

## WZB/TILLT Europe Research Workshop „Artful Research: Eliciting Tacit Knowledge“, 23.9.2009

## WZB/TILLT Europe Research Workshop „Artful Research: Experiences with Long Term Interventions“, 24.9.2009

## WZB/TILLT Europe Research Workshop „Artful Research: Experiences with Short Term Interventions“, 25.9.2009

In the context of the TILLT-Europe project on arts in organizations, Professor Ariane Berthoin Antal organized a series of 3 “Artful Research” workshops on September 23, 24 and 25 2009. Each workshop brought together a mix of stakeholders from different countries: artists; employees in organizations that have hosted artistic interventions; intermediary organizations; and researchers. Daniella Arieli from the Max Stern Academic College of Emek Yezreel (Israel) co-facilitated the workshops. The purpose was

- 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.

### Findings about 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 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.
- 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.

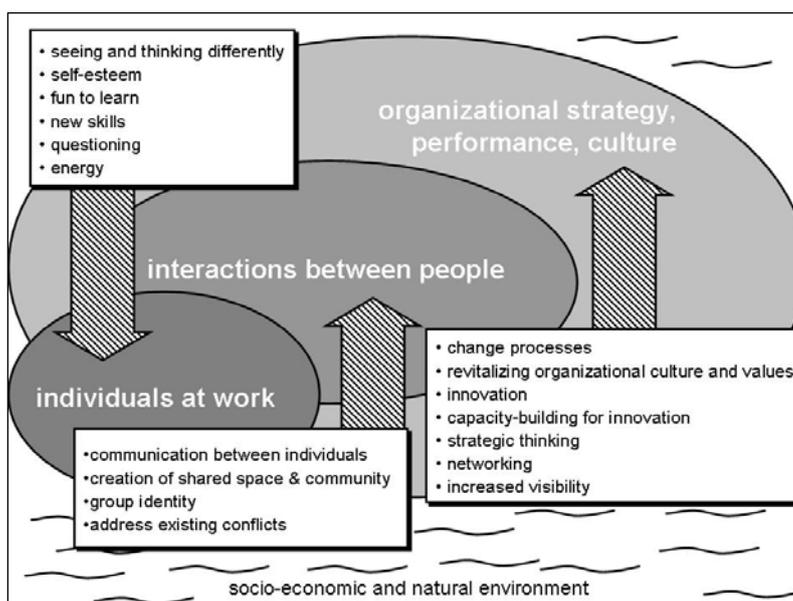


Figure: Where to look for the values that artistic interventions can add in Organizations

## Findings about Research Interests and Processes

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. 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 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 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. 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.

The Artful Research workshops were an opportunity to experiment with participative research. As one of the participants later commented, they were not only an artful, but also a “humanful” approach to working and learning together.

The conclusions fed into the project report ([http://www.wzb.eu/gwd/kneu/pdf/ResearchReport\\_Summary.pdf](http://www.wzb.eu/gwd/kneu/pdf/ResearchReport_Summary.pdf)), and the findings were presented at conferences in Barcelona in November, in Brussels in December, and at the closing conference for the European Year of Creativity and Innovation in Stockholm.



Workshop organizer Ariane Berthoin Antal ([WZB](#)) and Pia Areblad ([TILLT](#))



Cofacilitor Daniella Arieli (Max Stern Academic College of Emek Yezreel, Israel)

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