



The Research Council
of Norway

Assigning Cultural Values
Programme on Cultural Research (KULVER)
2008–2012

Final report

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Foreword

The Research Programme on Assigning Cultural Values (KULVER) is now concluded after a programme period of five years, from 2008 to 2012. It is the most recent in a series of cultural research programmes at the Research Council since the mid-1980s. The KULVER programme has been a basic research programme with a humanities orientation. The objective has been to enhance and further develop cultural research and to generate new knowledge about processes related to assigning cultural values and aesthetisation. The programme's overall sphere of research has been informed by six priority research areas: artistic fields, everyday life, forms of knowledge, cultural heritage and the politics of memory, construction of identities, and interaction between artistic fields and other fields of practice.

The KULVER programme had a budget framework of NOK 94 million and a total of 17 research projects were carried out. These projects have produced important, relevant knowledge about assigning cultural values and aesthetisation. The studies have mainly been targeted towards processes and activities which tend not to be included in more economic-instrumental and technological research on value creation because they address cultural values and symbolic resources. Research under the KULVER programme has shed light on the complex interaction between these dimensions and other societal processes related to resource distribution and priorities, status hierarchies and power, social structures, policy choices, identity constructions and aesthetic practice.

This final report contains a general presentation of the programme's activities, examples of results from the research conducted, and future challenges. All the projects and their results are presented in the KULVER programme's project overview, which is available on the programme's webpages (in Norwegian only): www.forskningsradet.no/kulver

In conclusion, we would like to thank everyone who has participated in the programme – project managers, researchers, and research fellows. Their research and dissemination activities have contributed new knowledge and insight to the field of cultural research.

October 2013
Kjersti Bale
Chair, KULVER programme board

Introduction

Title of the programme: *Research Programme on Assigning Cultural Values (KULVER)*

The programme's primary objective has been to enhance and further develop cultural research and to promote research on how cultural expressions and phenomena are assigned value and how cultural value is changed, displaced, transferred, acquired and challenged through dynamic processes. The programme has focused on aesthetisation and aesthetic practices, and the overall sphere of research has been related to the following priority research areas: artistic fields, everyday life, forms of knowledge, cultural heritage and the politics of memory, construction of identities, and interaction between artistic fields and other fields of practice.

The programme has sought to achieve this by:

- promoting basic research of high scientific merit, development of the research field, and scientific self-reflection;
- enhancing humanities-oriented cultural research;
- fostering internationalisation and multi- and interdisciplinary cooperation;
- encouraging the use of international perspectives;
- enhancing the social relevance of cultural research;
- promoting increased publication and dissemination of research findings.

Programme period: 2008–2012

The programme board, appointed from 1 June 2007 to 30 June 2013:

- Kjersti Bale, Department of Literature, Area Studies and European Languages, University of Oslo (chair)
- Ellen Aslaksen, Head of Research, Arts Council Norway, Oslo
- Mikkel Bogh, Rector, Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Visual Arts, Copenhagen
- Anne Eriksen, Professor, Department of Literature, Area Studies and European Languages, University of Oslo
- Narve Fulsås, Professor, Department of History, University of Tromsø
- Cecilia Sjöholm, Professor, Södertörn University College, Huddinge, Sweden
- Magne Velure, Project Director, Ministry of Culture, Oslo
- Deputy: Erik Hedling, Professor, Film Studies, Centre for Languages and Literature, Lund University, Sweden
- Deputy: Hans Dam Christensen, Dean of Research, Royal School of Library and Information Science, Copenhagen, Denmark

Financial situation

Programme's funding sources: Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Government Administration, Reform and Church Affairs

Total disposable budget: The programme has had available funding of NOK 94 million, of which NOK 71 million was allocated by the Ministry of Education and Research and NOK 23 by the Ministry of Culture. In addition, the Ministry of Government Administration, Reform and Church Affairs allocated NOK 1 million (earmarked for research on Romani culture, a continuation of a measure under the previous cultural research programme).

The programme has been funded with general funds from the Ministry of Education and Research and special funds from the Ministry of Culture, and had a total budget of NOK 94 million. Funding from the Ministry of Culture has been allocated without any stipulations regarding thematic orientation. In budget meetings with the Research Council, the Ministry of Culture has stated that it views the provision of funding for basic research of relevance to the cultural sector in a positive light. A member of the Ministry of Culture has held a seat on the programme board. An earmarked allocation from the Ministry of Government Administration, Reform and Church Affairs for research on Romani culture was transferred from the previous Programme on Cultural Research (KULFO), but only as a technical/administrative solution.

