

Introduction

INGRID ELAM

Ingrid Elam is a Swedish writer and critic. She is a Professor in Literary composition and currently Dean of the Faculty of Fine, Applied and Performing Arts at the University of Gothenburg and Chair of PARSE. She holds a PhD in Comparative literature since 1985. Between 1989 and 2000 she was the cultural editor of the Swedish newspapers *iDAG*, *Göteborgs-Posten* and *Dagens Nyheter*. From 2003 to 2012 she was employed at Malmö University, where, among other positions, she acted as the Dean of the School of Art and Communication.

JOHAN ÖBERG

Johan Öberg is a critic, literary translator (Russian, French, English) and publisher (*Ord&Bild* 1989-1994, *Art Monitor* 2006-2012). He has also been working in the field of cultural diplomacy, social prevention, etc. He currently works as secretary of research at Faculty of Fine, Applied and Performing arts, and with the Critical Heritage Studies network, both at the University of Gothenburg. He was one of the organizers of the 15th International Bakhtin Conference, July 2014 in Stockholm.

HENK SLAGER

Research and visual art have been the focus of many activities developed by Henk Slager over the last ten years. As professor of artistic research he has made significant contributions to the debate on the role of research in visual art and as Dean of the Utrecht Graduate School of Visual Art and Design (MaHKU) he has contributed to the launching of productions such as the yearly Dutch Artistic Research Event (DARE) and the publication of the biannual *MaHKUzine: Journal of Artistic Research*. In 2005, Henk Slager, together with Jan Kaila and Gertrud Sandqvist, initiated the European Artistic Research Network (EARN), a network investigating the consequences of artistic research for current art education in symposia, expert meetings, and presentations. Departing from a similar focus on artistic research, he has also produced various curatorial projects, the most recent being *The Judgment is the Mirror* (Living Art Museum, Reykjavik, 2013) and *Joyful Wisdom* (Parallel Event Istanbul Biennial, 2013).

1. *Art and Research Journal: A Journal of Ideas, Contexts and Methods*. URL: <http://www.artandresearch.org.uk>

2. *Journal Of Artistic Research*. URL: <http://www.jar-online.net>

3. *ArtMonitor: The Swedish Journal for Artistic Research*. URL: <http://konst.gu.se/samverkan/publikationer/artmonitor>

4. Utrecht Graduate School of Visual Art and Design. *MaHKUzine: Journal of Artistic Research*. URL: http://www.mahku.nl/activities/publications_index.html

5. Universitatea de Arte "George Enescu" Iasi. *Vector - cercetare critica in context*. URL: http://www.arteiasi.ro/ita/publ/Vector_2014.pdf

6. The European Artistic Research Network. URL: <http://www.artresearch.eu>

7. The Society for Artistic Research. URL: <http://www.societyforartisticresearch.org>

8. Stepchange for Higher Arts Research Education Network. URL: <http://www.sharenetwork.eu>

9. The decision to employ this dual mode of production is in recognition of the different materialities and valencies of these forms, and the wish to accord contributors an opportunity to utilise the affordances of both.

WE BEGIN with a dialogue between the artist Christian Boltanski and the editors, where the danger and intrinsic slipperiness of judgement are manifest. This dialogical text is both an enactment of judgement and a deferral of judgement, as we move from Boltanski's – "the older you get, the more you want to talk about serious things, and you become pompous" – to – "there is only discrepancy and postponed judgement." The text is unsettled in its genre: part artist's statement, part interview, part anecdote, part travelogue, and part diaristic reflection. The tangle of genre is a formal strategy that serves well to disclose the knotted discursivity of contemporary art rhetorics and the often oblique thematisation of its discourses. In the playful yet provocative torsion of its form-content, this text seems a fitting preface with which to announce a new peer-review journal that seeks to encourage, extend, and enlarge the dialogue of artistic research with other knowledge practices and other disciplines, but most importantly, to do so in a manner grounded in artistic practices and protocols.

It is now well established that within the arts there are energetic research cultures already active in many different institutional contexts. Through the work of journals such as *Art and Research*¹, *The Journal of Artistic Research*², *Art Monitor*³, *MaHKUzine: Journal of Artistic Research*⁴ and *Vector*⁵ there has been a lively unfolding of both concrete examples of artistic enquiry and wider debates about the nature, rationale, and methodological bases of artistic research. The activities of many networks such as the European Artistic Research Network (EARN)⁶,

the Society for Artistic Research (SAR)⁷, and the SHARE Network⁸ have also demonstrated the existence of a lively international community of researchers with distinct agendas and priorities in the construction of a research programme. It is now timely, indeed urgent, to establish a forum for the interaction and exchange of work by artist researchers with work by colleagues operative in other disciplinary contexts so that the real contribution and challenge of artistic research may be profiled, tested and engaged by other research communities and by wider publics.

The Platform for Artistic Research Sweden (PARSE) has been established precisely to meet this challenge. It comprises a publishing and conferencing framework located in Gothenburg, Sweden, animated and guided by an international network of multidisciplinary practitioners, researchers and scholars. PARSE has projected four streams of activity that seek to achieve this overarching goal of profiling, testing, and indeed contesting the claims of artist researchers in the encounter across different disciplinary, institutional and pragmatic formations. These four lines of development through PARSE are: (i) a peer-reviewed journal; (ii) a biennial conference and presentation event; (iii) a networking of researchers around shared research concerns; and (iv) a series of special profiles of exemplary practices, case-histories or projects that seek to disclose some of the key achievements and staging-posts in the elaboration of research in and through arts practice. The first line of activity brings us to the generation of this journal as a peer-reviewed production actualised in print

and online.⁹ In all four lines of development a key ambition will be to promote dialogue with other knowledge forms and practices while maintaining an anchorage in the different practices of the arts: the arts understood as different from each other as much as they may differ from non-arts disciplinary traditions and professional domains, and recognising the fugitive nature of the boundaries proposed between art and non-art.

