

TRANSFORMING ORGANISATIONS WITH THE ARTS.

Research Report

by

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WZB



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Research Framework for Evaluating the Effects of Artistic Interventions in Organizations

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Chapter 1

Introduction: The Need for a Research Framework for Evaluating the Effects of Artistic Interventions in Organizations

The past decades have witnessed the emergence of a multitude of ways to stimulate innovation and organizational learning in response to changes in society and economic pressures (Dierkes et al. 2001; Easterby-Smith & Lyles 2003). Among these are “artistic interventions”¹ – when some form of art is brought into an organization to trigger or support a learning process. Such a development may seem surprising, because the world of the arts is usually seen as quite distinct from the worlds of business and administration. Despite Luc Boltanski & Eve Chiapello’s (1999) revelation of some absorption of premises from the arts into the world of business, it is in fact the expectation of differences between the worlds that gives rise to the expectation of the potential for learning. The underlying assumption of practitioners is that bringing people, processes, and products from the “foreign culture” of the arts into the workplace helps to stimulate new ways of thinking and acting by irritating routines, challenging established mindsets, and developing new skills (Darsø 2004, Styhre and Eriksson 2008).

Artistic interventions vary greatly in time, from a workshop of few hours to a placement or residency spread over several months or even a few years, with the hope that their impacts will be lasting. They can involve all kinds of art forms, such as theatre, music, painting, and story-telling. The interaction with the art form can be more or less active, and more or less entertaining, provocative, and educational. In such meetings with the arts, members of the organization can become aware of the distinctive features of their language, perspectives, and practices, and have the opportunity to generate variations in ways of seeing and doing things from which to choose in the future. An additional assumption that drives such projects in organizations is that artistic ways of knowing encompass aesthetic and emotional

¹ We choose the term “artistic intervention” as a broad and neutral descriptor of the wide range of short- and long term forms of bringing people, processes, and products from the world of the arts into organizations. Based on its roots from Latin, inter-venire, to intervene means to come between, to involve someone or something into a situation so as to alter or hinder an action or development (American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 2000). Intermediary organizations, artists, and host organizations define the nature of the interaction, e.g., collaborative, provocative, entertaining, playful.

aspects that are generally overlooked at the workplace, and attending to them is expected to help open people to develop new ways of seeing and doing things (Carr and Hancock 2003).

Artistic interventions in organizations are conducted with high expectations of a multitude of positive outcomes. Research has not kept pace with these developments in practice. Very few empirical studies have been conducted to establish whether the high hopes placed on these interventions are justified. The WZB established a research unit in 2008 to explore “Cultural Sources of Newness”, within which a team is investigating the phenomenon of artistic interventions in organizations (http://www.wzb.eu/gwd/kneu/interventions_and_inventions.en.htm). The work conducted by this team to date – empirical case studies of diverse artistic interventions in European countries; data bases on artistic interventions, the stakeholders involved, and the available literature; and an “Artful Conversation” workshop (<http://www.wzb.eu/gwd/kneu/veranstaltungen.en.htm/>) with artists engaged in interventions in organizations –laid the groundwork for embarking on the TILLT Europe project reported on here.

Why does it matter that there is such a gap between research and practice? Policymakers are showing an interest in how to support competitiveness, quality of working life, and corporate social responsibility, and they are discovering that cultural resources can contribute significantly. So they would like to know whether artistic interventions can deliver on the promise to stimulate innovation and organizational learning. Decision-makers who have not yet tried working with artistic interventions would like to know on which basis to choose this route (or not). Intermediary organizations that place artists in organizations and support the intervention process seek information about which of their approaches have which effects, and what they could do better (Vives and Gomez de la Iglesia 2009). Artists, too, have many questions about their engagement in artistic interventions in organizations. Researchers bring a broad perspective, seeking to understand the complex processes entailed in bringing artistic ways of knowing and doing into organizational contexts; and they bring some scepticism, for example to clarify whether the phenomenon is more than a new fad and whether there are situations in which artistic interventions may actually do damage.

This report presents a research framework designed to start closing the gap between research and practice by enabling an analysis of the values that artistic interventions add in organizations. The term “value added” may at first sight appear inappropriate in connection with the arts, but we choose it consciously, in keeping with recent attempts to overcome the divide between the economic concept of “value” and the “values” in social relations (Stark 2009). “Evaluations” of the effects of artistic interventions in organizations should encompass all aspects that people esteem as having worth, as being valuable – not least because attending to “values” in an organization is likely to have repercussions on its “value”.

This report is based on past work and it is inspired by new work. It benefits first from our past years of research experience and knowledge of the literature in this and related fields of organizational behaviour and innovation, and second from research we conducted specifically for this project. We designed three “Artful Research” workshops at the WZB in order to move beyond the literature and gain fresh insights into the experiences diverse stakeholders have with artistic interventions in organizations (see appendix for list of participants). The involvement of stakeholders at this early stage in the development of a research framework is unusual but essential so as to orient the focus of research to the effects that can actually be documented (rather than those that are just hoped for). Tapping into the experiences and expectations of stakeholders also permits the integration of their perspectives into planning of appropriate research methods. Therefore, in September 2009 thirty three artists, people from companies and from intermediary organizations, consultants, and researchers shared their knowledge about the effects they have observed in connection with artistic interventions in organizations. The analysis of the results as well as reflections on the experimental process of the Artful Research workshops inspired the development of the research framework we propose for the future.

The structure of the report is intentionally simple. Following this introduction is a chapter summarizing key points from the few studies that have started examining the effects of artistic interventions in organizations. Chapter 3 then describes the Artful Research workshop methodology and findings derived from those three events with

stakeholders, indicating where to look for the kinds of value that artistic interventions can add and how to look for it in future research. The proposed research framework is presented in chapter 4, showing how to move forward in a field that is lacking theoretical underpinnings and that requires the engagement of diverse stakeholders to generate a sound understanding of the processes at work. The final chapter summarizes the conclusions and outlines the next steps.

Chapter 2

Learning from Past Research

Experiments with artistic interventions in organizations hark back to the 1960s and 70s, but their expansion into many kinds of organizations in many countries with many kinds of arts is a more recent phenomenon. Publications on the subject started appearing in the 1990s and have multiplied over the past decade, but very few examine the effects of such interventions with any rigor. The literature is primarily descriptive and conceptual, which are necessary first steps in a new field of practice. The focus of this chapter is on what can be learned from research to date on the kinds of value that artistic interventions can add in organizations. We will first sketch the landscape in which the few publications on effects are positioned, then turn to look at the content, methods and results of evaluation studies as a basis for formulating a future research framework.

Brief overview of the literature on arts and business

1. The background literature

The landscape is marked by the emergence of new thinking about the relationship between the arts, culture and the economy. It is common to define the arts and the economy as two different worlds. Art is seen as the field of the inspiration, imagination, and creativity, the economy as the domain of rationality, efficiency, and profit. But these boundaries are shifting. Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello (1999) explore the implications of the trend towards the integration of values and concepts from the world of the arts into the world of business. Olav Velthuis (2005) writes about the parallel trends of economization of culture and the culturalization of economics. Michael Hutter has been studying the relationship between arts and the economy from multiple angles (1992, 2006 with Shusterman, 2007, 2008 with Throsby, and 2009), including projects on corporate cultural responsibility with the Federation of German Industry (<http://www.kulturkreis.eu/>). Several authors have also discussed economic phenomena and the world of business from a more artistic

angle as a context and resource for creating new work (Felix et al. 2002, Mir 2003, Ferro-Thomsen 2005, Brellochs and Schrat 2005, 2006). The tenor of the background literature is mixed: authors note that the flow of ideas and values between spheres of arts and business is more open than has either previously been the case or previously recognized; this is seen both as an enrichment and as a potential concern if the capacity of the arts to critique society and its actors is thereby dulled.

2. The management literature

Given this rethinking about the relationship between two worlds hitherto seen as separate and the growth of experiments in organizations, it is not surprising that management is an area in which an increasing number of publications can be found. They cover a wide range of topics, and, while primarily descriptive, include various types and tenors.

Among the **topics** covered are:

- creative and artful processes of working (Austin and Devin 2003)
- arts as a metaphor (Pine and Gilmore 1999, Boland and Collopy 2004);
- artists and the arts as a new role model for leadership and management (Adler 2006, Hatch 1999, Corrigan 1999, Guillet de Monthoux et al. 2007, Seifter and Economy 2001);
- potential of the arts for training and development (Taylor and Ladkin 2009, Seifter and Buswick 2005, Schiuma 2009);
- arts as a source of ideas and guidance for dealing with issues in organizations such as, communication, change, intrapreneurship (DePree 1992; Kamoche et al. 2002, Hansen et al. 2007; Barry and Hansen 2008)
- aesthetic aspects of organizations, sensual dimensions of work (Guillet de Monthoux 2004, Linstead and Höpfl 2000, Carr and Hancock 2003, Strati 1999).

The management publications range from factual to normative, but include very little critical work to date:

- Overviews: Lotte Darsø's book "Artful Creation. Learning-Tales of Arts-In-Business" (2004) provided the first overview of the wide range ways in which organizations have experimented with artistic interventions. It is based on fifty three interviews with artists, consultants, researchers and business representatives around the world. She describes numerous cases and offers a theoretical framework for positioning different kinds of approaches. Other publications in this vein include: an article by Buswick et al. (2004) describing artistic interventions in organization and leadership development programmes; the Arts&Business description of how different forms of art can address business issues (Stockil n.d.); the book edited by Schreyögg and Dabitz (1999) specifically on theatre in business; and the special issue of the Journal of Business Strategy in 2005 discussing several aspects of arts in business.
- Documentation: Other publications provide material that still awaits analysis. For example, Harris (1999) and Scott (2006) documented artists-in-residence programmes in research centres. Harris describes the PAIR programme at the Xerox Palo Alto Research Center (PARC). Over ten years and artists were invited to work with the researchers of Xerox for a period of 6 to 12 months. The book illustrates several collaborations but does not provide an evaluation of the programme. Similarly, Scott (2006) documents the first year (2004-2005) of the Artists in Labs (AIL) programme at the Institute for Cultural Studies in the Arts of Zurich University of the Arts, where artists are paired with science labs for a period of 3 to 6 months.
- A great deal of the literature is inspired by personal experience. Some of this descriptive work has a reflective dimension, written by academics who have experimented with various forms of art in their management courses, such as Nancy Adler (2006), David Barry and his colleague Stefan Meisiek (2004), Mary Jo Hatch (1999), and Steve Taylor (Taylor 2004, Taylor and Hansen 2005, Taylor and Ladkin 2009). Much of the personally-inspired literature is not reflective, however, but rather "motivational" (e.g., DePree 1992, Zander and Zander 2000, VanGundy and Naiman 2003, Olivier 2004).
- To date, the rarest type of publication about artistic interventions in organizations are studies raising critical concerns. Questions of power, for example, are rarely raised in the literature on artistic interventions, although the exercise and distribution of power are inherent aspects of relations and

processes in organizations. The need for such work is illustrated by the study on the use of theatre in an organization by Timothy Clark and Iain Mangham (2004). It reveals how the potential of the arts to address underlying issues in an organization can be (unwittingly) subverted in an intervention, so that the existing problems are masked or even reinforced (see also Gibb 2004; Hüttler 2005; Nissley, Taylor, Houden 2004 ;for a broader critique, see Pelzer 2006).

These management-oriented publications have played an important role in generating interest in the field, as well as in raising expectations about the multiple positive effects to be had from it. The risk this literature entails, especially the “motivational” type, is the creation of hype around the phenomenon. As a result, artistic interventions may be brought into organizations naively or under inappropriate conditions, leading to disappointment and cynicism when problems arise and high hopes are dashed.

This brief review of the kind of publications characterizing the field of arts and business and in particular artistic interventions in organizations provides the backdrop for looking at the literature that is directly relevant to the focus of this study, namely how to conduct research on the effects of these interventions. In the next section we first present a few studies that have started evaluating programmes and projects; then we describe the methods used to date and the results they have generated.

Research relating to the effects of artistic interventions

1. Examples of programmes and projects

The state of the literature suggests that either very few organizations have been willing to submit their experiences with artistic interventions to some form of evaluation, or that very few researchers have shown an interest in doing so. Either way, there are not many studies that report on the effects of artistic interventions in organizations. We can draw on three prominent exceptions: The AIRIS (Artists in

Residence) programme in Sweden, the NyX Innovation Alliances Programme in Denmark, and Unilever's Catalyst program.

- 1) AIRIS has been running since 2002, originally under the auspices of Skådebanan Västra Götaland and now by the intermediary organization TILLT (for a description of the intermediary organization and comparison with others, see Vives and Gomez de la Iglesia 2009). Artists from many different art forms are paired with diverse types of organizations (private companies, municipal authorities etc.) for a period of 10 months to act as creative consultants or change agents. AIRIS is unusual for many reasons, one being that research has been a feature almost from the beginning. In fact, some organizations agreed to embark on a residency project specifically because they were interested in the research aspect. The intermediary organization actively sought out researchers to accompany the programme over time. Katja Lindqvist studied the projects of the years 2002 to 2004, and then Alexander Styhre and Michael Eriksson studied projects from 2005 to 2008 (Lindqvist 2005; Styhre and Eriksson 2008; Eriksson 2009).
- 2) One of the ideas behind the NyX Innovation Alliances Programme in Denmark was to find out whether the arts and artists can make difference in a workplace. To this end, twenty artists were paired with twenty companies from different industries for twenty days. David Barry and Stefan Meisiek undertook to "take a close look at the programme's successes, failures, and 'grey zones'", hoping to shed some light on how these artist-business partnerships have and haven't worked. They published their evaluation on the Learning Lab Denmark website (Barry and Meisiek 2004).
- 3) Unilever's Catalyst programme, has received quite a lot of attention in the literature on artistic interventions (e.g. Darsø 2004, Arts&Business 2004, Buswick et al. 2004, Schiuma 2009). Catalyst ran from 2000-2007² and for at least part of that period it was the largest corporate arts programme in the UK, encompassing a wide range of arts-based activities (Arts&Business 2004:23). The programme was initially proposed to the company by Alastair Creamer, an external arts consultant, who was then recruited as full-time creative director. Catalyst included art courses, lunchtime activities, and evening events. Most

² Dates provided to us by the Arts&Business research unit.

projects were short-time interventions but there were also artists-in-residence projects of different durations. In addition to activities in the two Unilever operating companies involved (Lever Fabergé and Unilever Icecream & Frozen Food) some employees volunteered in arts organizations. Nearly 70% of staff participated in at least one activity, 23% were serial participants during its first four years (Arts&Business 2004:25).

2. Research methods

The studies of these programmes offer the opportunity to explore the use and usefulness of different research methods. All involved qualitative research, and some also included surveys. Some authors used just one method, some worked with a mix of methods, either within a single study or over time.

