



Art as action or art as object? the embodiment of knowledge in practice as research  
Dr Anna Pakes  
Roehampton University of Surrey, England  
[<A.Pakes@roehampton.ac.uk>](mailto:A.Pakes@roehampton.ac.uk)

In a sometimes hostile academic climate, art practice as research (PAR) is typically legitimised via the claim that art makes available a distinctive kind of knowledge not available in other domains and inaccessible to other (more traditional) modes of enquiry. It is easy to make but more difficult to elaborate such a claim by specifying precisely in what this distinctive knowledge consists. PAR can be characterised negatively – as neither a fact-seeking exercise, nor primarily a theory-building enterprise, nor a means of quantifying or measuring the objects of the natural or human worlds. Positively identifying PAR's contribution to knowledge is a more complex affair. What does art practice produce knowledge of and what is the mode of this knowledge? How is it produced and disseminated? Is new knowledge generated in the process of making, and then made manifest and shared through the verbal reflection on that process? Or do the artistic outcomes of that process – the artefacts created – have epistemological primacy as the embodiment of new insight? Are art works themselves the vehicles which make that insight available to a wider community?

In a previous presentation (Pakes 2003b), I explored whether philosophical accounts of practical knowledge might help elucidate the epistemological distinctiveness of PAR. The discussion of practical knowing is part of a philosophical tradition deriving from Aristotle and, more latterly (in its Anglo-American philosophical incarnation), Wittgenstein. This tradition is united in its concern to uncover how the intelligence of action itself is inadequately accounted for by conventional epistemologies dominated by Plato's conception of knowledge as justified true belief. Philosophers such as Gilbert Ryle (1949), Elizabeth Anscombe (1963) and Anthony Kenny (1966) offer an analysis of the particular reasoning processes embedded in everyday action and decision-making; G.H. Von Wright (1971) sees similar forms practical reasoning as grounding the methods and claim to truth of the humanities in general; Joseph Dunne (1997) and David Carr (1978) elaborate practical knowing as a key component of teaching and legitimate goal of formal learning, with Carr also examining how art (in particular, dance) education fosters understanding through developing students' practice. These developments suggest that, although ideas about practical knowledge are more conventionally associated with ethics and the

philosophy of action, 1 they resonate also in the domain of art practice – and hence that they may be relevant to questions about the epistemological distinctiveness of PAR.

The accounts of practical knowledge highlighted above, then, incorporate analyses of the nature of practical reasoning, on the basis that the rationality of a practice in some sense constitutes or guarantees its epistemological validity. It is important at this point to emphasise that their conception of rationality is not the narrow one associated with the traditional deductive or inductive logic grounding scientific (or, perhaps more accurately, scientific) thinking. The very idea of practical reasoning is part of an effort to transcend this restricted conception, and see other thinking processes and forms of knowledge as equally rigorous though they do not conform to conventional logical models. Philosophies of practical knowledge vary (and are in some cases unclear) in how they characterise the precise relation between such knowledge and practical reasoning processes: the latter appear as either the mechanisms whereby the knowledge is produced, the manifestation of the knowledge's exercise or the logic articulable after the fact of action which endorses its epistemological claims. But, however they characterise that relation, the philosophers cited offer similar accounts of the nature of practical reasoning itself, based on their interpretation of insights from Aristotle.

In particular, Aristotle's formulation of the practical syllogism (2000) acts as a springboard for discussions of this alternative model of reasoning. The practical syllogism is a formalisation of the reasoning that makes sense of and justifies particular actions. It contrasts markedly with its theoretical counterpart in respect of the nature of its premises and conclusion. Aristotle suggests and his followers argue that, when deciding how to act, we do not reason deductively from general laws through particular facts to establish other particular facts; rather, we start from our intentions, balance these against the specific set of circumstances in play, to produce action which takes account of both those purposes and that state of affairs. Whereas the theoretical syllogism presents a proof of the conclusion which follows necessarily from the premises, the practical syllogism offers a justification of an action “whose point is shown by the premises” (Anscombe 1963, 60). The conclusion of a practical syllogism is the action itself, not a statement about the world. And practical inference is “the practical logic of our efforts to cope with and be effective in the world, not the theoretical logic of our thoughts about the world” (Carr 1978, 8). Practical knowledge thus emerges as an awareness of how best to act, a form of insight embodied in what we do in the world, and not – like theoretical knowledge – primarily a form of insight about or representation of the world. Its logic is a “logic of satisfactoriness” (Kenny 1966, 71) in relation to purposes and circumstances, not one of truth and falsity.

