Research in Art and Design - in fact in creative practices, what does it mean and how can we deal with it....

Dr Michele Whiting
Everything we do in life is rooted in theory. Whether we consciously explore (the) reasons we have a particular perspective or take a particular action there is also an underlying system shaping thought and practice (bell hooks) cited in https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b83ZIboQ_Kw&t=999s
Why do we research?
How do we research?
How can we make robust strategies?
Starting points

Think about what you really like to do in general, not what you think your work should be about or what other artists, designers or curators have done work about, just what you actually like to spend time doing. Maybe it’s sleeping, or listening to music, or going for hikes, reading, making.

So think about that for a little while and write down a short list of a few areas of interest you have.

Then try to figure out a project or topic that will allow you to do one or more of those things.

Is it relevant to your discipline? Are there other people working in this way?

Ask yourself broader questions: See if there is a way that you can make the project or topic participatory or collaborative, can there be some kind of documentation, can there be some kind of public presentation or display or does the project itself take place in a public way? Is it solely studio based? Is writing part of your making? Ask yourself how it might be?

Write a short paragraph about your project, idea or topic. Bring it into the next session printed out.
Tacit - difficult to put into words - knowledge that is intrinsically felt (embedded).

Explicit - formal and codified - for example specifications, manuals, instructions, databases etc. Explicit knowledge can be readily transmitted to others.

So we can think about how we can use these forms of knowledge to enable our research...
Axiology is the study of values and ethics.

Epistemology is our relationship with the knowledge that we are building and understanding our position within it... are we part of that knowledge or to one side of it, i.e. External?

The relationship between the researcher and what is knowable:

Possible relationships
- Practitioner is researcher
- The generator of works
- Creative participant
- Observer - places research in context
- Co-researcher
- Facilitator
- Research manager

Ontology
What is the form and nature of the social world? What exists? The nature of reality, the knowable... what is reality?

Realist Ontology - reality exists out there.
Relativist ontology - there are multiple realities that exist through personal and social constructions.

Characteristic of creative research is a pluralist approach using multiple approaches, methods and techniques, that are tailored to an individual project.
How do we know, how does it sit in the social world and what are its values and ethics?

Epistemological, ontological and axiological questions can be asked.
I have six honest serving men
They taught me all they knew
I call them What and Where and When
and How and Why and Who

Rudyard Kipling

Research Point: How we view the world and our understanding of knowledge affects our research, it affects how we carry out research and how we interpret it. It is important to know how your discipline carries out research— you can challenge it!
Just what is the difference between method and methodology - what does it mean?

What is a methodology?
What is a method?

**Methodology** is the way in which you go about researching (and building understanding of) the approaches that you take and the study of the systematic methods and principals used... it's aim is to help us to understand in broad terms, not the products of the inquiry but the process itself. (Gray and Malina)

**Method** a way of doing or going about something

Methodology to use an analogy- methodology is the vehicle (approach) that you use to get from A to B

**Methods** are the gears, petrol and parts (techniques and tools) the way you proceed
Stage 2

Strategies
Methods used: durational walking, observation, saturation, memory, mark making, material knowledge through testing, drawing, Instagram,
What other considerations are there in the developing works?

The works developed out of a considered period of time of study of Graham Sutherland’s British landscape paintings and drawings to closely consider the formation of marks and their relationship to the landscape.

Walking as method

Memory and drawing
How does the work become secure?

The knowledge of foundational underpinning (Sutherland and other British landscape artists such as Nash)

Contextual understanding of artists working in this way now and how they relate

A rigorous understanding of what I am doing/testing in the studio and an articulation of this to varied audience

Any philosophical points of view, theories or critiques
Black Landscape 1939-1940
Samuel Palmer
Anxiety, threat, violence, war
William Blake

“Leave the door open for the unknown, the door into the dark. That’s where the most important things come from, where you yourself came from, and where you will go.”
— Rebecca Solnit, A Field Guide to Getting Lost

“The art is not one of forgetting but letting go. And when everything else is gone, you can be rich in loss.”
— Rebecca Solnit, A Field Guide to Getting Lost

for specificity, definition, and fact, we coined the term anthropocene feminism as an experiment or provocation, expressing a survivalist ethos in regard to the masculinist and patriarchal urge to proclaim mankind an agent of major change. We conceived of anthropocene feminism as an ethos of disruption and hoped that one of the forms that an anthropocene feminism could play would be in reimagining of small-scale systems or the claiming of nonhuman territory for all.
What is the difference between an OUTPUT and an OUTCOME?
Methods

This is a diagram of my method of production.

notebook  visualisation
reading  interviews
video  peer discussions
case studies  archive
experimental processes  observation
photography

Which Methods do you use in your own practice? And can you add to these?
Stage 3

How do we write it?

Case study Ian Kiaer

Ian Kiaer makes fragile installations involving groupings of architectural models, untouched or slightly modified found objects, and two-dimensional work to create fragmented narratives. These works are prompted by the ideas of utopian thinkers, architects, and artists from various periods of history whose common concern has been their resistance and critique of dominant ideologies – while providing possible alternatives for thought. Kiaer’s installations often operate as projects or proposals and continue to employ the fragment as a means of questioning notions of totality and permanence.

Ian’s doctoral thesis was entitled *Endless House: Models of Thought for Dwelling*. He researched the question of the house as model of thought, looking in particular at Curzio Malaparte’s Casa Malaparte, Ludwig Wittgenstein’s Kurdmangasse, Konstantin Melnikov’s Cylindrical House Studio, and Frederick Kiesler’s unbuilt notion of the ‘Endless House’. Since then, he has become interested in thinking about how the model can inform an understanding of painting as a ‘mirror form’, where notions such as tone and timbre operate on the fringes of a potentially redundant practice.
Stage 3. Pragmatics

1) Look at your images
2) Note main practice interests
3) What do you make and how do you make it?
4) Note any insights, associated thoughts and tangential research/ideas
5) Note other artists that inspire have connections with your artists research interests
6) Can you ‘see’ any philosophical or theoretical connections that you can build on?

If you can get this into a paragraph you have the beginnings of a statement, a mode of being/research- something to build on