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TITLE: Re-visioning Screen Production Education through the Lens of Creative Practice: An Australian Film School example

ABSTRACT

The Australian Film Television and Radio School is a well-established training institution with a successful track record in producing successful alumni. In 2016, an industry survey of the Australian media landscape heralded the need for more resilient creative entrepreneurs who are able to negotiate the rapid technological and industrial changes in the sector. As a result, creative practice as research was recommended as fundamental component of the curriculum (AFTRS). In 2017, the school introduced a new Master of Arts Screen (MAS) program, which included a core Creative Practice curriculum across all four semesters of the degree. While creative practice is making a significant contribution to the production of innovation in the academy globally, debate still lingers on its inclusion in national film schools which have traditionally focused on the training of technical and craft skills of the artist. The National Film School of Denmark (NFDS), with its strong links to the industry, successfully adopted a collaborative curriculum with the Danish Broadcasting Corporation (DR) which allowed student writer and directors to understand their own creative practice in relation to the domain and field in which they were apprentices. This paper takes this opportunity to trace the pedagogical move towards a practice-based rather than artefact-based teaching at AFTRS, during the first iteration of the new curriculum. The case study describes the introduction of concrete conceptual models of "creative practice as research" and a methodology that can be applied to the student's creative work. This study evaluates the challenges of defining, clarifying, exploring and integrating creative practice theories, methodologies and professional understandings of what it means to be a creative filmmaker.

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PAPER

For decades, filmmaking education has struggled to reconcile the practical with the intellectual as the hands-on production training frequently taught in film schools took predominance over cinema and film studies. The separation of the practical and the intellectual has been a global issue and shifts in pedagogy that embrace creative practice has helped reduce the gap between cinema theory and filmmaking practice. Since 1963, the international body the International Association of Film and Television Schools (CILECT) has provided an 'environment for vibrant international collaboration conspicuously lacking among academic researchers working in film' (Petrie and Stoneman 2014: 40). Since 2000, shifts in educational approaches are emerging globally. In England, the UK Film Council and Skillset is a network for screen and media academics that aims to reconcile the historical debates between creative practice and research (Hjort 2013; Petrie and Stoneman 2014, Petrie 2010; 2011). In Denmark, a shortage of scriptwriters for television drama series was addressed by a collaboration between the Danish Broadcasting Corporation (DR) and the National Film School of Denmark (NFSD) (Redvall 2013, 81-101). In 'small film and television industries like the Danish, there are few places to train for the job as writer or producer' (Redvall 2013, 82), and the collaboration between the academy and the industry is crucial:

This has provided the opportunity to teach students a certain approach to television drama – based on a public service mandate and concepts like one vision and double storytelling from the production dogmas – as well as the opportunity to scout for new writers within a film school network.

(Redvall 2013, 82)

In Denmark, this NFDS-DR collaboration is celebrated for creating the screenwriters behind critically acclaimed drama series such as *The Killing* (2011) and *The Bridge* (2017). Petrie (2010) states the increasing market-oriented imperative of the global film industry has also strengthened demands for certain kinds of education and training' (43), that have led to global changes regarding the education of filmmakers in film schools and in universities.

Similarly, the purpose of the Australian Film Television and Radio School (AFTRS), established in 1973, was to train filmmakers for the industry and it was based on the European film school educational model (Petrie and Stoneman 2014: 40). The institution lead to the 'reinvigoration of Australian cinema in the 1970's and 1980's via graduates like Philip Noyce, Gillian Armstrong, Chris Noonan, Rolf De Heer, Jane Campion, P.J. Hogan, Jocelyn Moorhouse, Pauline Chan, Dione Beebe and Andrew Lesnie' (Petrie and Stoneman 2014,41). Historically, AFTRS is seen 'as producing films with great production values but less well-developed ideas' (Goldsmith and O'Regan 2013, 155). Frequently it is compared to the Victorian Colleges of the Arts (VCA) which is seen to 'consistently produced more films and filmmakers with great vision' (Goldsmith and O'Regan 2013,155) because of its adoption of the European auteur model. Goldsmith and O'Regan point out these claims are 'unfair to both, given the number and variety of films produced at each institution over the last 40 years' (2013,155).