- All the studies entailed conducting interviews with representatives of stakeholder groups, like artists and other providers, managers and employees. Some authors also interviewed academics. However, no information is provided about sampling in these interviews.
- It is common to cite authors of the field of creativity and innovation as well as artists to underpin statements about the usefulness of arts for organizational development strategies and the artful approach in general. The quotations provide interesting information about the positive sides of arts-business-collaborations, but they are singular opinions and they do not include evidence of impacts.
- Providing proof in this area is difficult, as Buswick and his colleagues noted: "Most 'proof' that enhancing an aesthetics perspective improves decision making is still anecdotal. The evidence lies in stories and the results in behaviour and in performance appraisals. Scientific studies investigating transfer of learning are inconclusive. Even major reviews of the transfer studies conducted by people sympathetic to the arts wind up with inconclusive results" (Buswick et al. 2004:39). These authors believe that learning in an artful mode cannot be measured.
- The authors of the Arts&Business report that was published in 2004 interviewed 15 providers of artistic interventions and some A&B clients, they initiated two

focus group discussions with providers, and they analysed the cases of Unilever and John Lewis. Nevertheless, they had to admit that no representative findings can be presented.

- Giovanni Schiuma (2009) used more methods to prepare his report for Arts&Business. He conducted interviews, several group discussions, document analysis, a literature review, and he compiled small case studies. With this material he developed a theoretical framework to guide the selection of the kind of artistic interventions to use for different organizational goals. It is a useful tool for selection and may provide a basis for future evaluations, but the report cannot provide evidence of impacts.
- The evaluations of the NyX and AIRIS programmes entailed sophisticated research designs with both qualitative and quantitative methods.

To study the NyX projects, the authors chose a grounded theory approach with a large range of methods, although not all the methods were used in all the cases (Barry and Meisiek 2004:2,16). They conducted interviews with managers using semi-structured questionnaires in the beginning of the projects, then they used the findings from these, together with results from observations, to develop dependent and independent variables. These provided the basis for formulating questionnaires with scaled survey questions, which they administered to managers and other employees. The response rate to the questionnaires left eleven out of the original twenty companies in the analysis. Other data sources included interviews with artists, analysis of artists' logbooks, and secondary data like media releases, photos, videos, and exhibitions. The authors mentioned analyzing innovation counts and numeric company data, but they did not specify in the article how they defined and collected this data. Some of the data were submitted to statistical analysis. David Barry and Stefan Meisiek generated some interesting results by using these methods but, as they pointed out, the evaluation was conducted a short time after the projects, so they could not report on long-term effects in the organizations.

Alexander Styhre and Michael Eriksson started with retrospective telephone interviews with organization representatives in the first research year, and later introduced more methods, in particular two instruments to measure change dispositions of the participating organizations: 1) workplace climate inventory, and 2) defensive routine mechanisms survey instrument. Selected participants

were asked to fill in a questionnaire at several points in time; additionally semi-structured interviews with management, workers' representatives, and artists were arranged. The researchers also conducted a field study during each project and they participated in AIRIS project team meetings in 2006. Secondary sources of the analysis were documents from the AIRIS homepage and the research report on the first generation of AIRIS projects (Lindqvist 2005). Unfortunately, the authors could not complete the analysis of all the projects: eleven of sixteen projects were seen as fully accomplished over the programme period 2005-2006.

3. Effects of artistic interventions identified in past research

The selected publications report on numerous aspects of the artistic interventions, but we focus here on the results relating to the effects in the organizations. To help structure the thinking about different kinds of effects, the Art&Business report (2004) suggests distinguishing between two modes of impacts that artistic interventions can have in organizations: a **technical mode** with the transfer of skills and knowledge, and an **inspirational mode** when artists introduce a different role model and new ways of thinking and doing. This distinction is reflected in the other studies as well. However, it is not always possible to distinguish clearly between the technical and the inspirational mode of learning. For example, a study reported that after volunteering in an arts organization a Unilever employee realized that he should change the style of communication when talking with customers and consumers (Buswick et al. 2004:9). This could be interpreted as an example of a skill transfer, but it might also be the result of inspiration from the artistic way of working. We find it more useful to organize the findings from these various studies with the model suggested by Giovanni Schiuma (2009:9). He distinguishes between effects on individuals, teams and community, the organization, and the public domain, which he represents in nested circles. Here we use the first three categories; effects on the public domain are important but not a focus of the studies at hand.

- Individual: Most studies report that employees express having **learned much about themselves and their colleagues** (e.g., Styhre and Eriksson 2008:53). The Art&Business report (2004) claims that arts projects have generally a

positive impact on **intrinsic motivation and commitment**. But it provides no supporting proof for the argument. Participants at Unilever “regularly speak of how their participation makes them more **passionate about their jobs, their company, and even their lives in general**. In both programs, participants and observers talk about how a lunchtime session after a difficult morning will send them back to their desks or computers with a fresh, alert outlook.” (Buswick et al. 2004:43; emphasis mine). The Art&Business (2004) report found that the workshops stimulated people to **explore and experiment**, something that more traditional approaches could not do, as the internal HR team of John Lewis noted. Buswick et al. (2004) summarize four core values of artful approaches: 1) new perspectives, 2) combination of emotional intelligence and rational thinking, 3) recovering of imagination, and 4) using all senses. The authors suggest that artistic interventions can change perceptions through a **heightened aesthetic sensibility** (Buswick et al. 2004:34) Aesthetic experiences are not generally addressed in organizations, but here they are considered significant because they “require intuitive thinking, emotional arousal, aesthetic understanding, social intelligence and more generally creative capabilities, such as imagination, improvisation, perception, empathy and flexibility, to name a few” (Schiuma 2009:7). As a result, people realized, for example, how much they have taken for granted in their organization. On the other hand they also **became aware of their abilities and new possibilities**. Because artists introduce fresh perspectives employees started to **ask questions** about their own work and about organizational values (Schiuma 2009). Employees also changed perspectives and therefore became more optimistic about their working environment and about their own skills.

- Team and community: Better **communication** as a result of artful projects in is mentioned very often in the studies. Unfortunately, none of the writings discuss the implications of improved communication.
- Organization: Unilever tried to capture the impact on the **organizational culture** with employee surveys on key people indicators. The surveys were benchmarked against other businesses: “In recent times they have outperformed the high performance average on 12 out of 13 key people indicators, and they have achieved the seconded highest recorded score on ‘valuing people’” (Arts&Business 2004:25). However, other studies have not been able

to document such effects. For example, Styhre and Eriksson (2008) looked at the cases to see whether artistic interventions had an impact on the **work climate**, but did not find clear evidence of change, although they suggest that management support for the artists' work can have a positive effect on the work climate. The NyX projects are mentioned as catalysts for **new networks, new products, new marketing, better efficiency of work**: "From a hard-nosed financial perspective, the programme also appears to be a success, especially given its 'new venture' status. All of the top-performing Alliances have resulted in significant payoffs, both direct and indirect" (Barry and Meisiek 2004:12). The Arts&Business report provides evidence of improvements in **customer service** after all the staff of a store attended theatre workshops and staged a play about the situation in the store: "Like many other leading retailers, John Lewis actively benchmark their customer service performance against the rest of the sector by using a mystery shopping index. Prior to the intervention the store's customer service performance was ranked 22nd in relation to other competitor stores. As a result of the arts-based intervention, the store moved up to 15th, and then to 7th, in terms of improved customer service" (Arts&Business 2004:31). The Catalyst programme at Unilever is credited with having helped to **address key business issues**, broadened perspectives, and has taught the participants to think in unforeseen ways. The reason is seen in the power of artistic experiences to engage people in a way that other types of intervention cannot. The authors concluded that Catalyst **increased business performance and had a positive impact on organizational culture** in Unilever. "As a consequence Catalyst has embedded itself deeply in the business, becoming a vital part of how the business invigorates its culture, tackles business performance issues, and creates an openness to change" (Art&Business 2004, 25).

Schiama represents the effects in these different categories as spill-overs from one nested circle outward to another. He argues that artistic interventions "are thought-provoking and capable of engaging people into reflection, self-assessment and development of a new and different knowledge of the organisational issues" (2009:7) and therefore provide insights and new understanding of organizational problems and challenges. Other authors conclude that the effects at the individual level have

important impacts on the organization. Artful approaches can be “powerful accelerants of all that is good about successful creative businesses – passion, honesty, insight, innovation and personality, both in their markets and in their internal cultures” (Art&Business 2004:16). The outward flow of effects from one circle to another is not automatic, however. Schiuma even suggests that artistic interventions “do not have a clear and direct link to the bottom line. Except those cases in which [they] either correspond to specific business activities in the cultural sector aimed to generate cash flow, or equal to real estate investments, it is extremely difficult if not impossible to draw a direct link between arts initiatives and economic returns” (2009:9). He suggests that the “benefits of [artistic interventions] will be fundamentally found within the positive impacts that they have on organisational behaviour and on developing business value drivers. These mainly refer to intangible and knowledge-based assets, grounding business competencies and affecting the efficiency and effectiveness of business processes” (Schiuma 2009:10).

Not surprisingly, the studies on multiple projects all show mixed outcomes (Barry and Meisiek 2004; Buswick et al. 2004; and Styhre and Eriksson 2008). There is no general conclusion for all examined projects, some have been more, some less successful. Nevertheless all estimate that the projects have overall positive effects. There may well be biases in the results due to research methods and sampling. When studies differentiate between the responses of managers and employees the authors sometimes find that managers are more optimistic about the projects than other employees. For example, while managers were satisfied with the NyX projects, non-managers generally gave low ratings (Barry and Meisiek 2004). Styhre and Eriksson (2008) also found optimism among managers in AIRIS projects: these believed that projects improve work satisfaction and enhance productivity through lower degrees of sick leave and absenteeism, but there is no evidence to support this claim.

Implications for future research framework

The research that has been conducted so far provides some guidance for the future

studies seeking to discover the effects of artistic interventions in organizations, but this review reveals how much basic work still needs to be done. A handicap has been that decision-makers in organizations that have worked with artistic interventions have shown little interest in studying effects. Arts&Business pointed out that organizations using artistic interventions usually do not engage in serious evaluation of their results. The internal evaluation is dominated by immediate satisfaction ratings. It seems to be enough for them when employees express pleasure about the experience: "More sophisticated evaluation techniques, focusing less on individual reactions and more on business performance outcomes and effects, involving formal pre- and post-event evaluation using a range of evaluation methods (self-reporting, line manager and peer review, etc.), were notable by their absence" (Arts&Business 2004:30).

Some organizations even refuse to evaluate their programmes or projects because they believe the effects of artistic interventions can hardly be measured. There is an evident **need to develop research approaches that the diverse stakeholders are confident will be appropriate** for studying artistic interventions. Some have started to experiment with unconventional techniques. For example, "Unilever realized that quantitative proof of the program's success would be difficult to come by, so it accepted the idea that the process of evaluation would be observation and personal storytelling or anecdote" (Buswick et al. 2004: 5).

The stronger studies are those that have used **a mix of methods**, drawing together different kinds of data (e.g., from interviews, documents, observation and surveys). These studies point to some areas in which effects have been found, suggesting that it makes sense to dedicate more attention to looking at the connections between individual, group, and organizational effects in future, attending both to the direct and the indirect ways value is added through artistic interventions in organization.

The anecdotal form of much of the evidence, and the general, often vague statements still make it difficult to distinguish between the effects that have really occurred and those which people would like to see occur. The **greatest gap remains in the specification of clear and reliable indicators** to document different kinds of effects in the short-, medium- and long term. Future research therefore needs to

focus on developing a sound enough **understanding of how effects emanate from artistic interventions in organizations** in order for indicators to be specified. It also needs to grapple with the fact that **different stakeholders** are likely to have different perspectives on the effects of an intervention.

Chapter 3

Beyond the Literature: Learning from Artful Research Workshops

The hopes and expectations surrounding the kinds of value that artistic interventions can add in organizations are high and wide-ranging. Calls for solid evidence that the potential is being realized are growing. Policy- and decision-makers want a basis for making sound investments; proponents are anxious to show that what they are doing is valuable; sceptics challenge the claims in the absence of reliable data; some participants and observers are curious about when which kinds of effects are likely to emerge. As our review in chapter 2 reveals, however, publications about the state of the art show more promise than proof. This state of affairs is not surprising for a relatively new field of practice, but the time is now ripe for asking questions and designing instruments that can respond to them.

In light of the many hoped-for effects and the great diversity of artistic interventions, where should research attention be focused? A logical place to start looking for something is where the people involved have actually seen it. In order to develop a practical research framework grounded in reality, we therefore decided to tap into the experience of a wide variety of stakeholders engaged in artistic interventions in Europe. We organized **a series of three “Artful Research” workshops at the WZB** (September 23, 24, and 25, 2009)

- a) To identify the effects of artistic interventions in the organizations with or in which the stakeholders have worked, and**
- b) To clarify which forms of research would be best suited to collecting evidence on a large scale in future.**

The primary focus of our data collection and reflection is on long-term (several months) artistic interventions, but we chose to look at short-term (several hours or days) interventions as well. They are much more common than long-term projects, they often serve as a first experience with the arts in the organization, and they are used as a follow-up in order to sustain effects or focus on a particular issue.

This chapter first describes the Artful Research workshop process for collecting and

making sense of data with diverse stakeholders. It explains the objectives and the design considerations, the complementary approaches taken to elicit insights from experience, and the two-step process to interpret the data. The second section then presents key findings on the kinds of value that the stakeholders have found, indicating the primary importance of human effects, and exploring the connections between effects on individuals, relationships, and strategic issues. The last section in the chapter discusses the implications for future research, based on recommendations collected from the stakeholders in the three workshops and on reflections about the experience of using the Artful Research workshop methodology.

The Artful Research workshops

1. Objectives and design considerations

Research agendas and research workshops are usually driven by academics because they have a conceptual grasp of – and objective distance from – the field of study, paired with the technical expertise to obtain and analyze the necessary data. They then present their results to the academic community and make them available also to other readers or listeners, who can use the findings as they see fit. We decided to break with this tradition when undertaking to specify where and how to look for the kinds of values that artistic interventions are adding in organizations. Theory-building is still in its infancy in this complex and diverse field, so it does not yet offer a sufficiently clear guide for which effects to look for, and too little empirical work has been conducted to warrant the extension and replication of instruments used so far.

In order to sort through the mass of aspirations and focus on the realistic potential value of artistic interventions as a basis for formulating the future research framework, academics need the experience-based insights of practitioners. One option would be for a researcher to travel around and collect such insights in individual interviews with a sample of stakeholders, and then step back to analyze and compare the results across stakeholder groups. We chose instead to invite an

international mix of stakeholders (artists, members of intermediary organizations, people from companies, consultants) and researchers to a series of three workshops. It was not only a faster and more efficient way of collecting data than conducting individual interviews around Europe would have been. More importantly, workshops offered the opportunity for a collective process of sharing and making sense of data from multiple perspectives. The joint exploration of similarities and differences in experience and interpretation promised to reveal areas of agreement on the values that artistic interventions can add in organizations, as well as unclear or contentious issues about the processes of generating and evaluating them.

