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Abstract	"Arts-based research" is a new methodology that combines both scientific and artistic components. The term that was first coined in the early 90s by curriculum theorist, Elliot Eisner, indicates a new research method extending beyond the limiting constraints of discursive communication to express meanings that would otherwise be inexpressible. Arts-based research embraces all kinds of artistic methods, which include painting, photography, videography, poetry, drama, dance and music, among others, at all stages of research activity. By doing so, researchers are able to achieve a plurality of view, rather than fixing their attention on a singular traditional scientific approach to the research process. Facing major changes in qualitative research brought on by postmodernism, feminism, narrative turn, globalization, and more, researchers at present are focused on conducting not only truthful but also useful research, which is open to a variety of audiences inside and outside of academia. By utilizing artistic methods, arts-based research is aiding researchers on this journey. This paper introduces major theories related to arts-based research, covering the emergence of arts-based research in education and its use in the field of qualitative research. It also examines the development of arts-based research in Japan, focusing on the work of "Keio ABR." This paper intends to recognize arts-based research as a continuum of qualitative research and aid its future development within the field of sociology.
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# Introduction to Arts-based Research Methodology: From educational research to qualitative research

Prusakova Alena\*

“Arts-based research” is a new methodology that combines both scientific and artistic components. The term that was first coined in the early 90s by curriculum theorist, Elliot Eisner, indicates a new research method extending beyond the limiting constraints of discursive communication to express meanings that would otherwise be inexpressible. Arts-based research embraces all kinds of artistic methods, which include painting, photography, videography, poetry, drama, dance and music, among others, at all stages of research activity. By doing so, researchers are able to achieve a plurality of view, rather than fixing their attention on a singular traditional scientific approach to the research process. Facing major changes in qualitative research brought on by postmodernism, feminism, narrative turn, globalization, and more, researchers at present are focused on conducting not only truthful but also useful research, which is open to a variety of audiences inside and outside of academia. By utilizing artistic methods, arts-based research is aiding researchers on this journey. This paper introduces major theories related to arts-based research, covering the emergence of arts-based research in education and its use in the field of qualitative research. It also examines the development of arts-based research in Japan, focusing on the work of “Keio ABR.” This paper intends to recognize arts-based research as a continuum of qualitative research and aid its future development within the field of sociology.

Key words : Arts-based research, performative sociology, qualitative research, art education

キーワード : アートベース・リサーチ、パフォーマティブ社会学、質的調査、美術教育

## 1. Towards arts-based research

In his book “Sociology as an art form” (1976), Robert Nisbet illustrates similarities between the art and sociology. Reflecting on his academic background and research activity he acknowledges: “none of the great themes which have provided continuing challenge and also theoretical foundation for sociologist

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during the last century was ever reached through anything resembling what we are today fond of identifying as scientific method” (Nisbet 1976: 3). He states that themes similar to greatest themes holding attention of the sociologist for years—community, alienation, anomie, masses, conflict, etc.—can be found in the work of art. Indeed, long before science has claimed its competency and neutral objective gaze upon the society, artists, in the broad sense of the term, were painting social, political and economical landscapes that helped us comprehend human experience. And even after the modern distinction between art and science dates from 19th century, greatest researchers have continuously projected powerful images of the world, painting same “landscapes” of culture and society, such as description of industrialism and modern metropolis, or even “portraits” such as Marx’s portrayal of bourgeois or Weber’s characterization of bureaucrat. Nisbet argues that art and sociology do not only share same themes and styles, but also employ the same techniques. They are similar in the desire to understand reality, but also bear similarity of means of representing reality. Sociology, and overall research activity, indeed requires the same creative imagination as arts—as stated before, great sociologist were great artists of observation and description. Overall, Nisbet is not arguing against science itself, but scientism, which is science with the spirit of discovery and creation left out. He wants sociology to be more what it already has been: the illumination of human experience. His book is an attempt to fix the imbalance and misconception between art and science, and his detailed comparison of scientific and artistic works opens a new conversation: can sociology be art as much as science? Although he doesn’t go further then analyzing parallels between work of art and science, this attempt can be counted as a theoretical step toward arts-based research—a new methodology combing both artistic and scientific features. If, as Nisbet reminds us, art is a tool to tell us something about the world, to escape from reality and common sense, or switch the perception of the world—then it is a perfectly fit tool for the qualitative research.

