

Is art only a matter of aesthetic? Changes, potential and future challenges for artistic research in Italy

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Abstract

Art is not only a matter of Aesthetic, but it is also a matter of Knowledge. By acknowledging this, artistic research - the knowledge produced, and the knowledge applied from the arts - is an undeniable presence within Higher Education. There is no universal approach to artistic research, which necessitates an exploration from a national perspective to stimulate reflections applicable at a broader, supra-national, global level. In the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), since 2021, Italy has been experiencing one of the most crucial changes in art-related Higher Education: the implementation of art-based doctoral programmes. Moved by this recent event, this paper focuses on the recent developments of artistic research in Italy. Structured into three main sections, this study unfolds with a historical perspective on the context of artistic research in the EHEA, followed by the definition of artistic research through the theoretical framework Mode 3 Knowledge Production and Quadruple and Quintuple Helix, to finally delve into the recent developments of artistic research in Italian Higher Education, shedding the light on its changes, opportunities, and challenges.

Keywords: artistic research, higher arts education, Italian higher education, mode 3, quadruple and quintuple helix.

Introduction

Is Art only a matter of Aesthetic? Is Aesthetic the sole dimension of Art?

There is no univocal way of defining Art (Campbell, 2013), and we should not, therefore, be confined to a single understanding of it. As sustained by Carayannis and Campbell (2015), while the aesthetic perspective remains fundamental, constituting the 'traditional' dimension of interpreting arts, an additional layer should be introduced for a more comprehensive understanding: the knowledge dimension.

By interweaving the knowledge dimension of the arts to the aesthetic one, the immediate implication is that arts embed knowledge production and application – respectively linked to research and innovation (Carayannis & Campbell, 2015). It is, therefore, possible to

acknowledge the emergence and existence of artistic research.

Damianisch (2013) defines artistic research as a research practice that utilizes artistic methods, modes and means, and that open its boundaries to other disciplines not directly connected to arts. The related knowledge produced by this research practice may manifest as basic research, as well as applied research.

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), which encompass artistic disciplines, play a pivotal role as catalysts for the development of artistic research. Nevertheless, the divergent supra-national and national policies governing HEIs generate a fragmented and varied-paced environment for the development of artistic research. Consequently, there is no universal approach to the topic, which necessitates an exploration from a national perspective to stimulate reflections applicable at a broader, supra-national, global level.

At the national level, the Italian Higher Education system is undergoing substantial changes regarding artistic research and doctoral education, following the introduction of a new set of legislation and guidelines (DM 2021/226, 2021; LINEE GUIDA PER L'ACCREDITAMENTO DEI DOTTORATI DI RICERCA AI SENSI DELL'ARTICOLO 4, COMMA 3, Del REGOLAMENTO DI CUI AL DM 14 DICEMBRE 2021, N. 226, 2022). In light of these changes, this paper explores the development of artistic research in Italy, aiming to provide new concrete insights to the topic. Through the theoretical framework of Mode 3 Knowledge Production and Quadruple and Quintuple Helix (Carayannis & Campbell, 2012), this paper will investigate (1) how artistic research has been developed and implemented in Italy by state government and HEIs and (2) what are the opportunities and challenges for Italian artistic research in the future, at national and supra-national level.

This exploratory research endeavours to present a concrete nation-based case of artistic research, situated in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The purpose is, on one hand, to provide new findings for researchers' future studies and/or comparative analyses; on the other hand, to support policy makers at national and supra-national levels for future decisions.

Structured into three main sections, the paper unfolds with a historical perspective on the context of artistic research in the EHEA, followed by the definition of artistic research through the theoretical framework. The final section delves into the recent developments of artistic research in Italian Higher Education, shedding light on its changes, opportunities, and challenges. A conclusion will summarize the main findings and it will include reflections for further studies about artistic research.

Brief history of artistic research

Artistic research is a relatively new field that, for the last 30 years, has been experiencing attempts of definition. It has been an acknowledgeable presence without a determined shape. This section will describe the shaping path of artistic research, especially in the EHEA context, through three main phases: emergence, development, and consolidation.

1990s-2010s: Emergence

Before the 2010s, the scenario around artistic research, despite being significantly blurred, witnessed the first steps which paved the path towards its consolidation.

