

PICK SOMETHING AT RANDOM. FIND SOMETHING YOU NOTICE. PUT IT BACKWARDS. PUT IT UPSIDE-DOWN. YOUR FIRST CHOICE MIGHT BE THE BEST. ENTERTAIN EVERY OPTION - ESPECIALLY THE WORST. EVERY CHOICE YOU MAKE IS A CLUE. TRY IT WITH DIFFERENT INGREDIENTS. FIND A CONCEPT. COLLECT EVERYTHING. PUT TWO UNRELATED THINGS TOGETHER. LAYER STUFF. WAIT. THINK THE NEXT STEPS THROUGH. MOVE BACK FOR A MINUTE. DON'T THINK ABOUT IT AT ALL. MAYBE IT'S MORE THAN ONE THING. MAYBE IT'S ONLY THE BEGINNING. WHAT DO

SOME (POSSIBLE) PATHS OF PLAY ON

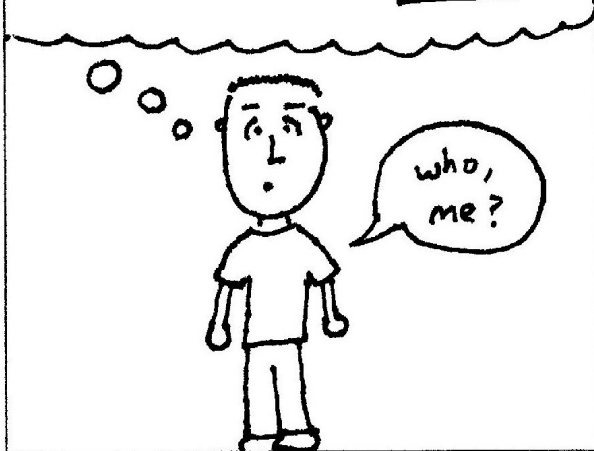


YOU REALLY WANT TO BE MAKING? WHAT ARE YOU AFRAID TO MAKE? SHARE IT WITH A FRIEND. ASK A STRANGER WHAT THEY THINK. MAKE IT AS A SURPRISE FOR SOMEONE. DO IT BY YOURSELF. DO IT WITH OTHERS. MAKE IT EASY FOR YOURSELF. YOU COULD USE A CHALLENGE FOR A CHANGE. NOTHING IS NEW. EVERYTHING IS A FIRST-TIME EXPERIENCE. HOW TO MAKE THIS FEEL LESS LIKE WORK?

SOME SCATTERED THOUGHTS ON MAKING STUFF FOR THE SFSU 2020 SPRING COMPOSITION WORKSHOP

(AND, IF I'M BEING HONEST, FOR MYSELF AS A REMINDER, TOO.)

EVERYTHING STARTS AND ENDS WITH THE BODY



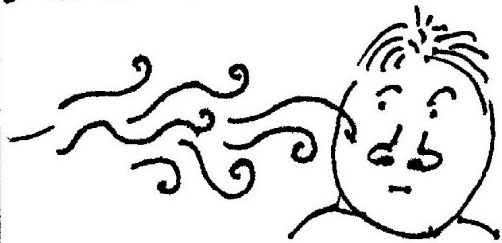
AND OUR BODY SPEAKS IN THE LANGUAGE OF PERCEPTUAL SENSATIONS.



How we process sensation:

