

## D is for doing

When asked to characterize twenty-five years of BAK's activities through a d-word, crucial concepts such as discourse, deconstruction, and dissemination popped up immediately. However, these notions – no matter how important they are – obviously require a much broader, and above all more dynamic semantic embedding. At BAK, such an embedding has always been mainly situated in a relentless, reflective practice of doing. That form of reflection Mika Hannula once aptly defined in one of the first publications on artistic research as: “Why do you do when you do what you do?” Precisely this simple, yet crucial question ultimately turns out to be related to all dimensions and connotations of doing as an act of causing something to happen by taking some action. So doing is inextricably linked to other meaningful concepts such as practice, praxis, agency, affordance, responsibility, and performativity.

That layering of doing as an advanced concept is typical of how BAK has presented and manifested itself as a 'basis voor actuele kunst' over the past twenty-five years: a forceful arena of textures, references and modalities that go far beyond what may be conventionally expected of them. Such ways of doing, for example by operating in the community, or by making the politics of representation more complex, create new modes of investigation characterized by an imbrication of theory within practice.

BAK has described this specific mode of doing as a strategic convergence of three linked dimensions: artistic processes of making, critical thought processes, and activist modes of dissemination. It is this dynamic mutual coherence that continually determined the direction of BAK's modus operandi: a modus operandi resonating in a constructive and inspiring way with a practice that has emerged more or less simultaneously over the past twenty-five years: that of doing artistic research.

In the current debate about paradigm formation in the field of doing artistic research (such as in the EARN conference *The Postresearch Condition*, which took place in 2021 in collaboration with BAK), three comparable perspectives are often taken as points of departure. In this discussion, doing artistic research is described as a mode of inquiry based on a triangular relationship irreducible to any one of its three conceptual spaces: creative practice (experimentality, art-making, sensory potential); artistic thinking (open-ended, speculative, associative, nonlinear); and dissemination strategies (curatorial formats, topical modes of political imaginaries, performative perspectives, transformational spaces for encounters). From whatever conceptual space one departs, doing artistic research should always amount to a creative proposition for thought in action and a mode of inquiry that can never be reduced to a single method.

BAK has always been a natural and inspiring partner – or better put, a comrade for this emerging field of doing artistic research. Together we worked on the emancipation of art as a specific mode of knowledge production. BAK taught us that artistic research should not be seduced by the scientific illusion of canonization. After all, the intrinsic value of this idiosyncratic mode of doing research ultimately lies in its de-canonizing potential, to use a final d-word.

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