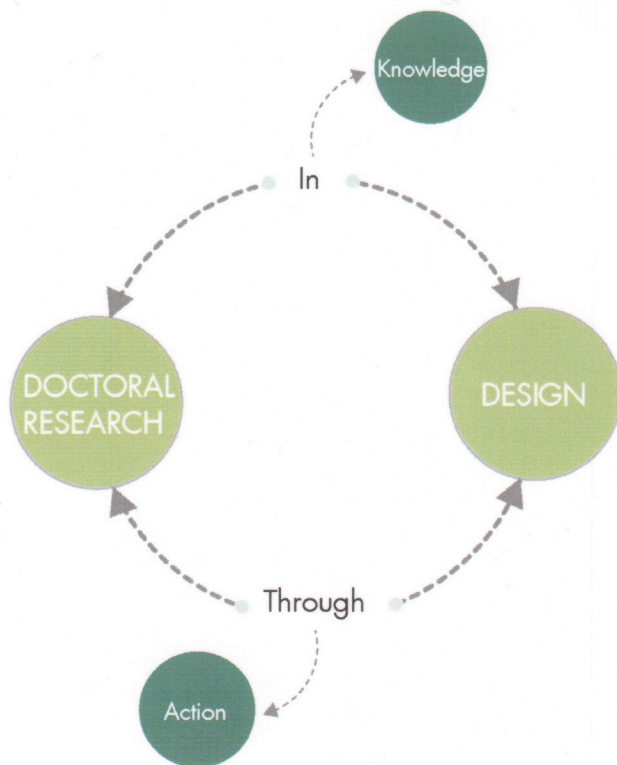


Design Research: Between Scientific Method and Project Praxis

Notes on Doctoral Research
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 Lucia Rampino (ed.)



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FRANCOANGELI

Methodology is pivotal to any research effort because "its reliability is determined by its methodology," as Leonard Archer phrased it. In design, a young, non-scientific, multidisciplinary, border discipline, research reliability is an even more delicate issue. As a result, there continues to be debate about what it means to do research using the tools and methods that belong to the discipline of design, even about the terms in which such research is possible. This book aims to make a contribution to this debate.

In the scientific tradition, research should be objective, systematically conducted, and context-free. These three adjectives summarize the traditional model of academic research, the model that several design scholars opted for, mainly at the doctoral level. On the other hand, an alternative model, where research is based on design practice, has been gaining credibility in recent years. In the most extreme reading of this approach, the research process coincides with the design process and the research result is the practical result itself.

However, opting for a 'practice-led' or 'artistic' approach ought to be a mindful choice, not a shortcut to dodge the complex question of method. Indeed, the very issue of method belongs to the scientific tradition, something every researcher must be aware of. Once this basic knowledge has been imparted to our PhD students, all the limits of applying the scientific method to a non-scientific discipline like design should be explained and discussed. Some highlights of that discussion have found their way into this book.

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