Table 1: Amount in NOK mill. from the main funding sources

Budget year	Ministry of Education and Research	Ministry of Culture
2008	15	4.3
2009	14	4.5
2010	14	4.6
2011	14	4.8
2012	14	4.9
Total	71	23.1

Activities

Most important activities during the programme period

The Research Council has had specific programmes for cultural research throughout recent decades, beginning with the Programme on the Dissemination of Culture and Tradition (KULT) in the mid-1980s. When it was established in 2008, the Programme on Assigning Cultural Values (KULVER) adopted a different thematic focus than earlier cultural research programmes. The new programme sought to reach out to humanities research groups to a greater extent than had been the case in the previous programmes. In 2006, as part of the programme planning, the Research Council invited humanities and social science research

groups and key users of cultural research to give their input on the focus of the new cultural research programme. Many of the roughly 50 submissions received noted the need to enhance research on the role of art and cultural life in society, including the aesthetisation of everyday life, and media and communication, cultural heritage and the politics of memory were emphasised as well. The input was used in the preparation of the new programme, and provided direction to the programme board when designing the work programme.

The programme board was appointed before the summer of 2007 so it could draw up the work programme and prepare the programme's first call for proposals. The work programme was completed in early autumn 2007, and the first call for proposals was issued that same autumn. The programme board has prepared annual action plans to ensure that activities under the programme supported the programme's objective. The programme's primary instrument for achieving the objectives was the allocation of funding to research projects.

Calls for proposals and application assessment

The programme issued two calls for proposals for research funding, one main call in autumn 2007 at the programme's start-up and a second, more targeted call in 2009 to supplement the areas of the work programme that were less well covered in the first funding round. The first call for proposals, which had an application deadline of 29 November 2007, was broad in scope and encompassed the entire work programme. Roughly 60 per cent of the programme's funding was announced and allocated under this main call. The programme received 109 grant applications (88 Researcher Projects, 21 Personal Post-doctoral Research Fellowships) totalling NOK 620 million in funding sought for the period 2008–2012. A total of 10 projects (8 Researcher Projects and 2 Personal Post-doctoral Research Fellowships¹) were awarded a total amount of NOK 57 million, i.e. an allocation rate of about 9 per cent both in terms of the number of projects and the amount of funding sought. The application assessment process was concluded in May 2008, but most of the projects did not start until late 2008 or early 2009. In the second call for proposals, which had an application deadline of 11 February 2009, the programme board sought to supplement the project portfolio from the first round to ensure that the programme's objectives and thematic priorities areas were addressed to the greatest extent possible. The programme received 81 grant applications (60 Researcher Projects and 21 Personal Post-doctoral Research Fellowships) seeking a total of NOK 320 million under the second call for proposals. Seven projects (6 Researcher Projects and 1 Personal Post-doctoral Research Fellowship) were awarded a total of roughly NOK 29 million, i.e. an allocation rate of 9 per cent.

The work programme emphasised that funding would primarily be provided to projects in which several researchers, preferably from different subject areas and institutions, addressed common research questions or areas of research objects in well-integrated projects with clearly defined research management. Recruitment was to take place mainly through the Researcher Projects. Consequently, both calls for proposals gave priority to Researcher Projects, although applications for Personal Post-doctoral Research Fellowships were accepted as well. In the first call for proposals, the maximum amount of funding that could be

¹ One of these Personal Post-doctoral Research Fellowships was converted to a Researcher Project after one year when the research fellow was appointed to a permanent academic position.

sought was NOK 8 million for Researcher Projects; this amount was reduced to NOK 5 million in the second call for proposals so that more projects could be funded.

Combined, close to 200 grant applications seeking some NOK 940 million in funding were submitted in response to the calls. Most applications came from the humanities and were distributed across most of the humanities subjects: literature, music, art, media studies, cultural history, history, archaeology and architecture; and many applications were interdisciplinary in nature. The programme received relatively few applications from linguistics, theology and religious studies. Some 84 per cent of the applications came from universities and university colleges, and 16 per cent from independent research institutes.

The assessment of research project proposals was conducted in two phases. First the applications underwent scientific assessment by panels of international referees. Then the programme board conducted an overall assessment in relation to the priority research areas and focus set out in the work programme as well as the guidelines in the calls for proposals. Scientific merit and relevance relative to the call for proposals were the criteria given the greatest weight, and importance was also attached to innovation in relation to the programme's research areas.

In addition, the programme issued three calls for proposals for additional funding to strengthen internationalisation, dissemination/communication activities and the establishment of networks/meeting places within the projects. All well-grounded applications were awarded funding. All together, 36 additional allocations totalling NOK 4.5 million were awarded for these purposes (see the discussion below under Internationalisation and Dissemination).

