



**Koninklijke
Academie van
Beeldende
Kunsten**

**Royal
Academy of Art**

**Hogeschool der Kunsten
Den Haag
University of the Arts
The Hague**

Research at the University of the Arts The Hague

Research is one of the important cornerstones of the University of the Arts The Hague. Within the University's programmes, the aim of research is to promote students' artistic and intellectual development. Related to that, the University's tutors also conduct research of their own. The way in which research is organised is in part influenced and inspired by the intensive collaboration with Leiden University.

The nature of the research activities varies according to the level. In the Bachelor's programme, it is about acquiring the basic research skills that artists and designers will need in their later artistic practice. These skills involve an ability to reflect eloquently on one's own specialist field and artistic practice in general. In this context, students learn discursive skills, such as how to deal with information, reading, speaking and writing skills and how to present ideas and their own work. In collaboration with Leiden University, an academic curriculum has been developed for Bachelor students of Fine Arts who aim to achieve a Bachelor's degree with both an applied emphasis (HBO) and a theoretical emphasis (WO).

In the Master's programme, research focuses on completing a specific research project, in which students specialise within their own field.

After completing the Master's degree and generally after several years of practical experience, students can apply to be selected for a doctoral programme through the Academy of Creative and Performing Arts (ACPA) at Leiden University. A doctoral programme for visual artists and designers at the ACPA is provided by PhDArts. PhD-level research conducted by artists and designers is referred to as artistic research. Like other types of research within the humanities, artistic research aims to enrich and/or change existing knowledge, experiences and understanding.

Artistic research often uses a range of existing research methods from the humanities (e.g. critical reflection), the social sciences (e.g. participatory observation) and the sciences (e.g. experimentation). In addition, the results of the research and the research process are properly documented, presented and distributed, enabling full traceability. Artistic research is distinct from other types of academic research because of the central role played by artistic practice. The research question arises directly from the artist-researcher's own artistic practice, the research methods are characterised by the use of artistic practices and materials during the research process and the research results contribute both to artistic practice and artistic and academic discourse. Because artistic research is conducted by artist-researchers, it results in knowledge, experiences and understanding that cannot be realised in other ways, since they are embodied in the works of art and artistic practices themselves.

Research is not only one of the basic elements of the artist/designer degree programme, it is also something in which the University's tutors are actively engaged. This further enhances the close relationship between research and education. Artists and designers affiliated to the University as tutors also conduct research in their artistic practice. Tutors are offered the opportunity to expand and disseminate their research within the University. The results that emerge from the various types of research at different levels are of great importance to artistic practice and make a key contribution to education at the University.



Research at KABK

The Royal Academy of Art The Hague (KABK) educates visual artists and designers. This results in research that serves artistic and design practice. Any description or assessment of KABK's research policy and research activities must take account of this fact.

Research in relation to artistic and design practice

Visual artists and designers are increasingly presenting themselves as researchers. The influence of conceptual art in the 1960s and 1970s resulted in an emphasis on the role of thought in the artistic and design process. In addition, the changes in society over the last twenty years because of the information revolution have placed new demands on the position of visual art and design. Today's artists and designers are expected to represent themselves effectively and actively engage with cultural and social developments.

The main difference between KABK research and university research is that the former always results in a material or artistic outcome (art, design). Research takes place as part of the creative process and in the reflection upon it. This means that research is not a theoretical addition to artistic practice, but an essential part of it.

In other words, a written text or publication in response to the work, however important it may be, is not sufficient in itself. The result of the research is a manifestation of both thought and creation. The persuasiveness of the artistic argument is expressed in the reasoned choice and development of a specific working method, the reasoned selection of materials and their interpretation and in communication about this, both orally and in writing.

In research within the arts, creation and thought and sensual and intellectual perception influence each other in an ongoing interactive process. It is not the case that research or analysis precede the process of creation and this then takes place according to that analysis, but rather, there is an ongoing process of interaction and a certain degree of unpredictability with regard to the result. The result of this process is a creative practice.

This means that research is not an end in itself, but focuses on the potential for change of the design and/or artistic practice and awareness of this in the designer or artist.



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Three types of research

The research conducted at KABK is divided into three types of research.

- Research into art, such as history of art, musicology, aesthetics and reception-aesthetics.
- Research for or on behalf of art and artistic practice, such as the development of new technology, form and material research and research into socio-cultural themes.
- Research in and through art, or in other words artistic research, such as research by artists in and by means of the artist's or designer's own work.

All these types of research serve artistic production and the realisation of an artistic outcome: they help enhance awareness of context and environment and broaden the repertoire of media and materials at the artist's disposal, resulting in understanding and knowledge that cannot be acquired through non-artistic means and providing new insights into the meaning of visual art and design (and therefore of visual artists and designers) in modern society.

