RAPP Lab

Reflection-based Artistic Professional Practice

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

01.09.2020 – 31.08.2023

Agency & Social Impact

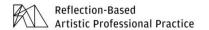Part of the "Module Handbook" (Intellectual Output 2)

Imprint

Authors

Evelyn Buyken, Hochschule für Musik und Tanz Köln, Germany
Carla Conti, Conservatorio di Musica Santa Cecilia, Rome, Italy
Darla Crispin, Norges musikhøgskole, NMH, Oslo, Norway
Sybille Fraquelli, Hochschule für Musik und Tanz Köln, Germany
Ivar Grydeland, Norges musikhøgskole, NMH, Oslo, Norway
Jonathan Impett, Orpheus Instituut Ghent, Belgium
Johannes Kretz, mdw – Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien, Austria
Theodore Parker, Eesti Muusika- ja Teatriakadeemia, Tallinn, Estonia

Editors

Evelyn Buyken, Hochschule für Musik und Tanz Köln, Germany
Sybille Fraquelli, Hochschule für Musik und Tanz Köln, Germany

Co-Editor

Stella Louise Göke, Hochschule für Musik und Tanz Köln, Germany

With contributions from

Peter Dejans, Orpheus Instituut Ghent, Belgium
Michelangelo Galeati, Conservatorio di Musica Santa Cecilia, Rome, Italy
Stefan Gies, Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC)
Kristel Pappel, Eesti Muusika- ja Teatriakadeemia, Tallinn, Estonia

Table of content

**Reflection-Based
Artistic Professional Practice**

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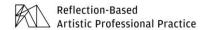Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

LAB 1 | OSLO

**Developing Critical Reflection
in Artistic Research**

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

Agency and Social impact

Agency and the potential social impact of critical reflection in artistic research, served as a premise for the Lab.

Reflection has, for roughly two decades, been a core element of what has come to be known as the "Nordic model of artistic research". When seeking to make their research relevant to their artistic practice, research fellows in the Norwegian tradition for artistic research, tends to direct their reflection in three primary strands:

- Relating one's own artistic practice to the surrounding field

- Relating one's own artistic practice to the problem of articulation [how to talk/communicate meaningfully about the inner workings of one's artistic practice]

- Tracing the relationship between one's own artistic practice and the personal experience of theoretical work and reflective work

These categories would probably spark universal recognition; they underline how reflection tends naturally towards thinking about relationships and they point up the crucial matter of context: one's own context within one's field; the artist's position and relevance in the context of society at large; and the place of practice in the context of theory and vice-versa. It is surely undeniable that, if we aspire to be both artists and researchers, we must acknowledge the situatedness of what we do, become conscious of the place of our work in relation to society's priorities and strive to unite the practices and theories upon which we build and rely.

Of course, not every act of reflection on artistic practice will necessarily lead to wholesale transformation of our ways of working or thinking – still less to some kind of social revolution! In reality, the more realistic hope might be for small incremental enhancements, each building upon its predecessors.

We return again and again to our points of origin, but never in the same way. This aspect of artistic research, the cyclically cumulative nature of its many practices, is also one of its most exciting features. It is also one of the most challenging: with each new project, the stakes are raised; we must strive to go further than the last time. But surely, that is precisely what all research demands of its exponents. Just as we speak of the 'frontiers' of science and scientific knowledge, we should accept the need for artistic research, too, to push at its boundaries and

Hochschule für
Musik und Tanz Köln   ORPHEUS   INSTITUUT   Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union   SANTA CECILIA   EESTI MUUSIKA- JA TEATRIAKADEEMIA   Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen   mdw universität für musik und darstellende kunst wien   Norges musikkhøgskole Norwegian Academy of Music

3

Reflection-Based Artistic Professional Practice

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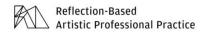of the European Union

seek to transcend them. Reflection, if applied rigorously, may be one of the more powerful items in our toolbox of devices and techniques for achieving this.

What this meant for us, in our Lab (and beyond), was a commitment to continue to reflect and to search. During the week we discussed and, in the process, learned more about ways to think and rethink, work and rework. It was not our aim to reach an end, but we had a series of adventures in the consideration of how critical reflection, in whatever shape the participants choose to engage with it, may have contributed to revivify the participants' artistic and research practices. Perhaps these experiences could also help us to feel more profoundly connected to a world that, even as we (still) continue to navigate through Covid and its consequences, surely needs its thoughtful artists more than ever, if it is to repair itself.

(Based on Darla Crispin's presentation)

.

Reflection-Based
Artistic Professional Practice

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

LAB 2 | GHENT

**Developing Cognitive Skills for
Artistic Research in Music**

September 2021 at Orpheus Instituut,
Ghent, Belgium

Agency and Social Impact

The goal of this project is to enhance the individual agency of research students by allowing them to reframe their work in the context of a wider cognitive-intellectual space. As well as informing their individual research, it is hoped that such an enhanced conceptual plasticity will contribute to change more broadly in both cultural and academic terms. It will help artist-researchers find new areas of commonality in a field seemingly characterised by intensely personal activities. This mirrors a need in contemporary art practices in general: to identify fundamental common issues and purpose amid an enormous variety if individual approach. In addition, the project shows a way in which teaching and learning can play a greater part in education at the most advanced level and in the most individual of contexts.