The basic strategy adopted by PARSE, in order to foster this dialogue, is to employ a broadly thematic approach to the gathering of different researchers around common problems, questions, uncertainties, objects, states of affairs or sites of contestation, while at the same time being mindful of the limitations of such thematic constructions – particularly in the context of artistic and philosophical enquiries which tend to problematize generic procedures and prioritise the integrity and specificity of singular works. Announcing a way of working, and problematizing that way of working in the same moment, should not be read as a simple performative contradiction or a case of academic hedging, but rather it should be seen as the reflexivity of critical research practice and an indication of the experimental and explorative agenda of the journal.

The thematic constructions that we have developed to initiate the new platform (judgement, value, repetition, time) point toward an open, inclusive dialogue, but they also indicate, by virtue of their wide focus, this dialogue's relatively youthful stage of development. In the first issue we start with questions of judgement. We do not propose judgement as an artistic research object, but rather as a condition of possibility for artistic practice and for considered enquiry: No art without judgement, no research without judgement. It is a theme that announces a condition and a problem of all our work: What is the current state of affairs? What matters? What is to be done? For the second issue, Fall 2015, we will constellate a range of research contributions around the question of "value" in the

contemporary arts, drawing upon current work by theorists, practitioners, participant-observers and academic analysts on the dynamics and behaviours of art world systems and economies. For the third issue, Winter 2015, we re-visit the thorny question of re-enactment and the re-performance of works of art, activating a wide range of discourses in order to capture where current thinking and practice is now situated in order to foreground what advances have been made with respect to this perennial problem in the ontology of the work of art.

For the first PARSE international conference, also taking place in Fall 2015, we will assemble a diverse body of researchers, artists, educators, theorists, technologists and critics around the complex question of time. This cross-disciplinary dialogue will address the question of chronopolitics in all its many diverse guises, from the temporal framing of climate change to the feeling backwards of queer culture.

In all of these instances of thematic construction, we are actively soliciting contributions from researchers and practitioners who believe that they have some new insight, or some new intervention to make with regard to the current state of the art and with reference to the general conditions of debate. The novelty we seek is not the trivial innovation of the merely modishly new, but the substantive and considered contribution of partners in a critical exchange based on shared enquiry. By this expression "shared enquiry" we do not mean to indicate consensus, but rather we include within this, the urgent contestation of judgements as to what should have wider salience for, and make claims upon, our collective attention within current artistic practice and research.

It is for this reason that we begin with this first issue on judgement. In inviting contributions under this overarching heading we indicated the persistence of a condition of ungrounded-ness: Ours is a time when all traditional forms of judgement and evaluation

are put into question, into doubt, are subverted whether this be a matter of the judgements of experts, critics, of courts, Academia, the Churches, or simply “men” and “women”. Judgement is now seen as one more symbolic construct among others. It has been torn down from its “theoretical” position, and transformed into contested practice among other contested practices. But nonetheless it is practiced. Judgement is operative within the giddy violent flows of what is variously dubbed late modernity, liquid modernity, the contemporary, the era of globalization or *mondialisation*. Indeed, one of the seemingly unending *agons* of judgement is this very attempt to pronounce, upon the nature of the current historical moment, its boundaries and its valences. In framing the problematic of judgement, the following questions which indicate the problematic construction of “the now” were presented as possible points of departure: Where and when and by whom is judgement and evaluation actually taking place today? What is the value and the legitimacy of judgements today? Where, when and by whom are judgements made about those values?

These questions are elaborated and some of the contradictions and dilemmas of judgement are unpacked in the tripartite “Opening to a Discussion on Judgement” by Simon Critchley, Mick Wilson and Andrea Phillips. This text picks up on the disjunctions already signalled in the prefacing dialogue with Boltanski, and extends these with reference to several wider arenas of judgement including sport, education and the art market. This is followed by Mine Doğantan-Dack’s reflection on “Artistic Research in Classical Music Performance: Truth and Politics” where she draws out the potential of artistic research to overhaul seemingly stable systems of judgement while also anticipating questions of re-performance that will be central to a later issue of the journal. Maria Lind makes a polemical intervention where she writes “About Urgency and Quality in Contemporary Art” demonstrating the enlivening force of judgement even as she identifies the urgent threats to its exercise in contemporary art. In lyrical

counterpoint to Lind’s contribution, Maria Fusco provides an “An Amateur’s Prolegomenon” in the form of a series of poetic meditations on judgement as it arises in the flow of experience. The question of judgement and the hermeneutic protocols of images in the courtroom are re-staged by Ruth Herz in her critical exploration of “The Naked Truth: A Pictorial View of Justice.” This brings us to the closing contribution, Rainer Ganahl’s robust defence of pedagogical judgement in “Strange Teaching: The Artist as Excellent and Miserable Teacher.” Ganahl’s text serves as a relay back to, and as a contrast with, Boltanski’s opening lines where he also refers to questions of judgement and the teaching of art: “I think I was very tolerant. I had very few students. I am not optimistic enough.”