system, data and method in creative disciplines

practice and theory in the contemporary visual arts

Judith Mottram, School of Material, Royal College of Art, London
pinning jelly to the wall
creating form from fluff
spinning yarns from gossip
pulling the wool over
herding cats

tinking in, through and with art
the creative process as pathway
refusing every explanatory gaze
puncturing the comfort zone
Focus

System
  - How artists work
  - How artists’ reputations develop

Data
  - The research field
  - Trouble with definitions

Method
  - Artistic research
  - Psycho-physics, neuroscience & psychology
  - Interrogating visual creativity and its discourse
Pinning down paint
With the great variety of art today, the one doesn't exclude the other by any means!
In other words, the best sales chance still remains the right buy!
This has been at any rate the philosophy of this information service from the beginning, which I will also hold on to in the future because it has obviously proved itself.
As to our marketing director's plea for help, let me say so much:
There are artists and "artists", galleries and "galleries", just as there are museums and "museums". For years I have endeavoured with "art aktuell" to report primarily on those artists, museums and galleries worth paying attention to, who—in one way or the other—have contributed to the history of art and attracted attention beyond regional and national borders.
As far as galleries are concerned, I advise you if at all possible to buy art only where you can bring it back again, at least at all times on commission or where you can exchange it for other works! And this without fuss!!
I admit, there are relatively few such galleries, primarily those mentioned in "art aktuell" more often than others—as opposed to, above all, dealers, who are also active and have their justification. But also as opposed to auction houses, which are even more justified, which however recommend themselves primarily as buying sources for galleries and dealers—as well as selling possibility for collectors.
I am perfectly aware that I'm touching on a controversial topic in giving preference to auction houses—from the collector's standpoint over selling institutions. As source for buying, on the other hand, they don't seem to me half as suitable for collectors, if at all! For more reasons than I can discuss here.
Auctions houses—like express-train stations—depend on the quickest disposal of their clients and business; this is due after all to...
The auction business
Modelling the system

Alan Bowness and the conditions for success

Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi and the conditions for creativity

Pierre Bourdieu and field of cultural production

David Galenson and what success can tell us

Olav Velthuis and the symbolic meaning of prices
Fake or fortune?
Reputations, aesthetic objects and modelling systems

Scope for data mining
New methods of tracking social networks

Artprice.com artists, key figures and market trends
ArtTactic.com unbiased art market research
Artfacts.net unlock the art market
Artinsight.co.uk talks and events delivering art market knowledge, insight and expertise
Research in art & design and the research field - a history

1960s 1st ten PhDs in art & design
1970  Coldstream report
1974  National Council for Diplomas in Art & Design merged with CNAA
1984  CNAA statement on how to infuse teaching with a sense of critical enquiry
1985  100th art & design PhD in the UK
1988  CNAA conference: The Matrix of Research in Art & Design Education
1992  Establishment of post-1992 universities
1996  First substantial submission from Art & Design to RAE
2000  500th PhD in Art & Design in the UK
2010  Creative arts & design PhD completions reaching 500 p.a.
The scale of the UK education field – first degrees

subjects of first degree graduates, UK universities, 2013-14

- Medicine & dentistry
- Subjects allied to medicine
- Veterinary sciences
- Biological sciences
- Agricultural sciences
- Physical sciences
- Mathematical sciences
- Computer sciences
- Engineering & technology
- Architecture, building & planning
- Law
- Social studies
- Creative arts & design
- Historical & philosophical studies
- Languages
- Mass communications & documentation
- Business & administrative studies
- Education
- Combined
- Mathematics
- Humanities
- Creative arts
- Social sciences
- Physical sciences
- Agriculture & related subjects
- Veterinary sciences
- Subjects allied to medicine
- Medicine & dentistry

Thousands
Scale of activity in different subjects

subjects of first degree graduates and doctorates, UK universities, 2013-14

First degree scale is in 10000s

Doctorate scale is in 1000s
## Dewey categorisation of EThoS records

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dewey Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>701-708</td>
<td>Standard subdivisions of fine and decorative arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>701</td>
<td>Philosophy and theory of fine and decorative arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>702</td>
<td>Miscellany of fine and decorative arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>703</td>
<td>Dictionaries, encyclopedias, concordances of fine and decorative arts</td>
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</tr>
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<td>708</td>
<td>Galleries, museums, private collections of fine and decorative arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>709</td>
<td>History, geographic treatment, biography</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 730-739 Standard subdivisions of fine and decorative arts

