



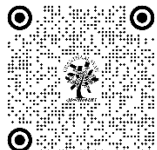


PRACTICE-BASED PHD IN VISUAL ART: AN INQUIRY REGARDING THE CURRENT SITUATION OF INDIAN ART EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

This research paper deals with a research methodology for Visual Art related research. Practice-based research is common in the art institutions of Europe, America, Australia, and Asian countries like China and Japan. In India, it is not well-known. This paper has been written on the basis of the experience gathered during the practice-based doctoral research of the first author (In India) and second author (In Hungary). To understand the exact scenario the views of senior art educators and research scholars in India were also taken. It has also included the experience through participation in the workshop on practice-based doctoral research, organized by Banaras Hindu University. These experiences and views lead this research to conclude with the requirements and possibilities of implementation of the Practice-based PhD as a suggestion for Indian Art Academia.

Keywords: Visual Art, Practice-Based Research, PhD, Art Education, Art Institutions, Research Methodology

1. INTRODUCTION

Practice-based research is a cognitive approach to observing, exploring, and analysing primarily practical and technical aspects of a particular practice like medicine, engineering, visual art and performing art. From the perspective of visual art, according to scholars, practice-based research is to observe and analyse the cognitive coalition between the technicalities of art practice and its inspirational phenomenon by engaging the researcher as a practising artist. [Sullivan \(2006\)](#) In Practice-based research, prose-oriented self-observation is engaged to specify and

categorize the process of creation of form, style, and artistic dialogue over social and political issues, conscious and subconscious inclusion and resection of symbols and aesthetic idioms within the framework of the technical, executive and presentation aspects of the art projects.

Practice-based research in visual art is not popular in Indian art academia. It is mainly conducted in Europe, America, and Australia. Developed Asian countries like China and Japan have also introduced practice-based PhD programs in their leading universities. This research is to investigate this format of research, to develop an understanding which may be influential for the required reshaping of the present curriculum of PhD level research in Indian art academia.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The research first focuses on the literature explaining practice-based research's nature, method, and utility. The book, 'Artist with PhDs' edited by Prof. James Elkins is mentionable here. The book consists of 17 chapters written by distinguished art academicians from several countries around the globe, along with 9 examples which are brief descriptions of the practice-based PhDs in visual art done from several universities in Europe, America, Australia and Asia [Elkins \(2014\)](#), 19. The study has also included examples of practice-based research reports (thesis). Scholars across the world have discussed the conflation of philosophical and pragmatic approaches in a practice-based format, [Hamilton & Jaaniste \(2009\)](#), [Irwin \(2013\)](#), [Springgay et al. \(2008\)](#), [Eisner \(2002\)](#) and [Stewart \(1994\)](#). Some of them have raised the issue of the research effort in terms of text (number of words) and number of pictures [Paltridge et al. \(2011\)](#). Some others have submitted their concern about ethical norms of research culture in this format [Macleod & Holdridge \(2004\)](#). Here the main question was about knowledge and objectivity. The discussion about material thinking from the perspective of practice is also highly considerable in this regard [Carter \(2004\)](#). To know practice-based research, the writings on the functionality of a studio from a research perspective and how there have been acknowledged issues like cultural, social, educational, and political concerns, are also very important [Baxter et al. \(2008\)](#). In that context, a comparison between the social-science-based paradigm and practice-based paradigm to explore moderation in art training and teaching is mentionable [Mason \(2008\)](#). Notable researchers accepted that art practice is a creative and critical form of human engagement that can be conceptualized as research [Sullivan \(2004\)](#), [Sullivan \(2005\)](#), [Sullivan \(2006\)](#).

3. LITERATUR GAP

There are some arguments and counterarguments over the topic among researchers across the world. Here we have to keep in mind that, it is about art practice and art education. Art is rooted in its respective culture, tradition, and heritage. The discussion above has been done by foreign researchers. In Indian art academia, practice-based research is still a matter of discussion. The academic structure is quite different here. If we search from this perspective we may find a prominent literature gap where the topic is gradually becoming significant in the Indian art academia.

