

KNOWLEDGE FOUNDATION RESEARCH AND ARTISTIC RESEARCH (KUV)

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A broad concept of research

It is the ambition of Aarhus School of Architecture to strengthen and develop our research in dialogue with the academic world – in line with developments at leading European research institutions within architecture and the artistic field these years. We also want to open up our research community and engage in knowledge sharing for the benefit of the profession and society. Based on an awareness that knowledge production is playing an ever greater role in developing society, we recognise that the architectural profession is also under pressure to constantly support the discipline's activities and projects with knowledge. It is consequently an important point that in Aarhus School of Architecture's work with architectural research we do not adhere to one single approach or method, but instead insist on developing and maintaining a certain scope. We deliberately apply a broad concept of research ranging from scientifically founded research over research by design to artistic research.

The discipline of architecture is founded on both scientific and artistic elements, and it is necessary and productive to maintain the special characteristics of the discipline and intensify the entire range. Architectural research is a relatively young field of research. And while architectural research was at first very closely aligned with university research traditions, in recent years there has been an increasing awareness of developing architectural research that incorporates the special characteristics of the discipline. Discussions on the development of design and practice-based research methods are taking place not only here in Denmark but also in the rest of Europe. And Aarhus School of Architecture participates in this debate and these developments by virtue of its participation in active networks at the European level.

Scientifically based research

Like architecture, architectural research comes into contact with many subject areas and fields of knowledge and draws on research traditions and methods from technical, socio-scientific and humanistic research. Among other subjects, the school carries out research into the theory and history of architecture. This research is primarily based on established research methods from adjacent academic fields. The school also carries out research – in particular within materials studies and the digital field – which is closely aligned with a more technical research tradition. And we also see examples of research with a sociologically oriented approach.

Research by design

In recent years, Aarhus School of Architecture has, in particular, focused on research by design as a research method. With these efforts, Aarhus School of Architecture places an emphasis on developing research which is in close dialogue with the design methods, tools, and processes of the discipline. In research by design, the architectural design process shapes the very way new insights, knowledge, practices or products are created. It brings about a critical questioning. It's all about using the discipline's own methods, achieving knowledge by working directly and physically with the subject matter, and initiating experiments that explore, develop and challenge.

Artistic research

We need to safeguard the artistic dimension as a basis for developing the architectural discipline, and we regard artistic research as an element that supports the discipline's foundation for designing and proposing solutions. The task group behind The Ministry of Culture's 2012 report on artistic research (KUV) defines artistic research as follows:

Artistic research is an integral part of an artistic process that leads to a publicly available result and is accompanied by a reflection on both the process and the presentation of the result.¹

In the way Aarhus School of Architecture works with artistic research as part of a broad concept of research, we not so much attach importance to the work itself as to the *process* and *method* based on which something is produced, and its contribution to knowledge production. To us, critical reflections on a work and the ability to place the work in a context are

¹ *Kunstnerisk Udviklingsvirksomhed. Udredning om vidensgrundlaget på de videregående kunstneriske uddannelser.* Report. The Ministry of Culture, January 2012, p. 12.



central elements of artistic research – as is also the case in other approaches to research and research methods. We do not see it as our responsibility as an institution to assess whether our research and development lead to artefacts and statements of high artistic value. On the other hand, it is our responsibility to ensure that the material is relevant for the questions that are being investigated and the methods and tools that are applied, and that these are published as transparently and accessible as possible to peers and a wider public. As is the case with other types of research, artistic research at educational and knowledge institutions must, therefore, be met with demands for contextualisation, methods and explicit reflection.

A plurality of methods

Our broad concept of research makes for a wide scope and academic relevance in the school's research. And the special focus on research by design creates a closer connection between research and both the educational programmes and architectural practice. We also see research projects that in themselves cover several methods and approaches within our broad scope of research. We, for instance, witness the fruitful juxtaposition of research by design processes and theoretical concept development, and of practice-oriented design proposals and historical inquiry. The methodical scope provides new insights: knowledge, awareness, and understanding are developed based on competencies, methods, and tools that are specific to the architectural discipline.

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