Creative Evolution
Natural Selection and the Urge to Remix
Edited by Mark Amerika
Creative Evolution
Natural Selection and the Urge to Remix
By Mark Amerika

Introduction: What is Creativity?

In his *Process and Reality*
Alfred North Whitehead writes that

Creativity is the principle of novelty.

The concept of novelty or more specifically
novelty generation as the modus operandi of
all living creatures mutating in the remix pool
relates to current trends in networked art
where the artist-as-medium postproduces
the Source Material Everywhere
as part of a larger co-poietic unfolding
inside the networked space of flows

This ongoing remix practice
procured by all living creatures
feels like an innate biological imperative
one that indicates an aesthetically charged culture of
intersubjective jamming where
the cut-and-paste as-you-go
open source lifestyle practice of
the artist-as-live-medium stimulates
the creative environment to the point of excess

In an interview titled 'The Creative Urge'
Elizabeth Grosz is quoted as saying:

That’s right, there’s something about art that is an
abundance of excess. Art is the revelry in the excess of
nature, but also a revelry in the excess of the energy
in our bodies. So we’re not the first artists and we’re
perhaps not even the greatest artists, we humans; we
take our cue from the animal world. So what is it that
appeals to us? It’s the striking beauty of flowers, it’s
the amazing colour of birds, it’s the songs of birds. In a
way, it’s that excess which, I think, is linked to
sexuality rather than to creation or production
directly.

Which then gets me thinking about
the formation of an uncanny sense of measure
(an intuitively generated aesthetic fitness)
artists unconsciously manifest / em-body
while navigating the networked space of flows

_Aesthetic fitness as an outcome of overflowing sexual
urgency?_
Randomly Google-searching the phrase 'aesthetic fitness'

my click-happy networked persona comes up on this:

If art is an adaptation, what possible function could it have served? From the viewpoint of current animal communication research, art is a signalling system. There is a signaller (the maker of the art), and a set of receivers (who perceive the work of art). The prototypical functions for animal signals include long-range sexual attraction, short-range sexual courtship, sexual rivalry, territorial conflict, begging by offspring to solicit parental investment, warning signals to deter predators, and alarm signals to alert relatives of danger.

And a bit further:

What sort of evidence could support this sexual selection theory of art? One clue would be an example of convergent evolution: the independent evolution of art-like abilities in another species through sexual selection. Bower-birds offer strong evidence along this line.

Bower-birds are natural collage artists caught in their perpetual blue period who create readymade nestworks to attract attention to themselves in hopes of finding their soul-mate (or maybe just an on again off-again
affair with their love bird)

They are naturally inclined *remixologists* (cut-and-paste as-you-go synthesizers abstractly expressing their need to attract sexual partners in search of beautiful experiences)

They do not need paint or canvas or verbal constructions to make the point nor do they need a white cube to exhibit their animal instincts *in*

But we digitally connected humans treat our remix / compostproduced / readymade art in a quite different manner—no?

In contemporary networked and mobile media culture Remixology presupposes the prophetic act of *making things with and out of code* whether it be a poet's direct presentation a programmer's hacking aesthetic a net artist's targeted action scripting or a live A/V artist's patchwork performance

Whatever the mediumistic delivery mechanism (and here artists can morph at will)
it still comes down to a root measure
a random association of selected thoughts
coming to the fore via intuitive memory trance
(an admixture of habit and novelty that informs
the remixological gestures of the artist-medium
as they perform the pseudo-autobiography of their
"always becoming" narrative-in-the-making)

Words rolling off the tongue
images conjured at the keyboard
sounds blasting through headphones
bodies bobbing off the balls of their feet
while qi electrical impulses structure
every pivotal move into makeshift
choreographed trance ritual space

In his lecture 'The Creative Act'
the artist Marcel Duchamp
refers to the artist as a medium:

To all appearances, the artist acts like a mediumistic being who, from the labyrinth beyond time and space, seeks his way out to a clearing.

Duchamp expands on his notion of the creative act:

In the creative act, the artist goes from intention to
realization through a chain of totally subjective reactions. His struggle toward the realization is a series of efforts, pains, satisfaction, refusals, decisions, which also cannot and must not be fully self-conscious, at least on the esthetic plane.

The result of this struggle is a difference between the intention and its realization, a difference which the artist is not aware of.

The artist-as-living-medium is not aware of this difference between intention and realization since they are performing their always-live remixes via unconsciously triggered states of intuition.

Duchamp writes that

the artistic execution of the work rests with pure intuition and cannot be translated into a self-analysis, spoken or written, or even thought out.

