RAPP Lab

Reflection-based Artistic Professional Practice

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

01.09.2020 – 31.08.2023

Collaboration & Communication

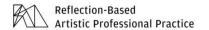## Part of the "Module Handbook" (Intellectual Output 2)

Imprint

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LAB 1 | OSLO

**Developing Critical Reflection
in Artistic Research**

March 2021 at Norges musikhøgskole,
NMH Oslo, Norway (Online)

Collaboration and communication

Before the Lab, we established contact with the participants via 3 information letters. In these letters we explained the different phases of the Lab, briefly presented the Lab programme, the team members and prepared for practical and technical aspects of the online Lab. The letters can be found under Documentation[1].

Collaboration and engaging in each other's processes were central aspects of this Lab. As described in the introductory text, the second phase, **Critical Reflection as Processing, emphasize critical dialogue with fellow participants as a valuable tool in all of the second phase's sub-phases** *deliberation*, *clarification* and *confirmation*.

Each of the participants was encouraged to submit text-, audio- or video material coming out from each of the workshop sessions. We encouraged the participants to contribute with raw, unfiltered output that served as small glimpses into each of the individual processes. The material was communicated and shared in a "process canvas" on NMH's portal in Research Catalogue – a multifaceted canvas, showing and exemplifying very different kinds of responses to the workshops specifically, and to reflection in artistic practice in general.

Collaboration was also essential in the themed breakout-groups. In the breakout-groups, we opened the floor to each participant to discuss ideas they submitted when registering for NMH's RAPP Lab. Each participant was given 10-15 minutes to present their ideas and then open out to the group to collaborate on *deliberating*, *clarifying* and *confirming*. Moderators wrote short accounts of these sessions and uploaded them to the process canvas in Research Catalogue as part of documenting the Lab and its processes.

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[1] https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/1673421/1733904

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LAB 2 | GHENT

Developing Cognitive Skills for Artistic Research in Music

September 2021 at Orpheus Instituut, Ghent, Belgium

Collaboration and Communication

Students are returned to the liberating joy of learning, an experience far back in the memory of researchers at this advanced level. Much education at a higher level and in research contexts is conducted in the spirit of guided co-discovery. Here, the clear distinction of students and teachers thus comes almost as a shock – but they have as a common purpose the process of learning, understanding and finding new relevance. For the duration of the project, this is a shared journey, and one that brought as much satisfaction and simulation to the teachers as to the students.

The openness of both students and teachers are key to engendering the trust necessary for the success of this project. The ethos of the week is set out in the pamphlet inviting applications. At the start of the week itself, the director, Jonathan Impett, gave an introduction to the ideas behind this project, to the structure of the bootcamp itself, and to the selection and relevance of the subjects to be studied.

The commonalities between the subjects taught, and their wide relevance to projects and issues in artistic research, emerge as lively debating points for students and teachers alike as they explore these areas together.
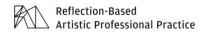
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LAB 3 | COLOGNE

**Embodied Reflection
in Artistic Practice**

May 2022 at Hochschule für Musik und
Tanz Köln, Germany

Collaboration and Communication

Collaboration is at the center of this Lab: Participants are invited to collaborate with each other as a community of practice, although there are units involved in which everybody is practicing and focusing on their own realizations.

Collaboration as a pathway to new knowledge

In relations with others (other bodies, other ideas, humans and non-human things) we start to discover ourselves in new ways. In this specific Lab environment, we aimed to create collaborations in which the bodily perceptions and the body as storage and medium of knowledge is in the center. For example, in workshop part 2 "The art is already in us. Please stay, we will change" participants were invited to mirror sound-motives in daily bodily gestures (waving, shaking hands, hands on the head etc.). Through this immediate mirroring of sound and gesture as a collaborative doing, sounds and gestures were enriched through auditive, visual and haptic levels, which changed the initial sound/gesture.

Collaboration as a frame for creating a safe space

Doing explorative and developmental work means overcoming one's own comfort zone. We designed learning settings, in which the atmosphere was always low-threshold but in a professional frame. Beginnings are especially crucial moments in which a feeling of trust and openness should be created: through words, through own stories, through space and interior. Acting as an experimental collective, in which every person is doing something new, something crazy, something weird, is one of the central parameters to create a safe space.

And in this safe space you can give up your own comfort zone, your normal routines, your main discipline or instrument.

Take risks: Body as medium for communication

How can we communicate with and through our body? Or through taste?

