

Evaluation Report Research Unit HKU University of the Arts Utrecht

2013–2019

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Evaluation committee

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1. Introduction

1.1 Research at HKU

This report contains the evaluation of the research unit of HKU University of the Arts Utrecht (hereafter: HKU) in the period 2013–2019. HKU is a university for applied sciences with bachelors, masters and a pre-PhD trajectory in various art disciplines, organized in nine “schools.” Research is organized in an interdisciplinary umbrella unit, subdivided into four different areas with one additional joint research area. Each research area is the home of one professorship as well as other related labs, research practices, and projects. The correlation of research areas and professorships is currently as follows:

Research area	Professorship
Creative Processes and Multidisciplinarity	Performative Creative Processes
Creative Processes and Learning	Art and Professionalisation
Creative Processes and Entrepreneurship	Creative Economy
Creative Processes and Creative Technology	Interactive Narrative Design
Creative Processes and Research Methodology (joint research area)	Research in Creative Practices

In each research area, there are other active participants aside from the professor, such as core team members, post docs, a PhD candidate, so-called “pre-PhDs,” and lecturer-researchers. The research in the different areas is coordinated and managed by the Expertise Centre for Research, Innovation and Internationalization (CvOI), which is also responsible for the process of quality assurance, fundraising and project development, together with the professors. There are a few pending changes to this structure. The professorship Research in Creative Practices will finish soon after its term ended in December 2019. HKU still has to decide on how to replace the professor, who will retire, and pursue the research topic. The professorship Interactive Narrative Design will be discontinued altogether in 2020, and will be replaced by a research topic with a broader focus in the research area of creative processes and technology. HKU will also define a new area of expertise in the field of Creative Entrepreneurship and find a new professor in this area after 2019.

In addition to the research unit with the five research areas, there are a couple of more or less independent research entities, such as the Futurelabs, The Innovation Studio, and the Music Design and Research group. Although the latter contribute to the HKU research environment at large, they were not an official part of the quality assessment system over the evaluation period.

1.2 Context of evaluation

The external quality assurance of research within universities of applied sciences is developed and coordinated nationally by the Association of Universities of Applied Science [Vereniging Hogescholen]. The principles of this external quality assurance are laid down in binding agreements in the *Sector Protocol for Quality Assurance in Research 2016-2022* [*Brancheprotocol Kwaliteitszorg Onderzoek 2016-2022*], abbreviated as *BKO framework* [*BKO-kader*] (version October 2015). At least once every six years a research unit must be evaluated by an external evaluation committee.

The evaluation of the research unit of the HKU by the committee was carried out in accordance with the *BKO framework* and the *HKU Memorandum Quality Assurance for Research 2016-2022* (June 2016), which is based on the framework. The BKO framework formulates five standards for the ongoing maintenance and improvement of the quality of practice-based research as well as the six-yearly evaluations:

1. The profile of the research unit
2. The organisation of the research unit
3. The quality of the research process
4. Relevance (results and impact)
5. Quality assurance

This report is structured on the basis of these five standards, which are described more elaborately in the respective sections.

Where the recommendations of the committee exceed the existing framework of the quality assessment, touching on more fundamental questions related to the BKO guidelines and definitions as well as other national policies, the text will be framed and rendered blue, to mark the difference with the general report and evaluation.

1.3 Procedural notes

For the evaluation, the HKU prepared a self-evaluation report, in accordance with the *BKO framework* and the *HKU Memorandum*, reflecting on the performance of the research unit in relation to the five standards. The report was provided to the

evaluation committee well before the day of the audit, together with relevant information on the procedures and standards and an online portfolio of projects in the different research areas (in total 50+ documents). As an addendum, the self-evaluation report was complemented by several key documents, such as the previous evaluation report, a vision document on the research in the upcoming years (*A Distinctive Focus – HKU Research Policy 2018-2023*), and the institutional plan 2019-2024.

The committee consisted of national and international representatives from scientific and professional domains relevant to the research carried out at the HKU:

Prof. Dr. Robin Nelson	Chair, Professorial Fellow, University of London, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama (United Kingdom)
Dr. Dorita Hannah	Committee member, Adjunct Professor University of Auckland: School of Architecture and Planning / Adjunct Professor University of Tasmania: College of Creative Arts & Media (New Zealand/Australia)
Drs. Frank Kresin	Committee member, Dean of the Faculty of Digital Media and Creative Industry at the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences
Anne Mieke Eggenkamp	Committee member, partner in Caracta Future Directions, creative strategist, former Chair Design Academy Eindhoven, former member of the topteam Creative Industry in the Netherlands
Dr. Jennifer Steetskamp	Secretary, owner of Firma Steetskamp Art Consult

Short biographies of the committee members are added as an appendix to this report.

The committee consulted the self-evaluation report and the other provided documentation. On the evening before the audit, the committee had a preparatory discussion and formulated questions for HKU. The audit itself took place on November 5th, 2019 at a HKU location in Utrecht. The audit started with a first table on Policy & Management, followed by a second table on Innovation and Impact. Table three was dedicated to the Quality of the Research Process, and the fourth and last to Research & Education. All tables addressed two or more (aspects of) the

above-mentioned standards. While the first table included mostly board members and employees in management positions, the other tables presented a mix of professors, researchers, and post docs, as well as lecturers and school directors. In between the first two tables, there was a showcase of recent and ongoing research projects, including presentations by the professors and other researchers.

At this point, it has to be noted that the committee did not talk to the Creative Economy professor, who was not present at the day of audit. Beforehand, the committee had been informed that HKU had decided earlier not to continue the collaboration due to diverging views. For this reason, this professor did not participate in the conversations.

The selection of conversation partners and the structure of the programme was agreed upon by the audit committee and HKU. An extensive overview of the conversation partners can be found in the appendix of this document, in the form of the (anonymised) programme for the audit. The audit day was concluded with concise feedback by the audit committee.

The draft report was submitted to the HKU on December 12, 2019 for review. The chairman approved the final report on 13 March 2020, after which it was offered to the board of HKU.

1. Profile of the research unit

Standard 1: The research unit has a relevant, ambitious and challenging research profile and a research programme with associated objectives that are operationalised in a number of indicators.

