**Introduction**  
This project (2011-2015) is an artistic research fellowship project at the [Norwegian Academy of Music](http://nmh.no/), as part of [The Norwegian Artistic Research Fellowship Programme](http://artistic-research.no/).

In this project I have produced *solo improvisations* that derive from the music of two improvising ensembles to which I belong: [*Dans les arbres*](http://danslesarbres.net/) and [*Huntsville*](http://www.huntsville.no/), and I have produced *collective improvisations* with the ensembles.

The project’s key questions are:

* What are my concepts when improvising with the ensembles and when improvising alone?
* How do the ensemble improvisations inform my solo improvisations?
* What do I think about when I think about our and my own improvisations?

I am intrigued by all the recurring elements in the music of *Huntsville* and *Dans les arbres*, how similar (yet radically different) two concerts with the same ensemble may be. We are indeed improvising. Yet, in my view, it is also as if we are performing new variations of previous improvisations, previous pieces. In effect, these are pre-meditated, yet fluctuating. It is as if Alexander Calder’s *Hanging Mobiles* has been translated into music: the elements may be known, but their mutual relationships are in constant flux. Each observation of the piece is reminiscent of another. It balances between the known and the unknown, between playing ‘what I know and what I do not know’, looking at the same objects over and over again, from new angles, in new constellations.

I have used my own understanding and interpretation of these ensembles’ aesthetics and philosophy as a backdrop for the solo works. I have aimed for an enhanced, articulated knowledge and understanding of my own approach as a member of two ensembles. I have tested how this knowledge can facilitate frameworks, filters and various approaches to my own solo works. The individual solo works are *artistic responses* to the collectively created music of the ensembles.

**Project results**  
According to the regulations of the programme, each fellowship project shall lead to *artistic results* and a *documentation of reflections.*

My projects’ artistic results are:

* Album release: *Ivar Grydeland* ­– *Stop Freeze Wait Eat*
* Album release*: Huntsville – Pond*
* *2 concerts at Norwegian Academy of Music 21 and 22 April 2015 with the following programme:  
  - Solo  
  - Solo with Video Ensemble  
  - Dans les arbres with ‘Electronic Mirror’  
  - Dans les arbres*

The documentation of my reflections comprises:

* Encyclopaedia
* Texts for each of the artistic results
* Audio and video

**Reflections**  
The Haruki Murakami-paraphrase in the sub-heading indicates a process of on-going reflection upon what *I* regard as key aspects when I improvise. More specifically, what I regard as key aspects in the music of *Dans les arbres* and *Huntsville*, as well as for my own solo improvisations. These reflections reveal key aspects and main challenges that have emerged during my attempts to create solo works that are informed by the ensembles.

The reflections are chiefly documented in the form of a personal *encyclopaedia*. The encyclopaedia includes audio and visual examples, both from the final artistic results and from artistic activity during the project. Some illustrative audio clips derive from artistic activity before the project started. In addition to the encyclopaedia, short texts accompany each of the artistic results. The development of three projects within the main project – *Video Ensemble,*‘Electronic Mirror’ and tracks from the solo album release – are documented with audio and video.

**In and out from the grey cloud**  
It has been important for me to allow the musical artistic development to lead the process. In order to achieve this, the key questions posed in my project description needed to be open. They needed to be door openers. The questions marked the outskirts of the project. In the beginning, my project was a big grey cloud, an ungraspable "something" that I went into and explored. During the process, the artistic activity and its reflections crystallised the project’s topography. The final artistic results, and the reflections accompanying them, are my answers to, and elaborations of, the posed key questions.

**Different ways to read the project**  
The project grows out of artistic activity that belongs to a dynamic network culture, to the complex field of improvised music. The project’s reflections are organized as a network too. It is a non-hierarchical arrangement of my own reflections, woven together in a complex system where everything is relating to (almost) everything.

What are my concepts when improvising with the ensembles and alone? How do the ensemble improvisations inform my solo improvisations? What do I think about when I think about our and my own improvisation? There are different ways to explore these answers, and the project:

* You can start with the [artistic results](http://www.ivargrydeland.com/artisticresearch/artistic-results), and continue to read each of the accompanying texts. From these texts you will find several links into the [encyclopaedia](http://www.ivargrydeland.com/artisticresearch/node/31). The [encyclopaedia](http://www.ivargrydeland.com/artisticresearch/node/31) is thus an elaboration of certain elements in the [artistic results](http://www.ivargrydeland.com/artisticresearch/artistic-results).
* You can also begin with the [encyclopaedia](http://www.ivargrydeland.com/artisticresearch/node/31), which represents *what I think about when I think about improvisation*. Read it in alphabetical order, watch and listen to examples of usage, and follow links to the [artistic results](http://www.ivargrydeland.com/artisticresearch/artistic-results).
* Whenever you are inside the [encyclopaedia](http://www.ivargrydeland.com/artisticresearch/node/31) you can also chose to follow the links between the different terms. They relate. They support each other. They contradict each other. Read in loops, repeat.

**My project's contribution**   
During this project I have identified aspects that I find important in our ensemble’s music. In the encyclopaedia, I have articulated tacit knowledge rooted in my own experience as a practitioner in this field. I have tried to pinpoint and describe the key aspects that represent *what I think about when I think about improvisation.* I believe this is my projects’ main contribution to the field.

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