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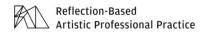Co-funded by the
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How can we lose common ways of communication through words? On which parameters do we trust?

"When we all take risks. We participate mutually in the work of creating a learning community. We discover together that we can be vulnerable in the space of shared learning, that we can take risks. Engaged pedagogy emphasizes mutual participation because it is the movement of ideas, exchanged by everyone, that forges a meaningful working relationship between everyone in the classroom." (Bell Hooks, *Teaching Critical Thinking*, 2010, 21)

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LAB 4 | VIENNA

**Transculturality
in Artistic Research**

May 2022 at mdw - Universität für Musik und
darstellende Kunst Vienna, Austria

Collaboration and Communication

The organizers of Lab 4 encouraged the workshop leaders to combine theoretical and practical workshop elements. (See <u>Meta-Methodology</u> above for details.) This resulted in multiple ways for the participants to collaborate and communicate.

Here are some comments of workshop leaders regarding Collaboration and Communication, which show the diversity of reflection of the workshop leaders, but also reveal some common tendencies:

Bhagwati: Theory-guided listening is essential while responding sonically to both sounds and social constellations in the room and outside.

Blume: I'm not sure if there is a specific "style" of communication. The session starts probably in a classical way, me talking and the participants listening. But there was then a place for Q&A, to give some feedback. The listening exercise part was definitely in another style, probably more "free", wherein the participants should participate much more.

Sakina: Unfortunately, Kurdish music and language have been subject to a very intensive policy of assimilation for a long time. Therefore, their written or recorded resources are very limited. Kurdish songs are often the only sources we can rely on. I tried to benefit from the songs and the limited number of field studies on Kurdish music. Unfortunately, due to the lack of sufficient material, we focused on viewing and commenting on videos from a few regions that could provide a practical example of traditional chanting. The tradition of Dengbej is an important source that I rely on, for it presents the most vivid examples of historical narration through music. Once again, I saw this very clearly: music is not only music for the Kurds, but also a very important area that ensures the survival of a memory, culture and language.

Kislal: I really liked the composition of the attendees, who were professors, students and artists. So I saw there the possibility for conversations between different perspectives, different point of views in small groups. After reading them my letter "the questioning the state of right now and before", the attendees of the workshop were asked to come together in smaller groups (4-5 persons) to discuss what they had heard. They were asked to choose whether to take some of the topics which they were interested in and discuss the answers for the questions with their expertise in Art/institutions/collectives/processes, or to ask new questions which are relevant
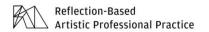
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for their jobs/works. That gave every of them to get involved with questioning the "reality/norms".

Maria Do Mar: I prepared a lecture with lots of examples from the cultural world and combined it with elements of small group work that allowed the participants to translate ad hoc what they had just heard into their own context.

Erdödi: In my workshops I work with a non-hierarchic, eye-level approach to communication and collaboration, always ensuring that there is a possibility to ask questions, and creating space and time for peer-to-peer work in pairs or smaller groups (see above), with situational exercises that help transmit my initial impulse/lecture. Although practice-based, it would remain abstract and theoretical without these hands-on situations that everyone can experience and experiment with.
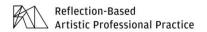
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LAB 5 | TALLINN

**Exploring Musical Identities:
Autoethnography**

September 2022 at Eesti Muusika-ja
Teatriakadeemia Tallinn, Estonia

Communication and Collaboration

Healthy communication while collaborating clearly benefits from the ability to attentively listen. However, developing listening in our Lab revolved around the concept of identity. In placing identity as the focus we were not just asking our participants to reflect on their sense of Self, but also how this "self" projects meaning and filters the information it receives while engaged in discourse. Discussing complicated topics in a group often brings out tendencies to anticipate one's turn to speak, rephrase, and interpret at the expense of hearing full statements, guiding us towards an area of knowledge we already possess. In our collaborative sessions we encouraged separating the listening experience into three stages: receiving information, noticing our interpretations, and drawing conclusions. Creating that space between describing an experience and interpreting its meaning allows us to listen more deeply to the stories we tell ourselves and each other, revealing how the projection of our identity and culture produces meaning. In this sense, listening to the self while receiving information can be just as important as hearing the other's utterances.