On one hand, it would be correct to state that arts were not considered a research-related discipline. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 6th Edition of Frascati Manual (2002) excluded any kind of artistic research from the fields of science and technology, in which Research & Development (R&D) took place. Consequently, artistic research was excluded from the main academic research discourse.

On the other hand, it would be correct to state that the emergence of artistic research was a reality as well. The emergence of artistic research was a starting point for debates. In the book *Artistic research* (Balkema & Slager, 2004), the authors argue against the academic presence in the arts and its potential influence in artistic exploration (Balkema, 2004; Kaila, 2004). However, the successful inclusion of artistic research in academia could have been already traced in the doctoral programmes related to art inside HEIs in Europe (Schiesser, 2015), in the presence of artistic research as a field in the national legislation, as it happened in Sweden in 2000 (Zetterfalk, 2020), and in the networking organisations.

The networking organisations have been a driving force for artistic research. Remarkable examples in this period are the European League of Institutes of the Arts - ELIA, the networking initiative of art-related HEIs (e.g. conservatories, academies, dramatic institutes) born in 1990 after the conference *Imagination and Diversity* in Amsterdam (European League of Institutes of the Arts, 2000a), and the European Association of Conservatories - AEC, born in Belgium in 1953. Other influential organisations born in these years are the Cumulus association, officially proclaimed as an association in 2001 in Rotterdam (Cumulus Association, 2022), and the European Artistic Research Network - EARN, a network of art-related HEIs from the EHEA, established between 2004 and 2006 (European Artistic Research Network, 2023).

At the European policy level, the European League of Institutes of the Arts and the European Association of Conservatories adapted timely with the changes in Higher Education. Through written statements (Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen, 1999; European League of Institutes of the Arts, 2000b), both organisations declared the intentions to harmonise arts education with the goals set by one of the most meaningful initiatives in Higher Education in Europe: the Bologna Process (European Ministers of Education, 1999).

In this context, among uncertainties and different perspectives, one undeniable fact was that artistic research emerged, and it existed at institutional, national, and supra-national levels.

2010s-2020s: Development

In the 2010s, artistic research witnessed some meaningful developments in Higher Education, which fostered its diffusion. As Schwab affirmed (2011), at the beginning of 2010s the term artistic research had already become ubiquitous.

In this context, in 2015 the OECD published the 7th Edition of the Frascati Manual, which presented a meaningful change compared to the past. Artistic research was not excluded 'ex ante' from the fields of R&D. The Manual introduced, instead, a distinction of research for the arts, research on the arts, and artistic expression, to discuss their contribution to R&D (OECD, 2015).

Moreover, artistic research was the driving force for the establishment of a further networking organisation during this decade: the Society for Artistic Research - SAR. The Society for Artistic Research was created in 2010 in Bern, Switzerland, and encloses artists and academics with the intention to disseminate artistic research practices at international level (Ruiten et al., 2013a; Society for Artistic Research, 2022).

In order to enhance the networking initiatives generated around artistic research, especially in the EHEA, the EU Directorate General for Education and Culture approved, in 2010, the Step-change for Higher Arts Research and Education (SHARE) network. SHARE was an international networking project conducted between 2010 and 2013, co-funded through the ERASMUS Lifelong Learning Programme, comprising a consortium of 39 HEIs. SHARE aimed to build an international research community around art, to facilitate art-related networks, to foster collaborations within and across the arts, and to enhance doctoral programmes in the arts (SHARE Network, 2013).

During this decade, the networking organisations launched meaningful projects. In 2013, SHARE published the Handbook for Artistic Research Education describing and organising context, debates, organisational issues, and platforms related to artistic research (Ruiten et al., 2013b). Besides its main goals, the Handbook was also significant to acknowledge the status of artistic research in HEIs. In 2013, around 280 Higher Education Institutions were offering doctoral degree programmes around the world (Ruiten et al., 2013b).

The Society for Artistic Research launched two other important projects. In 2010, it was published the first issue of the Journal for Artistic Research, an international online, peer-review, and open access journal, which ‘exposes’ artistic research projects (Schwab, 2011; Schwab & Borgdorff, 2014). The Journal for Artistic Research was of inspiration for the RUUKKU Studies in Artistic Research, a journal founded in 2013, with the same characteristics, available in English, Swedish, and Finnish (Ruukku, 2023) and for the Swedish-based PARSE, an artistic research online journal promoted by the University of Gothenburg (The University of Gothenburg & Platform for Artistic Research Sweden, 2023). The other project by the Society for Artistic Research is the Research Catalogue,

a virtual platform, which collects and archives thousands of artistic research (Schwab & Borgdorff, 2014).

