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Experiential knowledge and improvisation: Variations on movement, motion, emotion

Anne Douglas, Grays School of Art, The Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, UK and Orpheus Research Center in Music, Ghent, Belgium

Kathleen Coessens, Vrije Universiteit, Brussels and Orpheus Research Center in Music, Ghent, Belgium

Abstract (300 words)

In this paper we position improvisation as a way of knowing that is experiential, pivotal to the body's movement and growth in the world. Improvisation allows us to manage the constraints and freedoms of a world rich in possibilities, associations, and combinations. Improvisation, we argue, works across intuitive perception and intellectual analysis. We act and feel our way with whatever is to hand. The impetus is an urge to move from a point of stasis, to catalyse relationship: as we grasp the world, the world grasps us. Improvisation is a means of 'keeping going'. Where in life it may be unselfconscious, in art it leaves a trace, the means to repeat the process but not replicate its experience. Improvisation provides us with a means to create new experience and new knowledge. We draw on selected artists including the Harrisons, Klee, Kaprow, Kurtag, Cage. As authors we take their work into our creative experience of musical performance and the visual arts. This is a research method that is experiential and generative in nature, articulating knowledge from the perspective of the maker/performer rather than that of the spectator. The research approach itself is therefore improvisational in nature. We draw on perceptions of improvisation in other fields including anthropology and psychology examining how far these inform artistic experience and test its assumptions. The question remains: Is improvisation a quality of all art? Can we speak in a precise way of forms of art (therefore approaches to life) that are improvisational and others that are not? What are the implications of this question for our understanding of knowledge more broadly? (265 words)

Keywords: improvisation, experiential knowledge, artistic knowledge, artistic research

Improvisation and the Lagoon Cycle

Invited as artists by governments, organizations and individuals, Helen Mayer and Newton Harrison examine the eco culture of specific places under threat. In response they create work that traces the interconnectedness of living systems, of which the human is but a part, reimagining a place within a much larger 'field' of relations and interdependencies - a 'field of play'.

The Lagoon Cycle, begun in 1976 and continuously refined, is an account of their exploration of the indigenous habitat of a crab in Sri Lanka and the implications of attempting to breed the crab in a different environment. Through their research, the natural lagoon in which the crab is found in Sri Lanka becomes a series of artificial tanks in California. These tanks present significant economic potential but with problematic ecological implications. The Harrisons displace and reconstruct step-by-step points of interdependence between the crab and its habitat, responding to each new question as it arises. They document their journey. Each development is represented as a 'lagoon', a discrete experience. Poetry, drawing, large scale maps and photographs configure crucial links to form a complex narrative. In these two mirroring texts above, the first positions improvisation in human culture and the second in natural systems. The two characters –the Witness and the Lagoon Maker - through their dialogue, raise questions, seek practical solutions and explore the implications of the success and failure of experimentation. The subject - the crab - becomes a metaphor of interdependence between living forms. Culture is part of a larger whole. Human beings intervene in that whole and, through intervention, they learn. Individuals improvise not simply in response to the outer world, to what is given, but also from their inner world and particular perception and understanding of need and survival at a particular moment in time. As human beings and as artists, the Harrisons emphasise the often unacknowledged ways of coping with the world. They give form to their explorations by creating the narrative, itself an improvisation on improvisational forms of life, constructing new layers of experience.

