



The search for the red thread

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Supportive narrative

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Abstract

This ink on paper (or dark pixels on light background) is the documentation of the search for the little red thread that might make all of this make sense. As selfish as it seems it's mostly meant for myself, and possibly others to help understand my artistic motivations. Current trains of thought that hurl through my mind. My inability to adhere to strict research principles and scientific methods might cause the occasional outburst, and random musings on life.

1 Introduction

There are times I find myself thinking: “Why do I do this?”. Sometimes because I’ve been bashing my head against a creative block, and all I hear is a deadline snickering just beyond the horizon. Other times it comes with the recurring questions of an existential crisis: what is the meaning of life? what should I have for breakfast? and how do magnets work? And occasionally it’s plain curiosity. The cop-out answer is that I can’t imagine myself not doing it. But an inability to not do something is a far cry from a proper answer to why you do it. So in these pages I’ll make a stand. Battle through the jungle of my mind, to at least make some progress through the thickness of my thoughts to answer the ever lingering question. But the why won’t be the question I’ll try to answer, because in order to come close to that; I must first define what it is that I do. What can the red thread be? Where does it originate from? What is the it? A direction? Is it useful at all? Will I ever silence that teasing deadline?

2 Red threads

2.1 A red thread

What is it for? It can help you make decisions, a clear direction simplifies decision making, as it filters out what won’t further you in that direction. It can be a motivation; to move yourself further in that direction. It’s an anchor in a turbulent world. Hold on to the thread and you won’t get lost. It’s a way to abbreviate your inner turmoil into a more presentable form. Thoughts are tightly linked with the creative process; and sometimes they are not in a hurry to get places. A thought may take you through backcountry roads before even hinting at an eureka moment, the red thread should help you recognise when you are still in the wilderness, and

if you should trace your steps back or keep going. There is also external pressure to at least have a sense of direction. It is expected of you when you market yourself, or simply when trying to reach out to other artists or the public. A person's labour, which can be confused with a person's worth, worth is based on what you can produce (Foys 2014). What you do is an immovable part of your persona. A tagline; a selling point; a defining feature. If you can communicate your work clearly, the likelihood of a good response increases. The nature of the red thread will vary between artists, and like art; can be almost anything. You need to put the right feed in front of the donkey if you want him to drag your wagon(in this case the artist is both the donkey and the wagon). If a project is the plot of an episode, the red thread will be the season's story arc.¹ Your red thread could be to become an excellent craftsman, specialising in a finite set of methods or techniques. A thread hardwired in the history of art, and although it may seem it has a less importance in modern art, the foundations usually find a way to stick around. Some artists might choose being a part of particular genre or style; "I make breakbeat oriented trip-hop". It might lead to a redefinition of your direction on a regular basis, since genres staying around without changes is rare. But whether that's a pro or a con is open to the artist's own interpretation. The red thread can also be a central theme of your own work. A few points that define your own personal genre. Instead of focusing on the methods, or relying on outside definitions we focus on the work an artist produces.

¹Even though I talk about the red thread as being static, like most things it will be a subject of change over time. The changes will likely be small incremental steps, only noticeable after a long time period.

2.2 The red thread

My own process of finding the red thread wasn't quite as linear as presented here, but the original version, which only briefly existed as neurons firing electric impulses in grey matter, would be difficult to follow. I believe the reason why we work and the way we work is tightly intertwined; with each other and the resulting work. Disconnecting one from the other to peer at through a microscope, results in speculating about the mangled corpse of a process, reason, or result (depending on what you are looking at). I had some troubles getting started, the task felt like a giant mountain looming in the distance. I was afraid that defining my direction would limit my creative possibilities. But once I managed to remind myself creativity often benefits from restrictions; climbing the mountain ended up not taking more than a few sessions of self-pity sprinkled with the occasional bursts of writing.

I'm not really a fan of specialisation (maybe because of how often I've been told how important it is), but unfortunately time is a finite resource, and there are also activities like eating and sleeping which need to be attended to. So the need for at least some specialisation is born out of necessity. I feel that picking a direction inevitably leads you to spend enough time on the path to see all the other choices of specialisation that can be made. So do I increase the degree of specificity and again and again until I only make sound compositions for amateur radio broadcasts played with limonite stone sculptures? No, I want to stay open towards trying new techniques, methods and combinations.

