Practice or Perish: The Case of an Art Lecturer in the Era of Publish or Perish

Theophilus Kwesi Mensah (Phd), Efua Egyirba Enchill, Ruby Tabitha Kumangtum (Phd)

Art Department, University of Education, Winneba, Winneba, Central Region, Ghana

DOI: https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100900476

Received: 16 September 2026; Accepted: 21 September 2026; Published: 14 October 2026

ABSTRACT

The 'publish or perish' paradigm is a system that has traditionally influenced academics and careers through emphasis on peer reviewed publications and research output measurements. Although such a system works well in the scientific and humanities areas of knowledge production, it lacks flexibility and applicability to creative arts as it fails to take into account practice based knowledge creation processes in which arts operates. To many art lecturers who operate in practice based environments and whose career identity is linked with practice based research, the application of publishing criteria makes little sense and hinders innovation, marginalizes artistic practice and contributes to the persistence of epistemological biases in the field of academic knowledge production. This paper examine the inadequacy of the publish-or-perish model in the context of art education and argues for a paradigm shift towards 'practice or perish' that considers artistic productions such as exhibitions, performances, installations, and community-based practices as academically legitimate research. With reference to Bourdieu's (1993), Elkin's (2009) and Sullivan's (2010) theory on art and its relationship with academia, this paper addressess the disconnect between the academic measures and the value system of artistic practice. Thus, the study adds to an academic debate about paradigms of academic success, knowledge creation processes, and the creation of a supportive institutional environment.

INTRODUCTION

The last four decades have seen the 'publish or perish' paradigm gain prominence in academic circles, where peer-reviewed journal papers and research outputs have become the most common yardsticks of academic success. This trend, in which the output of academic research has become the main factor that determines career advancement for many academics worldwide, has come to define the academic world in many ways. While the publishing paradigm may be compatible with the epistemologies and research techniques used in sciences and humanities, this paradigm does not cater for the idiosyncratic nature of art as a field of study. Art academics find it difficult to fit into the publishing paradigm because of its practice-based nature.

Artistic practice involving exhibitions, performances, installations, and other community projects constitutes a separate mode of knowledge generation that cannot be readily evaluated in terms of the usual publish or perish approach. This poses important questions regarding the applicability of such an approach to art schools and necessitates a paradigm change to accommodate artistic practice in academia. According to the 'publish or perish' approach, the performance of a faculty member depends on his or her publications and, specifically, on the number of articles published in high-profile peer-reviewed journals. Although the approach promotes productivity and encourages scholarly work, it tends to favor quantity at the expense of quality, thus causing the generation of incremental and, sometimes, unimportant and repetitive research (Rond & Miller, 2005).

New lecturers, in particular, often find themselves forced to indulge in what could be called a 'numbers game', concentrating on fast results in research instead of conducting interdisciplinary, ethnographic or longitudinal research that could take a long time to materialize. It also tends to stigmatize practice and creative research that should be the priority of any art lecturer but which is neglected when using the

standard evaluation system. The flaws of the 'publish or perish' approach become obvious when it comes to the arts. As Bourdieu (1993) points out, "the field of cultural production works on its own logic, which cannot be reduced to the logic of any other fields." Creative work produces knowledge using visuals and experiences, yet this kind of intellectual contribution is not sufficiently recognized in academic institutions. The mismatch of academic criteria and the economic value of the art world, as pointed out by Elkins (2009), creates a system that does not acknowledge all the contributions made by art lecturers.

As a result of these difficulties, the movement towards switching from 'publish or perish' to 'practice or perish' in art teaching has emerged. Under such an approach, practice is considered an appropriate and vital form of scholarly activity in line with the idea of practice-based research, where creativity is viewed as a process of knowledge production. In other words, as stated by Sullivan (2010), artistic practice is a method through which knowledge is generated. Through such an approach, a more equal evaluation system can be formed since the achievements of art lecturers are evaluated on the basis of exhibitions, installations, and other forms of creative practice.

The prevalence of the 'publish or perish' mentality, therefore, calls for further examination in terms of its implications within academia, and in particular within art schools. At what point, and under what conditions, did the culture of publishing become prominent in these institutions, including those in developing countries such as Ghana? What is the impact of this culture on the motivation levels of academics, their independence, and the level of job stress? How frequently do academics find themselves compelled to forsake their own values in order to fulfill the expectations for publishing? What is the nature of scholarly work in professional schools?