<p>From The First Lagoon</p> <p><i>The Lagoon at Upouveli</i></p> <p><i>A culture is</i></p> <p><i>And I thought</i></p> <p><i>A culture is a cooperative adventure a complex system of shared interrelated beliefs about the nature of reality and causation of values codes of conduct and ethics by which people define themselves collectively and niche themselves individually</i></p> <p><i>It is a fragile form not having the duration of oceans or lands with which it is in discourse and upon which it depends for its survival Its constancy is reproduction and change Its stability is always at risk</i></p> <p><i>Its boundaries increase or decrease by virtue of the energies available the pressure of growth from within the pressures of change from without</i></p> <p><i>Scarcity of food can reduce its population while increasing its vulnerability from without as can climate change as can disease as can an idea</i></p> <p><i>Abundance can increase its population while increasing its vulnerability to stress as the resources available are consumed</i></p> <p><i>Conquerors can debase a culture denigrating its belief structures and language while destroying its relationship to the ecology</i></p> <p><i>But people are tough and resilient and improvise their existence as best they can very creatively with the materials at hand but the materials keep changing Only the improvisation remains constant.</i></p> <p>The Witness p 37</p>	<p>From The Third Lagoon:</p> <p>The House of Crabs</p> <p>An estuarial lagoon is the place where fresh and salt waters meet and mix It is a fragile meeting and mixing not having the constancy of the oceans or the rivers It is a collaborative adventure Its existence is always at risk</p> <p>Heavy rains increase its size and its boundaries increasing nutrients while decreasing salts</p> <p>Forest fire then rain can set up the conditions for heavy silting and a lagoon can turn first into a mud flat then into a swamp</p> <p>If the day is warm the waters being shallow warm quickly If the night is cold the waters being shallow cool quickly</p> <p>Life in the rivers the lakes and the oceans where the properties of water are more constant is less stressful</p> <p>But life in the lagoons is very special it has evolved high tolerance to the stresses that come about from sudden changes in salt and fresh water and temperature and available food for the life web</p> <p>Life in the lagoons is tough and very rich it breeds quickly Life all of us it must improvise its existence very creatively with the materials at hand but materials keep changing Only the improvisation remains constant</p> <p>The Lagoon Maker p 60</p>
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Fig 1 Two mirroring texts on Improvisation from the Lagoon Cycle (Harrison 1985)

This ecological and artistic research offers us a first account of the notion of improvisation from a poetic and inter-dialogical perspective. Hallam and Ingold, as anthropologists, echo this notion of human experience as continuously improvisational: *“There is no script for social and cultural life. People have to work it out as they go along. In a word, they have to improvise.”* (Hallam & Ingold

2007, p1). There exists no script, no modus operandi for human life, just some advice, narratives and instructions of other people whose contexts, bodies and perspectives are inevitably different: it is to the son to become the father. Take as an example the construction of a house, and then of another similar house following the same plan: the material will never be exactly the same, the location will be different, the time and the weather differ and the workers will have to take other decisions at other moments, even if they 'redo' the same work. For Ingold and Hallam, improvisation means that each act continues culture and (re)creates it. Improvisation is dynamic, never static, never perfectly repeatable. It is also different from innovation, because improvisation just happens as a necessary and spontaneous way of coping with the world in which imagination, thought and action again and again meet in specific unforeseen situations. Innovation is only apparent when we look back and recognize a point of change. As the Harrisons mention, there is a continuous search for equilibrium due to a high 'tolerance' in living systems and human agency towards the unforeseen, the extreme, conditions of stress, combined with a great vulnerability and sensitivity towards changing parameters.

Hallam and Ingold attribute four characteristics to improvisation. In the first place it is generative, meaning that it always creates something different, even minimally. The active unfolding of actions, even imitative, always contains unexpected variations, depending upon time, context, growth, inner feelings — *Its (Culture's) boundaries increase / or decrease / by virtue of the energies available / the pressure of growth from within / the pressures of change from without* (Harrison 1985, p 37).

Secondly, improvisation is relational: it is continuously directed towards the other. In that sense it is socially generative: it brings new elements into our interactions with others. Improvisation is also materially generative — as an interaction between one's own body and the inner and outer world. Each act in the world contains a precision, an interrelatedness between the actor and the environment, a subtle 'com-prehension', a 'grasping' of the outer world, and by grasping the outer world, the outer world can 'grasp' us. Improvisation implies a relational interaction, exchanges which influence mutual identities, as the Harrisons remind us metaphorically with the estuarial lagoon: *the place where fresh and salt / waters meet and mix / It is a fragile meeting and / mixing (...)* *It is a collaborative adventure* (Harrison 1985, p 60). Think about stepping on a wet rocky path: some stones will support the walk, others will offer too slippery a surface; think about the blanket that 'embraces' our skin and holds us warm; think about drawing and the springing back of the paper in response to the pressure we exert with a pencil. A continuous and improvisatory adjustment will need to be made again and again to achieve equilibrium, to create order.