Biologically speaking
what does it mean to intuitively generate an aesthetic experience and how would this creative act get translated as the ultimate turn-on?

Put differently: what is the unconscious readiness potential that triggers
Creativity as the principle of *novelty*?

Is it related to feeling a sexual urge?

When asked in an interview 'What is creativity?' Russian dancer Rudolf Nureyev gave the following answer:

> It is something born from within you. It's as though you felt a need to do something, to say something, to utter, and you cannot live without uttering this sentence or writing this piece of music. It just begs to manifest itself. It is a need to express yourself first, and then to rationalize this expression. It is irrational first, rational after. I am sure Einstein had an inkling about something unknown and then came to his theory of light. And I am sure everybody has had this impulse, very much akin to sex, sexual drive, or sexual appetite, if you wish.

Intuitively acting on this impulse
the fidgeting digits of the digital nomad
transfigured in trance narrative space
execute their high performance keyboard gestures
while generating what the poet Allen Ginsberg terms
'prophetic illuminations' running parallel to
physiological currents subtly manipulating
psychosomatic flow

Artists caught in the heat of ecstatic release
can relate to this ongoing creative process
triggering the continuous launch of
neuro-aesthetic forms of expression
finding their way in and out of the body
as it shape-shifts *while playing*

Vilém Flusser has a different take on
this Duchampian 'creative act'
referring to it as *The Gesture of Writing*
but for Ginsberg this ecstatic expression
catalyzes into spontaneous transmissions
emitting from a body experiencing 'physiological spasms'
in a heightened state of emerging-agency

The State of Emerging-Agency is not very different
from an endless State of Creative Emergency
(Emergency being a heightened state of emerging-agency
where the 'always live' artist-medium gives itself
extensive powers to develop an integrated
open source lifestyle practice that customizes responses to
these hyperimprovisational projections from the
creative unconscious
that seemingly come out of nowhere and require
If you are practicing spontaneous transmission
(Ginsberg lectures all wannabe bards)
and by this he means to say
'transmission of your thought'
'how do you choose then what thoughts
you need to put down' while in trance?

The answer (he says—playing Guru)
'is that you don't get a chance to choose
because everything's going so fast.'

'It's like driving on a road
you just have to follow the road;
And take turns, "eyeball it"
as a carpenter would say.
You don't have any scientific
measuring rod, except your own mind.

I don't know of any scientific measuring rod
that's usable. So you have to chance
whatever you can and pick whatever you can.
So there's also a process of automatic selection.
Whatever you can draw in your net is it,
is what you got.'

Remixology forms as a process of natural selection

intuitive netting of the source material

which then can be mutated into the physiological form of ecstasy during your ongoing postproduction sets

(a beautiful experience?

autoerotic musing?

this interiorized postproduction process turns the pure mobility of ones durée into the ongoing satisfaction of becoming more source material / experiential data and during a heightened state of emerging-agency can lead to what Alfred North Whitehead refers to as Higher Phases of Experience)

Creativity as a form of novel advance becomes an 'always live' performance art movement especially when embodied by the postproduction
medium
whose spontaneous transmission
is transcribed into *more source material*

more hard code

that then gets mashed up further
into a remixological composition style
that transfigures the measuring rod
into a conceptual DJ tool
whose job it is to **intervene**

(William Carlos Williams:
'The measure intervenes,
to measure is all we know."

This measuring rod is the instrument
used in the principle of natural selection
'so you have to be a little athletic about that'
says Ginsberg

(If the species *remixologist*
is about anything at all
it's about aesthetic fitness
i.e. the ability to transmit
an embodied sense of measure
as an intense [beautiful?] experience
so as to attract those whom might appreciate
such transmissions as indicative of
an energy-medium seeking sexual satisfaction)

The measuring rod vibrates
as a sense of measure
physiologically rooted
in the digital gesture transcribed
while writing (playing-performing-remixing)
and inhabits a transliminal space
where everything is biochemically
bleeding into everything else it connects with
and is subject to electro or alchemical
manipulation during its state of emerging-agency

This biochemically charged state of emerging-agency
can now be felt in the networked space of social flows
or what pre-Internet Ginsberg referred to as a 'mind bank network'
in whose neurosis we tell the story of Remixology
where the act of transmitting ones Creativity
takes place via continuous improvisation and revision

As Robert Creeley wrote in relation to Whitman
'[his] constant habit of revisions and additions would concur, I think, with this notion of his process, in that there is not 'one thing' to be said and, that done, then "another." Rather the process permits the material ('myself' in the world) to extend until literal death intercedes.'

