Articulation as Continuation: Rethinking Peer Review for Non-Screen-Based Creative Practice Research

Dr Roy Hanney

Abstract

This article examines the methodological challenges of peer review in non-screen-based creative practice research and proposes a practice-led alternative grounded in articulation rather than evaluation of fixed artefacts. While similar epistemic tensions exist across creative practice research, screen-based work already benefits from established artefact-submission peer-review infrastructures; the focus here is on practices where no equivalent framework currently exists. Existing scholarship highlights a persistent epistemic tension: while creative practice produces knowledge through embodied, material and temporally extended processes, traditional peer review assumes explicit, propositionally framed research contained within stable outputs. Drawing on literatures addressing implicit knowledge, documentation, and research visibility, as well as Research Excellence Framework (REF) contextual statement analysis, practitioner interviews, and an experimental pilot project, the article argues that articulation—through writing, reflection, documentation and dialogue—is not supplementary to creative practice but a continuation of its research process. The pilot developed and tested a workflow in which the research statement, rather than the creative work itself, becomes the primary site of peer review and revision. The resulting transparent research dossier, including reviewer comments and author reflections, provides a more robust and discoverable record of creative research while supporting the development of shared evaluative literacies. The article concludes by proposing a dialogic ecology of peer review that foregrounds articulation, enables meaningful engagement with process-based and ephemeral practices, and better reflects the epistemic realities of contemporary creative practice research.

Keywords: Creative practice research, Practice-based research, Peer review, Research articulation, Artefact epistemology.

Introduction: Rethinking Peer Review for Creative Practice Research

The application of conventional peer review workflows remains one of the most significant methodological challenges in creative practice research, particularly for work that is neither text-based nor screen-based1. While comparable epistemic tensions can be identified in screen-based practice, that field already benefits from established artefact-submission peer-review infrastructures; the present argument therefore addresses practices for which no equivalent mechanism currently exists. Although creative practice is now recognised as a legitimate research output, the evaluative structures surrounding it still presume fixed artefacts, explicit propositions and revisable texts. Whereas, for practitioners working through installation, performance, participatory processes, spatial practices or hybrid forms, research emerges through material, temporal and relational processes that exceed what can be captured by a single outcome. Yet it is precisely this single outcome—or a short accompanying text—that is typically subjected to academic peer review.

The limitations of this model have been clearly identified in existing scholarship. Glisovic, Berkeley and Batty describe the "implicit/explicit" tension at the heart of creative practice research, noting that creative works often communicate knowledge implicitly, through embodied and material modes that "do not always sit [in the artwork] explicitly" (2016, p. 7). Their argument mirrors concerns raised in creative writing research, where Nelson emphasises that researchers must articulate "the methodologies undertaken and the new knowledge being claimed" (2009, p. 6) because the work itself cannot reliably carry that burden. Candy and Edmonds likewise argue that the artefact "may not be fully communicable without additional description, interpretation or analysis" (2010, p. 120), and that creative works "cannot be expected to speak for themselves" in research terms (2018, p. 65).

What these studies collectively demonstrate is a deeper methodological tension: peer review presumes that research is contained within the artefact, but creative practice research distributes its knowledge across processes, encounters and reflective reconstruction. The difficulty is not that the artwork is epistemically insufficient, but that the research dimension lies in the ongoing articulation that surrounds it. If peer review is to recognise this epistemic reality, it must shift its focus from evaluating outcomes to engaging with the articulatory processes through which knowledge becomes legible. This argument is not seeking to redefine research or displace peer review as a scholarly benchmark; rather, it proposes that peer review workflows be recalibrated to

---

1 For the purposes of this article, "screen-based" refers to practices that produce a stable, reproducible digital artefact (e.g. film, video, or digital media work) capable of being embedded, streamed or archived for peer review. This distinction is infrastructural rather than epistemic; many of the tensions discussed here also apply to screen-based practice.

recognise that research in creative practice is distributed across artefact and articulation and must be made accessible within existing academic evaluative frameworks.

The argument then is that peer review for creative practice research would benefit from being re-conceptualised as a continuation of research articulation, not an evaluative endpoint. Where, evaluation refers to the judgement of a finished outcome against predefined criteria, whereas articulation denotes the dialogic extension of research through clarification, contextualisation and reflective elaboration. The proposed shift does not remove evaluative rigour but relocates it within an unfolding process of research articulation rather than treating the artefact as a static endpoint.