The design of the workshops entailed several considerations. How to tap into experience rather than repeating hopes and claims? How to elicit tacit knowledge that the stakeholders had developed over years? How to maximize learning among participants from different worlds (arts, business, research)? How to connect the spirit of the process to the nature of artistic interventions? To address these considerations, we chose “artful” ways of exploring and developing ideas together that could make the workshop process interactive, creative, and question-generating. Instead of structuring the day around prepared presentations as is customary in research workshops, we alternated between

- 1) Group work to explore stories from experience: recounting, listening to, and probing into stakeholder stories about values generated through artistic interventions; and
- 2) Distilling in plenary: conceptualizing and drawing conclusions for the research agenda and the appropriate research methods.

Anthropologists have long used stories as a vehicle for understanding the cultures they studied; other social scientists have also discovered stories for research in organizations (Abma 2003; Gabriel 1998; Orr 1993, Lave and Wenger 1991). **Storytelling** is a rich resource for research because it connects information about who, what, when, where, how and why (i.e., relational, declarative, conditional, axiomatic, and propositional knowledge). It provides information about the context, the actors involved, and the interactions, motivation, perceptions, emotions, and reasoning that the storyteller believes are connected with a particular outcome. Probing into stories reveals underlying logics and tacit knowledge the teller has

internalized without being aware of it any more. Listening to stories is an engaging way to learn, so in a workshop context it is likely to maintain interest and energy. Sharing stories in a research workshop allows participants to appreciate what is unique in a particular situation and to identify elements of commonality across situations (Abma 2003).

Another artful aspect we designed into the research workshops was **visualization**. For the group work we provided materials such as oil pastels, tubes of paint, plasticine, and large sheets of paper for participants to capture their thoughts and feelings while listening to the stories, rather than using individual notepads or computers. Our earlier experiments with such media had persuaded us of their potential for enriching the communication by engaging multiple senses, focusing attention, and generating visual outputs from the session (Berthoin Antal and Friedman 2009). We also worked with the visualization technique of human sculptures (tableaus) to express the messages that emerged for the participants in the group work. During plenary discussions the visual products generated in the small group sessions were exhibited and (metaplan) cards were used to distil key points into words and to identify clusters of thoughts on large pin boards. Flip charts also served to visualize issues raised in the plenary discussions, using the wording of the stakeholders and ensuring that differences of opinion were documented.

2. Approaching the question from multiple angles

We decided to take an iterative approach that would allow us to address the topic of where and how to look for the values that artistic interventions can add in organizations from different angles. So, instead of holding a single event, we invited different constellations of stakeholders to three Artful Research workshops that we designed as complementary processes. The participants came from the worlds of business, the arts, intermediary organizations, and research (see appendix for list of all the participants).

- The first workshop was devoted to exploring the experiences and tacit knowledge about long-term artistic interventions organized with the intermediary organizations TILLT in Sweden and Disonancias in Spain (September 23, 2009;

14 participants).

- The second workshop also focused on long-term artistic interventions but with a much broader range of institutional arrangements. In addition to TILLT and Disonancias, participants brought in experiences from projects with other intermediary organizations (Arts Council, UK; Zürich University of the Arts), as well as the experiences of artists and managers in France and Germany who engage in artistic interventions without the support of intermediary organizations (September 24, 2009; 22 participants).
- The third workshop focused on short-term artistic interventions with an almost entirely new group of participants, including an organization that prepares artists to work in companies but does not provide intermediary support to the process (Artlab, Denmark), and consultants from Germany and the UK who work with artists in organizational and management development projects (September 25, 2009; 17 participants).

By conducting three separate workshops with changing constellations of participants and complementary content focus, we sought to maximize the range of experiences and perspectives to explore, while keeping the group size each day to a level that permitted people to get a feeling for each other and have the time to explain and to listen. Most of the participants were invited for one event, some people participated in two, and just a few people participated in all three workshops. Two researchers with facilitation skills led the process throughout; they co-facilitated the plenary sessions and each led a working group; the second Artful Research workshop was the largest and required 3 parallel groups, so other researchers led them.

We formulated somewhat different tasks and questions in each of the Artful Research workshops in order to explore from multiple angles the issue of where and how to look for the values that artistic interventions can add in organizations.

- 1) The storytelling in the first event focused on “**stories of value.**” We formed two groups with a mix of stakeholders and asked the participants to share a story from personal experience about a long-term artistic intervention that they believed had added value. We listened for and inquired into the implicit criteria embedded in the stories by which the teller judged the artistic intervention to

have had valuable effects. We did not define the term “value” in advance because we wanted to use these stories to open the range of possible kinds of effects that the stakeholders perceived as valuable in practice. We also listened for the kinds of evidence or signals that the stakeholders mentioned as giving them the sense that value that had been added by the artistic intervention in the organization.

- 2) In the second event, we wanted to build on the data generated by the first workshop and make the connection between expected values-added and decision making about long-term artistic interventions. The participants met in 3 separate stakeholder groups (companies, intermediary organizations, artists; each group had a couple of researchers) to explore “**stories from the beginning**” and “**later stories**”. By collecting the stories from the three groups separately, we hoped to discover similarities and differences in stakeholder perspectives on the kinds of value that long-term artistic interventions can add in organizations. This time we suggested they use storytelling or try role playing to present a specific situation. The participants from companies first shared either what had persuaded them to bring in an artist for a long-term intervention or how they had persuaded other people in their organization to engage in it. The members from intermediary organizations described how they persuade potential clients to bring in an artist for a placement or residency. And the artists were asked to illustrate a negotiation situation at the beginning of a project in an organization in which they clarified expectations about the process and its possible outcomes. The second step in each of the three working groups was to collect stories about key moments during or after an artistic intervention that persuaded the stakeholders that the artistic intervention in the organization had indeed added some value.

The purpose of this combination of “stories from the beginning” and “later stories” was to elicit the kinds of value that stakeholders find persuasive in deciding to try engaging in an artistic intervention, and then to see whether they later find the same or other kinds of valuable effects in the organization. From our research on learning and change in organizations, we expected that stakeholders might discover unexpected effects during or after the process that they feel are as valuable or maybe even more valuable than the ones they had hoped for at the outset (Berthoin Antal 1992). Such findings will be helpful for

orienting research to the kinds of effects that are relevant for decision making.

- 3) In order to fill out our data collection on the kinds of value that artistic interventions have been seen to have in organizations the third Artful Research workshop was designed to generate insights from stakeholders working with short term artistic interventions. We wanted to see whether the participants would bring up significantly different points than in the two workshops focusing on long-term interventions. The perspective of an additional type of stakeholder, namely consultants, was added in this workshop because these activities are often embedded in management and organizational development projects conducted by consultants working independently or with business schools. The angle we took in this workshop to eliciting knowledge from experience observing the effects of artistic interventions was to ask about “**stories of success**” and “**stories of failures**”. We did not provide a definition of success, wanting instead to give the stakeholders space to express their own criteria, which we expected to be quite diverse. Describing an intervention a stakeholder considered successful brings to light the kinds of effects he or she values and the evidence that these effects have been observed in practice. The exploration of a contrasting example of an intervention that was not deemed successful is a complementary way of revealing the stakeholder’s criteria for value. Furthermore, by asking stakeholders to give an example of a failure we sought to take a first cut at addressing the possibility that interventions may fail to produce intended/desired outcomes, or produce effects that are seen as undesirable, negative, or destructive in some way.

We also asked the stakeholders in each the three Artful Research workshops about their **experiences with research in the past and their expectations from future research**. We wanted to find out which questions they believe are worth pursuing and which methods they have found helpful in generating knowledge that they believe is useful and reliable. Our sense was that the participants are unlikely to devote time and effort to research undertakings that they do not trust or see any value in.

3. Distilling meaning from stories

Whereas the approach to identifying effects that the stakeholders had experienced as valuable varied across the three Artful Research workshops, the process for “distilling the essence” of the stories was similar in all of them. Two steps were taken to elicit common elements and clarify differences from the stories in order to guide the direction of future research on the effects of artistic interventions in organizations.

The first step took place in each of the Artful Research workshops. After having spent several hours in working groups exploring the stories from experience, we asked the participants to review them synthetically and identify the kinds of value that emerged from the stories. In addition, we asked them to try to specify the kind of evidence they felt were indicators of the value having been added in the organization. The results from each working group were presented in plenary on flip charts and on cards that we pinned and clustered on large “metaplan” boards. The discussions during the distillation in the plenary were fruitful, revealing areas of agreement as well as some strong differences in views not only between but also within stakeholder groups.

The second step took place over the next month. We had made a conscious choice in inviting diverse stakeholders to the three Artful Research workshops at the outset of developing a research framework for identifying the ways in which artistic interventions in organizations can add value. That choice was to demystify the research process by opening the door early in the agenda-setting and design phase of research; to take the stakeholders’ forms of knowing as seriously as our academic knowing; and to experiment with different ways of collecting and making sense of data. However, there are limits to participative processes, and analysis requires more time and a certain reflective distance than are afforded in a workshop day. In order to have the opportunity to analyze the data afterwards, we asked the participants for permission to record the discussions throughout the three days, in the working groups and the plenary sessions, generating about 27 hours worth of audio material. Summaries of all the sessions were written as a basis for the analysis of themes, patterns, and differentiations. Some specific formulations were transcribed to illustrate key messages. These rich materials are resources worth drawing on more systematically in the coming months, but already now we can offer some useful

findings for framing research on the effects of artistic interventions in organizations.

Findings 1: Effects worth looking for

The stories told by the stakeholders during the three Artful Research workshops provide ample evidence of many kinds of value that they have seen artistic interventions generate in organizations. The impacts on individuals and interpersonal relations are the most evident and direct. The stories also contain some examples of changes in organizational culture and strategy as well as new ideas and products that the stakeholders believe are related to the interaction with the artist, but the causal links are usually indirect and many other factors are involved. Our sense from listening to the stakeholders talk and revisiting their words during the analysis on paper is that it is important first to take the messages from the stories at face value, then to look at the value that can be created in the connections between different kinds of effects.

1. Taking the findings at face value: appreciating the human side

First and foremost, the stories focus on people. All the stakeholders, using all the angles we offered during the Artful Research workshops, told stories in which some kind of value experienced by people in the organization was central. The way the stakeholders recounted their experiences suggests that they **value the changes they see in people in and of themselves, not simply as means to an end**. The artists, managers, employees, members of intermediary organizations, and consultants report feeling great satisfaction when people gain self-confidence, enjoy their work, and interact more freely and positively with one another.

The participants clearly enjoyed telling and listening to stories about how artistic interventions can make a difference to individuals by giving them opportunities to **experiment, develop new kinds of knowledge in new ways, nurture hidden skills, and discover an interest in cultural issues**. Sometimes an artistic

intervention gets people try out new things, things they never have thought of or even dared to do. As a result, they see themselves and are perceived by others not “just” as an employee but as a multifaceted person who is also, for example, a sculptor, a painter, or a composer. Similar findings are reported in other studies (see Arts&Business 2004, Barry and Meisiek 2004, Buswick et al. 2004) The significance attached to this kind of personal change was highlighted by a manager:

We have an employee who was always walking around like a shadow, just doing his work. But when he came in contact with the project he came to work an hour earlier, he was engaged and inspired and sending out much energy. He was suddenly interested in what he is doing.

This image of people no longer being shadows in the organization was picked up by other participants and referred to during the rest of the workshops.

The theme of **self-esteem** cropped up in numerous stories that illustrated how working with an artist can help people to discover new meaning in their working life, give them pride in the things they are doing and in themselves. Taking this personal development at face value can also lead to other forms of recognition, as one stakeholder proudly reported.

A Swedish commune brought in an artist for a project at a water purification plant. The work the employees are doing is very important for the commune but it actually stays invisible – no one knows about it. Beside the plant is a big wall and one of the first actions the employees undertook with the artist was painting the wall with monumental pictures with motives relating to the plant. The five workers preferred to stay in the auditorium during the presentation of the paintings, not feeling comfortable in the lime-light. But the artist’s words gave them pride in their work. With the project the workers could recognize the importance of their jobs. In fact, this even gave them the courage to ask for better working conditions and higher salaries. This demand was of course not an effect that anyone had expected from the intervention, but the management recognized the argument as worthy and agreed.

What struck us in the stories and the discussions around them was the intense feeling of satisfaction attached to the human effects of bringing arts and artists into

organizations. For some stakeholders this was at least part of the original intention of the intervention, for others it was a discovery during the intervention that gave them the feeling the project was worth the effort. It seems that once stakeholders have seen these kinds of effects in people, they feel something special has happened and seek to create new opportunities for it.

2. Value created by connections between effects

A second way of looking for the values that artistic interventions in organizations can generate, based on the data from the Artful Research workshops, is to explore connections between different kinds of effects mentioned in the stakeholders' stories. Our findings lead us to modify the model proposed by Schiuma (2009:9). At the core are the effects experienced by **individuals**. These are connected to effects on **interactions between people** in the organization and then to effects on **organizational strategy, performance and culture**. The organization is **embedded in a socio-economic and natural environment** that is affected by the organization's performance, and also affects the organization (e.g., resources, constraints, expectations). Deviating from Schiuma's model of nested circles, however, we explicitly recognize the fact that individuals are not just employees encircled by an organization; they are citizens who spend a considerable amount of time at work but who also have activities and relationships in the surrounding socio-economic and natural environment. The environment influences the organization in many ways, including through employees' perception of what is considered valuable, important or problematic in their environment. The focus of this report is on the impacts of artistic interventions in the organization, recognizing that they may eventually affect the environment through the decisions and behaviour of the organization and its employees. Figure 1 represents the organization in its environment; it shows the centrality of the individual, as a member of society and of the organization, for generating the different kinds of value that artistic interventions can add in organizations; and it illustrates the areas in which to look for the value creation in the organization.

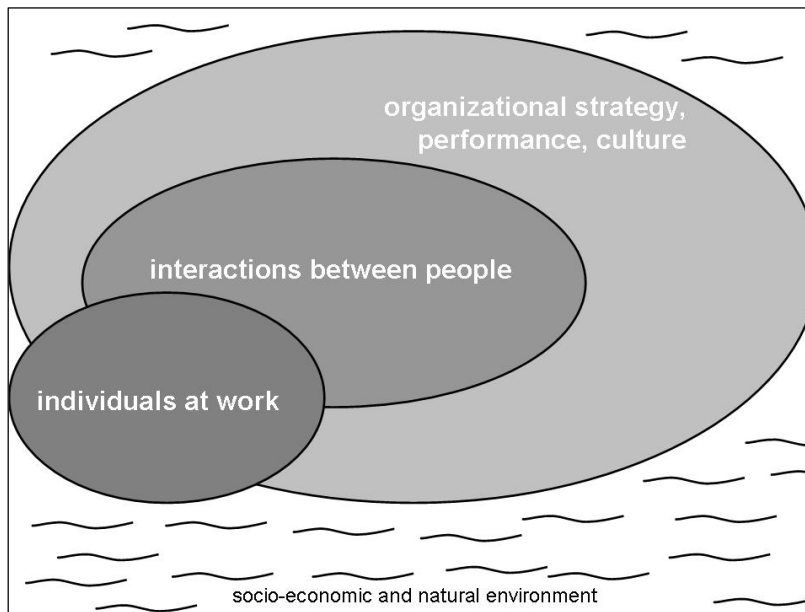


Figure 1: Where artistic interventions add value in organizations

Values emanating from the core: seeing and thinking differently at work

Stories in the Artful Research Workshops often showed that in the course of artistic interventions employees discover **new ways of experiencing their work and their working environment**. Two examples serve to highlight the power of engaging in activities that draw on multiple senses and are completely foreign to the daily work.