Research as part of the education at KABK

As the above vision of the meaning of research for the field of visual art and design makes clear, conducting research is inextricably linked to the practice of artistic creation. For this reason, research is not a separate subject in itself, although certain parts of the curriculum specifically focus on it. It takes place at all levels of the educational curriculum.

Students are expected to develop critical self-awareness about what they do and why they do it, as well as about the mentality as expressed in their creative practice. The research makes a significant contribution to the depth of their reflection on their own work, to awareness of the objectives of the artist or designer and the relevance of these objectives, and to the awareness of the context – both theoretical and socio-cultural – of their own practice. Research also aims to increase the accuracy with which the artist's or designer's own position and objectives are articulated.

With regard to conducting research, the education offered at KABK focuses on the following aspects:

- Encouraging critical reflection on one's own work.
- Increasing understanding of the complex tension between theory and practice, language and image, thought and creation.



- Developing communicative skills, both in writing and verbally. Today's artists and designers are not only expected to know how to position and discuss their work coherently in a broader context, they are also expected to explain the importance of art and design for society.
- Developing knowledge about and the ability to reflect on the field of art and one's own place within the cultural and social context.
- Developing a theoretical approach to one's own work, a working methodology and instruments for critical thought.
- Developing research skills.
- Encouraging the exploration of a context in art history that is specific to the subject.
- Encouraging critical research into media, materials and techniques and their application in one's own work.
- Conducting research into social, political, cultural and economic developments and prevailing views on these, for the purpose of one's own work.

By the end of the **Bachelor's programme**, the student will have developed his or her own working method and acquired a broad understanding of artistic and design practice. A Bachelor is capable of adopting a position for him or herself in the artistic field in a reasoned way. The research aspect in the Bachelor phase at KABK is primarily about coming into contact and learning to use the instruments that are prerequisites for conducting research and necessary in order to determine and communicate one's own artistic position in a reasoned way.

Starting from the first year of the Bachelor's programme, the foundations are laid for conducting research. This includes material research (material is also seen as being an 'instrument'), the development of a cohesive argument in relation to one's own work and working methodology, learning to ask questions, conducting source research, learning to write and write about one's own work and other people's work, mastering theory on the various art and design courses, and art and design history. The way in which this is shaped may vary according to the discipline.

In the **Master's programme**, research focuses more specifically on completing a research project in which the student specialises in his or her own field. During this phase, students learn to develop a clearly contextualised research question and to give shape to their research.

In the Master's phase, the areas of research generally relate directly to the student's specific discipline. The areas of research are important for the student's own artistic and intellectual development, but are also of relevance to the development of the discipline itself. There is also research into socio-cultural themes and interdisciplinary research on art in relation to other disciplines, with the various disciplines enriching each other. After completing the Master's programme and generally after several years of practical experience, students can apply for selection for a doctoral programme through the Academy of Creative and Performing Arts, the University's alliance with Leiden University.



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Na de masterstudie kan men zich - in de regel na enkele jaren praktijkervaring - aanmelden voor selectie voor deelname aan een doctoraatsprogramma via de Academie der Kunsten, het samenwerkingsverband van de Hogeschool der Kunsten Den Haag met de Universiteit Leiden.

Research by tutors

Research plays an important role not only in the education offered at KABK, but also in the practice of KABK's tutors. As well as conducting research as part of their work for the Academy, they all have their own professional practice in which they produce artistic work based on research.

The Lectorate plays a guiding role in initiating and encouraging research carried out by tutors and in research aspects of Academy-wide education. The Lectorate is tasked with developing and broadening research in visual arts and design education. Its aim is to promote the integration of theoretical and practical teaching, as well as encouraging students and tutors to carry out research.

In this, the Lectorate works closely with Leiden University's Academy of Creative and Performing Arts (ACPA). The way in which research is organised at KABK is in part influenced and inspired by the intensive collaboration with the ACPA.

Research Groups have been established to support tutors.

The Research Groups, chaired by the Lectors, enable a select group of tutors to conduct specific research projects as part of their appointment. The nature and subjects of the research can be varied and may include research into one's own artistic or design practice, pedagogical or didactic research, practical or more technology-oriented research for the purpose of one's own practice and academic research to prepare for a possible PhD programme. A Research Group meets monthly to discuss the research, approach, dilemmas and possible findings and to give presentations on the research process. Participating tutors are expected to share the findings of their research with the academic community in the form of a presentation, publication and/or lecture. Participating tutors are usually affiliated to the Research Group for a period of one year. Every year, new participants are recruited based on submitted research proposals.