



"But something is happening and you don't know what it is—  
Do you, Mr. Jones?" (Bob Dylan, *Ballad of the Thin Man*)

The session is planned to start out as a panel with *two pitches*—by Henrik Hellstenius and Theodor Barth—continued as conversation and landed by extending the invitation to the audience. The topic is the [transposition](#) of Artistic Research (AR) unto the variety of *arenas* where it may have some purchase: be it art-school (KHiO/NMH) as one arena, academic arenas and a variety of others.

That is, unto the varieties of professional arenas where the nature of what is given to sense, receive and discuss is at *risk*, by *no means* given, and where the arena—where the work is received—is *instrumentally* implicated in hatching concepts, process and outcomes. Discussions that are sprouting from e.g. Heiner Goebbels and Georges Aperghis work with [music theatre](#), focus on its *hybridity*.

We want to assess whether it alternatively is possible to consider the arena as an *empirical* asset to investigations in artistic research: *not* seeking to categorise the arena as e.g. a hybrid, but to *instrumentalise* it: and to make it work for *thinking* in AR-projects. That is, in the terms of Maria Puig della Bella Casa (2015)<sup>2</sup>; thinking *with* the arena, dissenting *within* AR and thinking *for* the project. [Criticality](#).

By exploring this approach we hope to explore and hatch *alternative* repertoires to those seeking to "pigeonhole" *art, research, practice* and *theory*—sometimes to *put them up against* each other. For instance, the support that art can receive from theory is often surprising. The critique that theory can elicit from practice can strike deep chords. And knowhow can open a new gate to the idea.

The success at "group-sourcing" capacities that may otherwise be considered as divisive, hinge on the success at using the arena as an *instrument*; to hatch new repertoires of a discovered *conjoint* capacity. A conjoint capacity that adds a *provenance* each time a new arena is involved in the investigation. By provenance we here mean experiences that eventually may hatch an *estate*.

In our session Henrik Hellstenius will examine the recently terminated project at NMH called [Extended Composition](#) under this lens: considering the AR-*proposal, -process* and *-result* assessment as different arenas of the same AR-work. Hence the question of how the quality of work, in teach these phases, can be expected to *match*. Arenas: DIKU, Ultima Festival, Literature House.

<sup>1</sup> *Child's Play* (emblem from *Splendor Solis*—Harley MS. 3469. M. Moleiro Editor): "[...] In order that the sulfur should be separated again from the quicksilver, and that it again should take the quicksilver and draw the earth and the body to itself out of the water, it is necessary that many different colours appear, as the qualities of the operative agent change. [...]"

<sup>2</sup> Puig della Bella Casa, Maria. (2015). *Matters of concern: speculative ethics in more than human worlds*. Post-humanities 14. University of Minnesota press.

Theodor Barth will turn to his collaborative work with the National Library—the dpt. of *pictures, conservation and special prints*—in which the visual readability of panels, and the atlas as an approach to reframing the relation between text and image, is transposed unto his long-term practice with flyers at KHiO. Here the arenas are cross-departmental, [KHiODA](#) and teaching.

The idea of matching qualities of work that is located at the intersection between different arenas, will in both cases bring up aspects of *professional listening, sensorial availability and presence to current- and completed tasks*. Henrik Hellstenius and Theodor Barth will bring *examples* to pitch their introductions, lending themselves to practice what is preached, and to audience-interaction.

## CONTEXT

Our reason for wanting to bring up this topic with an audience—on the backdrop of examples and experiences—is to *collectively* explore the possibility that *levelling* qualities in art and research will allow us to open a new horizon for a *transposable match*; comparable to Wolfgang Iser's idea of the [wandering viewpoint](#): be it in a multi-disciplinary AR-*team* or the multiple *voices* of an audience.

Both vantage-points are important to us in a *ventured* common plan: **the exploration of voice**. Are pitch, volume and timber *eruptive qualities* that reflects *teeming* matches—or, mismatches—in an AR-*team*? By drawing up a vocal territory this way, we hope to address the complexity of *voice* in both its expressive and democratic dimensions: as a “flesh-memory”, of sorts, from [interactions](#).

A larger issue, which this session may contribute to prompt, is the *embodiment of artistic materials from the research perspective*, and the *embodiment of the research materials from the artistic perspective*, to intercept environmental [affordances](#) to work with *form* without disconnecting from the *substantial concerns* of our time: bridging *running concerns* and their *presence*.

The problem of *killing the content with its expression*—obviously, *without* considering expression as a propagandic extension of content—is a key issue to us. From where we presently stand, we do not believe in general solutions to this problem, but specific queries such as ventured through collaboration in AR-projects. We wish to arrive at a set of sufficiently precise questions to move on.

A good question is a conversation starter. An improved question is a decision maker. To move *from* a robust statement of a topic—matching qualities—to the intelligence of a *well worked question*, is at odds with *a world rushing from problems to solutions*. But the ‘best alternative question’ holds the upper hand on ‘the best alternative solution’, because it takes *a first practical step to open the door*.

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