic research practices and phenomenological practices work *with* phenomena or *through* phenomena. There we have a common element, an affinity, a common ground.

So what do we understand of these phenomena?

And now it must be necessary to provide at least a minimal definition of what is a phenomenon. And in saying that, do we accept a definition as given by phenomenology?

The hierarchy again can appear. In this new form of research, you will find elements that come from both, but these elements will not relate to one another hierarchically. This is the difference.

Even the question, ‘what is a phenomenon?’, can be answered in different ways,
has been answered in different ways in the history of what calls itself phenomenology.

Artistic research has never defined what a phenomenon is, but phenomenology has. Again, a possible hierarchy in favor of phenomenology. What if instead we take ‘phenomenon’ as an empty vessel and we don’t take the phenomenological definition? We allow this practice to say or to show what a phenomenon is, there we have the moment of novelty.

Observation and Reflective Agency

Another characteristic could be that this form of research operates with or through the *observation* of phenomena.

These practices are engaged in the observation of phenomena. And there are various practices or media that highlight or amplify that experience of observation,

technologically-mediated forms of observation or practices that

allow the experience of observation to be sharable with others.

Aesthetic or artistic phenomenology

is engaged in the observation of phenomena, but is there also a phenomena-producing component to it —

not only observing the phenomena but also simultaneously producing phenomena, ‘artistic phenomena’?

Aesthetic

reflection,

phenomenological reflection, is not reflection through construction and articulation but reflection in the original sense of ‘giving back.’ So the ‘mirror’ sense of reflection.

In these terms, we were asking people not to reflect on their practices, but to reflect their practices which are reflective practices, practices that reflect phenomena aesthetically.

In the reflection of a phenomenon,
is something of the practice also reflected?

Is the idea of the vocative to mirror the phenomenon, in the sense of allowing the phenomenon to be seen?

The practitioner becomes the mirror, and the practice allows the practitioner to become the mirror. The *practitioner* is reflecting, or even better, the practitioner is reflective, reflecting in the sense of performing its reflective skills

or its reflective agency — in the same way that the mirror has a reflective agency.

This is the metaphor — the core of the metaphor is that there is matter which has agency, and that agency is reflective.

The mirror has the agency of reflection, and subjectivity

also has the agency of reflecting. The practice mobilizes or actualizes this potentiality of reflecting. Not reflecting *on* — this is another agency, the agency of constructing, logical construction, construction in logical terms — but *reflecting*.

How is that agency mediated through those technologies, or mediatized through different technologies, or how does that entanglement with the media inform or influence the nature of that reflection?

Each medium provides certain conditions of mobilization of different forms of reflection. And, of certain forms of sharability of these reflections, or the results of these reflections. Language is an adequate medium for constructed reflection. Logic can be instantiated through language and has been mainly instantiated through language. So language is a medium that provides adequate enabling conditions for logical reflection to be activated and realized. Images might realize this other form of reflection that we are talking about. Language has to be mobilized in other ways, like through poetry, to activate these agencies of 'mirror reflection,' or *aesthetic reflection*. Seeing and reflecting become one, because I am seeing what I reflect. I am looking at my experience, it is not about me, it is *through me*. I become a medium, I become a reflector. I am a medium and the medium is always invisible, providing potentiality, providing agency. But it is never in focus.

Embodiment: Sensible/Sensory Capacities

The first-person perspective might mean

that there is the heightening of that sensible, sensory-perceptual register of subjectivity, and at the same time the reduction or diminishing of the I-ness of that.

The neutral is active there:

neutral of I, it is not the I that is
reflected back.

Increased sensible, sensorial, perceptual
capacities as a way for maximizing reflective agency.

But at the same time that not being the personal.

It needs to be an engaged neutral.

Or neutrally engaged. A vulnerable neutral. A sensible neutral.
Neutral not in a sense of negation, it is an affirmative neutral, maybe
without expressing any kind of affirmation.

