

# the exegesis

the role of the exegesis  
and its relationship to the creative work



PROF. KIRSTY BEILHARZ [www.sense-aware.com](http://www.sense-aware.com)

## what is research?

- the creation of new knowledge, or advancement of knowledge (not an artefact, but what we know, could be what we know about making/creating/ designing but the product is not the knowledge *per se*)
- according to Scrivener (2002): “the knowledge embodied in the artefact can be described separately from it (thus offering the potential for reuse)”
- according to the Australian Research Council (ARC) national funding body:

research is defined as the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way so as to generate new concepts, methodologies and understandings. This could include synthesis and analysis of previous research to the extent that it is new and creative.

This definition of research is consistent with a broad notion of research and experimental development (R&D) as comprising creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of humanity, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise [innovative] applications<sup>1</sup>.

- The PhD is defined in terms of knowledge, e.g. “The degree is awarded to candidates who, through original investigation, make a distinct and significant contribution to knowledge.” (UTS, 2006).

<sup>1</sup> OECD (2002), Frascati Manual: Proposed Standard Practice for Surveys on Research and Experimental Development, Paris.

# research in creative practice

- Scrivener (2002) also points out a fundamental difference between traditional generation of new knowledge and its operation in creative practice

[http://sitem.herts.ac.uk/artdes\\_research/papers/wpades/vol1/scrivener2.html](http://sitem.herts.ac.uk/artdes_research/papers/wpades/vol1/scrivener2.html)

- Typically, [creative production doctoral] candidates involved are artists or studio/craft designers, focused on producing work that will stand up in the public domain (e.g. be worthy of exhibition). For them, doctoral study is mainly seen as an opportunity to develop as creators and to produce more satisfactory work.

artefact is produced
artefact is new or improved
artefact is the solution to a known problem
artefact demonstrates a solution to problem
the problem recognised as such by to others
artefact (solution) is useful
knowledge reified in artefact can be described
this knowledge is widely applicable and widely transferable
knowledge reified in the artefact is more important than the artefact

*Norms of Technology Research Projects*

artefacts are produced
artefacts are original in a cultural context
artefacts are a response to issues, concerns and interests
artefacts manifests these issues, concerns and interests
the issues, concerns and interests reflect cultural preoccupations
artefacts contribute to human experience
artefacts are more important than any knowledge embodied in them.

*Norms of Creative-production Research Projects*

- Scrivener (2002) says a creative-production research programme can be tested by asking, for example, has the student:
  - Described the issues, concerns and interests stimulating the work, i.e., something that will contribute to human experience?
  - Shown that the response to these stimulants is likely to be original?
  - Shown that the issues, concerns and interests reflect cultural preoccupations?
  - Shown the relationship between the artefact and those issues, concerns, and interests?
  - Presented original, high-quality and engaging artefacts that contribute to human experience?
  - Communicated knowledge, learning or insight resulting from the programme of work?
  - Shown themselves to be a self-conscious, systematic and reflective creative artist or designer?

# what is an exegesis?

- **exegesis** |,eksi'jēsis|

*critical explanation or interpretation* of a text, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, der. Greek words meaning "to interpret, guide and lead"

- according to ECU, "the central focus of the exegesis is a creative work or works, for instance a painting, installation, photomedia portfolio or film script. In the exegesis, the student critically examines their creative product in the light of contemporary theory and practice ... to *meaningfully situate your work in contemporary theory and practice* ... may explore the influences, ideas, decisions, materials, technologies, events, theories, which inspire, inform, restrain or facilitate the process and production of your work"

<http://www.ecu.edu.au/CLT/tips/docs/exegesis.pdf>

- writing an exegesis demands that you use a reflective and reflexive voice (Kroll 2004)

- **thesis** |'θēsis|

1. a statement or theory that is put forward as *a premise to be maintained or proved*.

2. a *long essay or dissertation involving personal research*,

written by a candidate for a university degree: a doctoral thesis.

