

Insights into an Artistic Practice through Self-Reflection

First published in Volume 11, Issue 2
of *The International Journal of Arts Education*
by Common Ground Publishing LLC
in February 2016.

Abstract

The paper discusses insights from a post-disciplinary artist who reflects on his artistic practice. This case study is written from an autoethnographical perspective, in a narrative-evocative voice, contextualised with Moon's strategies of reflective learning and the Socratic method. Adapted on Moon's suggestions and based on the Socratic discourse of self-examination, semi-structured questions for the self-reflection have been prompted whilst reading texts of Bergson's process philosophy. These questions have then been scrutinised if and how they are relevant to the artist's practice. The artist also reflected on his emotions during the reflective writing process and in retrospective thereof which further developed the writing process and content selection of the self-reflection. The general aim of the subjective reflection was to verbalise the complex layers of meanings that are inherent in his artistic processes. The author anticipates that the self-reflection could serve as a case study for students in mainly, but not exclusively, tertiary art education. Ideally, the research could be a guidance, or inspiration, for students to find their own sources for reflection such as writings, artworks or exhibitions, which could trigger questions about their individual artistic processes and outcomes. Based on the artist's experiences, in the context of his ongoing doctoral research, such self-reflections could enhance other students' and artists' metacognitions as competencies to better communicate their own artistic practices.

Keywords

Artistic Practice, Autoethnography,
Self-Reflective Learning, Socratic Method,
Process Philosophy, Arts Education

Reflecting and Evaluating Autoethnographic Writing Styles

My primary intention could have been to introduce myself and my research by sharing aspects of my biographical and ethnographical background that would have added information to the framework, in which this paper could have been contextualized. I had in mind that I take the focus of this article as guidance to select which life milestones I would have included, which I would have excluded, and how extensively I would have written about them. With such autobiographical markers I anticipated that insiders (art world members) and outsiders (art world strangers) could better relate to my artistic practice and could have found better access to my values, beliefs and experiences (Ellis, Adams, and Bochner 2011). Having had this plan in mind, I wrote a few hundred words and reflected upon it.

A few days passed and I felt discontent with my autobiographic text passage, because it did not really achieve what I had in mind. I asked myself: "How relevant is this information?" For instance, is it important that the reader learns that my nomadic lifestyle could be considered as a valuable addition to the classification of me being a "[w]hite, masculine, heterosexual, middle/upper-classed, Christian, able-bodied" (Ellis, Adams, and Bochner 2011) human being? Yes and no, I concluded. The inclusion of such information would automatically emphasise the importance thereof. Consequently, readers might refer back and interpret these in order to better understand my article. Would such biographical milestones really support my research aim or would they distract, or even deviate, from it? I felt uneasy that my text could be misinterpreted and also realised further problems.

My intention for this article is to summarise the methodology, outcomes and suggestions of my year-long thesis writings, in which I partially translated my artistic process into language (Ahtila 2008; Elo 2009; Belinfante 2012). I then reflected on the context and the required format of this article. My understanding is that the convention of a traditional academic journal, like this one, is based on the elaboration of coherence thoughts, which are supported with evidence that lead to conclusions which are based on causal strings of arguments. In this thought process, I would ideally discover patterns that would lead to the adaption or development of a theory that I, and fellow artistic researchers, could test, etc. Because the centre of my research is my artistic practice, the question occurred: What kind of sense does it make if I construct a coherent story that is plausible and makes sense? Who do I want to contribute knowledge to? Art world members? Researchers? Both? If my artwork is in the "prime focus" (Borgdorff 2012, 49) of my research, does the reader need to get an insight in my artwork production? If yes, how could I do this in a journal article with a text-based convention? I found a solution outside this academic article. Suggesting that this information is pivotal, readers can access my portfolio via my linklog (Klewitz 2015). Here they can also find, if they wish, my artist CV and links to interviews that I gave. From

the author's perspective, I feel content with this option because the reader can now select him-/herself what kind of information he/she wishes to include whilst interpreting this journal article.

I also realised that I was tempted to jump too easily to conclusion in my writings (Kahneman 2011, chap. 7); indeed, I planned to "produce a representation of a reality that makes too much sense" (Kahneman 2011, chap. 10). I also became aware that I intended to put myself in danger of falling into the narrative fallacy trap (Kahneman 2011, chap. 10); meaning, that I would write a narrative in a manner that the story flows nicely and makes sense. When life presents itself with ambiguity, I am furthermore conscious that my unconscious mind constructs narratives as well (Mlodinow 2012, chap. 10). The price, which I would have paid, was that I would have written a narrative for the story's coherence's sake instead of writing a narrative that reflects my research, which is, by many means, disordered and chaotic. Reading Kahneman's current bestseller helped me also to further reflect how, what and why I write in my research. For instance, Kahneman points out that "you will often find that knowing little makes it easier to fit everything you know into a coherent pattern" (Kahneman 2011, chap. 7). After a year of rigorous self-reflection I have constructively assembled and self-critically dissembled many coherent patterns that I made for myself. Furthermore, I realised that the more I reflect, the more my reflections become incoherent. Re-confirming myself with this insight, I also understand more and more what Socrates might have had in mind when he said, "I know nothing except the fact of my ignorance" (Buckingham et al. 2011, 49). This seemingly paradox makes a lot of logical sense to me when researching because every time I enter a deeper dimension, I realise that I need to revise my existing knowledge. Whilst performing these knowledge revisions, I often collapse my own foundation and I start a new construction. This process reminds me of research in science and I recall Max Planck's famous quote, "Science advances one funeral at a time" (Aldrich 2014, 13). I interpret these funerals not as a replacement of leading scholars, but rather as the perpetual "life-death-cycle" of theories that I self-construct, deconstruct, destruct, and self-reconstruct in my own research.