That seems to relate to the sense of dwelling — to remain neutral in
the face of wonder,
to be able to see the phenomenon itself. It is not me: that is
what I have to try to suspend, all those forms of being myself. Making space, making
myself available

, available for the phenomenon itself to reveal itself.
Being attentive, listening to the questions ‘how are you?’, ‘what are you?’,
but not providing or constructing any answer. But creating the conditions for *it* to
‘answer’.

This space of affinity between artistic research and phenomenology requires
this

positive neutral: does this connect with the idea of passivity, reaction or
action in touch with wonder?

Wonder, Not Knowing and Epoché

aim at publish in this Special Issue Do the practices we
 instantiate epoché? have to include or even

If we take the hyphenated variety of affinity, then
 yes, because there is no phenomenology without epoché and reduction. But if we take the
 phenomenologically-oriented variety then we enter a field of
 relativity — we could say maybe epoché, but not reduction.

Suspending but not excluding. A certain
 distance or at least difference from the world, but remaining in the world,
 ‘wonder in the face of the world.’

Epoché as practice enables a difference towards the world, it
 opens a space. We are in touch with the world, we continue being, we cannot *not* be.

We are attending to this world as it appears in our experience. So we suspend the
 validity of the world, the reality of the given-ness.

Opening a space, making a difference,
 remaining in the issue in which this difference is made.

Not knowing is a common trait of artistic
 research and phenomenology. Epoché is a way of achieving a state of not
 knowing. It allows
 the seeing of what could not be seen by knowing. All this
 knowledge occludes other knowledges. This is a constitutive idea in
 phenomenology and in a much more unarticulated way in artistic research, or even in art.
 This comes from art practices: I get in touch, I allow myself to not do
 anything, to be somewhere and not do anything, to suspend my intentions, to see what
 happens, to not know what I am doing.
 These are actions or procedures that are constitutive of some art practices.

In artistic practice, in artistic research as well,
there is a whole arsenal of tactics for this, from a
profound sense of doing nothing... the
encounter with boredom, a deep profound encounter with boredom as a way of
estrangement, or exhaustion. Or even, the opposite of 'not doing', doing and doing and
doing to the point that something exhausts itself, to the point of defamiliarization. There
is a whole spectrum of concrete practices for reaching this point of wonder,
of
not knowing, or astonishment, or perplexity, or bewilderment.

'Wonder' is one expression of not-knowing.
This expression 'wonder in the face of the world': 'wonder'
contains already 'in the face of the world'. Wonder
is not astonishment, it is not surprise. It is a very specific state, it is a very
specific emotion, which is this 'what is that?' in something familiar.
This 'in the face of the world' is intrinsic to the wonder. Wonder is always in
the face of the world.
This is also a very common situation in art practices, 'what is
this, that has been here all the time?', and then suddenly it is estranged, suddenly, 'what
is that?'

There are two different vectors
activated in an artistic register. The not knowing vector towards
defamiliarization that can lead towards alienation and separation
, and then there is this sense of wonder that can lead to
a profound sense of connection.

There is a discontinuity, there is a clear moment of discontinuity.
The
question is whether feeling this wonder follows a rejection or an attraction, and then an
intensification of the object of wonder. The promise of wonder as source of
research is that the second happens, so there is an intensification
through defamiliarization, an intensification of the
familiar.

How might it be to conceive of wonder as opening up a space of interaction?

This is possible if attraction takes place, because I continue being there and if I continue being there, a redistribution of agencies can take place.

It could be receptivity rather than attraction.

In terms of the liminal, the sense of keeping something open.

Even though the liminal is a space of passage, there is no real vector towards or away — maybe this connects to the dynamic of suspension. Whereas, the reactions of rejection or attraction contain

the vectors of moving towards or moving away; receptivity, or openness, or even liminality is a concern for holding the space open.

Acceptance better than attraction.

