

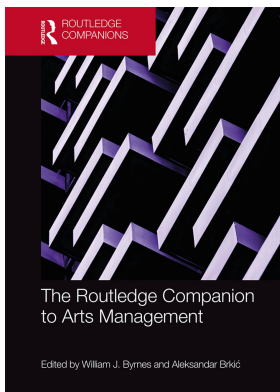
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ARTISTIC INTERVENTIONS FOR ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Case studies from Italy

Chiara Paolino and Daniela Aliberti

Introduction

This chapter is an examination of how artistic interventions can contribute to organizational development and innovation in the workplace, through a reflection on a set of informative experiences focused on integrating art within the dynamics of the organizational life.

An artistic intervention can be defined as a group of people, practices or products coming from the world of the arts, entering the business organization with the aim to benefit the organization itself (Berthoin Antal, 2009; Schiuma, 2011). For example, it could consist of an artist entering the organizational spaces with the idea to disrupt working routines by stimulating an active debate and collaboration in the creation of an artefact, or of an artistic performance, sharing creative techniques and different values. Generally, artistic interventions in the workplace are aesthetic experiences that allow for the engagement of all employees' senses, enabling them to develop a new perspective, guiding their decisions and actions (Berthoin Antal, 2013).

From the seminal work of Lotte Darsø in "*Learning Tales of Arts in Business*" (2004), the discussion around the role of art to improve the organization now encompasses the capacity of art to enhance employees' strategic thinking, their ability to learn and opportunity to innovate within the organization. Indeed, the practice and research in this field started in management learning and education, and it has moved towards broader topics, such as the role of art to shape new leadership capabilities (e.g., Adler, 2006; Taylor and Ladkin, 2009; Taylor, 2002; Sutherland and Purg, 2010).

The urgency and the importance to reflect on the meaning of the role of art at the workplace can be traced back to the question of Purg and Sutherland (2017, p. 382) about management education: 'Why should we care about the arts in management education? Why are the arts part of reforms in developing future professionals? What is the fundamental value of the arts for developing tomorrow's manager-leaders?' More generally, the answer revolves around the power of art to allow employees and managers to look for new meaning in their actions – to pause, reflect and question what art can bring to the workplace.

In order to contribute to this important debate, this chapter focuses on how artistic interventions at the workplace can help people in organizations in their search for meaning for their actions by focusing on three main issues. First, we explore and exemplify how an artistic

intervention can help employees to think differently about their professional identity and to rebuild a positive relationship with their organization. Second, we discuss the topic of how artistic interventions can contribute to enhancing learning during training in organizations. Our third goal is to debate how artistic interventions can foster product innovation at the workplace. In concluding this chapter, we highlight the implications of artistic interventions for the role of the arts manager within an organization.

Our examples of artistic interventions will focus on cases in Italy. In particular, we will refer to the artistic interventions organized by the Fondazione Ermanno Casoli (FEC since now). The FEC¹ is a non-profit institution that promotes artistic interventions at the workplace; its mission is to encourage companies to welcome artists and their works within the organization to promote opportunities for innovation and renewal. We will present how foundations, like FEC, need the professional profile of an arts manager, rather than a curator or a pure manager, to promote and organize effectively artistic interventions at the workplace.

We will first present the role of FEC as an intermediary between the artist and the companies in artistic interventions. Then, we will analyze the relationship between artistic interventions, individual identity, learning dynamics and innovation opportunities at the workplace. We will conclude with recommendations on how companies can manage successful interventions, and we will underline the possible risks a company can go by implementing artistic interventions.

Artistic interventions and the dynamics of identity and organizational identification

The concept of professional identity captures the essential features believed to be central, enduring, and distinctive of an individual as a professional (Albert and Whetten, 1985; Cole and Bruch, 2006). Organizational identification reflects the specific ways in which individuals define themselves in terms of their membership in an organization (Mael and Ashforth, 1995); the strength of organizational identification is believed to benefit individuals, workgroups, and the organization as a whole (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Riketta, 2005).

