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Anali za istrske in mediteranske študije - Annali di Studi istriani e mediterranei - Annals for Istrian and Mediterranean Studies

CONTEXTUALISATION OF A CREATIVE PRACTICE. A DIALOGUE

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ABSTRACT

This dialogue aims to demonstrate the relational knowledge creation in creative practice research. The practice identity is investigated through the lenses of the Mediterrannean context. The starting point is the EU 7th FP ITN ADAPT-r project 'Architecture, Design and Art Practice Training-research'. The two dialogue voices are from this network: a nomadic sculptorer/visual artist as a PhD fellow, and an architect/academic as his supervisor. The article contextualises both practices, bridging the gap between creative practice and academia, artistic and scientific research. The relational knowledge model is enhanced to explicate the tacit knowledge and challenge a wide variety of new knowledge creations.

Keywords: creative practice research, research relevance, visual arts, architecture

CONTESTUALIZZAZIONE DELLA PRATICA CREATIVA. UN DIALOGO

SINTESI

Il presente dialogo tende a dimostrare la conoscenza relazionale nella ricerca sulla pratica creativa mediante l'investigazione sull'identità della predetta prassi. L'identità di tale prassi viene investigata attraverso le lenti del contesto mediterraneo. Il punto di partenza è il Progetto EU 7th FP ITN ADAPT-r Architettura, Design e ricerca sulla didattica della prassi artistica. Le due voci di questo network sono uno scultore nomade/artista visivo, candidato ad un PhD, ed un architetto/accademico, suo supervisore. L'articolo contestualizza entrambe le pratiche, colmando il divario che esiste tra la prassi creativa ed il mondo accademico, tra la ricerca artistica e quella scientifica. Il modello di conoscenza relazionale viene rafforzato allo scopo di spiegare la conoscenza tacita e di mettere in discussione un'ampia gamma di nuove creazioni conoscitive.

Parole chiave: ricerca sulla pratica creativa, pertinenza di ricerca, arti visive, architettura

INTRODUCTION

This article emerges from the following positions:

- The creative practice research in the ADAPT-r project: 'Architecture, Design and Art Practice Training-research' (ADAPT-r, 2016); this initial training network emphasizes a creative practice as the primary source of new knowledge creation and new methodological developments;
- The doctoral programme in architecture at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Architecture (Doktorski študijski program arhitektura, 2016);
- The view through the ANNALES call on the identity of the urban environment and cultural landscapes – Mediterranean;
- The artistic practice of Federico del Vecchio – ADAPT-r fellow/doctoral researcher/sculptor and visual artist;
- The supervisory practice of Tadeja Zupančič – ADAPT-r project leader at the University of Ljubljana partner/doctoral programme leader/architect.

The first part of this article explains the approach to the knowledge creation in creative practice research through the lenses of the ADAPT-r project, the doctoral programme and the magazine call. The second one demonstrates the way new knowledge is explicated from creative practices through a dialogue between the two voices from ADAPT-r. The third and final part discusses some knowledge explication from the dialogue presented.

The ADAPT-r project 'aims to significantly increase European research capacity through a unique and ground-breaking research model.' It develops 'a robust and sustainable initial training network in an emergent Supra-Disciplinary field of research across a range of design and arts disciplines – *creative practice research*' (Blythe & Van Schaik, 2013; Verbeke & Zupančič, 2014). The ADAPT-r network links seven schools of architecture: KU Leuven, RMIT Europe, University of Westminster, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia; Estonian Academy of Arts, Aarhus School of Architecture, and Glasgow School of Art. It builds on recent discussions about research through practice (Polanyi, 1966; Schön, 1983; Österle & Otto, 2010; Koskinen et. al., 2011; Dunin-Woyseth, 2005; Stamm, 2009; Kocatürk and Mejddoub, 2011; Van Schaik & Johnson, 2011; Zupančič, 2009, 2012, 2013, 2014; Fraser, 2013; Verbeke, 2013; Blythe & Van Schaik, 2013; Verbeke & Zupančič, 2014). It relates to other networks (ARENA, 2016). It develops a training model, and is also training new researchers themselves. At the PhD, the postdoc as well as the supervisory levels. The authors of this article represent two voices from this network: the former, Federico, is the PhD fellow, and the latter, Tadeja, is his supervisor.

The project investigates a wide variety of knowledge types: the selection of the fellows is based on their 'venturousness'/competence/input knowledge. The output knowledge/innovation, as the outcome of the creative process, is investigated through the lenses, described below. The third type of knowledge, developed rationally in-between competence and innovation, is relational, aimed to be demonstrated in the 'dialogue' below. It exists in action and is developed through communication (Hatleskog, 2016, 25; Amin and Roberts, 2008).

RESEARCH APPROACH, STRATEGY, METHODS

Creative practice and creative practice research

Not all creative practice is research. The venturous practitioners are identified as the ones investigating beyond the commercial success. The ones with essential input and output knowledge, capable to develop relational knowledge. Their conscious decision to explicate some of the implicit/experiential knowledge from their creative practice through the relational knowledge development makes the difference. And the decision to develop a discipline of research training contributes to that difference. The new tacit/explicit knowledge is a consequence, recognizable through the relational knowledge creation. This is embedded within the communities of creative practice research and (potentially) recognized by the communities of research relevance (wider research community which finds this research relevant).

Creative practice research framing

The ADAPT-r project builds on a wide variety of doctoral training and creative practice research experiences. Its methodology focuses on six reference points/lenses: case study (of creative practice), community of practice, transformative triggers, public behaviours, explication of tacit knowledge and explication of methods for the tacit knowledge explication.

These lenses can be used non-linearly, as a reflective wall. On the other hand they are grouped into three investigation stages (which are explained in more detail in the following paragraphs), each digging deeper into the creative practice and its community.

The first stage is similar to the 'state of the art'/metarials/problems/questions/themes definition. The creative practice and its community are identified and staged. What drives/motivates the creative practices? Who are the people, related to the practice – researchers, practitioners, clients, public, teachers…?

Then the practice transforms into a field-based research laboratory. Creative thinking and its research relevance are investigated through the lens of transformative triggers, the critical moments/situations that change the thinking/working modes… The lens of

'public behaviours' shows the ways the practitioner is searching for contextualization/recognition/relevance…

The last stage explicates the contribution to the knowledge-body and methodological developments ('results and discussion'). The new knowledge is related both to design thinking (drivers/triggers) and public behaviours (community of practice/behavior rituals). The methodological contributions develop (individual) methods for explication of the tacit knowledge.