The argument developed here draws on Research Excellence Framework (REF)[2] statement analysis, documentation studies and practitioner interviews. It is worth noting that although REF analysis provided a concrete institutional context through which these tensions became visible, the infrastructural challenge identified here is not uniquely UK-specific and the proposed workflow is transferable to other creative practice research contexts. The research is further informed by an experimental pilot project that examined current models and developed a practice-led peer review workflow. Together, these enquiries show that articulation functions as a generative method within creative practice research. Writing, documentation, dialogue and review do not sit outside the practice; they extend and deepen it. When peer review is approached as a dialogic form of articulation, it becomes methodologically fit for the kinds of non-linear, multimodal and process-driven research that many creative practitioners undertake.

The kinds of epistemic tensions outlined above have already prompted infrastructural responses within screen-based creative research. Journals such as *Screenworks* and *Sightlines* have already developed models in which a stable digital artefact can be embedded, contextualised and peer reviewed alongside a research statement. These approaches acknowledge that knowledge often exceeds the artefact itself and require articulation to render it legible within academic systems. The present proposal builds upon that precedent but addresses a distinct ontological condition: practices in which no reproducible artefact exists to anchor review, and where the research contribution must therefore be accessed primarily through articulation and documentation rather than through re-viewing the work itself.

Issue 1: Implicit Knowledge and the Limits of Traditional Peer Review

Traditional academic peer review assumes that research is explicit and propositionally framed. This becomes a methodological mismatch when evaluating research enacted through practice. Non-textual and non-screen-based forms often produce knowledge through material exploration,

---

[2] The Research Excellence Framework (REF) is the United Kingdom's national system for assessing the quality of research in higher education institutions. It evaluates outputs, impact, and research environments to determine public funding allocations.

embodied decisions, community encounters, site-based processes and relational experimentation. The research may reside in how participants responded, how materials behaved or how the work unfolded over time—forms of knowledge not easily captured in a short statement.

The implicit nature of this knowledge is widely recognised. Glisovic et al. show that peer review struggles with research that unfolds across rehearsal rooms, interactions and materials rather than within a final artefact (2016, pp. 5–7). Skains frames this as a methodological cycle in which knowledge emerges "through the interplay between creation and explicating that creation" (2018, p. 84). Interviews with practitioners further reinforce this: Jo Scott (2025) describes "doing-thinking" as an epistemic mode embedded in making; Annette Arlander (2025) stresses the speculative emergence of questions through practice; Nick Cope (2025) highlights how meaning crystallises retrospectively. These accounts confirm a broader argument in the literature: that creative practice research is distributed, iterative and temporally extended.

If peer review is to serve creative practice research, it must be capable of engaging with this implicit, process-based knowledge rather than expecting it to be compressed into a single output.

Issue 2: The Problem of Revisability and the Fixed Output Assumption

Standard peer review presumes that submissions can be revised prior to publication. While entirely reasonable for journal articles, this assumption collapses when applied to installations, performances, participatory environments or site-specific interventions. The work cannot be remade simply to satisfy reviewer questions; nor would revision make sense for forms that are contingent, temporal or ephemeral.

The Sightlines project demonstrated this problem clearly even within screen production, where works cannot be revised without compromising their identity (Glisovic, Berkeley and Batty, 2016, p. 12–13). Candy and Edmonds similarly caution against conflating the artwork with the research argument (2010, p. 122). For non-screen-based practice, the difficulty is amplified: while documentation and material traces may remain, the primary experiential work cannot be re-experienced in its original form for the purposes of peer review.

In designing the pilot, this became a focal issue. The solution was to shift revisability from the creative work to the research statement. Rather than treating the statement as a justificatory afterthought, it becomes the primary site of review—a space where the practitioner can articulate decisions, methods and insights that the final work alone cannot hold. This reframing aligns with the literature's insistence that reflective articulation is itself a legitimate continuation of practice (Skains 2018; Candy and Edmonds 2010).