The research unit indicates in its research profile and research programme just how and to what extent these are distinctive: relevant, ambitious and challenging for education, for the professional development of professional practice and for the knowledge domain. The research profile is consistent with the institution's research vision and can count on the support of stakeholders, both internal and external. The research programme contains concrete objectives. To measure these objectives and to make them visible, the research unit has identified indicators that shed light on input, products, use and valuation.

At the moment of the audit, HKU is looking back at important organisational changes: the previous faculties were replaced by “schools,” and the professorships were disconnected from particular educational programmes to function in a more interdisciplinary way, within the broader domains of the above-mentioned research

areas. The Expertise Centre for Research, Innovation and Internationalization (CvOI) has taken a coordinating role, and even has become a driving force in stimulating research proposals for fundraising purposes. Changes like these always pose a challenge to cohesion, integration, and support within the institution, and demand a re-composition of existing frameworks and objectives.

In the course of the reorganization, the institutional mission of HKU has been reformulated:

HKU is a public institution for higher art education whose purpose is to train, as well as possible, talented students in autonomous, performing and applied arts and media disciplines, and adjacent educational, technical and economic disciplines.¹

While the emphasis of the general mission statement is on professional training, it does not contain any references to research. After the previous audit, the HKU has made first steps in the direction of formulating an overarching research vision with the document *HKU Research Policy 2013-2017*, followed by the more recent document *A Distinctive Focus – HKU Research Policy 2018-2023* (May 2018). In the most recent text, research at HKU is described in the following way (p.4):

HKU research is distinctive and useful.
Distinctive for its focus on creative processes and for linking research to education. And useful in its importance and meaning for society. The research always takes place as practice-based research: it is grafted onto an issue from practice and the research results flow back into practice. Besides art, design and education practices, these may also be practices in society.²

Generally speaking, the committee considers the HKU research vision convincing, and much more clear and outspoken than it was at the time of the previous assessment. As all research at HKU focuses on creative processes in the arts, there is a much more coherent vision of what research at HKU should look like. It may be that HKU will wish to refine its mission statement above shifting its emphasis on training to a broader educational remit embracing research. In other words, to make HKU more future-proof, the committee suggests that HKU profiles itself

¹ HKU is een publieke instelling voor hoger kunstonderwijs die ten doel heeft het zo goed mogelijk opleiden van daartoe getalenteerde studenten in vrije, uitvoerende en toegepaste kunst- en mediadisciplines en daaraan grenzende educatieve, technische en economische vakgebieden. See: <https://www.hku.nl/OverHKU/Organisatie/Missie.htm>

² In the Dutch version of the document, this reads as follows: “HKU onderzoek is eigen en zinnig. Eigen in het centraal stellen van creatieve maakprocessen, en de verbinding van onderzoek en onderwijs. Zinnig omdat het van belang en van betekenis is voor de samenleving. Het onderzoek vindt altijd plaats als praktijkonderzoek: het is geënt op een vraag uit de praktijk en de onderzoeksresultaten vloeien weer terug naar de praktijk. Dit kunnen kunst- ontwerp- en onderwijspraktijken zijn, maar ook praktijken uit de maatschappij.” See *Eigen / Zinnig – Onderzoeksbeleid HKU 2018-2023*, p.4.

more strongly as a knowledge-producing higher education institution, and articulates this explicitly in the general mission statement. The aim would be to make research a more integral part of the institution's operations in order to continually enhance its education practices with both research skills and state-of-the-art outputs.

On the basis of the conversations, the committee had the impression that the current research vision, the programmatic outlook and the research objectives are broadly shared and well accepted among the stakeholders. However, while the professors and research generally seem to appreciate the new framework, it also has to bed in much more. This explicitly is the case with the two professors whose contracts are discontinued – programmatically and methodologically, the professorships seemed to have a less strong connection with the new overarching vision. The committee agrees with the management team that it seems like there was not a good professional fit between HKU and the professors in this regard, and that it makes sense to look for a better match. The committee is convinced that the recently formulated vision, A Distinctive Focus, will steer HKU in the right direction.

The committee believes that the research profile is sufficiently distinctive and relevant. Initially, the committee was a little doubtful in regard to its ambition level, and whether the vision was not a little modest in its formulation of objectives. During the conversations with the first table, the management and board were able to fully convince the committee that this is not the case; HKU has the ambition to become a national leader in research on creative processes and strives for international recognition, at least in a European context. In this regard, the committee urges HKU to be somewhat bolder and more ambitious in its presentation and claim a stronger position. National and international benchmarking in regard to other institutions – also outside Europe, to add a more globalised perspective – are recommended. Reflections on the positioning vis-à-vis other institutions can also help to sharpen the profile of the institution in the future, and would be a welcome addition to the self-evaluation report, in relation to Standard 1.

Finally, the committee notes that HKU makes use of research indicators to assess the quality of its research, and the objectives formulated in this context, as suggested by the previous evaluation committee in 2013, and demanded by the new BKO framework. The HKU Memorandum Quality Assurance for Research 2016-2022 states on p.6: “The Indicators are used to determine whether research is sufficiently relevant, ambitious and challenging.” In addition to the performance

indicators prescribed by the BKO, HKU chose six additional indicators to assess (the impact of) their research (see standard 4):

	Demonstrable use of Products	Demonstrable appreciation of products
Professional practice and society	Implemented in policy or professional practice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - established by asking commissioning parties or research partners when evaluating the project - Advisory Committees are asked each year for an overall opinion 	Satisfaction of partners/commissioning parties: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - established by asking the commissioning parties when evaluating the project
Education and professionalisation	Training for lecturers and researchers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - each lectureship provides qualitative and quantitative information on this - School directors assess quality and effectiveness - Advisory Committees assess the result against the objectives 	Schools' satisfaction with contribution to education and professionalisation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - established by asking School directors through project/module evaluations
Knowledge development	Review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - knowledge products are distributed to reviewers and review bodies - because there are relatively few publication channels for practice-based research, it may be necessary for the professorships to make arrangements with related professorships or set up shared publication channels 	Opinions through external peer review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in accordance with the protocol in the Appendix

Figure 1. Table with 6 additional performance indicators. Source: *HKU Memorandum 2018*, p. 14

The committee considers these performance indicators useful for evaluating the HKU's research objectives. That they are used for internal evaluation and external review was sufficiently evident from the self-evaluation report and the conversations during the audit day.