Transitioning from the old paradigm of 'publish or perish' to a new one of 'practice or perish', which puts the value of artistic practice in the academic environment above all else, is a complicated and multifaceted process. Despite the great potential of this change, it is far from easy. The major problem in this case is related to the lack of objective criteria for evaluation of creative output in an academic environment. Artistic works cannot be objectively evaluated since they are by definition subjective and immune to any traditional evaluation methods. In contrast to the publications where the results can be quantified based on citation rates and impact factors of journals where they are published, artistic outputs should be assessed in terms that are peculiar to this particular work. As Barrett and Bolt (2010) point out, practice-based research should be evaluated in light of originality, impact, and contribution of the work. Thus, the creation of criteria for the evaluation of artistic outputs will be a challenging process requiring the cooperation of artists, educators, and administration.

Another major challenge involves the transformation of institutional cultures and attitudes toward artistic practice. For many years, the 'publish or perish' principle has been used in evaluating the academic performance of people, creating a bias towards research done through written work. Changing this attitude will require a lot of work to be done in order to sensitize all stakeholders on the importance of artistic practice and its contribution to knowledge creation. The difficulty is not only getting practice-based research recognized as important, but also embedding it in the broader academy, as Shreeve (2011) has noted.

In spite of these difficulties, however, there are significant opportunities for art education in terms of the adoption of this new model of practice. Furthermore, it offers an opportunity for reflection and for rethinking what counts as an academic contribution. The recognition of creativity as an academic contribution will make it possible to create a more varied and open environment that will reflect the many ways in which art lecturers approach their subjects.

Problem Statement

The 'publish or perish' philosophy is an established practice in academic institutions around the world, serving as the main criterion used to assess the productivity of academics, their performance in terms of obtaining tenure or promotion, and the allocation of institutional resources. In spite of its popularity, the use of such a philosophy is based on certain epistemological principles favoring written and measurable

contributions to knowledge over other scholarly contributions. The field of art education, where knowledge creation happens mainly through practical work, is greatly affected by this discrepancy.

The inconsistencies are apparent in several important respects. Firstly, art lecturers who identify themselves professionally as artists, along with their research approaches that focus on the practice of art, suffer from the disadvantageous treatment in academic evaluation systems which do not acknowledge the value of exhibitions, commissions, installations, performances, and socially engaged practices as academic achievement. Secondly, the need to adjust to established publishing formats might take the attention of the researcher away from the process of making art, thus preventing innovations and experimenting in the area. Thirdly, the epistemic bias towards textual knowledge maintains the hierarchy of knowledge that excludes visual and practical approaches to understanding the world. The paradigm has particular implications in developing academic environments such as that of Ghana, where research facilities are poorly developed and the requirement to publish in international peer-reviewed journals creates another hurdle to academic progress. Further, the absence of clear guidelines for evaluating artistic activities in an academic context creates barriers to supporting creative activity, as institutions may not be equipped to evaluate exhibitions, performances, and other artworks.

In this sense, this research seeks to address the following problem: What would be the most suitable way to address the requirements of traditional evaluation systems and the specific aspects of artistic activity, and how should the evaluation be designed so that the creative activity can be considered a valid academic contribution? The research question implies that a comprehensive analysis should be conducted in the following areas: 1. The particular flaws of the ‘publish or perish’ model in the context of art education, the epistemological assumptions it implies, and its incompatibility with the temporal, experiential, and material dimensions of artistic research; 2. The impact of publication pressure on the professional identity, creative practice, and job satisfaction of art lecturers, and how this pressure can lead to epistemic violence, restrict freedom of thought, and discourage risk-taking and experimentation in art education; 3. Alternative assessment criteria that would be rigorous and justified enough to allow for the assessment of artistic practice as an academic contribution without denying the subjectivity of art; 4. Institutional change that is expected to facilitate the recognition of artistic practice in academic assessment systems; and 5. The practical implementation of the ‘practice or perish’ paradigm in various institutional settings, particularly in resource-poor settings like Ghana.