Australian Film Television and Radio School

Since 2007, AFTRS has grappled with a series of changes to its curriculum offerings in order to keep abreast of industrial and technological changes in film and television. The school has introduced and retired a series of programs including part-time Diplomas, Advanced Diplomas and Graduate Certificates, a Foundation program, three-year Bachelor of Arts and eighteen-month Master of Arts. In 2017, the AFTRS Master of Arts Screen (MAS) was re-launched as a two year degree program and the three-year Bachelor of Arts Screen was implemented, both with a pedagogical move towards a practice-based rather than artefact-based teaching. In 2018, AFTRS announced that it was suspending all other short award programs to focus on these new award degrees. This is in line with the AFTRS Corporate Plan (2017) states the need for content creators to 'think about their audiences and the life of their programs on a global scale. This requires new skills in terms of screen businesses, technologies of production and storytelling' (3).

As a statutory body operating under the Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997, its purpose is to provide 'advanced education and training to develop the skills and knowledge of talented individuals' (AFTRS online). It has excelled as a training institution teaching craft-based practices for specific key creative roles - directors, producers, screenwriters, cinematographers, art directors, editors, sound design, etc. The staff are highly experienced industry practitioners and screen scholars, who have built a reputation for teaching professional filmmaking practices. The shift to include creative practice as research in the MAS program was led by an academic team of course leaders and teaching staff who have worked specifically with creative practice research within the academic

institution. This paper will look at the implementation of this creative practice approach and experiences of MAS Screenwriting students at AFTRS in understanding the concept of art-based research. A research sample of 5 MA Screenwriting students, around 20 percent of the total MA cohort was applied to this study, large enough to obtain feedback for qualitative assessment (Patton 1990). The small sample group allows for a concentrated investigation into adoption and a deeper understanding of creative practice as research (Ritchie *et al.* 2003).

MAS Screenwriting: Screen Idea System

In the MAS Screenwriting, screen production research is where spectating and filmmaking merge (Kerrigan 2016, 2017), allowing film and cinema studies to inform aspects of creative filmmaking practice. During the two-year program, students undertake a course work program which culminates in a portfolio of creative works (feature screenplay, television pilots, bibles, short film scripts, etc.) and an exegesis which articulates an area of creative enquiry within the domain and field in which they are training. Understanding how one's reputation is developed through creative artefacts is becoming an important insight for creative practice researchers. Moving these theoretical understandings and applying them in research situations through filmmaking or screenwriting as a practice is complex as commonsense understandings of creativity frequently disrupt and distract the researcher (Batty and Kerrigan 2017). Students are provided with concrete examples of the relevance of creative practice as research in order to understand this new concept. For example, Alfred Hitchcock and Steven Spielberg are two immensely creative

filmmakers who have been deemed by their peers, the Academy, to be creative and thus awarded prizes for their work based on this display of creativity in their films (Kerrigan 2017). Creativity scholars argue that practice as research can be understood as a product, a process or an idea (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999; McIntyre 2011). However, the move to embrace creative filmmaking practice can only be appreciated when creativity is seen as a phenomenon whereby creativity is the production of novelty and an appreciation of the novel variation in more than one social setting (Kerrigan and McIntyre, forthcoming).

The processes of screenwriting through the creation of the screen idea has been well received in the screen production discipline. Macdonald (2013) explains the screen idea is a focus on the practice of screenwriting and as a term it 'describes what is striven for, even when the goal cannot be seen or shared exactly ... each draft script becomes one more fixed version of the screen idea. The final film – the screen work – is another such version' (5). Redvall (2013) extended the concept to the 'Screen Idea Systems framework' (Redvall 2013, 146-149), which is based on the Systems Model of Creativity (Csikszentmihalyi 1999). Here, the person involved in creativity must have access to the conventions, rules and ideas of the domain as it is their task to produce some variation in this inherited information (McIntyre 2011). Such models are useful to creative practice students as they provide a symbolic visualization of practice as a process with 'constant and dynamic interplay between different forces on several levels' (Redvall 2013, 146). The screenplay can exist as an artefact in its own right, and the role of the screenwriter must be framed and articulated as quite different from that of a director, producer or writer (Batty and

Baker 2017, 74). Undertaking research from the screenwriting perspective builds new knowledge about screenwriting as a practice, advancing understandings of screen cultures, audiences, productions, genres and practice.

