HAL
open science

Chance and the Creative Process

Ivan Magrin-Chagnolleau

To cite this version:

Ivan Magrin-Chagnolleau. Chance and the Creative Process. Chance, Calculation and Life, ISTE Editions, pp.169-183, 2021, 9781786306678. hal-03098739

HAL Id: hal-03098739

https://hal.science/hal-03098739v1

Submitted on 25 Jan 2021

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

Chance and the Creative Process

Ivan MAGRIN-CHAGNOLLEAU

Aix Marseille Univ, CNRS, PRISM, Marseille, France
Chapman University, Orange, California

1. Introduction

I would like to start off this article by saying a few words about my current position as it directly relates to the content of this article. I present myself as an Artist Researcher[1,2], that is to say, I pursue creative artistic activities whilst at the same time research activities, at CNRS, based around this artistic activity. I work within the paradigm of Creative Research[3], which means that my creative artistic work and my research work are intimately linked. My research is related to my creative artistic work, and more generally, it relates to Art, Aesthetics, and Philosophy of Art. Whilst my creative artwork is also linked to my research, in that on the one hand it represents the grounds for my research, but also constitutes a research by itself, whether it is of an aesthetic nature or a more general philosophical nature. Sometimes these creations allow me to express some of the results of my research in a way that is more relevant, than say, an article.

On January 1, 2019, I joined the PRISM laboratory in Marseille, a new UMR[4] (7061) or *joint research unit*, created to precisely explore the links between Art and Science; creative research being one of the ways by which to explore this link. Within the framework of this creative research paradigm, I am particularly interested in the phenomenology[5] inherent to the creative process, that is, the creative process as a lived experience. How can we communicate the creative process as experienced and perceived by the person who is the actor of this process?

The question of the intervention of chance in this creative process is therefore an essential question, and it is this question that I seek to address in this article. I will begin by discussing the term 'chance' and a number of related concepts. Next I will look at the term 'creation' and its constellation of related notions. I will then reflect on the intervention of chance in the artistic creative process. Following on this, I will address the question of an artwork made in the present moment. I will wrap up this article with a conclusion.

---

[1] *L'Artiste Chercheur* (Artist Researcher), first issue of the journal *p-e-r-f-o-r-m-a-n-c-e.org*, vol. 1, 2014.

[2] Ivan Magrin-Chagnolleau, *Éloge de l'artiste chercheur* (In Praise of the Artist Researcher), *p-e-r-f-o-r-m-a-n-c-e.org*, vol. 1, 2014.

[3] Also called Art Research.

[4] Unité Mixte de Recherche (Joint Research Unit).

[5] Edmund Husserl, *L'idée de la phénoménologie* (The Idea of Phenomenology), PUF, 1992.

2. Chance

I have gotten used to starting an investigation with a semantic exploration of a word as taken from those definitions offered by *Le Grand Robert* [6], since it is through a dictionary that the history of the word can be seen, and as such the different concepts attached to it, its various occurrences in the literature, wherein each occurrence sheds a different light on the word. In the case of the word chance, we find that its meanings and occurrences are numerous.

Firstly, the etymology of the word chance refers us to an Arabic word, which has come down to us via Spanish. The origin of the Arabic word is controversial and could mean either "game of dice" or "flower" or "orange blossom"; because ancient dice once had a flower marked on one of the faces.

The oldest definition (13th century) tells us: "A dice game practiced in the Middle Ages." And a definition from 1538 describes: "Game of chance: game where the winner is chosen at the end of a series of 'moves' randomly producing results, and where calculation, skill ... plays no part."

So, from the beginning, the notion of chance is linked to games. There are games of chance, where everyone has the same chances, and where the skill of each plays no significant role, and there are the other games. We also immediately see a link established between chance and **random**, and by extension **randomness** (the randomness of life).