Table 2: Calls for proposals and application assessment

Appli- cation deadline	Thematic focus	Number of appli- cants	Number awarded funding	Amount granted, NOK mill.	Amount sought, NOK mill.
29.11.2007	1st call for proposals, main announcement, entire work programme	109	10	57	620
11.2.2009	2nd call for proposals, to supplement ongoing projects	81	7	29	319
17.2.2010	Dissemination measures for the projects	6	4	1.02	1.5
	Internationalisation measures for the projects	12	10	0.92	1.33
16.2.2011	Dissemination measures for the projects	6	6	1.24	1.27
	Internationalisation measures for the projects	6	5	0.44	0.51

30.11.2011	Dissemination measures, publications, networks/meeting places and internationalisation for the projects	11	11	0.88	0.95
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The projects

The KULVER programme has provided funding for 17 projects, divided among 15 Researcher Projects and 2 Personal Post-doctoral Research Projects. A total of roughly NOK 90.5 million was allocated to projects (including additional funding). Of this, NOK 83 million was allocated to universities and university colleges and NOK 7.5 million to independent research institutes. The projects have been weighted towards the humanities and have covered a wide range of subject areas including archaeology, architectural history/theory, cultural history/cultural studies, history, art history/design, art, literature, music, religious studies, media studies, sociology and social anthropology. Many projects are interdisciplinary within the humanities or between the humanities and social sciences. Three of the projects give special focus to gender perspectives. Three projects address issues related to museums, and several projects involve historical perspectives. In addition, development of theory is a key aspect of all KULVER projects. The programme has attached great importance to promoting high-quality basic research.

Most of the projects have been affiliated with the universities, but the Oslo School of Architecture and Design and the Bergen Academy of Art and Design are represented in the project portfolio as well. Two projects have been conducted at independent research institutes (CMI – Chr. Michelsen Institute and the Uni Rokkan Centre). Forty-four per cent of the project funding has been allocated to the University of Oslo, which reflects the application pool. Several projects have involved cooperation across institutions. Museums have taken an active part in the projects; a total of seven projects have cooperated with 10 museums in Norway and abroad. This project collaboration has taken various forms, from participation in research activity to dissemination measures. The Norwegian museums that have been involved are the Norwegian Museum of Science and Technology, the Oslo City Museum, the Museum of Cultural History/University of Oslo, the Bergen Art Museum, the National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, the Norwegian Road Museum and the Norwegian Railway Museum. The international museums involved have included the British Museum, the State Museum of Ethnology in Munich and Manchester Museum.

A special aspect of the programme is that several projects have comprised a collaborative effort between science and art. In addition to the project headed by the Bergen Academy of Art and Design, several other projects have cooperated with the following art schools: Trondheim Academy of Fine Art, Valand School of Fine Arts in Gothenburg, and the Alfred University School of Art & Design/Alfred University in New York. One of the projects has cooperated with Pikene på Broen in Kirkenes and the artists' collective Chto delat in St. Petersburg.

Gender balance in the projects has been satisfactory; some 60 per cent of the projects have had female project managers. The majority of research fellows (80 per cent) have been

women. In most cases, however, the research fellows were an integral part of the Researcher Projects and were employed by the institutions after project funding was allocated by the Research Council.

International cooperation

The KULVER programme has had a clearer international profile than previous cultural research programmes, which took a national perspective. The research community also emphasised in its input at the programme planning stage that there was a need to increase internationalisation within the humanities and cultural research. The KULVER programme has therefore encouraged internationalisation, both in terms of research perspectives and research field and in terms of greater international research cooperation.

Support for internationalisation measures has been channelled mostly through project allocations. Additionally, the programme board set aside separate funding for this purpose and prepared a plan for internationalisation which contained specific measures for enhancing the international component of the projects. This additional funding was announced in three rounds, and approximately NOK 1.8 million was allocated to the projects. All of the research projects have included international cooperation, many of them with active participation by international researchers, in addition to participation in international networks and research stays at institutions abroad. Several projects have incorporated international or global perspectives, e.g. related to identity, cultural encounters and multiculturalism. However, international perspectives have varied depending on the topic and research field, and have not been prominent in all of the projects.

In 2008, under the direction of HERA – Humanities within the European Research Area, the possibility of establishing European cooperation between programmes was explored. This was early in the KULVER programme period, when it would have been possible to set aside funding for cooperation measures. As it turned out, however, the relevant European research programmes targeted very different thematic areas and were in different phases of their programme periods, thereby limiting the potential for programme cooperation and joint calls for proposals. The participating HERA partners determined that it would be more beneficial to establish individual, joint European programmes through HERA.

Dissemination and communication activity

The KULVER programme has facilitated dissemination of and dialogue about knowledge in the field of cultural research. A total of NOK 2.7 million was awarded under three additional calls for proposals for communication/dissemination measures implemented under the projects, including exhibitions, films, publication and conferences. The calls were based on the programme board's communication and dissemination strategy, which aimed to increase and improve dissemination and communication activity under the programme and projects. In particular, the programme board sought to facilitate activities that could help to enhance the topical interest and societal relevance of cultural research, and it encouraged the use of new, non-traditional methods of dissemination targeted both at the research fields and at the general public. Many of the projects have carried out dissemination activities of a more traditional type, through publications and articles, in addition to more innovative dissemination activities that have garnered public attention. Measures included exhibitions,

films, film seminars, literary discussions and workshops. One project received a faculty award for the best dissemination measure at its university. Several of the projects have created exhibitions in cooperation with museums and curators, e.g. the exhibition *Utsikter* (“Views”) (the Oslo School of Architecture and Design and the National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design), *Ting, tang, trash* (the Bergen Academy of Art and Design and the Bergen Art Museum) and *Animal Matters* (University of Oslo and partners from several museums abroad). One of the KULVER projects worked in cooperation with a producer/director to make the film *Det vakre, det sanne og det gode* (“The beautiful, the true and the good”) which highlights the cultural aspects of scientific images and their production.