Why do we focus on the tacit knowledge in ADAPT-r? Because this core of the knowledge-base needs to be at least partially explicated to be shared within the research community. And because it triggers new explicit/tacit knowledge creation.

And why, in this article, the focus is on the relational knowledge? Because at this ADAPT-r stage (Hatleskog, 2016; Hatleskog and Holder, 2015a, 2015b; Holder, 2015) it is clear that the relational knowledge helps to explicate the tacit dimensions of the creative practices to make it shareable and thus relevant for wider research communities.

Investigation of community of practice and community of practice research to identify community of research relevance

Federico is enrolled in the PhD at the University of Ljubljana. He is in the early stage, when the relational knowledge plays a critical role in his orientation. He needs to identify the contexts of his research relevance earlier in the process than some other PhD researchers in the ADAPT-r network. Because our institutional research community is aware that the focus on practice research, when too intense, can lead to the ignorance of theoretical contextualisation – and the opposite. This awareness derives from adapting to the ADAPT-r (Verbeke & Zupančič, 2014), while we identified the resonance with the network and emphasized the roots of the practice research at the doctoral level from the last five decades.

This article contextualises Federico's practice through the following questions: What/who/how drives and/or triggers the practice? What are the relations to others – practitioners, researchers?

The presentation method in the main part of the text is a dialogue between both authors' voices: to demonstrate the relational knowledge development in the creative practice research; and to build on both professional obsessions of the participants. This dialogue shows how the explication of the implicit knowledge 'works' through the relational knowledge development. It demonstrates rather than answers how it works explicitly. The next explication step is in the conclusions.

The article contextualises also Tadeja's supervisory practice. When and how to trigger the artistic practice of contextualisation? How to identify the community of research relevance in these cases? How to identify the

contribution of creative practice research to the wider research communities?

The 'dialogue' develops the idea of the interview, common in the artistic dissemination world; to indicate the nature of the respectful partnership in the relational knowledge creation. However, the dialogue is contextualized through the introduction and the less personal conclusion, In a more contemporarily usual manner, to trigger some further research community relevance. The dialogue is not seen as a method in a mechanical sense, but rather as a mode of understanding (Gadamer, interpreted by Brinkman, 2007; a 'Mediterrannean' example: Plato, 380 BC). Doxastic and epistemic interviews are combined into a hybrid conversation, to trigger the shifts from tacit/experiential/story based to explicit/describable in general terms and back again.

The ANNALES call – from a potential community of research relevance – is used as a trigger to communicate the notion of diverse knowledge types from the creative practice research to the wider research communities. And this is why the joint voice of the authors splits to demonstrate the method of the relational knowledge investigation. Though knowledge is developed/created together, the identities of single voices need to demonstrate how they trigger each other's thinking in the creative practice research. The conclusions integrate Federico's thoughts of the artistic/curatorial practice and Tadeja's view as a writer/editor/supervisor; from the generalistic notion of architectural research (EAAE, 2012).

A DIALOGUE

Places as inspirations of creativity

Tadeja. As an architect I'm convinced I think spatially and I understand the difference between places and spaces; as sometimes authentic and non-problematic, and at other times dynamic / multiple but unique, recognizable socio-spatial entities (Norberg-Schulz, 1984; Madanipour, 1996; Abel, 1997). Spatial identity is thus a characteristic of a singular, specific location/area/region… as an experiential totality of interrelations at different scales. They possess their own 'identity of' as a potential to be sensed and 'identified with' (Zupančič and Mullins, 2002) by individuals and communities. Feeling/knowing places is the essential inspiration for any spatial intervention. The ANNALES call starts from these notions of identity. Federico, you are a sculptor/visual artist and I expect you to focus more on objects rather than places. Moreover you are from Naples and you are a nomadic artist. It can be assumed that your creative practice relates somehow with the Mediterranean identity, which seems obvious from some of your works, I wonder how it 'works' for you.

Federico. Am I aware that the Mediterranean cultural identity and its symbols are appropriated in my work? How important is it for me to choose these icons rather
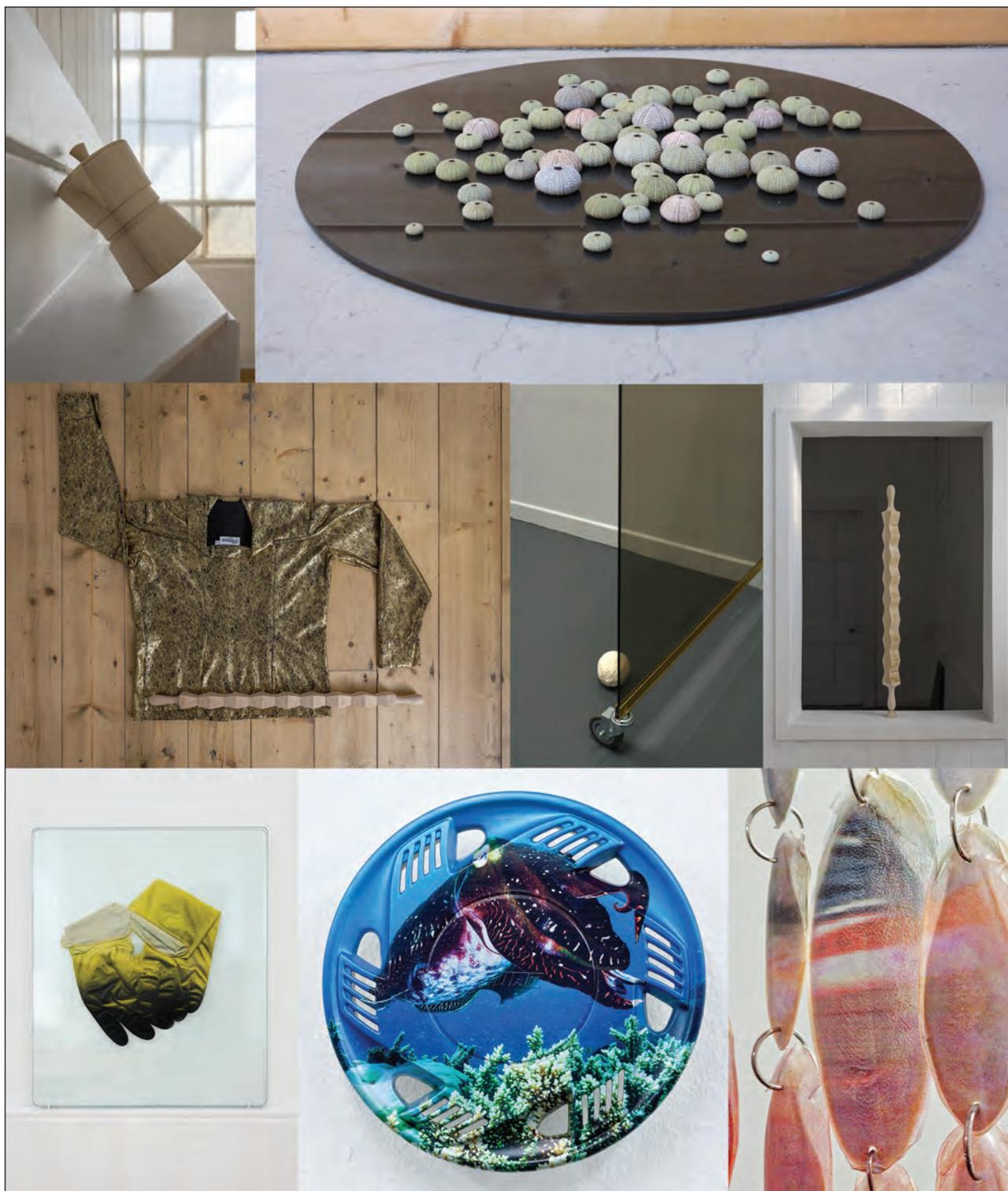
Figure 1: Federico Del Vecchio (F.D.V.): selected works from 2013 to 2014, most obviously relating to the Mediterrannean context: Untitled (Bialetti; photo credit: Queens Park Railway Club), Discobolo di Nettuno (photo credit: Museo Apparente), Patricia, Italy, M (photo credit: Queens Park Railway Club), Lemon Tree (photo credit: The Telfer Gallery), Brancusiello (photo credit: Queens Park Railway Club), Untitled (photo credit: Queens Park Railway Club), Untitled (photo credit: Jenifer Nails), Alfa Romeo Spider 'Osso di Seppia 1966–69' (detail; Photo credit: Jenifer Nails)

