Articulations of supervision in artistic research

practice, theory and method as part of the same trajectory

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Henrik Frisk, Docent and associate professor in Music

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- ▶ Associate professor in interactive music composition at Högskolan i Skövde, head of music department until February 2017.

Anthology

Acts of Creation

Thoughts on artistic research supervision

Henrik Frisk, Karin Johansson
& Åsa Lindberg-Sand (eds)

Symposion

Supervision - areas of interest

- How to combine theory, method and practice?

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Supervision - areas of interest

- ▸ How to combine theory, method and practice?
- ▸ Group supervision and individual supervision.
- ▸ Collaboration between supervisor and co-supervisor.
- ▸ Group meetings.

Articulations of supervision

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Content

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What is it we supervise?

- ▶ The theory/practice dichotomy:

Content

What is it we supervise?

- ▶ The theory/practice dichotomy:

May lead to supervision being about supervising theory

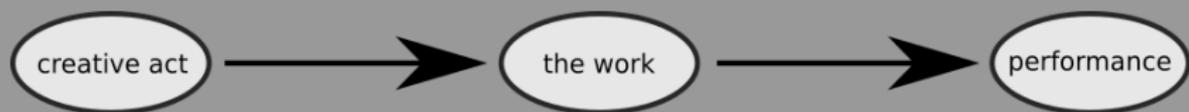because. . .

Content

What is it we supervise?

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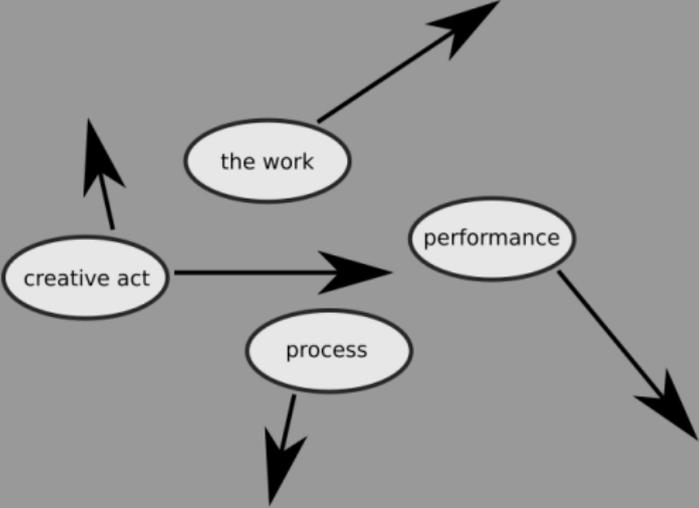May lead to supervision being about supervising theory

because. . .

Theory is that which most easily may be contained within the academy and within the form of the seminar.

The ontology of the (musical) work

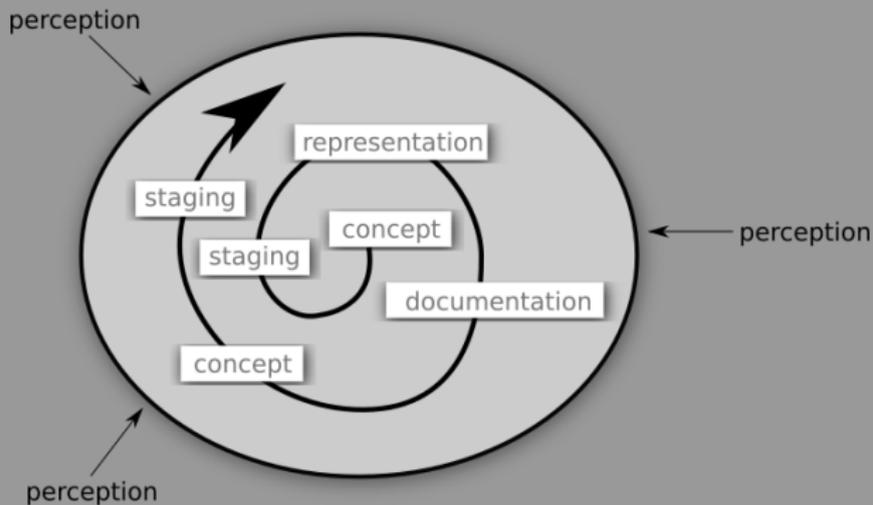# Rather. . .