- 730 Sculpture and related arts
- 731-735 Sculpture
  - 731-735.2 Specific periods
- 736-739 Other plastic arts
  - 736 Carving and carvings
  - 737 Numismatics and sigillography
  - 738 Ceramic arts
  - 739 Art metalwork

### 740-749 Graphic arts & decorative arts

- 740 Graphic arts [formerly 760] and decorative arts
  - 741 Drawing and drawing
    - 742 Perspective in drawing
    - 743 Drawing and drawings by subject
    - 744 [Unassigned]
    - 745 Decorative arts
    - 746 Textile arts
    - 747 Interior decoration
    - 748 Glass
    - 749 Furniture and accessories
- 750 Painting
  - 750.01 Philosophy and theory
  - 750.02 Miscellany
  - 750.03 History, geographic treatment, biography
  - 750.04 Iconography
  - 750.91-750.98 Periods of development
  - 750.99 *Nonliterate peoples, and earliest times to 499
  - 750.99.01-750.99.99 *500-1599
  - 751 *1600-1699
  - 752 *1700-1799
  - 753 *1800-1899
  - 754 *1900-1999
  - 755 *2000-2099
- 760 Printmaking and prints
  - 760.01 Philosophy and theory
  - 760.02 Miscellany
  - 760.03 History, geographic treatment, biography
  - 760.04 Iconography of graphic arts
  - 760.05 History, geographic treatment, biography of graphic arts
  - 760.11 Paintings, procedures, apparatus, equipment, materials, forms
  - 760.21 Technique, apparatus, equipment, materials, forms
  - 760.31 History, geographic treatment, biography
  - 760.41 History, geographic treatment, biography of graphic arts
  - 760.51 History, geographic treatment, biography of graphic arts
  - 760.61 History, geographic treatment, biography of graphic arts
  - 760.71 History, geographic treatment, biography of graphic arts
  - 760.81 History, geographic treatment, biography of graphic arts
  - 760.91 History, geographic treatment, biography of graphic arts
- 761 Prints
  - 761.01 Philosophy and theory
  - 761.02 Miscellany
  - 761.03 History, geographic treatment, biography
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Data and the trouble with definitions

Data-driven demands of the modern workplace

*Count us in: Quantitative Skills for a New Generation*

Statistics may rule our lives, but they are no way to measure the true value of the arts
(Andrew Marr, Observer, 29.07.01)

Black box theory

Caillois wanted to cut the bean open to find out its secret, while Breton was offended by such a suggestion, arguing that such an approach would dispel the bean’s mystery and undermine its potential for poetic speculation in its viewers’ minds (Marquard Smith, Post-screen literacy, 2015)
Output types History sub-panel and main panel B

History sub-panel REF output types

output types in REF submission Main Panel B
Artistic research and its methods

Artistic research is … any kind of production or original use and dissemination of knowledge – that artists make as part of or in connection with their artistic creativity (Soren Kjorup 2010)

…the trans- or interdisciplinary research conducted by artists in their artistic practices in not characterised by an objective, empirical approach (Henk Slager 2010)

‘spasmic, interdisciplinary probes, haphazard cognitive investigations, dissipating interaction, and imaginary archiving’ (Sarat Maharaj, 2004)

A process of investigation leading to new insights effectively shared
Psycho-physics and something to see

Looking at paintings again
Experts and non-experts?
Looking at what the critics see
What is said about colour?
New perspectives from neuroscience & psychology

Neuroscience
   Ramachandran’s 10 aesthetic laws
   Integration of ‘old’ and ‘new’ aesthetics

Psychology
   Cognitive psychology and the conditions for creativity
   Gestalt psychology and figural goodness
And as for interpretation....

International Art English

Comparisons with linguistic corpora
- PhD abstracts, Art & Craft, 2008-2013
- International Colour Association Conference abstracts 2013
- Selected exhibition reviews and catalogue essays 1992-4 & 2012-14