

PATTERNED WRECKAGE

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1. Iterating on a loop

The process of making a record is all about iterating through a looping process over and over again. First comes an uncritical, intuitive act that produces some material, next a closing down of possibilities through critiquing, editing, refining, selecting or abandoning whatever has emerged. This happens rapidly across multiple domains of composition, from playing a single note to arranging, ordering and naming a record.

2. Infinite possibility of the future turned into wreckage of the past

Every pass through the loop is a blindfolded attack on the future followed by a reconstruction of meaning by excavating artefacts from the ruins of what-just-happened. The future is a gestalt of infinite possibility from which fragments are hacked out and strewn across the present, becoming the wreckage of the past. We cannot look forward into the future even as we burrow into it, only backwards at the rubble we have dislodged.

3. Guessing at meaning in the stillstellung

Only in the frozen moment of the present in which history is manifested can we perceive the wreckage we have created, and even then we can only see it through the subjective lens of our current situation. By cataloguing the artefacts we unearth and by charting the topology of the ruins we can hazard guesses at what we were doing. We map patterns onto the wreckage of the past. Iterating through this process enough times allows us to sculpt the wreckage into the shapes of songs.

4. Albums as constellations of wreckage systems

So songs emerge from these systems we build to manifest them. Wreckage systems. Frameworks to produce ruins that become libraries of debris from which songs can be sculpted. It's not until after songs exist that their particularities become clear and their relation to other songs within their constellation can be properly gauged. The album is a higher order of wreckage pattern, a constellation of sculpted ruins.

5. Music is social relations 1.

Both parts of this loop are bound up within society. The primary intuitive creative act is not magical and by no means random. It is a subconscious processing of social relations into creative productions. These social relations are part of all of us. The musician might be lucky in that they have a talent for re-presenting these relations in ways that resonate with others, but they do not belong to the musician. Even as they emerge, seemingly unbidden, into the musician's head, before they are ever turned into songs or rhythms or melody, they are not private property. They are products made by all of us.

6. Art resonance

The musician's role is to reify these ideas, to combine them into song shapes that resonate with other people. The strongest resonances create a feedback that eclipses the idea of the self. This feedback is what we call art, the great resonator of our selves.

7. Music is social relations 2.

Despite the musical feudalism of the culture industry, this shared meaning in music emerges non-hierarchically, horizontally. In this way music is a kind of communism. Together we create the conditions for the musician to embed this meaning inside the music, and together we decode it through sharing, listening, dancing and watching it be performed.

8. Pattern engineering, not recognition.

The human brain is wired for pattern recognition, able to create the illusion of meaning where there is none. But with the intentional creative production of music there is meaning embedded at every stage, including the moments of creation that obliterate the future to produce wreckage. This original meaning (or intent), subjective to begin with, is quickly buried as debris is piled upon debris until there's no certainty in any of it. The meaning can only be guessed at. We are strangers to what our own music means at the end. Pattern engineering is not inauthentic. It's not creating a back story to fill in gaps in reasoning. It is a necessary part of quantising the untethered, endless process of music into the formalised structure of an album. These structures are dulled quantisers of reality, symptoms of a society that has learnt how to commodify everything. Nevertheless, that is where we exist, and these are the structures in which we provide shelters of understanding and communication against the overwhelming floods of signal.