A composer was placed in a public maintenance organization to feed in new perspectives from an artistic point of view. So he started to talk to employees and identified a need for workshops dealing with creativity and problem solving competences. He also recorded the sounds of the working environment and composed a piece of music to be played with the hammers some of the workers used. At first employees perceived it only as noise but gradually they discovered a dimension of their work that they had not seen value in previously. It became a street performance. The project and the media attention for it helped the employees to define their work differently, as well as increasing their self-esteem.

At a production plant in Sweden the employees, encouraged by the artist who was working with them, organized a writing competition and the resulting submissions showed that some employees invested a lot of time in writing a story or a poem. They also walked around the factory to take photos of the co-workers, and the stakeholder explained the significance of this choice of motifs:

they had seen a series of earlier photographs representing work in which only the equipment had been featured. The photographs were exhibited and many are still on display in a meeting room in the company. Some people recorded the sounds of the machines and produced an audio tape with it. The stakeholder reporting this story was struck by how this project triggered reflections among the employees about the working processes and their working environment.

As discussed in chapter 3, similar effects are reported in the literature. Arts&Business (2004), Buswick et al. (2004) as well as Schiuma (2009) highlight the potential of arts to provoke new thinking, engage people into reflection, and to develop new knowledge about job and organizational issues. Employees find themselves thinking about their work, they become inspired to try different ways of working and achieving their goals. The arts are seen as trigger for individual and organizational learning. In some cases it is reported that employees develop a more positive and optimistic view on their working environment and feel more committed to their organization. Styhre and Eriksson (2008:53) noticed that in workplaces where the artists receive strong support the work climate could improve significantly.

Many artists start their interventions by posing lots of questions all around the organization, exploring what people do, why, how they think and feel at work. Several artists who participated in the Artful Research workshops described their process as research. The questioning process stirs things up, makes employees aware of features of their work and environment which they usually do not pay attention to. And it is a way of role-modelling the value of **asking questions**. A participant explained:

“Artists are extreme users. And as extreme users of concepts, structures, materials, and whatever they ask always more and more. They are looking for changes and ask, ask, ask. For me this is the biggest impact they can have in any kind of organization and enterprise.”

Listening to this observation from experience, a stakeholder from a different organization commented:

“I call that the interest and the engagement in what I'm doing and why I'm doing it. Because this is the added value what we have seen in our projects. You won't just leave your brain at the gates of your company and just do what you have

been told. But you will also **think about and engage in what you are doing.**

You start to ask questions and to give suggestions.”

The participants saw such questioning as a basis for increased flexibility. When people become more aware of their environment and start to ask questions, they prepare themselves to break with routines and to seek changes. The need to keep asking questions was emphasized by a manager who showed how artists serve as role models employees learn from:

“For my company engagement and questioning is very welcomed and valued – but just in proper terms. [...] You can ask questions, but once you have passed a phase in the process you will not doubt it any more. The aim of the whole process is to end up with something. [...] What an artist can bring in is the ability to question all the process and all the phases of the process. [...] Artists can ask outdated, anachronistic questions – out of the time of the process. [...] We are usually just looking forward. An artist can see the whole thing and say: we are here because we made that step then.”

A word that came up very frequently in the discussions about the stories was “**fun.**” Participating in artistic interventions is often a way of discovering that learning at work can be fun. To be absolutely clear: this is not a matter of entertainment. All the participants in the Artful Research workshops emphasize that artistic interventions are not about entertaining employees. In fact, **experiencing learning as fun sometimes requires the artist to irritate, even to provoke people, and very often entails overcoming anxieties and resistance to trying out something unusual.** In the process, people develop a different mode of working and thinking, new skills, techniques, and methods. Having fun, people start to explore and to play around, which is unusual in most working environments, but a recognized source of innovation (Statler et al. 2009).

Possibly the most frequently mentioned effect associated with artists in the workplace in the stories we heard is the **energy** they release in individuals. Their fresh approach to a situation and their direct way of communicating awaken a new sense of possibilities and help people overcome the doubts and inertia that are engendered by established ways of seeing and doing things in their organization.

An employee reported having been very sceptical about engaging with an

artistic intervention. Many workers had heard strange rumours about the idea and wondered “Why do you pay money for an artist instead of investing in the personnel and safe jobs?” He actually fell asleep during the management’s official presentation of the project – until the artist addressed the group directly. Her energy was infectious and it persuaded him that it was worth getting involved. He not only became a member of the project group during the life-time of the project, he took responsibility for following up with an activity after the end of the artist’s placement. He said that participating in the project changed his aspirations for his future in the organization.

The kinds of effects that the stakeholders report having observed and valued in organizations relating to individuals at work are illustrated in Figure 2.

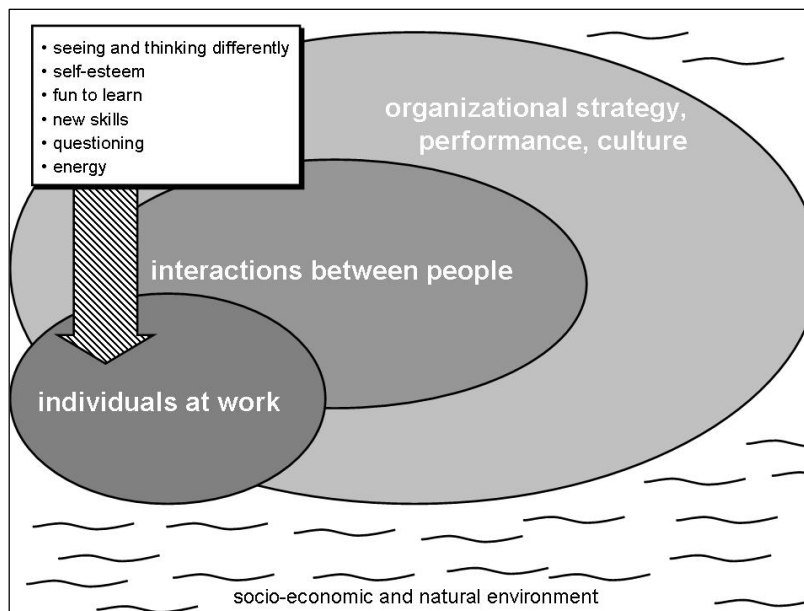


Figure 2: The added values for individuals at work

Values emanating from connecting people: communicating and collaborating

One of the frequently mentioned objectives companies have in bringing in artists for an intervention is to improve **communication between individuals, departments, and levels** in the organization. Accordingly, it is not surprising that stories in the Artful Research Workshops often described having achieved valuable improvements in this area. A manager described the problem they had diagnosed in his organization:

“Too much information was spread as rumours instead of clarifying information for the management and downwards the organization. [...] The whole effort we have done [during the placement] included an open communication between departments, shifts, and management levels. It was one of the goals to increase the information flow. [...] One part of the communication as a manager in there is to have done things together. And you stop talking behind each others back.”

A striking number of stories illustrated how artistic interventions helped connect people from different levels and functions. Several stakeholders described situations in which employees who did not know each other met in a seminar and worked together on a performance, a painting, a sculpture, or just experimenting with new materials. A participant described:

Every day between 10 and 15 employees from different disciplines but working in the same department used the same room for their breaks, but they sat in isolation. The artist came in and tried very hard to get them to communicate with one another, but they had nothing in common to talk about. One day the artist showed some abstract pictures that their working environment had inspired her to paint. People recognized several sites and started to get interested. Her next step was to give each person a map of the area with the mission to mark the routes they took during the day. The artist then asked them to paint pictures of their pathways and to express the emotions they experienced in several places. In a special session all of them met to talk about their paintings like art critics. Finally the participants rearranged the breakfast room and hung up six of the pictures. The art work showed them the way to communication and community.

The **creation of shared space and community** can be a valuable effect of an artistic intervention, in addition to the realization of its original objectives.

At a Spanish technological research centre, an artist in residence was engaged to work with scientists on new materials, models, and prototypes. The management had asked the artist to visualize the topic “sustainable urban environment”. During the project the artist organized numerous meetings and events. She used a mobile desk to move around with her working place, talked to many organization members, including the chef in the canteen. She also

invited family members to visit and to learn more about the work of their relatives. The artist brought people from different parts of the organization together and encouraged them to improve the organizational communication modes and to create new spaces for informal meetings. The employee observed that the working climate improved after this process.

Sharing and community are values that all the participants of the Artful Research workshops emphasized. They also talked about the value of **group identity** that can be built upon creative team-work. Very often the collaboration with an artist allows people to get to know each other better and more personally. It enhances the interest in the others and employees learn to respect their colleagues as well as their work. Just how “silly” the processes and how significant the results can be are illustrated in the following example:

On one site there were two factories with a history of distance, even animosity, despite the physical proximity and similarity in production processes. The employees in the steering committee for the artistic intervention organized a meeting that was attended by the heads of both factories, something that (surprisingly) had never happened before. Inspired by the artist, they organized events that brought together employees from both factories, including “silly games” with close physical contact. Men who for years had never looked at each other in the face nor shaken hands with one another found themselves literally cheek-to-cheek. These playful activities cracked the ice of the ages. After such interactions, the employees were able to meet and talk in a collegial manner. And when they needed to reschedule work in shifts, they were willing to move around between factories.

Artistic interventions not only **address conflicts** that exist in organizations, they sometimes also stir them up.

A stakeholder mentioned having to deal with negative responses from colleagues who did not understand why he was so interested in the artistic intervention. It took him away from them, and others had to take on some of his work. His direct boss recognized the problem and did some of the work himself, but that did not resolve the tensions with the colleagues.

An artist at one of the Artful Research workshops expressed responsibility for dealing with conflicts that might arise in the organization, explaining that “when you go and

question the things, maybe you make a conflict but you also propose something. Not only open the conflict". To the extent that conflicts are treated as opportunities for learning, they can have valuable effects. Dealing productively with conflicts can be very difficult, because not all artists feel that their responsibility includes this process, nor are they all skilled in it. Furthermore the risk appears to be high in organizations that conflicts are only perceived as problems to be avoided or patched over quickly. One of the stakeholders reported a very delicate situation:

Several artists were engaged to work with a municipal authority. An actor was asked to write a comedy related to the municipality's work. It was mainly meant for entertainment, but the artist discovered a problematic issue in the organization during his preparatory interviews for the project. He decided to write a play that would mirror the current situation in a humorous way. Taken by surprise, the mayor felt personally offended. As a result he cancelled the engagement. The intermediary organization took an alternative approach to addressing the problem by bringing in Forum Theatre, a form of acting that addresses an issue experienced by the audience and in which the audience is invited to engage. They can direct the play in a way they think it is closer to their own experiences and they can replace professional actors and play themselves. This gave the employees the opportunity to express their frustrations with the organization. The mayor, however, did not attend the new production, so it remains unclear what conclusions about community and communication the employees took from the experience.

See Figure 3 for an illustration of the values added in interactions between people, as part of the overall picture of effects.

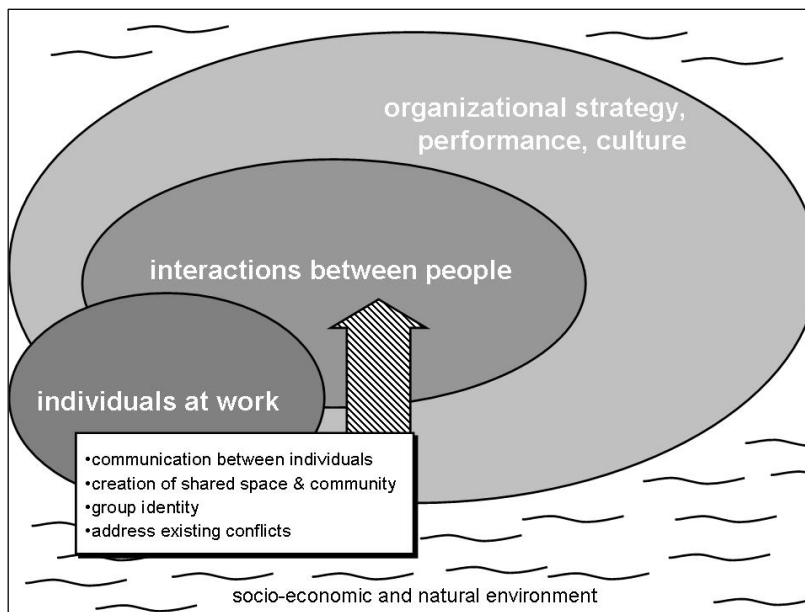


Figure 3: The added values in interactions between people

Reaching strategic values

Under the current pressures of global competition, managers are seeking ever better ways of achieving strategic goals such as rapid innovation and greater efficiency to strengthen their competitiveness. The next ring of the model encompasses effects that relate to strategic concerns. Adding values here depends on the presence of values identified in the core and first ring of the model.

When asked why they have engaged in artistic interventions, managers frequently mention the pressure for change and the need for supporting processes of organizational learning and innovation. Artists who enter into organizations for short or long term interventions are often characterized as catalysts for change, and in one of the Artful Research workshops a participant said “an artist can be a catalyst who starts new processes and keeps them running.” In some cases the management want an artist to help activate new **change processes**, and in others the ongoing change has exposed the need for better ways of handling it.

At one of the Artful Research Workshops, a dancer and choreographer explained how she helped employees to navigate better through rapid changes. She was placed in a division at a big medical research company that had been undergoing numerous reorganization processes affecting working groups,

departments, and context of work. The employees were highly skilled and very self-motivated persons, but the artist observed that “they really felt lost and frustrated. And I noticed they were losing their motivation.” The artist offered workshops where she used dance improvisation techniques which focus the individual on relating to the immediate present. The employees discovered new ways of seeing and responding to the current situation, so they learned that they could actually welcome change instead of feeling paralysed by it.

The end of this story is a mixed message. The economic pressures on the company led to the decision to relocate the function abroad shortly thereafter. The senior manager believes that the change in people’s mindset still stays wherever they are in the organization, but it is unclear whether the employees share this view or whether the experience has left them demotivated and possibly even cynical about their organization.

