ARTICLE

Editorial: Interdisciplinary relationships within spaces and bodies of collaboration

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This third issue of Airea presents a second round of articles in response to our call for contributions 'Revisiting interdisciplinarity within collaborative and participatory creative practice', announced in June 2019. Following the second issue that showcased contributions from sound-related areas, the present collection focuses on the breadth of practices in art and design. The contributions in this issue surface knowledge about the way interdisciplinary methodologies and approaches influence and shape spaces and bodies within collaborative and participatory works.

'Collaboration' has emerged as a distinct keyword and methodological concern in arts and design research. Collaborative and participatory creative practices have taken important roles within, across and in-between disciplines, forming interdisciplinary processes and contributing to knowledge in innovative ways (Marcus 2010). Our last set of articles explored these issues through the lens of interdisciplinary sonic practice. Featured authors fixated on notions of communality and community in choir groups, the embodiedness of group music-making, the problematics of composer-composer collaborations, the overlaps in practice between visual and sonic artists, and the affordances of sound art as a means of (re)forging connections between communities and the environment. Common theoretical concerns included the complex and mutable boundaries between audiences and authors, the role of technology in mediating expressive social interactions, and the environmentally situated politics of art production.

This issue follows this trajectory by exploring similar themes from a different methodological perspective. The following articles share a perspective through spaces and bodies. As noted in our last editorial, relational approaches that can be found in participatory art, the workshop turn and ideas of Do-It-With-Others, have given way to creative processes that are largely collaborative (Catlow and Garrett 2012). Creating and experiencing in these settings interface with the public sphere in ways that go beyond the framework of institutional or gallery contexts. Such processes push the boundaries of disciplines and spaces, by engaging arts with social, political, environmental, economic and technological facets of today's society. The growing plethora of practices and theories, methodologies and vocabularies of creating and researching collaboratively across disciplines, have been defined as *dialogical* (Kester 2005), *transformative* (Fischer-Lichte 2008) and *operational* (Bianchini and Verhagen 2016), among other definitions, according to the way artworks and experiences manifest and function.

The questions raised by this collaborative and social condition of artmaking can be fruitfully addressed by examining the various relationships that constitute artworks, design artefacts and creative processes: the complex

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connections between art-makers or designers, their methods, their values and the wider social environment in which they operate. This complexity of input could lead one to consider all such approaches as 'interdisciplinary' in a traditional sense: multiple different forms of disciplinary practice culminating in the emergence of an output. 'Integration' is a key concept here: Repko and Szotak (2016) explore how interdisciplinary practices can be addressed as the integration of various disciplines for producing solutions to problems that could not have been addressed from the limited imaginary of a single disciplinary context. We could argue that successful artistic collaborations are predicated on this need for integration: diverse exchanges between the distinct materialities of different practices, and the heterogeneous potentials of different ways of theorising creative production.

However, while integration can be used as a core concept for understanding how disciplines connect, there are a variety of lenses that we can use for understanding interdisciplinary collaboration. According to Joe Moran (2010), it is not possible to find a single, totalising way to understand interdisciplinarity. All interdisciplinary processes emerge in response to specific practical problems that need solving. Integration can be a core determining element regarding the way in which a problem is found, but the exchanges between the individual members of interdisciplinary collaborations will further inform the design of the interdisciplinary process, establishing a space in-between disciplines that is characterised by Moran (2010, 14) as "undisciplined". The specific formation of this social exchange might be characterised by difficulty and awkwardness. As suggested by Celia Lury (2018, 1), "interdisciplinarity emerges through *interferences* between disciplines and between disciplines and other forms of knowledge". Interdisciplinary methods are then subject to interruptive/deconstructive processes that concomitantly lead to disciplinary re-assemblage. These transformations and mutations can occur as a result of uneasy social exchanges.

This shift in theorisation, from conventional perspectives on the integration between distinct and separate disciplines, towards a more granular identification of the specific social contracts at play in the formation of the work, reveals the plurality of ways in which interdisciplinarity can be conceptualised, and raises questions around how disciplines can be broken into fragments and re-composed into something new. At times, solutions for achieving this interdisciplinarity rest upon commonalities and complimentary approaches; at others certain tensions must be counterbalanced. Crucially, these developing contemporary perspectives afford new tools and conceptual approaches that can be used as researchers collaborate on interdisciplinary projects, and continue to develop the meaning of interdisciplinarity as they work. The articles presented in this issue involve existing studies of such tools being developed, each demonstrating a unique and specific example of interdisciplinary and collaborative practice.

This issue of Airea Journal presents practice-based and theoretical contributions across art, design, film, pedagogies, urban planning and heritage to address the above concerns. While the previous issue of Airea, resulting from the same call, featured articles that approached interdisciplinary and collaborative artistic practices via a sonic standpoint, arguing that "no single discipline is able to fully encompass how sound as affective and vibrant matter can be both reflexive and constitutive of social, cultural, political, religious, ethical, and perhaps even biological or cognitive developments" (Lycouris et al. 2019), the interdisciplinary approaches featured in this third issue cut across community formation and distributed agency in areas such as participatory art in urban planning, collective artist residencies in the context of socio-environmental change, emotions and somatics, and wellbeing and design.