A change in professional identity and organizational identification occurs when the opportunity is offered to employees to participate in a new sensemaking and sensegiving process. The process of sensemaking around professional identity allows employees to articulate a revised conception of their role in the organization; this revision demands disconfirmation of the existing interpretative scheme about one's role, and it requires a revised one to take place (Poole, Gioia, and Gray, 1989). After disconfirmation and replacement occur, a new vision of the relationship with the organization can be formalized and disseminated through the process of sensegiving. This process implies that a new meaning of the relationship between the workers and the company is established in the organization (Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991).

Artistic interventions can create a disruption in the usual way of thinking and feeling of individuals at the workplace, such that they might be able to rethink their professional identity and identification with their organization (Barry and Meisiek, 2010). The discussion of the role of artistic interventions in the identification process is particularly important when we think about phenomena such as layoffs or downsizing within organizations; the same holds for all those things which create instability and break the usual way individuals think about their roles in their organization and the company (Adler, 2015). In addition, the disruptive potential of artistic interventions is fundamental when we think about the need for continuous innovation and ideas' generation to support company performance.

Artistic interventions generate a discontinuance by creating the conditions which cause people to perceive their job differently: when people take part in an artistic intervention, they

make an effort to re-discover themselves in artistic contents. The arts rely on tools and beliefs that encourage employees 'seeing more and seeing differently' (Barry and Meisiek, 2010, p. 3), which stands for an opportunity to look at the organizational context in a new and original way, functional to more innovative decision making. Indeed, artistic interventions often involve the creation of a new story to tell through a process of context shifting. Through context shifting, employees gain a different vision of the place they work in, which allows questioning the status quo. If we take the example of corporate art collections, previous studies indicate they are able to intrigue employees, inciting new questions about their professional and personal role (Barry and Meisiek, 2010). When viewing the art, employees have the chance to ask themselves if the work is accurately reflecting organizational values, and their professional and their identity. The presence of the artist can strengthen this process by allowing closer collaboration, continuous interaction and discussion with the artist and among the employees.

This process can be exemplified by the artistic intervention that the artist Danilo Corrales² did in three companies in Italy, thanks to the promotion and sponsorship of FEC. Danilo Corrales organized an artistic performance, lasting six months, named 'The Game',³ which was an occasion for employees' and artist's self-expressions, in order to share thoughts and feelings related to the ideas of precariousness and instability the companies were experiencing at that moment. In addition, 'The Game', now included in the permanent collection of MADRE museum in Naples, created the opportunity to substitute this sense of precariousness with different values, by encouraging workers to reflect upon their condition in their company and to cope with the crisis their company was living.

'The Game' consisted of a soccer game played by the teams of three companies from the Sienese territory (Tuscany, Italy). It was described by the artist as an 'acting and reacting' platform: each company had a team and participated in a soccer match with three doors, in accordance with a new set of rules, where the values of creativity, generosity, and collaboration had to substitute the values of competition and individualism (e.g., employees donated their free time to discuss and implement the project). The pitch was hexagonal, and each team was assigned to two opposite sides of it. The match was made not of two, as expected for a soccer game, but of three rounds and the final score of each team was based on the conceded goals, rather than on the scored ones. Victory could not be achieved based on how many goals one team scored but in terms of the creative and collaborative actions of participants. Indeed, the last third of the match consisted in a moment of celebration for all teams, regardless of the number of goals achieved. In addition, beyond the soccer match, the intervention consisted of important preparatory phases to plan the design of the soccer field, to produce the uniforms of the three teams, and to provide the set of objects needed for the final performance (posters, anthems, festoons, etc.). The most important part was the set of several encounters between the teams and the artist, which required some months and long hours for effectively sharing thoughts, building empathy and listening to each other's opinions. The teams not only discussed the way and rules the game should have been performed but mostly shared their ideas about the message they wanted the match to transmit.

This artistic intervention needs to be contextualized with respect to the perception the workers have had of their role in their organization, which was threatened by a feeling of loss, inadequacy, and uncertainty about the future. These feelings could be traced back to the fact that the companies and the entire industry had gone through a crisis and that they had experienced a lay off in some cases. The awareness of this condition represents the first phase of the artistic intervention, the moment in which the artist invites the workers to pause and to reflect on their condition, which resulted in a claiming possible threat with respect to their identification in the company (see Phase 1, Table 25.1).

