



The reconciliation of the hostile ones: writing as a method in art and design research practices

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The so-called "pictorial turn" of recent years has emphasized the role of the visual in our construction of the world. While we live surrounded by images, we continuously need language for understanding, explaining and analyzing the images. In an education context, learning and thought has always been strongly identified with text and all that is textual.

In my view the special knowledge of artists and designers as image makers is needed in this cultural milieu, but we also need image makers who are able to discuss their making process. Many visual artists nonetheless consider the use of written language to be alien to them, or even "arrogant". Hence, meaningful writing skills need to be practiced in art education. It seems to me that much has been said about the relationship between "art" and "research", but writing as a practice in this context has been questioned rather little thus far.

My ongoing research (2005-) consists of visual arts students' texts within an MA or PhD thesis process. The thesis involves a production of some kind and a research report. In this paper I will concentrate on the research report writing activity with the following questions: 1) how is the dialogic relationship between the production and the written report constructed in texts? 2) How can the investigation of one's own artistic activity processes and methods, for example, be conducted? 3) How are the textual constructs, such as narrative structures, used when discussing the making or producing? I will end my investigation with some practical solutions concerning writing integration in art and design instruction.