

National chart for research in Art Schools

**A proposition by the ANdÉA,
The National Association of Higher Schools of Art**

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Introduction

This chart has the goal of supporting the research put in place by higher schools of art (ESA) since 2006 through the establishment of a framework and criteria which, as with the rest of the organization of studies in ESAs, guarantee the quality of the activity being done there.

The current document is destined to be a chart of good practice, setting the tone for the involvement of the ESA in national and international research, but it is also a manifesto to build upon that which has produced in recent years by ESAs which is original, prospective and emancipatory, as a result of wide scale experimenting in the invention of a specific form of research.

It is a structuring document, which intends at the same time to establish a synthesis of the existing; fixing and describing the scope of research taking place today, but equally, following on from the effort of prospectation, proposing solutions for the concrete organization of a national plan which is lacking today.

Chapter 1

Research in higher schools of art

I-1- General Definition

Research in art schools is, above all, research, and in this shares the following minimal definition with other fields: “research” is the ensemble of the activities done with a view to producing and developing objects and knowledge which, when shared, enlarges the field in question and, consequently, contributes to the society concerned by the field.

This activity is defined by its prospective character in schools, its tension towards uncertainty, its ambition to conquer original spaces, and by its capacity to disseminate and share its results. However, research in art schools also has a number of areas of a specific nature, because its field of reference, art, is of a specific nature:

- It does not necessarily have technical and technological prerequisites. At the same time it knows how to show its methods, its protocols, its experiences and knows how to verify their pertinence, how to examine the issues raised and how to rethink them.
- It recognizes, intuitively, instinctively, an immense prospective capacity in the sensitive and in this, as in all creative activity, never separates the intelligible from the sensitive at any point in the chain of activity (from the moment of production to the moment of sharing what is produced).
- It draws a large part of its resources from that which is outside its own field – and like art, it is the combination of elements coming from the totality of the activities and information of the world.
- It assumes a non-linear relationship with history, and despite capitalizing on the forms and ideas of the past, knows the other research that has already been done (at least since the Renaissance and Leonardo da Vinci's *Treatise on Painting*) and, so as to add originality, it supposes no progress: as with art, it simply helps man to “be in the world”, in every sense of the expression.

I-2- The articulation of research and education

Research in an ESA is present at every level of education, with varying levels of intensity, as in the rest of higher education where teachers are researchers who transmit, right from the very first cycle, the knowledge and know-how coming directly from the field of their practice. As in the rest of higher education, the three cycles of training lead to three LMD qualifications gradually intensifying the place of research in education: if the question of research appears in the 1st cycle, it is in the 2nd cycle that the “initiation in research” is truly developed and it is in the 3rd cycle that the students themselves become researchers. Art schools have become accustomed to calling the first cycle “the programme phase”, the 2nd cycle “the project phase” and the 3rd cycle is known as a “research phrase”.

To be more specific, because the research produced in ESAs concerns art and thus the being in the world, it happens regularly that students, irrespective of their level of studies, appear as those “concerned” by research, and even as experts - as such, they are associated with this research. ESAs have developed liberating forms of pedagogy which allow one to go beyond the master / student dialectic. In research it is a matter of continuing to rely on this effective power: artists, designers and theoretician teacher-researchers, emancipated students – research which knows how to associate all of those affected by the construction of the problem to which it relates.

The formats of research (conferences, workshops, residencies, exhibitions...), as is the case of pedagogy in art schools, are thus extremely diverse and invented according to the needs of the projects: here again, they rely on the specific nature of the field of art to produce forms and to relay an extremely rich history as it pertains to the question of medium and format.

I-3- The temporality of research

As with art, research requires varying time frames. Therefore, in ESAs, we can distinguish:

- “research units” dedicated to a fundamental problem in art and design which intend to create spaces of capitalization of knowledge and know-how on the problem;
- “research programmes” set in a defined temporality (from two to four years) which occasionally bring specific teams together.

The **research units** structure research on an artistic and scientific level of the life of forms and ideas, but also at a material and technical level. They are carried by one or more schools and are as diverse as the higher art schools themselves, each one being characterized by a project which is unique to them – a project whose artistic, thematic, esthetic, political and, occasionally, stylistic coordinates and characteristics are elaborated and coordinated within the framework of the activity of each school. Concerning their role in the construction of the research content, the units:

- bring together the researchers, artists, designers and theoreticians concerned by the project which is defined by the higher art school, or schools, concerned;
- regularly work with the scientific counsels of ESAs (in accordance with the modalities decided by each school);
- animate the life of the forms and ideas by being a space where that which is produced in the different “research programmes”, backed by the establishment or establishments, is discussed, cross referenced and thus evaluated;
- think about different research formats and regimes, as well as definitions and methodologies;
- organize structured partnerships with regards to the research.

