

KAJ SPROŽA PREOBRAZBE KREATIVNIH UMETNIŠKIH PRAKS IN KAJ VODI NJIHOVO DELOVANJE V JAVNOSTI?

TRANSFORMATIVE TRIGGERS AND PUBLIC BEHAVIOURS OF CREATIVE PRACTICES

Ključne besede

Raziskovanje prakse; raziskovanje skozi oblikovanje

Key words

Practice research; research through design

Izvleček

V letu 2015 je Fakulteta za arhitekturo Univerze v Ljubljani gostila tri gostujoče raziskovalce evropskega ITN projekta ADAPT-r, v 7. Okvirnem programu. Pričujoči članek povzema prispevek fakultete k projektu v tem obdobju, s posebnim poudarkom na analizi intervjujev z osemnajstimi doktorskimi študenti oz. z njihovimi mentorji. Na podlagi omenjenih intervjujev so pripravljena tudi raziskovalna projektna poročila o novih spoznanjih in metodah 'sprožilcev preobrazb' ('Transformative Triggers') in 'javnega delovanja' ('Public Behaviours') kreativnih umetniških praks. Najina aktivna vloga v javnem ritually ADAPT-r raziskovalne mreže nama omogoča prepoznavanje posamičnih in kolektivnih raziskovalnih tradicij. Tako je mogoče prepoznati tudi izvor afinitet hibridne raziskovalne tradicije Fakultete za arhitekturo Univerze v Ljubljani s tem in z drugimi raziskovalnimi konteksti, s tokovi raziskovalnih vplivov in s sprožilci preobrazb raziskovalne tradicije.

Abstract

For the past twelve months, the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Architecture has been host to three ADAPT-r fellows and actively contributed to ADAPT-r ITN/7th FP. This paper will give a summary of some of the contributions that the faculty has made over the past year, with particular emphasis upon the analysis of interviews that were conducted with eighteen doctoral creative practice researchers and their supervisors. These interviews provided the source material for four EU reports and sought to explicate knowledge relating to the methods and intentions of creative practice research with regard to 'Transformative Triggers' and 'Public Behaviours' in research. Being an active part of the ADAPT-r public behaviour rituals has enabled us to reflect upon our individual and collective research traditions. It has helped us to identify the resonance of the hybrid tradition of the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Architecture, within this and other creative practice research contexts, the flows of research influences and the triggers of its transformations.

UKD 7.011
COBISS 1.03
Prejeto 1.02.2016

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1. Introduction

Over the past fifty-five years, the Faculty of Architecture (former: School of Architecture and Department of Architecture) at the University of Ljubljana has been pursuing 'Practice Based Research' and 'Research by Design' as PhD research approaches, which are integrated and contextualized with others in a hybrid, integrative way, by doctoral candidates (Zupančič, 2009). Following accreditation of Research by Design as one of the key potential focuses since 2009, the university has become an active partner within the ADAPT-r ITN project - Architecture, Design and Art Practice Training-research (ADAPT-r, 2015; Verbeke, Zupančič, 2014). For the past twelve months, the faculty has been host to one 'Experienced Researcher' (Eli Katrine Hatleskog) and two 'Early Stage Researchers' (Birgitte Juul Nielsen & Federico del Vecchio), with another joining the university next year (Karli Luik). This paper will give a summary of some of the contributions that these research fellows have made in collaboration with Tadeja Zupančič and the Faculty of Architecture.

The ADAPT-r network sees collaboration between seven schools of architecture across Europe: Aarhus School of Architecture, Denmark; Estonian Academy of Arts, Estonia; Glasgow School of Art and University of Westminster, UK; KU Leuven, Belgium; RMIT Europe, Spain and the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia. ADAPT-r – Architecture, Design and Art Practice Training-research – aims to develop new knowledge and understanding of Creative Practice Research (CPR) through the network. The key sources of this networked knowledge development are 33 Early Stage Researchers (ESRs), who are all creative practitioners and PhD researchers. Among the key meta-level-knowledge developers are seven Experienced Researchers (ERs). The seven institutional partners collaborating on ADAPT-r each offer their own specific research traditions, which are, in turn, adapted to implement the ADAPT-r project. Meta-level understanding is thus emerging from the interactions, exchanges and conflicts that occur

between the project/research training/PhD model developers, supervisors, examiners, panellists, ESRs, ERs and many others, linked to the process.

Understandings of design thinking, Transformative Triggers, Public Behaviours as well as the emergence of new methods oriented towards the explication of tacit knowledge, are developed collectively, representing an innovative, but not an isolated example of relational knowledge development.

The research discussed in this paper relates to ADAPT-r's work-package 1, 'Primary Research'. This work package follows the logic of the referential focuses of creative practice research training: 1.1 Case Studies, 1.2 Community of Practice, 1.3 Transformative Triggers, 1.4 Public Behaviours, 1.5 Explicating Tacit Knowledge and 1.6 Explication of Methods.