Given all the change that organizations are undergoing that employees at all levels are expected to adapt to and identify with, it is not surprising that several stories from artists related to processes of **revitalizing organizational culture and values**.

A consultant described a project in a big sporting goods company into which she brought an artistic intervention because managers wanted to reflect on the function of management in a matrix. She chose a conductor to talk about orchestrating. For the corporate people it was a completely new way of thinking about their role. They were interested in finding out who has the power in an orchestra – the conductor or the musicians? The concept of conducting was a challenging and fruitful new perspective for the managers and they asked the musician to return and tell more about it. The intervention has had an impact on the way people think and talk about leadership; they now use the metaphor of “orchestrating a matrix” instead of “managing”. The adoption of new terms in a language can be an indicator of cultural change. Studies would have to follow up to see whether this is just a new label or whether it really describes a new style of leadership in the corporate culture.

An artist described an intervention he had run in the German subsidiary of a multinational pharmaceutical company, a short-term project whose effect stretched over a long period of time. At a big event with 500 employees he

asked each one of them to emboss a symbol representing the value they associated with their work into metal. The artist specifically chose valuable metal to reflect the value the employees represent for the organization. He designed a huge tree shaped sculpture onto which all the pieces were then attached, thereby creating a collective sculpture of the employees' values. The artist suggested putting the tree into the new headquarters building which was being designed by a famous architect. Unfortunately, it did not fit the design, so the tree was put in storage. The artist recounted proudly that employees kept asking management to find a solution for the values tree. Finally, the artist received an invitation to the opening event and discovered that the employees had succeeded in a surprising way. They had not simply put up the original sculpture that the artist had conceived for the interior courtyard, but had in fact redesigned the tree so that it could be placed outside rather than inside the building. It had truly become "their tree".

Another German artist created a sculpture out of wood into which managers carved a value relating to their work. The idea started in the context of a management development program that was run for the company by a business school, and he had a slot for the artistic intervention. In the meantime, the engraving in the values sculpture has become a rite of passage for all new managers, whether recruited from outside the organization or promoted from within. Managers speak of "leaving their mark" on it. So here, too, something that started as a short intervention has extended its influence over time.

Discussions about these examples during the Artful Research workshops revealed that **stakeholders assess the value of an intervention differently**. For example, the effects of the last project are perceived as positive and sustainable in the company, but the artist is ambivalent. He feels that the process could become more meaningful if he had more time to work with and challenge the managers.

Innovation is currently one of the most frequently mentioned strategic goals in business and the topic is associated in people's minds with artists. Our sample contained a few examples of companies specifically seeking this effect and seeing it realized. It is noteworthy that the affinity to newness shared by artists and

researchers was perceived by some stakeholders to be a contributing factor to the success of the interaction.

An artist at one of the Artful Research workshop described a very stimulating and rewarding placement she had experienced in a laboratory in the UK. She was pleasantly surprised when she arrived and discovered that her assumption that such a placement would be used for PR purposes was wrong. The company wanted her to experiment with ideas and products because they were as interested as she was in virtual communities and how they use technology for getting connected. The collaboration was a time of pushing each other further, the film-maker was inspired by the work of the laboratory, and the engineers could see potential uses for their technologies outside the original purpose. The artist opened new perspectives on mobile video and gave inspiration for more projects.

The connection between an artistic intervention and innovation is rarely as obvious and direct as in the previous example. Stakeholders at the Artful Research workshops saw artistic interventions rather as a means of **capacity-building for innovation**. A manager explained that his experiences made him feel confident that an organization can multiply the possibilities that are already at the place “simply” by improving the working environment and the communication inside the organization and by introducing more flexibility. He pointed out that employees often have good ideas but no outlet for them. Sometimes it just needs an artful approach to release them. An artist can help to shift the attention and to create the context for innovation.

Engaging with artists can also have an effect on the **strategic thinking** of top management. Most of the organizations in our workshops defined an objective for bringing in an artistic intervention, often in connection with a problem to address, but in one case the decision grew out of curiosity.

A senior manager with strong interest in contemporary art had bringing artists into his company could lead to valuable exchanges about ways of seeing and understanding things in the organization and about society. He persuaded top management to try the idea and designed a program in which there would be four residencies over two years, arguing that by bringing in different artists people would have to keep rediscovering and recreating the interaction, rather than getting used to a particular model. The conversations with the artists have

contributed to the formulation of the new strategic strap-line, “the art of mobilization”, for the European group that the company is establishing in 2010.

Some stories showed how **difficult it can be sometimes to assess whether an artistic intervention has had a valuable effect, no effect, or possibly a negative effect on the strategic capacity of the organization**. A former consultant shared a story about an attempt to prepare a company for a future change.

His consulting firm had been engaged to help open the company for future issues of strategic importance. The consultants decided to get the message of change across in an unusual, palpable manner. They recruited an actor to be a guest speaker at the company gala dinner, giving him an official sounding title. The actor started his speech very formally and seriously, as befits an official expert, but he gradually morphed into an animal, illustrating his topic of change. Managers were shocked and many left the room demonstratively before he had finished his speech. The consultants did not succeed in getting the participants to reflect on their response to the unusual situation and what it implied for their ability to address new issues in the company. Nevertheless the consultant thinks it was a radical but successful intervention because the significant event mirrored the strategic problem of the organization. The issue was indeed addressed a little while later, and maybe the intervention helped make the issue discussable, but from the client’s point of view the intervention was a failure.

By contrast, success sometimes reveals itself in surprising and clear ways.

A manager recounted the feedback from auditors who had been struck by a significant change in the behaviour of employees in a factory. In earlier years it had been very difficult to obtain information about processes in the organization, but in the period after the artistic intervention the auditors experienced such willingness to talk about their work that they mentioned it in their written report. The manager attributes this change to the fact that employees learned more about the organization and their role in it as well as to the communication experience of the artistic intervention. The effect on the quality of information in the auditor’s report was a welcome surprise.

Participants at the Artful Research workshops described discovering unexpected

benefits to the organization of hosting artists, namely **networking** and increased **visibility**. There were examples of how artists had connected the company with other stakeholders when a project opened the field for new distributors and new clients, or permitting new functions for the products of the company to be seen. Managers from organizations working with intermediaries mentioned having developed useful relationships at events organized by the intermediaries. In companies that exhibited the artwork produced during a residency the managers reported great interest on the part of clients to see the work and increased visibility in the press, which in turn **generated interest from potential clients and employees**.

The values that the stakeholders reported having seen affecting organizational strategy, performance and culture are illustrated in Figure 4.

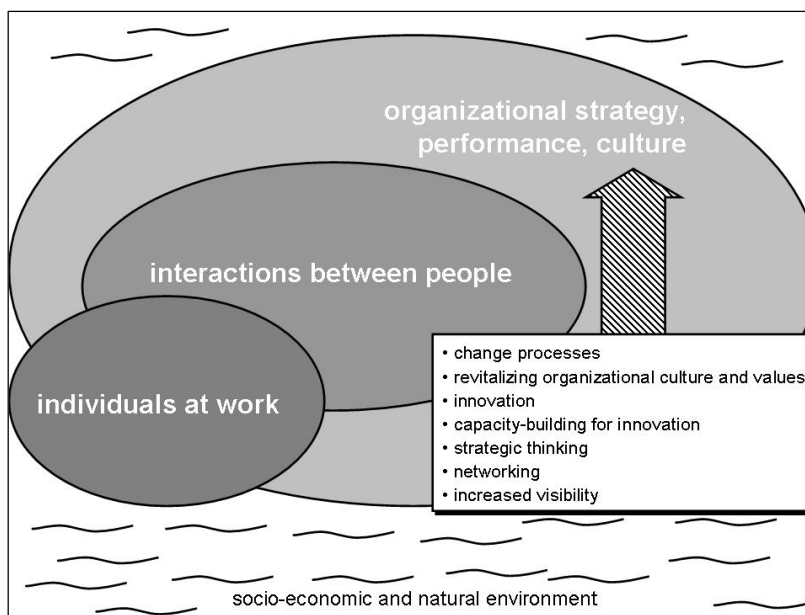


Figure 4: Values added for organizational strategy, performance and culture

Given the exploratory, unpredictable nature of art, however, artistic interventions cannot be pinned down to pre-defined objectives so the **distinction between “effects” and “side-effects” may be misleading**. A participant from an intermediary organization described a project that had such significant “side-effects” that the term is inappropriate.

Artists engaged in a company project with the objective of raising awareness in

society regarding the jobs disabled people perform as workers. The artists created an internet blog (<http://estolohehechoyo.wordpress.com/>) together with the workers, where the participants decided themselves about contents and aesthetics. The aim was reaching public interest but the project was also a strong tool for the empowerment of a marginalized social group. It raised the self-esteem of the company's employees and gave them pride in their work.

This example draws together the elements of the model in a powerful way. It illustrates the significance of human values in artistic interventions, and shows how they can relate to generating organizational value and value for society (see Figure 5).

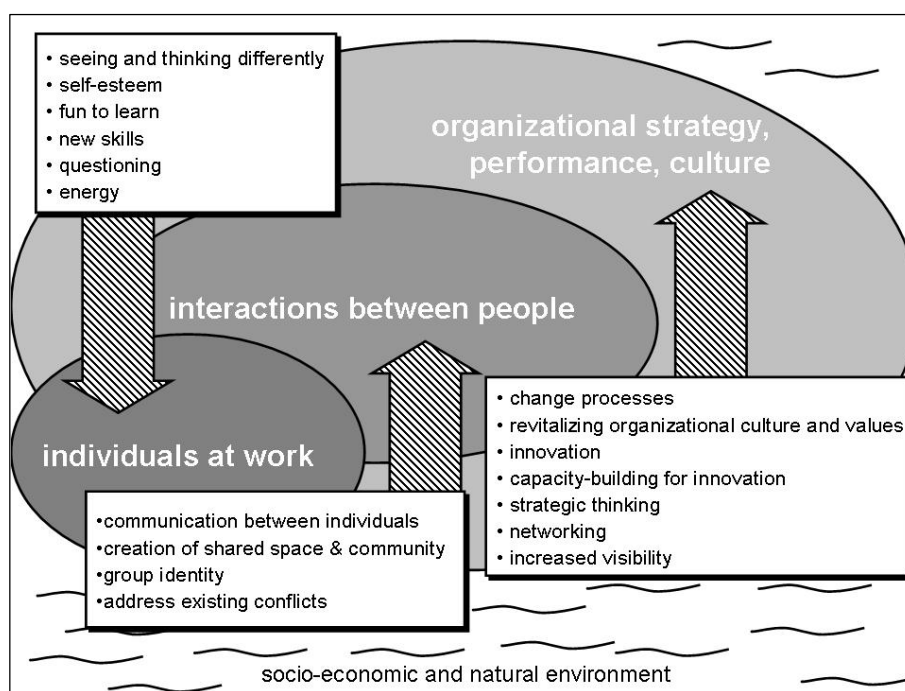


Figure 5: Where to look for the values that artistic interventions can add in organizations

Having provided an overview of **where** research should look for the value that artistic interventions can add, we turn now to what we learned from the Artful Research workshops about **what** to look for, and **how** to look for it.

Findings 2: Research interests and processes

The Artful Research Workshops provided two ways of learning from stakeholders

about research needs. One way is direct: We asked the participants which issues they feel need to be addressed by research and which kinds of research methods they had experienced as helpful--or less helpful. The result of this direct approach is paradoxical. On the one hand, stakeholders have numerous issues and questions for research, but on the other they have reservations about research processes. The second way is reflective: We designed the Artful Research workshops as experiments in order to draw some lessons from the experience in developing the research framework for future work.

1. Learning from stakeholder experiences with research methods

As already evident from the review of the state of the art of research on the effects of artistic interventions (chapter 2), little evaluation research has been conducted to date. So the stakeholders have little experience bringing in researchers to collect and analyse data systematically on the impacts of these activities (although they may have experience with researchers in other areas). TILLT is exceptional in its longstanding commitment to have researchers track the impacts of placements in many organizations over time (Lindqvist 2005, Styhre and Eriksson 2008, Eriksson 2009). Although many companies do report on their activities, very few undertake systematic internal evaluations of their projects. Some organizations have evaluation forms for their employees to fill out after workshops or other learning events, but the questionnaires are about immediate satisfaction with the experience rather than about the effects on thinking and behaviour afterwards.

The scarcity of research so far appears to be due to a combination of limited financial and human resources to invest into research and concerns about research methods. A manager in a company that has run several artistic interventions and who has experience with research on organizational processes pointed out that traditional surveys very often do not fit the needs of a companies. He has seen that results depend very much on how the researchers put the questions and that international surveys also entail problems of translation, making it difficult to compare the results of different countries. He has found that surveys can also cause confusion among the respondents, because they often find it difficult to understand what is meant by the

written questions. He feels that interviews avoid these difficulties. He also pointed out that people in organizations are not particularly interested in investing time in research if they and their organizations are not going to benefit from the results. An artist explained that although he is curious, he has been reluctant to bring researchers in to study his projects because he senses that there is something special in the process and experience of artistic interventions that needs to be treated sensitively and he is unsure whether established methods are appropriate. Other managers who have been working with artistic interventions also say that the process cannot be studied in the same way that other processes in organizations are evaluated. In the absence of scientific methods that they feel comfortable with and confident in, the stakeholders have trusted their intuition.

The fact that so many stakeholders invested their time and energy to come to Berlin for the Artful Research workshops signals that they are interested in finding ways to get research conducted. The discussion showed the importance of developing a mix of research methods and experimenting with approaches. The TILLT Europe project therefore provides a timely platform for them to help shape a research framework on the impacts of artistic interventions that they could later engage in.

2. What stakeholders would like to know

The metaphor of opening the floodgates is an apt image to describe what happened when we asked the participants at the Artful Research workshops which questions or issues research should address. The contrast between the concerned tenor of the discussion about research methods and the energetic firing of suggestions for the facilitators to write onto the flip chart was quite striking. **There is a veritable hunger for research in this field. The stakeholder groups have quite different expectations from research, relating to their roles and interests in artistic interventions in organizations:**

- The members of **intermediary organizations** would like to have evidence of impacts in organizations that they can use to persuade decision makers in the corporate world and the policy world of the value of such activities. They would also like to have indicators that help to translate the actual needs in

organizations into suitable artistic interventions. They hope that research can show which effects artistic interventions have in which areas on working life and how to use that knowledge to structure things for the corporate world. In addition, they are keen to assess their own work. As one of them asked: “How can I do more effective work; have more persuasive arguments when I am selling; and grow the collective human consciousness?” Intermediaries also want to know what the most important barriers in organizations are to realize the potential of an artful approach. And what are the best methods for extracting, anchoring, and developing learning? Other important issues they would like to see research address are the potential of artistic interventions to develop the ability to cope with change and uncertainty, or to generate innovative thinking.