Concerning the material and technical aspect of the activity of the research unit, and as a function of their specific project, they can equip themselves with:

- specific work spaces, whether they be physical (residences, laboratories, workshops, offices, meeting rooms...) or dematerialized (platform, blog, discussion forum, website...): these spaces allow for research activity, whatever it may be, to take place and develop *on site*, in the ESAs.
- a defined budget (for the organization of events, publications, for missions and its members' expenses, etc.)
- an administration and a team responsible for communication and valorisation – both to accompany and support the activity (from the constitution of dossiers to answering tenders to the organization of real events) and to archive, disseminate and redistribute that which is produced by the research.

It is important to note that it is no way desirable for a research unit be separate to the rest of the school (or schools) that it is attached to. On the contrary, it is in the constant contact and overlap between the activity of the research unit and that of the school (its artists, its designers, its teachers along with its students and technicians...) that the forms invent themselves. This particularity, which is linked to the ecosystem of the ESAs is a precious asset for the research activity.

As for the **research programmes**, they are produced to contribute to the capital of the units, but also to nourish the pedagogy, the activity of a specific department of the school, an important event in a territory, etc.

Between these two centers (an occasional programme and a perennial research unit) and these two temporalities, the ESAs regulate the cursor of their activities, relying on their permanent prospective inventiveness.

I-4- Research and its actors

The actors of research in ESAs function according to a logic which privileges complementarity and the tensioning of their differences. In addition, everyone engaged in a process of work, recognized by their peers as having sufficient skills, can participate in, or carry out, research.

As is the case in the other aspects of their activity, the ESAs do not wish to impose a set model. They promote an open model of trials, which permits the creation of ad-hoc teams, on a national and international level, as a function of that which is envisaged to be built.

Also, the regulatory structuring of peer recognition takes into account this lightness and the fundamental organizational logic which governs the world of art and design.

In this way artists, designers, doctors and researcher-professors in the social sciences and humanities (sociologists, philosophers, historians, ethnologists...) or in the natural sciences (biologists, botanists, doctors...), engineers, and Directors of Art and Design centers and cultural institutions, exhibition curators, museum curators, and professionals, craftsmen, writers or any other personality in France and abroad, are in a position to contribute to research projects.

I-5- Partnerships

Research in ESAs is defined and done in research structures which are situated within them, but, because art is an activity which is nourished by all human activities, it regularly collaborates with researchers from other disciplines and can generate associations with other laboratories and research centers in France and abroad. Research programmes and units can be thus set up between different structures, and as a result, original spaces for research see the light of day.

However, because research always has the objective of expanding its own field of reference, even in the case of research done in common with other disciplines, *the value of this research for art will only be determined outside of the field of art*: it is important that, as in other fields, the presence of partnerships do not guarantee the value of research – research in the philosophy of science is not necessarily pertinent because philosophy is interested in the sciences! It is the same when it comes to research done in the field of art and design.

Research can draw new territories, a third territory, that of the partnership, which stems both from the territory of the ESAs and that of their partners. In no way must the absence of partners be allowed to disqualify a research project.

I-6 - Third cycle

Some schools, together with universities, provide high level, selective and specialized post masters training: specific 3rd cycles, sanctioned or not by qualifications, establishment certificates, or doctorates.

Considering that after the “initiation in research” phase of a Masters' programme it is necessary to be in a position to practice an activity to which one has been initiated and thus really work within a research *regime*, ESAs develop third cycles which are specific to each structure. As the DNAP is a specific certificate grade qualification, and the DNSEP is a master's grade qualification being driven from the field of art to which the ESAs belong, the third cycles invent themselves as close as possible to the frame of reference which the art world represents.

Postgraduate programmes already exist in certain ESAs and can be starting points for the setting up of 3rd cycles. However, in no way do 3rd cycles aim to replace the post graduate programmes which are strictly orientated towards professionalization: over a short time (usually one year) post graduates belong to creative residencies and no longer to education. In varying dimensions, they allow professionals who have already begun their careers to see a project through while relying on the resources of the school and on its cultural and artistic network (production logistics, the possibility of exhibiting in professional conditions, immersion in research programmes and units...)