My fear of figuratively painting myself into an obscure corner, also leaves having a genre as the red thread out of the picture. Which led me to start looking for recurring defining features in my portfolio. The overarching story, studying the collage to see the mosaic picture. I talked with my teachers, colleagues and partner, while looking back at my portfolio. What stood out was a recurring element

of retro aesthetics, combined with more modern workflow. There was a project where 8bit audio was all the rage, and another where tape pops and crackles were sprinkled all over, and yet another where an ancient poem took center stage. I'm a firm believer in striving to move forward and push boundaries. At a glance the recurrence of retro aesthetics seem to be in direct opposition to that... Out of the mist of confusion in my mind, appeared a few words, which at a closer inspection bore a striking resemblance to the good-luck charm for weddings. This seems to have become infused in my portfolio:

Something old, something new,
something borrowed, something blue.

The something old and something borrowed in my case is an external element. Something new, is something that is then built around it or expanded by me. And something blue is only there to make it rhyme. So modified to fit my own personal needs, here it is rewritten as a haiku:

Borrow something old
it can be almost anything
Make it new.

As I was researching which artists I could use in the critical review I discovered that this phenomenon already had a name: *appropriation*.

3 Critical review

3.1 What is it anyway?

Appropriation is the use of borrowed elements (aspects or techniques) in the creation of a new piece. (*Appropriation(music)* 2017) New work

recontextualizes whatever it borrows to create the new work. (*Appropriation(art)* n.d.)

The definition casts a wide net, and allows for just about anything to be used as a starting point or an addition to an artistic process. Including but of course not limited to:

- Sampling
- Circuit bending
- Code snippets
- Interpreting data in artistic ways
- Teaching
- Alternative facts (if you want to get political)

What makes art isn't only what you put in, but also what you leave out. Art tells a story, and a story is much more than the words it contains. Behind every word is a world; giving it character and identity. Da Vinci used around 40 layers of paint to create Mona Lisa's smile (Gray 2010) and Leonard Cohen wrote 80 draft verses for Hallelujah (Barton 2008). When you appropriate you also take the history of the original work with you, all the painted over layers and thrown out verses. And much like in real life; history is immutable. Sure you can change what's written in the history books, but it won't change the events that rippled out from what originally happened. Decisions influence decisions and the final destination is dependent on the journey.

Appropriation is the harmonious union of hacking and improvisation through merging ideas of past and now; the ghost in the machine. Placing something in a new context has the potential to lead to clashes of processes/ideas; friction which

you can either work around, or use as a source of inspiration for more creation. It's one of the countless factors which make appropriation unique in each project: where is it from, what's the story, how is it used and how much of it is being used, what's the original medium and what is the final result? It also makes it hard to quantify what is suitable to appropriation, and what not. As the saying goes: one man's trash is another man's treasure.

How does appropriation appear in a project? The beginning of a project being a cycle between brainstorming and research through experimentations, improvisations and tests, it's difficult to tell, and again has no set rules. Sometimes appropriation is there from the beginning, and other times it shows up at a later stage while an idea is being developed.

For efficiency's sake² you want to know as much as possible so you can work close to the metal and keep translations between steps in the process to a minimum. Because as Bill Murray might tell you, things can get lost in translation.³ (*Lost in translation* n.d.)

3.2 Possible pitfalls

Appropriation is of course not the answer to all of life's questions. A well meaning artist might not move far away enough from the original work, so the end result isn't an addition to the piece, but skewed plagiarism. Where you end up just copying the mood, changing a few motifs and redoing old work.⁴ I don't like

²Efficiency means you manufacture more, so you can throw more out.

³If you work out the harmonies of a piece for four voices on a piano. You might be in for some unintended dissonant action, since a piano has no sustain portion to its sound, but voices do. You are better off using an organ or synth sound; which interprets the rhythms in a similar way a singing voice would. In the same way that you wouldn't use a bongo drum to work out the harmonies of an orchestral piece. (Unless that would be the point of the work).