As part of its final dissemination, the programme has published an English-language scientific anthology entitled *Assigning Cultural Values*. The anthology includes 13 newly written articles in addition to an introduction by the anthology’s editor. The book presents key research questions from the programme and addresses the aesthetic and cultural value of science, sexuality and gender roles, the construction of aesthetic value, the aesthetics of places, and cultural value in museums. Published by the international publishing house Peter Lang GmbH International, the anthology was made available at the programme’s concluding conference in spring 2013.

The programme’s concluding conference *Sansenes rike: Estetikk, erkjennelse og kulturell verdsetting* (“Realm of the senses: Aesthetic practices, acknowledgment and cultural values”) was held on Tuesday, 9 April 2013 at the House of Literature in Oslo. The results of the research activities were presented and the role of aesthetics in modern culture was discussed. Key issues from the programme were addressed, such as the significance of aesthetics for the creation of or changes in cultural values and the meaning of form, material and sensory qualities for how we assign value to surroundings and cultural expressions. The researchers who opened the conference asked questions such as: How have roads created and recreated the landscape and led to new ways of seeing nature? What happens when *A Doll’s House* is performed in Beijing in the 1950s? How can objects in a museum become technology for assigning value? What kind of aesthetics do ruins have? How is a place like Stonehenge managed in the interface between transport policy, national heritage and new religious activism? How objective are scientific images? A film from one of the projects (on scientific images) and videos with art installations from another project (artistic value creation) were shown during the conference. The diversity of the presentations at the conference illustrated the breadth of research conducted under the KULVER programme.

Other activities under the programme

The programme organised annual seminars for the projects in which project managers, project researchers and the programme board met to discuss a variety of topics of shared significance for cultural research and the projects. The purpose of the gatherings was to generate added value for the programme and to establish arenas for cooperation between the programme’s projects. The seminars featured keynote speakers from within and outside the programme as well as group work and active participation by the project participants.

Programme seminar 2009: The topic was *dissemination and internationalisation/international cooperation* and included presentations from external participants (e.g. from the museum sector, a journalist and from a cultural organisation) as well as discussion about and input

from the projects related to the programme board's efforts to draw up plans for dissemination/communication and internationalisation.

Programme seminar 2010: *Cultural research – theory, practice and relevance*. This seminar entailed various interactions and exchanges between a variety of empirical fields and theoretical perspectives, and addressed the relevance of cultural research and interaction between research and the field of practice.

Programme seminar 2011: *Giving form to research – think, write, publish*. This seminar focused on writing, specifically the production of texts and reflections on the writing process. Time was set aside for researchers to work with their own texts, including the articles for the KULVER anthology.

Programme seminar 2012: *Cultural research and interdisciplinarity: Concepts that cross disciplinary boundaries*. This seminar addressed what happens when the same theoretical concepts are interpreted in different subject areas and traditions and the challenges this creates for project activities.

Key figures, activities

Number of projects: 17 research projects (10 female and 7 male project managers). These projects include 15 Researcher Projects and 2 Personal Post-doctoral Research Fellowships (originally awarded as 3 Personal Post-doctoral Research Fellowships, but one was converted to a Researcher Project after one year when the research fellow was appointed to a permanent academic position).

Number of doctoral research fellows: 10, of which 8 are women and 2 are men + 1 art fellow (man).

Number of post-doctoral research fellows: 10, of which 8 are women and 2 are men.

Several projects have been postponed, mainly due to leaves taken by research fellows. These projects will be concluded in 2013, except for one to be concluded in 2014. Only 4 of the 17 projects were concluded by the end of 2012.

Number of participating institutions: A total of 8 institutions are Project Owners. Most of these are in the higher education sector (number of projects and proportion of project funding in parentheses):

University of Oslo (7, 44%), Norwegian University of Science and Technology (3, 15%), UiT The Arctic University of Norway (2, 11%), University of Agder (1, 5%), Oslo School of Architecture and Design (1, 8%), Bergen Academy of Art and Design (1, 8%), CMI (1, 6%), Uni Rokkan Centre (1, 3%)

Administration

Administrative costs:

Day-to-day activities,

including programme board and application assessment: NOK 1.6 million

Programme administration NOK 1.1 million

Seminars/conferences NOK 1 million

The programme has ongoing activities in 2013, and the accounts are not concluded.