On the contrary, the 3rd cycle is actually a cycle of training through research, completing the curriculum for DNSEP and Masters graduates, with specific arrangements for research, over longer periods, which radicalize the approaches already underway in the DNSEP programme. These third cycles and their actors (artists and theoreticians, student-researchers, guided by referent teams) fully participate in research in ESAs. They nourish the “research units” and the occasional projects of the programmes. They help in the development of research specific to the ESAs through the example of their equally specific activity – by situating themselves in the extension of that which the first two cycles have opened.

The 3rd cycles are thus built for and with young artists, designers and theoreticians operating in the field of art, the community of reference for the ESA. They allow for the structural implementation of a space for research regulated by the temporality of specific regimes. Also that which they produce being prospective, emancipating and adventurous is evaluated by competent actors of the art world, so as to guarantee the awarding of a specific school qualification at a doctorate level, following on from the DNAP and DNSEP.

I-7- Production and evaluation of research

For its publication and its sharing, research led in ESAs produces forms which are very diverse, chosen as a function of the projects concerned. These forms (oeuvres, exhibitions, films, public events, websites, publications, lectures...) come from the history of art and creation, but also from other fields of human activity – art knows how to use diverse *formats* to give account of a specific *regime*, that of research. If, since the sixteenth century, creative work has been accompanied by an analytical research activity on art and coming from art, artists have always invented forms which allows for the best dissemination of their research work, offering to society results which appear as true *exceedances*.

In this way, that which is produced by research can be generally identified (almost systematically in this order) as the following:

- The identification of a problem
- The work done on a problem using diverse practices and tools
- The production of a form (of knowledge and experience) allowed for by the work
- The sharing of this form which is disseminated and received by those concerned by the problem
- The record of a result, of a resolution or the shifting of the problem: ultimately, the presence of something more, an excess, with respect to the initial situation.

Every moment and every dimension of the production of research can be restituted, shared and given value – and this using forms always chosen in an *ad-hoc* manner.

With regards to its evaluation, the quality of the production of research is determined by peers coming from the reference community, in France and abroad, to which are added those concerned by the issue being treated. As in other places of artistic activity, evaluation is done in a situated way, that is to say by evaluating objects beginning with that which they postulate.

These seven points which characterize research in ESAs allow one to deduce the line of a national organization, an obvious necessity in the current context.

Chapter 2

National structure of research

To be in a position to effectively support the research activity developed by ESAs, the implementation of the following arrangements and statuses is proposed:

II-1- The National Council for Higher Art Schools

As research is led from the field of art, this field puts a legitimate and co-built structure in place for the establishment of good practice: the National Council for Higher Art Schools (CNESA) which brings together and represents the concerned actors. This council permits the organization of an approach to research by acting on the following points:

- The status of the student-researcher and the professor-researcher, for artists, designers, practitioners and theoreticians and the authorization to direct research programmes and third cycles;
- The creation of, and participation in, the operation of a new approach to the distribution of budgets allocated to research;
- The evaluation of “research units” and “research programmes”;
- The national coordination of research

The governance and functioning of the CNESA will be determined in a collegial manner from the moment of its creation, from propositions made by the “research commission” of the ANdÉA – the National Association of Higher Schools of Art. Already, it is clear from what has been previously stated that, for it to accomplish its missions, the CNESA will meet a number of times per year and is intended to be a particularly active council.

Schools represent an essential element in the world of art and design. The community of peers, which provides legitimacy and evaluates the activities of schools (education and research) is the milieu itself and the different actors operating within it. These peers are represented by 3 types of person:

- Those involved: artists, designers and theoreticians involved in research in schools
- Those concerned in France: critics, curators, institutional members from the world of creation, artists and designers
- Those concerned internationally: critics, curators, institutional members from the world of creation, artists and designers

The categories of experts and proportions to be respected by the CNESA and by organs of evaluation in general:

- Male/female: 1/1
- Design /Art: 2/5
- Theoretician/practitioner: 1/5
- Involved/concerned in France/ concerned internationally: 8/6/1

The CNESA could bring together:

- 12 involved (6 men and 6 women): 5 artists, 2 designers, 1 theoretician or 1 critic, 4 directors
- 8 concerned in France (4 men and 4 women): 3 artists, 1 designer and 4 curators or critics
- 2 concerned internationally (1 man and 1 woman): 1 artist and 1 curator or critic
- representatives of the Minister for Culture

II-2- The Status of the student-researcher

Young artists and also theoreticians, designers, curators and other creators, when they register with a school so as to prepare a third cycle, are given the status of student-researcher.