To conclude this section, the committee notes that the overall impression of HKU in relation to Standard 1 is positive. The audit panel especially considers the new research policy document A Distinctive Focus to be promising, as it follows up and refines the earlier research vision as formulated in 2013. As A Distinctive Focus has been published relatively recently (mid 2018), it is yet to prove its efficacy. **As HKU is clearly heading in the right direction, the committee sees no reason to assess the performance of the HKU research unit in regard to the first standard as anything other than “good.”**

2. Organization of the research unit

Standard 2: The way in which the research unit is organised, its deployment of people and resources, and its internal and external partnerships, networks and relationships facilitate the achievement of its research profile.

This standard contains the conditions for achieving the research profile and the research programme based on that profile. The portfolio and the way in which the unit is organised supports the implementation and assurance of the research programme. The allocation of people and resources is sufficient in terms of quality and quantity. The internal and external partnerships, networks and relationships are sufficiently relevant, intensive and enduring.

As mentioned before, all professorial research as well as additional research groups at HKU are integrated into a single research unit, subdivided in different interdisciplinary research areas with five correlating professorships. Compared to the situation during the previous assessment six years ago, much has improved. Instead of 12 different, content-wise relatively unrelated, and structurally underfunded professorships, the new set-up provides a much more nourishing and concentrated environment for research, with a more focused and efficient allocation of research funds. Although the FTEs have not radically changed – from 4,6 in 2013 to 4,9 in 2018 –, individual professors now have much more time and larger teams to carry out their tasks. Due to the joint research area “Creative Processes and Research Methodology,” the five professorships relate to each other through questions surrounding shared methodologies in research on creative processes (the common denominator).

The committee was generally pleased with the way the research unit is currently organized. However, as many of the changes were relatively recent, the committee was confronted with the difficulty of assessing the efficacy of the new configuration, while, in fact, having to deal with what is basically a promising outlook on the future. As described above, three of the professorships will change shape in the upcoming year, while it is yet to be determined how they will be

integrated into the research unit. As stated earlier, however, the committee has ample trust in the capability of the CvOI and board in guiding this process and strengthening the research at HKU as an organizational unit. The emphasis on creative processes on the one hand, and inter-, cross- and trans-disciplinarity on the other, guarantees a clear conceptual framework for structuring the unit in the future. The “outsourcing” of management, fundraising, and quality monitoring tasks to the CvOI seems sensible from an organizational perspective, to give researchers more freedom and space to carry out the actual research. Also, the CvOI functions as an important entity to warrant cohesion and overview, and to link researchers to objectives and ambitions of the research unit as a whole.

During the audit day, the committee remarked that limiting individual contracts for the professorships to four years, with the possibility of extending them with a maximum of another four years, could threaten continuity on the level of accumulated knowledge and expertise within the research unit and institution. However, HKU convinced the committee that this limitation – i.e. the prevention of tenured positions – also holds substantial advantages in the case of a mismatch between HKU and individual professors, and enables it to adjust the course in case of changes in the research policy. By making the research areas function more independently from current staff, HKU intends to safeguard continuity and sustainability within the research unit. Therefore, in the view of the committee, the structure of the research unit, as it has recently been constituted, acceptably guarantees this, also in case of personnel changes.

Another possibility to decrease the dependency of the research unit on the research carried out by individual professors involves increasing the number of other (senior) researchers and strengthening their active role in the varying research areas. There are currently two post-docs and one PhD candidate associated with the research unit of HKU. The binary system of so-called research universities and universities of applied sciences (*hogescholen*) in the Netherlands makes it difficult to increase numbers in this area, as the latter are not allowed to grant PhDs. Although HKU is very active in promoting systemic changes on a national level, and seeks to develop a third-cycle for universities of applied science, as an institution it is bound to national laws and regulations. This means that, currently, PhD candidates can only be taken on together with a regular accredited university.

Under the constraints of this context, HKU has, nevertheless, twelve so-called “pre-PhD” candidates – creative practitioners from different artistic fields that are being “prepped” for a traditional PhD in collaboration with research universities.

The committee has a lot of appreciation for the efforts of HKU in this area. However, to develop a third cycle, existing professors and researchers may need to upgrade their own qualifications, and the self-evaluation document omitted concrete numbers on what percentage of lecturers from the different schools are “moving up” within the bachelor–master–PhD trajectory, and getting acquainted with research skills, in order to contribute to the different research areas and build the research unit further. On a positive note, the committee was informed during the audit day that the number of lecturers obtaining or having obtained a master’s degree is steadily increasing, namely 43,6% of the total lecturers’ population at HKU at present. However, there was no clear indication of formulated targets (i.e. an x percentage of lecturers having obtained their master’s degree within x years, etc.). Increasing the involvement of teaching staff in research would also contribute to stronger ties with the schools and school directors, further increasing the number of interested stakeholders in the institution, and safeguarding the implementation of research in the bachelor’s and master’s programmes (see also standard 4).

While the committee appreciated the effectively simplified structure of the five research areas, which provide an inspiring research environment, it initially struggled to grasp the exact nature of the relationship between the professorships and research groups such as the Futurelabs, the Innovation Studio, and the Music Design and Research Group. Within the architecture of the research unit, these groups appear to be like “mobile entities,” some pertaining to different research areas (such as the Innovation Studio) while others (such as the Futurelabs) are more explicitly associated with professorships. The committee recognises that this kind of flexibility has advantages, as it allows for team-based research projects across disciplines beyond the specificity of the professorships. However, as mentioned before, research groups outside the professorships are not included in the quality assessment cycles yet. From the committee’s perspective, this indicates a need for improvement in regard to the quality control system (see also standard 5).

In terms of assessing the functioning of the system as a whole, the evaluation committee asks HKU to consider the possibility of including a mid-term review in the quality assessment of the research unit, so it is not only evaluated once in six years. This would allow the management team to see whether there might be necessary adjustments and changes of direction, which can then be implemented in a timely fashion.