Table 25.1 How the artistic intervention helps to revisit identity and organizational identification: an example based on ‘The Game’

<i>Phase 1: awareness of a new condition</i>	<i>Phase 2: art creates a disruption</i>	<i>Phase 3: sensemaking of a new identity and new identification</i>	<i>Phase 4: potential for sensegiving</i>
Workers’ professional identity and their sense of identification with their companies are threatened because of recent layoffs and the feeling of instability and uncertainty these events bring	The artistic intervention is organized and presented to the workers, creating a moment of disruption: they can participate to the realization of an art work with a living artist and can borrow from the art world new meanings and metaphors to interpret their current condition	The preparation of the soccer match (discussing, crafting, reflecting among the workers, and between the workers and the artist) and the soccer match itself provide workers with the opportunity to revisit their identity and identification with their company, by relying on the values of team-working, collaboration reciprocal help, and freedom to voice their opinions and concerns	Thanks to the involvement of the companies’ top management who supported and endorsed the project, this new meaning of the workers’ identity has the potential to be spread out in the companies themselves, especially through all the artifacts (videos, drawings, uniforms) that the artistic interventions has generated

‘The Game’ helped employees overcome the sense of frustration and alienation connected to this precarious condition, and to find in the values of solidarity and collaboration new ways to reconnect their personal and professional life to that of their organizations. The artist guided the employees, mainly workers, to engage in something unusual that allowed them to express their opinions and concerns about their current condition. This part stands for the phase of disruption (Phase 2, Table 25.1) corresponding to the moment in which the art effectively entered organizational routines. In this phase, the participants borrowed new meaning from the art world to interpret their condition. The workers had the chance to discuss among themselves and with the artist the meaning of this unusual soccer match (where the creativity of each team, rather than its athletic and technical superiority, was going to be rewarded) and to use this soccer game to reevaluate their condition of workers. They had the chance to craft all the materials needed to play the match, to be involved in a creative production relevant to reshaping the meaning of teamwork, and to reflect on their organizational identity (i.e., each team for each company had to decide a name for the team and to create the uniforms). This moment of reflection corresponds to the phase of sensemaking of a new identity (see Phase 3, Table 25.1). The match, in the form of a performative event, took place in December 2013, in a stadium adapted to the three-door structure of the game. The process of preparation and the entire match were filmed and became a medium-length film, presented to the public in the same stadium the year after. The event, the video and the realization of other artifacts were possible thanks to the support and the endorsement by top management; this mechanism contributed to the phase of sensegiving (see Phase 4, Table 25.1).

The artist, who had already realized art works with workers and that had already reflected on the meaning of precariousness connected to the nature of a routinized job, was able to organize

a complex intervention where the moments of discussion, of collective reflection and of crafting were as important as the soccer match itself.

The day of the match, nobody won 'the Game', as the main intent of the artistic intervention was not to elect any winner but to stimulate a new reflection on the nature of the relationship between the workers and their company through the expedient of a game. The described process is summarized in Table 25.1.

Artistic interventions and the learning process at the workplace

The role of art in management education has been theorized and investigated for a long time, and training was one of the first areas where art entered different organizational settings, including private and public institutions (e.g., Ladkin, 2008; Austin and Devin, 2003; Taylor, Fisher, and Dufresne, 2002). These contributions have been particularly important to support the presence of art in HR training strategies and to explain how art can support the development of strategic capabilities for the success of a company.

The topic has been considered so important by the academic and business community that more recent contributions have been dedicated to shedding light on how art can foster learning in organizations (Antal, 2013; Purg and Sutherland, 2017). In particular, Antal, Woodilla, and Sköldberg (2016) have specified that artistic interventions can operate by affecting learning at individual, group and organizational levels. Through art, at an individual level, people learn new competences for abstracting, conceptualizing and prototyping ideas, together with a new ability for reflecting on organizational action through the exercise of critical thought. At the team level, people learn how to experience organizational spaces together, and which become places for debating, criticizing and sharing ideas. Artistic interventions allow the development of a new mindset for innovation, strategic thinking and the revitalization of organizational values and culture.