These ideas are suggestive in the context of practice as research because they lend weight to action – and, by extension, artistic action – as itself the embodiment of knowledge. In this view, action – or, by analogy, art practice – has a principled coherence on its own terms; it is underwritten by a logic that emerges in and through the activity itself. This philosophical perspective positively characterises action as a rational process, as a mode of knowledge with its own distinctive logic, parasitic on neither deductive nor inductive theoretical reasoning. In this view, action neither requires theoretical explanation nor functions to illustrate insights acquired theoretically: rather, it is in itself intelligent. This chimes in tune with the claims of those practitioner researchers who argue that their practice itself is the embodiment of their research and its knowledge-outcome, and who resist the pressure to document process and justify the product in words. The philosophical discussion of practical knowing suggests a way of foregrounding the

epistemological value of what the artist-researcher actually does as opposed to the cleverness with which s/he theoretically frames or reflectively characterises that doing.

There are, however, a number of difficulties thrown up by developing this parallel between practical knowledge in general and PAR. In part, these derive from problems that are arguably already germane to the philosophical arguments in themselves. Ryle's (1949) discussion of "knowing how", for example, emphasises that there is no necessary connection between the success of an action's outcome and the reasoning process that is supposed to have led to that result. I could act appropriately in a given situation (by hitting the bullseye on a target, say, or making a devastating move in chess, or even choreographing a successful dance work) without knowing how or why I acted as I did: "there need be no visible or audible differences between an action done with skill and one done from sheer habit, blind impulse or in a fit of absence of mind" (Ryle 1949, 40). This suggests that, in order to interpret or verify an action as intelligent, one needs some way of checking that it was underscored by practical reasoning. This, in turn, implies a need for practical reasoning to be formalised – or symbolically articulated in a language other than that of the artwork – in order to demonstrate that it informed artistic action. But, as soon as that articulation happens, it begins to assume the guise of a conceptual order imposed from outside the action per se. It begins to look as though the artist deliberated "in her head" about the best course of action, and then methodically carried out steps already identified as leading to the desired outcome. We then lose the advantage of conceiving of reasoning as embedded in the activity itself, because it appears as a process that happened before and then imposed its structure on the practice.

This touches on contentious issues about the verbal documentation of PAR, too complex to consider in detail in the context of this paper. <sup>2</sup> These are relevant in the context of this argument because they raise the question of whether the practice itself or the reflection upon it embodies the knowledge artistic action produces. A related difficulty is also crucial to this discussion. This is an issue which arises when philosophical ideas elaborated to explain everyday decision-making and action are transposed to the highly specialised contexts of artistic action and PAR. In ordinary action, we do deliberate about means and ends, about our purposes and the best ways to achieve them in the relevant circumstances. Our performance of everyday tasks and our actions in relation to others are norm-governed, shaped by awareness of what is possible, and socially or ethically acceptable. But even if art is a rule-governed activity in the broad, Wittgensteinian sense, it is not a straightforward means-end process, each step of which is guided by clearly defined norms. The originality requirement – in the production of new works and/or new knowledge – pushes artistic practice beyond such a clearly-defined framework. David Carr recognises this in later critical reflections on his (1978) discussion of practical inference and dance education. He notes that the practical syllogism may help explain the rationality of acquiring and applying routine technical skills, but that it "stay[s] well clear of the less predictable creative and imaginative aspects of practice" (1999b, 126). Similarly, creating art work according to already accepted models might involve the kind of practical reasoning process identified in Aristotle's syllogism; but original art and PAR (insofar as it generates new insight) seems to be by definition an operation that is not norm-governed, even though it may involve the exercise of routine skills.