4. METHODOLOGY

After having a general conception of the existing literature this qualitative research focuses on the ground condition. The doctoral research experiences in a

practice-based format of both the authors (One in India and another in Europe), the interviews of research scholars, faculties, and senior faculties from different states of India and the experience and views shared in the workshop on practice-based doctoral research, organized by the Department of visual arts, Banaras Hindu University, are the prime sources of information here. More than 10 interviews have been taken. Both kinds of close-ended and open-ended questions were asked. Close-ended questions were for whether they knew about the concept or not. If yes what were the sources? Open-ended questions were for those who were aware of the topic and willing to share their opinion on the topic from the Indian context. Many of them were unaware of the topic and refused to make any comment. 10 interviews have been mentioned in this paper who have shared their statements on practice-based research. Discussion and activities in the BHU workshop and the statements of art researchers and educators have been analyzed to have an overview of how Indian art academia is thinking about practice-based research.

5. OBJECTIVES

The objective of this research are:

- To understand the concept, method, and processes of practice-based PhD.
- To find out the necessity and possibility of implementation of practice-based PhD in Indian art academia.

6. PRACTICE-BASED RESEARCH IN VISUAL ART

Figure 1

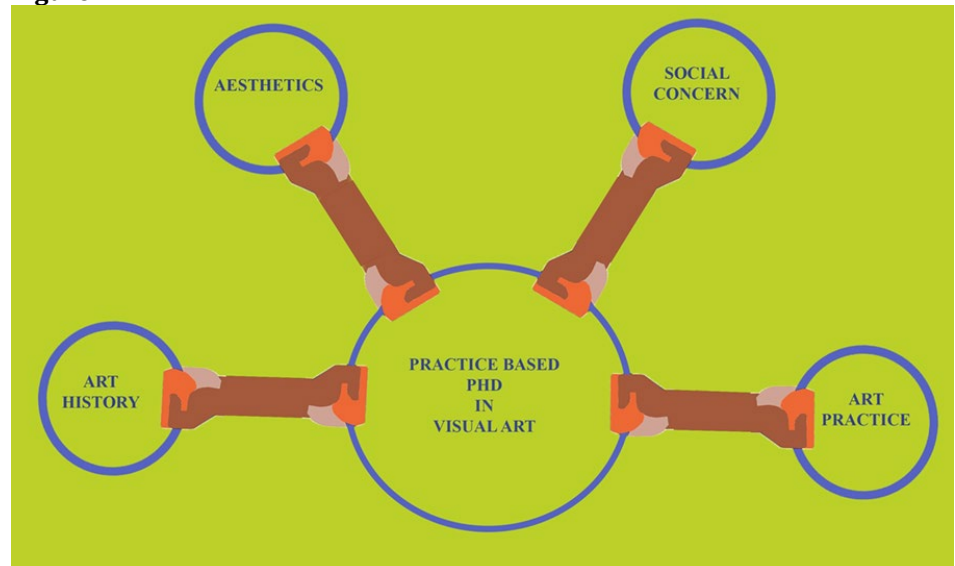


Figure 1 Multidimensionality of Practice-Based Research in Visual Art.

Source Designed by the Author of this paper

The diagram above (Which was designed by the author himself) presents and explains the entire concept and objectives of practice-based research in Visual Arts at the PhD level. It shows the multidisciplinary nature of this method where the ring of the practice-based research has been holed by four different hands. The other ends of the hands are holding the four different enterprises of visual art. The interlinked relationship between Art History, Aesthetics, Social concern, and art practice can be better explained through practice-based research. This diagram has

been presented to clarify that the concept of practice-based research does not avoid bringing theory or new knowledge. It delivers the language of teaching and learning the technical and philosophical correspondence in art practice.

7. PRACTICE-BASED RESEARCH IN ART ACADEMIA

According to the recent higher education system in India, having a PhD degree is almost an essential criterion for getting a job as an assistant professor. It will be very effective for the progress of all the theory-based subjects of languages and social science but in the case of practice-based subjects like performing art and visual art, the scenario is different.

There is no doubt about the necessity of practice to hold the label of performance. A dancer can be ruined for a lack of practice. A painter can learn many things by reading the critical history of art but if he does it for too long without practicing what will happen? We will get great scholars by sacrificing the artists in this way.