Thirdly, improvisation is time-dependent: it is always part of a dynamic ongoing action, an event, experienced in and adding to the narrative of life. It does not participate in chronological time as different improvisations will relate differently to times, dependent on what came before and what comes after — *(Culture) is a fragile form / not having the duration of oceans / or lands with which it is in discourse / and upon which it / depends for its survival / Its constancy is reproduction /and change / Its stability is always at risk* (Harrison 1985, p37). In that sense improvisation is a movement, motion. Moment and movement have the same origins in the Latin word *movere* to move, stir, agitate.

Fourth and finally, it is 'the way we work': improvisation is an inherent part of our human condition. In life we continually write a provisional script that needs to be adjusted again and again. A human being has to find h/her own way in the world; no explanation, no explicit coded output, no total predictability.— *But people are tough / and resilient / and improvise / their existence as best they can / very creatively / with / the materials at hand / but the materials keep changing / Only the improvisation remains constant* (Harrison 1985, p 37).

What do the ecology artists add to the anthropologist's view of improvisation? The poetry gifts shared guiding metaphors that colour how we might think and act - the adventure and uncertainty of *niching* ourselves as individuals within certain codes of conduct. Culture is part of nature's processes. There is struggle involved and it is a struggle with the conditions of life and its mortality. Time is an ebb and flow. In this field of forces, we strive towards equilibrium. The world is not a ready-made gift delivered by courtesy of the physical environment, to be exploited. The fragility of

the human moves to the foreground as a discourse within nature. Conceptually and emotionally man becomes an interlocutor, no longer singularly acting on the world to ensure his survival. As participants in the world we need to grasp the interrelatedness between events, objects, thoughts, subjects, to feel our way, to commit. As we engage in the adventure with the outer world, we perceive the outer world 'grasping' us.

This is experience: drawing a point in space

Hallam and Ingold's explanation and the Harrison's evocation of improvisation draw upon the primacy and specificity of the broader concept of human experience which "*occurs continuously, because the interaction of live creature and enviroing conditions is involved in the very process of living.*" (Dewey 1958/34, p35). An individual's particular experience is shaped by forces (instinct, genes, learning) but these do not wholly account for the quality of encounter when we act in the world. In action, each experience is new, original, an encounter with mortality. It is through experience, through improvising that the playing child becomes the musician or painter.

Interestingly, the etymological roots of 'experience' reflect this complexity. The word 'experience' in European languages originates from the Latin verb *ex-periri*, 'to try out, attempt to'. 'Periri', meaning to 'perish'/ 'die', originated in the noun 'periculum', which also signifies 'risk' or 'danger'. The prefix 'ex' refers to a movement out of a location or place. Experience refers therefore to the struggle and interaction between the human being and h/her environment. For the individual, it is finite process. 'Being involved' is a fundamental necessity from a biological point of view: we can only survive by interacting with the world. Moreover, it is by doing so that we temporarily can overcome our mortal condition.

Our primary approach to the world is immediate, pre-noetic, embodied, vague and undefined. Dewey calls this the level of 'feelings', making possible a first discernment of the world as lived, intuitive. On the next level of 'sense', the world is accepted and reflected upon as meaningful. Thirdly, these experiences are articulated through signs and symbols, through 'signification' (Dewey 1958). As such, "*Experience is as much cognitive as sensory. It includes everything a bat or a new born baby can feel, and everything a great mathematician can experience in thinking.*" (Strawson 1994, p4).