Composing performance

'Listening' to the process

The work-in-movement

A hybrid practice

Content: Challenge

What is the challenge?

- ▶ to explore tools and techniques that may unleash the epistemological capacity of artistic practice
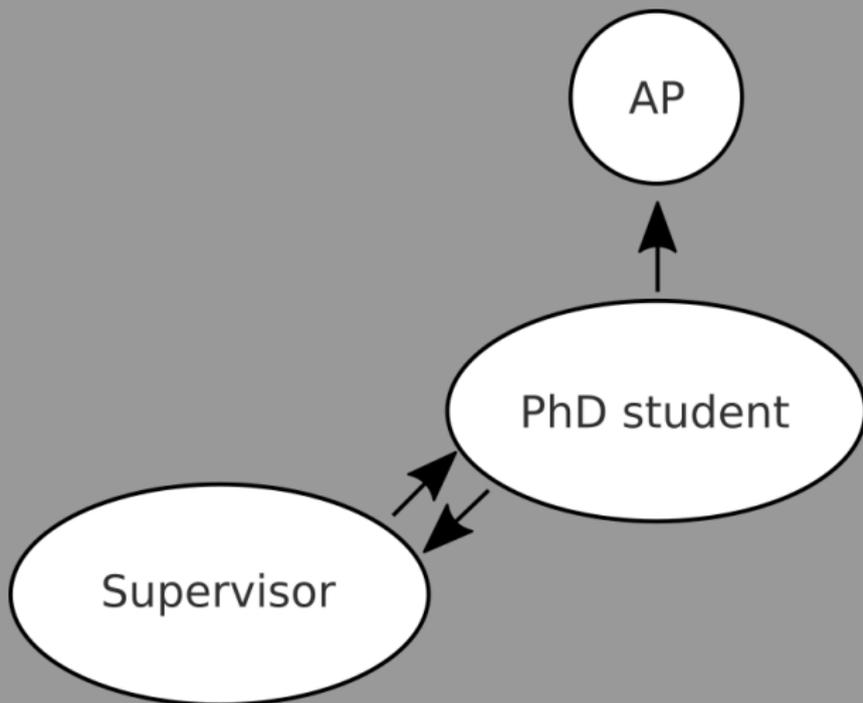
Content: Challenge

What is the challenge?

- ▶ to explore tools and techniques that may unleash the epistemological capacity of artistic practice
- ▶ as a supervisor to approach the project from the same angle as the PhD candidate, that is in most cases, starting from the practice.
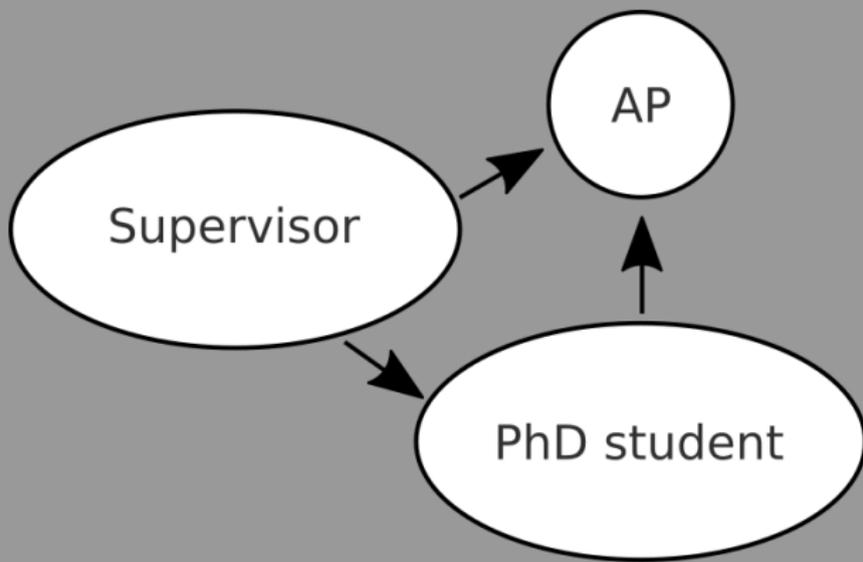
Student-supervisor mode of communication

Communicating outside of the field of the practice

Student-supervisor mode of communication

Communicating through the field of the practice

Content: A system of ideas

Theory
Theory is a system of ideas and as such it is not necessarily related to philosophy or any other aspect of social science. Any system of ideas that may parttake in contextualizing the artistic practice may be relevant.