Storytelling was used as a tool for developing such skills. Sharing an experience in narrative form is perhaps one of the oldest ways of transferring knowledge between subjects. It allows both the teller and the receiver to simultaneously reflect on their own interpretations of an event as well as, in intercultural environments, understand from where these interpretations might be stemming. It also allows us to synthesize our own experiences either through mutual or contradictory understandings of a narrative. By embracing the narrative vehicle for communication, a possibility for transmitting ideas opens up in artistic researchers that embraces artists' natural creative potential, allowing them to explore the playfulness and hyperbolic aspects of drafting a narrative while also retaining the gaze of a serious researcher. The collaboration of stories is an additional tool which can reveal the plurality of experience and stabilize our own perspectives.

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LAB 6 | ROME

**Conscious Improvisation:
A Deep and Functional Approach**

March 2023 at Conservatorio di musica
Santa Cecilia Rome, Italy

Collaboration and Communication

How do improvisation experiences help to develop the confidence needed to create authentic communication for authentic purposes?

According to Keith Sawyer[2], the key characteristics of improvisation include

• unpredictable outcome, rather than a scripted, known endpoint;

• moment-to-moment contingency: the next *dialogue* [emphasis added] turn depends on the one just before;

• open to *collaboration* [emphasis added];

• an oral performance, not a written product;

• embedded in the social context of the performance.

Similarly, the Lab 6 stressed the efficacy of collaboration especially because, in the cooperative learning environment established, students and teachers from the six partner institutions of the RAPP Lab project met students from the University RomaTre PhD, teachers from Italian conservatories and Italian universities.

In fact, in the working groups, participants faced how much improvising and interrelating (as each component of the Lab 6 interrelates with all the others) with other beings-bodies are entangled practices.

Collaboration and communication, in the broadest sense of both terms, are part of the same improvisational experience, especially in group contexts, this because "musical improvisation is an encounter. It is an encounter between sounds, bodies—both human and otherwise—and ideas. All these entities—Bruno Latour (2004, 237) calls them *actants*—are affected by this encounter, just as the encounter itself is influenced by the entities involved […and as consequence] we are incited to perform, to act, to react"[3].

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[2] R. Keith Sawyer, *Improvisation and Narrative. Narrative Inquiry*, 12 (2), p. 321, 2002 Amsterdam

[3] Vincent Meelberg, *Perform Now! The Ethics of Musical Improvisation* (pp.145-151) introduction, in Paulo de Assis & Paolo Giudici, editors. *Dark Precursor: Deleuze and Artistic Research*. Leuven University Press, 2017.

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The Lab 6 was also created thanks to the collaboration of the Music Education department of the Santa Cecilia Conservatory of Music which invited external teachers, experts and artists (Milena Cappabianca, Adriano Ercolani, Victor Vertunni, Manish Madankar, Valeria Vespaziani, Raffaele di Mauro, Nando Citarella, Marko Miladinović, Fiorella Battaglia), with internal funds. This created a fertile communication also with the internal teachers involved in the project (Carla Conti, Duilio D'Alfonso, Daniele Roccato). So that the RAPP Lab project has been well known also in the respective institutions to which all teachers belong. Moreover, students attending the first Italian PhD in "Cultures-practices-and-technologies-of-cinema-media-music-theater-and-dance"[4] (RomaTre - coordinator in collaboration with University of Teramo, Santa Cecilia Conservatory, National Academy of Dance, ABA Roma Fine art Academy) participated to all lectures and workshops.

For the members of an institution such the Conservatory of Music Santa Cecilia, that is aimed to internationalism, inclusiveness and interdisciplinarity the Lab 6 was an opportunity to concretely collaborate with the RAPP Lab's partners and to discuss relevant issues in improvisation, to apply methodological approaches and to envision future developments of the same field.

The communication among all participants took place, before during and after Lab 6. First by creating a mailing list and by signing up to the 'internal area' of the project website where they introduced each other, exchanged views. During Lab 6 the participants received daily emails, so-called 'info letters', to update them, to support them in the search for instruments (borrowed free of charge from the Santa Cecilia conservatory), to send news and warn them of materials uploaded to the internal area they had been prepared by teachers/artists. After the Lab 6, some students remained in concrete contact and communicated also for their participation in other initiatives (AEC's EPARM 2023).

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[4] https://filosofiacomunicazionespettacolo.uniroma3.it/ricerca/dottorato-di-ricerca/dottorato-di-ricerca-in-culture-pratiche-e-tecnologie-del-cinema-dei-media-della-musica-del-teatro-e-della-danza/