Carr's later work (1999a and 1999b) suggests that other Aristotelian ideas might be better-suited to identifying and legitimising the nature of artistic insight. He refers in particular to Aristotle's contrast between *techne* (the skill of craftsmanship) and *phronesis* (the practical wisdom of acting well within the social and moral domains). <sup>3</sup> Where *techne* is a form of skill that can be exploited instrumentally to achieve pre-conceived ends, *phronesis* is more

of a disposition to laudable action, grounded in sensitivity to particular situations and circumstances. Where the exercise of *techne* may involve theoretical understanding based on general laws and knowledge of causal connections, *phronesis* eschews generalisation, objective detachment and instrumentality. *Phronesis* is a capacity to respond to the particularities of experience, and to evolving relationships with others, which for Aristotle both enables and flows from the human being's living well within the polis. *Phronesis* is thus associated for Aristotle with the domain of *praxis* (social action) rather than *poesis* (making); but Carr's argument is that contemporary art making both depends upon and has the potential to develop a form of *phronetic* insight. Even if the action of the artist is a poetic production of art works or objects, her processes also involve a sensitivity to materials and the evolving situation more akin to practical wisdom than to mere technical competence.

One might argue similarly with respect to practice as research, characterising its epistemological mode as *phronetic* rather than either technical or theoretical. The parallel does, arguably, help highlight important dimensions of art-making activity, at least insofar as performance practice is concerned. The performing arts necessarily involve collective production and collective action, a number of agents working together to produce performance events. So these events take place within – and are the result of – an intersubjective context in which it is crucial to have a creative sensitivity to others participating in the process, to the materials at hand and to the evolving situation. This creative sensitivity – and the ability to act in accordance with what it suggests to be the “right” course – is arguably an essential element in any performing artist's practice, because decisions are not generally made in accordance with a technically rational view of how to achieve a pre-conceived effect. Rather, they arise out of the circumstances of the moment and are governed by a different, more flexible kind of rationality, sensitive to contingencies. It was on this basis that, in Pakes (2003b), I argued that we might conceive of dance practice as research as *phronetic* – that is, as bound up with a distinctively practical mode of knowledge, which reaches behind the professional norms of the dance world. This world, in its contemporary form, tends towards commodification, to treating artistic practice as primarily the production of dance works, presented, packaged and sold as commodities within a system of exchange (Pakes 2001). But, in contrast, presenting practice as research – or, more particularly, as generative of *phronetic* insight – reasserts the nature of dance-making as intersubjective action and allows the artist a space to develop increased self-consciousness about her conduct in that making process. In her reflexive awareness of what she does, and of her relationships with dancers, other collaborators and audience members, the dance artist-researcher develops a kind of knowledge that is valuable in reflecting on both specifically artistic processes and, more generally, on the nature of social relationships.

This characterisation of performance research as bound up with practical wisdom is seductive in that it secures a ground for the epistemological distinctiveness of such research. To make the characterisation work, we need to conceive of art making as a form of intentional action, of which the cognitive value lies in the reasoned decision-making of the artist as agent. In the case of dance art, this intentional conception of practice appears plausible. After all, the dance work is made through, and manifests itself as, patterns of intentional activity, and without choreographic making and dancers moving, there is no dance art: in dance “both the instrument or vehicle of expression of artistic ideas and intentions and the physical embodiment of the artwork itself are in themselves just forms or modes of human action” (Carr 1987, 346). It thus seems appropriate to consider the epistemological value of dance and the other performing arts as residing in the intentional activity that constitutes them – and performing art works – as such. But the notion of art as

intentional action appears less apposite in the case of the visual arts and design, which have traditionally been concerned with the production of art objects rather than performance events. Visual artworks are, typically, artefactual in a narrow sense that excludes the ephemerality of dance or other types of performance: paintings, sculptures and designed products are things rather than happenings; they are by nature objectified and ontologically independent of their creator(s). Although the process of their making is clearly a form of intentional action on the part of artists, the artworks themselves transcend that action and stand, in their own right, as the focus of attention, the locus of meaning and value, for their audiences. The intentional action model ignores this objectified quality of artworks, and hence seems to apply only to visual arts and design processes and not their products. And if it is through intentional action that art-making's distinctively practical knowledge or phronetic insight is generated, then the processes and not their outcomes carry the practice's epistemological weight.