⁴Which is great when done actively for learning purposes, but as a new creation, not so much.

being nostalgic, authentic is a made up word. The past should be a source of inspiration, not a subject of re-creation. Holding up a certain period in time like it's the pinnacle of all human creation, doesn't accomplish much. Since anything anyone can ever do is to work with the tools, and the context that happens to be nearest to them. If the people we glorify would've spent all of their time daydreaming about their predecessors; how they had it right, not much would have happened. Under the influence of nostalgia you can make many assumptions, "it sounded good because they used tape, that mix is great because it's all analog!" While glossing over that there is plenty of material from the same era that sounds like something awful wrapped in a layer of bad decisions, despite using the same "magic". I think the main way to avoid copying is to try and strip ideas down all the way to their core, simplify down to only what you need before expanding. Stay critical. Ask yourself regularly if you are contributing something new, is the process still exciting, or is it starting to feel like homework?

In the late stages of elementary school, before setting us free after 10 years of faithful service to the clan, our guidance counsellor had us take a personality test. We answered a questionnaire (like a cosmo quiz, but based on science!), and as a result we could make a graph of our personalities strength and weaknesses. And it ended up looking something like *fig. 1*.

I think in the subconscious of every artist there is a similar wheel at work, which works as a filter when creating. Except instead of the values having to do with your personality, it's a wheel of aesthetics. Since this wheel is entirely hypothetical it has an infinite amount of scoring factors, with values in the range 0.0000001%–99.99999% (almost nothing, to almost everything). I imagine the scoring factors can be anything remotely related to aesthetics, varying between each individual, some being outspoken likes/dislikes, others lurking in the artist's subconscious. Some possible factors: virtuosity, symmetry, imitation, dynamic, static, impro-

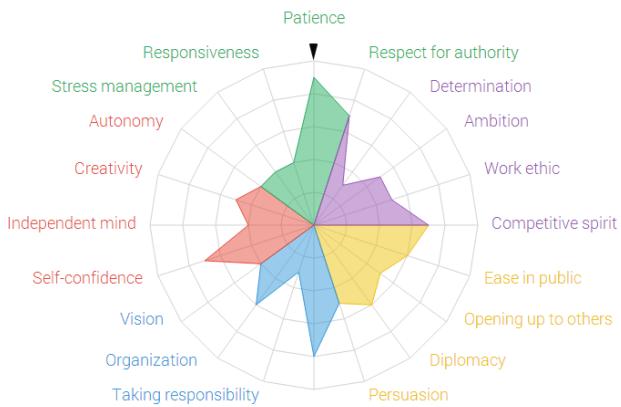


Figure 1: Personality wheel

vised, continuity, meaning, blue, red, not yellow(sometimes the importance not being something to an individual outweighs the need for it to be something), loud, quiet, raw... Every iteration of a work passes through the wheel, the peaks amplify, and the lows diminish. An artist “voice” is a byproduct of his aesthetic wheel. So the bigger a production is and more people get to have input in the process, the effect of their wheels are combined, and peaks and valleys move closer to the middle. Which might make it more accessible, or if it is overdone; overproduced. When there is balance between peaks, valleys and planes; the piece is finished. The wheel is dynamic, and will grow alongside you as an artist, so if you come back to a project after a long time you are essentially collaborating with yourself.

3.3 Why does this make sense to me?

In my adolescence I became fascinated with the punk movement and their emphasis on the importance of doing, over the need for perfection. It was raw energy translated into music. As Einar Örn Benediktsson put it: “You don’t have to be able to do this: ‘*hand gestures imitating a face melting guitar solo*’ to make music” (Friðriksson 1982). I relate to this because for me, creating and not creating is only separated by doing. It’s rare that something forms fully in my head before

I make it. Creating is a process – to start a process I need material. And to get that I either do, or borrow. Making is standing on the edge of a chasm, peaking over the edge. Hanging by your toes, reaching into the darkness, and hoping you'll grab onto something, before something grabs you.

The punk ideals are still important to me. But unlike during my adolescence when only an electric guitar, banging drums and loud vocals could lead me to salvation, I now try to see potential for raw in everything. Appropriation already has a meaning rooted in art history; I think it can be expanded into ideology or general attitude towards creation. Rather than placing boundaries, we occupy ourselves with breaking them down. Which can be directly connected with the do it yourself movement; in direct opposition with gatekeeping. The gate is an imaginary construct, just start, and learn while you do (at least when talking about art, crafts, and that kind of stuff, if you aspire to be an air traffic controller learning by doing, is not the way to go about it (the donkey and the carrot and all that jazz)).