Adopting a policy perspective, in the EHEA, the European League of Institutes of the Arts published, in collaboration with other organisation such as European Association of Conservatories, Cumulus and the Society for Artistic Research, the Florence Principles on the Doctorate of the Arts (European League of Institutes of the Arts, 2016). As a direct consequence of the inclusion of artistic research in the Frascati Manual, the Florence Principles are a position paper addressed to researchers and policy makers to create ‘the necessary frameworks, environments and resources for early stage researchers (doctoral researchers) to develop their projects’ (European League of Institutes of the Arts, 2016, p. 3).

During the 2010s, Artistic research strengthened in a considerable way its presence inside HEIs. Arts influenced the organisational environment of Higher Education, inspired new networks, initiatives, ways of dissemination, and gained a recognition as contribution to economy and society.

2020s-Present: Consolidation

In the present days, artistic research benefits from all the past decades developments, while it is still making steps ahead.

The increasing number of doctoral programmes in HEIs inside the EHEA is now a common phenomenon. In different countries there are artistic research-focused examples, such as the artistic research PhD programme offered by the University for Applied Arts Vienna - Universität für angewandte Kunst Wien in Vienna, Austria (dieAngewandte, 2022), by the Oslo National Academy of Arts - Kunsthøgskolen i Oslo in Oslo, Norway (Kunsthøgskolen i Oslo, 2022), or by the University of Applied Science - Hochschule Luzern of Lucern, Switzerland (Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts, 2023).

Doctoral programmes were the focus of an important project funded by the European Union through Erasmus+. The Creator Doctus was an Erasmus+ project active in the period 01/09/2018-31/12/2021, which included HEIs and Organisations from 7 different

European countries as partners (European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, 2018). Creator Doctus had the main objectives to facilitate the diffusion of PhD programmes in arts within the EHEA and its results are a database to explore the current offer of 3rd Cycle programmes in Europe (Creator Doctus project, 2021), a framework on good practices in art-related PhD programmes awards (Butler, 2021), a framework of practices and implementation at national level (The Creator Doctus, 2019), and a position paper directed to European policy makers (The Creator Doctus, 2021).

Related to policy recommendations such as Creator Doctus project's position paper, in 2020 a group of art-related networking organisations – including Cumulus, European League of Institutes of the Arts, the European Association of Conservatories, and the Society for Artistic Research- endorsed the Vienna Declaration on Artistic research. The Declaration highlighted the need to establish adequate legal framework for art-related doctoral programmes, to involve HEIs in funding schemes, and to recognise artistic research as an independent category in the Frascati Manual (AEC, CILECT / GEECT, Culture Action Europe, Cumulus, EAAE, ELIA, EPARM, EQ-Arts, MusiQuE, SAR, 2020).

At European level artistic research was not embodied only in the Creator Doctus project. The European Union Higher Education strategy includes as the 'flagship initiative' of the European Universities Initiatives, which aims to create new universities through themed-based consortia of HEIs from different EU countries (2022/C 160/01). The art-driven Alliance for Common Fine Arts Curriculum EU4ART (EU4ART, 2020a) is part of the 17 first selected European Universities alliances (European Commission, 2019). EU4Art European university includes artistic research, together with artistic teaching, in its mission (EU4ART, 2020a).

The shaping path of artistic research led it to foster a creative and innovative environment, which intertwines policies, networking organisations, publishing/dissemination initiatives, and HEIs.

The concept of artistic research

In this context, artistic research is increasingly becoming a catalyser of transformation, influencing economy, society and culture at different levels. Artistic research is a fundamental driver for innovation.

This section will delineate the shape of artistic research, defining its most salient characteristics, and its benefits on knowledge, economy, and society. Carayannis and Campbell's Mode 3 Knowledge Production, as well as of the Quadruple and Quintuple Helix innovation systems (2016; 2012, 2015), will be the theoretical basis to outline the main traits of artistic research, and the lens through which understanding its meaningful impact.