Results

Highlights and findings

The programme has published a project overview with a brief description of all the projects, information about the project participants, some key publications and website addresses. Please refer to this overview for more information about the projects (available in Norwegian only). Please see the programme's webpages: www.forskningsradet.no/kulver

Projects under the KULVER programme have produced important, relevant knowledge about cultural values and assigning cultural values. The studies have mainly focused on processes and activities that tend not to be included in more economic-instrumental and technological research on value creation because they address cultural values and symbolic resources. Research under the KULVER programme has nonetheless shed light on the complex interaction between these dimensions and other societal processes related to resource distribution and priorities, status hierarchies and power, social structures, constructions of identity, and political choices. Some examples are provided to illustrate the wide range of research topics:

The project *Routes, Roads and Landscapes: aesthetic practices en route, 1750-2015*, Oslo School of Architecture and Design, has studied the aesthetisation of the modern landscape and the relationship between routes, roads and landscapes. The project is based on a diverse array of material which spans a period from the royal voyages of the 1700s to the expansion of roads and railways in the 1800s to modern motorways and tourist routes. The history of the Norwegian landscape is largely a history of roads and railways – a narrative about how the landscape has been viewed, by whom, and from where. The project shows that road expansion, also at its most utilitarian, has important aesthetic dimensions. Aesthetic considerations come into play when roads are planned and built. Roads are also critical for how the landscape is perceived and assigned value as an aesthetic and experiential resource, which in turn has economic significance.

Muslim devotional practices, aesthetics and cultural formation in migrancy is a multidisciplinary project that analyses aesthetisation as part of the devotional practices in the Muslim world. The project has studied how religious values are conveyed across cultures and how they are the object of change. Especially relevant is the tension between what is perceived as tradition and contemporary needs and demands. The project illustrates how devotional practices are not only a religious, but also an aesthetic matter. Religious practice serves as a concrete acting out of devotion, identity and cultural character. In this way the practices and their material and sensory expressions become an important part of social interaction, both within the religious group and externally in communication with the surrounding society. The project was carried out at CMI – Chr. Michelsen Institute.

The project *Ibsen between Cultures* has focused on contemporary Ibsen productions in China, India and Bangladesh. These are countries with solid Ibsen traditions. The project has studied the Scandinavian tradition for performing “A Doll’s House” on stage by using cartographic programs on extensive repertoire data. This has made it possible to show that a number of visual instruments – decorations, gestures, movements, etc. – have been maintained by professional and familial connections dating all the way back to the first performances in Copenhagen and Christiania in 1879–1880, but all of which ended at the same time, in 1991. At the same time, local adaptations are also made so that the performances become a fusion of different theatre cultures. Ibsen’s plays are produced because they are regarded as relevant and may be used to problematise important issues in the local culture. In some cases global forces come into play, e.g. the movement of the Ibsen drama between cultures is influenced by imperialism, technological development, power relations. In Norway, Ibsen is used in cultural diplomacy to promote Norwegian interests and more universal values. The project has been based at the University of Oslo, with a wide array of international partners.

Ruin Memories: Materiality, Aesthetics and the Archaeology of the Recent Past is an international research project based at UiT The Arctic University of Norway. The project has explored modern ruin landscapes in various parts of Europe and the US. Modernity is seldom associated with ruins, which invoke thoughts of the distant past and monumental buildings. Despite this, never have so many ruins been created, so many things discarded and rendered superfluous, and so many places destroyed as today. This project has studied modern ruins – run-down fisheries, closed residence halls, derelict factories, prison camps and discarded objects from our recent past – using archaeological methods and a theoretical perspective on memory. This challenges us to reflect on basic questions in our politics of memory and in our daily lives. What has the potential to generate memories? What has cultural value? Where is the boundary between contaminating rubbish and cultural heritage monuments? Why do we perceive modern ruins so differently and consistently negatively compared with the ruins from antiquity and prehistoric times? What should we take care of and what should we allow to fall into decay? The project emphasises the potential of modern ruins to awaken a material memory. Ruins, deserted places and abandoned things provide insight into the forgotten human fates and the fascinating afterlife of things.

Through projects such as these, research under the KULVER programme shows both that cultural values and symbolic interaction have significant impact on social, political and economic conditions and that these dimensions are tightly woven together in a complex fabric. Knowledge about these conditions typically does not figure in studies of a more

quantitative and general nature, but is brought to light through a humanities-oriented approach.

Performance indicators

Completed doctoral degrees: 3 Ph.D.s (2 women, 1 man) and 1 art degree (man)

Scientific publication

Articles in anthologies:	331
Articles in periodicals and series:	253
Published monographs:	40

Other publication/dissemination activity:

New publication in the media:	348
Popular science publications:	256
Dissemination, vis-à-vis the general public and specific target groups	778

Many research fellows have taken leaves of absence during the project period, resulting in a postponement of the project completion date. To date, four research fellows have defended their doctoral theses and one has defended an artistic development project. The information is taken from final reports submitted by the projects, as well as the most recent project reports submitted up until 1 October 2013. Some projects have not been concluded, and more results are expected during 2013 and 2014.