4 Examples of appropriation

Reusing what has come before is not a new idea (so it's fitting to the theme to reuse it). Since art originates from persons which, whether they like it or not are a result of their accumulated experiences, you can argue that art that isn't under an influence from previous work, doesn't exist. At least not since the first human ever to make art, and he was probably inspired by a ruggedly handsome Neanderthal or cute Homo Erectus. Art movements look to the movements that are close to itself in time for inspiration, be it out of admiration or spite. Rolling Stones were blues music fanatics, punk hated disco, nu-metal merged two mortal enemies; rock and rap. Movements fall in and out of style, but appropriation

sticks around. Dada and pop art were avid practitioners of appropriation (*Pop art* n.d., *Dada* n.d.). Poems, magazines, pop stars and canned soup; nothing could escape their appropriating wrath.

4.1 Rodrigo Constanzo

With a website/PHD thesis which stirs excitement in every HTML aficionado's heart, Rodrigo would be a top contender in the category 'most likeable dude ever' at the music technology awards (if they existed). Dfscore is a dynamic realtime notation system, which lets improvisation and composition techniques blossom together in a software environment. (Constanzo n.d.*a*) He also brings teaching into a new format: gib gab. Offering lessons/discussions/mentoring free of charge, on just about any subject you think he might help you with, for creative persons. (Constanzo n.d.*b*)

DIY hardware, circuit bending, video game controllers applied to music instruments. (Constanzo n.d.*c*)

4.2 David Bowie

I just can't pass up the opportunity to put myself in the same category as Bowie; can I? The man who everything he touched turned cool. I remember first hearing about this as a nice bit of pop music trivia from my dad some years ago. (Oliver 2013) He applied the cut-up literary technique, popularised by Williams S. Burroughs; cutting up text and rearranging it to form new text; to lyric writing.

4.3 Plugin hardware emulation

The digitalizations of analog properties can also be argued to be a form of appropriation. Using both old and new hardware alike, as a model for building digital

plugins for Sound synthesis and processing. Translating physics, mechanics and complex analog circuits into code; turning a chaotic system into a finite amount of calculations, which can run 44k times a second without breaking a sweat. It's a lucrative industry, but no matter how exact you can make your approximation there will always be complaints about sound quality. Some plugin manufacturers will strive to achieve as close to a 1:1 translation as possible, while others will try to enhance the original, with all the parallelism, and zero cost multiplication of the digital environment. Bigger companies have resources to conduct very technical research, and develop new techniques of emulation.⁵

4.4 Honorable mentions

Other notable artist whose work provided reference material for me to devour, and inspiration during the writing of this delightfully over-opinionated text.

Tijs Ham no input mixing, noise performances.

Gert Jan Prins reuses/modifies old radio equipment to make music.

Mats Horbach Repurposing old wartime AM radio receiver technology to harvest energy.

Bryan Eno - David Byrne My Life in the Bush of Ghosts, field recordings of ethnic music, but electronic!

Ate M Hes Magnets. Grab a record, stick a magnet to it. Hang another bit of magnet over a record player. Play the record, enjoy as the magnetic field increases the friction that the record motor needs to fight against to turn

⁵Soundtoys, Arturia and Waves are a good example of those companies, whose research can even result in scientific papers.

the record, in a chaotic manner slowing down the audio, reshaping it to suit its own selfish magnetic needs.

5 Appropriation in my work

For my twelfth birthday I got a watch from my parents. It was the neatest thing, with a black and blue velcro strap, and water resistant down to 15 meters! I wore it religiously, but the limits of the water resistance puzzled me. An idea flickered: it probably has to do with being able to take an impact so then it's obviously also resistant to falling 15 meters! A theory which I tested by letting it fall down a staircase, onto concrete floor. Promptly learning that water pressure, and terminal velocity do not have the same effect on a unsuspecting watch (curiously the loss of the watch didn't seem to affect my time keeping skills). So since my research methods can be hit and miss, I'll keep this simple and talk a bit about the projects, and point out the cases of appropriation.