In one of the above-described confusions and pitfalls, I felt the urge to revisit the relevance and importance of integrating biographical data in autoethnographical texts. During a new phase of literature review, I was excited when I discovered Gannon's article that negotiates autoethnographic through a poststructural lens (Gannon 2006). The author summarises, that "[p]oststructuralism upsets humanism's basic tenets: subjects who are coherent and stable, language that is transparent, knowledge as truth produced through reason" (Gannon 2006, 491). Interpreting the writings of leading French poststructural theorists, she suggests that they apply discontinuous destabilising writing strategies to formulate fragmented, multidimensional, incoher-

ent, unreliable and contradictory narratives (Gannon 2006). Being familiar with the writings of Foucault, Barthes and Derrida, I welcome their approach to autoethnographic writing because their personal experiences in writing about themselves mirrors the difficulties and questions that I have in my own self-reflective writings.

Besides the above, the connections and parallels between French poststructural theories and the findings in psychology by Kahneman (Kahneman 2011; Gannon 2006) also intrigue me. Both emphasise the dangers of coherent story writing when interpreting one's own life experiences and both offer alternatives to embrace and reflect on the com-

plexities of the human condition. Comparing this insight with my thesis writing process, I realised that I needed to write this journal article in a fragmented form because such a structure would also reflect the present, early stage of my research where I do not have any concluding thoughts yet. Instead, in the process of translating my artistic practice into language, I found many different access points; disjointed insights that are more truthful and convincing to myself as if I would construct a coherent story with them. Guided by that approach, I elaborate in the following on the theoretical context that explains how I have conducted my research so far.

Conceptual Framework and Approach of my Research Methodology

In this section I scaffold components that I have implemented so far, which assemble my research methodology. At this stage of my study, that is one year of my part time doctoral studies, I studied, implemented, and adapted the following research paradigms: Autoethnography, Self-Reflective Learning, Process Philosophy, and the Socratic Method.

In opposition to a traditional dissertation, which unfolds in Chapter 3 the finite research methodology that has been chosen to answer a particular research question, I approach the notion of methodology in my study as more open ended. In my research process, I constantly evaluate, adapt, and apply my methodology. In this permanent progression, I give myself the flexibility to amend and deviate my research scope, direction, and destination so that I can act and react to my newly gained insights. I experience this flexibility as efficient and productive because, instead of subordinating myself to a fixed methodology, I evolve my research's means simultaneously with my research ends. In giving myself this freedom, I take an artificial pressure away and navigate my research direction towards unknown destinations. In the following sub-sections I will explain how the above-mentioned research paradigms assisted my research up to day.

Useful Concepts in Conventional Autoethnography

Having decided that conventional autoethnographical writing strategies (Ellis, Adams, and Bochner 2011) do not fully support my research intentions, but also wanting to apply the suitable aspects thereof, I felt the need to revisit this discipline. In this further investigation I found out that my writing could benefit from following conventions.

I suggest that my research falls under the category of being a "personal narrative" where I view myself as the phenomenon and write evocative narratives that are focused

on experiences of my artistic practice and artistic research (Ellis, Adams, and Bochner 2011). As an analytical strategy, I keep these two activities separate and allocate them in double roles (Scrivener 2009), where I consider the artistic practice aspect as my "art making" and the artistic research part as the "reflecting on my art making." I thereby acknowledge the research aspects in my artistic practice as a component of the latter.

To avoid my reflection from becoming too "self-absorbed" and "narcissistic" (Ellis, Adams, and Bochner 2011), I strive for my autoethnographical research to be "rigorous, theoretical [...] analytical and emotional" (Ellis, Adams, and Bochner 2011). By including the above research objectives I anticipate that my readers will value my narrative useful by comparing their own experiences to mine, by thinking about how my experiences are similar and different to theirs and the reasons why (Ellis, Adams, and Bochner 2011). I consider that the individual readers, who compare my narrative with their own experiences, assemble the audience, who validates my research, and I suggest that the group of readers generalizes my writings by implementing them in various artistic research contexts and by adapting it in individual artistic practices (Ellis, Adams, and Bochner 2011). This framework makes sense to me because it reflects what and how I have progressed my research so far. In search for a further access point to translate my artistic practice into language, I investigated the potential of self-reflective learning theories. In the following section I explain what I have found and how I have implemented it in my research.

Self-Reflective Learning in my Artistic Practice

Generally, I experience learning as a part of my life that happens inside and outside of learning, teaching, and research institutions. Based on that insight, I found great

value in learning, understanding, and applying Moon's strategies of self-reflective learning (Moon 2004) in my research. One aspect particularly useful for my study was when I considered her emphasis on the advantages in describing subjective interpretations of experiences (Moon 2004, 214) as opposed to reporting events objectively.

