Studio Investigation: An Approach in Studio-Based Research

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Article History: Received: 10 November 2020; Revised: 12 January 2021; Accepted: 27 January 2021;
Published online: 05 April 2021

Abstract: This article is about a studio investigation that is used as a practical studio-based research method to produce creative works of visual art. Creating an empirical research-oriented visual artwork is a creative process that involved intellectual phase on aesthetic object not an easy process. Studio-based research is similar just like any other research is to contribute science through the creative work of visual art. Thus in the investigation studio, there are two phases of research method, which is the data generation phase and the artwork phase. For Phase data generation, there are four components of the study element, namely qualitative approach, neo-narrative process, visual research methodology and object (subject of study). The Artwork approach consists of two components - art-making that consists of four-phase elements and studio experience components.

Keywords: Studio-Based Research, visual art methodology, Art making process

1. Introduction

Studio-based research is a new and emerging form of research, commonly practiced by person who involve in creative and aesthetic work (Sullivan, 2006 & 2010; Marshall, 2010). Especially in Malaysia, this form of research is still at early stages. Practical studio research postulate an issue for both quantitative and qualitative research paradigm on how the methodology goes in practical studio research? to use the study methodology? What are the ways and strategies to link the theories used with art studio practice? These questions suggest there view answered with this paper through the studio investigation methodology Creative studio research is a research that has methodologies and strategies appropriate to its disciplinary context (Bispo, 2015; Lester, 2016; Hamilton & Juaniiste, 2009).

2. Studio-Based Research

Studio-based research or various terms used such as practice-led research, research-led practice, practice-based research, creative research and practice as research is a research approach that began in the late 1970s and early 1980s. On account of this, the form of this research was introduced purposely to documenting the experiences and expertise of visual artists and designers through the process and design methodologies (Gray, 1996; Gray and Malins, 2004; Smith, 2009).

That first-generation has developed a methodology in studio practice research in response to the support provided by the United Kingdom Council to appreciate their contribution to the creative field and accepted it as a field of research (Gray, 1996; Green, 2001).

The methodology initially used was describing the elephant and later the second generation developed the methods in studio practice using the supervisory approach of the study. In short, the methodology used by this generation is more “methodological trailblazers” (Gray, 1996). Now that decades have passed, the methods in studio practice research should be more reliable and better than ever. With the development of technology (multimedia), it hoped that reflective practitioners could develop and develop methodologies more critically and creatively (Brown and Sorensen, 2009).

Studio-based research has a basis for producing such disciplines because the purpose and aim of the studio-based research are to contribute knowledge in the creative field (Newbury, 1996; Sullivan, 2006).

The methodology of the studio-based research approach is similar any other quantitative or qualitative research, as it needs to build on the relevance of the study itself (Rocco and Pldholtinik, 2009). Therefore, the development of appropriate methodologies for studio-based research should be to acquisition the best methods for achieving the goals or objectives of the study itself (Marshall, 2010; Bispo, 2015).

Studio-based research uses a more focused approach to the processes performed in visual art studios that align with their theory and practice. Therefore, the theories and methods are used in conjunction to create a
model of creative process or methodology that is different from conventional research (Barret and Bold, 2007 & 2014).

3. Studio Investigation

The research structure in the investigation studio involves several methods that are designed accordingly. Historically, research development in studio-based research has begun in the late 1970s and early 1980s. No wonder now that the process and methodological design have evolved (Gray, 1996; Gray and Malins, 2004).

In Figure 1, the methodology used consists of two connected components, data generation in phase one and the artwork approach for phase-two.

![Figure 1: Studio Investigation Methodology](Customized from Mace, 1998; Mace & Ward, 2002; Gray &Malins, 2004, Sullivan, 2006; Steward 1997 & 2007)

**Phase 1: Data Generations**

The method used at this stage involves the process of collecting data that will use in the production of artwork. In this phase one, there are four elements used to ensure that each data can be generated to provide the future output of the artwork.

Generating this data refers to creating critical ideas in the production of art based on four elements, namely qualitative approach, neo-narrative process, visual research methodology and object (subject of study).
Qualitative Approach

A. Interview
B. Observation
C. Reviewing & Surveying: Books, Documentation, Library Research, Video Interview, Journals/Articles, Website

Neo-narrative Process

A. Autobiography
B. Interview

Figure 2. Data Generations Element

Qualitative Approach

The first component of phase one involves a qualitative approach. Generally, this stage is a process of identifying previously created artworks (Gray & Malins, 2004).

The first is through the Interview process for artists who produce artwork for reference. The next process is through the Observation Approach. At this level, each reference work will be examined from ideas, content, context, materials, techniques and so on as a response to understanding the reference work holistically (these data are combined with interview data). The final process is to collect the data (reviewing & surveying) that is derived from written or printed materials. These materials include exhibition catalogues, exhibition curatorial reports, artist statements, newspapers, magazines, article publishing, studies and so on. This process is the process of gathering information to get an accurate and holistic picture of the reference work.

Neo-narrative Process

The neo-narrative process (Steward, 1997 & 2007), involves two approaches: autobiography and interview. This process is a widely used way to study and focus on a research topic built from everyday life experiences. The neo-narrative process (Steward, 1997 & 2007), involves two approaches: Autobiography and Interview. This process is a widely used way to study and focus on a research topic built from everyday life experiences.