In the 15th century, we have the following definition: "Case, fortuitous event; unexpected and inexplicable combination of circumstances." So now we have the intrusion of notions such as **fortuitousness**, the **unexpected** and the **inexplicable**.

In the middle of the 16th century, we have: "Fictitious cause of what happens without apparent or explicable reason." Here again we find the notion of what is explainable and what is not, and is therefore **inexplicable**. There is also an opposition between that which has a reason for being and that **which has no *apparent* reason for being**.

In Philosophy and Science, we have at the same time: "Character of what happens outside objective or subjective norms, that which falls under the laws of probability and is not deliberate." Here we find the first mention of the notion of the 'norm', and how chance exists outside of the norm, and is therefore **anormal**. We also notice the link between chance and **probability**. And finally the notion of deliberateness, chance as such is therefore **non-deliberate**.

Montaigne wrote in 1580: "Without a determined direction; without deciding the place, the situation." Here, it is rather the idea of **non-decision** that is put forward. We could also say **non-intention**.

And Fénelon in 1695: "Without foreseen nor foreseeable evolution; without specific modality." Here, it is the evolution that is **unpredictable**, or the modality that is **undefined**.

---

[6] Alain Rey, *Le Grand Robert de la Langue Française*, version en ligne, Le Robert, 2017.

We also have the adverbial phrase "by chance" which can be translated as "**accidentally**, **fortuitously**." Here, the notion of **accident** appears.

I would like to end this exploration of *Le Grand Robert* and its definitions of the word 'chance', with the help of a few quotes which will shed some light on the remarks made by this article. I will start with a maxim from La Rochefoucauld[7]:

> "Although men flatter themselves with their great actions, they are not so often the result of a great design as of chance." (François de La Rochefoucauld, *Maximes*, 57)

Here we have an opposition of the word chance through the word 'design', that is to say, something planned. Chance is therefore **unplanned**.

There are two other quotes concerning the word chance that I find very interesting. The first is by Romain Rolland in *Jean-Christophe*[8]:

> "[...] chance always knows how to find those who know how to use it." (Romain Rolland, *Jean-Christophe*)

The second is from Albert Camus in *La Peste*[9] (The Plague):

> "His only task, in truth, was to give opportunities to this chance which, too often, is disturbed only when provoked."(Albert Camus, *The Plague*)

These two quotes establish a link between chance and the ability of each and every person to use it, to provoke it. Therefore, **chance needs to be provoked**.

Voltaire, in his *Philosophical Dictionary*[10], brings us back to the fact that which we call chance is **that which we do not understand**, or that which we do not understand *yet*:

> "What we call chance can be no other than the unknown cause of a known effect." (Voltaire, *Dictionnaire philosophique*, Atoms)

I would like to continue on this semantic and philosophical exploration with two more quotes about the word 'chance', which emphasize the question of point of view, that is to say, that **there can be no chance without a subject who is concerned by the consequences of this chance**.

The first is by Henri Bergson in *Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion* (The Two Sources of Morality and Religion)[11] :

---

[7] François de La Rochefoucauld, *Maximes* (Maxims), Garnier Flammarion, 1999.

[8] Romain Rolland, *Jean-Christophe*, Albin Michel, 2007.

[9] Albert Camus, *La Peste* (The Plague), Folio, 1972.

[10] Voltaire, *Dictionnaire philosophique*, Folio, 1994.

[11] Henri Bergson, *Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion* (The Two Sources of Morality and Religion), Garnier Flammarion, 2012.