It is important to recognize that the student is still internalizing codes, acquiring a cultural knowledge, developing a 'feel for the game' (Bourdieu 1993, 5; McIntyre 2011). In screenwriting theory, students are presented with a range of theories which make sense of the logic to narratives. Screenplay patterns and models of storytelling are identified and categories are applied according to medium, format and genre. In screen studies, students study formulas that exist within cultural forms (such as genre conventions, film language, cinematic grammar and formalist analysis). Screen knowledge, as cultural and symbolic capital, is acknowledged as a system of interrelated parts and tested through collaborative works and innovative technology. In summary, creativity and cultural production is defined as meaningful when it operates within the context of the rules and the constraints provide a space for the possibility of action (Bourdieu 1993). As such, graduate students are not yet experts in their domain but enter a system of learning, which emulates industry practices.

The National Film School of Denmark (NFDS) Model

In order to understand the impact a creative practice as research curricula may have on the creative industries, it is useful to look at implementation of teaching graduate screenwriting in a film school which was previously using an auteur-based training. In 1975, NFDS moved away from the concept of the writer-director *auteur*, introducing the first formal screenwriting courses later that decade. In the 1990s,

NFDS was integral to the development of New Danish Cinema (Hjort *et al.* 2010) with its implementation of working with creativity under constraint – often seen as the basis for Dogma 95 and filmmakers such as Lars von Trier. By 1984, NFDS screenwriters were in strong demand and soon filled key positions in the television industry. NFDS continued its focus on screenwriting introducing a full-time program which eventually produced the screenwriters responsible for the popularity of Danish Noir globally.

Redvall (2013) attributes the current success of the Danish television industry to the relationship it shares with NFDS. Much attention has been drawn to the television program, which forms one semester of the two-year screenwriting program. In this highly collaborative process, screenwriting students undertake thorough preparation for the term during the summer break; “homework” consisting of a number of television series to view, copies of television scripts for national and international series and craft-related readings and manuals on layout, formatting and dummy concept documents (Redvall 2013, 92). During this preparation, writers are researching the “domain” to understand the tastes, trends and traditions of global television drama. This allows students to become familiar and with most stories and quite fluent in basic storytelling terms and traditions:

Former students have described how the TV term was a revelation in creating a new awareness around television (e.g. Rank 2012), but quality television series now seem firmly established in the minds of students and the teaching is more about exploring their desires and emphasizing how one can do a range of things if one is completely aware of what one is doing – and able to explain the choices made to broadcasters when they ask.

(Redvall 2012, 94)

Following this “homework,” groups of writers, directors and designers, students are given a set assignment asking for presentation or pitch within a strict genre and format. Despite this request of creativity within constraints, Redvall (2013) reports that ‘all projects seemed built on the individual interests of the writers’ and ‘having certain parameters for the process can be regarded as helpful when having to move through...idea generating stages in a short time span’ (93). Each group is allocated a space or room, ‘where ideas can gradually be externalized and evolve’ (93). The program includes a one-week observation with the Danish Broadcasting Corporation (DR), including consultation with key creative personnel. This immersive and reflective process allows student groups to progress to what NFDS refers to as ‘one vision,’ or how to create collaborative projects with a unified approach. The TV term is focused on developing a potential project for DR with ‘continuous input and feedback from industry players, the process is fundamentally approached as a learning process’ or ‘learning by doing’ (Redvall 2013, 98-99).

Redvall (2013) suggests this cross-over between film school and the television industry supports the concept Screen Idea System framework, which builds on an understanding of the writing and production of television as a ‘complex interplay between individuals, a domain, and a field’ (Redvall 2013, 20). The Screen Idea System is ‘an attempt to bridge ideas from media industry and screenwriting studies with a more process-oriented conceptions of creative work from the field of creativity studies, emphasizing how things happen in a constant and dynamic interplay between different forces on several levels’ (Redvall 2013, 29):

...where writers with an individual talent, training and track record propose ideas for potential TV series. These ideas build on the trends, tastes and traditions in the domain and have to find acceptance by the experts in the field, where projects are assessed based on the mandate, management and money of the institution involved.

(Redvall 2013, 31).

