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## Art Practice-Based Research Paradigm

Mohd Fuad Md Arif

College of Creative Arts, Universiti Teknologi MARA, 40450 Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia

fuad5649@uitm.edu.my  
Tel: +60123715234

### Abstract

A research paradigm is a blueprint that lay out the many roles of how the development of knowledge can be place within a particular discipline in research. As artistic research is still in its infancy, this paper attempts to proposed a schematic foundation for art practice-based research paradigm by referencing to an existing structure proposed by Gray and Malins. The research takes a interpretative method in developing definition and basic argument, providing the future researcher with a fundamental comprehension of the research paradigm by focusing on its three components—namely, ontology, epistemology, and methodology—as outlined in their suggested scheme.

Keywords: art, visual art, art practice-based research, art practice-based paradigm

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### 1.0 Introduction

The word "paradigm" comes from the Greek phrase "paradeiknumi," which can be translated as "to exhibit, to point out." The prefix "para" means "beside," and "deiknumi" means "to display." (Flew, 1985) Therefore, when used as a noun, it refers to a method of elucidating or emphasising something. In the context of a philosophical and theoretical framework for the organisation of knowledge, as the framework within which laws, theories, and generalisations, as well as the procedures that are developed to support them, are conceived. Additionally, the word may connote a train of thought or an image in one's head. Guba and Lincoln describe paradigm as "a set of basic beliefs ... that deals with ultimate or first principle... worldview that defines for its...beliefs are basic in the sense that they must be accepted simply on faith (however well argued); there is no way to establish their ultimate truthfulness. If there were, the philosophical debates... would have been resolved millennia ago." (1994 p. 107-108)

In the natural sciences, the investigation of its object is primarily geared toward gaining a better understanding of "existing facts such as physical phenomena" (Adiwijaya & Rahardja, 2015, p. 326) This fundamentally focuses on the generation of concrete knowledge, or truth claims, that correlate to universal patterns or laws, which in most instances also fit within the framework of the correspondence theory of truth. In this case, the facts are causative and mechanically predictable, which means that they are objectively inanimate and materially necessary. Setting up procedures for analysing phenomena, acquiring new knowledge, or re-establishing and re-incorporating previous knowledge through the process of observing, explaining, and testing is required for the scientific method (Carey, 2011, p. 3), and it is imperative that these procedures be replicable for any future scientific investigations. And it is in these methodical methods and their replicability that the scientific community stakes its claim to the truth. Regrettably, the scientific method is often presented in the context of aggressive claims with the assumption that it is the sole or, at the very least, the most trustworthy technique of getting to the truth. (Smith, 2003, p. 233) With regard to their definitions, research paradigms therefore attempts to set a boarder or a definition for the researcher on what it is that the fundamental structure of their research is about, as well as what kind of idea and conceptual barrier that falls within and

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outside the parameters of legitimate research. (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 108) However, when the same aspect is highlight within the arts, or more specifically the visual art, due to the infancy stage of the discipline being discuss, formulated, and made into practical, its paradigm development can still be consider new. This is because in the natural sciences and humanities, the establishment of research paradigms is well discussed and defined by scholars in the many respected fields, especially people like Kuhn, Guba, Lincoln, and Schwandt just to name a few. However, when the same aspect is brought to light within the realm of the arts, specifically of visual art, due to the fact that the field is still in its formative stages and is only just beginning to be discussed, formulated, and put into practise academically, the paradigm shift that results from this can still be considered novel.

## 2.0 Paradigm comparison

Guba and Lincoln (1994) state that the essential beliefs that outline a specific research paradigm may be abridged by the reactions given to these three fundamental questions as given below:

1. *Ontological*. Which deal with the question of what is the form and nature of reality.
2. *Epistemological*. Which deal with the question i.e. what is the basic belief about knowledge (i.e. what can be known by the inquirer)
3. *Methodological*. Which deal with the question of how can the researcher go about finding out whatever s/he believes can be known.

To further understand these distinction, a paradigm comparison table below develop by Carol Gray and Julian Malins (2004) can be used as reference. Their comparison table which is an adaptation from Guba's *Paradigm Dialogue* (1990) also included *Artistic* as an suggestion to the other areas which are Positivism, Post-positivism, Critical Theory and Constructivism.