Developed as critique against quantitative approach, where complex human experience was comprehended as deterministic external processes, qualitative research is characterized by inductive approaches to knowledge building. It consists of complex group of terms, concepts and assumptions and has since spread across different disciplines, field and subject matters. In their series “Handbook of Qualitative Research” (2005), Denzin and Lincoln have made an attempt to put the field of qualitative research in context and defined eight historical moments for field’s development. Such as the traditional age (1900–1950), the modernist or golden age (1950–1970); blurred genres (1970–1986); the crisis of representation (1986–1990); the postmodern, a period of experimental and new ethnographies (1990–1995); post experimental inquiry (1995–2004); the methodologically contested present (2000–2004); and the fractures future (2005–) which was present at the moment of publishing (Denzin and Lincoln 2005: 3). These eight historical moments represent the change in qualitative research, and ask that social sciences and humanities become sites for critical conversation about democracy, race, gender, class, globalization, community and other existent issues. Undoubtedly, acceptance of difference, irreducible conflict in human affairs, and plurality in ways of being and knowing brought by the postmodernism has changed the idea of scientific research. Not only shift in theory, but also the shift in society itself—civil rights

and movements—have influenced academic research, motivating researchers to ask new questions and doubt old approaches. However, it seems that now more than ever we “struggle to connect qualitative research to the hopes, needs, goals, and promises of free democratic society” (Denzin and Lincoln 2005: 4). Although qualitative paradigm has expanded greatly across the disciplines and achieved success in re-framing the purpose of scientific research and in reexamination of power within the knowledge building process, once again it is facing new challenges.

In the wake of blurred genres movement and major shift in academic research started in 1970's, Elliot Eisner, art educator and the creator of the term “arts-based research”, has noted that our capacity to question the world is stimulated by the tools and forms of expression with which we are already familiar (Leavy 2017). With the specialization of scholarship and constant training as a “researcher” we have lost our ability to see beyond the methods we have at our disposal by now - we simply seek for something we already know how to find. Facing these challenges, Sharlene Hesse-Biber and Patricia Leavy have argued, “researchers need to come at things differently in order to ask new questions or develop new insights” (Leavy 2017). As a consequence, in order to create new ways to see, think and communicate, researchers have turned to art in the process of research activity, and have created a new field of “arts-based research”. Although focusing on the same problems as scientific approach, this art informed approach has its purpose not only in looking for the reason, but to look for new possibilities and insights, reach different audiences, and lead research to the places science cannot follow. It continues critical conversation about the nature of scientific research and expands the methodological tools for understanding human experience.

There are many different factors that precede the emergence of arts-based research. Blurred genres and expansion of artistic inquiry in educational field (Eisner 2006, Barone and Eisner 2012, Cahman-Taylor 2008, Rolling 2010, 2013), development of art-based therapies in the field of psychology (McNiff 2009), or the expansion of qualitative research (Leavy 2015, 2017) are only the few components in this transaction. Since it expands across various fields and disciplines, there is yet to be a universal terminology for what “arts-based research” is. However, what unites these intentions, is the application of artistic methods to any step of the research, in order to make it differ in interpretation, more performative, improvisational and therefore accessible to various audiences. For example, Shaun McNiff, who defines arts-based research as a process where researcher “engages in making art as a primary mode of inquiry” (McNiff/Leavy 2017: 24), emphasizes that it “helps to dissolve artificial disciplinary boundaries and further concentration on ways of knowing and creation of method of inquiry based on an effort to design the best approach to addressing particular questions and issues” (McNiff/Leavy 2017: 24). It is hard to determine when exactly and by whom arts-based research was created, but in order to introduce arts-based methodologies to Japanese audience I will limit the introduction to the following authors. First, I will look into the terminology argued by the creator of the term “arts-based research” Elliot Eisner and introduce the development of methodology in the field of education research, with the additional description by James H. Rolling. Secondly, I will introduce the terminology argued by Patricia Leavy and analyze the connection of arts-based-research to the qualitative research paradigm.