Drawing these dynamic components together, it is possible to see how Redvall has combined the concept of the screen idea (Macdonald 2013) with the systems model to propose the screen idea system (figure 1), where each component of the model has its own traits that define the characteristic of the components:

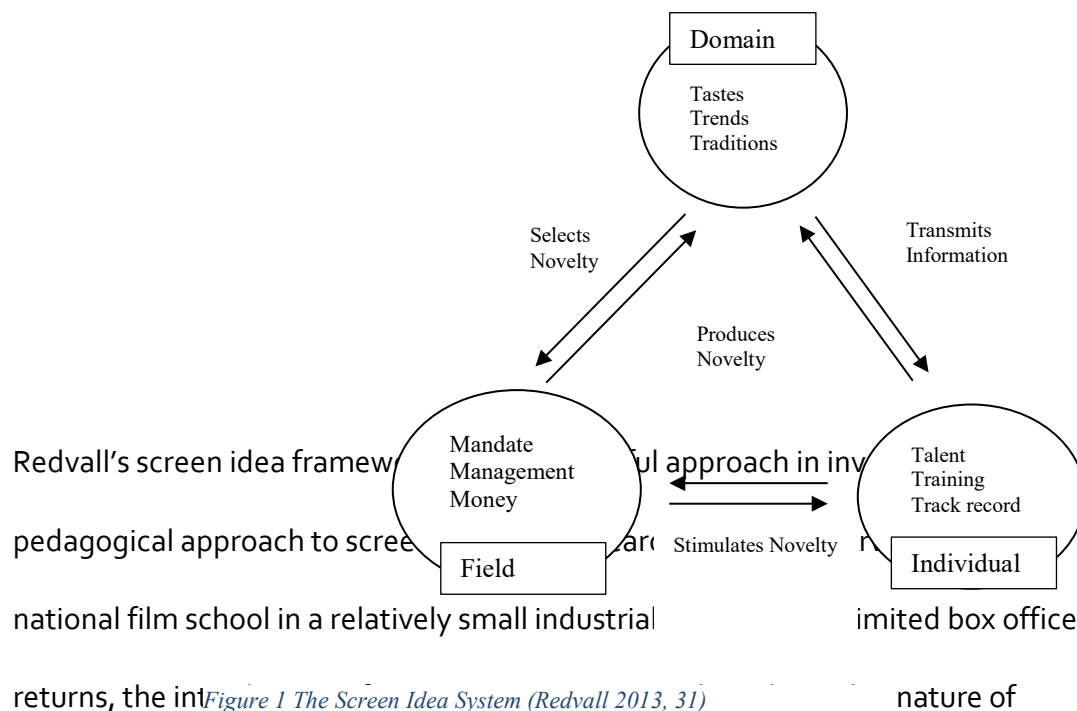


Figure 1 The Screen Idea System (Redvall 2013, 31)

expertise' and 'career and vocational objectives' (Fenton-O'Creevy 2005, 2-3). It is a form of 'agile learning' (Hanney 2013, 57) that allows practitioners to reflect upon their craft beyond the university classroom, potentially serving as a life-long practice in their professional lives.

Implementing a Process of Creative Inquiry

In the MA Screen at AFTRS, the definition of “creative practice” and its role within “research”, draws on the work of McNiff (2008), encouraging the student as researcher to use their creative work as a ‘process of inquiry’ (29) that can test existing practices in their chosen domain. McNiff defines the artist-researcher as having a unique quality:

... a willingness to start the work with questions and a willingness to design methods in response to the particular situation, as contrasted to the more general contemporary tendency within the human sciences to fit the question into a fixed research method. The art of the art-based researcher extends to the creation of a process of inquiry.

(McNiff 2008, 33-34)

In this milieu, ‘arts-informed research is a way of redefining research form and representation and creating new understandings of process, spirit, purpose, subjectivities, emotion, responsiveness, and the ethical dimensions of inquiry’ (Cole and Knowles 2008, 59). In the first iteration of Creative Practice at AFTRS in 2017, students were asked to ‘engage deeply with their creative practice...investigate the values, questions and impulses that drive their practice through the development of a substantial creative work [feature screenplay, television script, etc.] and a supporting research project [exegesis] (AFTRS, 2017).