Remixology challenges yet merges with the life sciences by performing a creative misappropriation of impenetrable scientific discourses loaded with hegemonic ideology resituating the aesthetics-junky as an 'always becoming' biopolitical animal instinctively looking for its next systemic hack

'Do I contradict myself? Very well, then I contradict myself. I am large, I contain multitudes'

In this regard as we watch our(so-called)selves randomly morph into any number of remixiogically reconfigured conceptual personae we cannot help but ask
'What does it mean to become an artistic energy / living medium?'

or:

'What do we do with the surplus energy that fills our bodies as they crave more aesthetic sexual / 'connectual' satisfaction?'

In its many iterations of becoming Philosophy Remixology envisions the artist as a postproduction Medium who becomes instrument while performing radical experiments in unconsciously projected Creativity

Performing in a shared headspace of hyperimprovisational co-creation or co-production one that feels like it takes place in asynchronous realtime

opens up the creative process to external influence but an external influence that is being parallel processed
internally by all of the other players
intersubjectively jamming in the co-poietic mix

Think of it as simultaneous and continuous experiential tagging
in a massively modular remixological network

Or how about 'call-and-response' metamediumystic performance art networking that happens so fast you end up in a parallel universe that looks and feels like this world you know all too well but that also now reveals an unconsciously generated underworld full of prophetic bioluminescence?

The dancing pulsations of literary bodies socializing the network while mirroring neurons?

Imagine transforming individual talent into an ongoing remixological potential where the artist as postproduction-medium triggers socially constructed forms of novel togetherness by mirroring neurons while aesthetically manipulating the environmental data our conceptual personae perform in

Immersed in the depths of this remix underworld
co-poietically unfolding in the 'mind bank network'
the living remix creature would become
more networked source material
that can be sampled from at will
suggesting that for artist mediums
who intentionally build mosaics of meaning
out of renewable forms of energy [source material]
there is no longer an inspirational source
to turn to for enlightened expression
rather it’s more of a co-conspiratorial practice
fed by a reservoir of living datum
that one hacks into and samples from
to create novel forms of aesthetic intensity
that may lead to . . . sexual experiences?

To perform this interventionist measure on measure
remixological hackers must attune their bodies
to the neural resonance of their relationships
with other creatures in their social network
as well as the accompanying neural resonance
they may have with all of the artworks they encounter
when engaging with activist reality hackers
whose aesthetic agenda includes designing
the distribution channels that these tactically administered
artworks continuously pass through
What would an applied remixologist intersubjectively jamming with their ludic crew distributed in the networked space of flows have to contribute to the collective unconscious especially in the name of deep research into the forever-remixed ('living') creative act?

Ginsberg deliberate in his prose tells us that we have to stretch things as far as we can take them 'you go so far out you don’t know what you’re doing, you lose touch with what’s been done before by anyone, you wind up creating a new poetry-universe.'

The bottom line is that to remix Miles Davis who once said

Sometimes you have to play a long time to be able to play like yourself

sometimes it takes a long time to become a postproduction medium
ADDENDUM:

This introduction cannot end here. There is always more. There is always an excess.

Natural Rhythms, Embodied
(After Henri Lefebvre)

A rhythm invests in places, but is itself not a place: it is not a thing, nor an aggregation of things, nor yet a simple flow. It embodies its own law, its own regularity, which it derives from space -- from its own space -- and from a relationship between space and time.

What we live are rhythms -- rhythms experienced intersubjectively.

Every rhythm expresses the body's inventiveness and when ported through an illuminative sense of measure can trigger higher phases of experience.

The body reveals these rhythms as varying forms of
aesthetic fitness.

Rhythms in all their multiplicity interpenetrate one another compostproducing the 'nature' one is becoming while in auto-remix mode.

This auto-remix mode feels natural and the rhythms that layer and multiply the experience of feeling natural (while living) have to do with needs, with feelings, with urges, with tendencies toward some creative action that may be filtered into more metamediumsytic becomings.

These metamediumsytic becomings ('prophetic illuminations' sometimes experienced as 'physiological spams') are triggered by the unconscious readiness potential of the living remixologist who appropriates the rhythms of the body engaged in its ongoing spatial practice.