And finally, I will introduce the definition of arts-based research by Masayuki Okahara and explore the possibility of applying methodology to sociological research.

## 2. The beginning of “arts-based research” in educational research

Although the connections between art and science go back many years ago, the term “arts-based research”, with the “art” in the title, has emerged quite recently. It was first coined in 1993 for an educational conference at Stanford University by curium theorist Elliot Eisner, who dedicated his career to the research of art in education. Eisner’s presentation at the 1993 AERA (American Educational Research Association) conference set off vigorous debate about the place of the arts in educational research: he spoke about the potential for different forms of representation within educational research, pointing out how scholars already use form other than words in research practice. It comes as no surprise that his ideas were not widely supported. Much later in 2006 in his lecture “Does Arts-Based Research Have a Future?” he recalled on this presentation stating that, “we do not tend to associate artistic activity with more cool, calculating, and for some, rational character of scientific investigation... so we start with the terminology that some people find difficult to understand” (Eisner 2006). However, if research is understood as a broader “umbrella” process that intends to enlarge human experience and promote understanding—then art is as much species of research as science. Research is a process of coming back and again to perceived phenomena, explore and re-experience the world; and in arts-based research experiencing may or may not be done in forms of scientific research, or result may be the work of art (Barone and Eisner 2012).

In their textbook “Arts-based research”, Tom Barone and Elliot Eisner describe arts-based research as “an effort to extend beyond the limiting constrains of discursive communication in order to express meanings that otherwise would be inflatable” (Barone and Eisner 2012: 1). Put more simply, arts-based research is a method to enlarge understanding of human experience. Started during the historical stage of blurred genres, arts-based research continues to experiment with artistic methods that provide us means through which we can deepen and broaden our understanding of some aspects of the world, and assist researchers who are in a pursuit of new methods to address the problem differently. Barone and Eisner emphasize that arts-based research promotes the understating that is made possible through the acquisition and utilization of different forms of representation—which on their side, support methodological pluralism. This plurality of view, rather than singular traditional scientific approach to the research process, is one of the significant features of arts-based research. While we already learned that quest for certainty is never to be finished, with the aid of arts-based research methods, we are now on the quest to find a way to raise significant questions and enlarger conversations rather than establish final meanings.

James H. Rolling, professor of art education and arts-based research practitioner, defines arts-based research as a new research paradigm for addressing social, behavioral, and educational research problems, distinguishing it from already existing quantitative and qualitative research paradigms (Rolling 2013). Each paradigm is similar in the desire to understand human social behavior but differ in their

description of it. Quantitative research paradigm focuses only on the known or observable indices of systems and their interrelated elements, classifying and measuring them by degree. Qualitative research paradigm is richly descriptive of qualities of systems as they relate to each other and as we relate to them, classifying them by difference of kind. Opposite to this, arts-based research paradigm is thereby privileging improvisational and hybrid creative activity and differs in interpretations (Rolling/Leavy 2017). It can be said, that arts-based research is concerned with similar problems and generation of theories to help us understand human behavior, however, rather than using mathematical or statistically expressed models, arts-based research models are expressed through art forms. And similar to qualitative researchers, arts-based researchers focus on rendering deeply wrought and richly described understanding of human perception, social behavior, and the common qualities of our shared experience. However, unlike them, arts-based researchers emphasize reflexive, authentic practice-based, and improvisatory methods for making meaning and recording knowledge (Rolling 2016).