Creative Practice A (2017) focused on ‘testing and developing work’; ‘communicating and critically reflecting on key ideas, values and impulses that inform their practice’; and ‘identifying an area of creative practice’ that can lead to a ‘practice-based research question.’ The student is encouraged to ‘critically appraise their practice’ in the field of screen arts, articulating and evaluating the creative

intentions for the project. The lesson plans for this subject focused on topic areas that explore creativity and creative practice; discovering authenticity in practice; resonances and influence; research questions, key words and fields of practice creative methodologies. These topics were supported by seminar/lectures, workshops, case studies, and practitioner presentations. The subject was earmarked by a series of workshops on creativity, personal vision, understanding the student as a practitioner, defining the notions and values, questions that drive their practice. The learning is supported by the completion of the Reflective Journal, Participation and a Critical Reflection of Portfolio.

In Semester 2, Creative Practice B focused on the 'exploration and articulation' of an area of creative enquiry that informed their creative practice and 'evaluates the creative intentions' of the project. The students were asked to keep working on their reflective journal, build an annotated bibliography, and write critical reflections on their work developed. The lessons continued to explore creative play, but also referenced practitioner-based case studies. Creative Practice B introduced peer project incubators, which allowed the student to focus on their creative project and associated creative research question in a smaller peer-review group setting. The Innovation Lab challenged students to design and model hypothetical practice-based research questions tested through virtual reality. Each student compiled an annotated bibliography that covered relevant academic articles, screen works and the creative practices of artists in their field. By the close of the semester 2, students were 'critically reflecting on key ideas, values and impulses that inform their

practice' and 'identifying an area of creative practice,' and a 'practice based research question' (AFTRS, 2017).

In line with the National Film School of Denmark's TV Term, whereby the student operates within the educational and industrial complex, AFTRS graduate students in the MAS Screenwriting are "practitioners in training" or "apprentices" for their nominated field of specialization in the industry. These students have entered the AFTRS Master's program through a competitive merit-based selection which includes interrogation of their portfolio and creative experience by industry practitioners and teaching staff. This selection process represents the "field" in Redvall's Screen Idea System (2012), which is the government mandate of AFTRS to produce the next generation of Australian storytellers, within AFTRS organizational management and financial structures. The student's chosen genre and format, such as the television one-hour drama is the "domain" based on the tastes, trends and traditions of the industry. In the course of the two-year program, MAS student's formative exercises and formal assessments will test their ability to test the novelty they hope to bring to the field. Initially, this field would be the AFTRS teaching staff and industry assessors who represent the screen industry.

Redvall's Screen Idea System (2013) provides a utilitarian framework which explains how each student is focused on improving their creative practice by immersing themselves in the course assessments and processing staff advice and feedback.

The film school is a simulative environment; it replicates the industry where knowledge imparted in the classroom is made up of Australian screen industry domain traditions, trends, tastes and industry or field expertise with regard to the

management and costing of film production. By undertaking and completing assessments as film scripts, web-series and speculative television pilots, the students hope to improve their understanding of how to produce novel screen works by being exposed to the rules of the domain and opinions of the field.

Challenges to Creative Practice as Research

MAS Screenwriting students were initially challenged in understanding the relevance of creative practice as research to their screenwriting work and on-going practice. Students were slow to respond to formulating a research question which would inform their creative works, as well as the collaborative projects they were undertaking with other students with diverse research interests. By the end of the second semester, screenwriting students were able to articulate a research area, but were still defining the creative processes which informed their work. There was still confusion between traditional research supported by primary and secondary sources and creative practice as research which required a systematic understanding of the artist's individual role in the domain and field in which they were working:

Student A is writing two feature film scripts. Both screenplays feature strong female characters who are essentially *unlikeable*. The student is exploring how to create unique *female stories* that resonate *globally*. The creative practice research will track the development of the character and the storytelling.

Student B is writing an *historical* television drama series looking at the Molly House subculture in eighteenth century in London, seeking to explore how you make historical drama with a contemporary style.

Student C is developing two television series featuring *Asian-Australian* characters. She is seeking to find practical solutions to *nuanced and authentic* cultural representation in *Australian* television

Student D is writing a *film and a television series*, telling stories from *diverse* perspectives. He is exploring ways of working with *indigenous* and *physically-challenged* artists to create their own digital stories.