Fortunately for the forms of Creativity advancing into novel states of emerging-agency, the end is never the end, because Creativity simultaneously and continuously infects the all of the bodies that remix it, and in doing so, survives.
Articles

Cheryl A. Kerfeld
When Art, Science, and Culture Commingle

David P. Barash
Biology Lurks Beneath: Bioliterary Explorations of the Individual versus Society

Liane Gabora
The Beer Can Theory of Creativity

Elena Daprati, Marco Iosa, Patrick Haggard
A Dance to the Music of Time: Aesthetically-Relevant Changes in Body Posture in Performing Art

Marco Iacoboni, Istvan Molnar-Szakacs, Vittorio Gallese, Giovanni Buccino, John C. Mazziotta, Giacomo Rizzolatti
Grasping the Intentions of Others with One’s Own Mirror Neuron System

Chrisantha Fernando, K.K. Karishma, Eors Szathmary
Copying and Evolution of Neuronal Topology

Steven P. DiPaola and Liane Gabora
Incorporating Characteristics of Human Creativity into an Evolutionary Art Algorithm

Richard Samuels
Is the Mind Massively Modular?
Johan De Smedt
Toward an Integrative Approach of Cognitive Neuroscientific and Evolutionary Psychological Studies of Art

Mark Amerika
Source Material Everywhere

Mark Amerika
Ghost Tendencies

John Egenes
Commentary: The Remix Culture; How the Folk Process Works in the 21st Century

Geoffrey F. Miller
Aesthetic fitness: How Sexual Selection Shaped Artistic Virtuosity as a Fitness Indicator and Aesthetic Preferences as Mate Choice Criteria

Julie Copeland
The Creative Urge: Elizabeth Grosz
Attributions

1. Cheryl A. Kerfeld *When Art, Science, and Culture Commingle*


This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Public Domain declaration which stipulates that, once placed in the public domain, this work may be freely reproduced, distributed, transmitted, modified, built upon, or otherwise used by anyone for any lawful purpose.

2. David P. Barash

*Biology Lurks Beneath: Bioliterary Explorations of the Individual versus Society*

Made available here via a link to *Evolutionary Psychology*

[http://www.epjournal.net/filestore/ep02200219.pdf](http://www.epjournal.net/filestore/ep02200219.pdf)

3. Liane Gabora

*The Beer Can Theory of Creativity*

Made available here via a link to the author's self-archived copy in the Cogprints repository

4. Elena Daprati, Marco Iosa, Patrick Haggard

*A Dance to the Music of Time: Aesthetically-Relevant Changes in Body Posture in Performing Art*


Licence: © 2009 Daprati et al. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any
medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

5. Marco Iacoboni, Istvan Molnar-Szakacs, Vittorio Gallese, Giovanni Buccino, John C. Mazziotta, Giacomo Rizzolatti

Grasping the Intentions of Others with One’s Own Mirror Neuron System


Licence: © 2005 Iacoboni et al. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

6. Chrisantha Fernando, K.K. Karishma, Eors Szathmary

Copying and Evolution of Neuronal Topology

http://www.plosone.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0003775

Licence: © 2008 Fernando et al. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

7. Steven P. DiPaola and Liane Gabora

Incorporating Characteristics of Human Creativity into an Evolutionary Art Algorithm

Made available here via a link to the authors' self-archived copy in the Cogprints repository

8. Richard Samuels
Is the Mind Massively Modular?
http://sas-space.sas.ac.uk/944/

'Available to the public' in the SAS-SPace repository, which recommends authors use a CC Attribution license

9. Johan De Smedt
Toward an Integrative Approach of Cognitive Neuroscientific and Evolutionary Psychological Studies of Art
Made available here via a link to *Evolutionary Psychology*

10. Mark Amerika
Source Material Everywhere
http://www.culturemachine.net/index.php/cm/article/viewArticle/351
Licence: © Mark Amerika; courtesy of Mark Amerika

11. Mark Amerika
Ghost Tendencies
http://www.vjtheory.net/web_texts/text_amerika.htm
Licence: © Mark Amerika; courtesy of Mark Amerika

12. John Egenes
Commentary: The Remix Culture; How the Folk Process Works in the 21st Century
http://www.doaj.org/doaj?func=abstract&id=614106&q1=remix&f1=all&b1=and&q2=&f2=all&recNo=2&uiLanguage=en

The authors of this article have elected, in the interests of open dissemination of scholarly work, to provide this
article to you in open access format. This means that, in accordance with the principles of the Budapest Open Access Initiative (http://www.soros.org/openaccess/), you may freely copy and redistribute this article provided you correctly acknowledge its authors and source, and do not alter its contents.

13. Geoffrey F. Miller
Aesthetic fitness: How Sexual Selection Shaped Artistic Virtuosity as a Fitness Indicator and Aesthetic Preferences as Mate Choice Criteria
Made available here via a link to the author's version on the University of New Mexico website

14. Julie Copeland
The Creative Urge: Elizabeth Grosz Made available here via a link to the Sunday Morning website