- There is more diversity of research interests among **artists**, which is not surprising because the reasons artists choose to engage in artistic interventions differ greatly (Berthoin Antal 2008). At the Artful Research workshops some expressed an interest in research that would give them a better sense for what can be improved in their interventions, what might be dangerous, and what is well done. Some artists ask which competences they need to be able to work on complex issues of organizations and hope for some orientation in future projects. Or they want to gain insights into which aspects of their practice (e.g., reflection or entertainment) have which kinds of impacts. Other artists are much more interested in the aesthetic aspects of their work in organizations. One participant suggested that research could be the midwife of the artist's knowledge, helping to reveal the artistic ways of knowing in the organizational contexts.
- Artistic interventions are used in many different kinds of organizations, and internally they are not monolithic, so the interests that members of organizations bring to research agendas are likely to be diverse. **Managers** want to know more about the contributions artistic interventions make in processes of organizational change and change of employees' attitudes in terms of teamwork, communication, and improvement of products and service. What competences should organizations have to bring in artistic interventions? For which reasons does it make sense to bring in artists? In what ways do artistic interventions differ from non-artistic interventions. Does the type of intervention

influence the impact? **Employees** are likely to have quite different questions than management, but they have not yet had much of a chance to formulate their needs.

- **Consultants** add a wide span of questions from the hard-nosed: “can research provide proof of return on investment?” to the aspirational: “can research expand the spectrum of possibilities?” They would like to know about effects in specific organizational settings, for example on team-performance, and in corporate creative processes, such as marketing or research & development. Which kinds of arts can have which impacts? How do artistic interventions spur organizational learning and what are their shadow-sides? How do artistic interventions increase or help balance the dilemmas organizations face?
- The **researchers** who participated in the Artful Research workshops posed questions fuelled by a combination of curiosity and scepticism. The need for descriptive research is evident in such broad questions as “what have the participants learned?”, “is there evidence of organizational learning?” and “do interventions have effects reaching beyond the organization?” They would like to see research clarify what artistic interventions can do, where the limits are, and what are the conditions under which an intervention is likely to “succeed or to fail” in the judgement of the diverse stakeholders. In what ways do artistic interventions differ from non-artistic interventions? Reflective questions also emerged, such as “Do artistic interventions affect people’s (artists, employees, managers...) perception of themselves, their work and their context? If so, how?” Researchers are interested in the methodological challenges that the complex phenomenon poses. For example, how can causality and sustainability of effects be ascertained? Some researchers feel the need to generate a common terminology for the field, while others believe that stakeholders will continue to use different terms and premises drawn from their contexts.

The discussions in the Artful Research workshops about the kinds of questions stakeholders are interested in asking of research was sometimes heated. **When participants sensed that their interests would not be included, they indicated a reluctance to invest the time and effort** in contributing to the process of generating knowledge. As a manager said, “In our point of view one thing is if we will put resources and manpower to do research for the European Commission to get a

feedback that, well, we have made the right decisions to make this project, it's not so interesting for us. It will not help us to answer our questions". We conclude from the Artful Research Workshops that **research on the impacts of artistic interventions depends on the willingness of stakeholders to share their knowledge; this willingness, in turn, depends on recognizing and addressing their different interests. Stakeholders therefore need to be involved in formulating the research questions so that they see a value in participating.** Finding common ground is both necessary and possible. In this spirit, the manager cited above suggested working out together how "the company can make together, for example, with TILLT a report that will help both us and the European Commission". Another way of ensuring that the stakeholders benefit from the research emerged from the discussions in the Artful Research workshops, namely to conduct **research which accompanies the artistic intervention** rather than focusing on reporting on results at the end. By generating insights about the effects of an intervention in an organization during a project, research can help all the stakeholders to learn from the experience and to improve the process while it is going on.

3. Reflections on the experimental artful research methodology

The Artful Research workshops were an opportunity to experiment with participative research. The series of three events was designed to explore ways of bringing together diverse stakeholders involved in artistic interventions in organizations, and stimulating them to share their explicit as well as tacit knowledge, and discussing their experiences from multiple perspectives. We then followed up on the workshops with a process of reflection: the facilitators developed their thoughts in writing and shared them by email with the participants, inviting them to comment. Several lessons emerge for future research in terms of content and process.

- The **specification of indicators** for effects that the stakeholders experienced proved to be especially difficult. The participants did not refer to the typical indicators of organizational performance but often to small signals they notice, speaking of intuition and sensing. Formulating indicators in research terms that all the stakeholders recognize as valid and useful is the area that will require most work in future.

- The experience of the Artful Research workshops indicates the primary importance of **starting by taking each stakeholder perspective seriously** and recognizing the value of different ways of knowing. Differences in stakeholder backgrounds (e.g., professional, national, organizational) are often reflected in language, with words resonating differently from one cultural context to another. As in other forms of intercultural communication, language differences can both be a source of misunderstanding and irritation, and a trigger to seek clarification instead of assuming shared meaning (Adler 2002).
- **Storytelling in small groups** is an effective and enjoyable way of sharing knowledge from experience. The time available in the Artful Research workshops was too limited to allow deep analysis, but the experiments showed that the method is a useful research tool for focusing on real (rather than hoped-for) situations, putting the actions, thoughts and feelings of the people involved into context, and making them available for joint exploration from different perspectives.
- The phase of probing into stories to understand their meaning can be quite challenging. The participants may question each others' assumptions, intentions, and interpretations, leading to heated discussions, for which **facilitation is needed**.
- Feedback from participants indicates that experimenting with **artful ways of capturing thoughts and feelings** while listening (e.g., with paints, plasticine and pastels) is stimulating; it helps to engage multiple senses in the sense-making process.
- The **process of drawing out the essence** from the storytelling into a form of knowledge with which the participants can still identify and which non-participants can understand and use requires further development. The rapid transition from storytelling to formulating concepts pinned on boards generated interesting and useful material for the researchers, but it was experienced as less satisfying for other participants. The experiment on the third day with an interim step of creating human sculptures to summarize key messages in a dynamic fashion opens the door to expanding the range of methods available in the research process.
- If the participants (the stakeholders in the intervention and the researchers) are

serious about learning together from their very different perspectives and feelings from experience, they need to **invest time to listen to each other, probe for evidence, and explore alternative interpretations. Reflection also requires some time to elapse, so that ideas can sink in and be reconsidered.** So the process requires time together and apart, with time in between (Berthoin Antal 2006). In the case of this series of three Artful Research workshops, each day was enough to generate a lot of data and to develop a preliminary sense of shared understanding, but the process could not stop there. The research team needed time to review the material afterwards and start writing about it. The feedback loop from the participants who responded to the facilitators' emails with very interesting comments and suggestions showed how valuable it is to keep the interaction with stakeholders going also in this phase of the research process.

In summary, the substance and method of the Artful Research workshops were rewarding. As one of the participants later commented, they were not only an artful, but also a "humanful" approach to working and learning together. The framework for research that we propose in the next chapter builds on the findings and the spirit of these first three experimental Artful Research workshops.

Chapter 4

A Research Framework for Evaluating Effects of Artistic Interventions in Organizations

The review of the state of the art of research on the effects of artistic interventions in organizations (chapter 2) and the Artful Research workshops held at WZB in September 2009 (chapter 3) revealed a number of formidable, but potentially fruitful, challenges to research-evaluation of this field of practice. The very newness of the field means that there are few, if any, existing theories or empirical studies that can provide conceptual, methodological frameworks, and/or standards as a basis for the design of evaluation research. Furthermore, the uniqueness, complexity, and diversity of artistic interventions mean that single, off-the-shelf methods of research-evaluation are unlikely to provide decision-makers and participants the information they need.

These challenges are formidable because researchers-evaluators must not only develop an innovative and customized “toolkit” with appropriate indicators for studying these interventions, they have to do so in the very process of conducting their research. These challenges, however, are also potentially fruitful, because research-evaluation of artistic interventions can make a valuable contribution both to the practice of artistic interventions themselves and to the development of methods for knowledge production in this emerging field. **We therefore recommend working with a mix of research methods to adequately capture the richness and complexity of artistic interventions in ways that will support learning by stakeholders (e.g., employees, managers, artists, intermediary organizations, and consultants) during and after the project, as well as provide insights and conclusions for policy making and theory building.**

In this chapter we first discuss the implications of the two primary challenges facing the field at this point in its development: the lack of theory, and the multiplicity of stakeholders. With these challenges in mind, we go on to describe the mix of approaches we propose, namely action evaluation research flanked by comparative case studies and, later, surveys. We then draw on the review of the state of the art

(chapter 2) and the Artful Research workshop findings (chapter 3) to suggest the areas in which research on the effects artistic interventions should focus and how to develop indicators for them. We also discuss issues that arise in the research and the skills that the participants will develop in the process.

The challenges facing research-evaluation of artistic interventions in organizations

1. Lack of theory and conceptual frameworks

Because artistic interventions in organizations is a very new field of practice, there is relatively little theory and only a handful of empirical studies upon which to base a strategy for researching and evaluating these kinds of programs. The review of the state of the art (see chapter 2) revealed that valuable groundwork has been laid by exploratory descriptive studies to document the wide range of types of interventions (e.g., Darsø 2004), by experimental work with storytelling as an artful organizational research form (e.g., Abma 2003, Gabriel 1998), and by surveys in and across organizations (Styhre and Eriksson 2008, Eriksson 2009). The small but growing body of literature has done more to describe the potential contribution of artistic interventions to a wide variety of outcomes for organizations than to evaluate its actual effects (see also Hutter 2007). Much of this literature makes highly compelling arguments based largely on personal experience and anecdotal evidence rather than the systematic study and critical review of actual interventions and their impacts.

The most significant challenge for evaluation research is that the field lacks a strong theoretical foundation upon which to ground understanding about the effects of artistic interventions in organizations and how to specify appropriate indicators for them. It can draw on related fields of such as action science and organizational learning, but new ground needs to be broken to understand and analyse the processes and effects of artistic interventions in organizations. **Therefore, one of the goals of research at this early stage in the life of the field must be the building of practical “program theories” that can generate actionable knowledge for evaluating and improving artistic interventions in organizations** (Bickman 2000, Chen 1990, Friedman 2001b, Friedman & Rogers 2008, Lipsey and Pollard 1989,

Patton 1997, Rogers et al. 2000, Weiss 1997).

Program theory evaluation³ has gained wide acceptance as a means of understanding how programs (and projects) work and for assessing their effectiveness. It is based on the proposition that there are tacit “theories of action” embedded within program planning and practices (Argyris and Schön 1978, Chen 1990). **A first task of research is to reveal the theories of action on which the stakeholders are operating.** The idea of theories of action emerged from inquiry into professional practice in fields involving high degrees of uncertainty and, thus, requiring considerable individual and organizational learning (Argyris and Schön 1974, 1978, 1996; Argyris et al. 1985; Friedman 2001a; Senge 1990).

Theories of action are “if...then” propositions which specify the causal links that stakeholders conceive of, often implicitly, between program ends and means as well as the conditions under which these ends are to be achieved. **Program theories of action serve**

- **explanatory functions (i.e., explaining events or behaviour),**
- **predictive functions (i.e., inferring future events or outcomes), and**
- **normative/control functions (i.e., identifying actions which should be taken so that outcomes can be made to occur).**

Much of the current interest in program theory evaluation focuses on developing a model of the logic implicit in the design of a given program or project. It is an inductive research approach whose purpose is to explain how inputs (i.e., resources) and activities are intended to create the desired outcomes in the context at hand (e.g., McLaughlin and Jordan 1999). In theory of action terms, models need to specify program or project goals, action strategies, values, assumptions, and standards for performance as well as the causal links between these components (Argyris and Schön 1978:14-15).

Program theories of action provide a useful framework for both summative and

³ Program theory evaluation has appeared in the literature under a variety of titles: “theory-driven evaluation” (e.g., Chen 1990), “theory-based evaluation” (e.g., Weiss 1997), and “program theory evaluation” (e.g., Rogers et al. 2000).

formative evaluation of programs. They serve summative evaluation by identifying measurable short- and long-term outcomes for determining program performance (e.g., Funnell 2000). However, the validity of these measures for the summative evaluation of artistic interventions in organizations depends upon the soundness and validity of the program theories from which they are derived.

The theoretical underpinnings for this approach come from action science, which makes an important distinction between “espoused theory,” what people intend or believe they do, and “theory-in-use,” what can be inferred from people’s actual behaviour, and notes that there is often a gap between the two (Argyris and Schön 1974:6,7; see also Chen 1990:53). Action evaluation research explores both kinds of theory in a given situation, so as to help the stakeholders identify and close gaps between them and generate a stronger theory to guide and analyse future action. Scholars of organizational learning also draw on these concepts from action science in order to analyse processes leading to new ways of thinking and behaving in and between organizations.

An implication for the study of the effects of artistic interventions in organizations is that it would be misleading to conduct evaluations only on the basis of espoused program theories. Even the most rigorously quantitative measurements derived from espoused program theories are likely to be inadequate in two respects. First, they will only measure those outcomes that the designers originally intended and may very well miss no less positive (and negative) unintended or unanticipated outcomes. Second, measuring outcomes only on the basis of espoused theory will not enable decision makers and other program stakeholders to understand the real program “theory-in-use” and to discover those factors in the program theory that have a critical impact on performance.

One of the biggest obstacles to measuring program effectiveness is that decision-makers and other stakeholders are frequently unaware of the gaps between espoused program theory and program theory-in-use until very late in the game – if at all. These gaps stem from a number of factors. For example, people who implement programs often make *ad hoc* adjustments to plans in order to deal with

unanticipated situations. Even little changes, when accumulated, can alter program design in significant ways without this information moving back up the chain. Furthermore, Argyris and Schön (1974, 1978) have shown quite conclusively that people are typically unaware of the gaps between what they say or believe they do and their actual practice. Even when people are aware of the gaps, there is a tendency to ignore them, especially if discussion of these gaps is liable to make people uncomfortable, raise threatening issues or generate conflicts.

At this stage in the development of artistic interventions in organizations, therefore, the emphasis needs to be on the formative evaluation of the “theories-in-use.” In other words, **research should focus on how artistic interventions are actually carried out so as to describe and explain the multiple paths through which their effects flow out and are felt in organizations.** Rigorous program theory evaluation offers an important tool for improving both current and future program and project practice. In the short-term it enables stakeholders to discover critical gaps between the espoused theories and theories-in-use in an artistic intervention or program of interventions, so that they can make corrections and adjustments accordingly (e.g., Argyris 1982, 1993; Sielbeck-Bowen 2000; Patton 1997; Weiss 1997). A rationale behind participatory evaluation is that engaging stakeholders in the process enables organizational learning during the research, thereby reducing the common risk that evaluation results are either unused or even misused (Suárez-Herrera, Springett, Kagan 2009). In the long-term it will provide program designers and funders with a knowledge base and planning tool, in the form of well-articulated and sound program theories of action, upon which to base future interventions (Stufflebeam 2001).