A significant strand within philosophical aesthetics does adopt something like this view, encouraging us to reach behind the objectification of art works in order to rediscover a sense of them as forms of artistic action. Arthur C. Danto's ontology of art, for example, highlights artworks' intentionality as a key attribute distinguishing them from "mere things". Whilst he uses this concept in the philosophical sense of an action's or object's "aboutness" (rather than in the sense of accompanied by psychological deliberation), Danto also frequently emphasises the maker's purpose as a determinant of an art object's specific character and meaning: this is suggested in his parallel between the action/movement and artwork/mere thing distinctions (1981, 4-6) and clear in his argument that "the work-as-interpreted must be such that the artist believed to have made it could have intended the interpretation of it, in terms of the concepts available to him and the times in which he worked" (ibid., 130). To this extent at least, he argues, interpretative intentionalism is no fallacy but essential to uncovering the true character of an artwork. Similarly Noël Carroll's (1992) defence of intentionalism urges that we reach behind the objectification of artistic languages, to rediscover a sense of the artwork as a medium of conversation between artist and public. The meanings of art, he suggests, are less a function of codes, conventions and the play of signifiers than of the aims of artists in particular situations. We interpret art works correctly when we grasp their purposive structures, when we view them under the correct description: "interpretation depends on locating the purpose that the [artistic] strategy in question serves for what the author is attempting to do. And it is hard to see how such artistic doings [...] can be explicated without reference to the intentional activity of authors" (1992, 112). Both Danto and Carroll emphasise that intentional artistic activity is only comprehensible with reference to the artworld context in which it occurs and which shapes artists' actions. According to Danto and Carroll, it is by reconstructing artistic action as a solution to particular problems or circumstances thrown up by this artworld context that we appreciate its true significance.

Danto and Carroll are concerned with art in general, but their views seem pertinent also to PAR. Indeed, much of the literature on PAR frames the activity of the practitioner researcher in similar terms, as an engagement with particular questions, arising within the context of past and contemporary art practice, to which the artist's practice offers a solution, thereby contributing to knowledge within the domain. 4 The key difference between practitioner-researcher and "ordinary" artist is then the extent of her awareness of, and explicit reflection on, her art as an appropriate creative response to the initial questions. Or, it may be the intention to approach art making as research-based rather than "purely" artistic endeavour. But in either case, a premium is placed on the intentional agency of the creator. Without a sense of this, the artwork's true nature and value will fail to be appreciated. In a general sense, PAR needs intending and framing as such in order

not to be seen “simply” as art; and in a more specific sense, the artwork itself must be contextualised in terms of research-intentions to limit the proliferation of its meanings, ensuring it conveys the relevant message and knowledge outcomes (Biggs 2003). This emphasises the need for the artist clearly to articulate her intentions, and/or find a way of positioning her artefacts so that they communicate in the appropriate way, so that the viewer / assessor can understand what the agent-creator is doing. But this doing as a whole – and not the objects created in the process – is what generates artistic knowledge. Following through the implications of these ideas, PAR's epistemological value derives from the combination of clearly articulated intentions, documentation of process, presentation of the artefact and reflection back on this object's relation to the initial questions and the broader artworld context. The artefact itself, then, becomes just one element in this bigger picture, a vehicle in the generation of knowledge rather than the only or main site of that knowledge's embodiment. The epistemological or cognitive value of the art object as such dissolves in its reframing as a piece of the artistic action.

On one level, there seems to be no problem with conceiving art and PAR in this way, in terms of an intentional action model. As indicated above, it does at least allow ideas about practical knowledge and phronesis to be invoked as a means to explicate the domain's epistemological specificity. But there also appears to be something unsatisfactory about the model, and particularly about the way it relegates the art object itself to a position of merely derivative importance. It seems to place too much emphasis on artistic purposes and not enough on the process's outcome, the artwork, which is after all the thing with which the wider audience would engage. The intentional action model also implies an imperative always to view artworks in terms of how they resolve problems bequeathed to their creators by art history and contemporary artworld developments, rather than recognising a value in those works' openness to multiple interpretations. As well as courting the dangers of intentionalism, the model seems to verge on solipsism in its agent-centredness: the cognitive content of PAR becomes knowledge of a type tied to the artworld context and to specifically artworld problems. As artistic practice as research develops, such knowledge is accrued or progressively supplemented by a sequence of research projects all answerable to the demands of the domain, but not necessarily to anything outside of it. The wider import of artistic activity, and of particular art works, thus gets obscured.