Overall assessment and future challenges

Overall assessment of progress, achievement of objectives and benefit

The KULVER programme's overall objective has been to enhance and further develop cultural research through basic studies on the theme of assigning cultural values with a focus on aesthetisation/aesthetic practices. The programme has sought to generate knowledge about how cultural phenomena are assigned value and how cultural value is changed, displaced, transferred and acquired. The use of the “-ing” form in the programme's title (“assigning cultural values”) indicates that the programme has given priority to studies of processes over studies of objects.

New knowledge

The programme's project portfolio has reflected a common, fundamental understanding of knowledge in the field. This has been highlighted through the focus on aesthetisation defined as sensory understanding – that is, how we acquire knowledge through the use of the senses. The term “aesthetics” refers in a more narrow sense to the philosophy of art, and in colloquial language it refers most often to that which is beautiful or flawless. In research, however, it has become more common to understand the term as encompassing how knowledge entails not only rationality, but also experience, understanding and assessment. Accordingly,

“aesthetisation” indicates a knowledge concept that humanities scholars find useful. Research under the programme has focused on aesthetisation/aesthetic practice by 1) encompassing much more than what we call art, 2) referencing more than what we find beautiful and lovely, 3) taking a critical approach to accepted truths and 4) involving all of the senses. Moreover, 5) aesthetic practice in the sense of artistic practice has been studied as a source of knowledge. All of these aspects are part of the common foundation for the knowledge that the KULVER programme’s project portfolio has helped to document, analyse and develop.

Composition and added value of the project portfolio

The project portfolio has encompassed all six of the priority research areas described in the work programme. The distribution among them has been good, often within the individual projects as well. Cultural heritage and to some extent the construction of identity have been focal points. In general, historical issues have played a prominent role in the project portfolio. Here are some examples of how the projects have been divided among the programme’s six priority research areas:

Artistic fields: All of the projects that have studied art have been oriented towards factors that affect value assessments, whether this involves gender codes in art, the artist’s choice of materials, handicrafts or recycled matter. An innovative aspect of the programme has been the evidence of the often intricate intertwining of artistic expressions, politics and technology, and how art can have an unexpected connection with “hard” material realities such as roads and railways, rubbish and factories.

Everyday life: Studies of the production of meaning in art and literature, television and the public debate have shown how social and political agendas change the conditions for and value of e.g. intimacy. In addition, our understanding of noisy surroundings and what we think of as unwanted noise, what we regard as music, and what we find pleasant and disturbing are determined by social and political agendas. Researchers under the KULVER programme have helped to increase insight into such phenomena.

Forms of knowledge: Knowledge institutions and forms of knowledge affect how we perceive animals through the standardisation to which they contribute. Studies of this phenomenon have given rise to unexpected approaches to and new reflections on microfauna and the significance of exhibition technologies. Several projects have focused on the interplay between various knowledge practices and forms of knowledge, e.g. the interaction between museums, the artistic field and digitalisation practice. The institutional opposition to scientific thematisations of gender when the modern university emerged has been studied through fresh perspectives based on new combinations of philosophical traditions.

Cultural heritage and the politics of memory: The programme has drawn particular attention to the museum as an institution. The results from many of the projects which directly and indirectly touch on this thematic area should be of great interest for cultural policy. Almost all of the projects address the issue of identity in some way or another, including how issues of identity are politicised. Fundamental questions have been raised about which objects are given status as cultural heritage monuments, and thus which forces play a role in determining our perception of history. In this way, this kind of cultural self-reflection takes on both contemporary and historical significance.

Construction of identities: Research in this area may be summarised as the study of 1) phenomena in which aesthetisation has played a role in constructing identity, and 2) complex issues of identity from the perspective of aesthetisation. Examples of the first are two projects that have explored religious practice and one project that has investigated how the concept of what it means to be a cultured individual and aesthetisation of the modern man has contributed to the marginalisation of women in academia. Examples of the second are a study of the growing importance of fatherhood and how intimacy is expressed in literature, film and the public sphere. How identity is represented and aestheticised in exhibitions has also been a topic of study.

Interaction between artistic fields and other fields of practice: One study shows how scientific images and aesthetic practice appear to be inextricably linked to each other. It sheds light on knowledge dissemination through artistic experience, which appears to be a growing tendency. Moreover, case studies have shown that aesthetics, art and literature play a major role in the way we negotiate boundaries and how we develop new concepts about boundaries. Modern design has also been explored through a study of the interface between industrial production and the transport sector.