> "A huge tile, blown off by the wind, falls and knocks down a passerby. We say it's a fluke. But would we say that if the tile had just broken on the floor? Perhaps it is because we vaguely think, what if a person had been there, or because for one reason or another, this special point on the sidewalk is of particular interest to us, such that the tile seems to have chosen this spot to fall. In both cases, there is only chance because there is human interest involved and because events took place in such a manner that it seems the man had been taken into consideration, either with a view to rendering him a service, or the converse, with the intention of harming him (…) Chance is therefore a mechanism, behaving as if it had an intention." (Henri Bergson, *Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion*)

The second is by Paul Valéry in *Variété* (Variety)[12]:

> "Everything else – everything that we cannot assign to the thinking man or to this Generating Power (nature) – we offer to 'chance' – which is itself an excellent addition to our vocabulary. It is expedient to have a name which allows one to express a remarkable thing (by itself or by its immediate effect) has taken place just as easily as it might not have done. However, to say that a thing is remarkable is to introduce a man, a person who is particularly sensitive to this trait, and they are the one who will attribute all the remarkable things to it. What does it matter if I don't have a lottery ticket, with the exact same numbers as that called out in the draw? (...) There is no chance for me in the draw (...)." (Paul Valéry, *Variété V*)

Finally, to conclude this exploration of the word 'chance' with the help of *Le Grand Robert*, I cannot help but end with a quote from Jacques Monod in *Le Hasard et la Nécessité* (Chance and Necessity)[13] :

> "We say that these alterations (of the "genetic text") are accidental, that they happen at random. And since they constitute the only possible source of modification for the genetic text, in turn the sole depositary of the hereditary structures for the organism, it necessarily follows that chance alone is at the source of all novelty, of all creation within the biosphere."(Jacques Monod, *Le Hasard et la Nécessité*)

This quote, even if its content has been questioned somewhat by recent advances in epigenetics, is interesting because it links the word 'chance' with the word 'accidental', and hypothesizes that all creation (in the biosphere) and all novelty (in the genetic text) is necessarily the result of chance.

3. Creation

Let us now begin a semantic exploration of the word 'creation'. Here again, *Le Grand Robert* provides several definitions. The first definition is more theological: "The act of giving existence, of drawing from nothing." Here, 'creation' is directly linked to an action. It is

---

[12] Paul Valéry, *Variété III, IV et V*, Folio Essais, 2002.

[13] Jacques Monod, *Le hasard et la nécessité* (Chance and Necessity), Points Essais, 2014.

through **action** that we create. By creating, we give **existence**. Before being created, the created thing does not exist.

There is also this notion of "**drawing from nothing**". What is nothingness in this definition? If we bring the two elements of this definition together, we could say that nothingness is that which is non-existent. Or else nothingness is the field in which all is possible, but which has not yet been acted upon, that is to say, nothing has ultimately been chosen.

To further illustrate this theological definition, *Le Grand Robert* gives us several interesting quotes. The first comes from Montesquieu in *De L'Esprit des Lois* (The Spirit of the Laws)[14] :

> "If creation appears to be an arbitrary act… [it] presupposes rules that are as invariable as the fatality of the atheists." (Montesquieu, *De L'Esprit des Lois*, I, 1)

Montesquieu speaks to us here on the **rules of creation**. Creation therefore has rules, and what is more: invariable rules. He uses here the contrasting term 'arbitrary', which implies having no rules. Is chance therefore arbitrary? He also relates these rules and their invariability to what he calls the "fatality of atheists". Here we find ourselves at the heart of the question of free will vs. predestination. When there is creation, does this come from free will, from a completely free choice on the part of the creator, or is everything predetermined and following invariable rules?

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in a letter to M. de Beaumont[15], reminds us how difficult it is to understand, to apprehend **this journey from nothingness into something**:

> "Now, the idea of creation, *viz.* the idea by which we conceive that, from a simple act of volition, nothing becomes something, is, of all ideas that are not evidently contradictory, the least comprehensible to the human mind." (Jean-Jacques Rousseau, letter to M. de Beaumont, 18 November 1762)

Finally, Paul Claudel, in his *Journal*[16], enlightens us on the difference between **creating from nothing** and **creating in the continuation of what has already been created before**:

> "There is a difference between the 1st day of Creation and the others. On this first day God creates from nothing, out of nothing. On the other days God creates in the middle of something. His creative activity is in a way conditioned by the other things He has already created. It is a matter on which He acts, that He provokes." (Paul Claudel, Journal, September 13, 1922)

This question is essential in relation to the questions of the link between chance and creation, by differentiating a creation that is primary from a creation that would continue a work already begun. This question arises in both artistic creation and in research.