Something like that is happening in PhD research in Visual Art in India. Students of Painting, Sculpture, Ceramics, Textile, Applied Art, Graphics, and other practice-based subjects spend their entire six years of BFA and MFA developing their skills at their best. Among those who want to hand over their knowledge or skill to the next generation of artists, they only choose the way of NET and PhD to be a faculty in an art college which takes 5 to 7 years more where they generally study only the critical or historical facts of art. 6 to 7 years are more than enough to forget all the skills they developed during BFA and MFA. Some scholars manage to continue their practice simultaneously. They must steal time for their practice from the theory-based research load.

Fine art scholars should not struggle with the academic system to create fine art. Their ultimate academic duty is to develop and encourage the practice of the art medium through their experience and skill.

PhD is the terminal and most prestigious academic degree in visual art in India. It is very discouraging for art students when they do not get any academic recognition or consideration for their practice during their long PhD tenure. It affects their performance as a teacher or demonstrators in practical classes in the future.

It does not happen in foreign universities in Europe, America, and Australia. They offer two different modes of PhD for visual art students [Mackh \(2022\)](#). The first one is the conventional theory-based PhD. This is done generally under the guidance of the professors of History of Art. Students who are good at writing on critical and analytical issues and scored well in History of art during BFA and MFA are only eligible to do a PhD in a theory-based format. The second one is a practice-based PhD which is the main topic of this chapter. This format incorporates the real practice of art and its inspirational context with the periodic progress of the art creation, as a systematically documented research report. Practice-based PhD in visual art is also known as a studio-based PhD or interdisciplinary PhD in creative art practice. For example, we may see the official website of Ruskin School of Art, London under Oxford University where it is reportedly categorized that they are offering two different programs. One is the theory-based PhD and another is the practice-led PhD.

“The Ruskin DPhil program includes two strands: the practice-led DPhil (which includes a substantial written component) and the contemporary art history and theory DPhil (by written thesis only).” [The Ruskin School of Art. \(2024\)](#)

8. THE BHU WORKSHOP ON PRACTICE-BASED DOCTORAL RESEARCH

In India, visual art academia has already begun to discuss practice-based doctoral research in this field. Recently Banaras Hindu University has organized an academic workshop on 'Practice/ Practice Based doctoral research in Visual art, from 23rd May to 29th May 2022. Distinguished personalities in the field of visual art, like the eminent artist and art Historian Suresh Jayram, Prof. Jayaram Poduval (MSU Baroda), and Prof. Atul Valla (Shiv Nadar University), and eminent artist HG Arun Kumar were the main speakers at the workshop. They all agreed on the necessity of the implication of practice-based research in visual art at the PhD level and delivered their suggestions according to their work and research experiences. Besides their role as academicians, most of the speakers were acclaimed art practitioners. They demonstrated their famous artworks and deliberately explained the research behind them and how these artworks share knowledge, philosophy, and ideologies with the viewer. There was a session in the workshop where the process of mind mapping was practised. The participants experienced how thoughts and associated thoughts pulsating in our mind may organize an idea where we may identify the sources of art inspirations with the emotional impulses. It has been well discussed that the challenges faced by the artist during creation is highly important to know the art properly. Without a practice-based approach, we are staying away from that process. It was a lively interactive exchange of ideas and experiences among more than 100 research scholars and faculties from all over India and abroad. Convener of the workshop concluded that practice-based research is a new concept in Indian visual arts academia but it is an important aspect of this sector to maintain the international standards of visual art-oriented research in India. This workshop was a great initiative to generate awareness of this research methodology.

9. THE EXPERIENCE OF PURSUING PRACTICE-BASED DOCTORAL RESEARCH IN EUROPE

The 2nd author has completed DLA (Doctor of Liberal Arts) at the Hungarian University of Fine Arts, in Budapest, Hungary. She was born and brought up in Kolkata. After finishing her MFA in painting from Kalabhaban, she went to Budapest looking for a practice-based PhD course. This research article considers her journey to Europe from India and the experience of pursuing practice-based research there as substantial knowledge about the subject.

Since her last academic year during her MFA, she has been aspiring to pursue a PhD degree and her interest was applying for a PhD in practice. She started looking for such opportunities and she already knew that such a structure of academics has not yet been developed or even incorporated in our educational system in India, at least in Visual art. At the same time 'PhD in practice' is not something new in the West, in fact also in some other Asian Countries. She ardently started looking for such Universities over the internet and found quite a few opportunities open and in relation to her research area.

