

TITLE

Researching in Architecture Practices : a methodological approach

NAME

Harold Fallon

AFFILIATION

KU Leuven, Department of Architecture, Sint-Lucas Campus / AgwA

EMAIL ADDRESS

hfallon@agwa.be

KEYWORDS

Research by Design; Architecture Practice; Research in architecture Practice; methodology; inspiration

ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the methodology of existing researches in active (professional) practices. The author obtained a PhD in his own practice, is currently supervising one doctorate nearing completion, in which the architectural practice is pivotal, and supervises two PhD proposals in young promising practices.

In these researches, the subject is essentially threefold.

First, there is the knowledge about the practices themselves. Other practices such as music, travelling, writing, fine arts, any practice can be part of the research, as long as they are connected to the architectural practice.

Second, there are the themes, the inspirational forces, the field of interests. This field of interest is not closed : other themes can appear during the research, similar to new projects that will appear in the practices during the PhD process. The paper will expand the notion of inspirational force in comparison to scientific subject.

Third, the research explores the interaction between the two above. The researched themes provoke understandings about the practices. Inversely, the practice lead to new understandings on the themes. The complex nature of these interaction is inevitably a subject in itself.

The methodology is structured around two fields: the practice and the inspirational forces. Inside these fields, the research is situated in specific actions and reflections.

1. the practice

1a. design processes : unfolding the story of the design processes through the work documents (correspondence, sketches, models, constructions site...) etc.

1b. experiments : these are artefacts created in the framework of the research and addressing the professional practice. It includes but is not limited to the (post-)production of explorative drawings.

1c. situate the projects inside the practice, similar to the mapping of the practice.

1d. situate the projects outside the practice, equivalent to literature review.

2. the inspirational forces

2a. experiments, production of drawings, artefacts, exploring themes.

2b. situating the themes in the world (this is equivalent to and includes literature review)

1d includes 2 and 2b includes 1 : this mutual inclusion is the place of the third subject: the nature of the interactions between practices and researched inspirational forces.

The paper frames and expands these points, while illustrating them with the specifics of the four cases mentioned above.