The primacy of experience as 'trying out', as 'moving out' of the location of stasis/death is the starting point for Klee's *thinking eye* (Spiller 1973). The dot/or point in space fixes a moment. It represents the primordial, simultaneously suggesting the cosmos (macro) or the cell (micro). Making a spot, determining a beginning represented by a point in space, is an intervention, a breaking of chaos, simultaneously an improvisational and an organisational action. By making a dot, by placing something within something else unlike it, a black spot within white space, this act transcends the pre-noetic, undefined 'feeling' and makes 'sense' by 'differentiating', making a 'decision'. A dot on paper becomes a point in space from which to move off in any direction. It urges us on towards improvisational interaction and involvement in the world into which we are born 'unasked' (Klee 1954).

One dot can connect with a second, leading us to imagine a relationship, the yielding of a line between two entities. Both possibilities suggest the second level of experience in which the world is no longer simply embodied, but a situation of two interrelated states, the world of inner perception and understanding and the outer world of encounter. These are an interplay of seemingly different forces in dynamic tension. We feel the pull of gravity as a pull towards stasis, towards the centre of the earth. We also feel a compulsion to move. "*Motion is the root of all growth*" (Klee). In this push/pull Klee's world accrues meaning.

Moreover, a line leaves a trace, and as such can be revisited, shared, and through reflection, altered, improved upon, varied in some sense 'knowingly', transported towards another plane. In this way Klee takes one experience, walking, as a basis for another mode of experience, drawing. In so doing he extracts experiential knowledge of the world into his artistic domain of drawing. An ordinary experience that we may not notice becomes an experience of intuition 'at work'. This marks a transition from an intuitive and embodied coping with the world to a different level of awareness – one that is more explicitly cognitive and conceptual.

The art theorist and psychologist, Arnheim argues in favor of the coupling of perception and thinking, intuition and intellect: '*Thinking requires a sensory base*' (Arnheim 1986, p14). In a bid to free the sensory from the aura of poetic inspiration by giving it a name, Arnheim articulates intuition as '*a cognitive capacity reserved to the activity of the senses because it operates by means of field processes, and only sensory perception can supply knowledge by means of field processes*' (ibid, p16). In formulating a whole, creating a stable image out of the complexity within the field, all components depend upon each other, one colour depends upon the color of its neighbours. Interestingly Arnheim notes that in everyday life, we limit ourselves to what is necessary to notice in order to move around. But in art, we engage in an improvisational dialogue with experiential knowledge that is constituted of more stable entities. The kinesthetic control of the bicycle rider repeats itself in the movements of the dancer. The dancer works intuitively with the language of dance, the shared signs, symbols and patterns of movement. The bicycle rider focuses to stay upright and in motion, a more primary level of experience.

Art as improvisation with experiential knowledge

The child enters a room and encounters a piano. The discovery depends on the child's being in the world and its curiosity to unfold the unknown. By touching a piano it makes a sound! By using hands, arms, dynamics change. By exploring the space of the piano, pitch varies. A world opens, a world that is also without a script. The improvising child nourished Gyorgy Kurtag's compositions: "*The idea of composing 'Games' was suggested by children playing spontaneously, children for whom the piano still means a toy. They experiment with it, caress it, attack it and run their fingers over it. They pile up seemingly disconnected sounds, and if this happens to arouse their musical instinct, they look consciously for some of the harmonies found by chance and keep repeating them.*" (Kurtag1976) Kurtag's musical composition *Games* embodies the transition from quotidian experience to artistic experience, but also from intuitive, prenoetic experience towards experiential knowledge. The intuitive experience and improvisational interaction of the child is rebuilt, reoriented towards a composition based on the awareness — and knowledge — of these experiences. The composer freely draws, like Klee, dots in space, lines referring to bodily movements and material interactions with the instrument. The performer embodies these dots and lines with motion and movement. The improvisational act of the child leaves traces in the improvisational act of the composer. Both leave traces and offer possible directions for the performer's act.

forms of cognition – intuitive and intellectual – are necessary and mutually dependent activities to make sense in the work of art in the same way as we make sense of the world. Being open to the uniqueness of the moment of interaction with the world in specific experience checks any tendency to view the world purely through generalized stable entities. Likewise unique and specific experience without generalization does not allow us to learn from experience, transfer knowledge from one situation to the next.