The act of cohabiting with the art practice, i.e. being able to continue your practical researches by not only depending on the bookish knowledge and writing theories is what she finds the most inspiring and engaging aspect of this program. This independence that it offers and the expectation of evolving through paying

attention to the art practice equally is the best thing that any practising visual artist would crave.

In this kind of research, you are equally engaged in learning, researching, data collection, analyzing and then most importantly incorporating your gathered knowledge and reasoning into the practice. The theoretical findings and art practice are never considered as separate arenas, that demand divided focus or concentration for both the branches of research. Hence there is an altogether development, enrichment and evolution in your approach and execution. The entire assimilation of learning, art making and strengthening your creative processes through practical and theoretical approaches seamlessly blend together resulting in the overall conceptual growth.

The only difficulty she has realized is that this independence of being able to totally immerse oneself in the art-making process that happens to be a crucial part of the research becomes overpowering, especially for a visual artist, who tends to enjoy practical creation over theoretical learning. In that case, sometimes the study or theoretical part of the research gets a bit neglected and procrastinated and at the same time, the activity of learning and writing takes time and draws effort away from the creative practice. This mild struggle of balance between the two sometimes needs to be disciplined.

Practice-based research develops one's sensibility, concerns, and interests in totality. It aids a visual art practitioner in evolving not only with literary knowledge and scientific or artistic facts but also with an overall maturity in one's artistic process. Here art making is never a separate or individual approach that one needs to engage in. It is rather a more important path of the studies that one must be involved with. The research topic must also be in coherence with one's artistic practice. For example, a researcher whose personal art practice deals with socio-political stigmas, cannot be commonly expected to theoretically research on influence of ready-made in contemporary art. Your theoretical and practical research must be congruent and complementary; more appropriately your final thesis should support your art-making process and artistic engagement which stands to be the foundation upon which you build your own individual approach to research. The practice-based PhD is hence more open experimental and 'informal'. There are no commonly agreed research methodologies in practice-based research and, for such researchers, analyzing and developing an approach fitting for their own needs becomes one of the prior tasks. Consultations, guidance and inspiration from supervisors and artists/practitioners working in relevant domains play a major part in the development of individual research frameworks or methodologies. In many cases, methodology is ignored altogether and this openness towards research practice encourages the students to develop their own parameters of discourse. The process opens the students to new opportunities and wider networks that facilitate them beyond the degree of a PhD. Thus practice-based PhD aims at the total development and growth of an artist beyond the acquisition of esteem knowledge, prestige, and a higher degree.

10. THE VIEWS OF THE EMINENT ART ACADEMICIANS AND RESEARCH SCHOLARS IN INDIA

1) Prof. Him Chatterjee (HOD, Visual Arts, Himachal Pradesh University)

Prof. Him Chatterjee is the chairman of the Department of Visual Art, Himachal Pradesh University. This does not introduce his versatile excellence in the field of art and design. He is an outstanding Painter, designer, art collector and researcher.

He has worked as the advisor and coordinator in a number of state and central government art projects. He has also directed and supervised several large projects of murals and city beautification. Apart from these, he belongs to a family which is deeply associated with art and culture. His father Sri Sanath Chatterjee is one of the last prominent practitioners of the Famous Bengal School style.

As this article deals with the PhD curriculum for visual art which is new and in a state of growth in India, the view of such a senior professor in this field is very important. Under his supervision, more than 23 scholars have finished their PhD research. As an influential and senior academician, he is actively associated with the PhD programs of the leading universities of North India, especially in Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. Some scholars are pursuing their PhD research under him at present.

The detachment of the scholars from the art practice during PhD tenure is a big concern for Prof. Chatterjee. He always encourages the PhD scholars to participate in all types of art activities happening around them. He always instructs the research scholars "You are an artist first. Don't be a bookish person". It has been tried to take it to the next level. With his encouragement, the author has already started to study the practice-based methodology of visual art-oriented research activities and the curriculum of foreign universities to implement them in his own doctoral research.

According to Prof. Him Chatterjee, the actual UGC guidelines for PhD level research is very flexible and liberal. It has not been mentioned anywhere that the research must be theory-based in Visual and Performing Art. It is absolutely up to the researchers to make the research convincing to be considered as productive and contributing. So visual art researchers may approach practice-based research by introducing it to every possible platform of research like PhD, writing research papers and combined research projects.