Finally, the committee has a few remarks on the current first-, second- and third-stream funding situation. In the last evaluation report, it was stated that too much dependency on exterior funding could threaten the autonomy of the research. The new self-evaluation report demonstrates a decrease in exterior third-stream funding, indicating a reverse development:

SPECIFICATION INCOME by cost category	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		2019
	realisation	realisation	realisation	realisation	realisation	realisation	realisation	realisation	realisation	budget	
Income from work for third parties 0% VAT	€ 18.319	€ 4.800	€ 26.111	€ 52.235	€ 15.433						
Income from work for third parties 6/9% VAT	€ 220		€ 88	€ 9							
Income from work for third parties 21% VAT	€ 41.488	€ 112.552	€ 101.807	€ 30.182	€ 22.108						
Subsidies/grants	€ 450.403	€ 495.030	€ 388.968	€ 542.359	€ 553.126	€ 927.096					
Secondment staff	€ 16.345	€ 4.670									
Other income	€ 1.700		€ 1.948	€ 291	€ 131						
total	€ 528.475	€ 617.052	€ 518.922	€ 625.076	€ 590.798	€ 927.096					

Figure 2. Detail from table “Income and Expenses HKU Research 2014–2019.” Source: Self-Evaluation Document 2019, p.37

During the conversations with the management and board, variations in third-party funding were explained in terms of the changes during the last years in the organization of the research unit and institution as a whole, and the fact that the professorships were reduced from twelve to five.

Also, HKU seems fairly successful in raising national second-stream research funds, and moderately successful in obtaining EU research money, in collaboration with other educational institutions. It is one of the few universities of applied science to do so in a very competitive context. HKU does not see the relative dependency on second-stream revenues as a large problem – it considers this a calculated risk. The CvOI has employees with long-term expertise in realizing research funding, both on a national and international level, and the income from subsidies and grants has been steady. Funding sources for practice-based research are still limited compared to funding sources for research carried out by so-called research universities, but they are growing in number and opportunity.

The committee agreed with this argumentation and only had one additional question concerning the autonomy of the researchers. During the conversations, it became evident that the CvOI plays a rather substantial role in initiating research applications to external funding bodies, and, thus, it almost seemed like they take over the role of the researchers in proposing or pushing particular research projects. If this were the case, it would seem somewhat opportunistic and could threaten the autonomy of the researchers. However, in the conversation with the professors, there was no evidence of a problematic role of the CvOI, and the centre convinced the committee that they mostly look for opportunities for professors and other researchers, stimulating possible proposals without limiting creativity on the side of the professorships. However, the committee urges the CvOI to remain alert to keeping a good relationship and direct line of communication with the

professors, and to include them more explicitly in the governance of the research unit.

In conclusion, the evaluation committee is positive about the organization of the research unit, which has a strong, content-driven architecture. **The committee assessed the performance of HKU in relation to standard 2 as “good,” with the potential of a future assessment as “excellent” if the institution stays on course.**

3. Quality of the research process

Standard 3: The research carried out by the research unit satisfies the standards applicable to research in this discipline.

These standards relate to the quality of the research process. Most important is that practice-based research is practically relevant, methodologically sound and ethically responsible. The research unit has explicit quality criteria for the preparation, implementation and evaluation of practice-based research. The research is carried out in accordance with the methodological rules, the research and professional ethics and the values that apply within the discipline and research domain. The criteria content can therefore differ according to research domain (e.g. technology or health care) and discipline (e.g. marketing or logistics).

Over the last few years, HKU has clearly worked on sharpening its vision on what research in the context of the institution ought to be. On page 4 of the policy document *A Distinctive Focus*, HKU writes:

[...] research [...] leads to new insights and usable knowledge, whereby the research process is transparent and can be followed and the results are publicised and shared.

HKU applies three criteria to determine what research is and what its quality describes:

- methodological thoroughness of the research (Rigour)
- relevance of the content of the research (Relevance)
- building up, sharing and continuing to build on knowledge (Knowledge Accumulation)

If one of these criteria is missing, we refer not to research, but rather to research activities, innovation or experiment.

Especially from the conversations with various members of the tables, it was evident to the evaluation committee that HKU puts considerable effort into redefining its research practice within the institution and to find a shared framework that allows for defining and assessing the quality of its research. Even though HKU has taken important first steps in this regard, the committee still had some substantial remarks and questions about unclear or problematic definitions, which it shared with HKU. This is especially relevant as HKU has international ambitions.

One of the initial ambiguities concerned the above-mentioned distinction between “research” and “research activities,” and the way it is applied to the current research portfolio. The self-evaluation document and the policy document *A Distinctive Focus* lacked a clear explanation. During the conversations on the audit day, HKU was able to elaborate further on this distinction, explaining that field or literature research carried out for the development of a film script, for instance, could be seen as “research activity.” This type of research does not produce new knowledge, but accumulates pre-existing information relevant for a particular artistic project. In other words: “research activity” refers to a more everyday usage of the word “research.” Research in the narrower sense, as carried out by the research unit of HKU, does not only have to be methodologically rigorous and relevant in its explorations, but has to also produce new knowledge and new applications of knowledge.

The committee agrees that this is a logical distinction, but is hesitant about the criteria used to describe research in the narrower sense. The committee suggests to have a look at criteria used in other national contexts, such as the United Kingdom. Here, research carried out in higher education has to be “rigorous”, “significant” (to the academy), and “original” (new knowledge, effectively shared), according to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021.³ “Relevance” in HKU’s definition – as in relevance to the academic field as well as to society and possible other contexts – is a more broad term than “significance” in the UK context, which is limited to significance to the academic field, first and foremost.⁴ Relevant social applications fall under the separate category of “impact” in the UK audit system. Both the “significance” of research within the academy and the “impact” of research beyond the academy are important but they should not be confused.⁵ The committee felt that the notion of “relevance” is insufficiently sharp in distinguishing research from other types of activities. Last but not least, the formulation “building up, sharing and continuing to build on knowledge,” describing the third criterion of knowledge accumulation, could be made stronger by putting more emphasis on the production of new knowledge, as does the criterion of “originality” employed in the UK context.

³ See <https://www.ref.ac.uk/>.

⁴ It is important to note here that “academic” in the British sense is not restricted to the context of so-called research universities, but refers to research within institutions of higher education in the broadest sense, also including the former “polytechnics.” The binary system, as it exists in the Netherlands, has long been abandoned in the United Kingdom.

⁵ The term “academy” refers to the context of research in higher education. See also the previous note.

As an addition, the committee remarks that there might be valuable definitions of other countries such as Australia and New Zealand that might help in redefining the notion of research required to contribute to a more general “research environment,”⁶ which acknowledges its contextuality, collegiality, and network-like character. At HKU, this could be used to determine whether the research that is carried out at the university contributes to a lively and vibrant research environment, and could hence be employed to assess its quality.

