



Locatedness and the objectivity of interpretation in practice-based research

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This paper addresses the question of interpretation in practice-based research by arguing that all practice is 'located', where this 'location' ensures the objectivity of interpretation. Another way of making the point is to claim that all art practice is made and perceived *under interpretation*. There is never a moment of 'pure' or 'innocent' looking at a work. Even an emotional response is located within the mode of interpretation that has human beings encounter the world through emotional states. Even perceiving a work *as a work of art* is an interpretation, resulting from us looking at certain objects through the concept 'art'.

In this paper, I defend the position that interpretation runs *all the way down*, so to speak, in the making and viewing of works of art. More specifically, I argue that it is interpretation's fundamental, 'all the way down' status which provides the condition for the objectivity of interpretation. To say that an artwork always occurs under interpretation means that it always occurs in relation to certain concepts and themes in the history and theory of art and aesthetics. The objectivity of the interpretation stems from working out and reflecting upon *how* the artwork is located, *how* the interpretation occurs in relation to these concepts and themes. It is never a case of concepts and themes simply being referred to. Neither is it a matter of merely imposing theory onto the artwork. Rather, the act of having to locate the work through interpretation will mean, for example, that some concepts are thrown together for the first time, as in the case of metaphor, or that an observation is made which challenges current understanding within a territory. These interventions need working out: they need to be described, evaluated, and applied, where these processes are not purely written but interactions between writing and practice.

I set out this position in detail, and show how it is supported by Kantian aesthetics and recent Deleuzian scholarship. I also provide an example of recent practice-based doctoral study at Cardiff School of Art and Design which (a) demonstrates how this approach leads to the generation of 'located' objective research outcomes, and (b) demonstrates the kind of language in which such outcomes are described.