In my artistic practice, I also find many access points to Duchamp's writings (Duchamp, Sanouillet, and Peterson 1973) and his artwork. Moon's emphasis on subjectivity goes hand in hand with Duchamp's, who articulated, "In the creative act, the artist goes from intention to realisation through a chain of totally subjective reactions." (Engels-Schwarzpaul and Peters 2013, 232). Duchamp's statement brings the importance of subjectivity to the point that I permanently experiences in my own artistic practice.

I summarise that all three, the disciplines of reflective learning and autoethnography, and Duchamp's statement, postulate the "I" in the centre. In addition, all three communicate the combination of subjective and emotional experiences of the author and/or artist as substantial. When translating my artistic process into language I found great relevance with this central approach of subjectivity, because, in my role as an artist, I consider my journey through life and art as the core of my activities. For my research I have thus decided to blend methods of reflective learning and autoethnography and thereby I anticipate "inspective/subjective" rather than "perspective/objective" (Nugraha 2010, 11) insights. Whilst guiding myself with this hybrid theory, I also aimed to direct my writing from a self-reflection towards a self-expression because the latter is closer to my artistic practice. With this intention I also anticipate a stronger synergy between my writing and my practice, thus, a more effective cross-fertilisation between the two activities and outcomes.

Translating my Artistic Practice into Language

In my preliminary doctoral research plan, I recognised many close relations between Bergson's process philosophy (Bergson 2007; Bergson 1998) and my artistic practice. In particular, I identified that I differentiate, in my artistic process as Bergson did in his writings, between intuitive acts and decisions resulting from analysis (Bergson 1998, 267). This close relation motivated me to apply his writings as a medium for my reflections. In searching for ways of how I could guide myself for that task, I discovered Moon's suggestion to use "[q]uestions that are likely to be helpful in prompting more profound reflection" (Moon 2004, 211). Based on that insight, I constructed a method that I applied as follows.

First, I studied Bergson's two main books, *Creative Evolution* (Bergson 1998) and *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics* (Bergson 2007). Whilst reading, I had the dichotomy between intuition and analysis in mind and accordingly highlighted sentences that I valued as relevant or which attracted me emotionally. In a second reading, I revisited the highlighted sentences, estimated how valuable they were in translating my artistic practice into language and selected the most promising statements. I then copied those in my thesis and asked the following prompting question, "Does that statement describe an as-

pect in my artistic process?" Possible answers that I gave myself were either "yes: always," "no: never" or "sometimes." In a second phase I concisely described "why" and "how" my answers related to my artistic process. I interpret this methodology a customised systematic enquiry based on the notion of how semi-structured questions can be applied as an "interview guide" (Bryman 2012, 471). Because I interview myself, my integration could be described as a self-enquiry. Never the less, Bergson's voice was very much present in my discussion, as a fact, it prompted discussions that I had with myself. I therefore find it appropriate to situate my writings somewhere between a dialogue and a monologue.

Having immersed myself in Bergson's process philosophy for more than one year, I have learnt a lot about both his writings and my artistic process. This rigorous self-enquiry reminded me of Socrates and his famous statement, "The unexamined life is not worth living" (Longstaff 2013). As I became more and more interested in this ancient philosopher, I felt the need to study his ideas and life deeper, which then influenced my self-reflective writing. In the following section I will unfold how the Socratic Method plays another role in my research.

Aspects of the Socratic Method in my Self-Enquiry

Jaklic (Jaklic 2013) summarises, Socrates' conception of human wisdom as follows:

- a) Possessing knowledge of (what is possible and what is not within) a particular subject;
- b) Prudently keeping one's actions and one's claims about one's knowledge within the limits of one's knowledge, while at the same time
- c) Working to expand the limits of one's knowledge (of what is, or is possible) by testing the limits of one's knowledge.

I coincide with Socrates' understanding that knowledge is "embedded" in a subject, as stated in point a), rather than it being outside a person. Point b) postulates a humble attitude towards people who possess knowledge outside one's limits. The more I progress in my research, the more I learn about the fields of knowledge within and without my research scope which evokes in me a genuine respect towards my fellow scholars. When reflecting on point c) I naturally relate to Socrates' appeal to examine one's life. With that understanding, I particularly identify myself with his focus on the knowledge of the subject rather than orienting myself on the general knowledge. I interpret that testing the limits of one's knowledge can best be done when self-reflecting. With this insight I link my framework back to Moon's understanding of the correlation between reflection and learning, "We reflect in order to learn something, or we learn as a result of reflecting" (Moon 2004, 80). During my first year of reflective writing I definitely can confirm Moon's statement and Socrates pronouncement of the motivation to lifelong learning that is summarised in the above point c). I do not consider these two statements as separate, but rather I have experienced that these two approaches go hand in hand. Based on that insight I relate back to Socrates once more.

Jaklic concludes that, “Socrates’ discourse challenges people to ‘own’ their beliefs and the reasons why they hold them, instead of simply accepting what they have been told by their elders, teachers, and society in general” (Jaklic 2013, 155). In my research I experience that whilst continuously examining and discovering my own beliefs, I simultaneously develop my critical thinking skills. I therefore empower myself, and thus I am able to communicate

my beliefs more autonomously to elders, teachers, and society in general.

