

# Artistic research – inside or outside the box?

How can a performance be registered in a database? Who is the author of a dissertation written by six characters of which five are fictional? These questions pinpoint some of the challenges that artistic research provide to the traditional academic research.

## CREATE AND REFLECT UPON ART

The aim of artistic research is to create art while it at the same time reflects upon it. It differs in many respects from traditional academic research. Artistic research is experimental in comparison with traditional academic research that is transparent, logic and coherent. Artistic research challenges the limits of a traditional framework by both creating art and simultaneously reflect upon its own performance. The doctoral thesis *Movements of memory* (2015) by Helga Krook is an example of experimental artistic research. In the online thesis database GUPEA the doctoral thesis is described as follows: “*Movements of memory* is a project by Helga Krook with texts by Elise Adrian, Linda Beel, Hilde Lindroth, Anja Nachaum and Greta Wiedrow. The dissertation consists of six separate books in a box.” [my translation]

## UNIT AND FRAGMENT

The dissertation *Movements of memory* is both a unit and a fragment. The books are kept together by a box. Taken out of the box the unit falls apart into separate pieces written by different fictional authors. The books are only related to the main work by the metatext inside each book that says that it is part of a doctoral thesis. It is easier for the reader to follow a logic reasoning and argumentation when reading a traditional academic text while the reader of *Movements of memory* gets involved in the meaning making process. The books might be read in whatever order the reader chooses. The reader needs to put the content in order and discover coherence between the different parts.

## TEXT AND PERFORMANCE

How can the library support PhD students in the information retrieval process? During PhD courses students get to know the library's resources. In *Movements of memory* the PhD student made the overflow of information a part of the project. How can a doctoral thesis that is both a printed text and a performance be registered in a database? Artistic research is allowed to be experimental and might be presented in different formats such as text supplemented by performances, sound tracks or images. When researchers register their publications in the publishing databases GUP and GUPEA at the University of Gothenburg they can choose between the labels “artistic work, refereed” or simply “artistic work”. In the case of *Movements of memory* each book in the box is registered in the library catalogue as well as GUPEA. Still it is not really possible to register a whole dissertation as a performance. The artistic research as a performance challenges the academic framework.

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