

## **THE DOCTORAL PROGRAMME IN ARTISTIC RESEARCH**

The Doctoral Programme in Artistic Research is a joint project of the Theatre Academy Helsinki, the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts, the Sibelius Academy and the Aalto University School of Art and Design. It is the first joint doctoral programme of Finnish art universities that focuses solely on artistic research and explores artistic practices, thinking and observation.

The purpose of the doctoral programme is to develop and enrich the common research culture of Finnish art universities, strengthen the status of artistic research in Finland, amplify its social significance and create international networks.

The four-year programme will begin in January 2012 and end in December 2015. During that period, at least five students are expected to graduate from the programme with the degree of Doctor of Arts (Art and Design). The programme is funded by the Academy of Finland.

## **OBJECTIVES RELATED TO THE PROGRAMME CONTENT**

**The programme focuses on 1) the methodology and practices of artistic research; 2) art, aesthetics and society; and 3) a new notion of artistic agency.**

### **1) Methodology and practices of artistic research**

Artistic research is the common denominator of the doctoral programme. In practice, this means that artistic research is understood as multisensory, multiartistic and multidisciplinary research in which cooperation, variation and comparison between areas of knowledge and skill serve as tools of knowledge production. How should such research be conducted, supervised and assessed? And how should its results be communicated? The doctoral programme allows postgraduate students, researchers in charge of postgraduate studies, teachers and supervisors at art universities to consider and develop, together with various other professionals, the methodology of artistic research and its theoretical basis. Only through such content-related discussion can shared criteria and good practices be established.

### **2) Art, *aesthetics* and society**

The basic principle of the emancipation of modern society is that citizens transform themselves from objects of change to subjects of change. The arts and art institutions can support individuals in this emancipation only if they themselves are able to change; in other words, if they can find and justify their mission in the current historical and social conditions. How can various political imperatives – whether ecological, economic or administrative – be translated into the language of art? The language of art here means the various media of *aesthetics* in which art is created and experienced. *Aesthetics*, on the other hand, refers to those primary processes that might be broadly described as aesthetic and in which and through which the world makes itself known and knowable, experienceable and shareable. The question of the relationship between society and *aesthetics*, as well as of

establishing and altering that relationship, is the question of *art*. Inasmuch as art is a shared concern for the doctoral programme and art universities, it also becomes for them a public affair, a *res publica*.

Art- and artist-based research is necessary not only for political or institutional reasons, but also because of the inherent urge in art and artists to address the question of the relationship between art and society. In the current historical context, experimental art, or the supposedly autonomous evolution of art, is evidently not enough. Artistic research constructs and justifies new or different forms of sensory experience through theory formation and then uses them to create new connections between art and other fields of knowledge, social practices and public discourses.

Clearly, academic artistic research will have a major impact on how art is practiced in future and how it manifests itself in society. Artistic research is expected and hoped to diversify artists' public engagement and to develop new forms of involvement.

### **3) New artistic agency**

Exploring the issue of today's artistic agency requires further research. Academic artistic research approaches the issue from two perspectives:

On the one hand, artistic research creates and justifies new models of artistic agency, challenges and renews traditional models, develops new forms of interaction and encounter between artists and audiences, opens up new fields of operation, reaches new audiences or expands those already in existence, promotes cooperation between various social functions, and develops artistic applications for education, social services and industry. Each artist addresses the personal questions "Who am I?" and "How do I work?" by articulating them through research in the form of more general questions concerning artistic agency, to which each research project provides its own answers. The latter are directly relevant when considering such issues as: "What kind of art instruction should be offered and to whom?", "What kind of art and artistic agency should be supported?", and "How is the relationship between art and citizenship justified at any given time?" The doctoral programme aims to establish a well-grounded vision of the opportunities provided by artistic research for artistic creation today and tomorrow.

On the other hand, a postgraduate degree in the arts creates not only certain research results, but also a new kind of artistic expert and practitioner whose future work is important for both the arts and societal development more generally. In practice, the relevance and visibility of research results depend on both the researcher's own efforts and motivation as well as on institutional opportunities to continue along the path taken. How can the two converge and correspond? The status and role of postdoctoral artistic research is a much broader issue than that of equivalent career progression ("tenure track") at science universities; the discussion has only just begun. In terms of the development of the field, it is every bit as challenging to expand and diversify the social applications of art as it is to

enable doctors of arts to work as “independent” artistic postdoctoral researchers. The doctoral programme aims to suggest models for both development targets and to consider their mutual relationship.