The proposed research should include what Patton (1997:219) called deductive, inductive, and user-based approaches to program theory evaluation. The deductive approach is important for connecting the study of artistic interventions to existing academic theory-building. Although there is no directly relevant theory in this field, researchers will approach the phenomenon with their existing theoretical lenses, through which they will analyse what they see happening and what and they hear from the stakeholders. The inductive and user-focused approaches are required for

obtaining a comprehensive and accurate picture of the implicit program theories that drive artistic interventions as they actually unfold in organizations over time.

2. Multiplicity of stakeholders with different worldviews

Having explored the first challenge to conducting research on the effects of artistic interventions in organizations, namely the lack of theory, let us now turn to the second: the culturally diverse stakeholders. Arts and business are often characterized as two “different worlds”, with their own sets of values, norms, and languages, leading some observers to suggest exploring the interactions between artists and people from business as intercultural encounters (e.g., Strauß 2009). Reality is actually far more complex, because artistic interventions in organizations involve more than just two kinds of stakeholders with two definable worldviews and attendant values, priorities, expectations, ways of knowing, and behavioural norms. There are variations not just between the stakeholders but also within stakeholder groups. Therefore, a second challenge to conducting research on the impacts of artistic interventions in organizations is that the various participants have different expectations (a) from an organization and from an artistic intervention in an organization, and (b) from research about artistic interventions in an organization.

The Artful Conversation workshop with artists organized by the WZB in 2008 already provided ample evidence of the differences among artists involved in artistic interventions in organizations (Berthoin Antal 2008). Some artists engage in artistic interventions in organizations in order to provoke change in the established order, for example, while others do so with the hope of giving people a creative experience, or in order to earn money that allows them to work on “real art” elsewhere, or because they choose to create their art in and from organizational contexts. The three Artful Research workshops at the WZB in 2009 confirmed this diversity of interests among participating artists and showed that people from each of the other groups also have different reasons for engaging in artistic interventions in organizations. Some managers have quite specific objectives, such as developing creativity and communication in their teams or departments; others seek to stimulate change and innovation in the organization by having their employees interact with artists; yet others invite artists to create their artwork in the organization because they have a

sense that the process will be beneficial to the organization in some way that cannot be specified in advance. The expectations of the employees are not the same as those of the managers who bring the artists in, and within each organization there is a high likelihood of diverse employee perspectives on the project. The willingness of people to participate actively in an artistic intervention project depends to a great extent on their ability to identify with and find value in it. Without the active engagement of the employees, artists, management, and intermediary organizations or consultants, the artistic intervention is unlikely to fulfil its potential and may feed cynicism instead. If people feel excluded from a process because they cannot identify with its objectives or feel that the process is inappropriate, or if they feel used by other actors in the pursuit of their interests, they are unlikely to cooperate fully and might even resist the project.

The Artful Research workshops showed that various stakeholders also have different expectations about research on artistic interventions in organizations, different ideas about interesting research questions and about productive processes of sharing, interpreting, and representing knowledge (see chapter 3). Without the willing engagement of these stakeholders, the research is also unlikely to generate new knowledge of much interest – and this again raises the question: in whose interest? Knowledge-sharing hostility is often found in organizations when people feel that it is not in their advantage or actually to their disadvantage to reveal what they know to others (Husted and Michailova 2002; Empson 2001). If any of the participants feel that the research is intended to serve the interests of a particular group and excludes their own interests, their willingness to share knowledge is likely to be curtailed, thereby affecting the quality of the research data and its analysis. The research methods chosen to study the effects of artistic interventions in organizations must address this challenge.

Proposed mix of research methods

The implication for the research framework we are proposing is that **action research must be at the heart of the mix of methods, and it should be flanked by case studies and survey research** (see Figure 6).

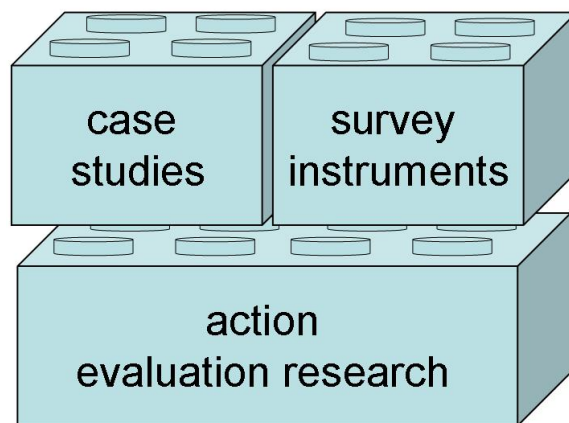


Figure 6: Mix of research methods

1. Action research and action evaluation research

Action research brings the various stakeholders into studying the project as co-researchers together with academics. In this research form, academics so to speak “surrender their primacy” in the research process in the interests of gaining access to knowledge about the actions, intentions, and valuations of the stakeholders that they cannot obtain without the stakeholders’ active engagement. The stakeholders participate in formulating the research objectives, questions and instruments, as well as in collecting and analyzing the data (for a thorough discussion of action research as participative inquiry see the handbook edited by Reason and Bradbury 2008). This method thereby reduces the risks that some stakeholders (e.g., employees, artists) might feel that their perspectives are marginalized (e.g., by the interests and language of management or academia), their contributions misrepresented or their roles instrumentalized.

In order to explore the effects of artistic interventions in organizations, a form of action research that has grown out of the recent developments in program evaluation described above appears particularly appropriate, namely **action evaluation research** (Friedman 2001b). It supports individual and organizational learning during the project, and generates knowledge that can be shared with others (e.g., in the

policy-making and academic communities) afterwards.

Action evaluation research entails an iterative three-phase process to program theory building and testing.

- The first (baseline) phase focuses on clarifying definitions of success and on making a program's "theory of action" explicit by asking: *What* are the goals of relevant stakeholders? *Why* are these goals important to them? *How* do they plan to achieve these goals? Data on these questions are collected, analyzed, and discussed with the stakeholders. The outputs of the baseline are an explicit statement of the program theory and an action plan for putting it into practice. This helps the participants in understanding their own process, and it generates a basis for comparing different programs and projects in terms of goals, action strategies, underlying assumptions, and contextual factors.
- The second (formative) phase views program implementation as an iterative process of experimentation aimed at testing and self-consciously refining the theory of action. Data on implementation and initial outcomes are collected, analyzed, and discussed with the stakeholders in order to compare its espoused theory with its theory-in-use. This stage provides important information about the kinds of challenges that artistic interventions face as they unfold and how these can be addressed. It enables stakeholders to obtain a deeper knowledge of how these interventions work and how they can be implemented more effectively.
- The third (summative) phase focuses on making broader assessments about the potential contribution of artistic interventions for organizations and best practices based on cumulative experience. Action evaluation research yields definitions of artistic intervention goals. While some goals only lend themselves to qualitative analysis, some goals can be translated into measurable indicators that provide the basis for survey research and other forms of quantitative analysis.

In seeking to draw general conclusions in this area, it is important to recognize that the context-specific nature and complexity of artistic interventions challenges the conventional notion of generalization as the wide application of laws or principles. Scholars have been grappling with this challenge in other areas as well (see for

example Symon and Cassell 1998). Schön and Rein (1994) suggest the concept of "**reflective transfer**" as an alternative, "the process by which patterns detected in one situation are carried over as projective models or templates to other situations to generate new causal inferences..." (p. 204). The key to reflective transfer is not simply seeing the new situation in terms of the old one, but using the comparison to become more keenly aware of the key differences that need to be addressed. Ultimately this research should lead to the creation of a repertoire of exemplars which enable decision-makers and practitioners to recognize particular contexts and design interventions accordingly.

Skill development as an added value from participative research

Positioning action research/action evaluation research at the heart of the mix of methods enables stakeholders to learn from the research by engaging in the process with researchers. For most participants, this will be a new experience, offering **the opportunity to develop valuable skills**.

- Clarification of objectives and roles in self-managed teams: Employees, managers, artists, academics (and in some projects intermediaries or consultants) bring to the research process their own interests and capabilities. Conducting an action research project requires the participants to decide what to focus on, how to make the most effective use of the skill sets in the group, and how to share and distribute responsibilities.
- Data collection, analysis and reflective transfer: Many of the competences required for collecting and making sense of qualitative data in organizations are relevant for a wide variety of responsibilities in organizations. Action evaluation research employs qualitative data collection methods such as observation, storytelling, interviewing, critical incident analysis, and focus groups. The ability to draw conclusions from data in complex situations and from multiple sources and to transfer them reflectively to new situations is a key learning skill.
- Intercultural competence: The diversity between and within stakeholder groups involved in artistic interventions in organizations requires the ability to engage with multiple perspectives, ways of knowing, and forms of expression. Participating in an action research project on an artistic intervention provides the opportunity to reflect together on these differences, and it brings in yet another way of knowing and communicating, namely the academic's. Project

members therefore have to develop the intercultural competence of “negotiating reality” to be able to understand each other, make decisions, and take action together (Friedman and Berthoin Antal 2005, Berthoin Antal and Friedman 2008).

- Conflict engagement and process facilitation: There are numerous potential sources of conflict in action research teams, starting with the definition of the focus of the project, during data collection when organizational taboos are touched or negative effects of interventions are identified, and during the data analysis, for example when gaps between espoused theories and theories in practice that underpin stakeholders’ engagement in artistic interventions are revealed. The ability to engage conflict constructively is crucial to the learning process in the research team, as well as a key organizational learning competence (Rothman and Friedman 2002).

As Michael Eriksson (2009) pointed out, artistic interventions are opportunities for learning by stretching the comfort zone, and this is a challenge that applies to academics as much as to other participants in research processes that push the boundaries of existing knowledge about organizational learning (Berthoin Antal 2001). The participants in action research projects have the opportunity to help each other learn the necessary skills as they stretch their comfort zones. The researchers bring in and share their expertise in data collection, systematic analysis, and abstraction; artists offer different ways of identifying and making sense of features in a context, and new ways of re-presenting their findings, thereby expanding the range of possibilities available to the group. Other participants (e.g. intermediaries, consultants, employees or managers) may have strong project management and conflict engagement skills to help develop the team members. **The research strategy we propose is therefore a way of generating valuable insights that are a) directly available to the participants and b) can later be shared with others; action evaluation research is also an opportunity to develop and put into practice a range of important skills.**

Flanking the core method of action research/action evaluation research, **we recommend that researchers also conduct case studies and develop survey instruments.** Together, they will provide the basis for eliciting broader insights and

building valid concepts and models, as described below.

2. Case studies

Researchers should conduct case studies to derive and test action strategies, trace causal pathways, and explore hypotheses that are generated by action evaluation research on specific interventions. Case studies can extend the breadth and depth of analysis. Among the types of case studies to be conducted would be:

- Case studies following an organization for a longer period of time beyond the conclusion of the intervention, or by observing people and processes that are not directly involved in the intervention.
- Case studies of different intervention projects within an organization, and also in diverse organizations, which would then permit comparisons of the processes and outcomes.
- Case studies exploring the use of different art forms will be helpful in specifying which forms tend to have which kinds of effects under which conditions, and which types of artistic interventions have more sustainable impacts.
- Comparative analysis across cases will also be necessary for understanding the influence of intermediary organizations: examples in which artists have worked alone or with consultants can be compared with cases in which intermediary organizations have facilitated the process.

The accumulation of findings from action research and multiple case studies will provide a solid basis for formulating conclusions, and also for developing survey instruments.

3. Survey research

A useful complement to the qualitative research methods will be the addition of surveys. By conducting surveys in organizations before, during, and again at several points in time after the completion of an artistic intervention numerous issues can be clarified. For example, they will make it possible

- to observe constellations of effects,

- to track the sustainability of effects over time,
- to see whether certain effects (expected or unexpected; desirable or problematic) emerge late, and
- to trace whether effects reach beyond the group of people who participated directly in the intervention.

A data base of results from surveys conducted in numerous organizations at multiple points in time would be a rich resource for researchers to analyze, then derive recommendations and continue to build theory.

Developing appropriate survey instruments is a significant challenge, however. The organizational phenomena (artistic interventions, and, for example, innovation and competitiveness) are complex, involving so many factors that direct causal relationships cannot be established reliably, and meaningful indicators have yet to be developed. Managers with experience in this area are aware of the difficulties. A manager we interviewed warned against simple internal attributions of effect. He assured us that he could produce numbers showing that an artistic intervention had reduced absenteeism in his company, but he pointed that this result is coincidental; he believed that the current high levels of unemployment are much more likely to be the determining factor.

We therefore see research developing in two steps: (1) Action evaluation research and comparative case studies on artistic interventions in organizations will generate a deeper understanding of the processes and their effects by tracing multiple, often indirect connections and complex causal flows, from which (2) researchers will be able to formulate useful survey questions that can do justice to the nature of the processes.

In the meantime, we recommend exploring the results of surveys and other large-scale data collection activities that are (usually) conducted in organizations (e.g., surveys of employees and customers, audits), in order to see whether there is evidence of changes that might be related to artistic interventions. Based on the research conducted to date and the results of the Artful Research workshops, we can suggest which kinds of changes and which kinds of evidence to be alert to in analyzing existing organizational surveys (see below).

Areas of impact, initial hypotheses, and development of indicators

Drawing together the results of our review of the state of the art (chapter 2) and the findings from the Artful Research workshops in Berlin (chapter 3), we have identified several areas in which artistic interventions can add value, in the broad sense of the term, in organizations (see Figure 7).

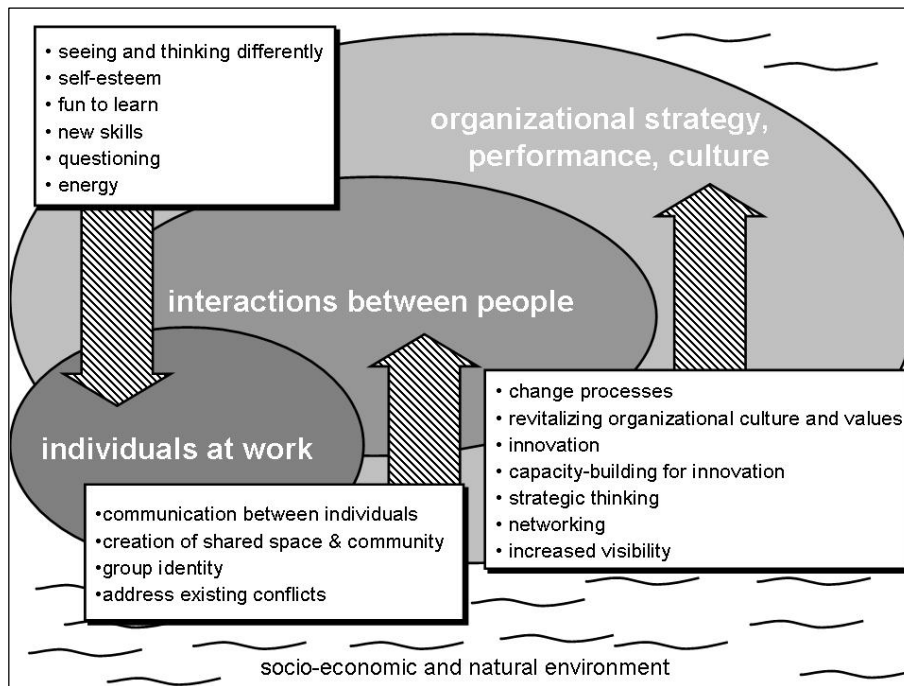


Figure 7: Where to look for the values artistic interventions can add

As we argued in chapter 3, the effects found in the core and in the first ring are plausibly (but not automatically) connected to those in the outer ring, namely strategic organizational goals (see also Schiuma 2009). For example, enhanced creativity of individuals and teams is likely to contribute positively to innovation and competitiveness, especially when paired with improved communication in the organization and a better understanding of the interdependencies between one's own work and that of others (Styhre and Eriksson 2008, Eriksson 2009). However, **to understand the impacts of artistic interventions in organizations we recommend focusing attention first on the factors that people say they experience as rewarding (or problematic)**, rather than seeking to prove the desired strategic (higher-level) effects directly. There are several reasons we recommend such a focus.