Art and knowledge

The first approach to understand artistic research is to add a layer to the existing aesthetic dimension of Art: the knowledge dimension. Since Art is a 'manifestation of knowledge', we are then able to recognize knowledge production and knowledge application and, therefore, the existence of artistic research and art-based innovation (Carayannis & Campbell, 2015).

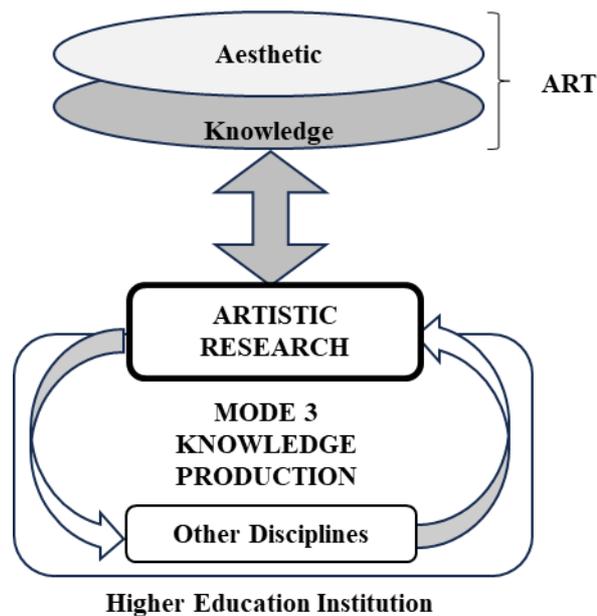
The mechanisms through which arts binds with knowledge, and consequently become research, are of primary importance. As proposed by Jochum (2015), artists, through their practice, bridge art, research and society, and become themselves researchers. It is possible to state that artistic research is a research that uses art-related means, modes and methods (Damianisch, 2013), with the artists playing a crucial role through their agency.

As the main centres where artistic research originates, HEIs as well play a pivotal role. They can be understood as systems (Pfeffer & Stichweh, 2015), that explore 'creative ways of combining and integrating different principles of knowledge production and knowledge application' (Carayannis et al., 2016, p. 18). From these explorations stem new creative contexts for research and innovation. HEIs can thus be regarded as 'Mode 3 production systems' (Carayannis et al., 2016), in which simultaneously happen Gibbon's Mode 1 and Mode 2 knowledge production (1994).

In a Mode 3 production system, artistic research has not to be understood as a disconnected field or discipline. As suggested by Wang (2015, p. 77), the hybridization and the interlink between art and science is an existing phenomenon, in which art and science are to be conceived as interconnected engines of the society.

Diverse disciplines from science and the arts constantly influence each other, with the result of adopting a common framework to study different topics, or even a common theory, to solve problems. Therefore, the direct consequence is that interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity (Gibbons, 1994; Stichweh, 2021) are natural characteristics embedded in artistic research (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Art and knowledge in higher education. Source: Authors' own conceptualization.



Artistic research and innovation systems

In this scenario, HEIs and artistic research foster the rise of new clusters of research/ knowledge production and innovation/ knowledge application (Carayannis et al., 2015).

Artistic research is the driver for new networking organisations – for instance the Society for Artistic Research, Cumulus, and the European League of Institutes of the Arts-, and of new collaborative configurations - such as EU4Art alliance and the Creator Doctus

project. The power of arts to generate organizations and networks is a demonstration of how arts have the potential to generate new environments, where is stimulated individual or collective knowledge production through creative work: the ‘Creative Knowledge Environments’ (Hemlin, 2004).

The knowledge and innovation generated through artistic research at institutional or national spheres – the local level- connect with the supra-national or international spheres - the global level. The interactions between local and global, starting from the institutional and reaching the international level, are the foundations of a multi-level innovation system architecture (Carayannis & Campbell, 2012, 2015). A multi-level innovation system architecture fosters inter-institutional, international, and supra-national cooperation and competition.

Artistic research and democracy

Mode 3 production, the embedded interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary traits of artistic research, creative knowledge environments, and multi-level innovation systems have a transformative impact on society.

Arts contributes to society, with its research and innovation, in many ways. For instance, artistic research disseminates knowledge through new languages. The Society for Artistic Research’s Research Catalogue and Journal of Artistic Research, the other journals such as PARSE and RUUKKU Studies in Artistic Research, are disruptive methods of sharing academic knowledge since they use both scientific and artistic approaches to communicate the research results. Moreover, they enhance a broader diffusion, due to their open access and online nature.

