

Submission for "Synesthesia: interdisciplinary research in a multisensory world" symposium

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Title: Crossmodal and Synesthetic Principles in Audiovisual Composition

This lecture-performance aims to demonstrate audiovisual compositional strategies in integrating artistic and scientific principles of synesthesia and crossmodality. Recent audiovisual compositions of Umut Eldem (*Shallow Steps* and *Chromesthetic Variations*) are presented and discussed.

While the individual experience of synesthesia is highly idiosyncratic and personal, certain overlaps with crossmodal correspondences and more general compositional trends emerge upon closer scrutiny. For example, even though different synesthetic composers may associate different sound elements with the color red, their expression of the color may show uniform harmonic, melodic, or textural treatments in their musical expression. Through an analysis of 'synesthetic' classical musical compositions (in which the synesthetic associations of the composer play an explicit role) as well as crossmodal expressions in programmatic music (in which the composer attempts to convey an extramusical sensory idea through musical means), a number of synesthetic and crossmodal compositional strategies are developed for further audiovisual analysis and composition. These elements are further developed in Eldem's audiovisual works through the use of generative digital systems that utilize audiovisual syntaxes using axiomatic rules based on such 'synesthetic principles'. Audiovisual compositions informed by synesthetic and crossmodal principles in this manner demonstrate both an internal audiovisual coherence as well as the potential for greater audiovisual expression in composition and performance, and may benefit audiovisual composers and performers in their creative process.