I can separate my workflow into two distinct phases: *Stop making sense* (SMS) and *Everything's under control* (EUC).⁶ SMS is where I'll try to push logic and rationale away. Because my aesthetic wheel has a notion of how things should be and by sticking to what I think is rational, and logical, I would be submitting myself entirely to my own tastes. I incorporate new techniques and workflows, to stave off staleness and a status quo of creativity. The second phase; EUC is where I'll reverse the effort and actively try to make sense. Because if I never do what makes sense to me, makes that the status quo. This can be the arranging process in a composition, improving modularity of software, balancing extremes; it's the enhancing of material, and making it readily available for further use.

⁶In the spirit of appropriation the names are lifted straight from the lyrics of Girlfriend is Better by the Talking Heads.

Often SMS will precede EUC in a project, it's necessary in the aforementioned research, test, improvisation and assembling material phase of a project. When I have something to work with, I'll proceed EUC. But it also happens the other way around, in the case of an improvisation the SMS becomes the final result and EUC will happen in the preparation process; deciding what techniques, instruments, hardware/software to use. Logic, experience and reason helps with constructing an environment in which I feel comfortable, or challenged enough to let loose.

6 Project portfolio

6.1 Hávaðamál

Hávaðamál is a performance of an algorithmic audio/visual composition. It's based on the text of *Hávamál*, an old Icelandic poem that tells the story when Odin visited middle-earth and gave advice on how to live life. The output of different interpretations of the text are layered to create a composition. The centrepiece is the poem itself; half-read/half-sung in the traditional Icelandic way of reciting. From every verse, a few hand picked words are paired with an audio sample and/or video clip, which are then played back and manipulated using an algorithmic analysis of the text. The spoken words are a fixture within a constantly changing scenery of the soundscape and visuals.

Here, the appropriation lies in the use of text that has been read and performed regularly since it was written 800 years ago. I put the recitation of the text in a new format. The backbone of the audio is granular playback of audio samples which have some relation with the content of the text. I wanted there to be a similarity between audio and visuals. So I implemented granular playback of video. The video clips were borrowed from movies made in Iceland in the 80s, most of them on the subject of vikings.

The performance was premiered during the annual E-live concert in Nicolaikerk Utrecht on February 2. 2017, and a second performance was held on 8. June at K.O. showcase event in Het Nutshuis in den Haag.

6.2 NIMpho

Feedback is a recurring theme in my work. There is something fascinating about plugging a system into itself and dancing on the edge of chaos and total meltdown. Oscillation in a system, or between multiple systems, is a straightforward way to achieve organic movement in synthetic environment. So I set out to explore analog musical feedback, using no input mixing, guitar pedals, and tape loops. Using a feedback system in a musical way is finding the balance between control and letting go. There are multiple variables to consider, and small modifications can have a ripple effect across the whole system. Old hardware combined with new; dripping fresh off the tip of a soldering iron. Simple building blocks accumulated to build rich sounds. Mixer not as a modifier but as a source. NIMpho is a musical improvisation with feedback, supported by feedback generated visuals. An exploration and celebration of feedback. NIM is an acronym for 'no input mixing' and pho indicates the soupy aroma of the mixture of sound and video.

Feedback is not subtle in it's nature. When it's on it's on – which doesn't leave much room for rhythmic development. So I explore the possibilities of on/off control of the feedback loops. I started off with a simple killswitch (fig.2a) with a single momentary pushbutton. Upon pressing, the feedback loop being passed through the device, would be silenced by shorting the active lead to the ground. A mod which you'll find frequently added to electric guitars (Wacker 2009). Next step was to build a box with four independent kill-switches (fig.2b), but instead of using an average joe pushbutton I built a Superswitch (Collins 2010); a toggle and a pushbutton working together so the pushbutton is switchable between normal

states of on and off. So the toggle switch selects if the loop is on or off, and the pushbutton reverses that state.