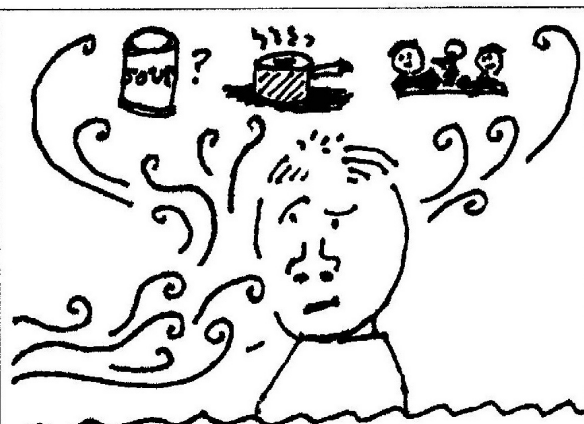
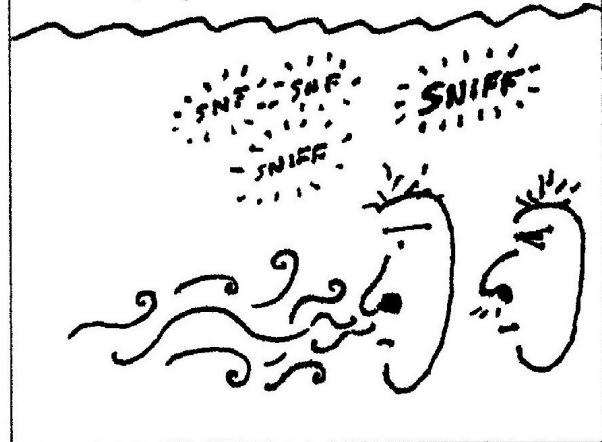
1. REGISTRATION

(we notice it.)



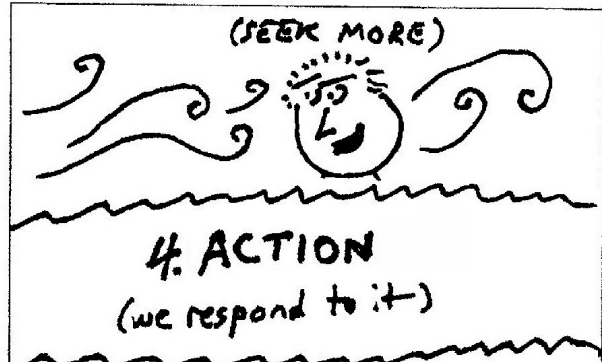
2. ORIENTATION

(we pay attention to it.)



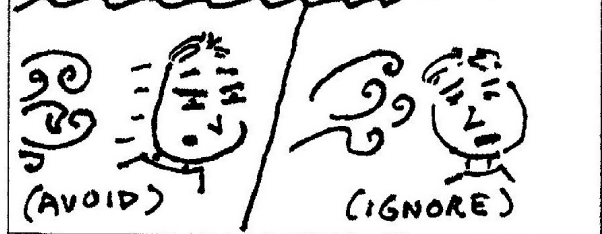
3. INTERPRETATION

(we incorporate prior information about it.)



4. ACTION

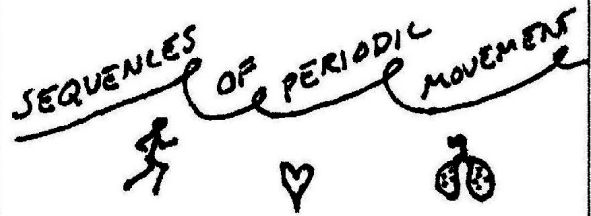
(we respond to it)



EVERY SENSATION CONTRIBUTES
TO A COMPLEX EXPERIENCE
OF INFORMATION THAT WE
MAY ORGANIZE.



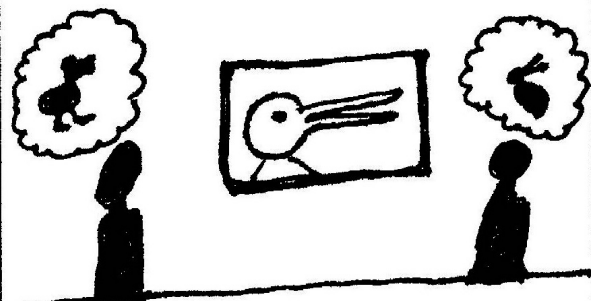
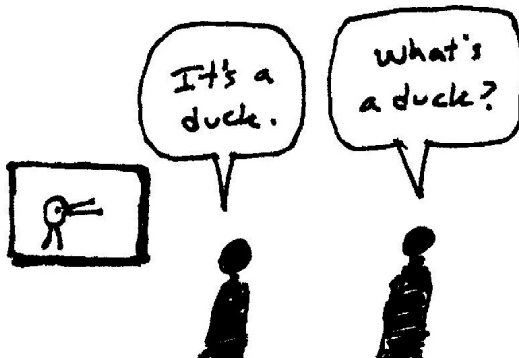
PROCESSES WE EXPERIENCE
IN OUR OWN BODY CAN SERVE
AS USEFUL WAYS TO ORGANIZE,
LIKE...



