Introduction

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Résumé de l'article
Dans ce numéro, l'équipe éditoriale de RACAR est heureuse de présenter Polémiques, une nouvelle section qui, comme la section Pratiques introduite l'année dernière sous l'égide d'une commissaire invitée, proposera des débats sur des sujets d'actualité et parfois controversés, à propos d'art et d'idées de toute époque et de tous pays. Chaque printemps, RACAR publiera une Polémiques ou une Pratiques.

Polémiques examine des sujets d'intérêt pressant pour la communauté des arts visuels. Chaque Polémiques sera développée et introduite par un rédacteur invité ou une rédactrice invitée et comprendra de brefs essais provocateurs qui se pencheront sur un sujet actuel abordé de différents points de vue. Dans ce numéro, Natalie Loveless de l'University of Alberta a réuni quatre voix de notre communauté réfléchissant à la recherche-création, qu'elles qualifient comme étant un « queering » important de l'académie et un défi de taille aux frontières disciplinaires traditionnelles.
**Introduction**

Natalie S. Loveless, University of Alberta

I am grateful to the editors of RACAR and to Risa Horowitz—guest-editor of RACAR’s inaugural Practices section (Spring 2014)—for their foresight in championing a space for research-creation in the Universities Art Association of Canada and its journal. This inaugural Polémics section could not have come about without their efforts. It has two aims: first, to advocate for the importance of research-creation for those of us teaching in art, art history, curatorial and museum studies, and design programs in Canada today; second, to cultivate a space not only for research-creation practice and pedagogy, but also for its critical discourse.

What follows is a polemic. Not only because the contributors disagree with each other on certain points, but more importantly because of the differences between their perspectives and those introduced in the Spring 2014 Practices. In it, Horowitz articulated a concern that has been the basis of numerous collegiate conversations between us, namely that the research-creation guidelines published by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) force artists to develop discourses alien to their practices. My response to this concern is twofold: regardless of discipline, any SSHRC applicant knows—or discovers—that the process involves “pretzelling” themselves for legibility outside their own field; furthermore, applicants looking to receive a “social sciences and humanities” grant should engage with one or both of these literacies in their research. In other words, it is my contention that SSHRC research-creation grants should not be for *any and all* artists working in the university, but specifically for artists whose work reaches into the social sciences and humanities.

Debating methods and research is the practice that produces fields, disciplines, and departments, and I engage in this polemic to honour research-creation as a changing, hybrid set of practices. From my point of view, the risk in specifying research-creation approaches is not “entrenchment” (a commonly
Props to Bad Artists: On Research-Creation and a Cultural Politics of University-Based Art
GLEN LOWRY, EMILY CARR UNIVERSITY OF ART + DESIGN

Good Research? Bad Art?

This value-laden binary elicits groans. Yet it takes us to the heart of a trenchant critique of new forms of academic, research-based art and institutional culture change. The duality also highlights ethical questions about the efficacy of creative-practice research and the pitfalls of university-supported creative projects. SSHRC established its research-creation program to target creative practitioners, yet word on the street is that it is rigged against real artists who make good art. Among professionals, there is a sense that despite the generous budgets and timelines, academic support comes with strings attached. Or so I hear in the “art school,” the specialized art and design university.

Old enough to remember Michael Jackson’s re-appropriation of bad, his ability to popularize its idiomatic use to mean good, I am skeptical of judgments hidden beneath the guise of aesthetic discernment: good (work we appreciate because it affirms ideals we are educated into) vs. bad (work that fails to respect established mores, particularly those underwritten by academic study). I am also old enough to have read the sick work of Stuart Hall, Paul Gilroy, bell hooks, among other feminist, queer, and racialized academics, and appreciate their interrogation of the Manichean values valorizing literature over potboilers, classical concertos over Hip Hop, and art over television. I offer this provocation as a spirited word-up to artists who trouble disciplinary differences to reach across a creative practice (art) and scholarly investigation (research) divide. I am inspired by colleagues at Emily Carr University and beyond who recognize the need to cross this divide, and I seek to reframe discussion of creative practice research in relation to ethical concerns about the function of contemporary culture: academic and creative practice.

Before discussing research-creation, I need to acknowledge the tenuous position of creative-practice research within Canadian universities. Not only are the specialized art and design