In spite of the broad range of topics and objects of study among the projects, the programme's focus on assigning cultural values and aesthetisation has forged ties between the projects. This has given a sound basis for cooperation and exchange, and has contributed to the programme's added value. There are three examples of new topics that have emerged which cut across the priority research areas described in the work programme: 1) the role of gender codes in our value assessments within the artistic field, the public sphere and academia, 2) how the museum as an institution contributes to multi-faceted knowledge production related to aesthetisation, technology, storage, identity development and as political change agents, 3) value-oriented changes in what is regarded as rubbish and junk on the one hand and cultural heritage monuments, art and design on the other. The fact that these three areas have emerged and been studied is evidence that important new knowledge has been generated beyond the knowledge originally sought in the work programme.

In many humanities research groups, monographs confer the most prestige internationally. The most important function of cooperative projects in these groups is to create an inspiring, challenging environment for individual researchers. In other groups, project work is more prominent. For both types of groups, the fact that many networks have been established between KULVER projects is a good sign. For example, there has been cooperation on doctoral education seminars and publications. The programme seminars have helped to facilitate this. According to the feedback received, participants have found that the programme's overall thematic focus has made the programme seminars relevant and useful. Switching between lectures and group work on specific cases has worked well and contributed to network-building.

Relevance

The issue of relevance in the humanities was a topic of discussion in one of the programme seminars. Relevance may be understood in several ways. In some contexts it is only considered to be a question of knowledge that is directly applicable or useful for government authorities and trade and industry, but the word "relevance" also indicates that something has significance, that it is important for the evaluation of something, and the Latin *relevare* can

mean “to lift up again”. This gets at the heart of a programme such as the KULVER programme, which entails the assigning of cultural values. In other words, the term “relevance” points not only towards the applicability of research, but also towards the responsibility of research with regard to which cultural phenomena it lifts up and which it allows to lie. Relevant research becomes future research that contributes to our cultural self-understanding by showing how our understanding of the present is dependent on our understanding of the past and how the geographic location from which culture is regarded is significant. The KULVER programme is a basic research programme, and a key objective has been to promote high-quality research and enhance humanities-oriented cultural research. The programme’s research activity and research results are also relevant by having contributed to the documentation, analysis and interpretation of cultural phenomena and the understanding of these, and thus has helped to create a knowledge base that is necessary for policy development concerning culture and research.

Interdisciplinarity

The KULVER programme has largely achieved its objective of promoting multi- and interdisciplinary cooperation. Interdisciplinarity has been a key aspect of activities under the programme. This was also explained and discussed at a programme seminar. There are several variations of interdisciplinarity:

- Multidisciplinarity, in which various subject areas contribute to a research project from their own perspective. This means that studies are conducted parallel to each other.
- Cross-disciplinarity, in which various disciplines cooperate so that they complement each other without extending beyond their own disciplinary boundaries. The focus is then on working from a common theoretical foundation and the operationalisation of concepts, but the empirical basis is usually different.
- Transdisciplinarity, in which researchers move outside of their own boundaries and enter into other subject areas. This approach entails risk, but it also has great potential for innovation.

Interdisciplinarity under the auspices of the KULVER programme has primarily been cross-disciplinary in nature. However, some projects have also come close to transdisciplinarity. It is too early to assess whether a bold approach has paid off with innovative results, and a final assessment must be made primarily by the respective research groups. However, boldness and a willingness to take risk may have its own value independent of the results because it allows for new ways of posing questions and thus may have value for future research.

Dissemination, internationalisation and publication

Adequate funding was set aside to facilitate dissemination and internationalisation, and the programme board is very pleased with the result. As mentioned previously, several of the dissemination projects have been innovative and received special recognition. A programme seminar was dedicated to academic writing, and included a discussion of the grey zones between dissemination and research in the humanities. Several dissemination projects have been innovative, in part through cooperation between researchers and artists. In this sense, the programme has extended the boundaries and shown new opportunities for research dissemination.

The programme has also had a strong international profile in terms of study objects, partners and publications. The publication of a scientific anthology in English under the auspices of the programme has sought to link these two objectives. An independent editor was engaged to ensure the progress and quality of the publication and to distinguish between the roles of the funding entity and editor.

A final analysis of the programme's results can only be conducted when all of the projects have been concluded. Compared with the previous KULFO programme on cultural research, however, there is now already a clear trend towards a considerable increase in the production of scientific articles, whereas the number of monographs has remained roughly the same.

Future challenges

Several years ago the Research Council initiated a study and report on the knowledge needs in the cultural sector, which was published in 2003. The report called for research on the cultural sector. The need was discussed by Cathrine Holst in her brief evaluation of the Research Council's previous KULFO programme on cultural research. Holst's conclusion was that this is not a knowledge need that is more naturally addressed to the humanities than the social sciences. Nonetheless, the KULVER programme has generated humanities-oriented research in three of the six focus areas identified in the report, namely, "aesthetic practices in movement", "institutions in the cultural field" and "cultural internationalisation and globalisation". Several projects have discussed factors and produced knowledge that was sought in the report. Yet as the Holst report concludes, it appears that the most favourable situation for ensuring that the knowledge needs of research on the cultural sector can be met is that knowledge development must take place through cooperation between humanities scholars and social scientists. The Programme on Cultural Conditions underlying Social Change (SAMKUL) has a work programme which makes this possible.