2) Indrapromit Roy (Associate Professor, Fine Arts, MSU, of Baroda)

Eminent artist and associate professor, faculty of fine arts MSU, Baroda, Indrapromit Roy is known for his contributions in both fields of academics and the art field of India. He spent his student life experiencing the highly enriched learning environment of prestigious institutions like Kalavaban, MSU of Baroda and the Royal College of Art London. Through art practice and as a renowned art activist in India he is associated with the leading league of Indian artists like Vivan Sundaram, Gulam Mohammed Sheikh, Achuthan Kudallur and others. In India personalities like him, who know both the modern Indian art practice and modern Indian art education along with, what is happening across the art world, are very rare.

A lot of important information came out from the interaction with him. He was one of the fore-frontiers of the movement which raised questions of the rules and regulations imposed on art academia by UGC from 2010 to 2014 which strengthened the norms of PhD in visual art for recruitment and promotions of art educators by the format of API scoring. According to him "It was total marginalization of art practice and art practitioners". He and his associates arranged a petition revealing the upcoming disputes for Indian art education. They sent three letters to the UGC Chairman. They tried to bring it to the attention of the Indian Ministry of Culture and Broadcasting. According to him, nothing functional happened about it.

He also added that theory-based PhD holders by system generally stay out of practice during their doctoral research. To save the standard of practice in Indian Academia Practice-based format is something which is at least better than nothing.

3) Dr Ritwij Bhowmik (Associate Professor, Fine Arts, IIT Kanpur)

Eminent art educator, and Fulbright fellow, Dr Ritwij Bhowmik is working as an Associate Professor of Fine Arts at IIT Kanpur and has also taught in different universities in Europe, America, and Asia. He comes from a family which has a wonderful artistic environment. His father Prof. Ashok Bhowmik was also an eminent artist and art educator who bore valuable experience and knowledge about the evolution of art education in post-independent India. Regarding Practice-based PhD, Ritwij says-

There are distinctions among learners in art. Major distinctions are the artists and art historians. Some people get confused when they mix up these things. Around the 1970s CAA in the USA established a format where MFA was the terminal degree in fine arts. By and large India and other South Asian Countries followed that format. The notion of a PhD came from the UK and other European countries. In the 1980s and 90s, we may see there the merger of different disciplines like Fine Arts, Design, Polytechnics, and Humanities under the rule of the universities. To maintain the uniformity PhD in Fine Arts was required. In India, the problem started in 2000 and onwards. The weightage of PhD in API started to play a big role in the recruitment of Fine Art Faculties in the universities. In Art History, a PhD and publication are essential. More or less they get the training in handling art theory from the days of BFA and MFA. But the students of other subjects like Painting, Sculpture, Graphics and applied arts are trained in a curriculum where art practice and art theory share a ratio of 10:1 (more or less). In most cases, they do not have the set of skills required for pursuing doctoral research.

Practice-based PhD in Art like Western universities is only possible when Indian institutions upgrade their UG and PG programs where there will be a strong base of art theory along with art practices.

4) Dr Ramesh Sampui (Assistant Professor, Painting, Amity University, Gurgaon)

According to Dr. Ramesh Sampui the option of Practice-based research will be beneficial for the candidates who belong to the practice-oriented disciplines like painting and sculpture. Here the question is, how academia will be benefited by letting them stay in their zone of comfort? The practice-based methods should be allowed only for those who have stylistic continuity with the research like tendency for gradual developments in their work. For example, we may notice that kind of continuous research in the works of the eminent artist Sanchyan Bose.

5) Neha Saha, BHU (PhD Scholar, Visual Arts, Banaras Hindu University, Banaras)

Research scholar Neha Saha says Practice-based research is essential to developing technical theory and applying it to your work. How can we make a good painting with the help of technical principles of painting? This becomes very important to teach because we can make a painting, but we can know whether that technical principle applies to our painting or not, only when we apply the theoretical rules to our practical work. Another advantage of this thing is that we can evaluate the paintings technically, whether that painting is good or bad based on the rules of art theory.