---

[14] Montesquieu, *De L'Esprit des Lois* (the Spirit of Laws), Garnier Flammarion, 1993.

[15] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Œuvres complètes* (Complete Works), Volumes I to V, La Pléiade Gallimard, 1959-1995.

[16] Paul Claudel, *Journal* (Journal), Volumes I & II, La Pléiade Gallimard, 1968-1969.

Next we come to a more common definition that makes reference to the activities of man rather than that of any divinity: "**Action** to do, to organize (something that did not yet exist)."

Here again, a few quotations help shed new meaning of the word 'creation'. Let us start with a quote from Eugène Delacroix as taken from his *Journal*[17] :

> "It is generally acknowledged that what is known as creation in the great painters is only a special manner in which each of them saw, coordinated, and rendered nature." (Eugène Delacroix, *Journal*, 1er mars 1859)

Any creation is thus a way of **sharing one's own vision of the world**. For there is in this quote from Delacroix, both the action of seeing but also that of coordinating, that is to say, a way of **giving meaning**.

Edmond Jaloux, for his part, speaks to us in *La Chute d'Icare* (The Fall of Icarus)[18], on the link between creation and action but also on **continuous creation**:

> "To act is a continuous creation. Nature is constantly creating forms that have no value unto themselves, but it is the sum total of these infinitesimal creations that is life." (Edmond Jaloux, *La Chute d'Icare*, p. 217)

At the heart of the question posed here is the creation of nature, but also the idea of **incremental creation**, that is to say, in art, as in research, it is by small infinitesimal contributions that a work, a new theory, etc. comes into being.

The next quote I would like to share is from Max Jacob in *Conseils à un jeune poète* (Advice to a Young Poet)[19]:

> "That which saves art is invention. Creation only exists where there is invention. Each art has its inventions." (Max Jacob, *Conseils à un jeune poète*)

In this quote, Max Jacob links creation to **invention**. There is creation when something new is invented; which of course raises the question of novelty. How to define that which is new, for example, when it takes place within incremental creation? Or an equivalent in research, when there is no paradigm shift, but only an infinitesimal contribution, compared to contributions that are considered revolutionary? And conversely how to assess the interest, the relevance, the aesthetics of something that truly represents a paradigm shift? Can we compare a paradigm shift in art or research to a genetic mutation?

Albert Camus, for his part, gives us, in *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* (The Myth of Sisyphus)[20], a more existential thought:

---

[17] Eugène Delacroix, *Journal*, 1822-1863, Plon, 1996.

[18] Edmond Jaloux, *La Chute d'Icare*, dans *La Revue des Deux Mondes*, 15 novembre 1935.

[19] Max Jacob, *Conseils à un jeune poète*, NRF, 1945.

[20] Albert Camus, *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*, Folio Essais, 1885.

> "Of all the schools of patience and lucidity, creation is the most effective. It is also the staggering evidence of man's sole dignity: the dogged revolt against his condition, perseverance in an effort considered sterile." (Albert Camus, *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*)

Therefore creation, for mankind, would be a way of fighting against the inevitability of death, a way of leaving a **trace**, a **testimony** of the lived experience.

I would like to end with a quote from André Malraux in *Les chênes qu'on abat…* (Felled Oaks; Conversation with De Gaulle)[21] :

> "Creation has always interested me more than perfection." (André Malraux, *Les chênes qu'on abat*…)

This quote reminds us that it is perhaps far more important to *try* rather than *want* to be perfect, whether in artistic creation or in research. The most important thing is to create something, not to strive for perfection.