With this understanding I close the section of explaining the conceptual approach of my research methodology and lead over to content and insights of my research. In the following section I unfold some major observations that I found out when reflecting on my artistic practice and translating the latter into language.

Insights from Reflecting on my Artistic Practice

Referring back to my initial research plan, my aim was to reflect on my artistic process by finding out, how intuitive acts and decisions resulting from analysis complement or contrast each other. Bergson uses this dichotomy across his central writings (Bergson 1998; Bergson 2007) to elaborate the on the “two opposite directions of the work of consciousness” (Bergson 1998, 267).

Reflecting on Dictionary Term Definitions

To best initiate my research I felt the need to first find out how a dictionary defines the terms “decision,” “analysis,” “intuitive,” and “acts.” For this investigation, I consulted the online version of the Merriam-Webster dictionary (Merriam-Webster 2014), looked up the terms, copied definitions that I found they were helpful to understand my artistic process into my thesis, and then rigorously asked myself, how relevant are these definitions when I produce art. I structured my enquiry to rephrase the definitions into prompting questions as described in the above section titled Translating my artistic practice into language. After giving myself answers, I asked myself successive question that were prompted by the former answers. I continued this self-Q&A until I felt content and confident that I answered all those aspects around the above terms that I focused on my self-enquiry.

I consider my experience from this exercise valuable because by negotiating the understanding between a dictionary entry and my own use of these terms, I opened myself to the discussion of the topics that interested me. One major insight is that in my artistic process I apply all the above listed terms but I am not always conscious that I do so. Furthermore, I found out, that I use these concepts only vaguely, that I modify, dilute and deviate from the concepts behind the terms or blend them with others. I also found out that there is a difference of reflection about these concepts whilst being in the act of creating an artwork and reflecting about the act of creating an artwork afterwards. I conclude that reflecting about the terms is only possible for me in a post art production phase.

Another insight that I found relevant was, that in my artistic process I do not experience the dichotomy between

intuitive acts and decisions resulting from analysis. Instead, I constantly mix and blend these to opposing concepts, start half way with one approach and continue with the other or work with interruptions. In summary, I am often uncertain, vague and ambiguous when consciously applying those, and, of course, unaware when subconsciously informed by them. I also became aware of other complexities in my artistic process, for instance when I try to define when I produce art. There are, of course, the active processes that outsiders and I can perceive through senses. But there are also the non-observable processes in my mind, for instance when lying in bed, or doing a repetitive task that allows me to simultaneously progress my artistic process in my mind.

By having gained these insights I paved myself an accessible path to engage deeper in Bergson’s writings. It was not just a research induction, but because I negotiated the key terms in Bergson’s texts that are relevant to my research aim, a straight leap into the topic. In the following section I summarise these kinds of propositions of Bergson’s writings that helped me translate qualities and characteristics, which are inherent in my artistic process.

Rephrasing Bergson’s Propositions into Prompting Sentences and Reflecting thereof

In this part of my investigation, I set the focus on finding out how Bergson’s opposing concepts of intuitive acts and decisions resulting from analysis occur in my artistic process. For writing my prompting questions (Moon 2004, 210), I took Bergson’s statements and rephrased them, so that I was able to ask direct questions for discovering and grasping complex layers, which are inherent my work process. This research part is fragmented on one hand because I extracted Bergson’s statements out of his original writing contexts. On the other hand, my self-reflections are somewhat coherent because I was gradually building on my insights. Sometimes in my writing process, I reflected on my reflection. Looking at this process from a constructivism perspective, Moon suggests this is a second order reflection. She defines, “Second-order reflection is represented in any technique that requires a learner to look through previous reflective work and to write a deeper reflective

overview” (Moon 2004, 148). In my research, I applied the term meta-reflection for this activity. I found this learning activity valuable because it gave me a better understanding about what and how I reflected, and also I gained a deeper insight into my artistic process. In my writings, I interweaved both reflections and meta-reflections because I wrote those successively and alternated between them when I felt a need, or possibly, using Moon’s term, when I did “cognitive housekeeping” (Moon 2004, 27) for the purpose to harmonise my “cognitive dissonance[s]” (Moon 2004, 19). In my experience, I felt that this kind of order seeking and finding was only momentary effective because in my meta-reflections, I often generated new questions. I concluded that I could continue this process *ad infinitum*, and, having had this insight, I found again a strong affiliation to the Socratic method (Jaklic 2013).

I consider writing this article as a meta-meta-reflection of my thesis. Looking back at my research process, I conclude that I began with a question that I employed to investigate an enigma, then tried to construct meaning, inquired the newly found meaning and deconstructed it in order to find new meaning in the deconstructed fragments, etc. But besides this fragmentation, there is a chronology in both my thesis and this article that gives my research a narrative structure. Thereby, readers can easily follow my reflection processes because they are able to re-construct that, and how, one question lead to another. This aspect of my research reflects the autoethnographic approach thereof (Ellis, Adams, and Bochner 2011) and re-tells a section of “the unique narrative of [my] live” (Butler 2002, 121).