Issue 3: Lack of Shared Research Literacy in Creative Practice Fields

Creative practice research lacks universally shared evaluative criteria. Nelson highlights the difficulty of distinguishing between artistic merit and research contribution (2009, p. 6). Glisovic et al. note that reviewers often struggle when research questions are implicit or when methodological framing is unclear (2016, p. 9). Batty and Zalipour extend this critique, arguing that CPR suffers from conceptual uncertainty and inconsistent research vocabularies (2024, p. 462–463). My own analysis of REF contextual statements revealed similar inconsistencies in how practitioners articulate rigour, methodology and significance. Interviews underscored this fragmentation: practitioners draw on diverse conceptual frames—speculative, reflective, experiential, dialogic—and often lack shared language.

What is required is not a single prescriptive solution but the development of infrastructures that render research articulation visible, dialogic and collectively legible. The lack of shared evaluative literacy in creative practice research is not merely a conceptual problem; it is infrastructural. Without transparent mechanisms for articulating, reviewing and documenting research contributions, creative practice risks remaining epistemically fragmented and unevenly recognised within academic systems. In this context, transparency becomes crucial. As Vanlee and Ysebaert argue, artistic research often remains "invisible within academic information systems" unless sufficiently disclosed (2019, p. 36). Publishing reviewer comments and author responses can reveal how research is interpreted, clarified and strengthened, enabling peer review to function pedagogically as well as adjudicatively.

The pilot workflow proposed here should therefore be understood as one contribution within a broader ecosystem of infrastructural development. It does not claim to resolve the lack of shared research literacy in creative practice research in its entirety. Rather, it offers a structured and transparent model in which articulation can be extended, revised and made traceable within academic knowledge systems. Parallel initiatives such as the currently ongoing ENACT Practice Research Data Service[3] demonstrate that this infrastructural turn is already underway. ENACT, for example, aims to build a national repository for practice research data that captures both process and product, underpinned by open standards, persistent identifiers and community engagement, thereby increasing the visibility, accessibility and integration of creative practice research within scholarly infrastructures. Taken together, these initiatives signal a growing recognition that creative practice research requires not only conceptual clarification but durable, transparent systems through which its knowledge can be disclosed, reviewed and sustained.

---

[3] ENACT (Practice Research Data Service) is an Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)-funded project (AH/Z000769/1) developing a national repository for practice research data, including both process and product documentation, supported by open standards, persistent identifiers and community engagement initiatives.

A Practice-Led Peer Review Model: The Pilot Workflow

The pilot workflow was developed as an exploratory pilot project and proposal aimed at addressing the methodological tensions outlined above. Its design emerged through an iterative, practice-led process involving interviews with creative practitioners, analysis of REF contextual statements, and the proposed publication of a pilot example in a target journal. Rather than retrofitting creative practice into familiar peer-review conventions, the intention was to create an evaluative model that reflects how research is actually produced in non-screen-based and processual forms.

The workflow begins with a dual-component submission: documentation of the creative work and a substantial research statement. The statement functions as the primary site of revisable research articulation within the peer review process—not as a replacement for the creative artefact, but as a means of rendering its distributed research dimensions accessible. In doing so, it enables practitioners to articulate the questions, methods, contexts and insights that the creative work alone cannot fully carry. The creative artefact therefore remains epistemically central; however, where it cannot be re-experienced in its original form, articulation becomes the mechanism through which its research contribution can be engaged. In the pilot example, the initial research statement was largely descriptive, but the review process prompted the author to expand the methodological framing, clarify the research enquiry, and articulate tacit insights that had remained implicit during the making process.

Submissions then undergo single-blind peer review. Reviewers remain anonymous, but their reports are published alongside the work. This transparency supports the development of shared research literacy, allowing future contributors to understand how evaluative criteria are applied and how research articulations are strengthened. In the pilot, reviewers identified ambiguities in the methodological description and highlighted areas where the research contribution could be made more explicit. Their comments were not corrective but generative—inviting clarification, expansion and deeper reflection.

Crucially, revision occurs at the level of articulation, not at the level of the creative artefact. Authors revise the research statement in response to reviewer feedback, extending the reflective and analytical dimensions of their project without altering the creative work itself. This approach respects the ontology of creative practice—its temporal, relational and material specificity—while still enabling rigorous peer review. Authors involved in the pilot described this revision phase as unexpectedly valuable, prompting them to recognise connections and methodological threads that had remained implicit until articulated.