### **Summary:**

The Doctoral Programme in Artistic Research enables students to address and explore the kind of broad issues outlined above. It encourages students to assume responsibility for the development and future of the field through their own research. Each doctoral student selected for the programme will work on the common and shared issues associated with the programme within the context and scope of their own research. Plans for a shared future will be made through cooperation and discussion between doctoral graduates, researchers, teachers and various specialists. The outcomes will include not only new degrees and researchers, but also methodologies, practices, academic pedagogies and assessment criteria for artistic research as well as expertise on the interaction between art and society.

### **PRACTICAL OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of the doctoral programme is to support the graduation of its postgraduate students and promote the quality of their research. One of the programme objectives is to guarantee that all its doctoral students who receive funding graduate within four years. Another objective is to develop academic artistic research and an academic research culture as well as cooperation between art universities both in Finland and abroad, especially in the Scandinavian countries.

The teaching and research carried out in the programme serve the shared needs of the affiliated universities. Activities will be planned systematically to avoid overlaps with existing curricula. The programme activities will supplement the research and postgraduate education carried out at the partner institutions, with which the programme will encourage close cooperation.

From the outset of their studies, doctoral students will be involved in determining the themes and implementation of teaching and research. Indeed, one of the starting points for the programme activities will be the students’ shared needs and interests.

### **STRUCTURE AND PROGRESS**

All doctoral students must prepare a research process plan (in addition to the personal study plan written components of their research. The rights and duties of students in the doctoral programme are specified in a separate document.

### **Teaching**

The doctoral programme runs on a term schedule (eight terms in total). Each term, one of the partner universities hosts the programme. The first year’s host is Theatre Academy Helsinki, followed by the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts, the Sibelius Academy and the Aalto University. During the four-year period, each partner university will host the

programme twice. Students will be responsible, together with members of the steering committee and the coordinator, for the implementation of teaching and research.

The programme for each term is structurally similar and consists of three stages:

1) Research seminar. Students present their research projects and receive feedback. The study plans that students draft for the doctoral programme must follow the seminar timetable. The research seminar is organised over two or three days in January and August. Each student is expected to present his or her progress during the seminar.

2) Theme seminar. Students work together on a jointly agreed issue or phenomenon related to the programme objectives. Each student addresses the topic from his or her own research and goals. The open seminar (see below) is prepared. The theme seminar is organised in March and October and lasts approximately 1.5 days.

3) Open seminar. The open seminar is a shared research opportunity for all the affiliated art universities. The topic is the same as that of the theme seminar. Open seminars may be arranged together with Swedish and Norwegian doctoral programmes. The open seminar is organised over approximately two days in May and November/December. It is followed by a meeting of the students of each doctoral programme to provide them an opportunity to reflect on what they have learnt at the open seminar.

Each of the three stages may involve teaching, visits, workshops, demonstrations and personal meetings with the supervisor, as agreed. If necessary, students can also supplement their studies by participating in postgraduate education at partner universities. The activities will be specified in more detail as the programme progresses. Supervisory seminars may also be held for the completion of dissertation work, if separately agreed upon.

### **Facilities and laboratory**

Each university provides work premises for their doctoral students. The creation of a shared work space (a laboratory of artistic research) will also be considered if students deem this appropriate for their mutual cooperation.

### **Student funding**

Each student may apply for a travel grant of EUR 500 to participate in a seminar or similar event once a term. In addition, each student may apply for a production grant of EUR 2,500 once during the four-year programme period and for a translation grant of EUR 500 once per academic year.

### **Information and publications**

The doctoral programme will open its web pages on the Theatre Academy Helsinki website to provide information about open events and other activities in Finnish, Swedish and

English. A closed group will be created for students (and the steering committee) on Pandora, the Theatre Academy's intranet. The students themselves are responsible for keeping their details up to date on the programme web pages. They will be encouraged to publish their research in JAR and other journals in the field.

Guest speakers will be asked to provide written copies of their open seminar talks so that they can be posted on the programme web pages. One or more publications will be issued in 2014 and 2015 to present student research projects and other programme activities.

### **International cooperation**

The international activities of the Doctoral Programme in Artistic Research focus on the Nordic countries, in particular two Nordic doctoral programmes: *Den nationella konstnärliga forskarskolan* in Sweden and *Stipendprogram for kunsnerisk utviklingsarbeid* in Norway. The doctoral programme will encourage cooperation between Finnish, Swedish and Norwegian students by arranging joint seminars in each country. The idea is for the host to be responsible for the programme, and the guests for their own travel costs. The doctoral programme also promotes the broader international cooperation of its students.

*For more information on the Doctoral Programme in Artistic Research, please contact the director of the programme, professor Esa Kirkkopelto, tel: +358 400 792 594, email: esa.kirkkopelto@teak.fi, or the coordinator: Hanna Westerlund, tel: +358 400 792 026, email: hanna.westerlund@teak.fi.*