



Invitation/ Call for Papers:

SYMPOSIUM: Musicians' Perspectives on Improvisation

International symposium dedicated to the specific practices, ideas, visions and theories of improvising musicians and other improvising artists

9th Symposium at the *exploratorium berlin*

February, 2nd–4th, 2024

Invited speakers to date: **Ulrike Brand, John Butcher, Marina Cyrino, Silvana K. Figueroa-Dreher, Carl Ludwig Hübsch, Luigi Marino, Mark Wastell, Ebru Yazıcı**

“Artists are the best explainers and models of what they do. Their views, reflections and contemplations are closer to the truth and more authentic than any other view concerning the music-objects they create.” (Wadada Leo Smith)

Many of the theoretical contributions and essential ideas about improvisation in recent years and decades have been written by the practitioners themselves. Like Wadada Leo Smith, Derek Bailey, in his seminal book *Improvisation. Its Nature and Practice in Music*, published in 1980, made the crucial assumption that musicians themselves are the most persuasive guarantors of their art. His initial idea in this early testimony to artistic self-revelation was “to show the significance of improvisation through the experience of those who use it”. This was in line with his assumption that “there was an important part of improvisation not easily indicated or conveyed by its results, a part which perhaps only those involved in doing it seemed to be able to appreciate or comprehend”.

With this in mind, the *exploratorium berlin* is organizing the conference *Musicians' Perspectives on Improvisation* to explore the specific practices, ideas, visions and theories of improvising musicians and other improvising artists. Their voices are essential to understanding the depth, complexity and diversity of the practice of improvisation. The aim, to again refer to Derek Bailey, is to “imagine a meaningful consideration of improvisation from anything other than a practical and a personal point of view.”

On the one hand, improvising musicians and artists themselves are invited to highlight aspects of improvisation that are crucial to them from their own perspective. On the other hand, academics are invited to present their views on what practitioners say about improvisation and to analyze their discourse on the subject.

The resulting thematic openness is intentional in order to ensure as many diverse contributions and disparate aspects of improvisation as possible. A list of possible topics is therefore deliberately omitted here.

Call for Papers and Contributions

We hereby invite active participation and request proposals for conference papers. The form as well as the exact length of the presentation is open. We welcome a wide range of presentation formats that reflect the diversity of improvisational practice and that encompass different artistic forms and approaches to discussion: papers and presentations as a platform for structured analysis, theoretical reflection and research; roundtables and panels as interactive formats for the exchange of ideas;

open space formats as a space for spontaneous discussion and collaborative exploration of self-defined topics; lecture performances and practical demonstrations as artistic-scientific realizations of theoretical concepts; and artistic presentations as an opportunity to experience and reflect on improvisation in action.

Application and Registration

For papers / presentations / conference contributions:

Please send your proposal until January 12th latest, in case you need accommodation from us.

Please send your proposal until January 19th latest, in case you don't need accommodation in Berlin.

Your proposal can be a detailed abstract (not more than 300 words), but also rather improvised sketches and spontaneous ideas are welcome (also due to the very short notice of the publication of this call). In any case your proposal needs to contain a title and your chosen format. You will be informed as soon as possible about the acceptance of your proposal, even before the deadline.

For participation only:

The symposium is open to the public and free of charge. To attend, please register by January 26th latest. Your registration will be confirmed as soon as possible.

Please send your application as well as your registration to Mathias Maschat via email:

mm@exploratorium-berlin.de

Costs for Travel and Accommodation:

For contributors to the symposium, travel and accommodation can be covered by *exploratorium berlin*. Our hotel contingent can also be used if required.

Conference Opening:

To open the symposium, the trio **John Butcher/ Mark Wastell/ Luigi Marino** will be guest in *exploratorium's* [Sound & Lecture series on February, 2nd, 8.00 pm](#). Coming from a practical background, all three have made notable contributions to thinking about improvisation, be it through articles, book publications, record production or doctoral theses. They will perform as a trio and discuss their specific ideas about improvisation.

Times:

Friday, February 2nd, 2024, 8:00 pm: Opening Event "Sound & Lecture with John Butcher/ Luigi Marino / Mark Wastell"

Saturday, February 3rd, 2024, 10:00 am – 9:00 pm (including Open Stages for Improvisation)

Sunday, February 4th, 2024, 10:30 am – 3:30 pm

Conference Language: English

Symposium Website:

<https://exploratorium-berlin.de/en/veranstaltung/symposium-musicians-perspectives-on-improvisation/>

Contact and Information:

Mathias Maschat

exploratorium berlin, Zossener Straße 24, D-10961 Berlin-Kreuzberg

Tel. 0049 / 178 / 554 87 42, mm@exploratorium-berlin.de

Further Links:

[exploratorium berlin](#) | [Denkraum Improvisation / Thinking Space Improvisation](#)

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