Through this comprehensive study, the purpose of the research is to facilitate wider academic conversations about academic achievement models, epistemic justice in the production of knowledge, and institutional cultural transformation in relation to inclusiveness and equity in practice-based disciplines.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Historical Context and Limitations of the ‘Publish or Perish’ Model

In the middle of the last century, the ‘publish or perish’ paradigm was firmly established in the academic evaluation process as the academic system grew and academic work became professionalized. It was originally developed as a way to ensure that professors were productive and accountable, but gradually became an institutionalized process for granting tenure and promotions to academics whose work is primarily represented by peer-reviewed publications. This paradigm’s focus on quantifiable measurements like number of articles published, citation rates and journal impact factors is connected to positivist epistemology that equates knowledge to measurable output (Rond & Miller, 2005).

There are several interrelated reasons for the institutionalization of this paradigm. First of all, there is increased bureaucratic control over academic institutions and need for standard measurements of faculty productivity. Secondly, there is growing number of research assessment exercises, such as UK’s Research Excellence Framework (REF), where academics are evaluated according to their measurable research outputs. Thirdly, there is increasing competition in international academic market where publication metrics become measures of scholarly and institutional reputation (Borgdorff, 2012).

Epistemological Limitations

Although the 'publish or perish' system has proved to be successful in some disciplines, its underlying epistemology is incompatible with the epistemology of art making. The model presumes that knowledge production occurs primarily through text-based, propositional forms of inquiry that can be codified, disseminated, and evaluated through standardized peer review processes. This presumption reflects what has been termed propositional knowledge, privileging the elevation of knowledge that can be expressed in propositions over other forms of knowing, such as experiential, tacit, or aesthetic knowledge (Barrett & Bolt, 2010). For art lecturers, whose work is rooted in visual and practical forms of expression, the imposition of this model creates several significant limitations. First, artistic practice generates knowledge through non-propositional means through the process of making, the manipulation of materials, the negotiation of visual relationships, and the cultivation of perceptual sensitivity. As Bolt (2007) argues, artistic practice embodies a form of material thinking in which knowledge emerges through the artist's engagement with materials and processes. This type of knowledge cannot be measured using traditional methods of measuring publications. Secondly, the 'publish or perish' model does not take into consideration the time factor in arts research. While the process of scientific research usually unfolds within defined projects leading to publications, the arts research process is a continuous process of experimentation, reflection, and improvement which cannot be measured as separate outputs. According to Sullivan (2010), the process of arts research consists of a recursive process where meaning is generated through the act of creation and reflection. Thirdly, the model does not give enough recognition to public contribution made by art lecturers. The work of many lecturers involves working on various community and publicly commissioned projects that lead to the advancement of the public discourse and social change. Such contributions are hard to measure using traditional scholarly criteria (McNiff, 1998).

Consequences for Art Lecturers

Adopting the 'publish or perish' model in art education environments has led to many adverse effects on individual lecturers as well as the wider area. Individually, art lecturers face pressure to invest time and effort in something other than the artistic practice, which is expected of them within the institution. According to Elkins (2009), an artist teaching in an institution of higher learning faces pressure to translate their practice into text, coming up with evaluations in the form of publications but not necessarily what represents their best artistic practice.

This pressure has been described as 'epistemic violence', which involves the marginalizing of artistic forms of knowledge and the imposition of alien modes of valuation. Art lecturers adopt institutional values that do not place much value on their practice resulting in lowered levels of professional identity and job satisfaction. Moreover, the pressure to publish results in conservatism where faculty members choose research topics that guarantee publications at the expense of speculative research. In terms of institutions, the 'publish or perish' system reinforces a narrow definition of scholarly activity that fails to embrace different forms of production of knowledge. This is disadvantageous because it limits the variety of voices, approaches, and ideas that could be included in scholarly discussion. The model can dissuade individuals who could become art lecturers from entering academia because of its restrictive nature.

Epistemic Hierarchies and Institutional Biases

The marginalization of creative works in academic institutions is as a result of deeply rooted epistemological hierarchies which emphasize some forms of knowledge over others. The positivist approach, which emphasizes objectivity, quantifiability and generalizability, has been prevalent in academic evaluation mechanisms. This has led to the creation of a framework where empirical research and propositional forms of knowledge take precedence over experiential, interpretive and aesthetic types of knowledge (Bourdieu, 1993). This hierarchical structure is reinforced through the way academic institutions operate in relation to the output they produce. Various disciplines in an academic institution are segmented in a manner where there is clearly defined boundary between the sciences, social sciences and the humanities. In the case of a hierarchy, the sciences and social sciences tend to be favored because they are considered more pragmatic

and also get funding (Elkins, 2009). The creative disciplines, such as fine arts and creative writing, are considered less useful and less impacting in solving actual problems.