While scientific theories are framed as testable hypotheses, arts-based theories are better understood as comprehensible representations; and while scientific research is looking for general explanations, arts-based research is aiming to expand the inquiry (Rolling/Leavy 2017). When the aim of art practice is not in simply represent the aesthetic feature of the world, but to address the problems—then the work becomes “arts-based research”. Once again research is understood as process of producing and documenting new knowledge that alleviate or reframe the question surrounding it, thereby aiding further research (Rolling/Leavy 2017). And viewing art as research recognizes that art have always been a means to understand human experience. As Rolling specifies, arts-based methodologies together constitute some most dynamic strategies at our disposal for the preservation, organization, and regeneration of data that most effectively inform human being of who we are, where we come from what our purpose is, and where we may be going (Rolling 2010).

### 3. Arts-based research in qualitative research

As previously established, qualitative research is full of non-quantitative forms of representation to describe, interpret, and appraise the characteristic of some process, situation or individual. Therefore, it can be said that arts-based research exists on the continuum of the qualitative research and is closely aligned with social science. However, while social scientists engage in research on the arts or utilize some artistic features such as photography, video, ethnographic fiction etc.—the use of art as a primary source or outcome of research is yet to be widely recognized. In 2009, in her first edition of “Method meets art”, sociologist and pioneer in the field of arts-based research, Patricia Leavy writes about arts-based research as a methodological genre emergent in qualitative paradigm. However, acknowledging broad development of arts-based research across fields outside qualitative community, in the second edition, she addresses it as its own paradigm (Leavy 2015). She defines it as “transdisciplinary approach to knowledge building that combines the tenets of creative arts in research context” (Leavy 2017). In other words, it is a set of methodological tools that adapt the tenant of creative arts but can be used to address research questions in any field, during any phases or all phases of research. Here again,

Leavy emphasizes the similarities between and science—such as their attempts to explore, illuminate, and represent aspects of human life. Therefore, in order to address social research questions in more holistic and engaged ways, practices informed with arts can draw on literary writing music, dance, performance, visual art, film, and other mediums (Leavy 2015). She uses the term arts-based research as an umbrella term, which includes previous attempts and literature that meant to capture the merging of art and science, such as arts-informed research, a/r/tography, artistic inquiry, research-based art, performative inquiry etc. (Leavy 2015). In her perspective, arts-based research exists on the intersection of art and science; therefore, draws on the power of the arts, humanities and science in order to tap into potential of the arts in research.

Leavy emphasizes art's capability to affect people and indicates the possibility of accomplishing two important goals absent from social research. First is the possibility to reach beyond academia and ability to share perspectives gained during research activity with audience outside the research field. Struggling with the inability to share her work other than academic paper, Leavy herself utilized creative writing and published now well acknowledged novel "Low-Fat Love" (2011), which became the springboard for people to reflect on their lives. The novel is grounded in years of Leavy's interviews with women and traditional sociological research about women identities and relationships—and instead of being lost in academic journal, these stories have met greater audience and certainly made change. This experience illustrates power of arts-based research—it's power to connect human experience and create lasting impressions and grab people's attention. It also connects to the second important goal—evoking people's emotions, promoting reflection, and transforming people minds. Arts do not only have an enormous potential to educate, but they give audience a chance to re-experience, and therefore a possibility to re-think and change opinion on perceived phenomena. Many researchers engage in arts-based research in order to increase critical consciousness, promote reflection, build empathetic connections, form coalitions, challenge stereotypes, and foster social action (Leavy 2015). To sum up, both artistic practice and practice of qualitative research share the intention to describe and represent the human experience. Both are holistic and dynamic practices that involve reflection, description, and problem formulation and solving. By embracing artistic shapes and tools in the process of research, arts-based research is able not only to produce and comprehend different meanings, but also to connect with diverse audience, collaborate with audience and challenge the audiences understanding of the problem. It also sees research as "work in progress", which is always open to multiple interpretations and conversations. This makes arts-based research practices particularly useful for research projects that aim to describe, explore and discover.