VECTORS OF TENSION
AND RELAXATION

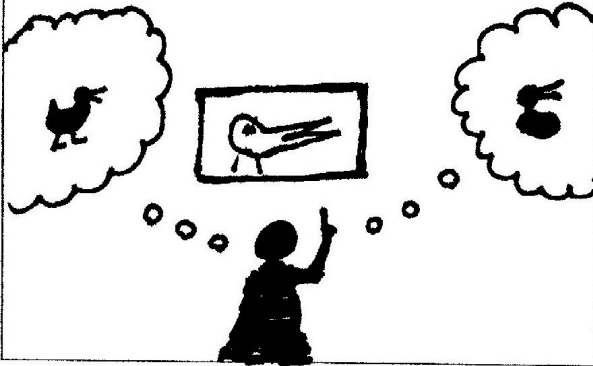
(H/T JEANNE BAMBERGER)

HOW WE ORGANIZE INFORMATION
DEPENDS ON WHAT WE CAN
THINK OF TO ORGANIZE.



TWO DIFFERENT BODIES
MIGHT ORGANIZE INCOMING
SENSATIONS DIFFERENTLY

TO BE ABLE TO ORGANIZE
INFORMATION IN DIFFERENT
WAYS IS POTENTIALLY USEFUL.



TO ORGANIZE AN EXPERIENCE IS
TO **EMPHASIZE**
CERTAIN ATTRIBUTES OVER
OTHERS...

...or, perhaps,
assign different types
of meanings to attributes...

To Be able To Focus
our attention To
Different Levels
of emphasis might
Be useful...



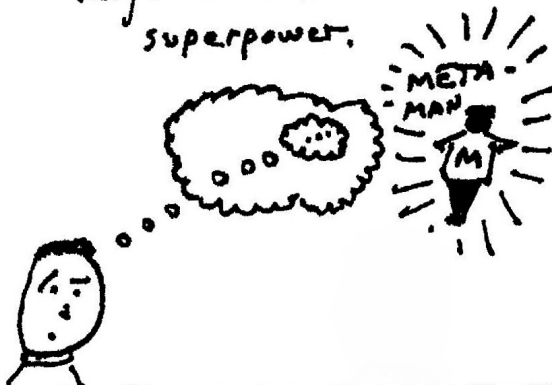
THE WAY WE ORGANIZE IS
OFTEN INTUITIVE, BUT CAN BE
MADE CONSCIOUS IF WE FOCUS
OUR ATTENTION ON IT.

(like breathing, and
maybe a multitude
of things...?)



META-ATTENTION
(NOTICING WHAT YOU NOTICE)

might be a kind of
superpower.

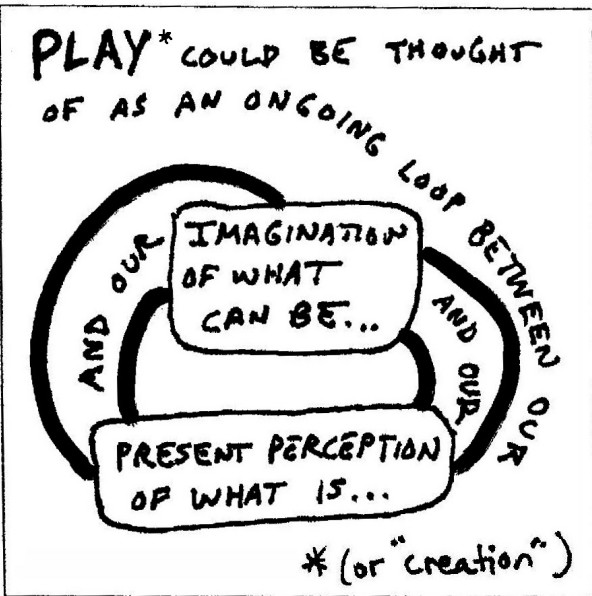
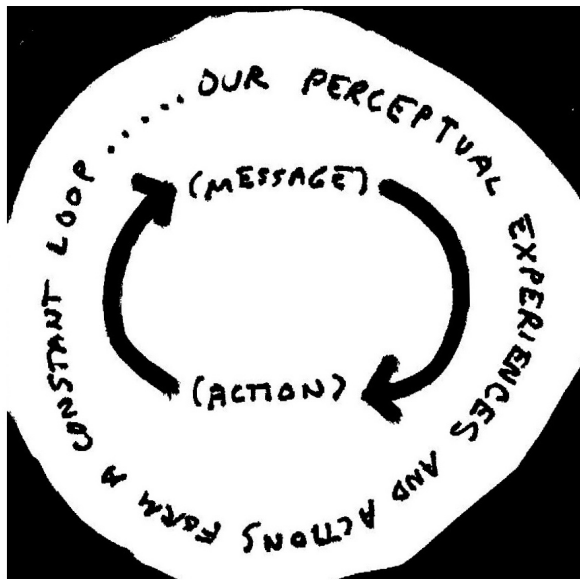