Merleau-Ponty evokes this interdependence as a delving *'into the thickness of the world by perceptual experience'* (Merleau-Ponty, p. 204). In contemplating the blue of the sky, *'I abandon myself and plunge into its mystery, it thinks itself within me'* (Merleau-Ponty, p. 214). Knowing the blue of the sky is therefore not about possessing some thought of 'blue' and 'spreading' that thought or idea into the world. It is a way of knowing that emerges from a living connection between me and the perceptible world, of my being part of the world in the same way that parts of my body are connected to each other: *"When I walk round my flat, the various aspects in which it presents itself to me could not possibly appear as views of one and the same thing if I did not know that each of them represents the flat seen from one spot or another and if I were not unaware of my own movements, and of my body as retaining its identity through stages of those movements"* (Merleau-Ponty, p 203).

However, Arnheim forgets an important aspect of artistic practice: the omnipresence of improvisational interaction needed to cope with the tensions between freedom and control and between intuition and experiential knowledge. This improvisational interaction nourishes the creative process. It encourages the situation of originality for which the artist strives. For example, in the case of Kurtág, there exists no standard notation addressing the embodied behavior of children's embodied improvisatory movements on the piano — which forces him to create one. In the Kurtág performance the artist questions the primary relation the child has with a musical instrument. The child's playfulness is transposed to an artistic creation. The encounter, realized by way of the motions of the child, the interaction with the instrument, opens a new perceptual and possibly emotional experience: by touching the piano, I am touched. Artistic experiential knowledge therefore starts from questioning the relations between the inner and outer world and, through questioning, reveals a heterogeneity of possible connections, associations and combinations. Moreover the questioning originates from an engaged and consciously open position; artistic experiential knowledge is the result of an involvement, a committed action, a trans-action that happens on the border between what is actual and potential, between reality and imagination. As such it implies a creative search. Likewise, this openness implies taking a position in between freedom and control, chaos and decision-making.

If Klee offers us drawing as a method of moving from open, non-defined space to greater levels of control and determinacy by improvising with line, then Cage offers us another artistic method that increasingly articulates improvisation as a highly disciplined process of 'letting go'. In his visual artwork 1978- 1992 with Crown Point Press, Oakland, Cage transposed the conceptual domains of 'structure, method, form and materials' already developed in music, to the visual domain. He expanded these domains to include 'intention, discipline, notation, indeterminacy, interpenetration, imitation, devotion and circumstances'. He worked with scores that laid out a series of moves determined by chance operations using the I Ching. Compositional decisions do not emerge out of the 'ego' of the artist, of what looks good. Instead Cage rigorously followed the outcomes of chance procedures (such as throwing dice or letting string fall) through the values that had been preassigned to them. Chance procedures determined with great precision how the artist should work with the materials to hand.

Klee's control started from a first dot with its inherent freedom - the possibility for infinitesimal trajectories of lines. Cage's control started with the decision to use a certain chance operation and follow its consequences. Both are precise responses to creative freedom. A tension exists between control and freedom and is at the heart of improvisation as both a cultural/artistic concept and a cultural/artistic practice. Whereas most of human life is concerned with how to control, how to judge our way as an individual, Cage flips this norm to revealing an absence of control or serendipity. *"Chance operations are a way of silencing the ego so that the rest of the world has a*

chance to enter into the ego's own experience," he wrote. Chance was not a method to avoid making choices. Rather, he said, "*I use chance as a discipline...my choices consist [of] choosing what questions to ask*" (Brown, p64).

Cage turns our attention to that aspect of the outer world that is perhaps the most challenging for us to grasp within our inner world - the inability to control life itself. Like Klee and the Harrisons, like Merleau -Ponty and the colour blue 'thinking itself within me', Cage's work becomes a process of 'letting the world in' to consciousness.

The relation between improvisation and experiential knowledge in art reveals itself through artistic method, engaging a sensible and sensitive reflection on a practice which circles between motion (action, transformation) and emotion (meaning, astonishment), between moving and being moved/touched. As a form of activity it is close to all human perception but as artistic experiential knowledge, searching actively and methodologically for the — aesthetic — relations between motion and emotion, also stands out as particular, as specific.