#### 4. Performative sociology and arts-based research in Japan

Despite arts-based research gaining popularity as new research methodology, it is yet to be widely recognized in Japan. In recent years it has been mentioned in the field of art education (Komatsu 2018), education and a/r/tography (Kasahara 2018, 2019), art therapy and psychology (Hara 2016; Ito 2018), and sociology (Okahara 2014a, 2014b, 2016, 2017, 2020, Goto 2017, Tsuboi 2017, Sawada 2018, Takayama

2017, Tsuchiya 2017). Kasahara (2019) is engaged in translating a/r/tography texts in Japanese as well as adaptation of methodology to Japanese context. He argues that engaging in artistic activities by artists/teachers/researchers will promote rethinking current theoretical perspectives and methodologies in Japan. Likewise, in “Bijutsu kyōiku no kanōsei (Possibility of Art Education)” (2018) Komatsu introduces arts-based research methodology in the field of art education and illustrates how artists reflect on the creating the work of art. In the field of clinical psychology, Ito (2018) makes a case for arts-based research by following its emergence in art therapy and introducing her own work as therapist.

In sociology, arts-based research methodology has been defined by Okahara as the process of pursuing states of life that cannot be simply observed, grasped, understood or transmitted in academic research activity (Okahara 2016). Arts-based research in this context proposes that not only research output, but also the research process itself should be performative at its nature. To achieve the purpose of finding new ways to learn and present knowledge and experience artistic practices are welcomed at the center of research activity. This indicates that research and its output not necessarily have to be presented in textual form. Instead, it can be presented as photography, video, performance, dance, drama form or as an installation, sound or music, novel, poem or any other artistic form. Taking into account previously illustrated advantages of using art in research process, Okahara acknowledges that making research easier to understand, therefore reachable to various audiences is not the only feature of arts-based research. Instead, here it is portrayed as the answer to “performative syndrome”—new theories and methods born as the outcome of doubting the justifying positivism as the main method to find the truth. Preexisting scientific research based on the positivism is not universal in its understanding of human experience. Only able partially capture the pieces of experience, it fails to portrait the bigger scenery. To capture the fluidity of human experience that is constantly changing, we need to use lenses different from preexisting scientific lenses. That is the reason to turn to artistic forms, which have been already using different lenses to capture the world. Not only the output, but also the process of research included, should embrace the performativity of existence, meaning that it should be conscious of the body, scene and possible cooperation—all the features that has been suppressed for the sake of science, and most of all, objectivity.

Since 2015, the research team of Keio ABR has put great effort in expanding possibilities of arts-based research in the field of sociology. Its members continuously demonstrated that sociological research can be performed in various artistic forms, such as video and sound installations (Goto 2017, Tsuchiya 2017), song and drama (Tsuboi 2017), written as autoethnography (Takayama 2016, 2017), and can be performed in various places: not only academic conference, but in a gallery or even outdoors. To illustrate how arts-based research methodologies can be applied to sociological research, I will introduce one of the projects performed by Keio ABR.

In 2016, as a part of proposal to art festival “Ichihara Art x Mix 2017”, Keio ABR team has conducted several traditional sociological interviews with the residents of Ushiku, a small town located in southern part of Chiba prefecture, Ichihara city. The town has experienced the peak of decrease of residence rate