NOTICING

Paying attention to something
is the first step towards
learning....




EXPERIENCE ITSELF
is always a kind
of LEARNING.




COMPOSITION is the act of
putting things together... of
ORGANIZING...

(what you organize depends
on what you can think of
to organize... right?)

TWO TYPES OF
ORGANIZERS *

the COLLECTOR 

and

the DEVELOPER 

* not mutually exclusive!
+ 4/4 Erin Bregman

the Collector

ORGANIZES FROM THE
OUTSIDE, ARRANGING
THINGS AND DISCOVERING
MEANING THROUGH MAT-
ERIAL MANIPULATION.

the DEVELOPER

ORGANIZES FROM WITHIN,
GENERATING IDEAS AND
STRUCTURES THROUGH
WHICH TO CONSIDER AND
PLACE THINGS ACCORDINGLY.



I SUSPECT THAT ALL FOLKS
NAVIGATE BETWEEN THESE
TWO METHODS OF ORGANIZING
INFORMATION. (CREATIVE
FOLKS MAY DO THIS PAR-
TICULARLY WELL.)

TO COMPOSE IS TO ORGANIZE.



ORGANIZATION CAN TAKE
MANY FORMS, INCLUDING...

AN INTUITION...



A RULE...

BY SIMILAR ATTRIBUTES...



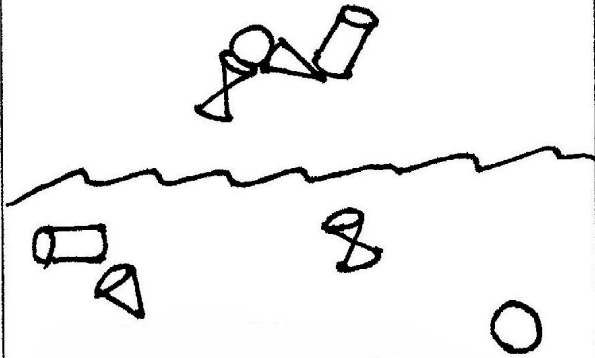
...OR CONTRASTING ONES...

ACCORDING TO AN IDEAL...



...OR A FEELING...

BY A MAP OR GRAPH...



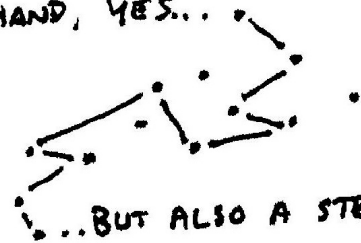
OR THE APPEARANCE
OF DISORGANIZATION.

TO COMPOSE IS TO NAVIGATE
AN INFINITE MATRIX OF

C
. H . . .
. . . O .
. . I . .
. C . . E

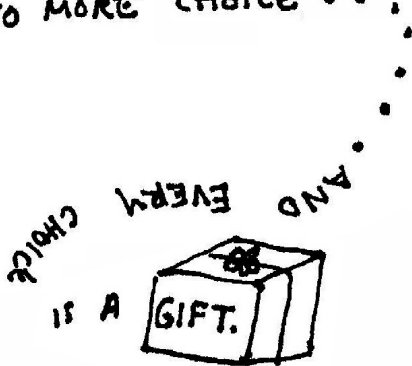
E
. V E R . . .
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E

A CLUE TO SOLVING THE
ORGANIZATIONAL PUZZLE AT
HAND, YES...