Assessment Challenges

Another reason for the undermining of art is the difficulty of measuring artistic products in the prevailing academic system. It is easy to evaluate traditional research products like journal articles and papers presented at conferences through peer review and citation analysis. Assessment of creative works, however, is based on subjective criteria, such as aesthetic value, emotional resonance, or cultural significance, and does not lend itself easily to standardized assessment measures (Barrett & Bolt, 2010).

In other cases, an art professor who invests months of work in creating a novel piece of art or organizing a groundbreaking art show could receive little or no credit for the work if they do not also write a peer-reviewed article. This lack of balance not only stifles innovative art creation but also adds to the marginalization of art lecturers in the academic system. Often, an art lecturer's work of art involves intellectual and creative labor that is overlooked or undervalued and treated as a secondary or supplementary academic activity instead of a central academic contribution. Moreover, challenges faced in valuing artistic products in the context of the current academic assessment system can lead to less value being placed on creative production. The measurement of traditional research products such as journal articles and conference papers is easily performed with the aid of peer review and citation analysis. Yet creative production requires the use of other standards of evaluation that are subjective by nature and are not quantifiable (Barrett & Bolt, 2010). Thus, an art lecturer who spends months on developing an outstanding piece of art or organizing an exceptional exhibition will get no credit for that work if he or she fails to produce a peer-reviewed paper alongside with the artwork. This inequality not only hinders creativity but also strengthens the subordination of art lecturers in the academic hierarchy. The work of intellect that goes into creation of art is disregarded and even devalued; it is seen as an add-on to regular academic work.

The Paradox of Institutional Values

Devaluation of creativity in academia leads to the following paradox: even though universities recognize the significance of innovation and interdisciplinary research, the system of evaluation discourages practices that allow students and academics to develop these qualities. An art lecturer who spends considerable time working on an installation dealing with relevant issues is likely to be told that their creation is not seen as part of academic activity unless accompanied by written analysis. Artists need to work within academic conventions to make their work credible, and this requires them to spend valuable time away from their creative practice.

In addition, such inequality contributes to a vicious circle that marginalizes art lecturers in the university context. Art lecturers, who are typically marginalized members of the hierarchy within universities, may have more difficulties in their career development if their creative work is not considered legitimate scholarly work. This, in its turn, leads to disappointment and disillusionment. As Sullivan (2010) notes, the failure to recognize artistic practice as a form of knowledge production not only diminishes the contributions of art lecturers but also impoverishes the academic community by excluding diverse ways of knowing and understanding the world.

Practice-Based Research and Knowledge Production

Practice or Perish debate essentially acknowledges that artistic practice is research in itself. As an epistemology, practice-based research regards artistic practice as a process that gives rise to knowledge in a way that cannot be achieved by any other kind of investigation. It undermines the dichotomy of practice and theory, as practice-based epistemology sees artistic practice as a kind of knowing that is experiential and materially rooted (Barrett & Bolt, 2010).

Art is a discipline where knowledge is created in the process of experimenting and working with materials and ideas. Artistic practice is an intrinsic process that cannot be translated into written language. Sullivan

(2010) states that in art, practice itself is a kind of creation and not a vehicle for the creation of ideas. For instance, when an artist tries out a new material or technique, new methods of manipulating visual forms arise from the practice. The same applies to sculpture: when a sculptor experiments with unconventional materials, new ideas about space and form are discovered.

The Agency of Materials and Material Thinking

The idea of 'material thinking', as described by Bolt (2007), represents the theoretical perspective on the process through which knowledge is created through artistic practice. As opposed to the perception that materials are just tools used to implement an artist's intention, they become actors in the creative process themselves through their interaction with the artist. The knowledge created through the interaction with materials cannot be reduced to the propositional form of knowledge. The understanding goes against the epistemological basis of the "publish or perish" approach because it emphasizes the importance of knowledge that is not expressible in language and cannot be recorded in writing. The idea of material thinking explains the repetitive and recursive nature of the artistic practice, where meaning is produced through the dialectics between intention and material response. Such a process-based view of research does not coincide with the outcome-oriented approach used in the evaluation of academic research (Sullivan, 2010).