By example and experience, the project also becomes a course in successful teaching. It thus contributes to higher education more widely. The concept of 'lifelong learning' is not only an outreach activity; this project shows how intensive teaching can provide valuable stimulus to a group of people at varied moments in their individual trajectories.
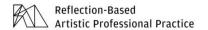
Reflection-Based
Artistic Professional Practice

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

LAB 3 | COLOGNE

**Embodied Reflection
in Artistic Practice**

May 2022 at Hochschule für Musik und
Tanz Köln, Germany

Agency and Social Impact

All Labs in the RAPP Lab project encourage perspectives through which students and teachers find creative answers to their future role in society. To strengthen the students' capacity to think "out of the box" and to find own their profile as artists influences their employability. In this specific Lab on embodied reflective practices, we aimed to analyze which role the bodily perceptions have for this individual and manifold process while "becoming an artist".

Leaving the comfort zone

Acting with their bodies (e.g. to look or behave "strangely") invites students to lose their hidden assumptions, how they "should" have acted accordingly to trained codes or learned techniques. This continuous stepping out of the comfort zone can be regarded as a social learning process, in which the "normal" can be critically questioned. The Lab community offered a context in which the questioning of the so-called "normal" can be experienced in a collective and participative way.

Backwards instead of forwards

In the very original sense of reflection as leaning backwards to oneself we regard the awareness of bodily perceptions and bodily sensitivities as a basic competence. In connection with the term research (lat. ricercare), we propose an understanding of searching back, to search backward, to search behind ones back, or to search our way back to something. We might also emphasise the connection to "seek for" from Latin "cercare" which also means to wander and to traverse also in a circle; we want to provide spaces in which it is not only ok to walk in circles, but positively welcome.

Bending back while so much in our current social and political situation is about moving (quickly) forward. Because reflection takes time and requires a slowing down, a particular mode of attention … To get intense with something.
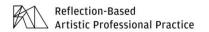
**Reflection-Based
Artistic Professional Practice**

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

LAB 4 | VIENNA

**Transculturality
in Artistic Research**

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

Agency and Social Impact

The workshop leaders were focusing on different aspects, which are exemplified as follows:

A) Finding creative sonic responses to what has been perceived:

Bhagwati: In my workshop, participants were asked to embrace their own agency by conscious acts of attentive, guided listening to one another – and to find creative sonic responses to what they perceived. In doing so, they transitioned from receptive listening to creative listening – thus gaining in agency and social interconnection.

Blume: I'm not sure if I could talk about a social impact through a workshop of a few hours, even if listening can be the beginning of a change. Listening to the other (human or non-human) means to take him/her/it in consideration, to give a place to exist… listening can probably be part of the change.

B) Curiosity

Sakina: The fact that I don't have an academic role in the field worried me a bit. However, I saw clearly that the practical transfer of knowledge should not be underestimated. It was very valuable that the participants had a high level of interest and focused on it with curiosity. Our workshop was interactive, very friendly and maintained personal communication at eye level

Kislal: In the art sector, we are at the point of changing the perspectives, at the phase of unlearning what we had until now thought to be the "norms", the usual daily life. This new situation should be observed, and accompanied with open discussions till we (as usual) find the new "normal" of our job. There is wholesale change in society and I believe that Art can manage this transition phase, this time of the unlearning with a creativity, and respect. And before we learn more, we can only ask the right questions.
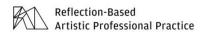
Reflection-Based
Artistic Professional Practice

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

C) Sharpening critical thinking – rethinking of one owns attachments

Maria Do Mar: The workshop had the concrete, direct aim of introducing the students to postcolonial approaches and their references to art and culture. In addition, I wanted to sharpen their critical thinking so that, for example, they would be empowered to rethink their own complicated attachments to a Eurocentric canon.

D) Agency, self-determination

Erdödi: My method of collaborative learning through the active involvement of the participants in the proposed exercises also fosters *agency*. At the same time, the exercises themselves revolve around how we think about agency and also how we conceptualize collaborations in a way that affords space for the agency of the different collaborators, and does not prefigure what their agency should be in a given process, but remains open to their agency unfolding in the dialogic process of getting to know one another and understanding in what way (with what content, in what form, with what mode of participation) they would like to contribute to the project.

This also connects to the social impact of such a methodology of collaboration, as it enables the people involved in the project be self-determined, often challenging the normative roles and status otherwise attributed to them by society and their local community. Sharing such a working method with the workshop participants enables them to devise collaborations in a more context-responsive and empowering way, attending to different practices of listening (see LITTLE BOOK ON LEARNING) that are conducive to allowing different bodies/forms of knowledge to be articulated.