The final publication includes the creative work (or, where direct embedding is not possible, a stable link or equivalent form of access to it), alongside the original and revised research statements, reviewer reports and an author reflection describing how the dialogue shaped their understanding. Where extensive process documentation exists, the workflow requires stable links to externally

maintained repositories, websites or platforms through which recordings, documentation or related materials may be accessed. Responsibility for the hosting and maintenance of such materials remains with the practitioner rather than the journal. This design ensures that peer review remains rigorous and transparent without imposing unsustainable curatorial or technical burdens on journals, particularly open-access publications operating with limited resources. The result is a transparent, traceable research dossier that captures both the practice and the ongoing articulation through which its research contribution becomes legible. It also produces citable, metadata-rich documentation capable of entering academic knowledge systems (Vanlee and Ysebaert 2019, p. 47). By foregrounding articulation over judgement, the workflow offers a peer review model that is better aligned with the epistemic realities of creative practice research.

Challenges and Infrastructural Considerations

The pilot also surfaced a series of practical and infrastructural considerations that extend beyond the conceptual design of the workflow itself. At a small scale, implementation proved relatively straightforward: existing models from screen-based peer review provided useful precedents, templates could be adapted, and two peer reviewers were successfully recruited. However, this modest success should not obscure the structural pressures that accompany any attempt to recalibrate peer review processes.

Reviewer recruitment remains a recognised pinch point across academic publishing. Securing reviewers willing to engage with non-traditional formats, particularly those involving transparent publication of reports, may require additional guidance and reassurance. In the pilot, reviewer uncertainty was less about evaluative standards than about format and expectation. Where reports are to be published alongside the research statement, clarity in structure, tone and scope becomes especially important. This suggests the need for carefully designed review templates that preserve intellectual freedom while ensuring comparability and coherence across published reports. The development of such templates represents an additional editorial task that would require sustained attention were the model to be implemented at scale.

Editorial workload is likewise a material consideration. Open-access journals, particularly those operating through voluntary or lightly resourced labour, cannot reasonably assume responsibility for hosting, curating and maintaining extensive practice archives. The workflow therefore deliberately places responsibility for hosting process documentation with the practitioner, requiring only stable links within the published dossier. While this approach preserves feasibility and scalability, it introduces questions of long-term stability and equity of access. Not all practitioners have equal access to technical infrastructure, web hosting resources or institutional support. The sustainability of externally maintained repositories, and the durability of "stable" links over time, remain ongoing infrastructural challenges.

Metadata standardisation presents a further structural issue. Institutional research management systems are frequently optimised for textual outputs and may struggle to accommodate distributed practice-led research dossiers. In previous institutional contexts, difficulties have arisen in configuring systems such as Pure to meaningfully represent creative practice submissions. The absence of widely adopted metadata standards for practice research complicates discoverability and indexing. Initiatives such as ENACT are directly engaging with this challenge through the development of interoperable metadata frameworks and persistent identifiers, but integration between journal workflows, institutional repositories and national data services remains an evolving terrain.

Finally, questions of scalability must be addressed. A small-scale pilot allows for close editorial oversight and careful calibration; broader implementation would require clearer procedural documentation, template refinement, reviewer guidance and potentially new editorial policies. The transition from experimental model to embedded infrastructure demands not only conceptual endorsement but institutional commitment. These considerations do not undermine the viability of the proposed workflow; rather, they highlight that peer review innovation in creative practice research is inseparable from wider questions of infrastructure, labour and sustainability. The pilot therefore should be understood not as a finished solution but as an exploratory step within a longer process of infrastructural development.

Conclusion: Towards a Dialogic Ecology of Peer Review

Across these issues, a clear argument emerges: peer review for creative practice research must recognise that articulation is not a bureaucratic necessity but a core research method. Writing, documentation, dialogue and review are integral to how knowledge is produced, understood and shared within creative practice research. When peer review becomes a continuation of that process—rather than an external judgement—it becomes capable of engaging non-screen, non-text, process-based and experimental work on its own terms. The result is not the abandonment of rigour but its recalibration: evaluative scrutiny is relocated within a dialogic process that acknowledges the distributed, iterative and often ephemeral nature of practice-based inquiry.