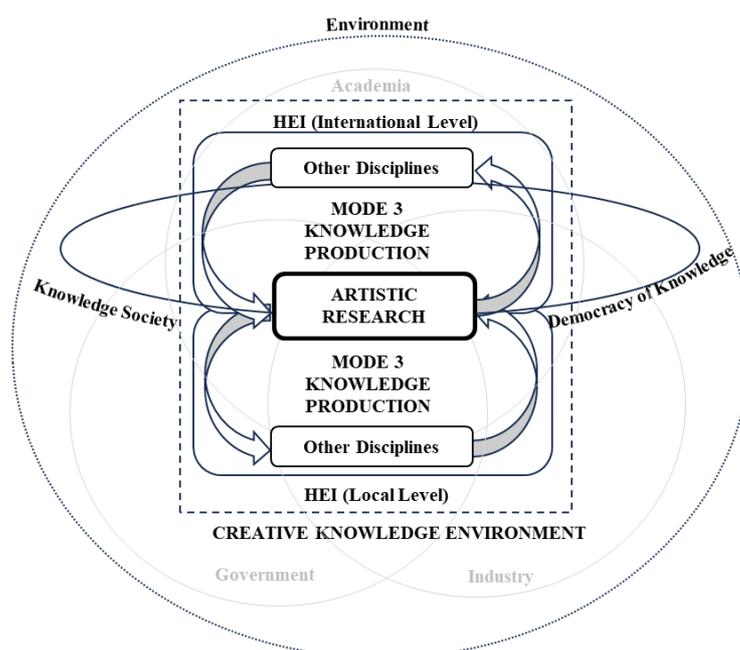
Artistic research could also be an added value to sciences for its methodologies, findings, and approaches (Bast, 2015; Ingman, 2022; Porkola, 2021). Besides, the impact of artistic research is not confined to academia. Artistic research could investigate solutions for real-based issues, as demonstrated, for example, in projects involving Women’s Shelters in Vienna (Mateus-Berr, 2015), the sound of a city like Belfast during lockdowns due to the Covid-19 pandemics (Varoutsos, 2022), or the public spaces in post-pandemic cities (Kinterová, 2023).

Arts, therefore, transcend the knowledge economy, a concept which could be reconducted to the Triple Helix innovation model proposed by Leydesdorff & Etzkowitz (1996). The research and innovation, which stem from arts, impact society; and, at the same time, research and innovation derived from the arts are supported by a knowledge society, contextualised in its natural environment. Consequently, to fully understand the concept of artistic research it is necessary to adopt a broader perspective, through the collocation artistic research in Carayannis & Campbell's Quadruple Helix and Quintuple Helix innovation systems (2012, 2015).

As shown in Figure 2, within the Quadruple and Quintuple Helix framework, artistic research does only contribute to knowledge economy and knowledge society, it also plays a role beyond the knowledge sphere. Artistic research can be understood also as an expression of 'new designs and performances of innovation and innovation systems, being furthermore expressed in the principles, building blocks and design of Quadruple and Quintuple Helix innovation systems', which generate both 'climate for democracy' and the 'democracy of knowledge' (Carayannis & Campbell, 2021, p. 2071).

Figure 2: Artistic research in the quadruple and quintuple helix innovation system

Source: Authors' own conceptualization based on Carayannis & Campbell's model (2012).



Artistic research and higher education in Italy

The main traits of artistic research show a great complexity, which could not be investigated with a one-size fits all approach. In the multi-level innovation system, an ideal understanding should start from a local/national level.

Despite art-related doctoral programmes existed for many years, their implementation and development has been different from state to state. Even in the European Union, there is currently no supra-national direction for artistic research. However, an increasing number of Higher Education systems are enabling the emergence and development of artistic research. The Italian Higher Education system can be considered among them. This section, the core of this paper, explores the case of artistic research in Italian education.