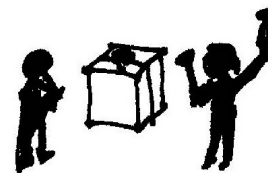


...BUT ALSO A STEP
TOWARDS THAT SUPER-
POWER OF META-ATTENTION.

BECAUSE TO NOTICE WHAT
YOU NOTICE ALWAYS LEADS
TO MORE CHOICE . . .




... ACTUALLY, TO COMPOSE
AT ALL IS A GIFT...




THE GIFT OF AN EXPERIENCE,
OF A LEARNING.

COMPOSING is the act
of putting things together...




...but "THINGS" could mean
anything, like...

MOVEMENTS OF
THE BODY...




BODIES THEMSELVES


OBJECTS...




SOUNDS...




PHYSICAL
MARKINGS...




IMAGES...



LIGHT...



BEHAVIORS...




COMPOSING IS CREATING,

BUT!

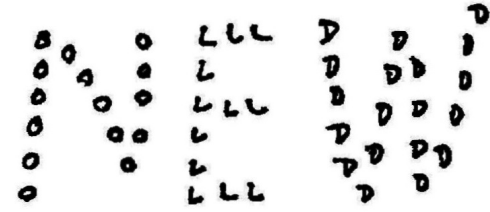
— I PROPOSE —

CREATING IS
NOT BRINGING NEW THINGS
INTO EXISTENCE.

NOTHING IS REALLY NEW,
RATHER, EVERYTHING IS A
MANIFESTATION OF SMALLER,
FAMILIAR COMPONENTS —
REORGANIZED.



EVEN SOMETHING THAT FEELS
UNFAMILIAR IS, IN FACT, A
DISCRETE COMBINATION OF
VARIOUS SENSATIONS IN NOVEL
COMBINATIONS, FORMS, MODIFICATIONS.




NEW creations...

NEW!

IF ANYTHING THAT CAN BE "MADE" IS AN ASSEMBLAGE OF EXISTING THINGS, "CREATION" IS COMPOSITION.

If things can be broken down into small enough components, they can be reorganized in ways that feel NEW, unfamiliar, maybe even WORD.




Take this old gem,



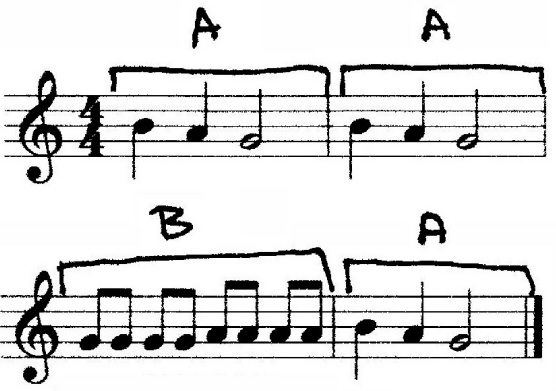
HOT CROSS BUNS.

H x B can be broken down by...




THE SEQUENCE OF NOTES...

THE PATTERN OF PHRASES...



B: 3 TOTAL A: 7 TOTAL
G: 7 TOTAL



THE CLASSES OF PITCHES USED...

... OR RHYTHMS USED...



♩ = 4 TOTAL ♪ = 6 TOTAL
♩ = 3 TOTAL

OR SPECIFIC RHYTHM/PITCH COMBOS...



♩ G's = 2 ♪ B's = 3
♩ A's = 2 ♪ A's = 3 ♪ G's = 3

OR EVEN INDIVIDUAL SOUNDS...

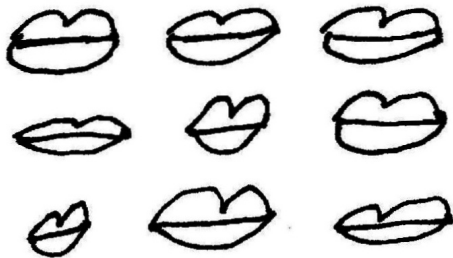


THIS SPECIFIC HALF-NOTE G, DANG IT!