To avoid such dangers, it would be necessary to develop an alternative philosophy of PAR which restores a sense of the object's cognitive value as such. This is not easy, partly because the tradition of philosophical aesthetics seems to weigh against treating artworks in this way: the Kantian insistence on the non-cognitive character of aesthetic experience, as well as emphasis on the essential ambiguity of aesthetic signification and the subjectivity of aesthetic judgement all militate against conceiving of the artwork itself as the embodiment of knowledge. They make us wary of letting an artwork speak meaningfully for itself in the research context, since such factors seem bound to obscure the clarity of the research outcomes and problematise the consensus which designates these as epistemologically valuable; hence the emphasis in some writing about PAR on the importance of controlling interpretive and evaluative variability by framing work in an appropriate way (e.g. UKCGE 1997; Biggs 2003). The problem is that exercising such control may also undercut the value of artworks as able to speak to a multiplicity of interests and a variety of viewers, but in a very particular way, which reaches beyond the purely personal and may also make a serious appeal to concerns at the heart of human experience.

Philosophical hermeneutics suggests a possible basis for an alternative philosophical view. Hans-Georg Gadamer's (1989) discussion of the epistemological basis of the humanities, includes a discussion of art which emphasises its profound import and value in developing understanding. His concern is to reassert the distinctiveness of humanistic and artistic insight, via a forceful argument that "art is knowledge and experiencing an artwork means sharing in that knowledge" (97). A key element in Gadamer's argument is the early chapters' painstaking archaeology of post-Enlightenment thought. This aims to show how deep-rooted concepts in the history of ideas in the modern West, such as the idea of a *sensus communis*, have become forgotten or distorted, thereby undermining the basis of the humanities' claim to truth. In the case of art, Gadamer argues that post-Kantian philosophical treatments have subjectivised the domain, to the point where artworks became mere objects of aesthetic experience or vehicles of communication for the artist as genius – their particular mode of being and its cognitive import dissolving in their reconfiguration as aspects of the individual subject's experience or activity. One consequence has been art's relegation to the status of an epistemologically suspect domain, a soft relation of "hard" scientific enquiry. Within this tradition of thought, art's contribution to knowledge (along with that of other humanities disciplines) can increasingly only be characterised in negative or derivative terms

What is especially interesting about Gadamer's writings from the point of view of the argument here, is the way he links the cognitive value of art practice to an ontology of the artwork which highlights the latter's autonomy. For Gadamer, art is essentially play: but, even though it has implications for the nature of the spectator's engagement, this characterisation is meant to emphasise "neither the orientation nor even the state of mind of the creator or of those enjoying the work of art, nor the freedom of a subjectivity engaged in play, but the mode of being of the work of art itself" (1987, 101). The process of art making effects what Gadamer terms a "transformation into structure" (*ibid.*, 110) which detaches the work from the activity of the creative artist, to foreground the meaningfulness of the content that the artwork conveys. That content consists essentially in the work's re-presentation of aspects of the world and of experience. In recognising the import of a work, the agents involved do not simply register its reference to something familiar; in understanding art, "[t]he joy of recognition is rather the joy of knowing more than is already familiar" (*ibid.*, 114). From Gadamer's perspective, then, an artwork itself embodies new insight. That insight may be variously applied and integrated into the experiential horizons of different viewers and audiences, but this variability in interpretation is tempered by a common sense of the work's transformative power. As autonomous structures, artworks move us beyond a subjective reflection on themes by artist and viewer, and towards a common participation in the work's play-structure, which in itself has the potential to reconfigure perception and the world.