Relevance of Bergson’s Concepts of Language and Movement in my Artistic Practice

To better understand the relevance and context of this subsection, I think it is important to first explain the framework of my artistic practice. I consider myself to be a post-disciplinary artist working with different media that I employ to experimentally develop my artwork. Whilst purposely exploring a wide spectrum in my practice, I work unsystematically by avoiding repetitive processes. I thus set myself in opposition to these artists, who work with narrowly defined themes and variations. Saying that, I sometimes discover in hindsight that I could summarise groups of artwork with broad, opened ended and overarching concepts. However, I propose that in the majority of my production, the singularity of each piece is more important that any kind of grouping order or recognisable patterns that summarises them.

Reflecting on language use in my thesis, I realised that when I applied the ready-made English grammar concept, as opposed to freer writing styles, I could better communicate my ideas to academicians because I share this language convention with them. With this decision, I narrow my language-based expressions because I am elaborating my reflection with clear, understandable and causal arguments. I suggest that poetry and associative writings would be more related to my artistic process, because I could better capture both intuitive and analytical notions. However, at this stage, I did not find yet a use for such writing styles. By excluding the latter styles, I realised that in exclusively

writing academic English, I clearly bias myself towards the analytical side. I suggest, that by keeping my reflections fragmented, I am able to counter balance my writings. The fragmented writing style also relates better to the singularly oriented artistic results.

Bergson also elaborates on the relation between mind and language. He specifies: “The mind derives three kinds of representations that correspond to three categories of words, (1) qualities: adjectives, (2) forms or essences: substantives, (3) acts: verbs” (Bergson 1998, 303). I was interested to understand, if and how his categories occur in my work process. For my reflections, I have thus recalled specific tasks that I performed and tried to map my experiences with Bergson’s linguistic tripartition. I concluded that when producing art, these three categories of words are strongly interlinked with, and blended into, each other. Based on that insight, I realised that instead of separating the three kinds of representation, I used them in their chronological appearance to show the causality between them. This comprehension helped me both clarify and open my mind. As opposed to Bergson’s linguistic categorising and narrowing method, I was particularly drawn towards my expanding writing strategies. This realisation reflected my past experiences. Whilst translating my artistic process into language, I have pointed towards the occasional ambivalence, uncertainty and fuzziness that I have experienced when making art and thus added another level of complexity that describes my artistic process.

Besides his linguistic suggestions, Bergson also introduces three “profoundly different becomings” (Bergson 1998, 304). He differentiates between qualitative, evolutionary and extensive movements. His trisection of the concept “movement” appeals to me because it has a close relation to my artistic process in the sense that I interpret movement as a synonym to evolution. After understanding how Bergson uses these terms, I composed prompting questions that I directed to past activities in my artistic production and realised, that I have applied all three kinds of movement. My concluding thoughts about this reflection are similar as in the above paragraph. Bergson’s strict division of the concept of becoming does not mirror how I apply those. When producing artwork, I realise that I can use all his three differentiations in my descriptive reflections. However, I find it difficult to state that a particular act in my production fits into only one category. For instance, when I modify the colour balance of a photograph, I define this act clearly a qualitative becoming because I regard changing a colour balance as a qualitative process, considering that I change how a picture looks like. Simultaneously, I experience this work process as an evolutionary becoming because by implementing this work step, I kind of grow my artwork, in the understanding that it becomes more mature for me.

Besides my familiarity with these two kinds of movements, I encountered difficulties when I tried to comprehend Bergson’s third category of extensive movements. He compares, “The action of eating or of drinking is not like the action of fighting: they are different extensive movements” (Bergson 1998, 304). Bergson does not elaborate on this example nor does he explain his definition of the extensive movements in more depth. My understanding of the adjective extensive is, that something increases in di-

mension or in complexity. With this in mind, I perceive eating and drinking not as extensive movements but I can understand that the action of fighting can extend, for instance from a dispute towards a war. With this in mind, I suggest that when working as an artist, besides growing my artistic work, I also extend my artistic and artist experience through more practice, or in Kahneman's words, I develop my "intuitive expertise" (Kahneman 2011, chap. 22). In that light, each activity in my artistic process contributes to that effect, including the above described colour balance adjustment example. With this in mind, I also regard the expansion of my artistic expertise as an evolutionary movement. In summary, in my artistic practice, I experience and value Bergson's profoundly different becomings as morphing into each other, without "tricking" my perception and intelligence to generalise the three different movements "into a single representation of becoming" (Bergson 1998, 304).

Relating Bergson's Definition of the Concept of Knowledge to my Research

In this section, I summarise how Bergson's definition of the immobile, cinematographical kind of knowledge (Bergson 1998, 305) relates to my artistic process. He argues that perception, intellection, and language proceed on the mechanism that works as follows. Firstly, we take immobile snapshots of reality, like individual frames, and then string those together, like frame by frame in a movie production. In doing so, we imitate becoming. Bergson concludes, "... the mechanism of our ordinary knowledge is of a cinematographical kind" (Bergson 1998, 306). He further points out the problems and limitations of such an approach of knowledge and argues: In order to experience the "movement of reality," one needs to "escape from the cinematographical mechanism of thought" (Bergson 1998, 313). In the following paragraphs, I summarise thoughts of how and when I consider immobile or static concepts of knowledge in my artistic production. I then expand those by explaining how I experience a fluid process in both my artistic process and artwork perception.