than others? Meanwhile, I also use the icons/objects collected from various cultural environments, sometimes far from my belonging (Figure 1).

Objects as inspiration for creativity, obsession with collecting objects

An unexpected conversation makes me think about my internal obsession; the impulse to collect things and the difficulty of ridding oneself of them. This carries on from place to place. Perhaps this relates to the idea of identity, and the notion of a place, a person or individuals. Each object has a personal and subjective meaning which connects individuals to their environment. One which is itself fragmented into objects and integrated through their meaning, mirroring ourselves in our surroundings. A recurrent phenomenon that is confronted with the obsessive accumulation of excessive amount of junk turns into a mass phenomenon that drives our behavior and defines our identities.

Tadeja. Is this obsession the evidence that we are afraid of losing memories?

The act of selection

Federico. If the collecting and the assembly of our own meaning is derived through the objects that form our 'place', then understating the process of what we select is critical in this discussion. The very act of selection and what motivates a selectivity of what is chosen and kept. As a mechanism. For each individual with their own criteria for the choices. If we relate it to an artistic-cultural context, it becomes a matter of common interest; for example, a large number of artists select the same typology of objects even if they work in a different way. A collective desire for certain objects through a shared set of criteria and established set of standards.

Tadeja. You have already brought a fresh view to the act of the selection of information, relevant for 'scientific' research (Del Vecchio, 2015). You arranged an art exhibition from the list of conventional research references of the Aarhus conference participants. Not in the alphabetical order but grouped according to the choice of people. Using the 'search dogs', the movable trolleys in front of the wall with the references exhibited, you demonstrated the chance, intuition, instability and play involved in carving of the artist/curator through the information and materialisation flows. The act of selection is based on the people's responsiveness, contextualized within the specific research community. You transformed the ordinary into extraordinary, as usually. But you thought about how to start your research at that time... And about how the research process usually starts... How to select relevant information? The information is transformed into a set of personalized objects, which form a specific place of the research background.

Object and place, artificial belonging

Federico. The obsession with collecting objects is also pragmatic in a sense. In our present reality, which lacks the future certainty, the things bring a consistency to the everyday moments. It also reflects a nomadic and flexible lifestyle as the main structure for certain individuals, and a large portion of this generation. So it is a kind of movement where the found, collectable things of a place are assembled and then shattered again to be reassembled at some other place. The collected matter forms a certain aura to a current place and dissolves again as we move, and new spatial realities and new things are collected.

This perhaps brings us to the necessity for 'lightness', or the practicality of not solidifying the structures of our object environments. Lightness in terms of flexibility, a model of life that points to the profession and its relationships. This mobility creates a lack of emotional relationships, or a regular family participation. Through a series of tangible objects collected at each place a sort of artificial belonging is shaped. Each object becomes part of a new life meaning. Extending the life of that object and projecting it through to allow for placemaking that may be part of the environment of that specific location in the space-time.

Everydayness shifting into the art realm

My works explore the concept of form, representation and the divide between everyday objects and artworks. Using the everyday as a source, I'm interested in the moment when objects are shifted into artworks and detach themselves from their intended context. Through the moment of critical transformation the assumed use value evaporates and the artworks form new/unusual interrelations within the exhibition space. These ties are not mechanical or defined through one specific meaning. The object's meaning, its socio-political role, its commodity value and functionality shifts; and its place within a hierarchy is altered.

My practice reflects on the notion of objecthood in contemporary practice. The conditions and circumstances in which objects are modified, positioned, assembled and displayed are central to this process. I am intrigued by how such transformations in the context express the tensions between polar qualities: monumental and mundane; stable and unstable; permanent and ephemeral; the value and lack thereof.

'Objects', specifically as they occupy our daily environments, express less of their objecthood and become an entity of utility. And yet there is their transformative process from the "everyday" and their placement in the realm of art practice.

Conditions for artistic transformation

Tadeja. While we discussed this displacement I asked you about the basic conditions for an everyday object to

become an art object. Is it about the cultural community recognition? What else?

We both observed the cases of dementia where a strange juxtaposition of objects is a 'natural' reaction to the situation. Is the artistic deliberate use of the same principle a potential sign of a found memory? Jo Van Den Berghe built his whole research story from his found memories of his already destroyed grandmother's house (Van Den Berghe, 2012, Book 2). Dimitri Vangrunderbeek's transformation of ordinary to sculpture is obsessed with limits/borders (Vangrunderbeek, 2015).

Thoughts as inspirations of creativity: everydayness, objecthood, home

Federico. I'm questioning the 'everyday', particularly through the writings of Blanchot and Lefebvre. Blanchot (Johnstone, 2008) suggests that the everyday should exhibit an 'absence of qualities', cannot be approached cognitively, and 'that it should display an energizing capacity to subvert intellectual and institutional authority'. It is 'inexhaustible, unimpeachable, always open-ended and always eluding forms or structures'. Moreover, the everyday is the site of fundamental ambiguity: where we become either alienated or where we can demonstrate our creativity. Here Blanchot closely follows Lefebvre: the everyday is the place 'where repetition and creativity confront each other', it is 'simultaneously the time and the place where the human either fulfills itself or fails' (edited by: Johnstone, 2008, 15).