- First, artistic interventions are just one, albeit potentially powerful, ingredient; many internal and external factors play a role in achieving these strategic objectives, such as the state of competition, the availability of resources for investment, and other management policy decisions.
- Second, there is a risk that shining the spotlight where strategic effects are hoped for will leave other actual effects in the dark, invisible and unappreciated, possibly to be trampled on.
- Third, getting the most value out of artistic interventions will depend on understanding and probably changing the program logic that is operating, which entails first identifying and then addressing the gap between the espoused theories and theories in practice of the various stakeholders.
- Fourth, if stakeholders sense from the formulation of the research objectives that the purpose of artistic interventions is narrowly focused on achieving higher organizational performance or other goals they do not identify with, they are unlikely to engage wholeheartedly in the project, and may even boycott both the intervention and the research (see Suarez-Herrera et al. 2009:330-332 regarding risks of undermining learning potential).

From our current analysis of the stakeholder stories and the discussions during the Artful Research workshops, we can propose some **initial hypotheses about conditions that appear important for value to be added through artistic interventions.**

- Representatives of intermediary organizations point out that not all artists are suited to engage in such interventions (see also Vives and Gomez de la Iglesia 2009). The artists themselves say that many of their colleagues cannot understand why they want to work in organizations. People are likely to have experiences that they feel are valuable to them personally when **the artists who engage in artistic interventions enjoy working with people in organizations.**
- The “foreignness” to the work environment of artistic ways of thinking and doing inhibit many people at first. The kinds of value identified in the core are also more likely to be realized when the **conditions are created for people to free themselves from the engrained norms of behaviour in the organizational**

culture.

- The creative process is by its very nature unpredictable and uncontrollable, so a willingness to “trust the process” (McNiff 1998) appears essential. Learning also entails trusting people. **If management seeks to control the process, if there is low trust between employees and management, and/or if there is low trust in the relationship with the artist, it is unlikely that valuable effects will emerge from the intervention.**
- We hypothesize that these are preconditions for generating effects of value in the organization, but the movement outward from the core is not automatically assured. Our sense at this point is that **if people feel instrumentalized the potential of an artistic intervention to create value is severely curtailed.**
- Artistic interventions entail engaging with different views about what is considered valuable, important, or appropriate in the organization and in the intervention, which can lead to intense controversy. **Learning is more likely to be generated if such conflicts are addressed constructively than if they are repressed or left unmanaged.**

These initial hypotheses about enabling factors should be explored and new ones developed in the course of action-evaluation research and case studies, and later tested in surveys as well. It will also be important to generate and explore hypotheses relating to the questions of power relations in processes of artistic interventions, because it is naïve to assume that they are power-neutral; similarly studies will need to address the potential negative effects of artistic interventions. Engaging stakeholders in such **self-critical research** is likely to be “uncomfortable” but rewarding--it is a necessary part of learning-oriented evaluation practice.

The three Artful Research workshops showed that the development of indicators is a major challenge. **More work is needed to develop indicators that do justice to the subtle and complex ways stakeholders perceive effects** in the organization during and after artistic interventions. When describing situations and processes, the participants referred to various ways in which they sense a change they believe was significant – the way people look at managers more directly than they used to, the way people are willing to respond to problems, the way people share their knowledge openly with others. Sensitivity, time, and effort need to be invested by researchers and stakeholders to tease out the essence and develop the appropriate indicators for

research, especially for use in surveys.

Last but not least, the proposed research framework will draw on and contribute to the emerging stream of performative social science (Guiney Yallop et al. 2008). Social scientists are recognizing the need to develop more ways of generating and interpreting data and presenting findings. For example, evaluation experts are suggesting that “a variety of techniques, including photography, sculpture, textiles, storytelling, social mapping and drama” can enhance research seeking to collect different stakeholder voices and stimulate organizational learning (Suárez-Herrera et al. 2009: 336). The Artful Research workshop methodology that we experimented with in developing the research strategy and the future research to be conducted with this framework could expand the repertoire available to researchers in future.

Chapter 5

Conclusions and Next Steps

Like most innovations, the phenomenon of artistic interventions in organizations has met with enthusiasm, growing curiosity, and, naturally, some scepticism. The claims about the positive potential contributions to learning and change in organizations that are attached to them are enthusiastically shared by many people who have participated in some kind of artistic intervention. Policymakers and decision-makers who have not yet experienced such interventions but who sense that new approaches are needed to stimulate innovativeness in all sectors of the economy are expressing curiosity: What effects do artistic interventions really have in organizations? Too little empirical research had been conducted to be able to respond to this question, which is not surprising in a relatively new field of practice. Researchers are professional sceptics, so their engagement in closing the gap between claims and reality in this field is sorely needed. The curiosity of policymakers in the European Commission therefore triggered this study, which has addressed a twofold question: **Where should attention be directed to find the kinds of value that artistic interventions add in organizations? And how should the research be conducted?**

In order to respond to this double question and generate a research framework to guide future studies, we first reviewed the literature, then sought out the expertise of stakeholders in the field. Although the literature about artistic interventions is expanding, we found that very few publications report about studies on the effects of artistic interventions in organizations (see chapter 2). The series of three Artful Research workshops that we organized in Berlin in September 2009 was designed to tap into the experience of artists, intermediary organizations, people from organizations that had engaged in artistic interventions, consultants who have worked with artists, and researchers who have studied arts and business, innovation and change, or who have methodological expertise. The experimental format of the Artful Research workshops stimulated the participants to explore what they have seen happen in organizations during and after long term (several months) and short term (several hours or days) artistic interventions. We created the opportunity for

them to delve into and share also into their (often tacit) knowledge about direct and indirect effects (see chapter 3).

Where to look for value

The preliminary analysis of the rich material produced during the Artful Research workshops permitted us to identify areas in which to look for effects that the stakeholders consider valuable.

- A key finding is that the stakeholders value the growth they see in people in and of itself, not simply as means to an end. For some stakeholders this human growth was at least part of the original intention of the intervention, for others it was a discovery during the intervention that gave them the feeling the project was worth the effort. They see value in giving people opportunities to experiment, develop new kinds of knowledge in new ways, nurture hidden skills, and discover an interest in cultural issues. The growth in self-esteem that stakeholders observed during and after an intervention is evidently intensely satisfying.
- The reports from experience indicate that the value that individuals draw out of an artistic intervention can flow out and generate value a) in their work, b) in interactions with others in their unit or across organizational units, and c) beyond that to affect organizational strategy, performance and culture. Figure 8 illustrates the different kinds of value that stakeholders have observed emerging in each of these areas.
- Since individuals (at all levels and in all departments) are the agents of organizational learning, the addition of value must start with them, but the movement of value from the core outwards to the meet the strategic interests of the organization is not automatic. Therefore, research seeking to document the value that artistic interventions can add in organizations will also need to explore the conditions that enable or impede the ability of individuals and the organization to generate value from the experience.

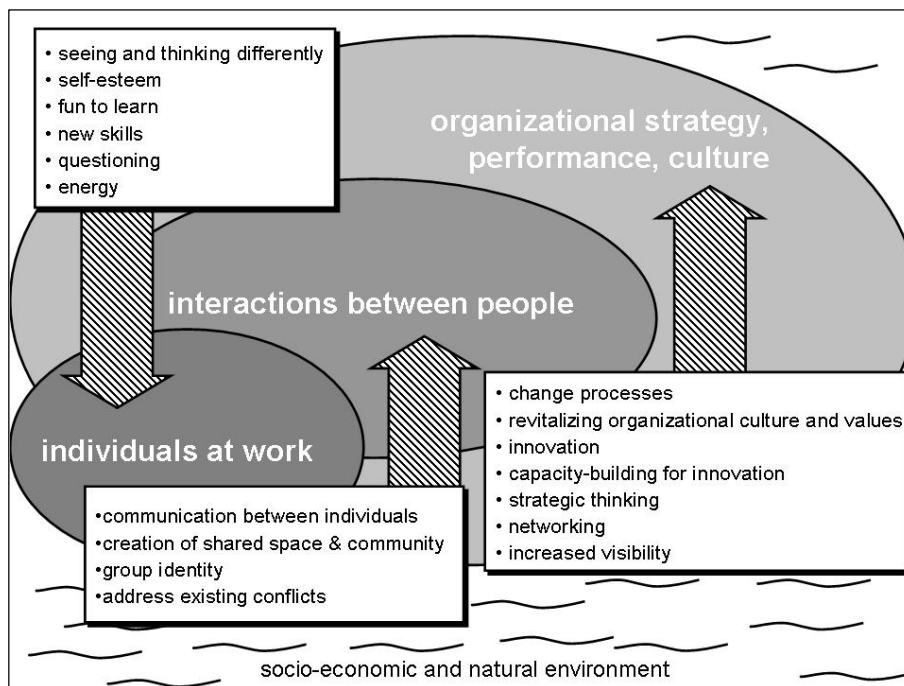


Figure 8: Where to look for the values artistic interventions can add

How to look for value

The proposed research framework takes into consideration the fact there is as yet no theory capable of explaining the complex phenomenon of artistic interventions and often indirect ways that they affect organizations.

- The implication is that researchers-evaluators have to develop an innovative and customized “toolkit” with appropriate indicators for studying these interventions *in the very process of conducting their research*.

Furthermore, the proposed framework recognizes that the stakeholders in any given project have different roles and interests, as well as different expectations of and perspectives on the organization, the artistic intervention, and research. Gaining an understanding of how artistic interventions generate value in organizations depends to a large extent on the willingness of the diverse stakeholders to share their knowledge and experience.

- The implication of this fact is that researchers must surrender their usual primacy in the research process if they want to understand the phenomenon. A participative research methodology is needed in which the various stakeholders contribute to defining a question or set of questions they agree is worth

pursuing, then to collecting and making sense of the data, and to representing the results.

We therefore propose a research framework composed of a mix of methods to adequately capture the richness and complexity of artistic interventions, with action research at the heart, flanked by case studies and survey research.

- The form of action research we recommend is action evaluation research, which supports individual and organizational learning during the project, and generates knowledge that can be shared with others (e.g., in the policy-making and academic communities) afterwards. As discussed in Chapter 4, participating in action evaluation research also offers the stakeholders an opportunity to develop a variety of valuable skills (e.g., intercultural competence, reflective transfer and conflict engagement).
- In addition, we see a need for researchers to conduct case studies to derive and test action strategies, trace causal pathways, and explore hypotheses that are generated by action evaluation research on specific interventions. The accumulation of findings from action research and multiple case studies will provide a solid basis for formulating conclusions, and also for developing survey instruments.
- Surveys will be a useful complement to the qualitative research methods. Some participants at the Artful Research workshops were reluctant to embark on surveys at this early stage of understanding in the field. Until appropriate instruments have been developed, we therefore recommend starting by analyzing the results of ongoing surveys in organizations (e.g., employee surveys) to see whether they reveal effects that could be related to artistic interventions.

Next steps

The Artful Research workshops showed how valuable it is to engage with stakeholders early in the research process to define the focus and formulate a framework. The proposed research framework is ready to be refined and piloted in different settings (see Figure 9). The time is evidently ripe for the enthusiasts of artistic interventions to engage in serious, (self-)critical research into the effects of

their projects. The results of these studies could whet the appetite for experimentation of those observers who are curious, and they might also shift some of the sceptics into the camp of the curious.

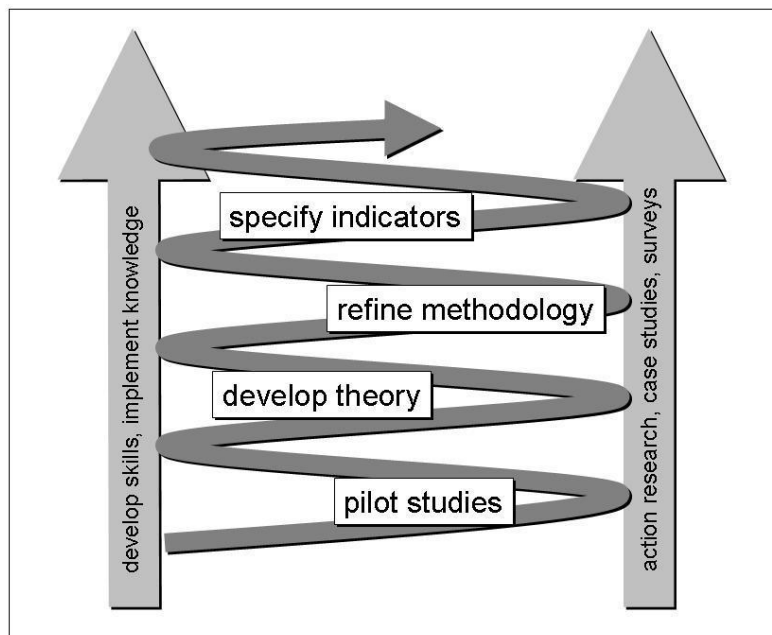


Figure 9: Next steps

Engaging in artistic interventions is by nature an unpredictable process. Using the mix of research methods proposed here will **help stakeholders clarify which kinds of value are likely to emerge under which conditions**. It will provide guidance in **how to create supportive conditions** to benefit from artistic interventions in organizations. Equally importantly, systematic research will help specify **when not to take the risk**, so that stakeholders do not embark naively into such interventions. But research results cannot replace the courage needed for decision and action, both at the policy making level and within organizations. Experience suggests that one of the preconditions for creating value through artistic interventions is and will remain the courage to trust: to trust the process and the people involved in it (McNiff 1998). **Next steps therefore include the willingness take a step into the unknown – to learn by engaging in and reflecting on experiments.**

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Appendix

Participants

“Artful Research: Assessing the Effects of Artistic Interventions”

September 23, 24 and 25, 2009

Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung

Reichpietschufer 50, D-10785 Berlin

Facilitated by

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