4. Chance in the Artistic Creative Process

After attempting to somewhat clarify the terms 'chance' and 'creation', I would now like to address the connection between the two. What link is there between chance and the creative process? How does chance intervene in creation?

In this section, I will be mainly interested in artistic creation, and as such I will mainly rely on my own experiences, since to talk on this intervention of chance in creation, I can see no better way to approach this question other than from a phenomenological point of view[22], that is, from the point of view of the lived experience. Indeed, only a lived experience can begin to clarify what can be considered as chance in a creative process. As we have seen with Henri Bergson and Paul Valéry, chance is a very subjective notion, dependent on a point of view, and therefore on the experiences which have led to this point of view.

It would be interesting, to take this reflection further, to consider an experimental protocol which aims, for example, with the help of elicitation interviews[23] or phenomenological interviews[24], to question other artists, and also researchers, on their lived experiences of the creative process in which chance has been perceived as a constitutive or even a defining element. We could then speak of the phenomenology of chance, or to put it in the form of a question: How is chance perceived in any form of creation from the point of view of the lived experience?

For the moment, let us come back to my own lived experience, and my own relationship with this notion of chance as manifested in my creative works. To this end I would like to

---

[21] André Malraux, *Les chênes qu'on abat*…, NRF, 1971.

[22] Edmund Husserl, *L'idée de la phénoménologie*, PUF, 1992.

[23] Pierre Vermersch, *L'Entretien d'explicitation*, ESF Éditeur, 2017.

[24] Michel Bitbol & Claire Petitmengin, "Neurophenomenology and the elicitation interview", in *The Blackwell Companion to Consciousness* (2nd edition), Wiley & Sons, 2017.

draw on several examples, each illustrating in a different way what the word ‘chance’ can *re-comprise* within the creative process.

The first is an example from photography, and concerns a series of photos called *Muir Woods Spirits*, which is regularly exhibited in galleries and which has been the subject of a book publication[25].

A friend and I visited Muir Woods National Monument Park a little way north of San Francisco. I had with me a camera as I so often do. Once in this extremely majestic location, I started taking some very classic shots, playing with the perspective effects of these gigantic trees.

At one point I realized that this classic type of photo didn't suit this place, which gave off something quite different. I found myself relating to it more as a natural cathedral. I then started taking pictures while moving my camera or its zoom or both simultaneously. It was then, from that moment on, only a matter of experimenting with movement, shutter speed, and aperture.

What interests me here is the precise moment at which I started to experiment with these manipulations. It was a process which at the time was not a part of my usual photography process. I had undoubtedly seen it in other photographers, and maybe even used it once or twice without really paying attention, for example, when I take pictures “by chance”, without looking through the viewfinder. But in this case, I can't remember the moment when I would have decided: “Okay, now I’m going to take pictures while moving the camera.” It may have been that the first photo with camera shake was taken by accident, meaning that I moved unintentionally, and was then captivated by the result. Or that this decision to move the camera while taking the photo arose out of my subconscious, in that present moment, an intuition, etc. In any case, there is something involved here that was not premeditated, which had not been decided, something which had not been foreseen, which was accidental. If we refer to the first section of this article, we can see that we are precisely in the semantic field of the word ‘chance’.

The second example also comes from photography, and concerns a more recent series of photos called *Handscapes*, which is just starting to be shown in galleries and whose book release is imminent[26].

I went to the heart of Auvergne one Summer for a training course. To travel there I took a small regional train, which runs through beautiful forests and canyons. Having become fascinated by the landscapes that I crisscrossed, I resolved to take photos of these sublime landscapes on my return. So on the way back, I took out my cell phone and took my first photo. I observed that in this photo, in addition to the photographed landscape, I could also see the reflection of my hands and my phone in the train window.

