

Title	Re:searching the purpose of research : analysis of arts-based research approaches
Sub Title	
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Publisher	慶應義塾大学大学院社会学研究科
Publication year	2023
Jtitle	慶應義塾大学大学院社会学研究科紀要：社会学心理学教育学：人間と社会の探究 (Studies in sociology, psychology and education : inquiries into humans and societies). No.94 (2023.) ,p.104- 107
JaLC DOI	
Abstract	
Notes	2021年度博士課程研究支援プログラム研究成果報告
Genre	Departmental Bulletin Paper
URL	https://koara.lib.keio.ac.jp/xoonips/modules/xoonips/detail.php?koara_id=AN0006957X-00000094-0104

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Re:searching the purpose of research: Analysis of arts-based research approaches

ブルサコワ・アリナ

This research focuses on exploring the possibilities of the application of arts-based research (ABR) methods to qualitative research in the field of sociology. Defined by Patricia Leavy (2017) as a “trans-disciplinary approach to knowledge building that combines the tenets of the creative arts in research contexts”, in recent years, arts-based research has expanded beyond the field of educational research, where the term has been first coined in the early 90s by Elliot Eisner. Artistic forms of expression can be incorporated into research in any phase of it - from earlier data collection and interpretation to research output presentation, which often takes place beyond the walls of academies and institutions. However, since it was born and is mostly used in educational research, further exploration of its efficacy and functions is vital to the development of ABR in the field of sociology- which therefore is the purpose of this research.

By utilizing art in various fields and at any phase of research, it becomes possible to not only deepen the understanding of human experience but also to reach audiences beyond the walls of the academy. ABR stands on the same ground as active research and performative social science, but it takes the idea further, by not denying the struggles and contradictions of conducting qualitative research. By doing so, arts-based research raises deeper questions, opens to new perspectives, and promotes the plurality of views and overall truthfulness of the research and the position of the researcher.

One of the most important features of arts-based research is its focus on audience response and endorsement of public scholarship. As well as the well-known existence of “art for art’s sake”, the academy is reluctant to admit the existence of “science for science’s sake only”—research with no use or no audience. However, with the recent dynamic changes in the field of qualitative research, it is becoming harder to answer the question and needs of diverse society with a flat, one-sided, and coldly objective research attitude. Therefore, by utilizing arts-based research methods, research can become multilayered, useful, and truthful to all participants.

With the support of Keio University Doctorate Student 2021 Grant-in-Aid Program 2021, I was able to expand my research overseas by presenting at two international symposiums/conferences—Art/Research/Practice 2021, held at Tokyo University of Art on October 2-3, and The Kyoto Conference on Arts, Media & Culture 2021, held mainly online from November 9 to 12. Both events brought together professionals interested in utilizing artistic methods and served as evidence for the development of the new art/science mixed field. Although the term “arts-based research” was not mentioned as the main theme for the events, the number of researchers incorporating art into their research for many years paints the scene for further exploration of the boundaries and needs of scientific research in all fields. In addition to the international conferences, the outcome of this research and new art-

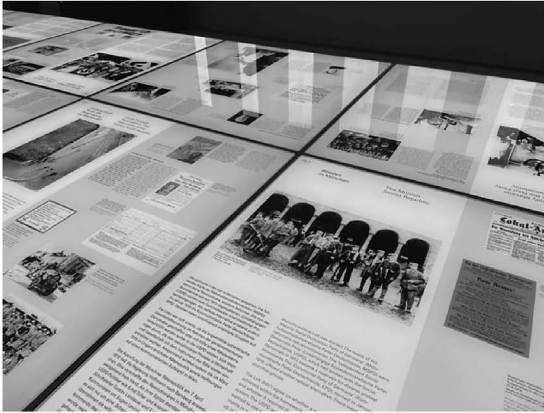


[Museum der Moderne Salzburg, Austria]

work was presented at the domestic conferences as well. For Cultural Typhoon 2021, held simultaneously at Kanazawa University and online on June 26–27, I presented short film “conversations with ai” (2021). This piece follows the researcher’s attempt to interview an artificial intelligence avatar and explore the possibilities of compassion. For Mita Sociology conference held at Keio University Mita Campus on June 3rd, I presented on the topic of “The development of arts-based research overseas: from theory to practice” , sharing my findings on the expansion of the method with the Japanese-speaking audience. And for the Japan Sociological Society Conference No. 94, held online on November 14–15, I re-screened my short film “Skin” (2020) and expanded on the topic of “touching” and “contact” as a mutual action.