Student E is writing a *female character* operating in a *dystopian* world - a "Jessica Jones" heroine who is interned by a corporate conglomerate which has monopolized the food market. The research explores how the tools of *characterization and world-building* apply to building a dystopian heroine.

The italics (above) are added by the authors of this paper to show how the student's area of inquiry can be mapped against the Screen Idea System. Redvall's Screen Idea Systems Framework (2013) can be applied to these broad research questions posited by the MAS Screenwriting students and potentially provides a pedagogical approach which may better support the MAS Screenwriting students' adoption of creative practice research as a methodology.

Screen Idea Systems Framework and AFTRS MAS Screenwriting

Redvall's model of the system framework provides a 3-step framework that allows the student to define (i) the domain of the research and its conventions, (ii) the field (which is limited to the classroom peers and AFTRS staff), and the (iii) the innovation they are seeking to explore. In applying this screen idea methodology, each of the broad statements made in Semester 2 may be further refined for the creative work and exegesis:

Student A has identified two domains they wanted to know more about; Horror Feature Film in Australia and screenwriting female anti-heroes. The identification of these domains is magnified as the student focuses on seeking further training in understanding screenwriting theories like breaking the 4th wall (Mulvey/House of Cards). As the script is being written with these factors in mind the staff at AFTRS are in the position to provide feedback to the student during the ongoing

creation of the script which they assess as satisfying the rules of the domain that will meet with their own and other field member's expectations.

Student B has identified two domains firstly historical TV Drama that from the UK and Australia, and further narrowing down the domain to specifically the use of language in period drama. The student has identified their need to be trained in the application of contemporary dialogue as described by Dancyger & Rush (2013) and Lavery's (2006) interviews with *Deadwood* producer David Milch.

Student C has identified Australian serial comedy television as being the domain of interest with a specific focus on the representation of authentic Asian characters. This domain knowledge means training in how to layer characters using cyclical patterning (Mitell 2015), for example in "The Family Law", has been identified.

Student D has identified the domain of low budget independent filmmaking with a specific focus on inclusive representation. The training they are seeking is in how to go about co-creating stories with minority communities, which is being explored in consultation with Martu indigenous community, social policy advocacy groups and cultural theorists (Banks and Deuze 2009)

Student E is seeking to work in the domain of Australian Sci-Fi television drama with a specific focus on the dystopian storyworld. The further training they are seeking is around how to create new rules for the world drawing on theoretical approaches by screenwriter Micahel Hauge (2011) and the creators of Marvel screen adaptations such as Jessica Jones.

In order to generate the above statements, a set of questions or foci were used.

Firstly, the domain needs to be appropriately catalogued - what is the genre or sub-genre and what are its conventions? Secondly, the field is carefully defined through identifying broad industrial frameworks that are narrowed down to a single market: Australian feature film, for example, can be further identified as "Independent", "micro-budget" or "speculative TV pilots". Thirdly, the individual or graduate student must test a specific modification to a domain and its field by identifying an area of innovation that they are seeking by writing the screenplay. In summary, each

student fine-tunes their creative practice research enquiry which is motivated through their idiosyncratic preferences.

Revising the Creative Practice as Screenwriting Curricula at AFTRS

In the new academic year 2018, significant changes were made to the modes of teaching and topics for Creative Practice A and B, which allowed a better introduction to creative practice processes within the graduate screenwriting program. Following academic board approval, the subject was renamed Research and Development A and B, with a reduced number of contact hours credit points. This balance of credit points was distributed to Screenwriting Practice to allow screenwriting teaching staff and students a more hands-on application of the relationship of creative practice research methodology to the creative work. The re-badged creative practice subjects, Research and Development A and B were streamlined to clarify the students' understanding of creative practice research in the development of their major creative project.

Firstly, the students are introduced to creative enquiry, practice-based research and research topics *earlier* in the first semester. Students were encouraged to immediately define key words for their area of interest and field of practice.