Finally, the committee also had some fundamental questions about the above-mentioned description of practice-based research and the way it is defined in the self-evaluation report on the basis of BKO definitions (p.15): “Practice-based research is research for which the questions are prompted by professional practice, and from which the knowledge gained can contribute directly to that professional practice.” The committee acknowledges that HKU is bound by the distinction between academic and practice-based research, as the Netherlands have a binary system, with so-called research universities on the one hand and universities of applied science on the other. However, from a principled standpoint, the committee considers such a divide between theory and practice to be problematic, as there is no unchallenged methodological or scientific standard (yet) to substantiate such a distinction. Moreover, in the view of the committee, with the emphasis on “professional practice,” relevance to the international research community is not sufficiently pronounced. Obviously, this is not something HKU can change on its own, but a point that could be brought into the national debate.

Another potential problem with a strong emphasis on professional practice, is the fact that original scientific research, according to international standards, is not primarily demand-driven (as R&D is in a corporate context, for instance), but focused on the creation of insights through innovation. Innovation can have an exterior purpose or motive, but this should not be part of the quality assessment of research within an academic context. If the determination of quality is primarily dependent on the needs of second- or third-party clients (such as governmental bodies or corporations), research can become less relevant and critical from a scientific point of view. While practice-based research can be demand-driven, to qualify as ‘academic’ (in the broadest sense of the word, including universities of

⁶ In New Zealand’s 6-yearly PBRF research audit (Performance Based Research Funding), The Research Contribution (RC) component provides staff members with an opportunity to demonstrate the esteem in which their peers hold their research, their role, and the contributions they make in creating a vital, high-quality research environment and any impact that their research has had outside academia. See: <https://www.tec.govt.nz/assets/Forms-templates-and-guides/PBRF/a7c29b5b70/PBRF-TEO-guidelines-April-2018.pdf>

applied sciences), it also has to provide sufficient space to respond to the industry in a critical and challenging way, in order to generate truly new knowledge, perspectives, and practices. In the committee's view, the place of practice-based research in higher education needs to be reconsidered. Although the HKU approaches seem sufficiently dynamic and original (*eigenzinnig*, in Dutch) in response to particular demands from the professional field, the committee urges HKU – and BKO – to remain alert to the fine but significant difference in emphasis between “R&D” and “practice-based research” within the context of higher (arts) education.

Unfortunately, it was difficult for the committee to assess the actual quality of research due to the lack of benchmarking: What is the status quo of the current debate of artistic research, what methodologies are internationally prevalent, how does HKU position itself in this field? This was one of the most fundamental problems the committee encountered in regard to research carried out at HKU.

On the basis of the provided data, it was impossible to assess how the chosen methodological approaches compare to methodologies in other, comparable contexts. **Based on its general impression, the committee would assess the quality of the research process and its innovative potential as good, but cannot sufficiently substantiate this claim with hard arguments provided by the written documentation or conversations.**

Having said this, HKU has worked hard on making the methodological framework as such more transparent, by adding the joint research area “Creative Processes and Research Methodology” to the research unit, among other strategies, and attracting postdocs that develop specific methodologies. At the same time, HKU emphasizes that they want to keep a broad spectrum of approaches alive, and not reduce possibilities and opportunities for researchers.

Although it operates broadly within BKO guidelines, HKU seems to have no fully operationalised (academic) quality criteria or, at least, it does not elaborately report on them. If internationally accepted conceptions of “Practice as Research” and/or “Artistic Research” were integrated into the protocols for quality assessment, thinking about the (academic) quality of HKU's work and its place in the research domain might be clarified. This, in turn, could contribute to quality control in practice-based research related to the arts, with clearer standards concerning notions such as “relevance,” or, preferably, “significance” (see above).

To conclude: it is symptomatic that the chapter on standard 3 in the self-evaluation report is rather short, much shorter than the other chapters. This points to a need for further reflection and development concerning this standard. Whilst it recognises the constraints of the national Netherlands framework for universities of applied sciences, the evaluation committee urges HKU to further work on the above-mentioned criteria and definitions. **The committee rates the overall performance of HKU in relation to standard 3 as a “pass.”**

4. Impact

Standard 4: The research unit achieves sufficient relevance in:

- knowledge development within the research domain
- professional practice and society
- education and professional development.

The research has sufficient impact in these areas.

This standard relates to the results and impact of the research and hence the extent to which the indicators used by the research unit are achieved. The indicators show the types of products and their impact, broken down into the following three areas:

- Professional practice and society. Research at universities of applied sciences is rooted in professional practice and has close ties with a context of application. The questions are motivated by professional practice (real-life situations) in both profit and non-profit sectors. The research then generates knowledge, insights and products that help to solve problems in professional practice and/or to develop that practice.
- Education and professional development. Research at universities of applied sciences has a strong connection with the other activities of higher professional education. By and large, this occurs via two pathways: the link with education and the professional development of the teaching staff (from lecturer to lecturer-researcher) for the purpose of teaching and/or conducting research.
- Knowledge development within the research domain. Research at universities of applied sciences contributes to knowledge development within the relevant research domain. Knowledge and understanding are transmitted to the different target groups through various channels, such as publications, contributions to professional journals, artefacts, testbeds, prototypes, lectures and presentations or through various media such as the internet, newspapers, radio and TV.

The committee was impressed by the quantity and quality of the various research outcomes, a very small part of which were presented on the day of the audit; other results were shared through the self-evaluation report and online documentation. Concerning the performance of HKU in regard to the above-mentioned standard, the impression of the evaluation committee is generally positive. The fact that HKU took the effort to formulate explicit performance indicators for these standards (see Standard 1) is to be applauded. Qualitatively, both the report and the conversation were convincing, but progress can be made on providing aggregated quantitative data on the impact in the different fields:

- Knowledge development: the *BKO framework* suggests to list output such as lectures, artefacts, presentations, demonstrations, and expert meetings.

This could easily be quantified and presented in the form of tables in the report. Now, the committee had to dig relatively deep for these data. Benchmarking against goals or other institutions could help to make the performance more easily evaluable.⁷

- Professional practice and society: It would have been convenient to be presented with the number of external stakeholders and partnerships, as well as concrete output from projects carried out in the social domain (the *BKO framework* mentions publications, artefacts, lectures, workshops, prototypes, models and demonstrations). In the self-evaluation report, this could be structured in a way that makes it easier for the committee to survey this aspect.
- Education and professional development: The *BKO framework* offers specific suggestions on how this product indicator could be assessed, i.e. by giving an overview of teaching modules, research learning pathways, minors, training and other courses, workshops, lectures, and publications. Also, it would have been helpful to get concrete numbers of staff pursuing a master's degree (see the earlier remarks in relation to standard 2).