## exegesis/thesis as *research training*

- *most people have never written a research thesis before*, thus learning academic writing and how to structure a long document is important research training
- learning evidence-based reasoning
- learning logical argumentation and persuasive writing (the thesis/exegesis is *not* creative writing, and has a world-wide ubiquitously consistent format)
- learning time-management and large-scale project organisation skills
- Ph.D/DCA qualification enables supervision of others, hence importance of understanding methodologies beyond the scope of this exegesis
- Ph.D/DCA qualification that leads to possible academic career, hence training for grant-writing and publication-writing

# specifications at UTS

- **DCA**

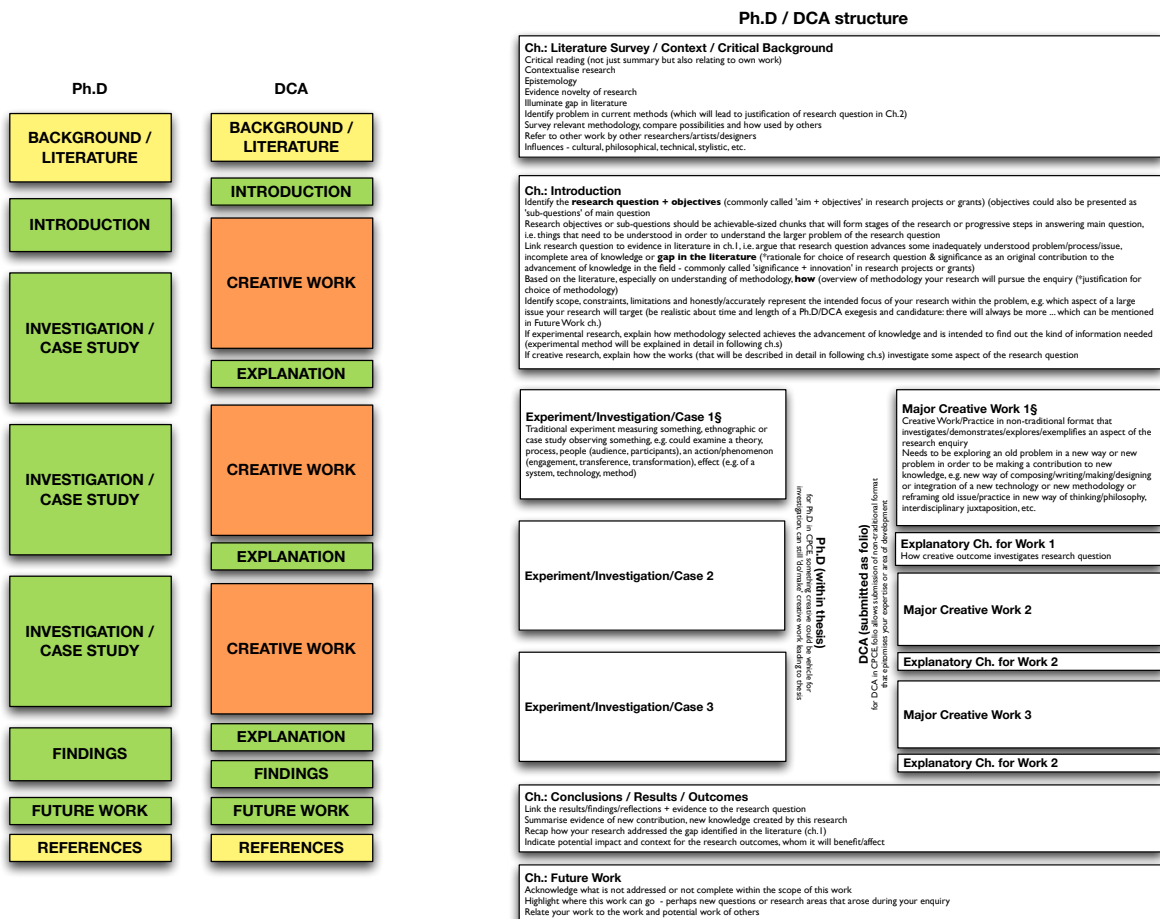
<http://www.handbook.uts.edu.au/courses/c02020.html>

