# SITRE

## Artistic Research Quality Criteria and Peer Review Procedures

[Rather than agreeing] "nationally or internationally on the proper modes
or common criteria of artistic research, [we need] to create
circumstances, where the different modes of making can develop in a
critical mutual dialogue."

Prof. Esa Kirkkopelto, UNIARTS Helsinki

The following SITRE quality criteria are our first attempt to engage in a collegiate dialogue about the quality of artistic research dissemination with the community. Based on future experiences with these criteria and perspectives on the nature of artistic research, the SITRE criteria will be the subject of an on-going process of dialogue and improvement.

## Artistic research at Rhythmic Music Conservatory

Artistic research at RMC engages in producing new art, new music, new sonic expressions and in simultaneous motion unfolding and sharing the decisions, considerations, experiments, and sensibilities involved in the investigative creation of artistic outcomes. Artistic research at RMC is performed by artists *developing art* and sharing reflections on this art practice and on the processes leading to this art with others. Pursuing the strongest possible work of art as the core interest. Nina Malterud underlines how – in spite of the fact that "artistic research belongs to the art education institutions and is conducted in connection with them" – we should ensure that "the results must concern the whole art field – they must be distinctive artistic contributions".

We strive for the dissemination of artistic research to be performed in relevant ways and formats, serving the intentions, aspirations and visions of the artistic researcher. Tacit insights and experiences thus become discursive and sharable contributions to other fields. Thus, we intend to contribute with significant art and insight about the creation of art to the art practice fields, artistic research fields as well as other research fields, challenging and developing our understanding of art and artistic research in dialogue with national and international peers.

Artistic research has important things to say. To the arts, but also to other research areas. Julian Klein stresses how "The arts are granted the authority to formulate and address (…) basal and yet complex issues in their specific ways, which don't have to be less reflected than those of philosophy or physics, being capable [of developing] specific knowledge that could not be delivered otherwise". Therefore, artistic research should nourish the interest for and provide new insights in and about art and art creation processes to the general artistically and culturally inclined public.

To strengthen the quality of the production and dissemination of artistic research at RMC, we aim at building a research environment that is oriented towards experiments and risk taking, and simultaneously constructive, open, critical and internationally informed. We aim at enhancing a sound, collegiate culture around developing new artistic insights and procedural experiences and how to discover new and relevant ways to disseminate these, asking: How can we contribute with insight, knowledge and awareness of the methods, contexts and ethical issues relevant to future artistic and artistic research processes as well as to scientific areas of insight and experience? How can we even challenge existing epistemic horizons?

## Dissemination on RMC Research Catalogue Platform

To meet these goals, artistic research performed and produced at RMC is peer reviewed by national and international colleagues before dissemination in public, durable formats. Artistic researchers can submit their work to different acknowledged, peer reviewed journals for artistic research, but RMC's artistic researchers also have the option to publish their work on RMC's dedicated platform on Research Catalogue. For such publication, RMC has developed a set of artistic research quality criteria (SITRE) and some peer review procedures and guidelines.

/LB 2019

# S I T R E

## Significant

- Does reviewer experience a significant artistic statement within its contexts in an international perspective? Including
    - Does the work of art present itself with significant artistic sensibility in relation to the intentions, it implies?
    - Does the art *work?*

## Informed

- Does the reviewer understand how the artist is informed in relations to the field(s) and context within which this project is oriented? Including
    - Does the artist communicate how this project relates to state of the art within the field in relation to
        - relevant artistic fields?
        - relevant artistic research fields?
        - relevant learning and teaching fields?

## Transparent

- Does reviewer acquire adequate and lucid insight into the artistic researcher's experiments, inquiries, arguments and decisions leading to the presented artistic result? Including
    - Insight to adequate process stages and turning points?
    - Insight to adequate artistic arguments and decisions?
    - Insight to adequate ethical considerations, including concerns of copyrighted material or other property?

