What does it mean to render research? How does the rendering of research typically reinforce certain limitations of thought and action? We ask these questions in the context of more and more demands on researchers to produce academic outputs in standardised forms, in peer-reviewed journals and such like that are legitimised by normative values. So, then, how to render research otherwise?

To clarify what is meant by “rendering”, we are curious how research takes material forms, how it reaches its public, and is granted approval by academic gatekeepers. To render, then, is to give something “cause to be” or “hand over” (from the Latin reddere “give back”) and enter into an obligation to do or make something like a decision. More familiar perhaps in computing, to render is to take an image or file and convert it into another format or apply a modification of some kind, or in the case of 3D animation or scanning. To render is to animate it or give it volume.

These initial thoughts set the scene for a number of speculations on what it might mean to render research, to give it volumetric form.

[1] In “Rendering Volumetrically, Rendering Queerly”, Vítor Blanco-Fernández argues for 3D/volumetric aesthetics as an ideal space for queer research. Rendering might also be described as a supply chain problem, something Miriam Matthiessen and Anne Lee Steele claim in the context of the current widespread shortages of goods, and the inherent difficulties of the supply of research objects. Or is part of the problem how we quantify research, what is considered to be research or not? According to One Research Collective (Andrea Macías-Yañez, Séverine Chapelle, Caterina Selva, Giovanna Reder, Sanjana Varghese) “waste pedagogy” can help draw attention to the ways in which academic waste can take collective and relational forms, remaining more open-ended and messy to amplify the in-between space of thinking, feeling and knowing. Their contribution is suitably concise.

Contributors approach the rendering of research from a wide range of perspectives. Live-action role-playing gaming (LARP) can, according to Malthe Stavning Erslev, be understood as a practice of mimesis, as an effective way to render research (in this case relating to the design of artificial intelligence systems). Similarly (although in the context of security vision) Ruben van de Ven and Ildikó Zonga Plájás look to diagramming as a means to shift attention to process, and to “con-figure” complex, sometimes even incompatible concepts and narratives in a shared space. Sheung Yiu describes his “Hyperimage Index” in which collective indexing is offered as an alternative to academic publishing, suggesting new ways of knowledge making and community building to address the distributed nature of algorithmic image systems. There is a more explicit connection between research and social movements in Hanna Grześkiewicz’s case study of the 2020/21 Women’s Strike protests in Poland, questioning the purpose of archiving and to what extent artistic research can be a form of knowledge-development, and more importantly a rendering of research with political effects. In the context of the proliferation of everyday AI agents such as virtual assistants and chatbots, Alexandra Anikina introduces the term “procedural animism” to rethink the questions of governance and relationality unfolding between humans and non-humans, and ultimately to render political imaginaries that offer the potential for alternative futures, thus giving shape to a (socialist) AI.

Clearly there is space for more dynamic and messy forms of research than those developed in typical academic journals and the reputation economy of academic publishing. We hasten to add that this issue of APRJA (indeed all issues) is part of a longer process
of development and reflection, which includes an open call for participation, a live-streamed online event as part of transmediale festival in January 2022,[2] as well as a workshop taking place at École de recherche graphique (ERG), in Brussels, March 2022.

The performative qualities of rendering research are also evident in “Re:searching Together (in Two Acts)”, the visual “scriptal remains” of two performances presented by artist-researchers Clareese Hill and Elly Clarke from both the live streamed presentation at transmediale and at ERG. And, perhaps, rendering research is best exemplified by the working practices leading to this publication. For instance, in the use of a web-based collaborative real-time editor (or ‘pad’) through which participants — both presenters and the audience — publish their thoughts as a collective performance, attempting to define rendering research in real-time, and in silence (without the authority of the master’s voice), to unsettle static forms of research exchange.[3] Moreover, the workshop at ERG was part of the iterative process and resulted in a risograph publication produced within the time-frame of the workshop itself. [4] The rendering of research in this case makes explicit the process through which the publication was produced and made publicly available (using free software tools and scripts).

— Aarhus/London, Autumn 2022

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Notes


[3] Hosted by Varia, the pad used as part of the livestreamed event can be found at https://pad.vvvvaria.org/rendering.

defeating the fear of blank page by writing this thank you +1 +1 +1 +1 developing new or old paradigms that break out of tired instrumental forms of research – less problem-solving and more problem-posing speaking into the silence allowing a silence sitting with the silence completely difficult in urban settings. I find that there is broader need to empower people through "breath work" without sounding too "new age"

learning from the silence +1, i often feel so much pressure to have constant speech and sound in the digital space, and to use a voice that feels like a odd, customer-service version of my own – yes! the service provider in a shop that is not our own, selling ourselves lurking with the silence yes also very much lurking. what is it to lurk in the digital realm? the default state at some point you need to pee.lol yes.

ambient sound+1 in translation is like those youtube videos 'cafe working ambiance environment'yes! keys tapping. a hum... sounds from another era. 'office sounds 4 hours' hehe. i reckon that'll have a following...tap tap click click From speaking aloud, to writing within to typing together. enjoying someone's type/taps/texts. It's stopped.
writing alongside people we do not know.
a masked ball of the (post) pandemic 2020s. Creating (digital) space, savoring it Research rendering and trying to unseat how academica operates is an important issue as people are leaving these academic epicenters such as NYC, London, LA for a better quality of life and how life is not about the performace of it all but having the space to rest and not have to perform. How space impacts research, what is research it laying in the grass a sort of research? let's break out of the authorship nonsense – and reputation economie sof research; yes please! while acknowledgement and credit for intellectual work are important, it is also urgent to operate beyond the narrative framework of "the hero's journey" both as subject and object of narration in academic research i agree totally with this. +1

How can we break out of academic engagement when the language of academia is one that often disenfranchizes as much as it empowers? (what often feels like its innate inaccessibility)+1+1+1+1+1+1+1+1 +1 +1
Isn't it about introducing, or re-scripting modes of articulation – beyond the presentation/slideshow/paper/conference, etc? Existing forms are encoded by the instutions.

yes also at least choosing arxiv instead of academia.edu [ need platforms that enable academic exchange freely] yes – platform use as a form of politics, pads instead of google docs, etc.? The restrictions of participating in academic / para-academic research means that compromises are made all over – linguistic, methodology, partnerships... it's self-censorship for economic survival... trying to creatively and secretly make spaces for moments of joy / resistance / justice.

Figure 1 & 2: Extracts from pad and risograph cover print (overleaf).