6) Swati Mehta (PhD Scholar, Visual Arts, IIS (Deemed to be University) Jaipur)

Research Scholar from applied Arts background, Swati Mehta from Rajasthan elaborates the implementation of practice-based research in Indian art academia is a great idea. It encourages artists to be creative and try new things, which can lead to unique and exciting art. It also lets artists explore important ideas through their art. In India, where we have a rich heritage of traditional art, practice-based research can help keep these traditions alive by mixing them with modern ideas. Plus, it allows artists to work with people from different fields, which can make art even more interesting. While there are some challenges, like how to evaluate this kind of research? With the right support and resources, it can really boost the Indian art scene and help artists get global recognition. So, it's a positive step for our art community.

7) Mandira Das Gupta (PhD Scholar, Visual Arts, Tripura University)

According to Mandira, regarding the field of visual art, other institutions may prefer the theory-based approach but in our University which is based upon the UGC guidelines has provided us with lots of flexibility in our research. "I myself have done a lot of practical study regarding the civil engineering of the architectures From drawing designs, to physically working on the construction sites, researching the preservation and restoration of ancient monuments etc." Yes, it is mandatory to do practice-based research in the PhD of the Visual art field. Since without practically realising the methodology of any artwork, you won't be able to analyse it.

8) Ashu Chawla (PhD Scholar, Visual Arts, IIS (Deemed to be University) Jaipur)

Research scholar Ashu Chawla says, scientific Academic writing is the need of the hour and is being promoted in Fine Art researchers. However we as fine art scholars come with negligible understanding of what academic writing really is when we enroll into PhD programmes. Very few scholars then make efforts to learn the process. Reviewing literature itself becomes tedious for serious scholars since the process of publishing low-quality literature is quite convenient in this field. Considering this ground-reality, practice based research seems to create more confusion than solutions. I do believe that practice-based research is the way forward in fields like Fine Art but we need some serious brains behind the construction of a system. The evaluation criteria, methodology, data collection tools etc need to be redefined completely for theoretical research as well. Although an unhinged promotion of practice-based research might get dangerous for the field at the moment.

9) Apu Acharya (PhD Scholar, Visual Arts, Tripura University)

According to Apu Acharya from Tripura producing art is the ultimate job for an art learner. This is the only expectation from the society to us. The theory-based format of a PhD does not recognize or encourage any practical competencies. "I think it is ruining the art practice in art education." Practice-based PhD can be a better option for India.

10) Nishant Kumar (PhD Scholar, Visual Arts, Himachal Pradesh University)

Nishant Kumar says the long tenure of doctoral research makes us stay away from the studio. In the case of sculpture managing the studio and developing the art there, is completely a matter of practical experience which cannot be maintained by staying out of it. The process, handling the mechanized infrastructure and the ecosystem of material suppliers, artists, transport, and gallery operations all are essential to knowing the complex process of art creation and its presentation. The practice-based approach is more focused on the study of the process which may develop awareness about it. This kind of research becomes more important from the Indian perspective where we are struggling with the lack of awareness about technical and infrastructural aspects of art studios.

11. THE FORMAT OF THE RESEARCH REPORT OR THESIS AS THE FINAL SUBMISSION FOR PRACTICE-BASED RESEARCH

To understand the concept of Practice-based research two examples have been mentioned and they will be analyzed from three main sections of research. The sections are contextual review, analysis, and practice. Here it has been tried to understand how practice-based research functions.

The first example is the doctoral thesis of Fritha Langerman. The title of the thesis is 'The exploded book: a disarticulation of visual knowledge systems within sites of natural history display' [Langerman \(2013\)](#). This doctoral research was done in the Mchaelis School of Fine Art, University of Cape Town.