## Relevant

- Does reviewer get an adequate impression of the artistic research's contributions to
    - relevant artistic fields?
    - relevant artistic research fields?
    - relevant learning and teaching fields?
    - relevant societal fields?

## Engaged

- Does reviewer generally get a coherent sense of engagement in the artistic researcher's intentions within the measures, it proposes? Including
    - Is the research communicated in relevant and engaging manners and formats?

# The peer review process

The RMC platform on RC is divided into two 'tracks' with differentiated criteria for peer review and dissemination. A public and an internal track:

## Public track

- External, international peer review and internal peer review
- English language
- Lasting format with designated DOI for future reference
- Project summaries presented on RMC homepage with link to RC

Public expositions for the RMC RC portal are peer reviewed by two external, international peer reviewers and one internal reviewer (the latter to optimize institutional anchoring and discourse development). The artistic researcher can suggest peer reviewers.
All reviewers should have experience with artistic research.
At least one peer reviewer should have artistic research experience within the general project field at hand.

Peer review process is 'open' insofar as the artistic researcher's as well as the peer reviewers' identities are mutually transparent. Each peer reviewer is asked to briefly state their personal artistic and artistic research point of departure / perspective in relation to the project. This ensures the peer dialogue to be as artistically and personally informed as possible, aiming to counterweigh any tendencies toward claiming objective, re-productive and too generally claimed criteria to be pursued.

Through his/her reading/listening to the exposition at RC, each peer reviewer relates the exposition to RMC's artistic research quality criteria (SITRE). For each criterion, the peer reviewer is asked to estimate, whether the criterion is fulfilled, or if the lack of (or only partial fulfillment of) a certain (sub) criterion is of significance to the overall quality of the dissemination. Does a particular (partial) omission matter? If so, how and why?

Peer reviewer can use the built-in commenting function on Research Catalogue *or* list concerns and comments in a Word document.

Following the three peer reviewers' responses, the artistic researcher relates to each of the comments and considers subsequent revisions and clarifications (or why recommendations are not pursued) in dialogue with RMC Head of Research.

In some cases, reviewers will be asked by RMC Head of Research to perform a second round of peer review to discuss the artistic researcher's arguments and choices.

Before a peer review is initiated, the peer reviewer should be asked to declare any academic or personal relations which might bias the conduct of review.

## Internal track

- Internal peer review
- Danish or English language
- Not public, but lasting format for internal reference and educational purposes
- English project summaries presented on RMC homepage

The SITRE criteria should also be engaged in the internal peer review on projects intended for the internal track on RMC's RC platform.

Typically, the projects disseminated here are smaller regarding work hours, and the research outcome(s) therefore less developed in relation to the SITRE quality criteria. Nevertheless, criteria should be met on a general level.

The peer review process is open as well, and it involves on-going dialogue among peer reviewers, artistic researcher and RMC Head of Research. In any case, peer reviewers state their artistic and AR point of departure as a reference point for the artistic researcher being reviewed.

For the RMC supplement diploma students using RC for their artistic research projects, the SITRE quality criteria should be applied in the on-going dialogue with fellow students and supervisors alongside current curricular regulations.

# Notes to peer reviewers

## Some kind advice

- Please represent your community, and review in a language and from a perspective that you yourself would appreciate and learn from, using the SITRE criteria as well as possible.

- Please be professional and constructive. You are contributing to the international discourse of art and artistic research production and dissemination

- Please engage in the artistic research in front of you and in your colleague's intentions and aspirations

- Please engage in a curious and solidary collegiate dialogue

- Please explain how you have reached your conclusions and recommendations. Your colleague will benefit from understanding as much as possible about your point of argument

- Please assess quality and argue for your concerns in relation to the SITRE criteria

## Some common pitfalls to avoid

- Finding flaws based on own expertise. The introductory statement on your own point of departure would help avoiding this.

- Being judgmental

- Offering few arguments for critical concerns. Arguments should in general relate to the SITRE criteria

- Being a 'tough' reviewer, stating an opinion.

- Being less critical because
    - you like the art presented
    - you like the colleague presenting his/her work