In this paragraph, we integrate literature from training and learner-centered approaches (Keith and Frese, 2005), from aesthetics in organizations (Strati, 2007) and from management education (Adler, 2015; Taylor, Fisher, and Dufresne, 2002) to discuss how to organize an artistic intervention to foster knowledge creation and exchange. This integration is useful to make sense of three pillars that, according to the experience and data we have been collecting so far, are important to explain how artistic interventions can contribute effectively to learning at the workplace. These three pillars to be considered when organizing a training section with an artistic intervention are: relying on positive error framing, building an aesthetic experience, and providing the opportunity for a re-composition of relationships at the workplace.

Positive error framing in training design implies that the learning experience is built in such a way that mistakes are encouraged rather than being punished. The main assumption of this approach is that mistakes are useful to provide information to the learners about how to improve the learning performance. In this way, the learners' autonomy and ability to plan are improved since permitting mistakes increases their ability to explore by themselves the issue at hand; finally, encouraging mistakes can be important to arouse curiosity (Keith and Frese, 2005).

Artistic interventions can be important tools to introduce positive error framing in the training strategy of an organization since the artistic process offers the opportunity to have more than one possibility to perform a certain task in the creation of a work of art. Mistakes have been very often theorized as an integral part of the artistic process, as it allows the artists to investigate their own poetry more deeply and to communicate with their audience more effectively (Vetese, 1996, 2012). As a consequence, the artistic processes characterized by induced mistakes and

reflections are able to allow for new idea generation. As such, the presence of the artist during a training session could be an ideal way to introduce a new approach where errors can be considered as an integral part of effective decision making within the organization.

When considering the dimension of the aesthetic experience and aesthetic knowledge, it is relevant to point out that aesthetic knowledge is derived from the senses and particular situations and experiences (Ewenstein and Whyte, 2007, p. 691). It comes from practitioners understanding the look, feel, smell, taste, and sound of things in organizational life. Aesthetic knowledge exists in organizational symbols, as expressions through non-verbal signifiers, and in feelings, sensitivity, and corporal experiences. Artistic interventions are extremely suitable activities to introduce aesthetic knowledge and reflexivity within training since they are able to encourage inductive reasoning above and beyond the usual deductive scheme adopted in the decision making within organizations. Furthermore, artistic interventions assume that the artist, in collaboration with the organizational members, presents physical experiences, especially thanks to their crafting and making activities. The artist brings into the company a heightened opportunity for sensorial perceptions thanks to a wide set of stimuli from music, painting or photographing. Finally, artists help employees to reflect on this sensorial experience and its link with their individual and professional life.

The last dimension to understand the peculiar value of artistic interventions is their potential to recompose and rebuild relationships within the organization. The artistic intervention can be the chance for discovering new ground to explore in working and personal relationships at the workplace since the interventions introduce something that is completely new to the company. It is a new work of art, not seen before, neither by the artist nor by the organization; something unique, and that requires the active contribution of the organizational members for its realization. The production of a work of art helps people who had never collaborated before to meet and to create something distinctive and original together. The participation in this artistic experience has the disruptive potential to create the opportunity to rethink working routines and relationships and to inspire the search of a deeper meaning.

These three concepts can be exemplified by the artistic intervention, named 'VITRIOL',⁴ that the artist Andrea Mastrovito⁵ designed and implemented within an Italian pharmaceutical company with the sponsorship and the support of FEC. VITRIOL consisted of seven mural 'paintings' the artist realized together with a hundred employees of the company on the company's walls. However, 'painting' is not the right term to describe this collective activity, even though the effect the murals produced looked like they were painted. The artist and the employees first made a drawing on one of the walls in the company; then the wall was not properly painted, but 'peeled off' by the employees till a layer of the wall itself emerged, showing a particular color. The outcome was a drawing tinted and filled with color belonging to the different layers of the wall itself. The drawings represented a subject related to the identity of the company and its business, so they all revolved around the topic of chemistry and alchemy. The drawings were as big as the wall of a manufacturing plant or a conference room. The intervention required one week and around 100 employees working on different shifts. The goal of the company was to organize this artistic intervention within a training initiative aimed at transmitting the concept that an effective result required a team effort and the constant work of each team member.