In the conversations, HKU responded to this recommendation by saying that the measurement of impact, especially in the field they operate in, is complicated, and difficult to capture in a quantitative way. The committee partly agrees with this view, but encourages HKU to look further into possibilities to present the information in a more structured and assessment-friendly manner. It is not entirely clear to the committee why HKU did not follow the *BKO framework* more closely in this context. Also, the committee would have liked to talk to students during the audit day and to more external stakeholders, to get a more complete picture. To include students in the evaluation was a suggestion already made by the previous evaluation committee, and the current committee wants to repeat this suggestion.

Fortunately, the actual conversations and presentations on the audit day clarified the impact on the aforementioned domains. HKU has long-term experience working with partners in the social and semi-public domain (especially health care), the general research output is high, and the relationships between colleagues in research and education are generally close enough. There were plenty of anecdotal examples of research impacting upon curricula. The general tendency seems to be of a growing integration of research practices in the bachelor's and master's programmes, which shows a considerable improvement compared to the previous

⁷ *BKO framework 2016*, p.13

evaluation. However, it seemed from the conversation that there is still some resistance of particular school directors towards integrating research into the curricula. The committee suggests that HKU keeps motivating school directors and lecturers-practitioners to engage in research, and for them to re-assess its value for education.

On a more general note, the committee would like to add that it considers standard 4 a rather problematic one. Like the notion of “relevance,” “impact” is a broad term that is not only limited to the context of higher education, but also includes external factors, such as an influence on society.⁸ A problem arises when societal impact threatens to override academic impact. Although the impact of research on society can obviously be positive – and is to be welcomed –, to use this sub-criterion as a leading criterion, or even as a criterion that is equal to “impact on academia” to assess quality is rather problematic from the committee’s perspective. Research is not simply about “problem-solving,” but has a role to play in its unique ability to foster critical thought. Again, the committee realizes that HKU is bound by the current formulation of the criterion, and that these remarks exceed the scope of this assessment, but suggests discussing this with the umbrella organization responsible for the formulation of these standards (Vereniging Hogescholen).

Although the self-evaluation report lacks aggregated quantitative data of research output and its effects on the three fields (knowledge development; professional practice; education and professional development), the qualitative information that was provided to the committee was sufficiently convincing to give HKU a positive assessment concerning the fulfilment of Standard 4. The committee considers the performance with respect to this standard as “good.”

5. Quality Assurance in Research

⁸ In the documentation, HKU actually states that a nuance has been offered to this standard: “Because the term ‘impact’ is usually associated with the final research result, the Franken Committee (*Meer waarde met hbo*, 2018) has advised that the term ‘carry-over’ (doorwerking) be used in future, defined as ‘the influence of both the process and the research results on education, practice and society.’ This advice has not always been followed in practice.” However, in this quote, the only shift is in a double emphasis on *both* result and process. Both “impact”, and alternative terms such as “relevance” or “carry-over,” underscore the social, political, and economic importance of research vs. a more intrinsic significance, i.e. significance to the primary context of academic innovation and knowledge production. See *Notes for Review of HKU Research Unit 2019*, p. 1 and *Self-evaluation Report 2019*, p.69

Standard 5: The research unit regularly and systematically evaluates its research processes and results. If required by the outcome of these evaluations, the research unit makes the necessary improvements.

The standard is intended to ensure the quality of practice-based research. The research unit has access to management information and uses a coherent set of measurement and evaluation tools, of which the follow-up to the external review forms a part. The measurement and evaluation results lead to reflection, resulting in improvement measures for the research profile, the research programme and the organisation and implementation of research.

Generally speaking, quality assurance at HKU is robust. Not only does the institution follow the six-year presentation cycle, but it also uses intermittent internal evaluations and informal peer review sessions with internal and external stakeholders as a tool to assess quality and consider improvements, as was recommended by the previous evaluation committee. The CvOI plays an important role in this, and the collaboration between professorships and this centre in this area seems generally stable and to everybody's satisfaction.

During the conversations, however, the evaluation committee received signals that some professors would like to receive more explicit guidelines in what is expected of them, in terms of yearly evaluations and programmatic choices, for instance. Therefore, the committee recommends to inform new professors clearly and in good time on the HKU research profile, the research objectives, the expected output, and the way these are reviewed, and to maybe even include this information in the interview process for new professors. All the necessary elements are there – this is just a question of using them effectively and consistently.

A point that the committee brought up during the conversations was the fact that the quality assurance at HKU seems rather time-intensive, with all the interim reports that professorships have to deliver. The committee was slightly worried that this would create too big of an administrative workload for the professors. However, the conversations with the staff did not give enough reasons for critical remarks in this area. The majority of the staff that the committee talked to did not think that was a problem. One of the professors even described the quality assurance instruments as a welcome way to re-evaluate the research approach and output.

In terms of possible added instruments for quality assurance, establishing a more formal expert peer review structure could help making the quality of the research output come forward stronger than it does now. Also, the committee would like to repeat that regular benchmarking can tremendously help to determine more effectively whether the institution reaches set goals on the level of research (see also standard 3). The committee greatly appreciates that HKU is involved in the

national discussion around quality assurance with respect to research at universities of applied science, and that it follows national developments in this area closely. Looking at international debates and using this information to inform other relevant partners in the field, in order to stimulate debate, could be a valuable addition to this practice.

Overall, the quality assurance at HKU gets a clear “pass.”

6. Conclusion

HKU has a strong position in the field of practice-based research in the arts, and it has developed an improved and convincing vision on research. The organization of the research has become more functional and durable, and the quality of the research process and its impact is sufficient. The conversations during the day of the audit gave the impression of a nourishing research environment, and a willingness and openness to question one's own positions. In a broader context, the evaluation committee was rather impressed by the evident initiatives of HKU to discuss the framework of quality assurance as such, and to take an active stance in the national debate. The committee praises the way HKU contributes to the discourse around the third cycle (PhD or PD) at universities of applied science, and art academies in particular and, as indicated in the observations on the unsustainable dichotomy between theory and practice above, sees no reason why a PhD might not be an appropriate award for research undertaken through practice.