Plato's reflection of particular relevance is the fundamental difference between form and object. Form as the universal entity is always constant. "Forms are transcendent. This means that they do not exist in space and time" (Plato's Theory of Forms). On the other hand he argues that objects are a complex formation of conditions that are very specifically organized in relation to space and time. This very understanding creates a more critical awareness of objects, including the everyday objects around us.

The 'object' implies materiality that differs from the realm of 'form', which in contrast only exists in an immaterial realm. The very materiality of the object is the reason that the object ceases to be purely form, regardless of the extent it aspires to be purely 'form'. Plato goes on to elaborate that all objects embody the qualities of form and are the copies of form; 'form' is the pure essence of the object: "Particular objects are the copies or likeness of them: and the participation of such objects in the form consists in being made like it" (Plato, 1867, 272). The object is understood as a subjective interpretation of those associated combinations and visual/tactile complexities that take from the 'form' to exist in our world.

Their ability a to exist in the space and time and thus be transient in nature, empowers the objects to "be"

with a specific condition and perform in a specific way related to the particularities of the space and time they are positioned within. This positioning and existence will never become universal; but will be in a constant state of flux. Creating each moment is a unique opportunity of its existence, with the potential to reflect the moment or the context.

This understanding of the source of object and the possibility of its source of existence, takes us to observing the role of objects in our world and our attitude towards them. Heidegger argues that the very functionality of objects has made them in ways invisible: we no longer reflect on their essence – their very objecthood – but only see them performing the roles they are assigned to:

/.../ objects tend to vanish from conscious awareness and to perform their functions invisibly. Objects are tools, not in the sense that all objects are "useful" for something but in the sense that objects tend to vanish from view in favour of some larger context or ulterior purpose by which they are dominated (Harman, 2005, 268).

This implies that our human interaction with non-human objects have been mostly reduced to the functional features that the object beholds. The result disregards the essence of that object – which links it back to its metaphysical 'form' and the properties that allow it to be very specific to time and space. This observation occurs when the object is acknowledged as a unified entity.

However, Heidegger addresses the way in which this lack of awareness of the intricacies and complexities of the object can be resolved: "By deliberately tearing the objects from their invisible actions and putting them openly on display" (Harman, 2005, 268). Taking the discussion back to reflect on the artistic practice in the appropriation of objects.

Especially during the last few decades, artists have been working primarily either on appropriating objects that are part of the visual cultural landscape, transforming them, juxtaposing them or on using them as readymades. Boris Groys states:

Art today is defined by an identity between creation and selection. At least since Duchamp it has been the case that selecting an artwork is the same as creating an artwork. That /.../ does not mean that all art since then has become ready-made art. It does, however, mean that the creative act has become the act of selection: /.../ producing an object is no longer sufficient for its producer to be considered an artist. One must also select the object one has made oneself and declare it an artwork. Accordingly, since Duchamp there has no longer been any difference between an object one produces oneself and one produced by someone else (Groys, 2008, 93).

The 'the system of objects' (Baudrillard, 2005) refers to the house as a well-organized structure, where the arrangement of the furniture reflects a function related to the hierarchical structure and functionality of a family. These objects with or without a family contain the meaning of it and the system of meaning it associates. Individuals with no 'permanent home', how do they face such situations? It can be drawn to a desire for the staging of an overcrowded space where the excessive accumulation of objects attempts a simulation of such a 'home'.

It is a drive for wanting 'home' even without a reality of 'home' being there. The meaning is poured into these objects as the lost objects of 'home', in an almost morbose relationship with these objects. They are scattered around in different places, unobtainable, lost, just like the Lacanian objects of desire. And it turns into a cycle of accumulation and constant connecting of all these objects to form a unified entity, side by side. Away from its reality where they would have never been in such juxtaposition. But for an 'individual' this might become a 'home '. Providing the hope that all these objects together make a sense of a 'place'. An 'entity' that does not need a link to a single location but reflects this nomadism and a lack of impermanence. These found and collected objects never really belonged to that individual. Freed   from the need to belong they form a reality of its own. A reality without attachment to physicality of a place. Perhaps becoming the mirror of arationality that we want to achieve but at the same time refuse. Causing an internal loop in and out of this desire.

Creative practices as references: transpositions

Referring to the well-known example of the Duchamp's ready-made – the Fountain (1917) – Rosalind Krauss describes:

But for Duchamp, the work was no longer a common object, because it had been transposed. It had been "flipped" or inverted to rest on a pedestal, /…/ it had been repositioned, and this physical repositioning stood for a transformation that must then be read on a metaphysical level. Folded into that act of inversion is a moment in which the viewer has to realize that an act of transfer has occurred (Krauss, 1981, 77).

Objects interact with each other in a specific way: "some works are composed of different/independent units and come together in the moment of the exhibition…" (Buskirk, 2003). The interplay in the way artists engage with assembling, archiving, accumulating, manipulating and combining these objects is of particular intrigue. Objects are non-inert entities capable of interaction and producing relations between them. They "/…/ have a fourfold structure that is drawn from Heidegger; I treat casual relations between non-human

objects no differently from human perception of them" (Harman, 2011, 5). Furthermore, the deliberate juxtaposition of object brings forth the following:

An object is defined by its relationship to another object(s). The meaning is generated through the play of objects; in how they are placed, acting on one another. The viewer is engaged to complete the story, to solve the riddle (Steinbach, 2008).

Some of these relations are established in the Isa Gensken's works (Genzken, 2013). One begins to plunge into a narrative state, reflecting on those objects but unable to find a logical thread. Those objects, however, may say a lot, result in a shiny surface bound by the plastic and industrial materials. It is clear that these objects belong to our every day life, but in their particular state of assemblage they could hardly return to that situation. Even after the slight manipulation that have undergone, they are now in a new dimension; even if it appears precarious, it maintains a balance between them:

/…/ plentiful piles of disparate objects, and vividly artificial colors, they, too, address the dialectic of growth and ruin, creation and destruction, past and future. Genzen creates astoundingly original works that adopt specific primary concerns of earlier sculptural practice-arrangement, scale, presentation-while discarding (or re-positioning) others-precision, stability, permanence (Ellegood et. al., 2007, 51).

