# RAPP Lab

**Reflection-based Artistic Professional Practice**

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

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## Interdisciplinarity

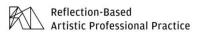## Part of the "Module Handbook" (Intellectual Output 2)

## Imprint

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## Table of content

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## LAB 1 | OSLO

**Developing Critical Reflection
in Artistic Research**

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

## Interdisciplinarity

The Lab organized breakout-groups by themes and research interests that emerged from the questionnaire[1] presented before the Lab. The aim was to organize participants with shared research interest in groups, while still allowing for diversity in research objects, musical style, instruments and working methods within the same groups.

The interdisciplinarity is evident in the documentation of the Lab, specifically in the process canvas on Research Catalogue, were we see a great variation in artistic expressions and formats for documenting reflection. We also see combinations of music and reflection: reflections in music and reflections in words.

It is possible to organize the Lab also involving other art disciplines, if the workshops are re-designed to suit the different disciplines.

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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

## Interdisciplinarity

The three subjects selected for this project all combine technical specificity with wide-ranging relevance. There was discussion before and afterwards as to whether students should be introduced to and prepared for some of the commonalities that might emerge between the subjects, as they are explored in increasing detail and students begin to reflect more deeply on each. It was finally decided not to do so; rather than being guided to understand such resonances in particular ways, it was felt that it would be more authentic and transformative for students to observe links and relationships in their own way. Interdisciplinarity is clearly inherent in the project, but it arises to individuals as emergent knowledge – a more deep-seated, personal way of learning than a set of concepts they might be instructed to observe.

Connecting threads soon emerge, and become an important topic of discussion among students. They include:

- the algorithmic nature of counterpoint, of the techniques of music in general
- the performative and aesthetic nature of coding
- the ways in which non-textual statements (e.g., musical, computational) can be evaluated as arguments
- the role of critical thinking in evaluating one's one thought and decision-making in academic research, but also in individual artistic practice

Through this intensive learning process, students are encouraged to experience directly the interconnectedness and translational potential of different modes of knowledge, action and investigation. They are equipped with tools that will allow a reframing of individual artistic and academic pursuits in both intellectual and cultural terms – a process that cumulatively has implications for both academic and artistic life.

In the course of this project, students implicitly undergo the experience of relating three well-defined and coherent but apparently off-topic disciplinary areas to their own subject area and their particular research. This carefully structured experience will serve as a model as they go on to identify new relationships across disciplines and modes of thought in their subsequent work, and in their own future teaching.

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## LAB 3 | COLOGNE

**Embodied Reflection
in Artistic Practice**

May 2022 at Hochschule für Musik und
Tanz Köln, Germany

## Interdisciplinarity

Our approach is radically transdisciplinary. We consider the connection between sounding/hearing/playing and moving/dancing/gestures not as one between fixed or static entities, which will meet at some points and build inter-sectional fields. Rather, our focus is the relational and how we think about sounding, moving, wording as entities which already exist within each other and come into existence through their inter-connectedness and entanglement.

The relational approach is very much connected with phenomenological discourses - understanding the intellectual brain work and the bodily sensations as a holistic phenomenon. This is what Lepecki und Banes claim in "Performing of the Senses": that phenomenology is the way to overcome gaps between 'western' concepts of perception and the senses (as only bodily) in connection to performance art: "Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, by binding perception to language and both to memory, allowed consideration that 'the senses' are not well-defined, isolated, autonomous organs of perception. Merlau-Ponty would famously posit that, first, perception always happens laced with temporality and language: perception is fraught with the anticipation of a future and the memory of a past and with the linguistic materiality of the human body. Moreover […], phenomenology proposes that perception happens only when the senses (already constituted by language, just as language is already constituted by the senses) find themselves to be in deep entanglement with the sensed phenomena." (Sally Banes/André Lepecki, *The Senses in Performance*, 2007, p. 6)

This also affects the role of language: We want to deconstruct the assumptions; words of reflection come after action. Let's turn it the other way around: what if the action involves the reflection and the sound provokes a word, because of its already related origin? The interplay of reflection in action, reflection during the action or on the action and within breaks, can then then lead to a development of new ideas for movement or sounds.

We aim to create fluid transitions, simultaneity, descriptive accompaniment, verbalising, commenting on my reflection of what is happening (sound and movement) also outside the language system. Writing in and out: Body, knowledge and writing.

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**LAB 4 | VIENNA**

**Transculturality
in Artistic Research**

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

## Interdisciplinarity

In their workshops, different genres of Interdisciplinarity were present:

### A) improv techniques from theatre, sport and psychology

**Bhagwati:** While the ostensible focus was sound art/music, the lecture part of the workshop looked deeply at historic and social issues around musicking in European traditions, and the practical part adapted improv techniques from theatre, sport and psychology.

### B) Understanding of sound as a way to talk about a lot of different topics, in a lot of different (creative) ways

**Blume:** I have studied a career of sound engineer, and slowly started to work on my personal project, becoming more a sound artist than a sound engineer. Sound is a medium, but of course it's a way to talk about a lot of different topics, in a lot of different (creative) ways. My works are sometimes more related to music (as the in project "Death in Haiti" that I presented) or to film and anthropology (as in the project "Curupira, bicho do mato" for example). I'm using sound and listening in different ways, through different disciplines, and that's what I've tried to present during the workshop.