That three of the five professorships will change shape, together with the structural changes implemented recently, entails both serious risks and opportunities for the institution. The committee feels this is recognized sufficiently by the management team; the conversations on the day of the audit instilled enough trust in the committee that HKU will solve this issue in a way that will contribute to the general research environment, and support the overarching research vision.

If the committee has any critical remarks, this is on the basis of an already strong vision on research and generally high level of self-reflection evident at HKU. Some of the remarks, also throughout the report, are of a more fundamental nature, reflecting on the current national policies that HKU is bound by, while others are smaller improvements that could be easily implemented by HKU itself. Summarized, the most important recommendations boil down to the following (in no particular order):

- Use (inter)national benchmarking to determine the (inter)national position of HKU as a higher arts education institution, to be used as reference framework for the evaluation of HKU’s performance in relation to different standards.
- Apply the BKO performance indicators more systematically, by offering (more) concrete overviews and numbers in the self-evaluation report, for instance of the percentage of lecturers attaining the master’s degrees or pursuing a PhD, of established teaching modules related to research, of publications or other types of output. Do not only assess them qualitatively, but also quantitatively, if possible and applicable. Formulate clear targets.
- Strengthen the ambition to further develop the second and third cycle, ideally into a PhD, but also to have more lecturers obtaining a master’s degree.
- Look more closely at the role of “independent” research groups that are currently not fully integrated in the quality assessment of the research unit, such as the Futurelabs, the Innovation Studio, and the Music Design and Research Group.
- Re-evaluate the criteria on what constitutes research (quality), and critically look at possible differentiations between “relevance,” “impact,” and “significance.” Use international definitions as a reference, to give them a stronger fundament.
- Work on increasing support for research within the institution as a whole including all the schools and school directors, and further integrate research and education.
- Include students and external stakeholders more explicitly in the audit day and/or in the quality assurance process, especially in regard to Standard 4.
- Further strengthen the ties between professors, directors of schools and centres, and the executive board.
- Complement demand-driven incentives to do research with critical and art-specific perspectives, in order to demonstrate critical research capacity beyond the market per se. I.e. find and preserve the balance between autonomy and utility in research.

Additionally, the evaluation committee would like to give concrete input on a point that is currently not part of the quality assessment, but still has an impact on the international profile and outlook of the research unit. This concerns the inclusivity and diversity policy of HKU, which does not seem to be implemented yet on a human resource level. The committee strongly urges HKU to pay attention to this topic, and, with the appointment of new professors and researchers, make decisions consistent with the aim to diversify the staff, parallel to the already diversified international student population. As HKU admitted in the conversation, the orientation of HKU is currently still rather Eurocentric, which does not sufficiently reflect the changed social reality in the Netherlands, and the challenges posed by a globalized economy, currently determining the fate of the creative industry and art world. This is a point that is also relevant to other higher arts education institutions.

Finally, the committee would like to compliment HKU on the organisation of the day of the audit and the preparation of the audit. HKU made the effort to invite two international reviewers with a particular expertise to be part of the evaluation committee. This meant that all reports, policy documents, and project documentation had to be translated into English, and all conversations had to be in this language. Also, the documentation was – with 50+ documents – rather elaborate, which was tremendously helpful for the quality assessment process. The committee greatly appreciates this effort, and thinks that this in itself, is proof of the fact that HKU is ambitious and willing to move forward, to fearlessly stimulate internal and external debates.

Based on the average assessment per standard, the committee considers the overall performance of the HKU research unit as “good.”

Appendix 1: Programme

Audit HKU Research Unit HKU University of the Arts Utrecht

Location: Ina Boudier Bakkerlaan 50, Utrecht | HKU X and Innovation Studio
Date: November 5, 2019
Time: 9h00-18h00

Audit panel

Professor Robin Nelson (London; chair) Professorial Fellow, University of London, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama

Dr. Dorita Hannah (Auckland/Hobart) Adjunct Professor University of Auckland: School of Architecture & Planning (NZ), Adjunct Professor University of Tasmania: College of Creative Arts & Media (Australia)

Drs. Frank Kresin - Dean of the Faculty of Digital Media and Creative Industry at the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences

Anne Mieke Eggenkamp - Partner in Caracta Future Directions, creative strategist. Former Chair of Design Academy Eindhoven

Dr. Jennifer Steetskamp (secretary) - owner of Firma Steetskamp Art Consult

Notes on the program

For the structure of the day, we propose to host one Policy and Management table conversation and three thematic tables. We think that this setup will contribute to valuable conversations and, hopefully, a good understanding of the HKU research unit. To come to an appreciation of the various standards of the BKO, we made a short introduction to each table and a suggestion to what Standards of the BKO they correspond with (this covers all 5 standards). The topics at the tables are of course not limited to the proposed standards.

09h00 – 09h15 Walk-in, welcoming of audit panel

9h15u - 10h15 TABLE 1 - **Policy & Management HKU Research**

The Board is represented at this table together with the director of CvOI, as well as a director from education and our expert and analyst in the field of EU policy and strategic partnerships. The table provides input for an assessment of:

Standard 1: the profile of the research unit

Standard 2: the organisation of the research unit (people and resources)

Standard 5: quality assurance

- [REDACTED] - President Executive Board HKU University of the Arts Utrecht
- [REDACTED] - HKU Director Expertise Centre Research, Innovation and Internationalisation
- [REDACTED] - Director HKU Design, chair advisory committee HKU professorship RiCP
- [REDACTED] - HKU EU Research, Expertise Centre Research, Innovation and Internationalisation

10h15 - 10h30 Coffee break + tea break

10h30 - 11h15 Exposition of documentation / showcase

11h15u - 12h15 TABLE 2 – **Innovation and Impact**

In addition to researchers and representatives from HKU expertise centers, there are a number of external stakeholders of the research unit at this table. The table provides input for an assessment of:

Standard 2: external partnerships, networks and relationships

Standard 4: impact on society and the professional field

- [REDACTED] – HKU Professor Art & Professionalisation
- [REDACTED] HKU Head Innovation Studio, Expertise Centre Research, Innovation and Internationalisation
- [REDACTED] - Projectmanager Utrecht Sustainability Institute, involved in the IRIS project
- [REDACTED] – HKU Researcher Professorship IND and Senior Lecturer

- [REDACTED] – Director Centre of Expertise UCREATE
- [REDACTED] - HKU X - Expertise Centre Creative Entrepreneurship, project leader of SIA Take Off feasibility studies with alumni

12h15u – 13h00 Panel consultation during lunch (closed)

13.00u – 14.00u TABLE 3 – **Quality of the Research Process**

Professors, researchers and a knowledge manager are present at this table to explain the different research methods or approaches at HKU (multiplicity of approaches) and the application thereof in their work. They can also answer questions about the joint research area Creative Processes and Research Methodology.