While responding to the prompting questions that I adapted from Bergson's statements when he elaborated on the concept of duration, I found out that the jerkiness of jumping from snapshot to snapshot does not apply in my artistic production. Moreover, I consider the processuality in my artistic process as dynamic, organic, multi-layered and continual. Reflecting on how I perceive and interpret my own artwork, I realised that I have similar experiences of fluidity instead of applying fixed, static concepts. With this insight, I realise my experience also coincides with a postmodern approach to interpret art and refer to Ward, who paraphrases Barthes, "A text moves through history, geography and culture, constantly gathering new meanings and revising old ones as it goes" (Ward 2003, 162). This understanding also relates to Bergson's definition of the concept of becoming. He states, "Matter or mind, reality has appeared to us as a perpetual becoming. It makes itself or it unmakes itself, but it is never something made" (Bergson 1998, 272). In contrast to the static, mechanistic definition and application of knowledge, I agree with Bergson's definition of the perpetual becoming and conclude that I

experience both my artistic process and artwork interpretation as a kind of a permanent fluid knowledge process, which never solidifies. But I am also aware, that this is only one aspect of knowledge generation and application that I implement. Beyond that, I remind myself of Bergson's dichotomy between intuition and analysis.

By further inquiring into my artistic process, I realised that contingency plays an important role in the intuitive acts of my artistic process. I experience that my intuitive acts are dynamic and flowing. In addition, I also employ phases where I logically reflect on my process. In those developments, I mostly apply and adapt immobile, cinematographical concepts of knowledge to reflect on the snapshots of my stages. These reflections help me to bring my artwork to a more advanced level. For instance, when working on a video artwork, I ask myself how the concept of time, particularly the notions of start and end of a time span, relate to my artwork when it is played in a loop. As a result of such reflections, I often find myself in situations where I can choose between alternatives. Having this in mind, I realise that contingency is most of the time a moving agent in my intuitive acts, whereas choice is often a conscious decision making process inherent in my analytical work phases. On the other side, I experience that I also choose when working intuitively and contingency influences my choices when reflecting analytically. Also not considered are how my feelings influence my consciousness (Bergson 2007, chap. VI; Mlodinow 2012, chap. 9), and, contrary to strict logic, how my unconsciousness affects (Bergson 2007, chap. II) my analytical decisions, emotional states, and intuitive acts. When contemplating my previous train of thoughts from a meta-reflection perspective, I realise the complexity of my task, which is to translate my artistic process into language. Bergson brought this insight to the point: "The more complexity the intellects puts into its object by analysing it, the more complex is the order it finds there" (Bergson 1998, 379).

Often, when working on an artwork, I do not strive that the outcome obeys the concept of order. Intending to comprehensively reflect on my experiences in my artistic processes, I thus feel the need to add to the complexity of order and the concept of disorder. From that perspective, Bergson's following enquiry corresponds to how I approach my artistic practice: "The question [...] is to know why is there order, and not disorder, in things?" (Bergson 1998, 491).

With the above elaboration, I have summarised my most relevant insights of my task to translate my artistic process into language. In my further research, I also rephrased those kind of Bergson's sentences that prompted me to respond to his ideas about the concepts of nothing, and order and disorder. Furthermore, I investigated deeper in his concept of duration because I felt and realised that this could give me a greater insight into my artistic process, which it did. However, the scope of this journal article does not allow me to further elaborate on these insights. With that in mind I continue to explain how I consider implementing my insights in the context of art education.

Implementation Intentions of my Research in Art Education

By no means have I reached a point where I can say that I have successfully and completely translated my artistic process into language and, reflecting on my insights, I predict that I will never accomplish this task. However, during my research process, I have realised that my self-reflections and meta-reflections have helped me “to better understand my own thinking” (Daichendt 2012, 79). This insight has a greater value for me than coming up with definite statements that describe my artistic practice. Having this understanding, I suggest that the methodology that I have implemented in my research has its own value that stands in addition to my insights, which I have gained. I thus consider that my research’s means also became my research’s end.

At this early stage of my doctoral research, I have not had the opportunity to evaluate my insights with a group of students. At this phase, my implementations are therefore only suggestions and plans that I consider in my further research. However, I do not speak from a “blue skies research” perspective but instead, by contextualising my study with my research framework and finding relevance of my insights with the literature, I suggest that my predictions are well grounded and thus have potentials. But before predicting the value of my research in its final stage, I am re-approaching its beginning, with an intention to focus on generalising my insights. In the following paragraphs, I thus revisit the fundament of my research intention with the aim to translate my artistic practice into language.

To gain an overview, I suggest to first observing my research from a bird’s eye perspective. For many artists, uncertainty, unpredictability, and indeterminability are central components in their practice. Rust summarises: “For the artist it is not only normal, but in fact necessary to avoid the kind of intentionality that would be usual for most other professions” (Rust 2007, 71). I have experienced that self-reflecting on my artistic practice helped me “as a means of coping with situations that are unstructured and/or unpredictable” (Moon 2004, 101). Assuming that this insight has a wider relevance, I propose that my research could also be of value for art students, whose practise is driven by unknown and unknowable aspects and motivations. In my further thoughts, I thus elaborate on recommendations of why and how my insights could be implemented.