The performative, dynamic quality of an object is present in the case of Felix Gonzales Torres (1991a, 1991b, 1994). Even though it is often an assembly of the same object which is able to totally change the perception of space. In spite of the objects being in multiples, they become a single work, such as the stack of posters, or an installation with candies. It is interesting to see howthe nature of an object has different attributes when it forms an accumulated object composed from the same parts.

Tadeja. What about the composition of an architectural object from bricks, for instance? What makes the difference here, actually?

Federico. The posters become like a single sculpture block and candies become a shiny cloak. At the same time, the same object begins to take on different formal presentation trough the subtraction by the viewer. Through the deconstruction the singular objects take an intimate role and become part of the visitor's world. This is further emphasized because these objects are simple and familiar. There is a continuous changeability in these works that places the object in constant motion by changing its formal and perceptual role. And each object then takes on a life of its own and transfers into other contexts while carrying along part of the narrative from an accumulated composition.
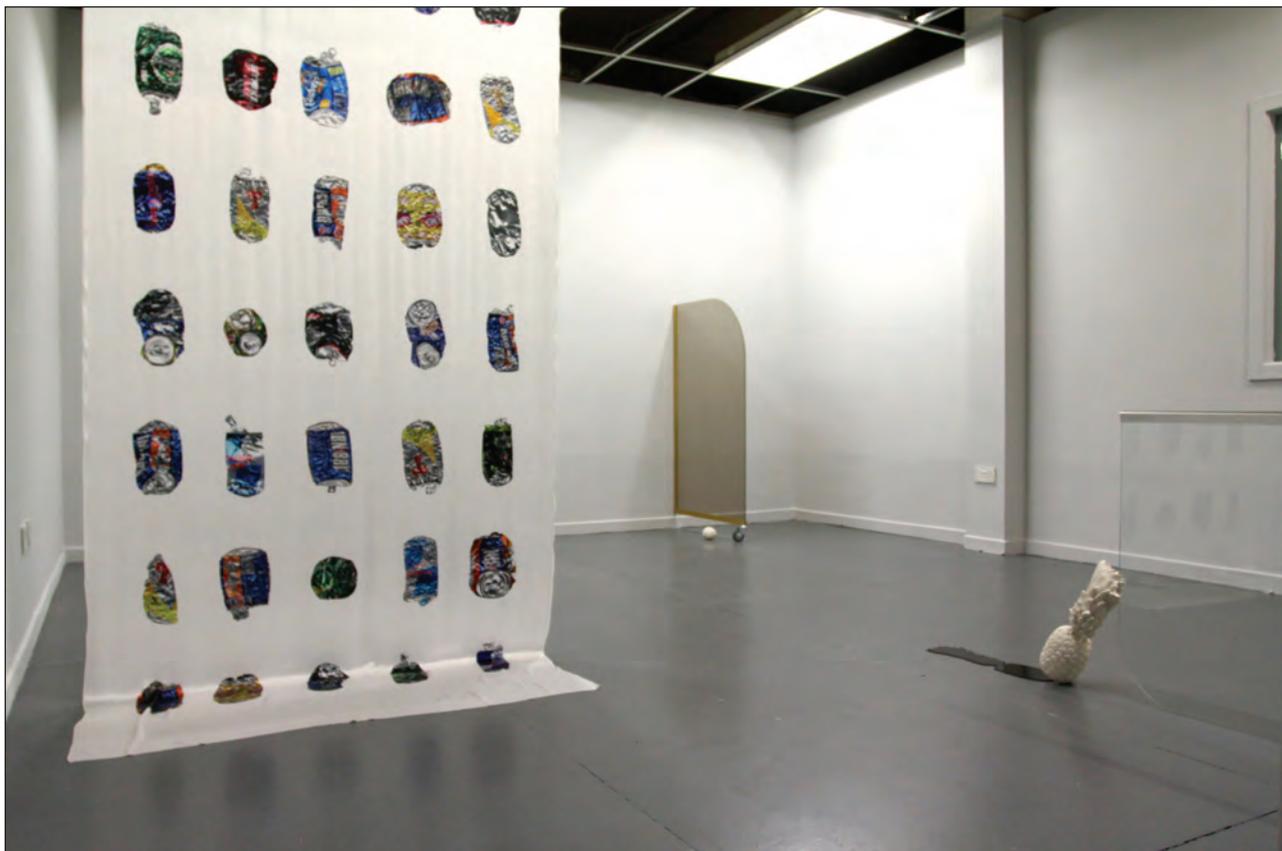
Figure 2: F. D. V.: We End Up Always Using the Same Things. The Telfer Gallery, Glasgow, 2013 (Photo credit: The Telfer Gallery)

Figure 3: F.D.V.: A Can in the Hand, 2013 – print on silk (scanned smashed cans collected in Glasgow). We End Up Always Using the Same Things – detail. The Telfer Gallery, Glasgow, 2013 (Photo credit: The Telfer Gallery)

In this instance of accumulation these mundane objects begin to transform into another realm. They express their singularity and their formal quality, which is made more powerful in their mass presence. And the hesitation of the viewer to 'take' indicates that they are placed in a way that they are made 'untouchable'. Then the permission is given back to the viewer, to take away the object that assumes another value because it has been transformed into an art object. Often these candies or posters return home with the audience, become cherished as art, and worthless candies are seen as a sculptural object. This is the power of that transformation.

Constantly moving and living other contexts, means that you experience new spaces, flavors, fragrances, and different visions in a more detailed manner. This has always led me to observe specific objects, their context and their interrelations.

Unnoticed everydayness as inspiration

Lawrence Weiner says:

/…/ Art is not about telling, is about showing. /…/ so it is posing a question /…/ if you take these

Figure 4: F.D.V.: Untitled – direct UV print on plastic wheel rim. I wish I were a Futurist, Jenifer Nails, Frankfurt am Main, 2014 (Photo credit: Jenifer Nails)

Figure 5: F.D.V.: Domestic landscape. Ljubljana, 2016 (Photo: F.D.V.)

materials and put them together, what would the product, what would the result look like? When you see a sculpture, when you see a Brancusi /…/, what do you do? You tell yourself what you are seeing…/…/ Art is one of those things that has no essential definition…/…/ it has no qualifications necessary. It has no need for a reference point to anything else. Art is one of those things that appears in the world becausesomebody decides they are going to pose the question and that makes it art.That's the whole purpose of? art, it doesn't answer anybody's question... /.../ I wish they woud just stop being so cruel to each other for no reason /…/ my art is not going to change that but is going to take away any rationalization for that. When you do the wrong thing, you are doing the wrong thing, there is no way to rationalize it. /…/ The artist is about simultaneous realities and those realities are not a reflection of each others. Reflections of things have tendency to become hierarchy. /…/Art is about things you don't know, not about things somebody invented or created, but something that nobody noticed. And that's what my life is about, is about finding those things and having the time to be able to present those things that people might not have noticed (Weiner, 2015).