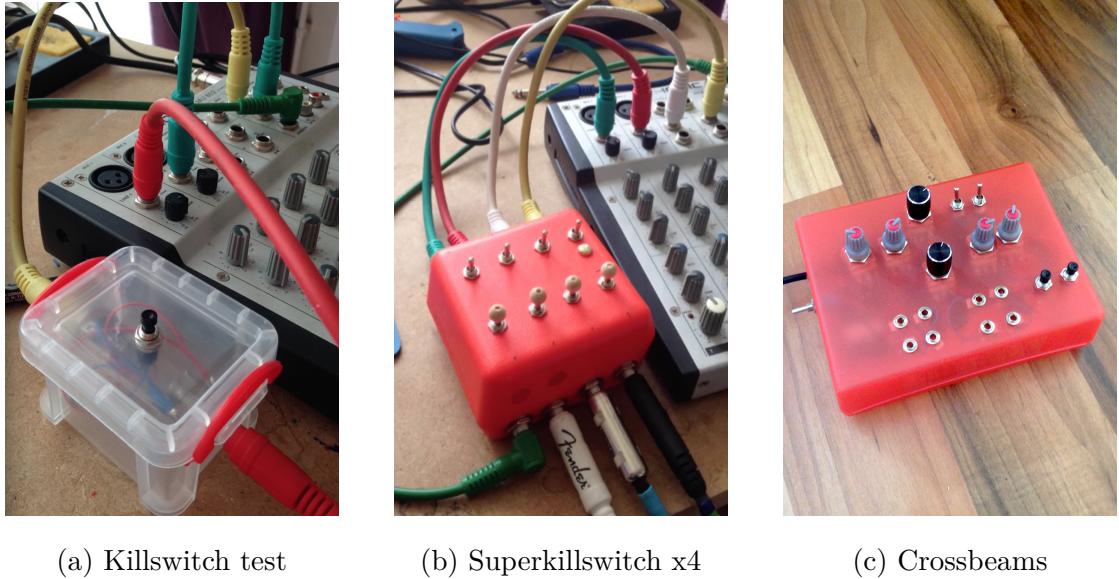


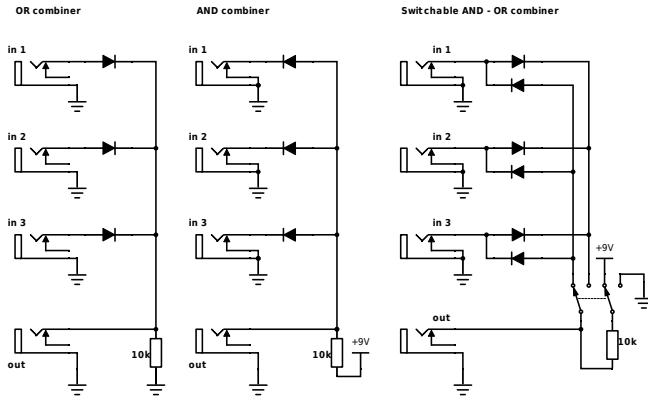
Figure 2: The hardware of NIMPHO

I also want to be able to leave the turning on/off to a sequencer; giving me the wiggle room to wiggle other's buttons. In my third year project (*Ó*)regla I did some experimentation with the Schillinger system of musical composition; in particular functions which turn simple periodic signals (square waves) into rhythms. I planned out a modular sequencing system in which controlling the speed of square waves and how they are routed through either and/or gates you could make rhythms, with relatively simple hardware. Unfortunately time got away from me, and the premier of the performance in Het Nutshuis was drawing closer.⁷ So I set myself even stricter requirements.⁸ It resulted in the *Crossbeams* sequencer

⁷I still plan on building the modular LFO sequencer, since I put a lot of research into how to build it. Even took a crack of some circuit combining myself, since I couldn't find a logic combiner that was switchable between "and", and "or" combining. (fig.3)

⁸To make it arduino compatible which means the 4 independent sequences must be controlled

Figure 3: Combining two circuits into one.



(fig.2c), which consist of four crossbeams, who are tied to a master tempo. A crossbeam is a sequence formed by varying the amount two square waves at different frequencies modulate each other's pulse width, and then adding the result of the two waves with and/or gate. Each crossbeam has two controls: frequency division and modulation amount. But since I only had 6 potentiometers available one of which was used as a master tempo, some pots got double responsibility.

Pot 1 Master tempo

Pot 2 Crossbeam 1 & 3: frequency division.