- The work produced for the DCA is of equivalent intellectual scope and level to a PhD, but is presented in non-traditional formats. Coursework subjects may be prescribed according to individual student requirements. *The substantial creative work should be the equivalent of a 50,000–70,000-word written work, accompanied by a 30,000-word dissertation.*
  - The work (e.g. presentation, performance, exhibition, installation or website) must be recorded in a format which can be lodged in the Library.
  - Normally a closed session of the presentation, performance, exhibition or installation shall be organised by the candidate at his or her own expense.

- **Ph.D**

<http://www.handbook.uts.edu.au/courses/c02019.html>

- This research degree is undertaken wholly by thesis. A PhD thesis is normally a work of *80,000–100,000 words*. Coursework subjects may be prescribed, according to individual student requirements. While the doctoral thesis is normally written in dissertation style, candidates may, if they wish, illustrate their argument by also submitting film, video, sound/ audio, photography or other formats. Applicants should contact the research degrees administrator for further information about non-traditional formats for thesis presentation.



# practice-based vs. creative practice

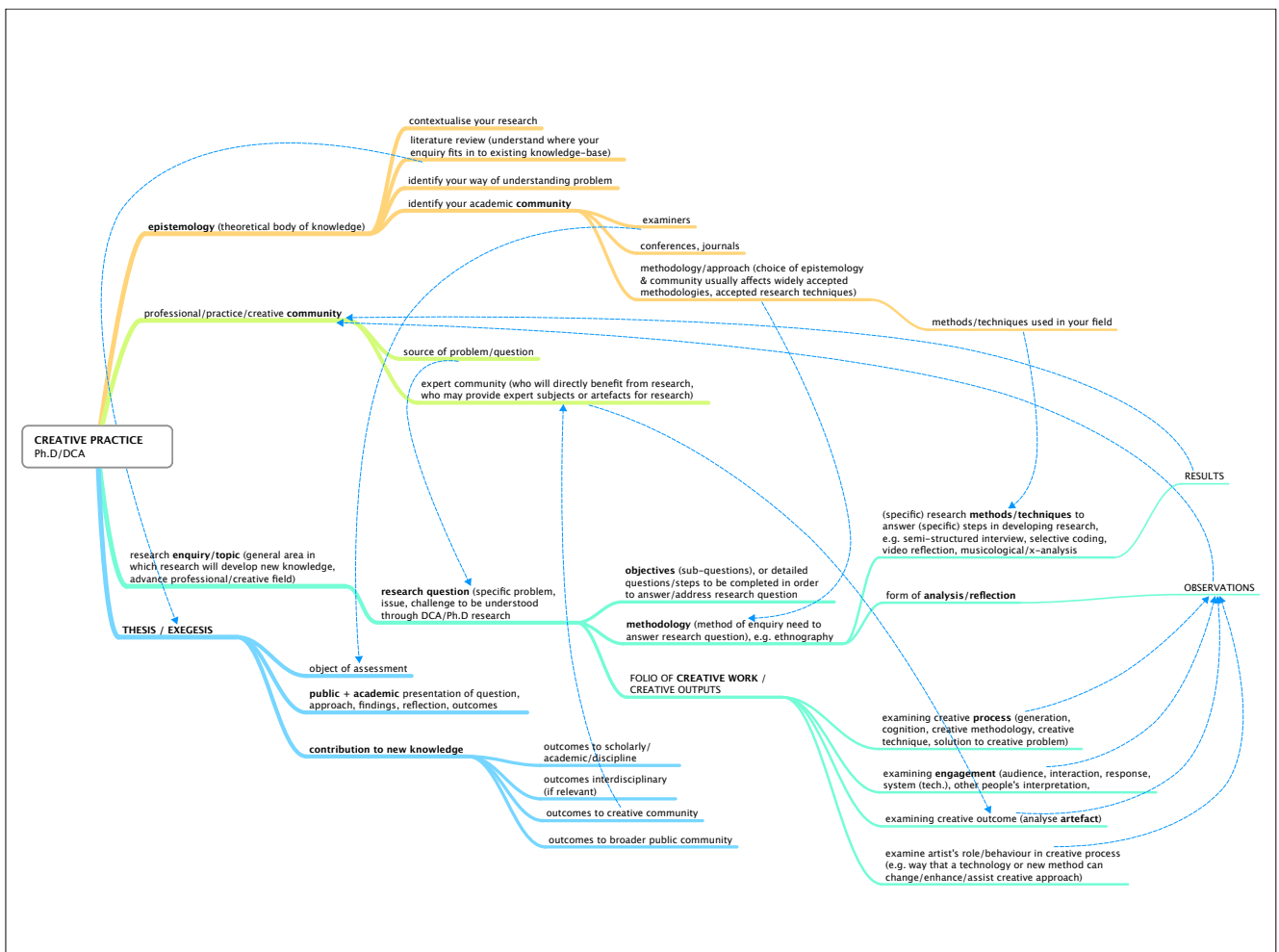
- a practice-based research Ph.D is submitted as thesis only (as explained by Ernest Edmonds & Linda Candy of Creativity & Cognition Studios)  
<http://www.creativityandcognition.com/content/category/10/56/131/>
- a PBR Ph.D draws on experience in practical/professional work (including creative practice, but could be other professions), may address a problem generated in the profession
- The practice-based doctoral research outcome that is shared with a wider community arises from *a structured process that is defined in university examination regulations* (Edmonds & Candy)
- PBR degrees have been around in EU for several decades and in AU since 1984, hence interesting comparison, ways of integrating practical activities in thesis, similar to FASS Ph.D model of writing thesis relating to creative work or using creative work as vehicle for research enquiry  
∴ PBR Ph.D ≡ Ph.D using CP as research domain, assessed by thesis
- DCA is ∴ different because creative works form part of submission & assessment

