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The inclusion of practice as a valid research activity within the academic community has not only established the academic credentials of art and design, but has also undermined the traditional binaries of theory and practice. This is of particular significance for art and design, because a broader understanding of the way in which creativity contributes to knowledge has been generated as a result. At the same time, it has become increasingly relevant to think about research itself as a cultural practice, rather than primarily as a distinct field of academic endeavour validated by the award of a research degree qualification.

This paper argues that there is a need to find an appropriate model for thinking about knowledge as a cultural practice that is generated by and through the intersection of other cultural practices. Such a model can be found outside the field of art and design, in recent developments in technoscience. There are several reasons for suggesting this model: firstly, the gradual implosion in recent years of science and technology means that the boundaries between these areas have been significantly eroded, as is indicated by portmanteau word 'technoscience'. Secondly, as Donna Haraway has argued, technoscience is inseparable from the complex social and cultural structures within which it occurs, and by which it is shaped. It is a cultural hybrid in the sense that it brings together related sets of knowledges and practices that are, in turn, inextricably linked to other forms of social and cultural knowledge. Thirdly, a key factor in this model is the recognition that the interrelation between things means that it is increasingly necessary to work across discipline boundaries and in collaborative ways.

The paper argues that technoscience provides a useful model for defining research in art and design. The boundaries between art and design practices have also been eroded, not least through the impact of new media, and web-based art and design in particular has produced significant cultural hybrids.

As with technoscience, it is increasingly necessary to recognise not only that complex negotiations take place between related sets of know ledges and practices, but also that such negotiations will necessitate more expansive definitions of research than are currently available. It is the capacity to move reflexively between cultural practices that will become central to any consideration of the nature of knowledge in practice-based fields. On-going debates about the relationship between theory and practice, for example, can usefully be subsumed into a broader discussion about the different ways of knowing that are available within art and design. Finally, as the question of 'ownership' of work inevitably becomes more difficult to resolve, an increasingly sophisticated and intertextual approach to research will be required that is able to interrogate familiar ontological and epistemological categories.

The collaborative partnership of gatescherrywolmark provides a 'live' case study of some of the theoretical and practical issues involved in any reflexive movement between cultural practices. The work appears both on and off line, which has resulted in an increasingly flexible and open-ended definition of collaboration.