Pot 3 Crossbeam 1: modulation amount

Pot 4 Crossbeam 2 & 4: frequency division.

Pot 5 Crossbeam 2: modulation amount

Pot 6 Crossbeam 3 & 4: modulation amount

with an interface of only 6 potentiometers, and small assortment of push-buttons and toggles.

Each crossbeam then controls a vactrol; a LED coupled with a LDR which audio can be patched through, if the LED is on, the audio passed through, and if the LED is off, audio is not passed through.

NIMpho is also my way to make music without a laptop or acoustic instruments. Usually there is quite a steep price curve to getting started with hardware, especially if I was probing to come close to what I can make with a laptop. But wouldn't that kind of defeat the purpose of using hardware over a laptop, if you make the same things with both?

The visuals were also driven by a feedback system. By pointing a webcam at the surface where the video is being projected, and altering the image on every frame, the video output has infinite variety. Since I can't anticipate what the result will be of changing values, the visuals were influenced by the audio by letting the audio control when to change the values. Additional to the webcam feedback, the previous video frame was also available to other video objects, and could be stretched to cover a moving sphere, a cube, or a waveform of the audio.

6.3 MGNT

An audio/visual installation inspired by magnetic tape and the work of Dick Raaijmakers: a pioneer of electronic music who worked from the Philips laboratory in Eindhoven. I was hired by the *WHAT IF collective* to make generative audio for MGNT, which was exhibited in Klogebouw Eindhoven during STRP BIÈNNALE 2017 festival.

Approaching the generative audio was a fun challenge. I didn't want to chase after mimicking the type of sounds that Dick Raaijmakers made or copy sequences from his pieces. But instead to emulate his methods and techniques of composition. Raaijmakers worked with tape recorders and loops; a simplified look on the workflow looks like this: Record samples, process them; loop and re record them.

Figure 4: MGNT

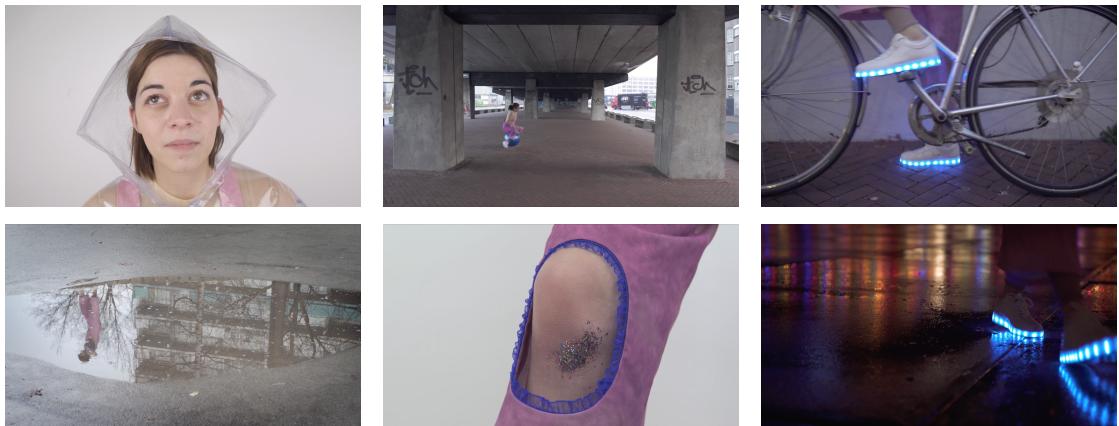


Then repeating the process until you have a composition. A pair of microphones hanging directly above the installation space, record samples; which are then processed to either sound melodic, or rhythmic, and at last sequenced into musical phrases. Teaching a machine an iterative artistic process is a subject for a PHD thesis or two, so the melodic and rhythmic patterns were based off probabilities, which were built on a very rough analysis of few of Raaijmakers's pieces. The iterative process of Raaijmakers was then represented in the system by it's inability differentiate between the sounds it made itself and the ones that originated from the audience. Giving it the ability to sample itself and then reprocessing it into new sounds.