As a contribution to “applied research” I suggest a knowledge transfer into art education, advancing teaching and reflection methodologies as well as providing inputs for curriculum design in artistic research (Koskinen 2009; Varto 2009). Within that context, I foresee that my research could “empower” (Moon, 2004, pp. 86, 109) and inspire art students to reflect and understand their own process and artwork in more depth. As a result, I suggest that students and graduates could then better articulate their artistic practice and artwork in “artist talks” (Denzin 2006, 9), interviews, press releases and funding applications (Tan 2012, 65).

Besides implementing my research in tertiary teaching and research environments, I propose that my insights could also be of value in art education at primary and secondary schools because the discipline of art making is also practiced in these institutions. I thus recommend that self-reflection empowers students of all ages because I foresee, by applying my methodology in their learning, students support themselves to become creators of their own knowledge (Freire 2000). Furthermore, self-reflection enables students to raise their self-awareness, develops their critical consciousness, and they become more aware of the teacher student dichotomy (Chomsky, Gardner, and della Chiesa 2013). Having this big picture in mind, I foresee to evaluate my research’s relevance in primary and secondary schools in a follow-up phase after I have received feedback and response from tertiary students. This decision makes sense to me because in my role as a senior lecturer, I can better relate and understand a tertiary education student cohort. In the continuing paragraph I outline my intentions and plans of how I would do that.

Suggestions for Research Validation and Generalisation

In order to find out the relevance of my research, I propose a validity research phase. For this purpose, I intend to inspire and guide art students to ask prompting questions (Moon 2004, 210) that are directed to find out how and why a self-selected text, exhibition, artwork, artist interview, etc. could be relevant in their own individual artistic practice. The student’s depth of their self-reflections could be discussed and evaluated in his/her “ability to recognise and manage relevance” (Moon 2004, 102); a relevance that the art student first and foremost defines for him/herself.

I recommend that students record their self-reflections in learning journals (Moon 2004, 179) that allow them to review their entries in a chronological order. Contemplating my own learning process, I benefited myself by organising my writings chronographically because by re-reading my own reflections I have realised my development as an artist and artistic researcher. Simultaneously, I was able to identify my learning progress on a meta-cognitive level (Moon 2004, 84). Furthermore, I have gained a deeper understanding of my artistic practice by both “learning from the process of writing and learning from the process of reading back what is on the page” (Moon 2004, 94).

The aspect of writing a personal narrative has also helped me “to understand [my]self or some aspects of [my] life as it intersects with a cultural context” (Ellis, Adams, and Bochner 2011, 6). With this understanding I realised overlapping and cross-fertilising values between writing a self-reflective learning journal and a personal narrative, thus an amalgamation between values suggested in education and autoethnography. Based on this insight, I also rec-

ognised a strong relation between Moon's prompting question method (Moon 2004, 210) and the Socratic method (Jaklic 2013), as I have experienced that both methods supported me to become "a responsible, autonomous adult individual with good critical thinking skills" (Jaklic 2013, 149).

Being fully aware of the complexities that are inherent in my artistic process and understanding my own subjectivity through a poststructural framework, I realise that my personal writings "remain perpetually under construction" (Gannon 2006, 480). Here again, I recognise a related approach between the Socratic method (Jaklic 2013) and poststructural definitions of the subject (Gannon 2006) because both concepts acknowledge the complexity of knowledge and both postmodernist philosophers and Socrates are/were "always asking 'Why?,' never satisfied with facile or even finite answers to any given question" (Phillips 2012, 150). Contemplating these cross-references, I paradoxically conclude that Socrates was probably the first "pre-post-modern" philosopher. I experience my own perpetual questioning as an intrinsic and vital motivation to learn more about myself, and the cultural context, in which I am acting and reacting.

Research Expansion: Self-Reflecting on my Artistic Outcomes

Whilst writing this article, I am simultaneously researching how to translate my artistic outcomes, the works of art, into language. During this research stage, I have already experienced, that by finding out how I produce art, I also empower myself to better articulate my "conscious intentions and unconscious aspirations" (Mäki 2014) that I apply in my artistic process. Furthermore, this process allows me to expose my "knowledge about society and humanity" (Mäki 2014), that is, in one way or the other, inherent in my artwork. As a preliminary insight, I suggest that both my artistic process and my artistic outcomes merge into each other. By being able to better articulate both aspects, I suggest that I have reached a higher level of self-competence that helps me to better position myself in the art world.

Based on my literature review, my own experience, and my predictions, I suggest that the methodology-hybrid, which I have assembled and adapted for own my research, could also be of value for art students. I have thus the vision that, by implementing my research, future art students will also be able to enrich their own artistic practice and their communication thereof.