Interdisciplinary and Collaborative Dimensions

Artistic practice has many aspects that go beyond what one would see within the bounds of traditional disciplines. The contemporary artist tends to conduct his activities in collaboration with scientists, engineers, people who work on community development projects and who are active members of social activist groups. Artistic research can be understood by referring to such contemporary artists as Olafur Eliasson, who creates his large-scale installations in collaboration with scientists and engineers in order to study such topics as perception, light, and space. Artistic research does not only presuppose creating works of art but also the process of acquiring new knowledge in collaboration with others (Bolt, 2007). By viewing artistic practice as a research discipline, one will manage to build a more inclusive environment in academia where the contribution of art lecturers to the field will be valued.

Studio-Based Pedagogy and Experiential Learning

The practice of art plays an integral role in teaching and learning and ensures that the experience of education is enhanced while preparing students for the dynamic nature of the art industry. Art lecturers who practice what they preach introduce fresh ideas, techniques, and knowledge into teaching, acting as models of dispositions and skills that make a good professional practitioner. For instance, a lecturer who is active in curating exhibitions can give practical insight into the art industry and teach students some of the skills required to operate within it. On the other hand, an art lecturer who is practicing through experimentation in new media and technology can introduce innovative approaches and tools to students.

The relationship between artistic practice and teaching is evident in the practice of art educators such as Graeme Sullivan who champions for the studio-based approach in teaching art. In such an approach, the studio becomes a critical space for challenging ideas, generating knowledge and testing them through the process of creation (Sullivan, 2010). By prioritizing practice, institutions can foster a culture of creativity and innovation that benefits both educators and learners.

Mentorship and Professional Socialization

Lecturers in the visual arts who continue to be engaged in active creative practice act as mentors and models for their students, showing them how an artistic career looks and its potentials and problems. Lecturers through the contacts they make and the experience they gather in the field of professional networks, exhibitions, and community-based projects provide their students with access to professional networks and valuable information. The inclusion of practice within the pedagogy facilitates the development of those dispositions and competencies that are vital for contemporary artistic practice, critical thinking, problem

solving, teamwork, flexibility, etc. Arts lecturers through practice-based inquiry develop in their students those qualities that will make them successful practitioners in the field of creative industries and other sectors (Shreeve, 2011).

The Case for 'Practice or Perish'

'Practice or perish' presents a contrasting approach that respects and values artistic practice as a valid academic contribution. The 'practice or perish' framework is based on a number of fundamental principles that challenge the epistemological hegemony of conventional approaches to evaluating and assessing academic performance and suggest the development of an alternative academic culture that would be more inclusive and intellectually fertile. Principles like knowledge pluralism, epistemic justice, institutional inclusion, and professional integrity represent a comprehensive basis for the development of a new vision of the importance of artistic practice within academia. The notion of Knowledge Pluralism becomes the very epistemology of the 'practice or perish' approach, as it accepts the idea of the production of knowledge through various methods, forms, and approaches to the process of inquiry which go beyond the limits of text-oriented, propositional research. The idea of Knowledge Pluralism contradicts the positivist view of the nature of knowledge being quantifiable, generalizable, and propositional; and the idea of Knowledge Pluralism assumes that knowledge is acquired through various kinds of inquiry, such as visual, experiential, tacit, embodied, and aesthetic. In the case of artistic practices, the notion of knowledge acquisition presupposes its creation through the interaction with materials, spatial relations, perceptual sensibility and the making process itself. As Bolt (2007) explains through his idea of material thinking, artists create knowledge in interaction with materials. In a similar vein, Sullivan (2010) posits that artistic practice is an instance of visual thinking that offers insight that cannot be gained by any other way. Therefore, knowledge pluralism necessitates that academic institutions broaden their definition of contributions to scholarship and understand that exhibitions, installations, performances, and engagement projects are different ways of creating knowledge that add to our understanding of the world in a way that complements, rather than conflicts with, other forms of knowledge output. In doing so, it is recognized that the multiplicity of human knowledge necessitates multiplicity of methodology for creating and communicating that knowledge.