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Theory is not a thing. It grows and extends along with the material practice.

Thinking in practice

- Even the separation between practice and reflection may be broken down:

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    - Already through reflection (observation) we are affecting the practice.
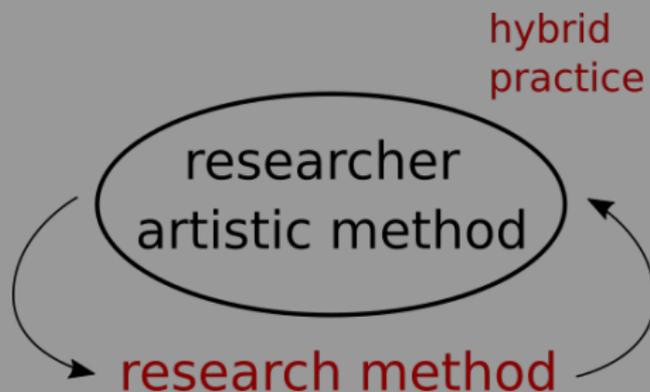
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Conclusion
Artistic reflection is the beginning of a map (an extension) that initself is the beginning of theory.

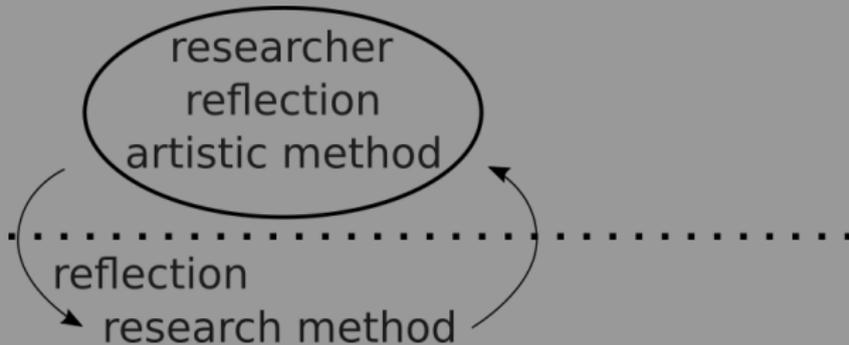# The role of the artistic method vs. research method
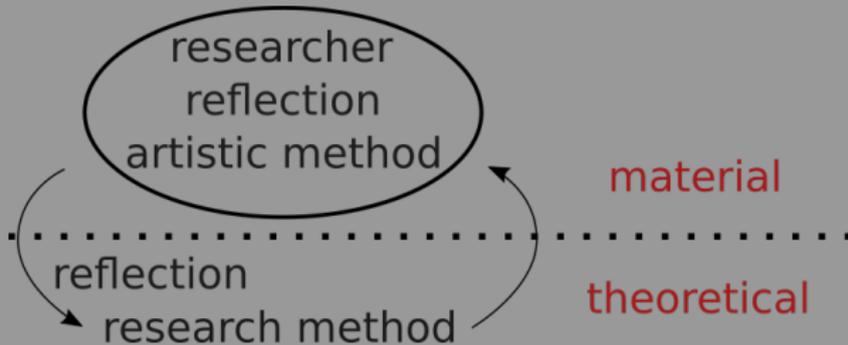
Reflection is part of the research method

Reflection is part of the artistic method

Methodological articulations in artistic research

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Thinking in practice

Considerations

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- A study that correlates a theory with practice is in danger of shaping the practice to the theory rather than analysing the knowledge in the practice.
- Avoid to allow the principle research initiative be dominated by the theoretical frame

Method in artistic research...

... **can be developed from the material aspect of the artistic research process**

Thinking in practice

Argument

- it should be possible to reconsider the theory-practice, method-practice and theory-method relationships beyond their most obvious appearances.