This cursory overview of Gadamer's account of art scarcely does justice to the depth and scope of his analysis, and probably raises more questions about the epistemological status of PAR than it resolves. For example, how can one distinguish PAR from art not governed by research-imperatives if all art has the kind of cognitive import that Gadamer suggests? The hermeneutic view would also need much more detailed elaboration to clarify its implications for the conduct, presentation and assessment of PAR. In particular, perhaps, the question looms of how an artwork might be judged to fail to embody knowledge, given that Gadamer's philosophy seems to indicate that it should by definition make new insight available. And yet without being able to question critically, or even deny, the epistemological value of some works, it is unclear whether one can positively identify the claim to knowledge of any. Gadamer's work may suggest that an artwork stands or falls on its transformative power within the audience's experience, but how exactly can one

tell whether a work has this power? The responses of individual viewers – including those responsible for assessing PAR projects – might give us some indication: but, as Gadamer himself points out, the subjectivisation of aesthetics has weakened our trust in the commonality of artistic experience to the extent that we doubt the wider resonance of individual response. The philosophical argument for the intersubjectivity of art experience would thus need fleshing out in much more detail to counter the weight of tradition and of the received views attendant upon it.

Nonetheless, philosophical hermeneutics is highly suggestive in extending the scope of art's claim to knowledge, and hence has potential as a basis for arguing the epistemological value of art as research. In terms of this conference's particular concerns, it is the emphasis on the artwork itself as the embodiment of knowledge that is worth pursuing. And this emphasis also functions in counterpoint to the claims of what I have termed the “intentional action model” of art practice, which centred the epistemological value on the activity and developing phronetic awareness of the artist as creative agent. The hermeneutic perspective, meanwhile, posits an artwork's transformation into structure as making insight available to a much wider community, which includes general audiences as well as artworld experts. This moves us away from a preoccupation with artistic intentions, and towards a deep engagement with artworks as such. The latter cease to be an illustration or by-product of the artist's knowledge-generative process or thinking, and become structures in their own right whose value resides in their transcendence of the individual's intentional action.

Earlier, I outlined the contrasting ontologies of performing and visual art forms, at least as these forms are traditionally conceived: where performing art is arguably a form of intentional action in both process and outcome, the intentional activity of the visual arts and design is typically geared towards the production of relatively permanent artefacts. This ontological contrast seemed to indicate the appropriateness of the intentional action model to the performing arts, even though that model neglected a key feature of the visual arts. In this regard, however, it is interesting to note that Gadamer's central example in arguing for the primacy of the artwork as autonomous structure is drama. <sup>8</sup> He sees the artwork's autonomy and “objecthood” as a key feature also of performing arts practice: “the play – even the unforeseen elements of improvisation – is in principle repeatable and hence permanent. It has the character of a work, of an *ergon* and not only of *energia*” (1987, 110). <sup>9</sup> According to this view, then, the “objecthood” of art is important also to the cognitive value and epistemological status of the performing arts too: by framing performing art as intentional action, we run the risk of ignoring that choreographic and devising processes also produce artworks – autonomous structures, the value of which is partly derived from the fact that they are not tied to the artist's purposes and activity, but can decontextualise and recontextualise themselves within different horizons of meaning. Gadamer's discussion thus suggests a way of foregrounding the objecthood of all artworks - visual and performed – as a crucial element in generating new insight. In the context of PAR, this challenges us to question whether art's epistemological value really resides in the artist's intentional activity and creative processes. And it challenges us to reassert, on secure philosophical grounds, the importance of the artwork itself as the embodiment of knowledge.

## References

Anscombe, G.E.M. (1963) *Intention*, 2nd edition, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Aristotle (2000) *Nicomachean Ethics*, translated & edited by Roger Crisp, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Arts and Humanities Research Board (AHRB) (2002) *Guide to the Fellowships in the Creative and Performing Arts Scheme*, London: AHRB.

Biggs, Michael (2003) "The role of "the work" in research." Electronic publication of PARIP conference proceedings. Bristol, UK: University of Bristol, 2003.  
<http://www.bris.ac.uk/parip/biggs.htm>

Carr, David (1978) *Practical Reasoning and Knowing How*, *Journal of Human Movement Studies*, 4:1, pp. 3-20.

– (1987) *Reason and Inspiration in Dance and Choreography*, in Janet Adshead (ed.) *Choreography: Principles and Practice*, Guildford: University of Surrey / NRCD, pp. 40-50.

– (1999a) *Art, Practical Knowledge and Aesthetic Objectivity*, *Ratio*, 12:3, pp.240-256.