### C) terms of anthropological, sociological, etymological and geopolitical disciplines

**Sakina:** During the presentation we tried to treat the topic in terms of anthropological, sociological, etymological and geopolitical disciplines. We also discussed content, form and melodic structures of artistic creations. Presentations were also given on the place of music in dance and religious rituals.
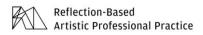
### D) philosophical and ethical questions as well as paradigms from affect theory, history and social-science with a strong focus on postcolonial theory

**Maria Do Mar:** The workshop presented philosophical and ethical questions as well as paradigms from affect theory, history and social-science with a strong focus on postcolonial theory, which is itself transdisciplinary.

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Musik und Tanz Köln     ORPHEUS     Co-funded by the     SANTA CECILIA     EESTI MUUSIKA-     Association Européenne des     mdw     Norges
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## LAB 5 | TALLINN

**Exploring Musical Identities: Autoethnography**

September 2022 at Eesti Muusika-ja Teatriakadeemia Tallinn, Estonia

## Interdisciplinarity

One of the main reasons individual identity was chosen as a focus of our Tallinn Lab was because of the several compartments of knowledge which contribute to our total understanding of ourselves. Accessing these various compartments can be difficult and Autoethnographic methods can improve our abilities to see how participation in various disciplines contribute to self-understanding. Rarely in today's world are artists just composers or performers, and often lessons learned in one field may not completely connect with knowledge from another. In this sense, individual identity can be viewed as a pre-existing interdisciplinary subject where an individual already possesses information from several bodies of knowledge but has yet to form clear connections between them. Reflecting on the Self as an interdisciplinary subject helps to mend this connection, and in doing so benefits the artist and prepares them for future interdisciplinary work.
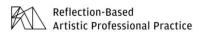
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**LAB 6 | ROME**

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

March 2023 at Conservatorio di musica
Santa Cecilia Rome, Italy

## Interdisciplinarity

What would happen if artists reflected on their approach towards their performative practice through improvisation exploring different points of view derived from other fields and other cultures?

Improvisation, understood as a skilful activity, always suggests a tension between the own artistic professional practice field and the openness and curiosity towards diverse cultures' perspectives and fields, as improvisation is undoubtedly a phenomenon[2] that can be observed in varying contexts.

Interdisciplinarity, as an artistic research process, performs itself into Improvisation.

This Lab 6 intends improvisation as an approach to facilitates interdisciplinary in the way of bringing together researcher/scholars/performers form different traditions and cultures, as well as aims for transdisciplinarity, in the way of subordinating disciplinary perspectives to the task of reflecting to the phenomenon of improvisation.

This reflection is conceived as an integrative work, individual and collective one: reflecting in the time of doing some improvisation experiences, reflecting in the time of observing some artistic improvisations, and reflecting in the time of discussing as an extended conversation in group as well.

This Lab 6 has been especially designed in bringing together perspectives on the psychological, historical, ethnomusicological, and philosophical aspects of improvisation with perspectives on its practices and according to this it has a cross-sectorial perspective through and through.

However, Interdisciplinarity in this lab refers not only to the academic fields from which participants gathered knowledge about improvisation but also to the avenues of questioning that have been raised. Inter is used in reference to the manner in which it has allowed knowledge of one area to feed over into another, or, perhaps more accurately, the ways material and experience have combined to inspire participants to consider their own artistic professional practice in a larger disciplinary context.

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[2] *Philosophy of Improvisation: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Theory and Practice*, Ed. by S. Ravn, S. Høffding, J. McGuirk, Routledge 2021.

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The Lab 6 underlines that Interdisciplinarity perspectives on improvisation in artistic professional practices can reframe crucial issues as knowledge construction, metacognition, as well as collaboration.

Many of the common bias and misconceptions concerning improvisation, such as that teaching improvisation needs to be justified, can be overcome dealing improvisation with a wide interdisciplinary perspective.

Exploring and understanding many of the concepts and perspectives of improvisation with other specifics field of knowledge in an interdisciplinary approach, this helps to share their methods, to explore different backgrounds and to achieve a wider confidence in the practices and results of improvisation in music.

Interdisciplinarity is one of the reasons for Lab 6's reverberation according to the multiplicity and diversity of its constructs. This does not only apply to the proposal ones considering the difference in their nature, but for many other disciplines it could imply.

Each day has been dedicated to a different discipline: Psychoanalysis, Indian culture, Neapolitan Song, Musicology, and Philosophy.

Further interdisciplinary perspectives can consider fields such as:

• Inclusive Education - How can Improvisation designed labs include individuals with disabilities?

• Critical thinking - How can Improvisation increase students' mental flexibility and critical thinking skills?

• Ethics - How can Improvisation investigate the nature of ethical behaviour, using live encounters with musical ensembles?

• Anthropology - How can Improvisation design a novel ethnography?

• Neuroscience - How can Improvisation inquiry the activity of prefrontal cortex?

• Semiotics - How can Improvisation investigate semiotic theory and analysis applied to artistic practice performances?

• Digital Technology - How can Improvisation create a new paradigm in dealing with technology?

• Artificial Intelligence - How can Improvisation explore cybernetics, organization theory, and human computer interaction?

• Gender Equality - furthermore, as Improvisation is associated to ideas such as freedom and liberation it can promote the discourse on Gender Equality too and not only in the performing arts because it falls within gender studies as "If gender is a kind of a doing, an incessant activity performed, in part, without one's knowing and without one's willing, it is not for that

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reason automatic or mechanical. On the contrary, it is a practice of improvisation within a scene of constraint. Moreover, one does not "do" one's gender alone."[3]

In such a lab like Lab 6, improvisation introduces closer and productive critical encounters with other fields of knowledge to an exploratory way of thinking, that guides participants reliably within the reflectiveness and introduces them to the world outside their own artistic practices too.

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[3] Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender*, New York: Routledge, 2004, Introduction