The context of Italian higher arts education

In 1999, the Ministry for University and Research (MUR) separated Italian HEIs, which offer mainly art-related programmes, from the universities and grouped in the Alta Formazione Artistico, Musicale e coreutica (AFAM) sector (Legge 1999/508). In 2005 HEIs belonging to AFAM were able to implement their structures and academic programmes (Regolamento Recante Disciplina per La Definizione Degli Ordinamenti Didattici Delle Istituzioni Di Alta Formazione Artistica, Musicale e Coreutica, a Norma Dell'articolo 2 Della Legge 21 Dicembre 1999, n. 508, 2005). The art-related HEIs were allowed to offer undergraduate and graduate programmes, as well as, potentially, doctoral programmes- the last one in an experimental way. However, doctoral programmes in arts have never been implemented, due to the lack of state regulations and policies for their concrete realisation.

Nowadays, the AFAM sector comprehends 159 HEIs, including both public and private institutions, and encloses 80.671 students, a number increased by 69% in the past ten years (Ministero dell'Università e della Ricerca, 2022). Italian HEIs belonging to AFAM joined international art-related networking organisations, such as the European League of Institutes of the Arts – which encloses 12 Italian members (ELIA, 2022)- and Cumulus Association -which encloses 18 Italian members (Cumulus Association, 2021). The European League of Institutes of the Arts and Cumulus are both influential in the EHEA,

as showed for instance by the Vienna Declaration on Artistic research or the commitment in European-funded projects such as SHARE. Moreover, one of the four members of the EU4Art European university alliance is the Accademia di Belle Arti di Roma - Academy of Fine Art of Rome in Rome, Italy (EU4ART, 2020b).

Despite this significative presence inside Italian Higher Education, until 2021 the lack of legislation at national level was not allowing the implementation of artistic doctoral programmes in Italy, while at supra-national level some Italian HEIs were joining networks and alliances enhancing artistic research. In a multi-level innovation system (Carayannis & Campbell, 2012, 2015), Italian HEIs were contributing to research and innovation more to a global level rather than a local/national one.

In the end of 2021 and in the beginning of 2022, the MUR published a legislation, and the related guidelines allowed Italian HEIs to implement art-related doctoral programmes (DM 2021/226, 2021; LINEE GUIDA PER L'ACCREDITAMENTO DEI DOTTORATI DI RICERCA AI SENSI DELL'ARTICOLO 4, COMMA 3, Del REGOLAMENTO DI CUI AL DM 14 DICEMBRE 2021, N. 226, 2022).

Despite the historical change, the implementation cannot be at its full potential yet. Even if the legislation allows HEIs to implement doctoral programmes, HEIs have guidelines to establish art-related doctoral programmes only within an inter-institutional consortium with a non-AFAM university. A policy choice, which has been criticised for this strong limitation in art-related HEIs autonomy in establishing new doctoral programmes (Detheridge, 2023).

The opportunities for artistic research in Italy

In this context, the newly created doctoral programmes may have a bigger impact than expected on artistic research, regardless of their limitations.

For instance, the PhD programme in Cultural Heritage (TOR VERGATA - Università degli studi di Roma, 2022) is offered by a consortium composed by numerous members, including one public university (Università di Tor Vergata), two telematic universities (Uninettuno and E-Campus), six HAEIs (ISIA Roma Design and the Academy of Fine

Art of Catania, Florence, Lecce, Macerata, and Rome), one Art Foundation (Fondazione MAXXI), one state research institute (Istituto superiore per la protezione e la ricerca ambientale - ISPRA), and two international universities (New Vision University, Tbilisi, Georgia and University of Arts, Tirana, Albania).

The quality of this kind of programmes relies in something more than being implemented by numerous institutions. Collocating this experience within the theoretical framework of this study, it is possible to see the main qualities of artistic research embedded in the PhD programme in Cultural Heritage.

On one hand, the programme involves universities and HEIs specialised in different fields and disciplines, creating space for the interdisciplinarity; on the other hand, it favours transdisciplinarity, adopting a common theory with the aim to investigate and provide possible solutions to an issue, namely Cultural Heritage. Interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity are two main characteristics of artistic research, which take place in a Mode 3 knowledge production system (Carayannis et al., 2016; Carayannis & Campbell, 2012).

Internationalisation, fostered through the involvement of two international HEIs, could lead towards multi-level innovation system (Carayannis & Campbell, 2012, 2015), where knowledge and innovation start from a local perspective and reach a global dimension.

Adopting the Quadruple and Quintuple Helix's perspective (Carayannis & Campbell, 2012), the potential influence of artistic research on the PhD programme could be three-folded.

