



Prof. Ivar Frounberg

EASA Member of Class III

Lecture 19-5-2023

Colloquium 'Art meets Medicine'

Title: Stages in creative processes – some painting practises and music composition.

Abstract

The quote “composition process employs 1% inspiration and 99% transpiration” is often attributed to Igor Stravinsky. Even though the attribution may be false¹, it expresses what Stravinsky could have agreed on: that inspiration is only a small part in the creation of a masterpiece in the arts.

Others have investigated the notion of “inspiration”². In the presentation I will expand the knowledge of the nature of the remaining 99% of work. I will draw on my personal experiences with the composers Morton Feldman (1926-1987) and Iannis Xenakis (1922-2001)³. Feldman had a close relation to several of the abstract expressionist painters in New York and Xenakis had an oeuvre as an architect in France.

I will specify a number of distinct stages of the working process, even not all will be equally present during the composition of any specific artwork: The empty paper – Concept – Generation: deterministic structures or a library (in-time or out-of-time?) – Writing and intension – Phenomenological analysis and generative structures – Differentiation – Articulation. The presentation will not be dealing with aspects of artisanal work: music theory, instrumentation, notation, acoustics and the like.

Since my personal artistic experiences include music composition and oil pastel painting, I will introduce the documentation of the painting processes of the painters Gerhard Richter (b. 1932)⁴ and Per Kirkeby (1938-2018)⁵ showing how it has influenced my personal work and contributed to a wider understanding of creative processes.

Finally I will propose possible concordances between the working processes in the two art fields: painting and music composition. It is my hope that the interdisciplinary work in the field of arts also might extend to be (re-)cognized valuably as a possible detail in the scientific research process.

¹ The quote is also attributed to the inventor Thomas Alva Edison (1847-1931).

² see: Jonathan Harvey: "Music and Inspiration", Faber and Faber Limited, London 1999.

³ Iannis Xenakis: "Formalized Music – Thought and Mathematics in composition", Pendragon Press, Stuyvesant NY 1992.

⁴ Gerhard Richter: "Abstrakte Bilder", Hantje Cantz Verlag, Ostfildern 2008.

⁵ Jesper Jargil: "Per Kirkeby – Winters Tale", Jesper Jargil Film Aps, Copenhagen 2013.