Or acceptance understood as a form of attraction because I stay, I do not move away. I inhabit it. It is not that I move towards. I stay where I am and I accept.

In the observation of phenomena there is something about *allowing*, letting the momentum come from the emerging phenomenon, a *stopping* in the agency of the subject. Acceptance, welcome, receptivity create conditions or work with conditions that allow something to appear, rather than *moving towards* something.

The German term *Aufmerksamkeit*. *Auf* can be understood here as ‘open’ and *merksam* relates to ‘notice’ (*merken*). Imagine an analogue camera, it opens and light is marked on the film. An image for this acceptance, this opening, and this welcoming idea of becoming vulnerable, fragile, open.

This can happen when wonder occurs, and if this happens, then the possibility of research is open.

This could be added to our list of commonalities, in the sense of ‘revealing unconcealment.’ Connected with observation, showing, or rather allowing to see — it is really striking how philosophy begins to talk in aesthetic terms when it becomes phenomenology. The phenomenon is not thought, it is seen. You *see* the phenomenon.

I wonder if phenomenology is fundamentally aesthetic...

The inceptual moment
 , this moment of epiphany, or breakthrough or revelation,
 like *waves*.
 Prolonging
 of the space of wonder. Attraction and repulsion
 reactions are triggered by wonder. This
 holding of the space open requires subtle navigation or negotiation of those
 forces.

This
 very dynamic space of trying to prolong that zone of liminality,
 with the possibility that
 something emerges.

Also in conversation — something arises and if you follow it too quickly the space that was opening disappears; you were too eager, not holding the space open.

This relationship between slowness and duration —
 extending the space of openness for the possibility of these inceptual glimpses
 or flashes.

This sense of inhabiting, in terms of dwelling,
 dwelling in the phenomena.

Part III: Publishing Practices

This Special Issue attempts to publish practices, specific research practices.

What are the practices and how are they activated?

What is at stake in showing or sharing practices, or wanting to publish practices?

This aim of

publishing practices in this Special Issue is also a research endeavor.

The radicality is that we want to publish practices, not the results of practices. We want to publish the practices themselves. The question is if this operation is possible. Is a practice able to be published in a journal? In general terms of *making public*, yes:

the field of possibility is quite open. But in a journal, or through a journal, with these constraints.

the pursuit of publishing practices? What is at stake in

Through practices: *through* rather as a medium and not a means. *Through practices* — not that the practices are the means but rather the media in terms of sets of conditions of possibility.

Practices and Actions

‘Attitude’ is a fundamental word used in phenomenology — like in ‘natural attitude’. The term attitude is too vague — can we specify it in terms of forms of action? If someone has an attitude towards something, then this person is *making something*, is *acting* in a specific way.

‘Perspective’: in terms of per-spective — *per-* through, and *specere*, seeing. ‘Disposition’, a shared disposition. *Dis-position*. — a shared un-positioning.

A disposition is possible to be expressed in terms of a set of actions. A disposition is taken or adopted. A perspective — also in an optical sense — is to put oneself in a certain spatial relationship towards something else. I take a perspective, I situate myself here and not there. I move there, I *do* it. It is possible to break out of these perspectives, these positions, these attitudes as sets of actions. This is what thinking in terms of practice is.

What do you do, and how do you do it?

Does the ‘how’ follow the ‘what’ in this kind of thinking?

How is ‘attitude’ expressed in terms of action? How is this relation between action and practices? Practice is systematized action.

This is the minimal definition of practice:
practice as a set of actions.

A sense of attitude, perspective, disposition, orientation:
practice is a set of systematized actions that are imbued with a certain quality
— expressive of a certain attitude.

The common take is that an attitude precedes an action or precedes a practice.

Can an attitude be seen as a set of practices?

In order to take a phenomenological attitude, I have to do a lot of things and actually this taking of a phenomenological attitude is the practice of epoché.

An attitude or disposition.

Understanding epoché as a practice:
what are the actions that give expression to epoché?