Over the last year, the University of Ljubljana has been working in close collaboration with Aarhus School of Architecture, Denmark, investigating themes, concepts and intentions relating to: '1.3: Transformative Triggers' and '1.4: Public Behaviours'. This has been done with a particular emphasis in Ljubljana on Public Behaviours. The resultant reports produced through this process, for distribution to the EU, thus represent an important milestone.

Slika 12: Dneva projekta ADAPT-r v Ljubljani, 11-12 junij 2015: Stadium sprehod z Gitte Juul in z ljubljanskimi študenti arhitekture.
Figure 12: ADAPT-r Days, Ljubljana 11-12 June 2015: Stadium Walk with Gitte Juul and the students of architecture from Ljubljana.



After the creative practitioners have already investigated the drivers and motivations of their ventures practices as case studies, and after they identified their communities of practice (they contextualized their case studies), they are able to think about what shifts and transforms their creative practice and how do they relate to their social contexts (they can focus their thinking on the relevance potential of their work). The work-packages cannot be taken as research steps literally, as creative practice research is far from a linear process. When creative practitioners discuss their relations to communities of practice, they expand the previous understanding of those communities, they may identify others, they are not only thinking about their communities of practice but also about their communities of relevance. They also begin to understand where and how specific individuals and the communities trigger their creative thinking and public behaviours. The last methodological set (1.5: 1.6) is thus not an isolated act; it enhances the explication process from all the previous endeavours.

The following two definitions give a broader understanding of the scope of the research that the University of Ljubljana has been conducting in collaboration with the Aarhus School of Architecture:

2. Transformative Triggers (TTs):

The detection, observation and analysis of triggers, shifts and transformations practitioners understand in their practice.

Transformative triggers relate to specific moments in creative practice research, which result in changes in direction, approach and/or understanding. These triggers are particular to the individual practitioners and highly personal. They can be described more practically as shifts in practice. Transformative triggers can be understood with regard to design practice as triggers to change. Design is basically the will to change the current situation into a preferable one, that change is transformation. What triggers the design/change can be described as the transformative trigger and the change itself, as designed and experienced, the transformative experience and may result in artefacts, exhibitions or events. Transformative Triggers, are by no means simple or obvious, but relate quite personally to the practitioners' stance, intention and attitude. As such, there is no single definition.

3. Public Behaviours (PBs)

The engagement with different means of exhibition, writing, review, entry into competitions and awards, and participation in or establishment of institutions.

Public behaviours give context and specificity to everything you do in practice. They demonstrate you engage with the world through your practice. With this in mind, we see our task, as experienced researchers, is to zoom in at these points of transformation and engagement, with a view to developing an understanding of the relational knowledge developed in these moments. Public behaviours are understood, in the developing language of the ADAPT-r PhD by Practice, as moves by which a practitioner can define a stance, or attitude, in relation to: the profession, practice, policymakers, clients (potential and existing), the public and society at large. They position practice in relation to these various 'publics'. . As such, they pertain to context, or more precisely the contextualisation of practice and may be seen to relate directly to who with and how the practitioner chooses to engage. The concept of Public Behaviours took primary inspiration from Randall Collins' 1988 book, 'The Sociology of Philosophies', where Collins suggests that the history of ideas is the history of social structure,

Slika 13: Components of the landscape according to Pitte, 1992 [Source: Marta Bujanda].

Figure 13: Components of the landscape according to Pitte, 1992 [Source: Marta Bujanda].



or networks of people who exert, 'emotional energy and cultural capital' through chains of human interactions and contact. The principal motivator of intellectual activity is conflict among those who form the networks, and the greatest concentration of creativity's emotional energy is found in face-to-face relationships at the centre of networks.

The reports for both Transformative Triggers and Public behaviours were prepared in two volumes. These covered: Firstly, examples from researcher/practitioners, which were collected through mediated group interviews that were staged with eighteen doctoral researcher/practitioners and supervisors and collated into multi-layered edited transcripts, which combined images and text. These booklets were then analysed with regard to the themes of Transformative Triggers and Public Behaviours. And secondly, meta-reflection and critical analysis of both the interviews and broader research contexts. These reports sought to ground and position the research theoretically, institutionally and in relation to other diverse activities relating to research by design across Europe.

The materials were prepared by Eli Hatleskog, the ADAPT-r Experienced Researcher at the University of Ljubljana, and Anna Holder, the ADAPT-r Experienced Researcher at the Aarhus School of Architecture. Both have completed their own PhD in a way that allows them a deeper understanding of the research training discussed. Eli finished her research training in Norway (NTNU), Anna in UK (Sheffield School of Architecture). During their creative meta-level investigation they developed a relational method to capture knowledge on both TTs and PBs. They decided to use workshops and developed interactional interviews with sensitively selected pairs of creative practitioners, as well as some supervisory couples. The relational-type of knowledge from the process of tacit knowledge explication is thus enhanced through the relational-type of research method. Resonance in creative thinking, or in contextual framework, is perhaps the keyword in their interview management. The resonance - in other words: a certain level of familiarity, a

balance of closeness and distance that motivates interaction and creative action/knowledge creation. In short: sharing something. This balance seeking is not only present within the interviews presented, but also in all other processes of communities of relevance investigation.