At first I tried to find a way of avoiding this reflection, but quickly realized that there is something fascinating about seeing a photo and at the same time the tool that made it

---

[25] Ivan Magrin-Chagnolleau, *Muir Woods Spirits*, Aloha Edition, 2017.

[26] Ivan Magrin-Chagnolleau, *Handscapes*, Aloha Edition, 2020.

possible to take said photo, as well as the hands holding said tool. I then made the decision to continue taking pictures with apparent reflection.

Again, what particularly interests me here is that when I took the first photo, I did not plan to photograph my reflection. I am just taking a photo with the intention of capturing a beautiful landscape the way I see it. Herein lies the fruit of chance that composed for me a photo where we see at the same time a landscape, a cell phone, and my hands. Of course, it is no coincidence that this reflection appears. It is the result of a very specific physical phenomenon. But the chance comes about through the fact that I had not anticipated for this physical phenomenon. I had not foreseen it. I had not planned for it. Nor did I choose it. It occurred without my knowledge. From the point of view of my lived experience, this is 'chance'. Returning to those quotes from Henri Bergson and Paul Valéry, as in the previous example, who state there can be no chance without a subject.

I would like to take a third example which is perhaps even more surprising. In the late 90s, I was in New York to work as a researcher at Bell Labs, which later became AT&T Labs. I was living in New York then, and I was taking beginner watercolor classes at Cooper Union, then one of New York's top art schools. I made six beginner watercolors, which were not particularly fantastic, but which initiated a practice, and above all a very special relationship to this art medium that I still cherish. The watercolors have since been stored in a cardboard folder with a few blank sheets. Upon my return from the United States, this box was stored in an attic in a family country home.

About fifteen years later, whilst tidying up the attic I came across this box. I opened it and found that it had absorbed a little moisture, and that most of my beginner watercolors had been damaged. At the same time I also discovered a very surprising thing. Thanks to the humidity, through capillarity and sedimentation of the pigments, an absolutely magnificent watercolor had "composed itself" on one of the blank sheets, a kind of meditative landscape[27]. Again, we can explain very precisely what happened from a physics point of view. But who could have planned for such a thing, without ever having experienced it, 'by chance', first hand? From the point of view of my lived experience, it was truly chance that made this watercolor possible.

I could cite many other examples of the same type, from my artistic practices and also some from my experience as a researcher, but it seems to me that these three examples already allow us to fully understand the subject of this article.

Indeed, these examples illustrate the close links between chance and creation, and also underline, like Henri Bergson and Paul Valéry, the phenomenological part to this relation, that is to say, the fact that there is always a subjectivity to interpret a lived experience as the intervention of chance.

5. An Art of the Present Moment

I would like to end this article by talking about an experience that I have been conducting for many years around an art of the present moment, that is to say an art practice that is

[27] Ivan Magrin-Chagnolleau, *Sedimented Landscape #1*, Aquarelle, 1998-2018.

shaped in the moment, without premeditation, without predictability, an artwork where chance plays an important role.

This experience has already taken several forms. It is currently being developed around two flagship projects.

The first is called “Around the Lake”. From 2012 to 2017, I lived near a lake. I very quickly got used to going for walks there, and very quickly I got used to these walks taking me around this lake. I quickly made the decision that I was going to take these walks around the lake so as to explore the creative process. It was done in stages. First I took notes, on my first few walks, of any thoughts that came to me as I walked around the lake. Then some of these ideas led to other forms of experimentation. I started taking pictures during these walks. I then captured audio recordings of the sounds I would hear. I then took to taking short videos comprised of several moments during these walks. It was then that I realized the impact of a regular walk on creativity. It was also around this time that I joined the Walking Artists Network (WAN)[28], a network of research artists who explore this link between walking and creativity, and who make walking one of the practices of their creative and research process.