6.4 Out of the blue

I did the sound design and mixing of the fashion film *Out of the blue*, created by Olivia Watkins. The film makes a point of fashion celebrating bruises and the stories behind them; instead of covering them up. Keeping things playful is important to Olivia, and mixing jolly 8 bit sounds and a funky electronic groove with more serious brooding electronic sounds. Repurposing 8 bit game sounds into a

Figure 5: Stills from Out of the blue



cinematic sound field, sounds of footsteps, jumps and tumbles were swapped out for 8 bit counterparts. I received a folder full of sound samples that were recorded alongside the film footage recordings, and during an additional pseudo foley session. So an accompanying minor theme of mine during the sound design was to try out swapping the original sound out for a completely different sound(while still limiting me to the original sound collection). For instance: knee movement got the sound of a rubber ball bouncing, chewing gum and a swing-set became bicycle noises, bicycle noises became a swingset and a bus was a bus since some things don't change. The appropriation rabbit hole goes even deeper than that, since the music track used throughout the video heavily samples the song *Watch what happens* by the north american vocal jazz group *Rare Silk*.

6.5 Songwriting

The timelines of projects sometimes seems to stretch endlessly on into every direction possible. It can drag you down when you know that you won't finish anything until after two more months of work. A splendid moment to take a day or two to work on songwriting. The focus then lies on working quickly, moving from one

thing to another, basic rhythm or chord structure, writing lyrics, jamming on top of it all, and things will often happen in parallel. Like recording of vocals and slicing things up and arrange it. The milage of appropriation varies between songs, from none at all, to a full blown stew of different ideas. I might start from a sampled piece of music, and work away from it until nothing of the original material is left. Or you can start with the midi arrangement of a whole piece, slice it up or throw it in an arpeggiator. The whole process is a search for a groove, some spunk. Trying out different flavours.

Some of these songs I'll then use for my project *Gosi*; an indie-dance duet, inspired by all music you can dance to. Disco, punk, country, funk and everything in between. Others will sit in a folder on my hard drive called "finished", or "almost there", which patiently waits with material ripe for picking for the next project I come across.

7 Conclusion

Appropriation gives a wide range of possibilities and a unique flavour to each project. The amount of time appropriation has been around gives a strong indication that it will continue to be a plentiful source of inspiration and ideas. Now that I have observed this pattern of appropriation in what I make, the question rises whether it will affect my future projects. Since, up until now, this knowledge has best been bound to my subconscious. Maybe ignorance was a bliss?

There is a never ending amount of possibilities to create music. Yet it's so easy to get blindsided, and rather than concentrating on creating, we chase a fleeting moment in time, based on the popularity of the moment. Forgetting we can do everything and don't have to do anything. Things have their place in time. Energy all the way down.

I'm moving to back to my hometown of Iceland. There are a number of reasons, being back home and the benefit of living in a small town contributes to having lower expenses. Less financial restrictions, which leaves room for more experimental work. So I can choose projects that I find fitting, rather than taking on things for the sake of generating income. I've been employed as a part time teacher in music lessons and programming in the elementary school of Ísafjörður, which will be my base source of income, and as a teacher I'll have a long summer vacation (almost three months), which I can use for more time intensive projects, touring or residencies. There are a number of funds and grants available in Iceland e.g. Uppbyggingasjóður Vestfjarða (Westfjords Development Fund), Tónlistarsjóður (music fund), Listamannalaun (artist fee) & Loftbrú (artist travel fund).

I won't be going to Iceland empty handed, I bring with me the background of an education that doesn't yet exist in Iceland. And I hope I can put it to good use, by making artists and general public of Iceland aware of the many alternative directions available in music. Interactive systems, using code, algorithms and sensors to influence the process. Although Icelandic music is often seen by the outside world as a boiling pot of creativity, when you peak under the lid, you'll see a lot of bubbles following each other blindly in hope of reaching the surface. But it sometimes gives radical ideas a great leeway to spread quickly through the society.

I want to take on new challenges and to give people the idea that they can approach me with any proposition. Because even if I haven't done much of it before, if it touches my interests I will definitely want to take part in it. I like my work to bleed across mediums. A composition can be partly improvised, audio interacts with visuals, improvisation is influenced by static structures. I'm optimistic about the future, want to be inspired by the past without getting nostalgic and enjoy the now.

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