First, arts could be the driver to produce knowledge, which has an impact beyond the economy sphere. The doctoral programme, cited above as an example, involves the society and contributes to the creation of a knowledge society, due to its focus on a society-related theme and to the inclusion of different organisations in the consortium, such as the art foundation and the state research institution.

Second, in a doctoral programme determined by global environmental issues, such as the one focused on Cultural Heritage, artistic research is not only a driver of knowledge, but it has also driven by the natural environment.

Third, artistic research could enhance new modalities to fosters the ‘democracy of knowledge’ (Carayannis & Campbell, 2021), thanks to multiple inputs from the different members of the consortium.

Implications and future challenges

Due to the recent changes, it is not possible to rely on data or on previous quality assessment of the art-related doctoral programmes. However, the premises suggest that the doctoral programmes will be an important milestone for artistic research in Italy, and potentially beyond Italy. Despite the value of these PhD programmes, it is important to take into account potential challenges, which may arise in the future.

The first challenge is about quality assurance. In Italy does not exist a framework for evaluation of artistic research and art-based doctoral programmes. The currently activated joint-doctoral programmes will rely on Research Quality Assessment for not-AFAM universities (ANVUR, 2019). If new guidelines for artistic programmes offered only by art-related HEIs will be published by the state, how will the quality of the research will be assessed then?

Related to quality assurance, a second challenge is the establishment of funding allocation policies for artistic research and quality enhancement in HEIs belonging to the AFAM sector. At the present day, the only funding scheme for HEIs is historical based (MUR, 2020). How artistic research will be financed? How the funding will be allocated? Some studies conducted in other European countries (Hellström, 2010; Lewandowska & Kulczycki, 2022) may be a starting point for the Italian Higher Education system.

A third challenge concerns the employability for artistic researchers. Future students will hold an art-based doctoral degree, and new professions may emerge. In the Italian Higher Education system and labour market, what could be the possibilities of prosecuting an artistic research career?

Due to its recent changes, development and implementation, the Italian case is particularly relevant to the future of artistic research, especially the EHEA. The new jointly run doctoral programmes will foster internationalisation, research and innovation in the art-related HEIs. And they might also contribute to the emergence of new a Creative Knowledge Environments, at national and supra-national level (Hemlin, 2004).

However, in the future issues may arise, especially when doctoral programmes solely run by HEIs, belonging to AFAM, will be implemented. Quality assurance, funding allocation and the labour market will be the main challenges to be addressed, and the previous studies may be helpful to develop an effective system.

Conclusion

Art is not only a matter of Aesthetic, but it is also a matter of Knowledge. By acknowledging this, artistic research, the knowledge produced, and the knowledge applied from the arts, has an undeniable presence within Higher Education (Carayannis & Campbell, 2015). HEIs play a pivotal role in the development of artistic research, but it is impossible to delineate a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach for all of them. Therefore, an ideal exploration of the potential and the challenges of artistic research should start from a local/national point of view.

Adopting this perspective, this paper focuses on the Italian Higher Education system, which experienced significant changes in arts Higher Education, and investigated (1) how is artistic research developing and being implemented in Italy, and (2) what are the potential opportunities and challenges for the future, both at national and international level.

To understand the dynamics of artistic research, it is fundamental to delineate its context -with a focus on EHEA- and its shaping path, which could be articulated in three main phases: emergence, development, and consolidation.

The emergence phase, between 1990s and 2010s early 2000s, witnessed, among uncertainties and different perspectives, the undeniable fact that artistic research emerged,

and it existed at institutional, national, supra-national and levels. Despite exclusion by the R&D field (OECD, 2002), the arts were the source of new networking organisations and doctoral programmes. The development phase covers the time between 2010 and 2020, during which artistic research strengthened in a considerable way its presence inside HEIs. Arts influenced the organisational inspired new networks, initiatives, and ways of dissemination, and gained recognition as well as it became a contributor to economy and society. In the consolidation phase, undergoing from 2020 until now, artistic research fosters creative and innovative environments involving HEIs and other organisation in projects (Creator Doctus project, 2021), collaborations (EU4ART, 2020a), through journals and platforms disseminating knowledge (Society for Artistic research, 2018; The University of Gothenburg & Platform for Artistic research Sweden (Ruukku, 2023; Schwab & Borgdorff, 2014), 2022), and initiatives influencing economy and society at a supranational level (AEC, CILECT / GEECT, Culture Action Europe, Cumulus, EAEE, ELIA, EPARM, EQ-Arts, MusiQuE, SAR, 2020).

