



Society for Artistic Research
Brunngasse 60
PO Box 675
CH-3000 Bern 8
Switzerland
T +41 31 312 72 72
F +41 31 312 38 01
www.societyforartisticresearch.org

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2014 Annual Report from the President

Dear SAR member,

SAR's success has continued in 2014. Building on the steadily growing support of our membership, we were able to expand our activities and develop our organisational structures. We pursued the strategy process initiated in 2013. This led to more events, more investment in development, and a new conference project to be presented at the upcoming General Assembly – to name just a few highlights. Although we have not yet reached the degree of financial autonomy required for a sustainable operation of our society, SAR has never been in a better position to reach such a goal.

With the Journal for Artistic Research (JAR) being published regularly and with increasingly diverse contents, the constantly growing number of portal partners using and shaping the development of the Research Catalogue (RC), and more opportunities for our members to meet than ever, the core activities of our society are clearly thriving. If we manage to sustain the growth rate established over the last two years (during which we witnessed more than a 100% increase in membership fees), we may reach a financially stable situation in the two coming years. This would also allow us to transition from a setup and consolidation stage into a new phase of further developing and refining the objectives of the society together with our membership.

Journal for Artistic Research

With the appearance of two issues in 2014 and the first of three issues planned for 2015, JAR has produced a total of 57 expositions since its inauguration in 2011. Together with the publication of the book "The Exposition of Artistic Research: Publishing Art in Academia" edited by Michael Schwab and Henk Borgdorff (Leiden University Press, 2014), which brings together various approaches to exposition writing, the 57 JAR expositions – covering a wide spectrum of artistic practices – are a clear sign for the notion of exposition to be well established and accepted in the community of artist researchers by now.

Research Catalogue

With currently 6000 users, the RC offers the largest existing forum and network for artists interested in research today. It is used for profiling and self-publication, as institutional repository, as research and education management tool, as a publishing platform for several online journals, and as a database for projects, degrees, and supervisors.

2014 has seen major developments of the RC, which have been generously supported by our portal partners and AEC's Polifonia project. In addition to expositions, works (i.e. various types of publications, events, and art objects) and degrees have been added as RC object types. Users may now register works along with their meta data and media files. CVs can be uploaded and degrees can be registered. The new profiling feature allows for a structured presentation of the expositions, works, degrees, and collaborations of a user. A new tool can be used to leave notes in expositions and the new object viewer can be used to display 3D objects. The new possibility to undo changes and restore deleted tools makes the RC much easier to use.

A RC Steering Group has been established and the position of RC Managing Officer has been defined in order to better organise and structure RC development. These new structures and their operation are described in the new By-Laws from March 2015. Luc Döbereiner was appointed RC Managing Officer in February 2015.

Events

In 2014 we moved from one annual event to two events per year – one in spring and another one in autumn. The spring event will remain attached to the General Assembly whereas the fall event is meant as an additional meeting point with the possibility to target special topics. The last spring event entitled “Loitering with Intent – A Feast of Research” was held at the newly inaugurated Stockholm University of the Arts in March 2014. “Loitering with Intent” was a very successful event attracting more than 200 visitors from all over the world. The first autumn event, entitled “Operation on the Open Heart”, was held at the Vienna University of Applied Arts and focused on art research-driven education and its societal impact. Once the new conference project has been established, the spring event may be replaced by an international conference series on artistic research organized by a group of SAR member institutions.

Amendments of Aims, Articles of Association and By-Laws

The two-year span of office for this Executive Board brought about a significant change in the SAR's focus and responsibilities. The transfer of ownership of the Research Catalogue to SAR has been an important step towards a wider perspective of SAR's operations. When SAR's Articles of Association were made in 2010, the Society existed solely to publish the Journal for Artistic Research. Our new and wider perspectives need to be reflected in our legal documents, and the Executive Board has secured this by proposing to this General Assembly a revision of the aims formulated in our Articles, and has at the same time made a thorough revision of our By-Laws. The revised By-Laws are available at our home page, while the proposed amendments of the Articles are attached to this report.

Membership and financial status

SAR membership has grown significantly over the last two years. Concerning institutional membership, the Portal Partner Scheme has been very important to develop better funding of the whole operation of SAR. We have also been able to find a working system for international payment by individual members, and as a result this part of our income is also growing. It is, however, important to underline that SAR's financial situation is still very fragile and that increased number of institutional membership/partnerships are the most important component of our regular annual income. There are still large challenges ahead for the organisation, and continuity in combination with new initiatives will be paramount for the sustainability and further development of SAR.

Yours sincerely,



Gerhard Eckel