Thinking in practice

Argument

- ▶ it should be possible to reconsider the theory-practice, method-practice and theory-method relationships beyond their most obvious appearances.
- ▶ see them as movements instead, continuities from practice to method to theory and then back, from concept to abstraction to specificity, the generalising and contextualising power of the theoretical approach may be less of an obstacle to the practice-oriented artistic researcher and doctoral candidate.

Articulations of supervision

- Content — what is it we supervise?
- Quality — how do we judge quality?
- Ethics — who's loyalty do I as a supervisor represent?
- Structure — where do we stand?

Quality: Analysis

The challenge

- ▸ to find a meaningful way to evaluate artistic research involving:

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The challenge

- to find a meaningful way to evaluate artistic research involving:
  - the artistic project, and. . .

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Reflection

- The discussion on the question of quality has been far too absent in my opinion.
- There is a risk that a traditional view on theory/practice/method deadlocks the discussion on quality.

Quality: means of discussing quality

- is a multimodal perspective on quality assessment in the arts possible?

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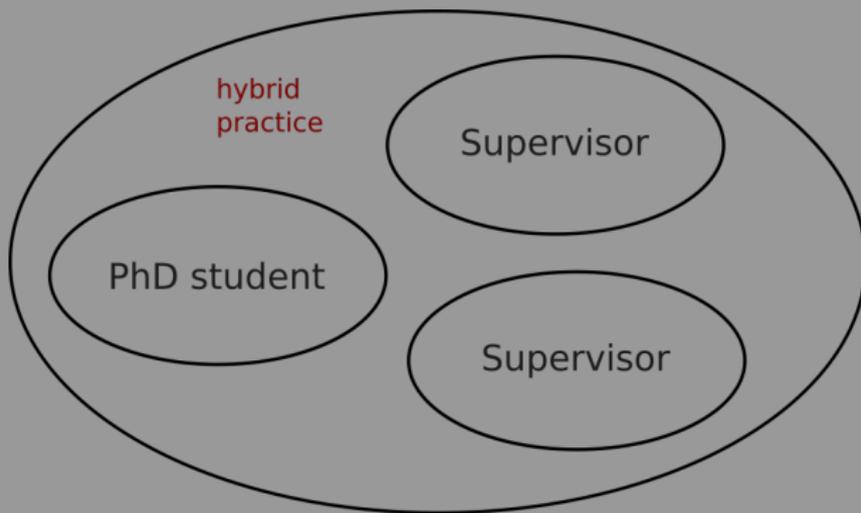- . . . and it happens in the act of performance.

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    - ▸ debate, staged interventions, monologue, artistic responses, etc. as part of the supervision and the various supervising formations
- ▸ we must not restrict the question of evaluation and quality to something that takes place in seminars and defences - it happens in the act of supervision. . .
- ▸ . . . and it happens in the act of performance.
- ▸ . . . and it happens outside of the academy.

Quality: the role of the supervisor

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Ethics: Analysis

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- Ethics in artistic research is not much different than ethics in any research discipline:
    - How do we deal with our material?
    - How do we handle our collegues?
    - How do we handle external grants?
    - And so forth. . .

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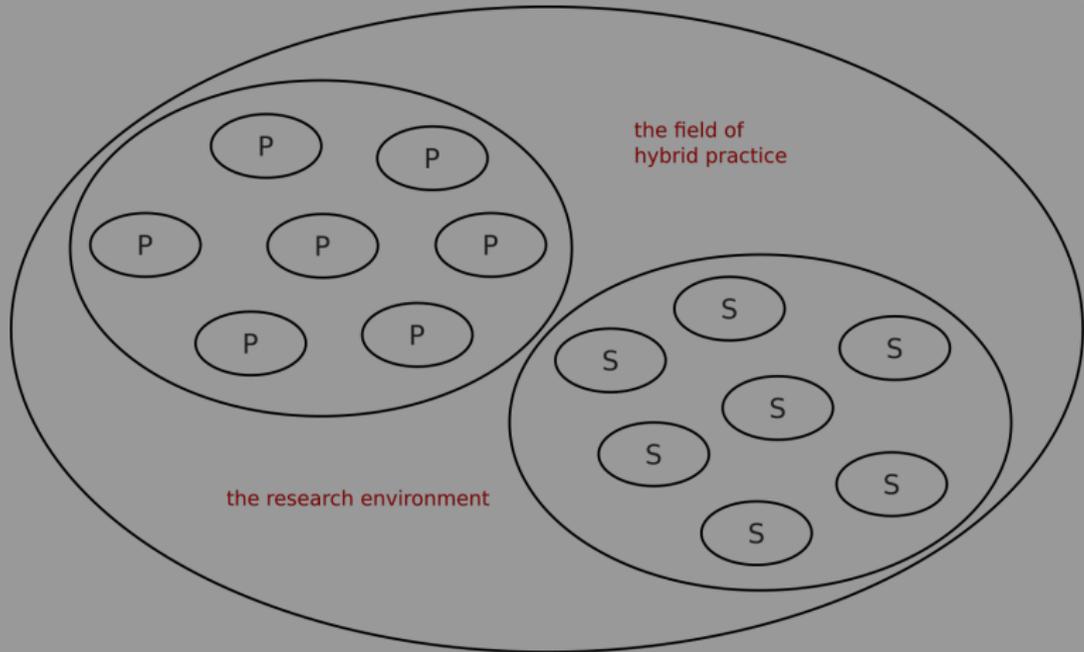   - Who is the candidate loyal to?