Artistic research should not only be understood through its context, but also through defining its most salient characteristics, and its benefits on knowledge, economy, and society. Mode 3 Knowledge Production and Quadruple and Quintuple Helix (Carayannis & Campbell, 2012) theoretical framework were fundamental to pursue this goal.

Artistic research is a research that uses art-related means, modes and methods (Damianisch, 2013), with the artists playing a crucial role through their agency (Jochum, 2015). HEIs, in which artistic research is implemented, could be regarded as 'Mode 3 production systems' in Higher Education (Carayannis et al., 2016). In this Mode 3 production system, interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity (Gibbons, 1994; Stichweh, 2021) are natural characteristics embedded in artistic research. The knowledge and innovation generated through artistic research at institutional or national spheres – the local level- connect with the supra-national or international spheres - the global level, building the foundations of a multi-level innovation system architecture (Carayannis & Campbell, 2012, 2015). The capability of arts to create new organizations and networks also carry the potential to generate 'Creative Knowledge Environments' (Hemlin, 2004). Artistic transcends the knowledge economy of the Triple Helix model (Leydesdorff & Etzkowitz, 1996). The research and innovation are supported and promoted by the

knowledge society, within its natural environment, as in the Quadruple Helix and Quintuple Helix perspective (Carayannis & Campbell, 2012, 2015). Moreover, artistic research is a potential building block for the ‘democracy of knowledge’ (Carayannis & Campbell, 2021).

The context and the definition of artistic research led to the investigation the case of Italy, focusing on the recent 1. changes, and on the 2. opportunities and 3. challenges of artistic research in the future.

1. Changes: since the establishment in 1999 of the art-related HEIs (Riforma delle Accademie di belle arti, dell’Accademia nazionale di danza, dell’Accademia nazionale di arte drammatica, degli Istituti superiori per le industrie artistiche, dei Conservatori di musica e degli Istituti musicali pareggiati., 1999) until now, the lack of national regulations and policies has not allowed the establishment of doctoral programmes. A historical change was the introduction of regulation and guidelines (DM 2021/226, 2021; LINEE GUIDA PER L’ACCREDITAMENTO DEI DOTTORATI DI RICERCA AI SENSI DELL’ARTICOLO 4, COMMA 3, Del REGOLAMENTO DI CUI AL DM 14 DICEMBRE 2021, N. 226, 2022), which at the present status only allows universities and AFAM HEIs joint doctoral programmes, and not doctoral programmes individually implement by art-related HEIs.
2. Opportunities: the new doctoral programmes are jointly run by consortia enclosing universities, art-related HEIs, organisations and international HEIs. The potential of it is that internationalisation, interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity, a multi-level innovation system will be enhanced through these programmes, in a way relatable to the Mode 3 Knowledge Production and Quadruple and Quintuple Helix innovation systems. Moreover, the new doctoral programmes could be the vehicle to foster both knowledge society and knowledge democracy.
3. Future challenges: quality assurance, funding allocation and the labour market related to artistic research are challenges to be addressed as soon as possible in Italian Higher Education system. An aid can be retrieved from previous studies (Hellström, 2010; Lewandowska & Kulczycki, 2022), however the policies will have to be developed and declined considering the national characteristics.

This paper aims first to be beneficial to the development of Italian national Higher Education, in the midst of the changes in artistic research. There is the urgency to understand, on one hand the quality of what is already emerging, and on the other hand, what could be expected ahead. This study first provided an analysis that might be useful for developing future policies and funding schemes at national level. Besides, it could be meaningful for Italian art-related HEIs to establish and/or enhance the quality of their new art-related doctoral programmes.

Allocated in a broader historical and theoretical context, the case of artistic research in Italy could contribute to/can benefit from the supra-national development and discourse around artistic research in the EHEA. The cluster model of Italian consortia in art-related doctoral programmes, as well as interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity, might inspire other HEIs in EHEA in the development of new programmes.

Despite this, there is the need for further studies around artistic research cases on different levels and adopting different perspectives, to lead to supra-national collaborations and policies that can benefit both the global and local developments of artistic research.

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