The KULVER programme has garnered great interest from researchers and succeeded with its objective to reach the humanities research communities. The enhanced profile of the research field and the added value achieved through a programme initiative has made a positive contribution to cultural research. The thematic focus of the KULVER programme has also enabled the exploration of interfaces between subject areas, between science and art, and between research and dissemination. It will be important that funding opportunities for this type of research are made available in the future as well.

The programme's portfolio has no obvious deficiencies or gaps. However, it is clear that interdisciplinarity occurs mainly between the humanities and social sciences. If it is seen as beneficial for this boundary to be crossed and project cooperation to be extended to more research areas, it may be necessary to implement special structural measures in which the reward for those who dare to take on the challenge is great enough for researchers to find it worth the trouble. It is clear that this will require a special effort. However, it appears that research of the type conducted under the KULVER programme, with its focus on assigning value and the knowledge we acquire through our senses, in combination with medical and natural science research, is what is needed in order to solve some of the future challenges with regard to value choices, ethics, sustainable development and the like. In this context the focus is on individual cases and the assessments that are already inherent in how we perceive the world through our senses and ascribe meaning to it – which the KULVER programme has helped to document and analyse.

Attachment

Projects funded under the KULVER programme

Researcher projects

Ibsen Between Cultures

Project manager: Professor Frode Helland, University of Oslo

<http://www.hf.uio.no/is/english/research/projects/ibc/>

Routes, Roads, and Landscapes: aesthetic practices en route, 1750-2015

Project manager: Professor Mari Hvattum, The Oslo School of Architecture and Design

<http://routes.no/>

Exhibiting Europe. The construction of European integration and identity in the Musée de l'Europe

Project manager: Ass. Professor Stefan Krankenhagen, NTNU - Norwegian University of Science and Technology

<http://www.ntnu.edu/ifs/research/exhibiting>

Being Together - Remaking Public Intimacies

Project manager: Researcher Wencke Mühleisen, University of Oslo

<http://www.stk.uio.no/English/intimacies.html>

Patterns of Cultural Valuation. Priorities and aesthetics in exhibitions of identity in museums.

Project manager: Professor Saphinaz-Amal Naguib, University of Oslo

http://www.hf.uio.no/ikos/forskning/prosjekter/kulturell_verdsetting/index.html

Animals as Things and Animals as Signs

Project manager: Professor Liv Emma Thorsen, University of Oslo

<http://www.hf.uio.no/ikos/forskning/prosjekter/dyrsomting/index.html>

Art Value: A Research Project on Trash and Readymades, Art and Ceramics

Project manager: Professor Jorunn Veiteberg, Bergen Academy of Art and Design

<http://www.k-verdi.no/>

Contemporary Soundspaces: Acoustemology and Musical Agency

Project manager: Professor Hans Weisethaunet, University of Oslo

<http://www.hf.uio.no/imv/english/research/projects/soundspaces/index.html>

Inside out. New images and imaginations of the body

Project manager: Professor Merete Lie, NTNU - Norwegian University of Science and Technology

Border Aesthetics

Project manager: Ass. Professor Johan H. Schimanski, University of Tromsø

<http://uit.no/hsl/borderaesthetics>

Ruin Memories: Materiality, Aesthetics and the Archaeology of the Recent Past

Project manager: Professor Bjørnar J. Olsen, University of Tromsø

<http://ruinmemories.org/>

Muslim devotional practices, aesthetics and cultural formation in migrancy
Project manager: Researcher Nefissa Naguib, CMI - Chr. Michelsen Institute
<http://www.cmi.no/research/project/?1464=muslim-devotional-practices-aesthetics>

Conflicts and Negotiations: Gender and Value in Art and Aesthetics
Project manager: Ass. Professor Anne Birgitte Rønning, University of Oslo
<http://www.hf.uio.no/ilos/forskning/prosjekter/forhandlinger-strid/index.html>

Religion as Aestheticizing Practice
Project manager: Professor Pål Steinar Repstad, University of Agder
http://www.uia.no/no/portaler/om_universitetet/humaniora_og_pedagogikk/nordisk_og_mediefag/forskning/resepe

Alumination: Design as Aesthetic Practice and Cultural Valuation in the Aluminium Industry
Project manager: Ass. Professor Kjetil Fallan, University of Oslo
<http://www.hf.uio.no/ifikk/forskning/prosjekter/alumination/index.html>

Postdoctoral Fellowships

The Ambiguities of Sex and Gender in the Aesthetic Theories of Bildung
Project manager: Gry Cathrin Brandser, Uni Research Rokkan Centre

Time and Aesthetic Value in Early Modern Literary Culture
Project manager: Tina Skouen, University of Oslo
<http://www.hf.uio.no/ilos/english/research/projects/haste/>