At the intersection of varied focuses, creative analyses, and methodological considerations, this collection of articles explores collaboration and participation to form their own distinct interdisciplinary perspectives. Through analysis of the authors' own making practices, or the synthesis of new theoretical frameworks and methodologies, the articles focus on what happens when your draw multiple discrete agencies together in the formation of an interdisciplinary study. Through this interrogation of collaborative and participatory approaches to interdisciplinary

arts research, we are left with a set of analytical tools, cultural lenses and theoretical provocations about what constitutes research when you consider its relational foundation.

The following six contributions take their own idiosyncratic approaches to considering where these participatory and collaborative processes take place, and the means through which they are embedded into the text of their article. The social context of each study similarly shifts in scope: we explore community stances on urban regeneration, collective artist residencies, participatory and user-centred approaches to design, the politics of participatory art, collaborative learning in pedagogy, and the way in which the aesthetics of film adjust to and refract contemporary social culture. Underpinning this methodological and thematic diversity, what binds these papers together is a shared concern on the social fabric of art-making cultures, and how this can radically influence the ways in which art is practiced, analysed and perceived.

Catalina Pollak Williamson explores participatory artistic processes and their role in urban regeneration. Pollak Williamson's project *Common-places* (2019) is featured in this article. The author developed a participatory workshop in Sheffield, UK to engage the local community with an interplay between material and immaterial value distinct to places of living and working. The workshop promotes forms of use-value sought to assemble things that citizens 'hold dear' about their area, while developing ways for cartographing and preserving intangible heritage in the context of urban regeneration. This contribution addresses existing challenges about the definitions of heritage and highlights the importance of a holistic approach that considers intangible forms of heritage as key urban planning concerns.

Natalia Eernstman, Kelli Rose Pearson, Arjen Evert Jan Wals, Åse Eliason Bjurström and Anke de Vrieze take a humanistic approach to climate change to explore artistic residencies as a means of addressing complex socio-ecological issues in a collective manner. The authors propose a residency that seeks to develop ideas of play, making and dialoguing between artists and non-artists to confront complexities around our position in the world as humans. This model questions existing methods of practice by opening up new directions to explore emotional, aesthetic, cognitive, social and somatic facets of complex issues within a safe and comfortable space. The authors conclude with five guiding principles for the design of a 'collective artist residency' as a means to encourage co-reflection as well as to enable participants to reimagine the present and explore future possibilities.

Sarah Kettley takes a user-centred approach to theories on product design. Raising imbalances between the ways in which product users are perceived across different design disciplines, Kettley argues that normative stances on user-centred design often lead to a medicalised understanding of the user. Leaning towards a psychotherapeutic understanding of what constitutes a user (i.e. a human being), Sarah Kettley theorises design practice through the lens of Carl Roger's Person-Centred Approach (1961/1967) to therapy. Discussion is centred around a case study carried out by a group of interdisciplinary students, who were invited to design prosthetics by working directly with the person who would use them. Kettley found that this was an effective way of steering the student designers' focus away from 'user' and towards 'person', a shift that she uses to query the ethics of user-centred design.

Ben Landau investigates a participatory process that seeks to create innovations according to market led criteria. His Concept Generation workshop, which is also the title of this paper, approaches the marketing practices of the creative industries through a comedic, ambiguous, and performative happening informed by surrealist techniques. Landau's art event uses a marketing language that is based on neo-liberal conceptions of resource extraction, production and labour, to critique this neoliberal mindset by changing the perspective of the audience-turned-participant and re-examining the resulting impacts on labour and value exchange. This can be understood as a socially engaged art practice, that challenges participants to form their own critical stance on issues such as

intellectual property, labour exploitation, work precarity, integration of work and leisure into a neoliberal model informed by the constant demand to be happy, cheery, and productive.

Peter Kingston's paper, entitled "Building Teacherly Roles Together: An A/r/tographic Exploration of Agency in Constructivist Learning" presents the design principles of a co-learning practice. Situated outside the field of formal education, this study invited educators and learners to learn alongside, and share the practice of learning-with, by taking education as its medium, and a/r/tography as its methodology. In this way, this paper provides an analysis of the processes that highlight the demand for an arts-based research that takes into consideration the multiplicity of roles, power dynamics, and meanings, that are shared among artist, researcher, and teacher. Kingston discusses the collaborative, learning processes that led to the pedagogical principles of a consensual education that aims to enable learners and teachers to perform their agential roles, while allowing for possibilities of novel knowledges to emerge.

Karen Heald investigates the temporal characteristics of humanity's accelerating technological landscape and its role in film. Following Lutz Koepnik, Heald argues that the increased pace of contemporary social life yields an increased desire for slowness and stillness. With reference to Julia Kristeva's theories on intertextuality, transposition and time, Heald uses four case studies from her own experimental, collaborative and interdisciplinary film practice – *FRIDA Travels to Ibiza*, *Cycle*, *Llafarganu Papagei* and *Frock* – to demonstrate an aesthetic reconciliation of these different and shifting temporalities and to hint towards the invisibility of time.

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