– (1999b) *Further Reflections on Practical Knowledge and Dance a Decade On*, in: Graham McFee (ed.) *Dance, Education and Philosophy*, Oxford: Meyer & Meyer Sport.

Carroll, Noël (1992) *Art, Intention and Conversation*, in Iseminger, Gary (ed.) *Intention and Interpretation*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, pp.97-131.

Cullity, Garrett & Berys Gaut (eds.)(1997) *Ethics and Practical Reason*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Danto, Arthur (1981) *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Dunne, Joseph (1997) *Back to the Rough Ground: Practical Judgement and the Lure of Technique*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.

Gadamer, Hans-Georg (1987) *Truth and Method*, 2nd revised edition, W. Glen-Doepel's translation revised by J. Weinsheimer & D.G. Marshall, London: Sheed & Ward.

Kenny, Anthony (1966) *Practical Inference*, *Analysis*, 26:3, pp.65-75.

Mele, Alfred R. (ed.)(1997) *The Philosophy of Action*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Moya, Carlos J. (1990) *Philosophy of Action: An Introduction*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Pakes, Anna (2001) *Dance Interpretation and the Cultural Institution: Exploring the Condition(s) of British and French Contemporary Dance in the 1990s*, unpublished PhD thesis, London: Laban / City University.

– (2003a) *Original Embodied Knowledge: The Epistemology of the New in Dance Practice as Research*, *Research in Dance Education*, 4:2, pp.127-149.

– (2003b) *Practical Embodied Knowledge: The Epistemology of Dance Practice as Research*, presentation to the PARIP 2003 conference, University of Bristol.

Ryle, Gilbert (1949) *The Concept of Mind*, London: Hutchinson.

UK Council for Graduate Education (UKCGE) (1997) *Practice-based Doctorates in the Creative and Performing Arts*, Coventry: UKCGE.

Velleman, J. David (1989) *Practical Reflection*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

– (2000) *The Possibility of Practical Reason*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Von Wright, Georg Henrik (1971) *Explanation and Understanding*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Wittgenstein, Ludwig (1958) *Philosophical Investigations*, translated by G.E.M. Anscombe, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

## Endnotes

1 See, for example, Cullity & Gaut (eds.) (1997); Velleman (1989) and (2000); Moya (1990) and Mele (ed.) (1997).

2 As I argued in my PARIP 2003 presentation (Pakes 2003b), such issues might be resolved by adopting Carr's distinction between first- and third-person forms of practical reasoning (1978, 12), and placing the onus on the interpreter or assessor, rather than the artist, to reconstruct the logic of practice.

3 On this distinction, see also Aristotle (2000) and Dunne (1997).

4 See, for example, UKCGE (1997) and AHRB (2002). These texts, and the issues they raise about how PAR makes an original contribution to knowledge, are further discussed in Pakes (2003a).

5 For example, “[p]lay fulfils its purpose only if the player loses himself in play” and “has its true being in the fact that it becomes an experience that changes the person who experiences it” (Gadamer 1987, 102).

6 The term “content” is not used here in the narrow sense it has in the conventional opposition between form and content, but rather in the broader sense of the work's import, which includes both subject matter and its treatment in the artwork. In this view, what is said cannot be separated from how it is said.

7 C.f. Wittgenstein's (1958) insight that it is impossible to speak of knowledge where there is no possibility of being wrong, also articulated by Anscombe (1963, 14): “there is point in speaking of knowledge only where a contrast exists between 'he knows' and 'he (merely) thinks he knows'.”

8 He goes on to develop the implications of his argument for the representational visual arts and literature (1987, 134-164).

9 As Gadamer's footnote to this statement points out, he is drawing here on “the classical distinction by which Aristotle separates poiesis from praxis (Eudemian Ethics, II, 1;

Nichomachean Ethics, I, 1)" (1987, 110, fn. 206). C.f. the discussion above about the notion of phronesis and its association with praxis rather than the activity of making artefacts.

to cite this journal article:

Pakes, A. (2004) Art as action or art as object? the embodiment of knowledge in practice as research. Working Papers in Art and Design 3  
ISSN 1466-4917