In Glasgow, where I lived at that time, I exhibited the 'A Can in the Hand' (Figures 2, 3).

The object in question is a can as part of the urban fabric. It is impossible that it goes unnoticed; you can see many of them smashed around the city. The act of being run over by a car activates the transformation of that object. From a three-dimensional object it becomes two-dimensional and passing through the scanner, it is printed on silk, a precious fabric. This shifts the hierarchical value, from urban waste to 'art work'. These smashed cans assume an aesthetic value, with their graphics, colors and metallic sheen.

The relation with this object is reflected into the action. As an expression of an obsessional neurotic structure referring to the Lacanian notion of this neurosis. The exhibitionism and the fetishism towards objects. I utilize the objects related to our capitalist era: the things that adorn our daily routine and surround our lives.

The human subject has developed a very strong relationship to certain 'objects'; which goes beyond function and becomes an extension of itself. These objects become a mass phenomenon that drive our behaviors and become the representation of ourselves. Their function is to place us in a context of acceptance in a society that is well circumscribed and manipulated. The relationship with an object reflects also on an action and obsession: the speed
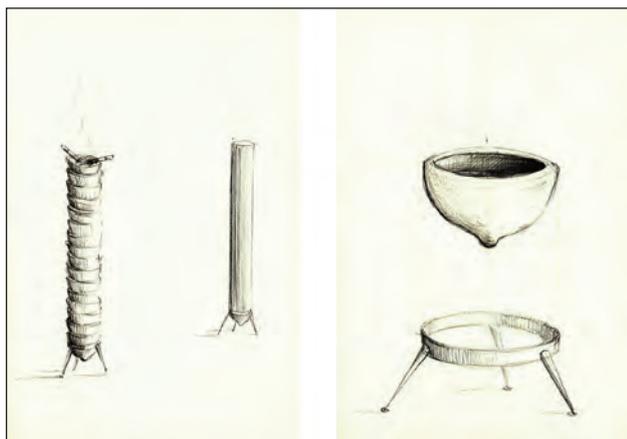
Figure 6: F.D.V.: Fétichisme and lemon soda – lemons and/or oranges, brass, cigarettes (Photo: F.D.V.)

of time has an overwhelming position in comparison to man., It causes a sort of time procrastination, or in other words not entering time, but maybe just staying in a state of "cosmic time", a way to avoid death by becoming part of the space beyond death.

I have been working on the appropriation of a series of different automobile rims (Figure 4). The images of cuttlefish in their natural habitat are printed on the surface. The rims are nothing but a lie, an aesthetics mask/coverage. Maintaining their formal aerodynamics, they become a support for a seductive and almost alien image that covers the entire surface through which the logo of the car is transpiring.

Tadeja. A Fiat, of course.

Federico. The images of the cuttlefishs are chosen in a way that the sea urchins are present in another work, in addition to its physical and formal characteristics. This has probably something to do with my personal interests that create strong emotions beside the creative process. Those that are able to get me away from the daily routine and become immersed in a different dimension.

Free diving and experiencing the sea is a fundamental part of my exsistence. To become a predator in a 'hostile' environment, but at the same time 'comfortable' is somehting mandatory and meditative. To isolate myself for a limited period of time and to experience completely different feelings. To observe an 'alien' world, so fascinating, and then maybe transcend some emotions to another environment, perhaps more alien, or that of the creative space.

Another example from my practice is still not formally materialized (Figures 5, 6). It again takes into account the elements with which we relate methodologically and which are repeated systematically. They are part of both, a positive and a negative addiction that affects our body and our mind. I'm referring to the obsession with vitamin C through the act of pressing citrus fruits; and to the addiction to smoking.

The act of squeezing citrus fruits and automatically wedging in each other like a modular process to form a column, led me to imagine the individual elements as a 'uniqueness', and imagine them as a number of ashtray-sculptures.

The cigarette is also seen here as a sculpture, as an object that we picture very well in our imagination. I'm interested in the presence of cigarette within a sculptural-installation arrangement. Its narrative is retained, partially consumed; it implies that the action of smoking has been completed.

However, the action is paused and is part of the display within the exhibition environment. The cigarette exists in all its presence, but at the same time it is turning into ashes. It refers to life and death.

There is also a form of idolatry towards the car culture, as well as smoking as a historical reference to religious ceremonies and offerings to deities in cleansing rituals. These objects are part of a larger cultural performance brought into a new formal configuration.

Alienation from everydayness as inspiration

Federico. I believe in the everyday as the site of a fundamental ambiguity: it is both where we become alienated and where we can show our creativity. It is exactly by taking part to this alienation that I keep deconstructing this experience by challenging the obsessiveness of objecthood in contemporary society while placing it in a gallery setting or other social contexts (Figures 7, 8, 9).

Tadeja. The everyday is a site… an example of a general identity of space, as a contrast to the specific identity of a place, a square, a region… An abstract site, a constantbut also a dynamic set of concrete and specific repeating circularities. The everyday is a ritual, our unconscious obsession. Being able to develop a distance to the everydayness seems the key to identify the relevance of what we are doing. A distance through the abstraction of the specific; through the awareness of our own obsessions in relation to the cultural context we are working in/with…

I have also been interested in how a form or a typology of visual aesthetics is linked to a specific time. What takes us back or forth? The ambiguity of time relates to an unknown space of a 'future'. Perhaps even an unattainable idea of the future. Thus the future and the notion of Futurist always remain as unattainable, yet ironically recognizable through vintage imagery. An example of this dichotomy is captured through one of my latest work composed of cuttlefish bones connected into a curtain like surface. The geometric form of the cuttlefish embodying the curves is often associated with the futurists. On one side the Alpha Romeo Spider is printed, a car designed in 1966, also known as Osso di Seppia, which in Italian means a cuttlefish bone (Figure 10). The organic object is transformed into a new materiality, referencing through the imagery and nebulous

Figure 7: F.D.V.: Discobolo di Nettuno, skeletons of sea urchins on black glass. Pugna Est Vita, Museo Apparente, Naples, 2013 (Photo: F.D.V.)

Figure 8: F.D.V.: Untitled (Bialetti), 2013. Wood worked on the lathe; Turning and Boring. Queens Park Railway Club, Glasgow, 2013 (Photo credit: Queens Park Railway Club)

form of the cuttlefish to a 'future'. An object of no time – since it is past/vintage, and simultaneously related to an abstract future.