Epoché as a whole is a field of practices, or a set of systematized actions.

It comes back then to this dual question: So how do *you* do that? And/or how might that be done?

And how *else* might that be done, because
it has been described predominantly as a linguistic set of systematized actions?

Practices and Media

Practices
mobilize certain capacities of a medium, so if we consider language, even written
language as a medium,
it provides certain
enabling and constraining conditions for practices. There are certain practices that
activate a certain sphere, a certain terrain, a set of these conditions.
The same thing happens with images: compare a diagram, an icon, a
logo, and a poetic image. Or with sounds. This is not exclusive to language.
Different practices
are situated in — to use a certain topological metaphor of a medium —
different *areas* of a given medium.

Language mobilized in other ways
in the case of a poetic form. Language mobilized *as* image. Or even,
thinking of the semantic, alliterative dimension:
language mobilized *as* sound.

More than non-linguistic mediality,
rather something to do with the capacity of language to be mobilized
beyond this discursive, propositional register.

The activation of practices creates or provides
enabling conditions for the emergence of new phenomena.
Artistic artifacts:

it is in touch with them that particular phenomena might appear, it is in the experience, or through the experience, or by virtue of the experience of or with this artifact

that phenomena might appear. Phenomena are always emerging, they cannot be produced and cannot be contained in an artifact, or in practices, or in a medium.

An artistic phenomenology would be a phenomenology substantiated through artistic practices.

Where is the Practice?

Where is the practice? Where does a practice manifest? Or where is a practice operative? This leads to the phenomenal dimension of practice. How does a phenomenological practice manifest? Does the writing (noun) manifest the practice of writing (verb)? Or is what we encounter an artifact, that is, the result or outcome of a practice, but not necessarily the practice itself?

Where is the practice?
Can we only publish artifacts... in a journal?

There is diversity of media. But nevertheless we continue publishing artifacts.

What we make public on a first level are artifacts — but where in these artifacts is the practice to be found?

What we publish are two moments within the practicing: a score or outline of a practice (as a kind of pre-moment, or a to-come moment within that), and then the artifact (an after-the-fact of practicing to a certain extent). There is this gap which opens up between the description of a practice and what emerges through the practicing of that practice.

What appears or emerges through the conjunction of those two moments of showing? Is there something that is revealed through the combination of different kinds of manifestation or tangibility?

How do you give expression to a first-person experience of observation?

Is this an externalization of an experience of observing, or the giving of tangibility to the experience of observation, or attention, or noticing? Practices of the attending to, or noticing, or observing of a phenomenon: can that be made sharable?

How do you create a set of conditions that allow a phenomenon to arise again for the reader, viewer?

Three possible ways : a score describing the actions to be made in order to practice; the artifact or artifacts that are produced or that emerge through the practicing of the practice;

and a description of the practice

(the *about-ness* mode). We don't want *descriptions* of practices, we want the practices themselves.

The practice itself can only appear as an absence. The practice itself as a phenomenon is a possibility.

Is this not always the case? Is a phenomenon not always a field of possibilities?

It is not meaning, it is the source of meaning. A field of possibility is temporal, not only because of the temporal dimension of experience,

a flow of sense, which crystallizes as a phenomenon, which is objectified as a phenomenon. Probably the practices we publish in this Special Issue are

published as their absence, and therefore as presence of a possibility of practice. And probably this is the only way to publish practices in a journal.

Is this a possible way to address this impossibility?

What is at stake in making public practices?

What does it mean to share practices, and 'how do you do it'?

With something like *epoché*:

how do you actually do
it?

How do *you* do it? It is a strong ‘you’ and not the impersonal.
The question is not ‘how *should* this be done?,’ meaning ‘by everyone.’

If the question is ‘how do *you*, specifically you, do it?,’ then this question can be answered. Or ‘how have you been doing it?’ This is a possible question, where the concept of practice is interesting not in the sense of a closed method defined in advance.