Although still affected by the global pandemic and being driven to cancel the attendance of the planned conference in Vienna, I was able to convey the overseas survey in Austria, Germany, and Russia. To deepen my understanding of the contemporary art and the planning of the research-based exhibitions, I visited and gathered materials from the following institutions: NS-Dokumentationszentrum München (Germany), Pinakothek der Moderne (Germany), Museum der Moderne Salzburg (Austria), Moscow Museum of Modern Art (Russia), New Holland Island (Russia), GES-2 House of Culture (Russia) and various small independent galleries. One of the most notable destinations was the Documentation Centre for the History of National Socialism (NS-Dokumentationszentrum) located in Munich, a city that played important role in supporting the Nazi regime. The center is built on the remains of the ‘Brown House’, once the headquarters of the National Socialist German Workers’ Party, and now serves as a learning place and museum. However, it utilizes artistic expression not only in its permanent exhibition design but welcomes various kinds of art in the series of special exhibitions as well.

“End of Testimony?” was a special exhibition featuring the future without the first-hand witnesses of the Holocaust, exploring the possibility of becoming the witness, and questioning the “fabricated” nature of the interviews with contemporary witnesses and their social role since the end of the war. Such issue, deeply related and rooted in the questions of sociology as well, was portrayed in the video recordings of testimonies and experiences of hearing them in VR, or through the conversation with the pre-recorded image in real-time. Here I was able to observe the potential of arts-based research –



[Permanent exhibition at the NS-Dokumentationszentrum München]



[Special exhibition "End of Testimony?" 24/06/2021-14/11/2021]

deeper compassion and understanding of the issue through the elimination of the anonymity and visualization of materials, which also connects to reaching a broader audience.

To conclude a year of research, it must be noted that the interest in arts-based research within Japan is growing every year. However, most of the attempts in utilizing art remain action-based, with little theoretical support, or rooted in another theoretical field. The future step for this research would be the establishment of a common understanding of the term and further exploration of the available tools.

本年度の主な業績一覧

1. 報告書 (共著): 令和3年度メディア芸術アーカイブ推進支援事業「中嶋興/VICを基軸としたビデオアート関連資料のデジタル化・レコード化II」報告書, 久保仁志 編, 慶應義塾大学アート・センター (2022.3)
2. 単行本 (共著): "Arts-Based Methods in Education Research in Japan", Kayoko Komatsu Ed., Brill Academic Pub (2022.3)
3. 学会報告: プルサコワありな: 「conversations with ai」(作品上映), カルチュラル・タイフーン2021, 金沢大学・オンライン同時開催: 2021年6月27日
4. 学会報告: プルサコワありな: 「欧米におけるアートベース・リサーチの発展: 理論から実践まで」, 三田社会学会大会2021, 慶應義塾大学 三田キャンパス・オンライン同時開催: 2021年7月3日
5. 学会報告: Alena Prusakova: 「Between art and research: arts-based research as a work-in-progress」, 国際シ

ンポジウム A/R/P (Art/Research/Practice) 2021, 東京藝術大学 北千住キャンパス: 2021年10月2日

6. 学会報告: Alena Prusakova: 「Development of Arts-based Research in Japan: Problems and Possibilities in the Field of Sociology」, IAFOR The 2nd Kyoto Conference on Arts, Media & Culture, オンライン開催: 2021年11月9日-12日
7. 学会報告: プルサコワありな: 「相互行為としての接触——短編映像作品『皮膚』をめぐって」, 第94回日本社会学会大会, オンライン開催: 2021年11月14日

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