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    - If art is free (is it?), is artistic research free?
    - If art has the right to provoke, may artistic research also provoke?
    - Who is the supervisor loyal to?
    - Who is the candidate loyal to?
    - Who is the institution loyal to?

Ethics: Discussing the matters

These are complex issues that needs to be discussed continuously in several formations, not to reach a conclusion, but to ensure knowledge transfer and growth of experience.

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Structure: Analysis

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- This makes the candidate vulnerable and prevents the continous development of the research environment.
- The supervisor accumulates knowlegde in the research education and is a central figure for all current and future candidates.

Structure: First scenario

Art and artistic research as one practice

- ▸ Artistic research as a form for deepened artistic practice

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- Where is the competence of the supervisor gathered?

Structure: Second scenario

Art and artistic research as two related practices

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Art and artistic research as two related practices

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Art and artistic research as two related practices

- ▸ Artistic research as one particular form for research and art
- ▸ *The supervisor (. . .) embodies two sets of implicit quality criteria both for artistic practice and for artistic research.*
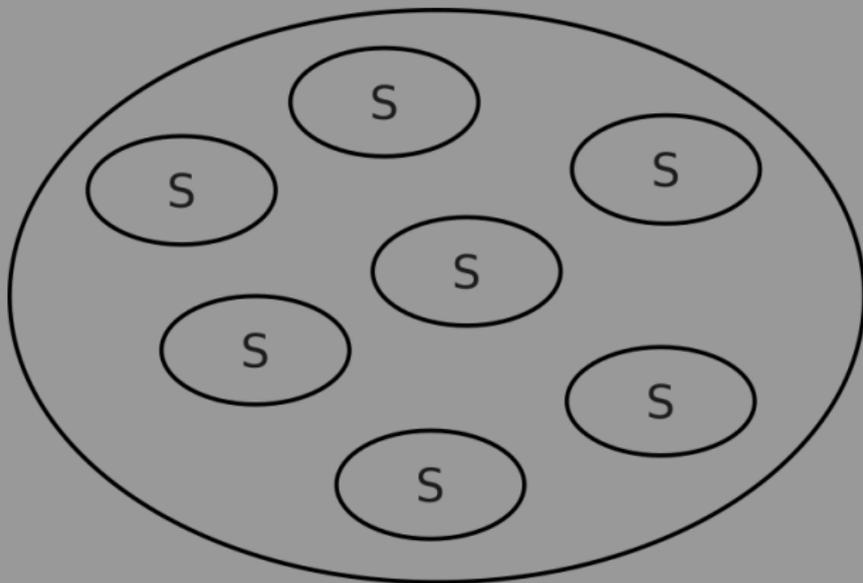- ▸ The supervisor's influence over both project and development of the field is great.
- ▸ Where is the competence of the supervisor gathered?

Supervision - where is the competence gathered?

Supervisor's meetings and the research environment

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- ▶ The ethical perspective shall be seen from the view point of the university as a system.
- ▶ The discussion on quality should be present at all stages and may be approached from a multimodal perspective.

Discussion

Tack!