Epistemic Justice is a term that takes the concept of knowledge pluralism and applies it to the field of ethics, requiring academic institutions to acknowledge the diversity in knowledge production and to resist the idea of prioritizing any particular method of inquiry over another. The theory of epistemic injustice is grounded in the philosophical works of writers such as Miranda Fricker (2007), who describes epistemic injustice as the process of silencing certain knowers and ways of knowing through which valuable perspectives on a subject matter are excluded from the collective knowledge. In an academic setting, epistemic justice calls for an analysis of power relations inherent in the evaluation system, which should reveal the ways in which historical bias, discipline dominance, and institutional politics contributed to the marginalization of some types of scholarship over others. For art lecturers, epistemic injustice takes the form of a need to express their knowledge in a textual form to be acknowledged by an institution, a process that drains their time from creation and distorts the essence of art. The 'practice or perish' model seeks to redress this wrong by proposing evaluation models which will evaluate artistic practice on its own terms by recognizing the intellectual, critical and knowledge-generating aspects of artistic practice. This means that institutions need to come up with criteria for assessing the work of artists based on the unique nature of their practice, its originality, its material process-based nature, its contributions to visual and experiential knowledge and to society and audiences without forcing alien values upon it. Epistemic justice is not just about procedures; it involves an ethical commitment to the recognition of diverse knowers and ways of knowing as legitimate scholarly contributors. Institutional Inclusion puts knowledge pluralism and epistemic justice into practice in institutional terms.

In this regard, it should be noted that it is impossible to make any meaningful changes without revising the formal evaluation framework in order to allow room for practice-based research in the context of academic institutions. The institutional incorporation involves several different aspects of the academic work as well: first of all, criteria of tenure and promotion should be changed in such a way that will make art output an acknowledged form of scholarly work; secondly, professional development of faculty members should

involve helping art lecturers incorporate their practices into the research; thirdly, resource allocation should ensure adequate access to studio facilities, materials and exhibition opportunities; and finally, decision-making processes regarding evaluation policies should involve art faculty members. As pointed out by Shreeve (2011), the main point is to incorporate not just the recognition of the importance of practice-based research, but also its integration into academic institutions in general. The implementation of institutional inclusion further necessitates the establishment of alternative models of assessment that would be able to assess practice critically and fairly, considering the inherently subjective nature of artistic creation and at the same time ensuring the quality criteria of originality, impact, and contribution to the field from the perspective of scholarship. The methods might include peer review models adjusted to the context of art, including, but not limited to, exhibitions' reviews, portfolios, and presentations, as well as publications, of course. Also, an important feature of institutional inclusion in the context of alternative assessment is its transparency, consistency, and ongoing improvement through a conversation between artists, teachers, and administrators. Finally, institutional inclusion implies that practice-based scholars should not be asked to adapt to external evaluation models, but that academic institutions have to change themselves according to the principles of diversity.

Finally, the last pillar of the 'practice or perish' model is Professional Integrity which stresses the necessity of providing art lecturers with opportunities to continue engaging in their creative practice as an integral part of their scholarly work instead of a secondary aspect of the traditional research-oriented career. The idea is that the creative practice is not just a hobby or a professional development activity of the art lecturers. For them, artistic practice is an inherent part of their scholarly identity, pedagogical effectiveness, and professional contribution. Thus, according to the principle of professional integrity, it should be ensured that the art lecturers have enough time and other resources to maintain their creative practice. In particular, it includes appropriate time distribution, workload management that takes into account time-consuming nature of the creative process, and professional development to keep up with new artistic trends and technologies. Besides, this principle also aims at addressing psychological and professional implications of the 'publish or perish' approach to the careers of art lecturers. According to Elkins (2009), those in academia who are artists often find themselves alienated due to the need to create work which does not reflect their most important contribution and has evaluation purposes only. This is where the 'practice or perish' approach comes in; according to this perspective, it is not only accepted but expected that artistic practice goes hand in hand with academic affiliation, and that there is a moral responsibility to help faculty maintain their creative practice as an important part of their professional life. The responsibility to nurture art lectures' creativity is not just about them as individuals but it is also necessary for the well-being of art education since students get benefits from being taught by lecturers who are still connected to modern artistic practice and bring new ideas and techniques to the classroom. Professional integrity, in turn, can be seen as a holistic approach to the development of art lecturers as scholars and teachers.

Addressing Barriers to Implementation

Implementing the ‘practice or perish’ approach is also not without its challenges. First of all, there is no standard set of criteria for evaluating artistic practice. Contrary to traditional scholarly research, which has such criteria as citation frequency and impact factor, artistic practices are quite subjective and depend on many contextual factors. In order to compensate for this, institutions need to introduce some other system for assessing the artistic practices of their members.

