

On My Work

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What role does improvisation play in your work? (In the beginning stages, to get ideas, in the final performances?)

Due to the musical tools I use, I could not say that improvisation plays a major part in my work, at least not in the traditional sense of improvisation (by that, I mean the use of improvisation with acoustical instruments). But, as most of my work deals with live performance in an interactive setting, I would say that creating possibilities for adaptation and change is crucial.

The software (MAX-MSP) has to be programmed in advance, the mapping of all the sensors coming from the *lady's glove* have to be established, and the mapping to any external devices such as light bulbs or motors also has to be established before the performance. Therefore the structure is quite solid. But the way I envision this structure is as a set of templates or architectural playing fields. Within these fields I have access to a variety of possibilities, whether they are the type of sounds that can be triggered, or the modification of algorithms. Each playing field is therefore malleable. A series of playing fields are programmed and can be recalled in any order, though usually I recall them sequentially as I am still very tied to some abstract narrative structure that runs in my mind while I play.

As far as improvisation in the beginning stages, when I am still in the dark as to where the music will go, it is more about exploration, again tied to the digital tools I use. So, it is not so much about improvisation, though I wish it was, but rather exploration of particular software, letting myself wander with no pre-conceived ideas. If this exploration is fruitful, I then need to establish the possible degrees of freedom and implement them for real-time control. In some part of the composition I might want very little wiggle room while in others I might want more of a free system which I have to adapt to and play with. I am not sure why, but the image of bull riding comes to mind when performing with this system!