	Positivism	Post-positivism	Critical Theory	Constructivism	Artistic ?
ONTOLOGY (The nature of reality, the 'knowable')	<b>Realist</b> – reality exists 'out there' and is driven by immutable natural laws and mechanisms. Knowledge of these entities, laws and mechanisms is conventionally summarized in the form of time- and context-free generalizations. Some of these latter generalizations take the form of cause-effect laws.	<b>Critical realist</b> – reality exists but can never be fully apprehended. It is driven by natural laws that can only be incompletely understood.	<b>Critical realist</b> – reality exists but can never be fully apprehended. It is driven by natural laws that can only be incompletely understood.	<b>Relativist</b> – realities exist in the form of multiple mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific, dependent for their form and content on the persons who hold them.	
EPISTEMOLOGY Nature of relationship between inquirer and the 'knowable'	<b>Dualist / objectivist</b> – it is both possible and essential for the inquirer to adopt a distant, non-interactive posture. Values and other biasing and confounding factors are thereby automatically excluded from influencing the outcomes.	<b>Modified objectivist</b> – objectivity remains a regulatory ideal, but it can only be approximated, with special emphasis placed on external guardians such as the critical tradition and the critical community.	<b>Subjectivist</b> – in the sense that values mediate inquiry.	<b>Subjectivist</b> – inquirer and inquired are fused into a single (monistic) entity. Findings are literally the creation of the process of interaction between the two.	
METHODOLOGY How should the inquirer go about finding out knowledge?	<b>Experimental / manipulative</b> – questions and/or hypotheses are stated in advance in propositional form and subjected to empirical tests (falsification) under carefully controlled conditions.	<b>Modified experimental / manipulative</b> – emphasize critical multipism. Redress imbalances by doing inquiry in more natural settings, using more qualitative methods, depending more on grounded theory, and reintroducing discovery into the enquiry process.	<b>Dialogic, transformative</b> – eliminate false consciousness and energize and facilitate transformation.	<b>Hermeneutic, dialectic</b> – individual constructions are elicited and refined hermeneutically, and compared and contrasted dialectically, with the aim of generating one (or a few) constructions on which there is substantial consensus.	

Table 1. Comparison research paradigm table adapted by Gray, C., & Malins, J. from Gaba, Paradigm of inquiry (1990), 2004, *Visualizing research: A guide to the research process in art and design*. (p. 20), 2004, Ashgate.

There is a discernible movement from one region to another in the ontological position of reality. The fundamental understanding of reality that underpins Positivist, views reality as a universal condition that exists in the world, governed by natural and mechanistic laws. According to this understanding, the concept of causal effect is essential to the way in which things like the universe operate. There is a concrete, undeniable reality that functions in accordance with immutable natural rules that control cause and effect relationships. It comprises of consistent patterns or orders that have existed in the past and can be discovered. These patterns or orders are not confined by time or context and can be generalised. Constructivism, on the other hand, acknowledges that reality is multifaceted and contends that people construct, interpret, and have experiences of the world in the context of their relationships with one another and with larger social systems. In this context, reality is regarded to be subjective and relative, given that individuals have unique ways of perceiving the world around them.

When knowledge is understood on an epistemological level, it is possible to describe it in a methodical manner from a positivist point of view. On the other hand, in constructivism, knowledge is based not only on observable phenomena, but also on an individual's subjective beliefs, values, reasons, and understandings. In this context, knowledge is understood to be something that can be produced, and it refers to the process by which individuals give their lives meaning—not merely the fact that they give their lives meaning, but also the meaning that they give their lives.

Within a Positivist framework, the responsibility of a researcher is to retain impartiality and remain separate from the subject being researched. The investigator maintains influence over the phenomenon that is being researched, leading some to believe that science is value-free and that they have no place in research. Any kind of research needs to get rid of all of the biases. However, from the standpoint of the Constructivist school of thought regarding research methodology, the role of researchers is that of co-creators of meaning, and they add their own personal experiences to the research. The goal of the research will be to gain a grasp of both the entire and a profound comprehension of the ways in which each component is related to and connected to the whole.