Secondly, there is quite a conservative attitude of many academic institutions towards the change. Institutions have been following the traditional ‘publish or perish’ approach for many years, and they are likely to be resistant to changing the assessment practices of their members. To deal with this problem, it is essential for art lecturers to defend their position and make certain changes in the policies of institutions.

Thirdly, there is an issue related to the formulation of assessment criteria that can be considered as rigorous. It should be noted that according to the ideas of Barrett and Bolt (2010), the process of assessing practice-based research needs to consider its particular characteristics that include uniqueness, impact and contribution of this type of research. Thus, this process requires the cooperation of all the interested parties.

Benefits and Opportunities

Nevertheless, there are many benefits associated with this move towards a 'practice or perish' model of art education. The recognition of creative activity as an academic contribution provides a number of opportunities for art educators to create an environment where different aspects of working with art will be valued. It is possible to assume that this approach can contribute to further innovation and cooperation. Another benefit of the 'practice or perish' model is the possibility to connect academic work with the practical one. By providing due value to creative activity, it is possible to ensure the connection of scholars with the real art world. It is important to maintain this link in order to keep art education relevant (Elkins, 2009).

Toward a More Inclusive Academic Culture

In tackling the issue of the devaluation of creativity in the academy, there is need for the redefinition of what constitutes scholarship and scholarly work from the current one-dimensional approach based on privileging of text-based scholarship to include all the other various means through which knowledge creation and communication can be achieved through art. The alternative way of defining and evaluating the impact of the contribution made by artists involves the development of other metrics for the measurement of the value of the artistic contribution, including peer-reviewed exhibitions, commissioning of creative art works and public engagement as examples of scholarly output. In doing so, institutions will provide an environment of inclusion of other means of scholarship where an artistic work, for instance, a sculpture or a monument that raises questions of sustainability or even an exhibit that questions a historical narrative, is of scholarly importance in the same manner as a peer-reviewed article. To achieve this, there is need for the development of frameworks for the evaluation of artistic practices in their multi-dimensionality. The possible criteria for assessment of artistic practice could include the element of originality and innovation in terms of the work's ability to add new knowledge, methods, or viewpoints to the field; technical and aesthetic quality – skillfulness and complexity of the work's realization; scholarly contribution of the work in terms of the work's relationship to the theoretical frameworks, criticism, and other scholarship; impact of the work on the public sphere and its ability to engage the community; and finally the professional reception of the work among art professionals in terms of exhibitions, commissions, and peer evaluation. Such criteria establish a system of assessment of artistic practice that respects its unique characteristics, while at the same time keeping up with the standards of scholarly work.

Fostering Interdisciplinary Collaboration

Promoting cooperation between the different branches of knowledge may be another way to close the gap between art and research. Collaborative efforts involving artists, researchers and academics from other disciplines may bring into attention the distinctive value of art within the scope of broader academic discussion. Bolt (2007) believes that artistic practice is able to challenge the existing paradigms and to provide new ways to explore them. There exist numerous possibilities of implementing the above mentioned potential such as research centers, common curricula, as well as collaborative projects dealing with complex environmental and social issues. With the help of realizing this potential, academics may step out of the conventional perception of scholarly pursuits and become innovative and experimental.

It is crucial to make institutional culture changes through consistent effort on different levels. On the policy level, institutions must change tenure and promotion requirements by acknowledging artistic practice as a valid form of scholarly work. To do this, it will be necessary to consult both faculty members and external specialists who will help create appropriate standards. On the program level, the institution can provide various initiatives in the field of faculty development that will facilitate the process of recognizing artistic practice as research. On the individual level, it will be important to empower the art lecturer to be able to defend his/her practice. According to Shreeve (2011), the problem consists not only in the recognition of the importance of practice-based research but also in its integration into the whole institutional academic system.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the analysis conducted in this paper, the following recommendations can be given to the institutions regarding how to recognize and support artistic practice as academic contribution. On the policy level, institutions should conduct basic revision of their evaluation criteria starting from recognizing artistic practice including exhibits, performances, installation and community-based projects as a valid form of scholarly contribution that should be accounted in the guidelines for promotion and tenure. The recognition of artistic practices should be followed by developing clear assessment criteria, which should be developed in cooperation with faculty members and external experts, to measure originality, impact and contribution to the field. In addition to that, institutions should give practical tools to art lecturers in their practice by providing them with studio space, materials, technical support and research funding that would take into consideration material demands of artistic practice.