Figure 2

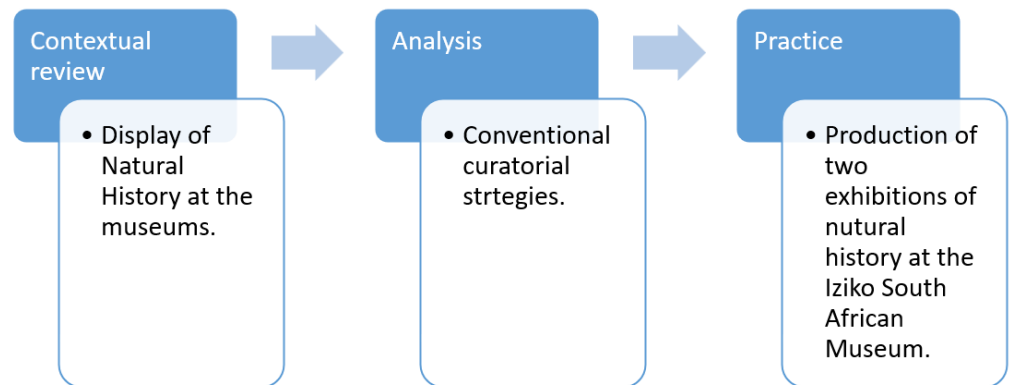


Figure 2 Structure of the Thesis of Fritha Langerman.

Its research area was the curatorial aspects of museums. It was particularly focused on the display of natural history (with dioramas) at the museums. In the contextual review part, this research thoroughly studied the existing literature and the display of natural history in different reputed museums showing the overall scenarios of conventional curatorial strategies. In the analysis part, the pros, and cons of the conventional curatorial system for natural history display were discussed. After understanding the basics and pros and cons of the natural history display the researcher curated two exhibitions of natural history at the Iziko South African Museum which was the practice section of the research and the prime output also.

The thesis concludes with the presentation of two exhibitions produced for this submission, Subtle Thresholds in the year 2009 and R-A-T in the year 2012, which ask about how the experiential and sensorial nature of creative practice can facilitate different kinds of understanding within a museum context and how acts of curatorship can be used to explain or reveal the cultural nature of systems of organisation that underpin natural history display. This is answered through practice rather than through textual analysis. [Elkins \(2014\)](#), p.363

The next example is the thesis of Trish Barnett, done at the Creative Faculty, Queensland University of Technology, Australia [Barnett \(2012\)](#). The title of the thesis was 'An Investigation into paintings transformation and regeneration through post-photographic intervention in the digital archive'. The main objective of the research is to analyze the artistic inherent of abstraction in modern art. In the contextual review section, this research thoroughly studied Modern Art, Abstraction, and the abstract works of Gerhard Richter, Jackson Pollock, Lucio Fontana, Goshka Macuga, Christian Boltanski, Bernd and Hilla Becher, Ann Hamilton and Janet Laurence. In the analysis part, this research explores the artistic potential and approach of abstraction in modern art. After getting a deep understanding of it the research produces wonderful digital paintings as a practice.