Our practice of artistic experiential knowledge: *Calendar Variations* 2010

Calendar Variations 2010 is a collaborative art research project that responds to Kaprow's *Calendar* score (1971). Developed by a group of artists researchers from the On the Edge research programme at Grays School of Art in Aberdeen, the project started as a response to an invitation by the Orpheus Institute of Research into Musical Practice to contribute an 'unexpected variation' to the Research Festival 2010, *Unexpected Variations*.

Kaprow felt that life is more artlike than art. He drew artists and participants into noticing and exploring life's spontaneous moments of sociability. Kaprow's method was to rely on scores to create a series of timebased events, to break with the tradition of the visual as privileged objects and material. The quality of timelessness, of being outside of time, is frequently cited as a quality of the visual, whereas Kaprow framed time consciously in the work. Kaprow's score consists of words, while musical scores consist of musical notation; but both are embedded in performance and time. By working together with a score, Kaprow set out to create the potential for shared social experience. This would, he claimed, naturally occur when a group of individuals attempted to grapple with a score's meaning. The necessity to negotiate meaning and appropriate response would arise in a shared performance. In this way Kaprow transposed Cage's idea of experimental action, 'the outcome of which is unforeseen', into the visual arts by using scores to trigger awareness, to notice and value the moment in which one was working.

Calender

planting a square of turf
amid grass like it

planting another
amid grass a little less green

planting four more squares
in places progressively drier

planting a square of dry turf
amid grass like it

planting another
amid grass a little less dry

planting four more squares
in places progressively greener

-Activity, A.K., California
Institute of the Arts, November 2, 1971
(Kaprow 2003 p 120)

We worked closely to what we felt was intended by the artist, in that sense treating the score as a 'set of actions to be performed' and filtering its meanings through our own cultural, geographical and ecological circumstances. The score resembled the drawn point on a sheet of paper of Klee: it offered constraints and freedom.

First of all, we performed this score through drawing. Each individual was invited to respond from within their own centre. We then came together and shared our productions, seeking agreement about how to perform together. We decided to 'walk the score'. meaning in our own experience, We also reveal difference. Chu takes the score into practices of negotiation in relational art practice, exposing tensions in 'implanting an idea' in minds that are 'friendly' or 'hostile'; Fremantle uses the score's structure to articulate the quality of a collaborative experience; Goto translates and thereby disseminates our shared processes of folding and tracing, of working singly and in pairs; McEwan explores quality of relationship through quality of space, of sound and silence; Barney creates a tactic for insinuating art back into everyday life.

How does *Calendar Variations* speak to improvisation in art as experiential knowledge? As mentioned earlier improvisation focuses in particular on how constraint and freedom is managed in any particular piece, who or what controls or is in control of the work and how and where control is relinquished. Constraint and freedom within form draw into play the structures of thought that Arnheim describes as 'intuitive perception' and 'intellectual analysis' (Arnheim 1984, p 29), as well as they draw into play a performative relation between motion and emotion. In nature as well as culture we find within each context "petrified" elements, which act as constraints because they are not influenced by the structure of the whole (Arnheim 1984, p 28. This corresponds to Klee's idea that things on earth require impetus: "*What was in the beginning? (...) There was just one thing – mobility, the prerequisite for change from the primordial state.*" (Klee in Spiller 1973, p 19). These non-negotiable elements are essential to a work's capacity to produce the experience of encounter as 'unexpected'.

As with the Kurtag, it is important to focus on the form producing properties of this project and how these might lend themselves to creating the unexpectedness that is implied in improvisation. By identifying and working within certain givens in the score: numbers of squares, conditions of turf, juxtapositions, sequences, repetitions and changes in rhythm, we established a set of constraints that provided an impetus to challenge habit. The sense of the project resonates with 'using the materials to hand', 'without preparing in advance' in the sense of relying on preformed modes of production or repertoire, seeking an encounter that is 'unexpected'. This work will undergo deeper analysis in the coming months.