The artistic intervention was organized so that each team assigned to each wall had a general view of the drawing, and each team member had a particular task to perform. In terms of positive error framing, this activity was particularly powerful: each team member had a task, but the time constraints and the huge size of the work to be realized forced everyone to immediately

express their difficulties, delays or mistakes, since this was the only way to get help and to achieve the final goal. The artist and his assistants persisted in this way of working, (which is consistent with the artist's poetry, attitude and execution methods, where trials and errors are an integral part of the artistic process), never punishing any mistakes, but encouraging more of this openness and disposition to voice difficulties immediately. This 'try-and-see-what-happens' approach helped the employees participating in the intervention without any fear and to transfer then this ability to admit mistakes in their daily life. The artistic intervention gave employees the chance to observe that when dealing with a challenging task, the most appropriate strategy was to discuss their own mistakes immediately.

When considering the aesthetic dimension of the training experience to foster learning, it is important to note that VITRIOL generated multiple chances for employees to experience a different way to make decisions and engage in actions. This artistic intervention was physically demanding and required an intense effort on the part of numerous people over a week to be realized. The employees had the chance to experience different feelings, from frustration to satisfaction, and to engage in this experience with their senses fully since the activity required that they touched the wall, that they changed it and that they had both a global and particular view of the drawing they were realizing. In addition, many among the employees worked on the drawing, even doing an extra-shift and not wearing their working clothes, even though they were still within the boundary of their organization. All this set of stimuli provided them the opportunity to know whether the work was done or not and to decide what to do, not only on the basis of the usual routine but also by making reference to their sensorial experience and non-verbal cues. Finally, when considering the importance of restoring a positive climate among people, VITRIOL can work as a suitable example. The artist, the company, and the FEC agreed to build teams with members having different tenure, status, and organizational position. This choice created the feeling that coordination and communication among people do not encounter any barrier, such as hierarchy, during the artistic intervention. In addition, competition between people and individualism would have been completely dysfunctional for the realization of the work of art. In such a context, the artistic intervention became the opportunity for reshaping some relationships and finding new ways of communicating with others for a common goal rather than competing or being stuck due to the obstacles that status rules might create.

Thus, VITRIOL, for its ability to embrace mistakes, to create a sensorial experience and to give people the chance to experiment a new way of communicating and thinking about their relationships, was able to deliver an effective training experience, reflecting the original goal of the company. In the words of one employee: 'during this experience nobody ever explained to me formally that I was been taught about the relevance of individual contribution to team-working. But I immediately realized by myself that I would have never finished my part without the physical and psychological support from the others . . . someone said 'I can't do it, please you do it for me'. At the workplace, it is not easy to say that you cannot do something, but as another employee acknowledged, when you admitted it, you found the help you needed and 'it was evident that a big task, carried out by a numerous teams, with small details and small mistakes by everyone, resulted in a beautiful thing. In big projects, it is likely to miss the value of the individual contribution, but this was not the case, it was clear to everyone that each of us did his part' (Paolino, Smarrelli, and Carè, 2018, pp. 80–81). The aim of the artistic intervention was to deliver a training experience able to create reflection on the way of working; an employee concluded: 'I discovered how to combine the artistic experience and the scientific knowledge characterizing my job. . . . Now, anytime I join a project, I try to give value to this artistic part' (Paolino, Smarrelli, and Carè, 2018, p. 83).

Artistic interventions to foster innovation

Next, we discuss how artistic interventions can be organized within a company to sustain and encourage innovation by referencing an artistic residency supported by FEC in an Italian company, which can be considered a source of inspiration for product innovation.