At the end of those five years I had amassed a considerable amount of material, a sort of dough that I now had to knead into shape. The material is itself a kind of work already, but it is also the formatting that gives meaning to this work. So I decided to produce a number of ‘objects’ from this material. First up is a book compiling together the texts that were produced during these hikes, as well as some photographs. Then another book essentially comprised of photographs. These two books are in the process of being produced and will hopefully be published at some point in 2021. I would also like to create a website where to collate all the texts, photos, sound and video files into one place. Finally, I would like to create an immersive exhibition where these different materials would be arranged as a coherent whole, and where the viewer of the exhibition wanders through it all, a bit in the same manner I wandered around this lake myself.

What is fascinating about this kind of experience, beyond all the deep intuitions that arise during regular walks, is the preponderant role that chance plays in the moment of creating artistic objects. Even if, as we have already seen, there must be a subject in order for there to be chance, and even if we can infer that the thoughts that arise, the desire for photos, sound recordings, or video files, are triggered by volition, it is what happens in the moments following this triggering that belong to chance.

For example, if I decide, without always knowing why, that I am going to start recording sounds, I do not know what will happen between the triggering of the recorder and the moment I stop it. While it may have been a bird's song that was the trigger, I have no idea what will happen next. I may see children playing, or a woman walking her dog, or ducks that will fly away as I approach them.

It is the same with video. Although I might have a good reason for starting to film, often at times the reason is simply that I think about it then. Nevertheless, even though I am filming where I am, often the path right in front of me, what happens after the start of the recording

[28] https://www.walkingartistsnetwork.org.

is spontaneous. I may take a detour to avoid an unusual obstacle, or else be attracted by something that takes me off my normal route.

The second project is called “The Haiku Project”. I have been writing haiku for a long time now and with it the idea to create an entire project around the notion of haiku. I wanted to explore other forms of haiku other than poetry, including photographic haikus, video haikus, musical and sound haikus. For this purpose, I opted to ease the constraints of haiku so as to retain two aspects: the simplistic form; and the idea of an artwork in the present moment, not premeditated, but that which is made in the here and now.

Here again the question arose of objects made from all the material accumulated over time. As with the previous project, I chose to start with that which seemed easiest to do, a book of poetic haikus that also contains some photographic haikus, as well as a book that mainly contains photographic haikus. These two books are also in production and will likely be published in 2020 or 2021. I also intend to create a website to host a lot of the material collected as part of this project. Again, I would also like to stage an immersive exhibition that not only allows the viewer to wander through all this material, but to also experience the haiku process in different forms, this creative process that is within the moment.

Here again, chance plays a considerable role in the creative process. There is of course always the question of the trigger. What makes me choose this time to make a haiku, and what makes me choose this form of haiku over another? This is why this artistic practice is extremely phenomenological, since one can assume that it is something that happens at the level of the lived experience that triggers this impulse to do a haiku as well as to choose in what format.

For some time now, I have been considering taking this notion of chance even further, by setting up a small system that would randomly choose the moments of the haikus as well as their medium. It would then be interesting to compare the two forms of practice. I am not sure, however, that it is all that interesting to disconnect the practice of haiku from the phenomenological experience that triggers it. Although in this second case, there would still be a lived experience, but it would be of quite a different nature.

6. Conclusion

I have therefore proposed in this article a semantic exploration of the word ‘chance’ and the word ‘creation’. Next I have tried to show, using examples from my own artistic practice, the part played by chance within the artistic creative process, and the extent to which chance was or was not a constituent element of this process. I then presented two artistic experiences which explored an artwork of the present moment, that is to say an artwork in which, by definition, chance plays a significant role.

While concluding this article, I have formed some new idea, mentioned above, to take this exploration of the link between chance and creation further. For some time now I have

been carrying out experiments around the phenomenology[29] of the creative process[30]. I do this through elicitation interviews[31] and phenomenological interviews[32] which I conduct with several artists based around their creative process. During these interviews, I suggest that artists choose a moment in their creative process, in connection with a recent creation, which they find particularly interesting. On the other hand, I could also ask them to choose a moment when it seems that chance played an important role. This would allow me to investigate and characterize the various notions different artists attach to the word 'chance'. In any case, it would certainly make for interesting further explorations.