## creative practice research in a *Ph.D*

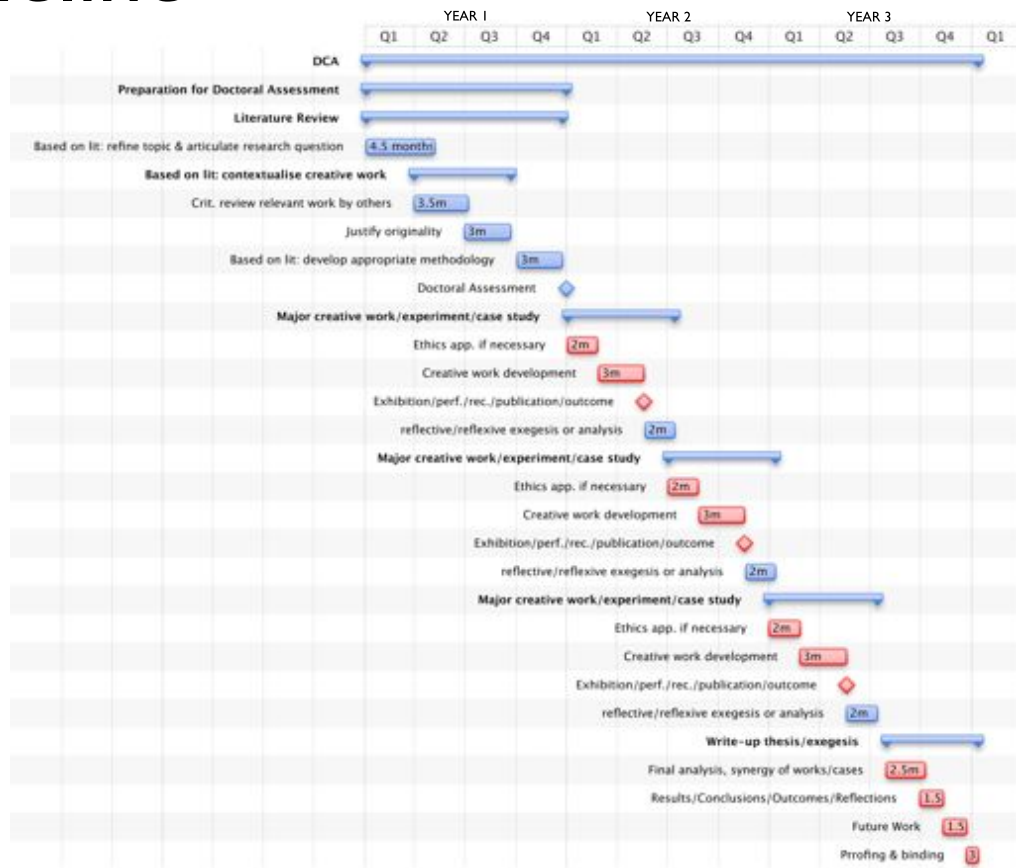
- pursue enquiry arising from field of practice & personal experience
- use creative (your) work as vehicle / 'black box' to test an idea, e.g. engagement, efficacy, affect of a technology/technique/method/system
- use creative works or creative practitioners as subjects, e.g. fieldwork, questionnaires
- develop a theoretical framework that can be applied to area of creative practice or solves a problem, issue in creative practice