The fact that the introduction of art in the company setting can reinforce lateral and creative thinking has been analyzed by the literature focused on art and its connections with individual and organizational learning (e.g., Berthoin Antal, 2013). However, in extant literature, there is also a more direct reference to the link between art and innovation at the workplace, when, for instance, we consider the contributions about the concept of studio or *atelier*, when introduced in organizational settings (Barry and Meisiek, 2015; Meisiek and Barry, 2016). ‘It is from the Enlightenment in the 16th century that the studio concept became fully articulated, distinctively combining intellectual curiosity, craft skills, aesthetic expression, and artisan-style production. . . . For both art and design, studios are places for an inquiry into the pernicious problems of business and society, and for creatively expressing the results of the inquiry process’ (Barry and Meisiek, 2015, p. 154). In the organizational setting, studios have been created as dedicated and private spaces where employees can experiment and explore ideas and problem-solving issues, by relying on the artistic practices (e.g., for the visual arts, on drawing, filming, painting).

We want to discuss the role of the artistic studio in organizational contexts, such as a permanent residency of an artist in a company. This focus on the residency is important to understand how the creation of a dedicated space for the artists within the company and the continuous interaction between them and the company’s employees can be crucial to foster innovation. Indeed, residencies are not usually spent within a company setting, but within an artistic institution. The residency is company-based when an artist works within the organization to complete a full project that the artist and the company agreed upon. In doing so, the artists use company materials and interact with the members of the organization, on a topic of mutual interest.

The relationship between this type of artistic interventions and organizational innovation can be explained in the light of the stream of research based on materiality (e.g., Leonardi, 2012), where materiality represents a whole set of physical and digital spaces and objects encountered in an organizational context. This stream of research is particularly relevant to discuss innovation processes and innovative decision making (Stigliani and Ravasi, 2012), since it assumes that, beyond language, discourses and interpretation, the objects we are surrounded by are vital to articulate new thoughts, formulate new concepts, and propose new courses of action within the organization. Artifacts, such as notes, product prototypes, powerpoint documents, sketches, have been theorized to be protagonist for knowledge creation process and forward thinking and innovation, especially in the design field (e.g., Hargadon and Sutton, 1997). Artifacts are effective ways of storing knowledge, they create the chance for leveraging a company’s product history, and they constitute means through which concepts and ideas can be rearranged and projected into the future.

Also, artistic interventions, especially when in the form of a long residency, might generate objects that are useful to rethink through a company’s processes and to reorganize previous notions to get inspiration for new strategic thinking, new prototypes, and products. During a residency, an artist introduces a wide range of artifacts, from the preparatory materials (sketches, drawings, prototypes, raw materials, and artist’s tools) to the final output of the artistic process. With respect to the usual objects created during production phases in a company setting, the artifacts produced during the artistic residency, while intertwined with the core business of the company, have a deep bond with the art world. We argue that being their nature is so complex, they can work as an even more powerful source of innovative thinking with respect to traditional artifacts.

This concept can be exemplified by the residency the artist Sissi⁶ spent in Elica, an Italian company producing kitchen range hoods. As one of the artistic interventions conducted by FEC for Factories, the residency gave birth to three art works, named by the artist ‘Aspiranti Aspiratori’⁷ (2012). During the residency, the artist was constantly present within the company and was in an ongoing exchange with the participants of the artistic intervention who consisted of technicians in charge of prototyping the hoods before they went into the production phase. The artist created her studio on the shop floor of the company, in the corner of the prototyping room; the studio was made of materials from the production process, and it was meant as a space of both private composition and exchange between the artist and the technicians. For this residency, the artist was required to reflect upon the concept of purification, since the company was thinking of entering a new area of business related to air purification. During the residency, the artist produced numerous artifacts, many of them created by changing and intervening on the shape and on the purpose of tools and objects that already existed at the shop floor. For instance, the artist drew her models of air purifiers on the original documents the technicians used to develop the prototype of a kitchen hood, changing the nature and the purpose of these plans. In addition, while doing this, the artist asked for constant information and feedback to (and from) the technicians, often resulting in them working with their tools in ways that were unrelated to their original functions and in a completely different way with respect to the usual working routines.