Standard 3; Quality of the research process

Standard 4: impact on the knowledge development within the research domain

- [REDACTED] - HKU Professor Research in Creative Practices
- [REDACTED] - HKU Professor Interactive Narrative Design
- [REDACTED] - HKU post doc researcher Methodology and teacher Utrecht Conservatory a.o.
- [REDACTED] - PhD student (UU/UT/HKU), HKU researcher at Professorship Performative Processes, lecturer at HKU Theatre and MA Scenography
- [REDACTED] - HKU policy advisor / knowledge manager HKU research
- [REDACTED] – Prof. Dr. of Auditory Culture at the University of Leiden and Orpheus Institute (Ghent, B), member of the Advisory Board of HKU Professorship Performative Processes

14h00 - 14h15 Coffee + tea break (with intervention)

14h15 - 15h15 TABLE 4 – **Research & Education**

Researchers, study leaders, lecturer/researchers sit at this table to be questioned about the (and their) connection between education and research at HKU. Both on an organisational level (interaction, embedment, exchange between the research unit and education programs) as well as on the impact on (our) learning practice.

Standard 4: impact in the domain of education/learning practice

Standard 2: internal partnerships, networks and relationships

- [REDACTED] - HKU Professor Performative Processes
- [REDACTED] - director HKU Music and Technology, head of the research group Music Design
- [REDACTED] - HKU lecturer MA Interior Design, owner-founder of Ruimdenkers (spatial design agency)
- [REDACTED] - HKU Innovation Studio, teacher at HKU Design, HKU College
- [REDACTED], course leader HKU MA Scenography
- [REDACTED] - HKU post doc researcher Methodology and teacher MA Art Education a.o.

15h15u - 15.30u Panel consultation (closed)

15h30 – 16h00 Time for additional questions; if necessary second meeting with representatives of HKU Management and/or the research unit (people on call) related to topics that require further attention

16h00u - 17h00 Meeting of Panel (closed session)

17h00 - 17h30 Concise Feedback of Panel

Drinks

18h00 END

Appendix 2: Biographies evaluation committee

Prof. Dr. Robin Nelson, chair

Robin Nelson (UK, 1949) used to be director of Research and Professor of Theatre and Intermedial Performance (2010 - 2015) at the University of London, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, and currently remains (in semi-retirement) a Professorial Fellow. He is also an Emeritus Professor of Manchester Metropolitan University where he worked for many years. Twice a RAE/REF sub-panel member, he has himself published widely on the performing arts and media. Books include *Practice as Research in the Arts: Principles, Protocols, Pedagogies, Resistances* (2013), *Stephen Poliakoff on Stage and Screen* (2011), and *Mapping Intermediality in Performance* (co-edited with S.Bay-Cheng et al., 2010).

Dr. Dorita Hannah, committee member

Dorita Hannah (NZ, 1961) is an architect, scenographer, and academic who is aligned with the University of Auckland (NZ), University of Tasmania (Australia) and Aalto University (Finland). Through trans-disciplinary research, her *Critical Spatial Practice* explores intersections between the spatial, performing, and visual arts. Publications include *Performance Design* (2008) and *Event-Space: Theatre Architecture and the Historical Avant-Garde* (2018). Dr. Hannah co-convenes the Theatre & Architecture working group for IFTR (International Federation of Theatre Research) and co-chairs the Performance+Design working group for PSi (Performance Studies international). She is a regular contributor to the Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design & Space and her current international research collaborations include *Performative Urbanism* (Canada) and *Floating Peripheries* (Finland).

More information: <https://www.utas.edu.au/profiles/staff/creative-arts/dorita-hannah> and <https://unidirectory.auckland.ac.nz/profile/dorita-hannah>

Dr. Frank Kresin, committee member

Frank Kresin (NL, 1972) is Dean of the Faculty of Digital Media and Creative Industries at the Amsterdam University of Applied Science. He is also Associate Fellow of DesignLab at the University of Twente, Research Fellow at Waag Society, and (supervisory) Board Member of V2_, Tetem, CREA and The Mobile City. Frank was trained in cinematography and artificial intelligence, and worked previously at the University of Amsterdam, the Dutch Digital University Consortium, Waag

Society, and the University of Twente, and served as a board member for the Dutch Chapter of the Internet Society. He is interested in Citizen Science, Transdisciplinary Innovation, and Responsible Design.

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/kresin/>

Twitter: @kresin

Anne Mieke Eggenkamp, committee member

Anne Mieke Eggenkamp (NL, 1961) is partner at Caracta future directions, with a focus on creative intelligence, leadership, and learning. Her passion is to apply creative thinking and action to explore possible futures and develop the learning potential of people and organizations – whether she is acting in the role as creative strategist, executive educator, or business coach. People value her for her conceptual thinking, her ability to “make it happen” and the unusual connections she creates between different people and seemingly unrelated fields of knowledge. Anne Mieke is the former chair of Design Academy Eindhoven, and has several non-executive board positions (Mediacollege Amsterdam, Crafts Council Netherlands). She was a member of the topteam Creative Industries and one of the initiators and ‘founding fathers’ of CRISP: Creative Industry Scientific Research Program.

More information: <https://www.caracta.com/en/about-caracta/team>

Dr. Jennifer Steetskamp, secretary 2019 and 2013

Jennifer Steetskamp (DE, 1980) studied Art History, Philosophy, and Cultural Studies in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, and obtained a PhD in Media Studies from the University of Amsterdam, with a dissertation on moving image installations and media archaeology. Between, during and after her studies, she worked in different functions for various employers, including Netherlands Media Art Institute/Montevideo, University of Amsterdam, Rietveld Academie, Duitsland Instituut and, most recently, Amsterdams Fonds voor de Kunst, where she was responsible for the evaluation of project subsidy applications in the fields of fine art, new media, design, architecture, fashion, photography, film, community art, and art in public space. She also has extensive freelancing experience, and currently works with various artists and organizations to improve their texts and concepts.

More information: www.firmasteetskamp.nl