



The Power of Deconstruction in Artistic Research

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The paper discusses the use of deconstructive methods in artistic research. It highlights the fact that practice-based research very suitably complements such methods, while deconstruction on its own is seen as self-limiting and generalising exercise. The paper argues that the supplemental relationship between theory and practice that is set up in the Arts and Humanities Research Council's definition of research is an invitation to deconstruct precisely this relationship in order to gain a proper artistic definition of research, which the council in its definition is deferring to the individual research itself.

The AHRC's definition of research, which is essential for academic artistic research in the UK, describes neither practice nor theory alone as suitable site for artistic research at the same time as it does not give a clear enough indication of how their relationship should be negotiated. What can be perceived as a failure in the official definition of research, however, may be seen, by interpreting it in the context of deconstructive philosophy, as the definition's particular strength, which can allow for an arts-driven notion of research to emerge.

In the first part, the paper explains the concept of deconstruction by looking at some of Jacques Derrida's and Jean-François Lyotard's writings. The question whether deconstruction can be called a method is also discussed. In the second part, the paper shows the limits of deconstruction, by questioning if deconstruction can principally leave the discourse behind, which it deconstructs. Regarding art, the paper argues that although some works can be called 'deconstructive,' deconstruction is not what gives these works artistic, that is, visual coherence. In the final part, the paper proposes to look at artistic research as an option that becomes available only after a deconstructive procedure when the relationship between theory and practice can be reconfigured. This is also seen as the site for interpretation.