in early 2000's, and since then is continuously losing its residents (Tsuboi 2017). During the interviews project members have learned that not only decreasing birthrate and speeding aging of population, but also the unwillingness of young generation to stay in rural area has equally big impact on town's destiny—it is slowly becoming a ghost town with closed shutters. Confronting such problems, Ichihara city held first “Ichihara Art x Mix” in 2014 with the goal to solve problems of the area one by one through the power of art. It is based on the following four key points: utilization of former elementary schools, revitalization of local transportation networks, rediscovery of local resources including food and natural environment, and open participation of diverse people in multiple events. Furthermore, one of the important and influential characteristics of the festival is its affirmative acceptance of the workshop style art works. Creators openly recognize art as helpful tool in creating connections between two separated matters and local community activation. For the “Ichihara Art x Mix 2017”, reflecting on festival's goal to use local resources, Keio ABR team has submitted the following project: they identified people living in the Ushiku town and their live history as most important local resource, and proposed to utilize it as a tool for local community renovation. As the part of the process, first research team has conducted a fieldwork, including interviews with local store, restaurants and hotel owners. From here, by applying artistic methods, life history of residents and field notes of researchers has been translated into lyrics and drama script. Following is the translation of the example of the song created for the owner of local hotel, based on her own story:

*“Different people stayed here at the time  
Connecting with people was always a joy  
There was a time with no emails in it  
Nowadays people are starving for love  
Everyone is lonely and sad  
But I welcome them warmly  
Yes, I will protect this hotel till my death*

*Different people stayed  
and then left  
Peaceful time, peaceful happenings  
Surpassing the times with no things left to have  
Feeling relieved after the war  
This is the way I lived  
Yes, it wasn't easy  
But I still protect my hotel”  
(Tsuboi 2017, 167–168)*

After translating field notes into the lyrics and poem, Keio ABR team has collaborated with profes-

sional musicians to create the song for each story told, bringing to light the history of the town and its residents in the process (Tsuboi 2017). Regrettably, the proposal was rejected by the festival's administration, but was picked up by town's administration and continued in later years. To conclude, this project was an attempt to apply arts-based research methodology to sociological research. The work was not only significant for researchers and research purpose only, but it served a purpose of illuminating and connecting human experience beyond the academy. The audience response was present, represented by the local residents who were able to reconnect with each other and strengthen the community ties. And, the work had the creative touch—all songs were created individually, and included not only the researcher, but also the participant's reflection on research activity.

This again connects to the question: are art and science that different? They share common desire to comprehend this world, to reduce its complexity, even chaos, to some kind of ordered presentation (Nisbet 1976). And when responding to the chaos of the world, we have to accept the fact that artists voice is usually the first to respond and in the middle of the crisis people will always look for the comfort in art, not in science. But again, same as artists, scientists are looking for the opportunity to change the world and make research useful to others. Nowadays more than ever, we as researchers must ask ourselves—what is this research good for? If the response to the crisis of qualitative research is the shift to more self-reflective and responsive research— then art is powerful tool to utilize. It has the ability to show different perspectives, make deep and lasting impression, and by its nature has a resisting quality. If the ultimate purpose of the research is to understand the other— isn't art the tool that helps us re-experience and re-enact the life of others?

## 5. Debate on arts-based research possibilities

Art and science may use different lenses to see the world, but they are similar in their attempt to illuminate, understand and connect human experience. Moreover, art provide researchers access to new forms of experience that are not securable through the representational forms of preexisting scientific research. Trained as scientists, by only using facts and scientific tools in the research we limit our understanding of phenomena, situation or person. But through the process of reflection on the purpose of research starting from the period of blurred genres, we already learned that quest for certainty is destined to be unfinished; we learned that facts only tell a part of the story and that the story can be untruthful. By welcoming artistic methods in the process of research, arts-based research broadens the tool used to represent the world and redefines the meaning of research itself. Arts based research is based on the notion that any perspective is always partial and therefore incomplete. It welcomes other perspectives from inside and outside of academy, and is welcoming collaboration between audience and researcher, or collaboration with professional artists. Nevertheless, arts-based research may retain the power to persuade audience to rethink and re-experience aspects of social world. Utilizing art's capacity to capitalize on emotions and lead audience toward empathy, research conducted through arts-based research methodology can contain power to promote understanding or even to motive audience to change behavior.