Students commenced exploring comparative texts sooner, compiling an annotated bibliography in their field of research in the first semester rather than the second semester. Project Incubators were initiated by Week 4 of semester and held more regularly to allow students to share and debate their ideas with MAS staff mentors and peers. The students continued to work on their exegesis with a rolling deadline

of key deliverables every fortnight. Students were encouraged to source relevant theories to support their investigation including general readings from Csikzentmihalyi (1996), Knowles and Coles (2008), and McNiff (2008). Students were exposed to multiple collaborative projects and a design ideation process for immersive technologies in order to understand the testing and exploring phase of research. These workshops were directed to interrogate the collaborative process from within the student's respective roles.

Secondly, the Student's Learning Plan was modified to an Individual Project and Research Plan which students were able to update as the research question and creative works were continually developing over the duration of the degree program. The plan allows students to summarise their topic of investigation, keywords and key deadlines. The associated development tasks in the Plan are focused on the student's creative project and practice- thinking. The Individual Project and Research Plan is discussed in initial classes and deliverables are due on an ongoing basis. It is a pragmatic attempt at "concretizing" the students' notion of practice research, aimed at ultimately nurturing their creativity within an industry framework. There is the use of more accessible language asking students to 'identify a research topic,' rather than 'identify an area a creative enquiry' (Research and Development A and B 2018).

Thirdly, now that the research is clearly linked to the student's creative project, it is tested in small group supervision (incubators) in Research and Development A and B as well as table readings and script edit sessions in MAS Screenwriting Practice. In these incubators, where both the creative project and the exegesis is shared with

peers, the connection between the creative project and theory is constantly emphasised, creative practice methodology is reinforced, and peer sharing contributes to the fields of practice. A stronger argument is made for students to 'justify creative strategies for a project' by providing clear outcomes about the innovations are testing in their work (AFTRS, 2018).

The key factor in realigning creative practice as research in MAS Screenwriting is the reconceptualization of 'research' to remediate the challenges students faced in understanding the methodology of creative practice as research. Here, creative practice is promoted as a sustainable career skill that students can draw on in both their studies and future professions. The teaching now provides the student with a better understanding of creativity as a practice that is internalized (Kerrigan and McIntyre, 2018) and replicable in future projects. There has been an attempt to formalize the interrelationship between a project and research topic that draw on a particular area of passion or interest for the student. The revamped subject utilizes more practitioner case studies which emulate the students' key research topics. This positions creative practice as research and it is promoted as an organic part of the creative process integral to development of the screen practitioner. For example, a guest lecture from PhD candidate and documentary filmmaker, Margaret McHugh, demonstrated her creative practice research which is testing the difference between objective fact and subjective reality in Hybrid Documentary. In the field screenwriting, Benjamin Law's exegesis of his doctoral creative work, *The New Lows* (a precursor for his now successful SBS series *The Family Law*) is analyzed in class, highlighting its creative practice methodology for the creation of authentic Asian

characters in Australian television comedy drama. While this approach is not as strict as one that might take place in a Masters or PhD by research at a tertiary institution (Kerrigan et al. 2015), these contemporary examples and case studies allow students insight into potential methodologies, personal narratives, interviews and other research methods which earmark a creative journey. It positions the student as 'willing' researcher who is invigorated in the exploration of their craft (McNiff 2008, 31). The student must feel confident that the creative practice research meets with their learning expectations and their desires to undertake the practice. This is a vital part of the creative practice approach (Kerrigan and McIntyre 2018).

Systems Model Framework as Pedagogy

Research in the field of creative practice as research are increasingly using system or flow models (Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi, 2009) to help creative arts students develop a critical approach to their professional practice. The BA Communications program at the University of Newcastle has been designed around a Systems Centered Learning (SCL) approach (McIntyre et. al. 2018) where the education of creative media practitioners, including screen production and screenwriting, creates the conditions for bringing novel and valued things into being. The SCL approach can be seen through the teaching of the Honours students using a Creative Practice approach (Kerrigan and McIntyre 2018) where a practitioners research is framed through creative theories (Csikszentmihalyi 1999, Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi 2009, Wallas 1976, Bastick 1982). The combination of these creativity frameworks provide a logical progression allowing a student an opportunity to explore their System Centered Learning approach (McIntyre et.al. 2018). Flow theory is useful as a

foundational approach as it tracks the practitioners emotional responses 'providing a mechanism, language and framework that explains the practitioners experience' (Kerrigan and McIntyre 2018, 11) in terms of task challenges and skills. In summary, students are given a range of theories that can be tested out in their own practice.