Beyond thinking, drawing, and sketching, the artist created from scratch three purifiers out of the ten she had envisioned. To do this, she used materials from the shop floor, again by relying on something that was familiar to the company but completely changing the shape, the look, and the function of these objects. These purifiers were later displayed inside the company, so they could be visible and appreciated as part of the legacy of this artistic intervention. Furthermore, the artist created a video and a book that documented the whole process of ideation, prototyping, selection, and production of the purifiers. These products represented the artifacts where the company and the artist met metaphorically since they collected all the relevant steps the artist did at the shop floor to create her purifiers. On one hand, the book stood for the narrative the artist gave back to the company, as a sensemaking activity she did to document and to build an interpretation of how, where and when her art and poetry had been intertwined with the organizational life. On the other, the video described the aspirators’ creation. The artifacts can leave organizational spaces to enter artistic institutions; previous studies show museums are often involved in the final phase of artistic interventions, with both the organization and the artists involved (Berthoin Antal, 2012). In this case, the book was presented at MAMbo – Museo d’Arte Moderna di Bologna, within the IX edition of the Bologna Artelibro Festival 2012; while the artist’s personal exhibit was presented at the Aike-Dellarco Gallery in Shanghai, in 2013.

These artifacts were not all created by the artist with the explicit purpose of stimulating innovation or knowledge exchange. However, these artefacts were disseminated and made available while the artist was operating, relying on the collaboration of company employees, and they became a source of reflection for the organization. In the words of one of the technicians: ‘the artist took out our blueprints and she drew on them with her stuff, making shapes that were unusual for us, to design her own sketches for the purifiers. She was using the blueprints in a completely different way from us, the blueprints, they are believed to be ‘sacred’ materials for prototyping. I was surprised and pushed to see our usual and familiar tool in a different way’ (Paolino, Smarrelli, and Carè, 2018, p. 100). This spontaneous reflection, coupled with the availability of the artist and her objects, stimulated a different way of thinking about the company’s production processes and about company products themselves. Indeed, after the residency was over, even though the purifier could not be launched as a new line of product, a kitchen hood designed with a mirror was launched by the company. The ‘mirroring purifier’ was one of the three purifiers the

artist decided to realize within her studio and that was also made available in the main building of the company, ultimately acting as a source of inspiration for new product development.

The role of the arts manager in the artistic interventions

Artistic interventions open a new space within art foundations, within business organizations and arts organizations for the role of the arts manager, who should be in charge of conceiving and managing the interventions, of negotiating the conditions and the applications of these collaborations, and in enhancing the integration of art within companies.

The state of the research in the field has highlighted there is a potential role to be filled to make the presence of art and artistic interventions more frequent, more structured and effective at the workplace and promote the presence of the works of art produced with the interventions in public arts institutions. A research carried out on 160 corporate art collections in Italy (Paolino and Bodega, 2016) has illustrated that almost 70% of these art collections are not managed by a full-time employee or a dedicated team, whose background is consistent with the goal of integrating art within the workplace. Most of the time, individuals in charge of the art collection, and all the activities referred to it, are managers in the company officially with a role in corporate communication and marketing, and who are lent part-time to the management of the collection (or they are external consultants, generally trained as art advisors). While the work of these managers has been extremely precious to enhance the role of art in the workplace dynamics, the research has also illustrated that the best-managed collections were those that had a dedicated team or a full-time employee in charge. In these cases, managers in charge of the collections and of the artistic activities of the company were permanent and long-tenured employees either with a background in arts administration or in the humanities, and always identifiable as strongly aware of the processes and history of the company. To improve the effectiveness of art at the workplace, these results pinpoint the importance of a stable managerial role, socialized within the organization, and who is an expert in the art field and in the administrative processes the artistic production requires to be managed and promoted better.

In addition, as previously described and scrutinized, another research stream has specifically clarified the role of 'intermediaries' in artistic interventions, meaning with 'intermediaries' those organizations and individuals 'seeking out artists and organizations, matching them and making contractual arrangements; helping specify the focus of the project; assisting in finding funding; providing a framework to structure the process; addressing conflicts that may emerge; communicating with authorities and the media locally and beyond; monitoring progress; evaluating results and; stimulating cross-fertilization between projects' (Berthoin Antal, 2012, p. 53). It was observed that for corporate art collections, these intermediaries also were usually separated from the organization that requires the artistic interventions.