---

[29] Edmund Husserl, *L'idée de la phénoménologie* (The Idea of Phenomenology), PUF, 1992.

[30] Ivan Magrin-Chagnolleau, Ruth Nahoum, Marcus Weisen, "Le projet sipapu : vers une micro-phénoménologie de la création" (The Sipapu Project: Towards a Micro-phenomenology of Creation), in *Les enjeux cognitifs de l'artefact esthétique*, tome 2, under the direction of Xavier Lambert, L'Harmattan, 2019.

[31] Pierre Vermersch, *L'Entretien d'explicitation* (The Explanation Interview), ESF Éditeur, 2017.

[32] Michel Bitbol & Claire Petitmengin, "Neurophenomenology and the elicitation interview", in *The Blackwell Companion to Consciousness* (2nd edition), Wiley & Sons, 2017.

7. Bibliography

L'Artiste Chercheur, premier numéro du journal *p-e-r-f-o-r-m-a-n-c-e.org*, Vol. 1, 2014.

Bergson, Henri, *Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion*, Garnier Flammarion, 2012.

Bitbol, Michel & Petitmengin, Claire, "Neurophenomenology and the elicitation interview", in *The Blackwell Companion to Consciousness* (2nd edition), Wiley & Sons, 2017.

Camus, Albert, *La Peste,* Folio, 1972.

Camus, Albert, *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*, Folio Essais, 1885.

Claudel, Paul, *Journal*, tomes I & II, La Pléiade Gallimard, 1968–1969.

Delacroix, Eugène, *Journal, 1822-1863*, Plon, 1996.

Husserl, Edmund, *L'idée de la phénoménologie*, PUF, 1992.

Jacob, Max, *Conseils à un jeune poète*, NRF, 1945.

Jaloux, Edmond, *La Chute d'Icare*, dans *La Revue des Deux Mondes*, 15 novembre 1935.

La Rochefoucauld, François de, *Maximes*, Garnier Flammarion, 1999.

Magrin-Chagnolleau, Ivan, *Sedimented Landscape #1*, Aquarelle, 1998-2018.

Magrin-Chagnolleau, Ivan, « Éloge de l'artiste chercheur », *p-e-r-f-o-r-m-a-n-c-e.org*, Vol. 1, 2014.

Magrin-Chagnolleau, Ivan, *Muir Woods Spirits*, Aloha Edition, 2017.

Magrin-Chagnolleau, Ivan, Nahoum, Ruth, Weisen, Marcus, "Le projet sipapu : vers une micro-phénoménologie de la création", dans *Les enjeux cognitifs de l'artefact esthétique, tome 2*, sous la direction de Xavier Lambert, L'Harmattan, 2019.

Magrin-Chagnolleau, Ivan, *Handscapes*, Aloha Edition, 2020.

Malraux, André, *Les chênes qu'on abat…*, NRF, 1971.

Monod, Jacques, *Le hasard et la nécessité*, Points Essais, 2014.

Montesquieu, *De L'Esprit des Lois*, Garnier Flammarion, 1993.

Rey, Alain, *Le Grand Robert de la Langue Française*, version en ligne, Le Robert, 2017.

Rolland, Romain, *Jean-Christophe*, Albin Michel, 2007.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, *Œuvres complètes*, tomes I à V, La Pléiade Gallimard, 1959-1995.

Valéry, Paul, *Variété III, IV et V,* Folio Essais, 2002.

Vermersch, Pierre, *L'Entretien d'explicitation*, ESF Éditeur, 2017.

Voltaire, *Dictionnaire philosophique*, Folio, 1994.

Walking Artists Network (WAN) : https ://www.walkingartistsnetwork.org.