# creative practice research in a *DCA*

- the artefact (whether musical, creative writing, poetry, photography, installation, media art production, or designed product, etc.) embodies a new concept, a new method of production, explores field from new perspective/paradigm, addresses new problem (e.g. emerging due to new technologies in field) or approaches established problem/query in a new way (e.g. informed by interdisciplinary methodology), or evolves methodology in your field
- the *role of the exegesis in the research* is: to explain the innovation, contribution to knowledge and reflection on creative process; to contextualise the work culturally, historically, in the literature, and to elucidate the gap or evidence originality of approach



# timeline



# references

- Art Practice as Research: Inquiry in Visual Arts* 2nd edition 2010 Dr. Graeme Sullivan (authored book)
- Artists with PhDs: On the New Doctoral Degree in Studio Art* James Elkins (Editor) 2009
- Practice-led Research, Research-led Practice in the Creative Arts (Research Methods for the Arts and Humanities)* by Hazel Smith (2009) Hazel Smith (Author; Editor), Roger T. Dean (Editor)
- Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry* Estelle Barrett (Author; Editor), Barbara Bolt (Editor)
- Vizualizing Research: A Guide to the Research Process in Art and Design* Carole Gray (Author), Julian Malins (Author)
- "Creative Writing as Research and the Dilemma of Accreditation: How do we prove the value of what we do?" *TEXT*, Vol.6, No. 1 (April, 2002). <http://www.textjournal.com.au/april02/kroll.htm>
- "The Exegesis and the Gentle Reader/Writer" (keynote speech) *TEXT Special Issue Website Series, 3: Illuminating the Exegesis*, University of Ballarat Eds. J. Fletcher and A. Mann. (April, 2004), 1-14. <http://www.textjournal.com.au/speciss/issue3/kroll.htm>
- Krauth, Nigel. "The Creative Writing Doctorate in Australia: An Initial Survey." *TEXT*, Vol. 5, No 1 (April 2001). Return to paper.
- Strand, Dennis. *Research in the Creative Arts*. Canberra: Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs, 1998.
- Scrivener, S.A.R (2002). *The Art Object Does Not Embody a Form of Knowledge*, Working Papers in Art and Design. [http://sitem.herts.ac.uk/artdes\\_research/papers/wpades/vol1/scrivener2.html](http://sitem.herts.ac.uk/artdes_research/papers/wpades/vol1/scrivener2.html)
- Schön, D.A. (1983) *The reflective practitioner: how professionals think in action*. Basic books, New York