The Visual and Performing Arts research team currently involves Dr Karen Maras, A/Prof Kerry Thomas and Dr Paul Evans. Their research is focused on the nature of learning and teaching in the visual arts and music including: Theoretical and conceptual development in visual arts; Creative practice in visual arts and design education; and Artists and musicians: how they learn.

Dr Paul Evans, with an international research team located in Melbourne, Indiana, New York, and London, is investigating the kinds of motivation and practice strategies used in elite music performance. This team received ARC Funding of $374,000 (2015–18).

Visual and Performing Arts Education research at UNSW is an emerging area of development. This group is recently established and is characterised by research in the areas of visual arts and music education with a small, committed team of experts contributing to this program.

Current research projects include:

• How do students understand the meaning of artworks at different ages? This research, led by Dr Karen Maras, maps how students build and learn to apply theoretical frameworks of value in their judgements of artwork meaning. Example:

  Example:

  • What is the nature of creative practice in visual arts and design education? A/Prof Kerry Thomas examines the function of practical and social reasoning in the micro-moments of everyday exchanges between teachers and students in creative classrooms in secondary schools and university studios.

  • What do students need to feel motivated to practice? What do students need to feel motivated to practice? Dr Paul Evans is finding that students who practice effectively have motivation that is optimised. Without this optimised motivation, music students are vulnerable to psychological ill-being and dropout.

  • Dr Karen Maras and A/Prof Kerry Thomas are both consultants on Editorial Boards for the International Journal of Art and Design Education, and The Journal of Australian Art Education. They were founding members and Co-Presidents of the Visual Arts and Design Educators Association of NSW.

  • Dr Paul Evans is a member of the Music Trust of Australia Advisory Board and on the Editorial Board of Frontiers in Psychology (Performance Science section), and is also consultant to journals including Psychology of Music, Research Studies in Music Education, Musicae Scientiae, British Journal of Educational Psychology.

  • A/Prof Kerry Thomas co-edited the Handbook of Research on Creativity with Professor Janet Chan in 2014.

  • Recent events include: negotiating new options for framing Stage 6 Visual Arts, UNSW, November 2014; Art World Alliances: negotiating relationships between the art classroom, art world and art teacher’s professional obligations, UNSW, June 2014.

  • Never Stand Still

  • Arts & Social Sciences

  • School of Education