REFERENCES

- Ahtila, Eija-Liisa. 2008. "Eija-Liisa Ahtila." In *The Artist's Knowledge 2*, edited by Jan Kaila, 12–15. Helsinki, Finland: The Finnish Academy of Fine Arts (FAFA). <http://www.scribd.com/doc/125873958/The-Artists-Knowledge-vol-2>.
- Aldrich, John H. 2014. *Interdisciplinarity: Its Role in a Discipline-Based Academy*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Belinfante, Sam. 2012. "Sam Belinfante." In *Doing Research*, edited by Jan Kaila, Henk Slager, and Annette W. Balkema, 84–88. Helsinki, Finland: The Finnish Academy of Fine Arts.
- Bergson, Henri. 1998. *Creative Evolution*. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications.
- Bergson, Henri. 2007. *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*. Edited by Mabelle L. Anderson. EPUB edition. Mineola, N.Y.: Dover Publications.
- Borgdorff, Henk. 2012. "The Production of Knowledge in Artistic Research." In *The Routledge Companion to Research in the Arts*, edited by Michael Biggs and Henrik Karlsson, 44–63. London, New York: Routledge.
- Bryman, Alan. 2012. *Social Research Methods: 4th Edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Buckingham, Will, Douglas Burnham, Peter J. King, Clive Hill, Marcus Weeks, and John Marenbo. 2011. *The Philosophy Book*. New York: DK Publishing.
- Butler, Christopher. 2002. *Postmodernism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Chomsky, Noam, Howard Gardner, and Bruno della Chiesa. 2013. "Pedagogy of the Oppressed." *Askwith Forum*. Accessed March 20. <https://youtu.be/-SOW55BU7yg>.
- Daichendt, James G. 2012. *Artist Scholar*. Bristol, UK / Chicago, USA: Intellect.
- Denzin, Norman K. 2006. "Analytic Autoethnography, or Déjà Vu All Over Again." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 35 (4). <http://arenaresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Denzin-2.pdf>.
- Duchamp, Marcel, Michel Sanouillet, and Elmer Peterson. 1973. *The Writings of Marcel Duchamp*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Da Capo Press.
- Ellis, Carolyn, Tony E. Adams, and Arthur P. Bochner. 2011. "Autoethnography: An Overview." *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 12 (1): 1–15. <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1589/3095>.
- Elo, Mika. 2009. "Passages of Articulation: Art and Research Touching." In *Reflections and Connections*, edited by Nithikul Nimkulrat and Tim O'Riley, 19–26. Helsinki, Finland: University of Art and Design Helsinki.
- Engels-Schwarzpaul, A.-Chr., and Michael A. Peters. 2013. *Of Other Thoughts: Non-Traditional Ways to the Doctorate*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- Freire, Paulo. 2000. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Edited by Continuum. New York.

- Gannon, Susanne. 2006. "The (Im)Possibilities of Writing the Self-Writing: French Poststructural Theory and Auto-ethnography." *Cultural Studies – Critical Methodologies* 6 (4 474-495). <http://csc.sagepub.com/content/6/4/474.refs>.
- Jaklic, Emily. 2013. "But Socrates, What Is It That You Do?" University of Guelph. https://dspace.lib.uoguelph.ca/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10214/7519/Jaklic_Emily_201309_PhD.pdf?sequence=1.
- Kahneman, Daniel. 2011. *Thinking, Fast and Slow*. EPUB edition. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Klewitz, Ralph. 2015. "Ralph Klewitz–Linklog." Accessed 11 March. <http://ralphklewitz.blogspot.com/>
- Koskinen, Ilpo. 2009. "Throwing the Baby Out or Taking Practice Seriously." In *Reflections and Connections*, edited by Nithikul Nimkulrat and Tim O'Riley, 11–17. Helsinki, Finland: University of Art and Design Helsinki.
- Longstaff, Simon. 2013. "The Unexamined Life Is Not Worth Living." *New Philosopher*. <http://www.newphilosopher.com/articles/being-fully-human/>.
- Mäki, Teemu. 2014. "Art and Research Colliding." *The Journal for Artistic Research (JAR)* (5).
- Merriam-Webster. 2014. "Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Eleventh Edition." Accessed 3 Mai. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/>.
- Mlodinow, Leonard. 2012. *Subliminal: How Your Unconscious Mind Rules Your Behavior*. EBUB edition. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Moon, Jennifer A. 2004. *A Handbook of Reflective and Experiential Learning: Theory and Practice*. New York: Routledge-Falmer.
- Nugraha, Adhi. 2010. "Discourses on Research: Where Is the Site of Artistic Researches?" *Synnyt/Origins* 2. http://arted.uiah.fi/synnyt/2_2010/nugraha.pdf.
- Phillips, Christopher. 2012. "Socratic Inquiry for All Ages." *Childhood & Philosophy* 8 (15): 131–151. <http://www.periodicos.proped.pro.br/index.php/childhood/article/view/1149/883>.
- Rust, Chris. 2007. "Unstated Contributions – How Artistic Inquiry Can Inform Interdisciplinary Research." *International Journal of Design* 1 (3).
- Scrivener, Stephen. 2009. "The Roles of Art and Design Process and Object in Research." In *Reflections and Connections*, edited by Nithikul Nimkulrat and Tim O'Riley, 69–80. Helsinki, Finland: University of Art and Design Helsinki.
- Tan, Lisa. 2012. "Lisa Tan." In *Doing Research*, edited by Jan Kaila, Henk Slager, and Annette W Balkema, 63–68. Helsinki, Finland.
- Varto, Juha. 2009. *Basics of Artistic Research*. Helsinki, Finland: University of Art and Design Helsinki.
- Ward, Glenn. 2003. *Postmodernism*. London: Hodder Education.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ralph Klewitz: Doctoral Candidate, Department of Art,
School of Arts, Design, and Architecture,
Aalto University, Helsinki, Finland