Title: The Dialogic: art work as method

Keywords
dialogue, practice-led research, generative method, collaboration, community of support

Abstract:

This paper discusses how the multisite artwork The Dialogic demonstrates an innovative, supportive and generative artwork-as-method which resists overly reductive, and prescriptive tendencies within practice-led research. It continues a dialogue between participants that has been ongoing since 2012. The Dialogic has been adapted through the work of multiple artists, and this iteration is offered as a dialogue between the artists John Hammersley and Rachelle Viader Knowles in response to reflections in the work of Simon Pope. The Dialogic emerged as a method-work which imbricates the artist in socially situated exchange across multiple contexts, enacts co-authored and co-produced meaning-making, and challenges assumptions about the separation of art and research and notions of the detached artist-researcher. Its innovative contribution to practice-led research is how it demonstrates dialogical art as the on-going re-construction of a community of support, sustained through a commitment to knowledge mobilization, continued exchange and engagement in which the artist and their work are ‘answerable’ for the choices and actions in their art-as-research.

The work functions as a generative research tool. It demonstrates how semi-structured everyday conversational-exchange-as-art can simultaneously lead to the emergence of subconsciously held insights, construct a community of practice that helps shape thinking outside of institutional frameworks, and act as a situated literature review that may disrupt traditional frameworks of knowledge production normalized in much fine art research.

The authors argue that this method is appropriate to dialogical art-as-research as it makes a necessary contribution to the practice-led research tool box. It offers a method of distributive authorship grounded in an emergent, situated and more provisional mode of meaning-making that facilitates generous, democratized, peer-to-peer co-mentorship and skill-sharing contributing to understandings of dialogical art as research. This they argue is an increasingly necessary counterpoint to the reduction of practice-led fine art research to a training in mechanistic methods, reductive evaluation, and singular concrete outcomes aimed at satisfying the artist-researcher as customer and consumer.