Figure 3

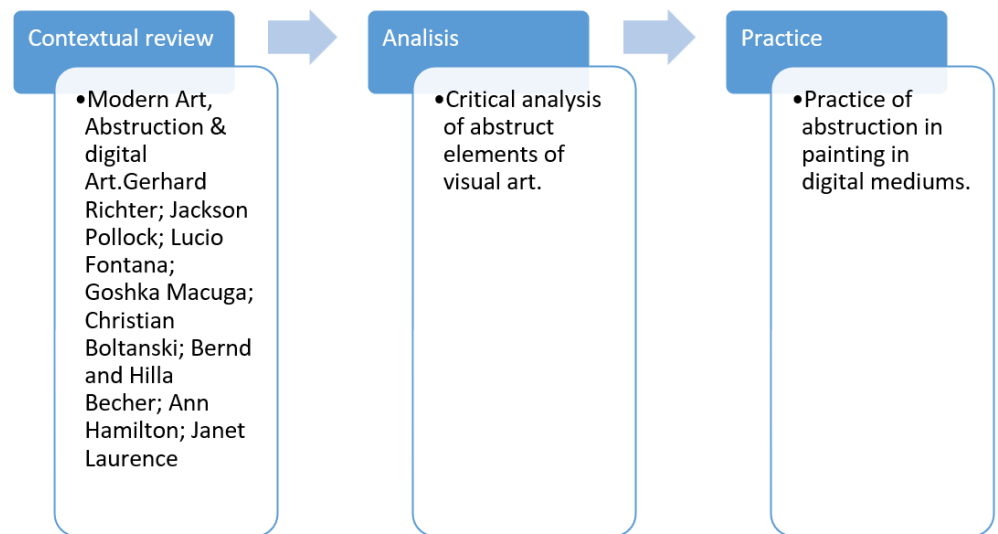


Figure 3 Structure of the Thesis of Trish Barnett

12. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The entire deliberation above was focused on developing an understanding of the practice-based method and its fusibility, especially in Indian art academia. Primary observations and study of existing literature show a gradually increasing popularity of the practice-based method in different countries across the world. Examples of institutes of world repute were mentioned where practice-based and theory-based classifications have been demarked and announced officially. Statements of eminent artists and academician Indrapromit Roy and Dr Ritwij Bhowmik clarify that the concept of doctoral research in fine arts is not well developed like other disciplines even in developed countries. Some of the countries like USA consider MFA as a terminal degree not Phd in Fine Arts. Which countries want a uniform decorum of higher studies in their universities, they are asking for PhD in fine Arts. Now the question is if we want PhDs which will be the choice?

Options are practice-based and theory-based. Many of the universities all over the world offering practice-based PhDs but a large number of scholars are raising the question of the fusibility of this research. Many of them think practice does not deliver any original knowledge. This paper considers all these arguments and has tried to investigate the idea of practice-based research among Indian art scholars and academicians with the study of finished doctoral projects in foreign universities. Eminent art academician Indrapromit Roy described 'the present system of consideration of PhD and its benefits in Indian art Academia' as the ultimate marginalization of practice. Prof. Him Chatterjee is also concerned about the impertinence of practice among doctoral research patterns in India. The interactions with the Indian PhD candidates have reflected a kind of frustration for having less opportunity or recognition for art practice during doctoral research. A large number of them like Apu Acharya, (Including Senior faculties) are expecting that the practice-based format may give us a better solution to this problem. Prof. Him Chatterjee and Mandira Das Gupta from Tripura, believes UGC rules regarding research are flexible and liberal enough to accept the the format of practice-based research in fine art. It is nowhere mentioned that PhD in fine art must be in theory-based format. Research scholars Ashu Chawla and Neha Shaha have mentioned their concerns about the evaluation of the research work. It depends on the outcome of the research. After studying a considerable number of theses done in practice-based method [Proquest. \(n.d.\)](#) this work has noticed a confusion among Indian scholars about the outcome. There is a concept that outcome of a practice-based research is a series of art works, designs or completion of a curatorial project or art conservation project. The examples mentioned in this paper [Langerman \(2013\)](#), and [Barnett \(2012\)](#) have demonstrated that the work or the practice is not the only outcome of the research. Source of inspiration, analysis of the philosophy and relevance of that inspiration to be transferred and presented in the artwork, social concern, history of the style, development of artistic technicalities, processing, and steps of the medium and managing the presentation and many more things are there to be researched, reported, and explained. Nishant Kumar has shown the essentiality of knowledge behind the studio management of an art practitioner. These are the huge amount of knowledge behind the creation of a work of art which must be conserved to inspire, guide, and upgrade the art academia and practice for the future generation. Here the quotation from RSA website [The Ruskin School of Art. \(2024\)](#) is highly mentionable. In this regard Dr Ramesh Sampui raised the topic of eligibility of practice-based researcher from the perspective of stylistic continuity which reflects the seriousness and focused area of research. Swati Mehta is hopeful for getting the new scope of multi-disciplinary research through practice-based format. According to Dr Ritwij Bhowmik and some other scholars, Indian art academia has yet to do a lot of work to match the global standard of BFA and MFA before thinking about the PhDs.

The BHU workshop was full of these arguments and counter-arguments but above all the doubts there was one thing decisive. Practice-based research is an option which should be brought under consideration to stay in the rhythm in which the world art academia is moving. To have more clarity we must develop a habit of studying of practice-based thesis reports available on internet repositories like ProQuest and others as we do in Shodhganga to know the conventional way of research. We must apply and avail the modern means of communication with foreign universities especially where practice-based PhDs are offered. We should become more serious during BFA regarding analytical and rational communication over our practice and about the dissertation during MFA. The research aptitude must be developed from the early steps of BFA and MFA at the institutions where

students become able to communicate the knowledge and cognitive character artists build in their soul during the exploration of their style which is a cumulative culmination of their skill and philosophy. The awareness about the knowledge behind the practice and operational management of the process and presentation may be brought into the literature by the practice of practice-based research.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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