### 3.0 Art Practice-Base Paradigm

As the sphere of art practise in research (academia) is not limited inside a mechanical scheme in the same way that the sciences are. As a consequence of this, it is how Baldacchino defined as a practise that is multiple, renouncing the assurance of teleological (2012, p. xvii) It operates under the premise that the artist or researcher can never know the result in advance, and that understanding is something that emerges rather than is something that is premeditated. As explained by Scrivener, the understanding that the purpose of the research through artistic practise is to serve "deep insights into emotion, human nature and relationships, and our place in the World... provide both ways of seeing and ways of being", is the foundation upon which the research is established. (Scrivener, 2002, p. 11)

#### 3.1 Ontology: Nature of Reality

As Gray & Malins (p. 15, 2004) artistic paradigm embrace both so sort of pluralist notion in viewing reality. Thus in artistic research paradigm reality is viewed as a complex and dynamic condition in which, e.g. social reality are constructed, interpreted and experienced by people in their interactions with each other and with wider social systems. Reality is a fluid definitions in which a huge part of it is created by human interaction/social construction of reality and also with non-humans; objects, materials, objects and concepts. The being of reality is influence by conflicting, underlying structures – social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, gender but also by a universal stable pre-existing patterns or order that can be unveiled but can never be gasped in its essence. It is both objective and subjective. Reality can only be imperfectly grasped (reality is not perfect it is always the becoming of the real absolute. Thus the notion of "aesthetic" for example can be understood as a condition in which "beauty" and "ugliness" always coexist alongside one another as dynamic phenomena.

#### 3.2 Ontology: Nature of Human Beings

A paradigm that is founded on art, places humans in a perpetual state of paradoxical engagement, in which the condition or being simultaneously seen as logical and irrational, imaginative and specific, wonderers and dwellers, unpredictable and definite, thinking and thoughtless, aware and unconscious. People have a perception of reality that comes from their own personal experiences. Social beings capable of creating both objects and meaning, as well as being constantly engaged in the creation of sense, beauty, and the desecration of beauty. People have the ability to shape and reimagine their own world through the acts they take and critical reflection on those activities. People have varied ways of experiencing reality, but in order to navigate the hierarchy of it, they need to have a goal.

#### 3.3 Epistemology: Nature of Knowledge

Knowledge is drive from subjective (Gray & Malins, p. 21, 2004) opinions, values, reasons, and understandings, as well as intuitive and tacit. The acquisition of knowledge through the creation of art is concerned with the processes by which (artist) individuals fashion and produce items in their life that are regarded as being exceptional or unique. However, art, much like philosophy, cannot be considered a type of knowledge (Harman, 2014, para 9). In the same way that poetry does, art is the process of the unfolding of the world through the use of a variety of things, objects and ideas. In relation to this, Bolt defined artistic inquiry as "material thinking," which he borrowed from Paul Carter's terminology. Material thinking refers to "knowing that arises through handling materials in practice", which is the focus of Bolt's definition. (2010, p. 29) Nelson (2013) defined it as "practical knowing-in-doing," which attended to the genuine engagement and practise of the art of work. The phrase "practical knowing-in-doing" can also be reflected on when Wentworth underscore this idea through the position of *paint* in painting that is "something that only is what it is through being used. In other words paint is paint. It is in this that the *paintness* of paint resides; in its being used as paint". (2004, p. 34)

#### 3.4 Epistemology: Role of theory

There is a lot of room for error when it comes to the role of theory in artistic paradigm. Making use of the physicality of the work is an essential component of the process. Therefore, theory is subordinate to both the working object and the art object itself. Any type of theory that is used in art or that is contextually "referred" to art is not fixed and can be creatively changed, reassembled, demolished, and reengaged with.

### 3.5 Epistemology: Theory Building

Theories can be formed or produced from numerous realities; the artist/researcher can look at their activities, and challenge it from within. Artistic ideas depart and evolved from a variety of perspectives and dimensions in order to make sense of them and reason them out. The artist or researcher shapes theory based on his or her artistic individual talent as well as their awareness of the setting of the work. When it comes to testing theories, there is no commitment as theory role is to inform the artistic practice.