In addition to changes in policies, there should be programmatic approaches that will facilitate an environment of recognition and appreciation for practice-based research in universities. The faculty development program should be initiated to assist art lecturers in documenting and articulating the practice as research in order to enable them to survive within the existing system and change it at the same time. Art lecturers should be provided with ample opportunities for interdisciplinary cooperation between artists and scholars from other academic disciplines to allow the exchange of knowledge and recognition of diverse methods and approaches used by artists in order to show the uniqueness of artistic research. Art lecturers should also be encouraged to reach out to their communities and make presentations of their research results to the public in order to promote public scholarship.

On the individual level, the art lecturers have an important role to play in promoting the recognition of artistic practice through proactive professional behavior. Documentation of their work, which includes a clear statement of the intent of artistic practice, research processes involved, and critique of the outcomes forms the basis of arguing for the practice as research in the evaluation process. The art lecturer is supposed to promote recognition of his/her work through participating in governance of institutions, professional organizations, and the public sphere, and use his/her knowledge to influence policy making and combat marginalization of practice-based research. Lastly, establishment of a network of peers that can critically comment on, collaborate with, and support one another in practice-based research creates strength in numbers among the art lecturers. Through the combination of institution policy reform, programmatic support, and individual professional initiative, the transition into the ‘practice or perish’ mode of existence becomes realistic and attainable.

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that the paradigm of 'publish or perish' with its excessive reliance on text-based academic products is inherently alien to the realm of artistic practice. As far as art lecturers who produce research outputs that are visual and practical by their very essence are concerned, compliance with the requirements of traditional academic publishing may suppress their creativity and identity as professionals. The lack of value of the creative side of academic work is based on epistemological biases, hierarchies of disciplines, and difficulties in assessing experiential and aesthetic kinds of knowledge rather than propositional one. Changing the paradigm of academic work from 'publish or perish' to 'practice or perish', institutions will be able to establish an equitable and innovative system of evaluating the contribution of art lecturers. The shift of paradigm discussed above is likely to make the world of academic research more diverse and alive. The contribution of artistic practice to teaching and learning in particular justifies the need for this change because it enhances the experience of students and makes them more prepared for the realities of the art industry.

Even though applying the ‘practice or perish’ model faces challenges such as creation of alternative criteria for assessment, resistance to changes in the institution, and the need for a cultural transformation, there are many benefits of applying such model to art education and academics in general. It is crucial to adapt to the changing academic environment by reevaluating existing models of success and adopting innovative

approaches to evaluation of contribution of art lecturers. At the end of the day, the recognition of and validation of the artistic practice in academia are crucial both for the development of art lecturers' career and for the overall improvement of the academic environment. In doing so, institutions can ensure innovation and creativity as well as a better approach to understanding of what contribution means. The 'practice or perish' model is a promising alternative to the existing paradigm, as it takes into account the diverse forms of engagement of art lecturers in their fields of expertise.

REFERENCES

1. Barrett, E., & Bolt, B. (Eds.). (2010). Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry. I.B. Tauris.
2. Bolt, B. (2007). "Material Thinking and the Agency of Matter," Studies in Material Thinking, 1(1), 1-4.
3. Borgdorff, H. (2012). The Conflict of the Faculties: Perspectives on Artistic Research and Academia. Leiden University Press.
4. Bourdieu, P. (1993). The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature. Columbia University Press.
5. Elkins, J. (2009). Artists with PhDs: On the New Doctoral Degree in Studio Art. New Academia Publishing.
6. Fricker, M. (2007). Epistemic injustice: Power and the ethics of knowing. Oxford University Press.
7. McNiff, S. (1998). Art-Based Research. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
8. Rond, M., & Miller, A. (2005). "Publish or Perish: Bane or Boon of Academic Life?" Journal of Management Inquiry, 14(4), 321-329.
9. Shreeve, A. (2011). "The Art and Design Academic Identity," Art, Design & Communication in Higher Education, 10(1), 55-70.
10. Sullivan, G. (2010). Art Practice as Research: Inquiry in the Visual Arts. SAGE Publications