As student-researchers they benefit from the student status, but also from all of the resources of the establishment with which they have registered. Furthermore, because they are also researchers, they can lead missions, drive projects for establishments and their research units and also disseminate various teachings. For each one of these missions, contracts are established between the student-researcher and the ESA concerned.

This status is to be created on a national level, from the recommendations made by the CNESA.

II-3- The mission of the professor-researcher

The teachers working in the ESAs, theoreticians, artists and other creators who wish to practice the activity of research in an ESA will make the request to the establishment and its associated Scientific Council – and on the advice of the Scientific Council, for the determined length of time of the research project, the theoretician, artist or designer can obtain an occasional arrangement with regards to his or her position and become a professor-researcher.

The responsibility for research is thus accessible to any teacher whose skills are recognized by their establishment – teachers in ESAs are already in effect teachers working in higher education and their activity is evaluated and recognized at the moment that the LMD qualifications, for which they are responsible, are awarded – so they can request the status of professor-researcher in the establishments where they work.

Of note is the fact that the status of professor-researcher occurs within the framework of the general restructuring of the status of art school teachers which appears today to be essential in accomplishing the reform of higher artistic education (the annualization of face to face teaching time and the possibility of release so as to participate in research, validated by the scientific council of the establishment in which they work).

II-4- Funds and financing for research

The financing of the research in the ESAs comes primarily from the field of art and with their traditional national and international partners. In effect, because research concerns an existing field, the financing of this research is first made with the arrangements already established in this field. Thus, in France, in the context of their mission of support for creation, in the first place the Minister for Culture, followed by the territorial managers of cultural affairs follow and develop the accompanying of research activity. They put specific funds for financing and research into place, all the while communicating clearly on an ambitious research policy, they articulate a reaffirmed support for creation, the other essential aspect of a policy favorable to the visual arts. The means that have been assembled are distributed by relying on the expertise of the CNESA. These means aim to support:

- Research units in addition to the activities of teachers and student-researchers who participate in increasing their influence on a national and international level (notably: mission and travel expenses, the dissemination of results in publications, lectures and exhibitions...). This will allow the establishment of permanent structures, true pillars of research in ESAs.
- Occasional research programmes, established for a defined objective and length of time. This will also allow the constitution of original teams, so that a specific and localized problem can be treated – in each case a situated activity is stimulated.
- 3rd cycles specific to ESAs.

In the first and third cases, financing is provided by renewable multi-year contracts (4 years minimum). In the second case, project tenders are proposed regularly, with a defined specification sheet and transparency when it comes to the attribution of this assistance.

Research activity can then find its financing by making inroads into the professional creative fields, of art, of design and of theory, and by moving closer to R&D. In the same way, research can find a number of resources by optimizing its organizational logic, in particular in partnership with other places of research in higher education eligible for their own financing (European and ANR project tenders, various grants...), and the ESAs can in this way monetize their partnership. This does not in any way constitute the principal resource of research activity in ESAs. Because research in an ESA, just like research in general, is not necessarily immediately profitable but participates in innovation and the transformation of our society, it is for the public powers to refine their structures for the financing of this specific research.

II-5- Evaluation of research

The principal of the evaluation of research which takes place in ESAs is the same as that of all research activity: an evaluation by peers. To this is added, in the case where the research is particularly situated and contextualized, and when this is an issue in the research itself, an evaluation by those concerned.

The CNESA, the National Council for Higher Art Schools, organizes the structure for evaluation of research in an ESA:

- For research units and 3rd cycles, evaluation can be done on site, so as to be in contact with teams and their tools, and to observe the work being done.
- For research programmes, evaluation can be carried out on presentation of documentation, before and after projects, when financing is solicited.

The CNESA can also be called upon to accompany the attempt to structure research within a school. In any case, evaluation is considered as accompanying the practice of research and is there to stimulate the progression of the development of specific research in ESAs.

To achieve this goal, evaluation:

- is carried out by a group of peers
- explicits its methods, its expectations and its objectives;
- systematically renders public its conclusions (and generally renders its functioning transparent, for example concerning the conditions in which the evaluation was done and by whom);
- is argumentative and adds to” the strength of the proposition;
- privileges the “evaluation report” rather than numbered grades, and chooses criticism above awards.