The blurred image of the car is not visible at first glance, it becomes a puzzle-like fragment of memory to be rebuilt.

The delicate and suspended surface of the cuttlefish bones sways as people pass by, sways at a minimum air shift… It reminds of those curtains that we often encounter in the south Italy during hot summers. Curtains which try to hinder the passage of flies and to maintain the internal environment mild... Passing trough those curtains activates a fragmented sound and movement, like that of the memory.

Alienation to region

Tadeja. The majority of your works selected for this discourse seem a very obvious artistic reflection of the powerful Mediterranean cultural context, where the sea is understood as the centre of the 'world'. The limits of this area are 'not only geographical' (Matvejević, 2008, 15 – Croatian ed. 1987). Can we challenge the notion of those limits? Your work indicates the blurring boundaries of the spatial contexts you are working in/with. This borderline position enables you to emphasize the potentials involved in a new situation. Working in-between familiar and exotic keeps the borderline alive, identifiable, but flexible, appearing/disappearing within its own rhythm.

Discussing the rhythm of the Mediterraneean cities Lefebvre and Regulier write:

externality is necessary; and yet in order to grasp a rhythm one must have been grasped by it.' /…/

'all forms of hegemony and homegeneity are refused in the Mediterranean./…/ it is the very idea of centrality that is refused, because each group, each entity, each culture considers itself as a centre… (Lefebvre & Regulier, 2004, 95, 104).

Another space / place

Federico. The space which artists work with is another space. Even when the artistic intervention relates to a physical space, that space becomes a mental/metaphysical space. The artist is also playing barely with the reality, with a minimal displacement, dragging the viewer into his world. The observer, even if for an instant, loses the relationship with reality, with the 'functional' space to deal with in a 'new' reality'. The artist does not work with pragmatism and functionality but rather analyses reality and looks beyond the board/transverse.

Movements and shifts make certain things dissolve and remain and the other ones follow.

The ongoing collecting of objects is transformed into a new system referring to different places. Through this pattern a sort of a 'new-place' is formed, and embodied through the associative content that these selected objects contain. This makes a person feel as a citizen of no-place, a place outside of a location, more connected to the new system of object-meaning and a personal narrative.

Tadeja. Is this reality without any attachment to physicality possible? This place is specific and inhabited primarily mentally. But its creation is also architectural: it is defined by the selected objects. Though that place is distributed/scattered within many physical places it is unified though a singular human experience, forming his own socio-spatial identity.

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Figure 9: F.D.V.: Brancusiello. wood carved and worked on the lathe. Pugna Est Vita, Museo Apparente, Naples, 2013 (Photo: F.D.V)

Creative practices as inspirations:
another space / place

Federico. I have been interested in the work of Haim Steinbach (1985a, 1985b).

In his scenario a new space/universe is created. There is a deliberate physical and formal esthetics of the new space that allows the object(s) to adapt a particular type of relationship that is other. The space is formed to manipulate/change the object. By creating a shelf Steinbach creates a new formal construct that allows the objects he positions to express a very specific formal order. This is emphasized and dictated by the properties that the new space beholds.

Through the specificities of that shelf he sets the precedent, in terms of colour, texture, form, proportion and scale, where "a relational play of measurements and number is implied between objects and shelf" (Wolfe-Saurez, 2008). In the exhibition in 1986 called *New Sculpture*, Steinbach showed every day objects juxtaposed one another, which perhaps carry some aesthetical connections but are highlighted and given hierarchy through the use of the colors on the shelf. However no parallels are made in their functionality: a ceramic pitcher to a cardboard detergent box. Steinbach addresses the formal composition of the objects. Thus the appropriated objects are dependent on the specific spatial condition.

The need to change the existing space and then to create a new display is part of the work. It is not only the object(s) to be affected by the space created, they are interacting with each other and with the space that hosts them. What allows the object to transform into an art object and remain as what it is; is the conscious decision of the artist.

The recreation of the space through an initial platform is also seen in the work of Tom Burr (2007). The larger spatial envelope remains as the white cube, but the recreation of a stage, a secondary object, allows the introduction of everyday objects in a scenario that binds them in an intentional way. The new stage implies a new set of rules the objects abide, which disconnects them from the everyday. This refers to Burr's exhibition *Moods*, an installation of four chairs, placed at the centre of attention, in a relation to one another around a constructed platform and steel frames. The standard expectation of the directionality and orientation of chairs in an ensemble is changed and disrupted. Anke Kempkes writes:

> But the chairs…Despite their symbolic and narrative potential they are no less 'abstract' than the former minimalist sculptures of Tom Burr. They are made 'unrelated', ready for entering the sphere of aesthetic experience, waiting to perform new yet unknown relations – like in a surrealist painting of a kind (Kempkes, 2008).

The staging of this object, in this case the chair, brings the conditions of its objecthood into visibility and away from its assumed function.

Closeness and distance as indicator
of research relevance

Tadeja. The Mediterranean world seems an obvious background you are fighting for and against. It is perhaps about finding a dynamic balance of closeness and distance, security and taking risk, stepping out of the comfort zone, essential for creativity in any type of crea-

Figure 10: F.D.V.: I wish I were a Futurist; Alfa Romeo Spider 'Osso di Seppia 1966-69', 2014 – direct UV print on cuttlefish bones, steel. Jenifer Nails, Frankfurt am Main, 2014 (Photo credit: Jenifer Nails)

tive practice/research. Being close and far enough at the same time is also what triggers my research curiosity, and what I recognize while talking to others, from other fields, about research relevance.

My prejudices, when I am unaware of them, add to the 'distance' and block my understanding of any research message. Relevance is not only about the message itself…

I can also add a note of closeness and distance to your artistic practice. We share the obsession with objects. While my obsession shifts the scale and includes the specific places and regions, you are able to alienate yourself from these shifts. Your conceptualism doesn't necessary mean you neglect aesthetics. Perhaps this is why I find it relevant for the architectural community of my faculty, my wider reseach context and myself.

I'm interested in what we can learn from the differences, how to overcome the world of dualities.

And howwe structure our research the way we think. I'd like to challenge the obsession with both artistic and scientific research dissemination traditions; the integration has already started to happen. I'm in favour of the research freedom, its only limitation is perhaps its relevance for others we respect/admire. Relevance offers many faces. I feel the obsession with the declarative innovation requirements in research, I would like to relax from the pressure that cannot prevent the hot-water reinventions. Any research is an integral part of the collective knowledge body. In the case of the PhD research it is necessary to identify the relevance not only for the researcher and his immediate surroundings, but also for many diversified research contexts. Different types of knowledge co-exist in many research areas.