The claim that arts-based research's basic aims are not finding general explanations and provide certainties, but to create possibilities is significant. Not focusing on providing certainties and looking for truth are the qualities that distinguish arts-based research from quantitative and qualitative research. However, qualitative research has gone through multiple changes to adapt to the postmodern society too: it learned to focus on the individual stories, power relations, truthfulness and activism. Art-based research does not claim to be a better alternative to all scientific research, but a suitable alternative for research that aims to expand the understanding or, for example, engage with audience and community, and bring the difference. Although debate whether arts-based research is its own paradigm or a genre of qualitative research is still continuing, for a researcher only beginning to engage and learn about arts-based research methodologies, it is easier to understand it as a continuum of qualitative research, where the final form of work can be presented in an art form. This perception furthermore can benefit the development of the scientific research in general—to make all forms of research inclusive, reflective, and performative.

It must be noted that interest in utilizing artistic methods mentioned above is mostly limited to America and European countries, and yet to be fully acknowledged as a methodology in Japan. This paper introduced arts-based research as seen in educational research, genre of qualitative paradigm and continuum of performative sociology. However, to achieve recognition of arts-based research methodology in Japan, following topics should be considered in future research. First, connected to the discussion of whether arts-based research is a paradigm or a continuum of qualitative research, there is a need to establish an evaluation system for such work. If the research is conducted and presented with the help of artistic methods—how can it be evaluated as a scientific research? What are the criteria for such work? Leavy argued that evaluation criteria should be appropriate to specific project and established seven umbrella categories for evaluation: methodology; usefulness and significance of the work, public scholarship, audience response, aesthetics or artfulness, personal fingerprint or creativity, ethical practice (Leavy 2017). This suggests that while being a scientific research, work should be aesthetic, but also useful and significant—features that are not necessarily considered or requested in evaluation of typical scientific work.

This connects to the second topic of consideration—what is the “art” in arts-based research and how is it understood by the researchers. While there is a thick explanation of how arts can lend themselves to promote holistic and inclusive research, there are mostly no description of what “art” is. I argue that one of the reasons arts-based research is a conflicting methodology to understand is not just because art is guided by emotions, but because researchers fail to understand that art has also developed and grew in postmodern society and became more than just the tool to describe the inner world of the artist, or to portray reality. In future a conversation should be open on what is art, how it has developed to be more than a piece in the museum, and how can such artistic work be connected to the science. While methods and outputs of arts-based research are diverse and differ from the research question and output method, it is important to acknowledge and explain why you chose that particular art form. In order to do so, researcher must be well informed about this art form and comfortable to conduct

research with it. This also means that there should be a system where researchers cannot only learn about art, but to learn how to utilize it.

Another issue in understanding arts-based research as a methodology is a presumed lack of examples of such work. While many argue about what arts-based research is, not many describe work in detail. But how to describe the work of art to the community mainly communicating in words? This issue relates to the previous topics and calls for the creating or learning rules to describe artwork in a way it will not oversimplify such. However, it must be noted that examples and detailed explanation of arts-based research work can be found in textbooks on arts-based research (Barone and Eisner 2012, Leavy 2015, 2017), or individual papers (Tsuboi 2017, Tsuchiya 2017, Ito 2018). Moreover, although not labeled as arts-based work at the begging, given the interest in artistic inquiry—preexistent research is being reviewed as such (Okahara 2020).

Finally, to establish arts-based research as methodology, we must not only distinguish it from previous methodologies, but also at the end again connect it to the science. Research is a work in progress, and we must not forget the roots, but also question where this research leads us and how can it contribute to the knowledge building. How can we contribute to the science becoming more self-reflective and inclusive? Science, and especially sociology—field invested in understanding human experience and the other—by its nature not only question the reality, but also itself. It has the capacity to become reflective and arts-based research is only a step forward to be so.

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