This System Centered Learning created and applied at the University of Newcastle (McIntyre et. al. 2018) circumvents many of the challenges experienced by the introduction of creative practice in MAS Screenwriting at AFTRS. Assisting students in understanding the methodologies of creativity requires students to be constantly exposed to the notion of research questions and testing. The MAS Screenwriting, while introducing Csikszentmihalyi's (1996) flow model, requires a more rigorous application of creative system and parallel flow theories, such as Redvall's Screen Idea (2013). Kerrigan and McIntyre (2018) describe the merging of the system and flow as an internalized artistic process which allows for creativity to emerge. Nakumura and Csikszentmihalyi (2009) explain the process as 'exhilaration':

Flow occurs when the creative practitioner's skill level meets the level of production challenge and results in an intensely exhilarating time-altering experience which can be so exhilarating that the practitioner attempt to return to this experience because the activity is rewarding in and of itself regardless of any extrinsic good that might result from the activity. (90)

This understanding of the artist as apprentice to the industry, studying the professional domain of screenwriting within a field of constraints cannot be underestimated in the training of a new generation of creative screen entrepreneurs.

Conclusion

It is evident that teaching creative practice as research is procedural. That is, it is iterative and recursive, as the artist or creative practitioner is researching how they go about acquiring knowledge from peers or from an archive, that can embodied and situated in their practice. McNiff (2008) provides a fitting metaphor when he references his studio class where the teacher and student reflect on and compare their respective creative practice in relation to existing practices in the field, while simultaneously exploring 'how movement improvisation offers something to the interpretation of art that cannot be accessed in words' (2008, p.31). It is a reiteration of Bazin's role in the French New Wave or Von Trier's Dogme films, where artists respond to the historical, technological, cultural and economic, drawing on these impulses to create new modes of expression. Kerrigan and McIntyre (2018) argue there are a range of creativity theories to apply to practice and the selection of which ones to use is an 'essential step towards designing a research question that will extract new knowledge for the media practitioners/researchers' (11). The job as educators is to provide students of creative practice the foundational theory and methodologies that can be applied to help them refine their individualised creative processes.

By holding a microscope to the creative systems in the domain/field in which the student is exploring, disruptions or variations to any stage of the conventional norms/flows will result in some degree of novelty or innovation which may contribute to new knowledge, relevant to the student's field of research. A MAS Screenwriting student writing about Australasian characters in television serial comedy may interrogate the process of cyclical repetition of characters as described

by Mitell's theory of complex television storytelling (2015). A MAS screenwriter testing Dancyger and Rush's (2013) alternative screenwriting tools in a historical television drama will synthesize domain conventions and conditions of the field in which they are working but **may** also discover new methods which **may** somewhat shift the genre toward creative innovation. **By defining domain and field, and understanding its conventions, systems and constraints, the student's embodied and internalized knowledge increases, giving them more confidence and opportunity to produce novelty through their own work.**

Film schools internationally are investigating the role of creative practice as research in the learning of a resilient film graduate. This is a significant departure from the technical skills training role which schools such as the NFSD and AFTRS were initially established to undertake. Increasingly, creative practice research is seen as an important foundation for the production of novelty and innovation in the screen industry. In Denmark, this impact can be seen in the NFSD screenwriting graduates who were responsible for what we now term 'nordic noir' television (Redvall 2013). The Australian national film school's industry-informed decision to integrate a creative practice as research subject into its curriculum hasn't been without challenges. By the second year of implementation, there is a recognition that the adoption of creative practice as research requires a carefully managed and staged process of pedagogy. Initially, the relevance of the creative practice methodology is demonstrated through cohesive definitions, practice-based case-studies and exemplars. The graduate students (individual) must recognize their position within the domain and field in which they are seeking craft training and

understanding. Redvall's screen idea systems (2013, 31) provides a utilitarian framework which allows screenwriting students to define the rules of the domain and opinions of the field of their major creative work and how the flow within this system may produce novelty and a unique creative voice. The anticipation is that upon graduation, the student has internalized the creative process which allows them to be creative, whereby the skill level of the graduate meets the production challenge resulting in an 'exhilarating' experience which the graduate will take into the professional industry.

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