Eli and Anna organized and edited the transcriptions of 9 pairs of interviews. Firstly, two supervisory couples: Kate Heron from the University of Westminster and Leon van Schaik, the creative practice based PhD model initiator at RMIT; Richard Blythe (RMIT), the conceptual 'force' of the ADAPT-r project and Veronika Valk (Estonian Academy of Art), his former PhD candidate (completed within the RMIT model). Karin Helms and Tom Holbrook, Colm More and Alice Casey, Jo Van Den Berghe and Arnaud Hendrickx, Cian Deegan and Steve Larkin, Marti Franch Batllori and Sebastien Penfornis, are all RMIT candidates or PhD holders but based at different ADAPT-r partner hosts. They share the closeness within the RMIT PhD model itself. Jo and Arnaud are specific in this group – their creative practice research contextualization within the theoretical mode of knowledge is stronger than in other cases. Siv Helene Stangeland (based at/registered at the Aarhus School of Architecture and Sam Kebbell (hosted by the University of Westminster/PhD programme at RMIT), Petra Marguc and Eric Guilbert (both hosted by/PhD involved at KU Leuven); these couples share the resonance with the model deriving from other cultural contexts and research traditions and demonstrate the openness of the model itself.

The compilation and analysis of combined behaviours (report) starts with the general investigation of the reasons behind public behaviours and addresses some of the issues of relevance. It discusses creativity and knowledge types. It continues with a rough definition of public behaviours and modes of behaviour ('knowing in action' and its varieties). Further social contextualisations. Then it shifts to the ADAPT-r partnership level and its contextualization. The question is, what partners bring to and take from the partnership, why they feel the resonance with others etc. (what they share and how)?

The backbone of this discussion is the RMIT view as the main tradition reference. Other views and research traditions are waiting for future projects and other developments to be fully investigated. Some of them have already been described on occasion/within other frameworks. These other creative practice research and joint PhD networks are also listed in this report in order to contextualize the ADAPT-r network itself.

The core of the meta-level investigation is the interpretation of the interview results through descriptions of instances of public behaviour. This part is introduced by an explanation of Eli and Anna's starting positions, and their own ADAPT-r specific process for the methodological development. As these issues are not the first addressed in this PhD model, the question is how to identify the PBs relevant issues regardless to the PhD stage.

Eli and Anna tested their method with those already having a critical distance on their own creative practice based PhD process and/or working as experienced supervisors within the framework. The next step was to adapt the method for people from earlier stages of their PhD development. The instances of public behaviours and their contextualization include but are not limited to: where creative practitioners seek recognition and how, how they use language and what remains unspoken (and why), what are the regional variations, what is the relation between individual and collective, what is the role of critical judgement, what is the role of the Practice Research Symposium (PRS) as a public behaviour ritual within the ADAPT-r project, what is the relation of different roles within creative practice research (practitioner / researcher / teacher etc.), the difference between saying and doing, the transformative nature of the PhD process in the relation to public behaviours, some ethical issues and further social contextualisations. The majority of the results are focused on public behaviours within the communities of practice. There are also some instances described that lead to the refreshed understandings of communities of creative practice research relevance. Further research contextualisation, oriented into

a deeper understanding of the motivations behind the PB instances, and the methodological development of creative practice research relevance seeking is probably the next step of investigations into PBs.

A conscious reflection on public behaviours by a creative practitioner is means to position himself or herself in his/her communities of practice/relevance. A conscious development of the meta-level understanding of relational knowledge development by communities of creative practice research means to position (and/or reposition) themselves in their research context. Though the research investigation itself takes us from our comfort zones, the act of (re-)positioning ourselves can bring us some critical self-confidence, needed to identify the critical moments in our creative practices, when we need to trigger ourselves and/or others to move forward, towards a higher level of maturity in our creative actions.

Being an active part of the ADAPT-r public behaviour rituals and their investigations enables us to explicate our individual and collective research tradition better than before the ADAPT-r project preparations and implementation. It helps us to identify the resonance of the hybrid tradition of the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Architecture, within this and other creative practice research contexts, the flows of research influences and the triggers of its transformations. On the other hand the observation of the creative practice research activities within the project enhances our awareness and reinsures our conviction about the importance of creative practice research contextualisation not only within the experiential and relational knowledge of other creative practice researchers but also within a wider knowledge-base of theoretical inquiries. We believe the findings explained in this report are relevant for many (levels of) creative practice research contexts.

4. Acknowledgements

The research leading to these results has received funding from the People Programme (Marie Curie Actions) of the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013) under REA grant agreement n° 317325.

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