This process emphasizes the engagement of the participant (the reference artist) with the researcher and further synthesizes the objective and subjective of the personal experience to the public. Autobiography approach is a qualitative approach used to gather information, study and explore own knowledge. An autobiographical approach allows the artist to reveal their personal experience through the telling of a life story that is a fundamental concept in a study. It makes it more rational and impossible by expressing personal reflection, embodied in consciousness by personal experience.

This autobiographical approach is a way of explaining how to explore (understand) the artist (art practitioner) through the concepts of engagement, identity, history, time, storytelling, interpretation, experience and knowledge.
Interview approach is a way to get information about what people think this approach is a great way to get data that is subjective and is an essential way of finding meaning. Through this approach, all aspects of their lives are recorded and interpreted through their experiences.

**Visual Research Methodology**

The visual research methodology is a method used by Leonardo da Vinci. Results such as drawings, sketchbooks, models, writing are examples that Leonardo da Vinci has produced. This visual research methodology is a model called 'practitioner-researcher' (Gray and Malins, 2004). It can be said that all the areas in the study, such as physical and natural science, physical science, social science, humanities and creative and performing arts use visual methods in their research.

This visual research methodology approach is used in all of the areas mentioned above because it has five functions, which are primarily to gather or form ideas. Second, to organize, elaborate, and come up with ideas. Third, to explain or provide insight into a phenomenon or situation. The fourth is to evaluate, analyze, and decompose. Lastly, to finish, and argue the findings of the study.

**Object (subject of study)**

Artwork brings its status as a form of knowledge that is translated into art objects (works of art). An art object is a source of knowledge that provides information on ideas, themes, and issues in the artwork that has been produced (Sullivan, 2006).

For the first approach, the researcher uses the artwork as a subject of study to study the ideas, themes and issues contained in the artwork that has been produced. Besides, the interpretation approach is also used in the fourth component to obtain the data.

This approach is applied to an art object. After all, art is a subject of study because art (gives meaning through the process of description, presentation, expression or expression (symbolic form) (Sullivan, 2006).

**Phase 2: Artwork Approach**

At this stage, studio-based research methods are divided into two component components, the Art-Making Process (Mace and Ward, 2002) and the Studio Experience (Sullivan, 2006). Figure 3 shows that these two methods are interrelated as they involve the process of producing artwork.

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**Figure 3. Artwork Approach Element**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Art-Making Process</th>
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<td>b. Phase two</td>
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<td>- Idea development</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Phase three</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Making the artwork</td>
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<td>d. Phase four</td>
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<td>- Finishing the artwork and resolution</td>
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<tr>
<th>Studio Experience</th>
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<td>b. Problem solving</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Media exploration</td>
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<td>d. Creative mind/process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Site of inquiry</td>
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<tr>
<td>f. Giving form to ideas of personal and social relevant</td>
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**Art-Making Process**

Phase one is an artwork conception that proposes two steps. First, are the Activities of Idea Conceptions, which are everyday activities that play a role in triggering the idea of producing a work of art. Ideas may also come from experience and exist in unconsciously because they are related to experience in creating artwork. The
second step is the Idea of Selection, in which the artist selects ideas that are appropriate and interesting. It may be that the chosen approaches are the general theme of the artwork.

Phase two involves the five proposed steps, first, structuring an idea. The second is Enriching, expanding, discovering. Third, Restructuring. Fourth, Evaluation and the last one is Shelving or abandoning the work. These five steps are a bit difficult to implement. It is because the ideas proposed need to be through decision-making, problem-solving, experimental behaviour and information gathering activities.

The next phase, in turn, involves the process of transformation from conceptual idea to physical form. At this stage, the artist has to determine the type of artwork to be produced in the form of multimedia, painting, sculpture and so on. At the same time, the use of materials in artwork also needs to be studied using four steps, namely preparation. Second, the artwork begins. The third is developing, expanding and restructuring. Fourth, evaluation and the fifth is shelving or abandoning the artwork.

The fourth phase involves the evaluation of the artwork based on the finishing process; written or implied, successful or not in three steps to consider. First, exhibiting artwork. Second, not exhibiting the artwork: abandonment or postponement and third, ongoing and developing art-making knowledge. Artwork produced if unsuccessful, must be abandoned, stored in the store or destroyed. If the artist feels that the work of art produced had completed, then the artwork needs to be exhibited, and it requires preparation.

**Studio Experience**

An art studio is a place for inquiry and inquiry into knowledge-related activities. It is a unique place as it engages in-studio activities such as sketches, discussion boards, documentation and so on to provide further experience and knowledge.

Art studios play an essential role as a place not just for producing works. The importance of art studios should be seen in more detail as studio functions play a role in science labs. An art studio is a place where every process of making artwork to do. The studio experience provides knowledge through the activities carried out in the studio.

Art studio functions include, for problem finding, problem-solving, media exploration, creative mind/process, Site of inquiry, and finally giving form to ideas of personal & social relevant.

**4. Conclusion**

Studio investigation is one of the research methods used in studio-based research. The studio investigation framework is a combination of appropriate research methods in the context of the studio-based research. The phase one of the research in the studio investigation is an essential component that serves to generate ideas for the production of visual artwork. In the second phase, however, it involved design activities that focused on the implementation of visual artwork that took place in the art studio.

**Bibliography**