Hochschule für Musik und Tanz Köln   ORPHEUS INSTITUUT   Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union   SANTA CECILIA   EESTI MUUSIKA- JA TEATRIAKADEEMIA   Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen   mdw universität für musik und darstellende kunst wien   Norges musikkhøgskolen Norwegian Academy of Music

8

**Reflection-Based
Artistic Professional Practice**

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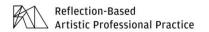of the European Union

LAB 5 | TALLINN

**Exploring Musical Identities:
Autoethnography**

September 2022 at Eesti Muusika-ja
Teatriakadeemia Tallinn, Estonia

Agency and Social Impact

Reflecting on the environments in which we find ourselves living, working, educating, and studying can reveal to us our own sense of agency, as well as clarify areas in our lives where we may or may not have impact on our surroundings. Applying this towards spaces in which we feel an inability to express our sense of individuality, creativity, and communication can highlight for our communities areas of culture which may need further development. Are all voices heard in every space? Should every voice be heard in every space, and if not, which ones are required for executing impact or change? It is important that individuals first reflect on their environments in order to more adequately identify where and what types of impacts could be undertaken in improving their communities. In our Lab, lessons were conducted in various institutionalized spaces and, whether directly or indirectly, we asked our guests to reflect on their own personal relationship with similar surroundings as well as the symbolic nature of common academic surroundings. This could mean reflecting on the sense of agency in a large institutional concert hall or how it feels to speak about artistic ideals while gathered in an academic senate room. These types of exercises were designed to make the individual question, identify, and perhaps even categorize the spaces in which their careers and lives take place and whether certain environments either support or ignore their individual sense of agency. During the collaboration day, participants were asked directly whether their artistic activities integrate socio-political issues which are present in their communities.

A collaborative Autoethnographic method was applied to small groups for attempting to answer such a broad question. Collaborative Autoethnography embraces diversity of perspectives around a central issue. The goal in our attempt was not to stimulate consensus amongst individuals from various higher education institutions, but instead to use our differences to generate a prism of perspectives, allowing the complexity of discussions around art and society to be more clearly mapped for further individual investigation. In doing so, collaboration can help reveal to us where our individual concerns are already focused, solidifying our sense of self and agency. By seeing the self in the context of the others, not arguing for our perspective, but contextualizing it, we develop a better understanding for what types of social impact we as individuals wish to carry out.

LAB 6 | ROME

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

March 2023 at Conservatorio di musica
Santa Cecilia Rome, Italy

Agency and Social Impact

How can improvisation contribute to the tomorrow artists' citizenship and to their cooperative skills as the urgent transformation of human behavioural patterns and values systems?

How do we prepare musicians/performers for the unexpected, when the challenges they will face depend not only on what they know but on how they think and in which way they cooperate?

It is useful to identify three interrelated levels at which Lab 6 can strengthen the social impact as many of the challenges to face in strengthening agency too are similar at individual, organisational and environmental levels:

• Individual - involving the development of performing artists/students/researchers via training to design and undertake, write up and publish research outputs.

• Organisational - developing the capacity of artistic research in HEIMs, think tanks, artistic research groups, and to interact with their community. The Lab 6 can profiled many different approaches for strengthening organisational capacity including: direct support to departments involved, and partnerships, network or consortia models.

• Environmental - addressing the incentive structures, the resource contexts in which artistic professional practice is undertaken and understood by policy makers and broader education providers and the wider society, so that approaches to strengthening the environmental impact include supporting governmental and parliamentary educational advisory bodies.

Moreover, the Lab 6's characteristic about agency and expertise let participants be aware that when we tend to consider the improviser as an expert, as someone who has mastered their artistic practice and through improvising can discover new spaces of possibilities of their art.

The multi-dimensional empirical relation with the unexpected frames Lab 6's participants within a state in which they lose the trace of the familiar path to an extent that allows them to consider that novelty is practicable and achievable.

The Lab 6, exploring the role and demonstrating the potential of improvisation in the artistic professional practice (in the broader sense of contents and contexts) leads participants to the unknown territory outside their expected individual framework.

Hochschule für Musik und Tanz Köln   ORPHEUS INSTITUUT   Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union   SANTA CECILIA   EESTI MUUSIKA- JA TEATRIAKADEEMIA   Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen   mdw universität für musik und darstellende kunst wien   Norges musikkhøgskole Norwegian Academy of Music

10

Reflection-Based
Artistic Professional Practice

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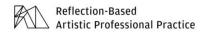Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

This does not imply that the sense of agency is 'lost 'or 'given up 'but rather that improvisers exercised in highly trained ways because it is also extended in intersubjective relations of collaboration[1] and in fact improvisation is enacted mostly with co-performers, co-agents, and audiences.

IMPROVISATION - AGENCY	IMPROVISATION - SOCIAL IMPACT
Identify and involve all potentially affected groups and individuals with artistic professional practice	Focus pertinent and significant issues and public concerns within artistic professional practice

[1] Adam Linson and Eric F. Clarke. *Distributed cognition, ecological theory and group improvisation*. In: Clarke, Eric F. and Doffman, Mark eds. *Distributed Creativity: Collaboration and Improvisation in Contemporary Music.* Studies in Musical Performance as Creative Practice. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 52–69, 2017.