A practice is a specific way of doing something, and here is where the necessary balance between the *specificity* of ‘I can tell you how I do it’ and the *open-ness* of ‘it can be done in different ways’ meet.
This

leads to affirming that phenomenology is a field of practices, because you can do it in different ways, but these different ways can be systematized, sufficiently systematized, so that you can do it again.

We can show practices, as examples, but not in a normative sense.

It is possible to identify a practice not through description — but rather through an artifact or a part or fragment of an artifact that the practice has generated. The practice is the presence of an absence.

A practice is a process, we cannot find it, we cannot directly observe it.

the case of a direct exposition of someone practicing, Even in the practice will not be evident.

Maybe a practice is never evident. Maybe a practice is somehow a kind of infrastructure of the visible, of what can be seen. In this sense, to publish a practice can only follow indirect strategies.

Maybe the practice can only be expressed directly as a structure. But even this would not be the practice, as practicing. The structure of a practice can be grasped, can be expressed, can be formulated, can be described, but not the practice. There is something of the practice that can be expressed, formulated, clearly formulated, but not the practice.

Can the unfolding, the temporal dimension of an artifact's unfolding, place you in the time-space of practicing?

The score is a frame for the practice,

but does not provide access to the practice, because the practice also contains the experience of the phenomenon.

A practice is invisible and irreducible. It is pure action, it is pure organized action. Organized in a way which is intrinsic to the action.

Compare it with a game: I can formulate the rules and the rules enable me to play. Without the rules I cannot play, but the playing is clearly not the rules. Is this also the case with a practice? There are components of a practice which are these enabling conditions, and they can be expressed. But this is not the practice itself. A practice is unique in the same way that each iteration of a game is unique. And this uniqueness leads to the irreducibility of a practice.

Is that also related to its liveness ?

How to re-enliven this sense of the liveliness
of attunement with the phenomenon?

There is an attunement of the one who is writing and the one who is reading.

Two interwoven livenesses, one of the appearing phenomenon and the other in the sense of the liveness of the practice.

How
might the practice also have a phenomenal dimension —
also become part of the emerging phenomenon, also
being observed?

The practice engages with a particular phenomenon, but is it also
engaging with its own appearance, its own unfolding?

Are phenomenological practices always self-reflective?

In showing or sharing
practices, is there something about showing ‘the mirror’ at the same time as
‘what is mirrored’? Is the practice the ‘mirror’?

It is about the accessibility of an
absence. Not as an absence but as a presence to which the absence refers. Maybe the
reasonable goal is that the reader acquires a sense of what this practice is, or even better,
might be.

Can practices be phenomena
 ? Yes, if I observe how this
 practice is appearing in my experience, then a practice is a phenomenon.

Method without Method

One of the commonalities for both fields of
 practice is
method without method.

There are only singular examples of practice.
 There is this common principle of *showing*, and of showing through
 examples.

Rather than
 describing a general method,
 it can only be given expression through
 singular examples of practices.

Method:
 the common interpretation probably comes from the scientific method, as if
 method could be something prescriptive.
 But there is also a non-prescriptive, responding approach
 related to *methodos*, the way. The prescriptive implies: ‘this is *the* way, so go.’ The non-
 prescriptive instead: ‘walk, lay down a path by walking.’

A method emerges
 from the conjunction of practices.

The showing of
 practices as the showing of *a* way, not the showing of *the* way. This goes back to
 ‘how do you do it?’ and ‘how do *you* do it?’

To soften the term
'method' rather than to fully renounce it.

creativity: So suspend the ways you know The claim for methodological
let the phenomenon 'tell you' how to deal with it. in doing research,
Situated and embodied methods:
'You do it here, now and in touch with this issue, this phenomenon.' If the last
element, the phenomenon, is not present, then the redistribution of agencies will not
happen and then
neither aesthetic nor phenomenological research can be made.

Contingent methods —
a network of contingencies.