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Fig 3 a Drawing *Calendar Variations* 2010

Fig 3 b Walk *Calendar Variations* 2010, Woodend Barn, Banchory

Conclusion

In life there exists no script, no *modus operandi*. The primacy of experience is a form of 'trying out' or improvisation, a moving from an indefinable and undifferentiated state to feeling our way by creating a direction. By projecting into the world, we invite a response. Improvisation means that each act continues culture and (re) creates it. Improvisation is dynamic, never static, never perfectly repeatable.

In art the body becomes a medium of expression. Simple, everyday movements are transposed into more stable, choreographed elements thereby opening up the potential for almost infinite variability. The artist uses this potential knowingly.

In artistic research, by experimenting with new forms, by observing how other artists work, by drawing on understandings of improvisation from other fields (anthropology and psychology), we notice that art is a process of aesthetic questioning between the domains of our inner and outer selves. This questioning arises when we view the world as heterogeneous, as rich in possibilities, associations and combinations. Art goes further, however. Art produces new forms, experiences and thoughts. If we extend our definition of improvisation in everyday life into artistic practice, we see that in art, improvisation manages the constraints and freedoms of possibility as a dynamic. Improvisational forms and tactics in art leave traces. These can be repeated but never exactly, adding a new layer of consciousness.

Within this paper we have traced a trajectory from improvisation in life to improvisation in art. The next phase of work is distinctly different. By focusing on artists who work with improvisation in precise ways in the visual and music, we aim to explore how our current understanding of experiential knowledge and improvisation may be challenged and transformed by what the artist specifically offers. (Arnheim 1984, p 28).

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Images

Fig 1 Two mirroring texts from the Lagoon Cycle (Harrison 1985)

Fig 2a Detail of score of Kurtag's *Games* 1976

Fig 2b Kathleen Coessens and Catherine Laws performing *Games* Orpheus Institute, Sept 2010

Fig 3 a Drawing *Calendar Variations* 2010

Fig 3 b Walk *Calendar Variations* 2010, Woodend Barn, Banchory

(4739 words)

Anne Douglas (192 words)

Anne Douglas is a visual artist and research professor whose work has focused on the dynamic role of the artists in the public sphere. Her practice led doctorate (completed 1992) entitled *Structure and Improvisation* focussed on the artist's creative process. She developed parallel strands of inquiry: investigating her own practice of sculpture and its process of change within a post industrial context alongside the potential of art practice to open up new trajectories and methodological approaches to research. Douglas has initiated and led On the Edge research programme at Grays School of Art, Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen working within a network of international artists on a range of issues including artistic leadership; contemporary art and remote and rural cultures; the aesthetics and ethics of working in public. The research increasingly draws out the philosophical and social implications of a practice-led approach, tracing its implications in new forms of practice as well as new forms of research. Recent publications include *the Artist as Leader* co-authored with Chris Fremantle and *The Artistic Turn*, co-authored with Kathleen Coessens and Darla Crispin. Douglas is a Senior Research fellow of the Orpheus Research Centre in Music, Ghent.

Kathleen Coessens (154 words)

Kathleen Coessens is a philosopher and musician, whose research is situated at the crossings of science and art, human creativity and cultural representations, looked at from an embodied, epistemological and philosophical point of view. She graduated in piano and chamber music at the Conservatory of Brussels and école Cortot at Paris; at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, she studied philosophy, sociology and psychology. She was awarded her doctorate in 2003 with her thesis *The human being as cartographer- coping with the already epistemized world* to be published later this year. She is now professor and post - doctoral researcher at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB Centre for Logic and Philosophy of Science), a Senior Researcher at the Orpheus Research Centre in Music, Ghent and guest professor at the Conservatory (Arets Hogeschool), Antwerpen. She teaches semiotics, sociology of artistic practice and arts and performance culture. Coessens co-authored *The Artistic Turn*, with Darla Crispin and Anne Douglas.