AND THIS IS ONLY IN NOTATED FORM. CONSIDER, FOR EXAMPLE, THE SPECIFIC FINGERS USED TO PLAY IT ON PIANO...



... OR THE LIPS OF A GROUP OF PEOPLE PLAYING THE SONG ON RECORDER...



(EW.)

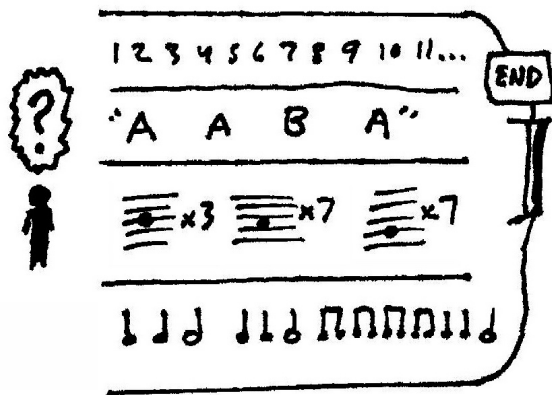
THE POINT IS, EVERY CONCEIVABLE COMPONENT OF "HOT CROSS BUNS" CONTRIBUTES TO IT'S NATURE AS A COMPOSITION...



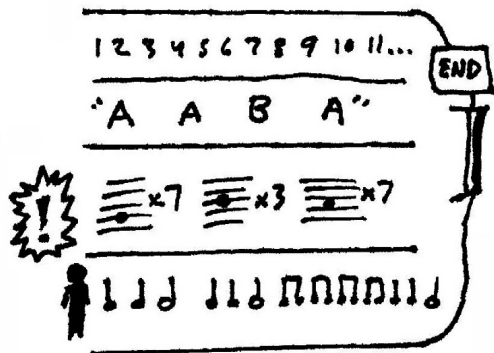
... and is therefore capable of being re-organized.



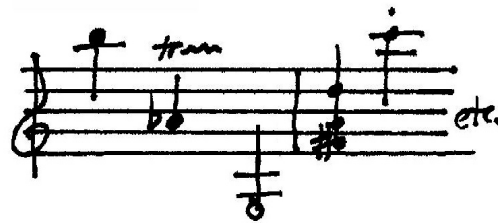
This is an overwhelmingly VAST network of choices...



so it can be helpful to pick ONE concept, or mode of ORGANIZATION, to focus on.

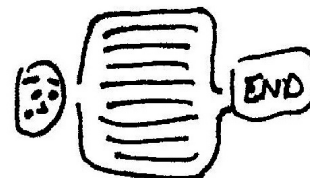


Doing so can free one up to make other, bolder choices in different ways.

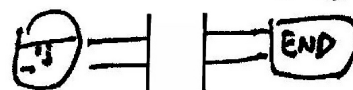


We often focus our organizing subconsciously, EMPHASIZING certain parameters as we compose...
...but it can be useful to notice where our choices are being made, especially if we get stuck.

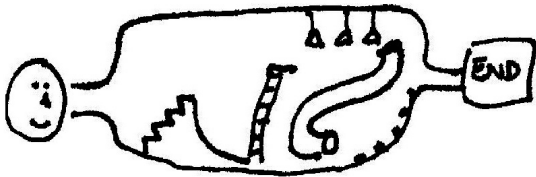
Having TOO MANY choices is overwhelming...



Having NONE is discouraging...



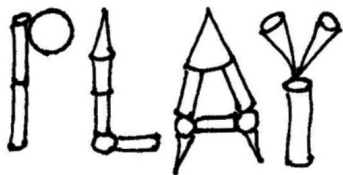
But setting friendly limitations
on how we organize, or
what we choose, can inspire
us to be more PLAYFUL than ever.



I propose asking this question
when composing gets
discouraging:

"How can I make
this **WORK**
feel like
PLAY?"

I propose that it is a
critical, lifelong, worthy
pursuit to cultivate one's
inner and outer sense of



DANNY CLAY, 2019, TAOS, NEW MEXICO