

Transmedia Composition and Hermeneutic Accrual

Early Empirical Insights from *BAROQUE*

This presentation investigates how audiences construct meaning across the multiple components of a transmedia composition, drawing on my ongoing artistic research into modes-of-encounter and the dynamics of vertical and horizontal attention.

I approach transmedia composition not merely as the combination of multiple media, but as the creation of autonomous works that share a conceptual core – an idea-scape – and invite cumulative interpretation over time. The central research question guiding this project is:

How do audiences navigate, interpret, and relate autonomous components of a transmedia work, and what kinds of hermeneutic processes emerge when meaning is distributed across works, media, and modes-of-encounter?

Relationship between artistic practice and research

This question is rooted directly in my current transmedia composition *BAROQUE* (<https://www.ciciliani.com/baroque.html>), which consists of three independent works: a string quartet with electronics and four-channel video, an audiovisual performance for an audience of four persons, and an audiovisual installation – each offering distinct media constellations and perceptual framings. The works were designed to intentionally evoke different modes-of-encounter, ranging from immersive spatial configurations to focused concert settings.

Following the premiere of all three components, I conducted semi-structured interviews with audience members who experienced all parts of the project. These conversations explored how they experienced the changing modalities. Did they recognise conceptual, thematic, or aesthetic connections across the works? Which elements acted as anchors, and how vertical (deep, work-internal) and horizontal (associative, cross-work) attention shaped their sense-making.

Critical approach to method

The research adopts a constructivist methodology grounded in artistic research. The project combines:

- Compositional experimentation using varied media and perceptual framings,
- Modes-of-encounter analysis (adapted from Elleström's modalities), and
- Audience-centred qualitative inquiry, using interviews to trace the process of hermeneutic accrual.

Research Presentations

This combination allows artistic decisions, theoretical models, and audience responses to critically inform one another. The empirical insights now emerging from BAROGUE offer the first opportunity to test hypotheses formulated in earlier publications and refine our understanding of how transmedia composition facilitates meaning-making across works, media, and time.



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Marko Ciciliani is a composer, intermedia artist, performer and artistic researcher. The focus of his work lies in the composition of performative electronic music, mostly in audiovisual contexts. Interactive video, light design and laser graphics often play an integral part in his compositions, just as well as elements of ergodic or transmedia storytelling, or speculative fabulation.

Ciciliani's music has been performed in more than forty-five countries across Eurasia, Oceania and the Americas. His work has been released on five full-length CDs and four multimedia books featuring inter- and transdisciplinary works.

Ciciliani is Professor for Computer Music Composition at the Institute for Electronic Music and Acoustics (IEM) of the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz. From 2016-21 he conceived and led the artistic research project GAPPP in which with a team of artists/researchers he investigated the artistic potential of elements from computer games in the context of experimental audiovisual composition.