Your talking about the blurring boundaries of the artistic/curatorial practice triggers my thinking about

the editorial/supervisory practice. If the disciplinary background is essential in the professional supervision, the PhD supervision is different. The candidate is an expert already, with his/her own vision/motivation; the supervisor is the challenger/research trainer with the research 'training'-related vision. He/she creates the environment for the relational knowledge to develop. The most literal personalisation of this environment is the supervisory team. Each supervisor needs to train his/ her awareness/emphaty, the responsivenes to specific situations; a rich experience can lead to blindness for new situations. This is what I have learned from/contributed to the supervisory traning within the ADAPT-r so far. And from my home institution? I have learned the difference between the start of the career orientation through the PhD, the mid-term carreer needs to shift the practice (many ADAPT-r fellows), due to the personal/community crisis; or the carreer maturity research framing before/after retirement, potentially relevant for others.

I'm fascinated by the (hybrid) ways of architectural research. And in the potentials of my supervisory practice. Both. Because I need the former to improve the latter. And the latter to understand how to become an effective mirror/trigger of my candidate's thoughts; to himself and also to other researchers. Not a simple mirror, but the one with the glass blurred with my own knowledge/experience.

Identification of potential research relevance

Federico. We collect – select – filter – create place – uproot – move and return again. Never leaving anything behind.

Tadeja. This reinvestigation of the artistic actions' background offers some insight into its potential research relevance. The trajectories to what/how is selected/ relevant for us can give us some initial ideas about our research relevance for others.

Potential research relevance through the local/regional perspective

As a supervisor/guest editor of this magazine I'm bringing my own pre-conceptions to the discussion. I need to address the notion of 'scientific research'. I belong to academic practitioners, triggered by an institutional divide within the discipline/among disciplines. The dichotomy of artistic and scientific research is deeply enrooted even within the academic promotion criteria. From the ADAPT-r and other discussions I know that 'scientific' research means many different things ('natural sciences'/'excellent research', like in Slovenia). Similar can be said about 'art' (a discipline/'artistic excellence'). I would like to address the variety of the multidimensional knowledge flows intertwining 'artistic' and 'scientific' research creativ-

ity. Instead of defining 'artistic'/'scientific' I prefer the investigation of the (field of) research creativity and its relevance for knowledge creation in any type of research.

CONCLUSIONS

What/who/how drives and triggers Federico's creative practice? The 'dialogue' itself explicates that the nomadic way of life is a set of triggers, driving him. His life-style is involves excessive collecting of objects, which Federico is absolutely aware of. On the other hand the books he reads and the art-works he admires increase his imagination. The constant desire to create the magic moments of transformation from ordinary to extraordinary can also be seen as a a key driver of Federico's practice.

What are Federico's relations to others – practitioners/ researchers? There is deep respect for all… The inspirations from theories and practices are equally important. Some relations are easily seen in the 'dialogue' (he admires some contemporary artists, curators, philosophers…); the others emerge from the reader's perspective.

How can Tadeja as a supervisor trigger the artistic practice contextualisation? With the assumptions seemingly most obvious (for example, the notion of the indentification with the (Mediterrannean) region.

How can she trigger the process of identification by the community of research relevance? Through the stimulation of the investigation of the influences within the practice. Mapping of the trajectories/constellations involved (like in signposting/subtitling within the 'dialogue').

How to look beyond creative practice research and identify its contribution to the wider research community? The common glasses of the people involved help. The discussion on the shareability of the relational knowledge development is another potential.

The deliberate juxtaposition of the two voices can be seen as a representation of the deliberate juxtaposition of objects in the artistic practice discussed. It shows the first voice as object oriented and the other specific place focused. The artist reflects the ANNALES call from a distance, the architect looks through the filter itself. The evidence is obvious in their interpretantions of identity. The seemingly imposed theme, though 'present' in the 'worlds' of both actors involved, can be seen as a trigger of the specific practice, in-depth investigation, avoiding the literarines of the identification and consciously developing a critical distance. The evidence can be traced in the literarines of the intial statements and the critical distance of the developed ones. For example: 'Am I aware that the Mediterranean cultural identity and its symbols are mirrored in my work? /…/ a sort of 'new-place' is formed for the individual, embodied through the associative content that these selected objects contain, /.../ a no-place.../

connected to the new system of object-meaning and a personal narrative.'

The juxtaposition of the two voices is not just a dialogue: the contextualisation of a creative practice invites many voices into the discussion; we can hide behind them, build on their shoulders, reinterpret, jump somewhere else; thus the dialogue becomes a rich conversation on its own right, beyond the duality of the represented voices.

We are now far from any research exclusivism. We acknowledge a wide variety of knowledge flows including the flow from within the creative practice and back again. We are also far from individualistic notions of relevance (some ignorant creative practitioners are thus not recognised as creative practice researchers) and from the idea that all excellent creative practice research results need to become globally relevant.

The idea of the ANNALES call is taken as a driver to investigate the contextual dimension of the specific creative practice. The ADAPT-r up to now focused on singularities of the creative practitioners and the general nature of the knowledge explicated/developed. In the current research phase we redirect the discussion to the diversity of contextualisation and relevance levels.

This article demonstrates some insight of how we can identify and trigger the intermediate relevance levels. One aspect is (trans-)disciplinary, another (trans-) regional. The third one can be found in the freedom of our mental space: it breaks our current sensing/thinking limitations, to investigate the parallel views to our reality… that sometimes meet.

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POVZETEK

V pričujočem članku želiva avtorja pokazati, kako nastaja novo relacijsko znanje v raziskovanju konteksta kreativne prakse, in sicer skozi dialog o identiteti. Ta dialog je spodbudil poziv revije ANNALES o identiteti Mediterana. Najino razmišljanje izhaja iz sodelovanja v EU projektu ADAPT-r – 'Architecture, Design and Art Practice Training-research', ki razvija nov model raziskovalnega treninga na doktorski, podoktorski in mentorski ravni. Prvi avtor, Federico, je kipar in vizualni umetnik, doktorski študent, druga, Tadeja, pa arhitektka, akademska raziskovalka in njegova mentorica. V članku kontekstualizirava kreativno prakso kot povezavo med strokovno in akademsko sfero, med umetniškim in znanstvenim raziskovanjem. Dialog med avtorjema v jedru besedila kaže, kako lahko razvoj relacijskega znanja skozi diskusijo prispeva k eksplikaciji implicitnega znanja in h kreaciji novih umetniških in znanstvenih spoznanj.

Ključne besede: raziskovanje skozi kreativno prakso, relevanca raziskovanja, likovna umetnost, arhitektura

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