The workflow proposed here is not presented as a finished model but as an infrastructural proposition. The small-scale pilot demonstrates feasibility, but wider adoption would require phased implementation. A next step could involve a limited call for submissions within a partnering journal, accompanied by the recruitment of a dedicated pool of reviewers prepared to engage with transparent and dialogic formats. Targeted reviewer guidance or training would support consistency and confidence in applying the model. Restricting such a call to a defined cohort of practitioners would allow the process to be refined before broader rollout, ensuring that editorial workload, templating and documentation standards are carefully calibrated.

Such an approach would also benefit from structured community engagement. Publication of this article offers an opportunity to invite dialogue from practitioners, editors and institutions interested in developing peer review infrastructures for creative practice research. Open discussion—whether through journal forums, symposia or collaborative working groups—could help shape iterative refinements, address disciplinary differences and test scalability. In this sense, implementation becomes a collective rather than individual endeavour, aligning with the broader ecological framing advanced throughout this article.

The long-term ambition is not simply to modify a workflow but to contribute to an evolving research culture in which creative practice is fully legible within scholarly systems without being reduced to textual proxies. By foregrounding articulation while preserving the epistemic centrality of practice, peer review can become a site of ongoing research formation rather than terminal judgement. The pilot example published on Zenodo provides a concrete instantiation of this possibility, and its continued refinement will depend upon institutional commitment, infrastructural development and sustained community participation. If creative practice research is to be recognised as a substantive contributor to academic knowledge, then the development of durable, transparent and dialogic peer review mechanisms is not optional but essential.

Download Link: Hanney, R. (2025). *Duration: on Durée, Ontological Disturbance, and Improvisation* (Preprint). DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17742122

References

Arlander, A. (2025) *Finding the research question in speculative creative practice*. Creative Practice Research Podcast, 12 January. Available at: https://creativemediapractice.podbean.com/ (Accessed: 14 October 2025).

Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) (n.d.) *ENACT: Practice Research Data Service (AH/Z000769/1)*. Available at: https://gtr.ukri.org/projects?ref=AH/Z000769/1 (Accessed: 15 February 2026).

Batty, C. and Zalipour, A. (2024) 'Research, practice, knowledge: Introducing the creative knowledges enabling framework', *Media Practice and Education*, pp. 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/25741136.2024.2384686

Candy, L. and Edmonds, E. (2010) 'The role of the artefact and frameworks for practice-based research', in Mäkelä, M. and Routarinne, S. (eds.) *The Routledge Companion to Research in the Arts*. London: Routledge, pp. 120–137.

Candy, L. and Edmonds, E. (2018) 'Practice-based research in the creative arts: Foundations and futures from the front line', *Leonardo*, 51(1), pp. 63–69. https://doi.org/10.1162/LEON_a_01471

Cope, N. (2025) *Reflecting backwards: PhD by publication and practice*. Creative Practice Research Podcast, 15 January. Available at: https://creativemediapractice.podbean.com/ (Accessed: 14 October 2025).

Glisovic, S., Berkeley, L. and Batty, C. (2016) 'The problem of peer review in screen production: Exploring issues and proposing solutions', *Studies in Australasian Cinema*, 10(1), pp. 5–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/17503175.2015.1133262

Hanney, R. (2025) *Duration: On durée, ontological disturbance, and improvisation* (Preprint). https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17742122

Nelson, R. (2009) 'Best practice? The problem of peer-reviewed creative practice research', *TEXT*, 13(1). https://doi.org/10.52086/001c.31541

Scott, J. (2024) *Bridging the gap: Doing-thinking in practice*. Creative Practice Research Podcast, 9 October. Available at: https://creativemediapractice.podbean.com/ (Accessed: 14 October 2025).

Skains, R. L. (2018) 'Creative practice as research: Discourse on methodology', *Media Practice and Education*, 19(1), pp. 82–97. https://doi.org/10.1080/14682753.2017.1362175

Vanlee, F. and Ysebaert, W. (2019) 'Disclosing and evaluating artistic research', *Journal of Data and Information Science*, 4(3), pp. 35–54. doi:10.2478/jdis-2019-0014. Available at: https://sciendo.com/pdf/10.2478/jdis-2019-0014 (Accessed: 15th February 2026)