### 3.6 Epistemology: Role of research

Discover reality, that is, natural laws (which are mysterious in their depth), and artistically portray them as objects that are original, critical, expressive, lyrical, provoking, and other such things. Artistically making, creating, addressing social issues, individual stories, political emancipation, and increasing critical consciousness, experiencing object phenomena, breaking down institutional structures and arrangements so that ideologies and power can be experienced, pondered upon, and engaged by the artist/researcher and their audience in an artistic manner.

### 3.7 Epistemology: Research findings are 'true' if:

The research approach has been collaborative throughout, with participants providing input and creative authorities or communities providing feedback. Unveiling amazing, perceptive aesthetics art objects, thought-provoking and innovative ideas that enhance both the understanding and the experience of the *artistic universe* is what this book is all about. Some 'findings' in the arts have the potential to improve the quality of life for individuals as well as society as a whole.

### 3.8 Epistemology: Role of common sense

The aesthetic environment as well as powerful everyday notions that are held by the human subjectivity are reflected in common sense. There is room for overlap between creative, artistic, and inductive and deductive forms of reasoning.

### 3.9 Methodology: Role of researcher

The artist/researcher recognises researchable problems that have been brought up in practise and provides responses through aspects of practise. (Gray & Malins, p. 20, 2004) The artist/researcher is always infused as an active participant in the production of the artwork and its meaning. In doing the research they in turn contributes their own uniquely personal experience to the investigation. Artistic investigation makes effort to build a grasp of the entirety of their artistic processes as well as a profound understanding of how each component relates to and is connected to the whole (circular, loop). They takes on the role of a mediator, a shepherd, and a wonderer while simultaneously promoting the participation and involvement of the subjects, who therefore become collaborators, with object or people in the process of conducting research. Yet in most of the processes, the artist/researcher always have an intimate and *personal* connection with the subject. According to Borgdorff (2012), this is the reason why "creative processes are inextricably bound up with the creative personality and with the individual, sometimes idiosyncratic gaze of the artist, research like this can best be performed from within". (p. 10)

### 3.10 Methodology: Role of values

In the world of art practice, values are an indispensable component; nevertheless, there is no such thing as an outmoded value; values can only evolve and are also influenced by judgement of taste. The values of the researcher have an impact on the discoveries of the study (subjective). Because art reflective of one's own bias – "I".

### 3.11 Methodology: Methods

Empirical (deals with power, metaphorical, sensory etc). Experimental - directly manipulate data, material & things. intentionally structured and emergently unstructured from the experiences of its participants. Dialogical (textual) - artworks that encourage conversation between the researcher and the researched in the process of creating the artwork (participatory). The term "artistic method" refers to a variety of practises, including drawing, painting, installation, video works, performance, photography, printmaking, and participatory art.

### 3.12 Methodology: Type of studies

Studies can be of device in art studio setting that investigate individual, biographical expressionistic, abstract through painting, drawing, print, sculpture or electronic art and etc) or it could be a audience / interactive, or collaborative / collective, or site-specific setting, and/ engagement that question the idea of context, social structure, political drives or quasi-science meets art through poetic of material, engagement or science lab meets studio art to examine material, biological themes.

## 4.0 Conclusion & Recommendations

As a result of the discussions that were presented deriving from Gray & Malins suggestion on the artistic paradigm (2004), it should be abundantly clear to readers that art practice-based paradigms, which are positions within the understanding of ontology, epistemology, and methodology, exert significant influences on how research projects can be conducted within a foundation that is connected to the practice of art itself. The choice of a paradigm for artistic research implies that the research will be nested in a particular ontology, epistemology, and methodology, and that these elements will therefore guide the artist/researcher towards a particular goal that are not bound with the already acclaim research paradigm in the sciences. This is due to the fact that each paradigm is supported by specific

assumptions and philosophical unpinning that makes them unique in their own formation. Therefore, having a comprehension of such a paradigm involves having a paradoxical and even metaphorical type of knowing, and not that of absolute certainty, although the artistic work end up being concrete and visual. This underpinning is very important because it define what artistic inquiry have a different scheme from how question are form, selection on different context(s) are done, what constitute artistic data, instruments and processes.

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