However, given the strategic values of the activities they carry out and the potential impact they have on the organization, the opportunity for internalizing them and for creating 'arts manager' positions for these activities can be easily envisioned. This internationalization of the intermediaries' activities could be meaningful both for traditional companies and for arts institutions that promote and organize artistic interventions.

When we look at traditional companies, based on the experiences analyzed in this chapter, the role of arts manager at the workplace can go far beyond the previously listed activities of matching, funding, organizing, and communicating. A broader role can be designed for arts managers in organizations investing in art and artistic interventions; this role can include the strategic task of keeping the memory of the interventions, spreading the knowledge coming from them to the whole organization and sustaining innovation and continuous change.

When we look at arts organizations, artistic interventions can become a part of the institutional activity of a theatre or a museum, to promote and spread art and to raise funding. Examples in Italy can be found in the experience of some extremely important theatres, such as Teatro Litta in Milan, which provides team building activities for companies. While team building could not be properly considered, in the light of the FEC activities we discussed in the chapter, as an authentic artistic intervention, this is a sign that there could be attempts from arts institutions to expand their activities to improve companies' workplace through arts and that this new field will require arts management abilities.

So, either if internalized within a company or an arts organization, or if included within the professions of an intermediary such as a foundation, we propose that beyond the activities Berthoin Antal (2012) specified, the following responsibilities can be referred to the arts manager organizing artistic interventions:

- Integrating art and artistic interventions within the knowledge management process of the company where the artistic intervention takes place: art works within an art collection or produced during artistic interventions should not be left stored in places that are detached from the normal routine of the working life and the daily processes of the organizations. These artefacts, including the prototypes and the documenting materials (books, videos, pictures) should be organized so that they can be available as much as the artefacts from the traditional production process or the history of the company. The responsibility of the arts manager should be that of promoting the presence of artefacts and documents within the formal places and channels through which the organization normally gathers, stores, and changes critical information and knowledge.
- Negotiating the conditions of the arrangement between organizations, artists and other institutions: the organization of an artistic intervention requires various phases and meetings of the parties that may be managers with a different background, employees, artists and other artistic entities. The role of an arts manager in shaping the conditions of a contractual arrangement is crucial; for this reason, the arts manager should help the communication of needs and the relative arrangements among the parties involved in the artistic intervention. Thanks to arts and the business background, the arts manager can make contractual arrangements that meet all involved parties' needs as an intermediary (Berthoin Antal, 2012).
- Being in charge of the company storytelling: artistic interventions have been highlighted as important to change the storytelling around the company for its external and internal audiences (Berthoin Antal, 2012). While this task is usually delegated to the communication department, it is important that the storytelling of artistic interventions be created and narrated by the arts manager, the most knowledgeable and reliable employee to create a narrative of art at the workplace. The main responsibility is that of integrating this storytelling within the history of the company. At the same time, the arts manager needs to understand when it is important to innovate the storytelling and to propose a new trajectory for the company values and identity through different interventions. Last, the arts manager needs to create, when possible, continuity among artistic interventions, so that the deep intents and principles of the company to organize them can always be understood and clear. When considering the artistic interventions organized by arts organization, the storytelling has to be also developed internally. In Italy, the management side of arts is still in its infancy when we look at its application in our institutions. To start artistic interventions could be even a disruptive for the organizing institutions and deserves to be contextualized concerning its missions, values, and audience.

Managerial implications and the 'dark side' of artistic interventions

In this chapter, we have discussed and presented how artistic interventions can be particularly beneficial to organizational development and performance by highlighting how they can impact the nature of the relationship between the employee and the organization, the learning processes within a company, and how they can foster innovation. We illustrated the case of artistic interventions, supported and sponsored by one of the main Italian private foundations, FEC, whose mission is spreading the value of contemporary art to support company identity, forward thinking and performance.

In Table 25.2, we illustrate the recommendations to guide the managerial actions when thinking and organizing artistic interventions at the workplace. These recommendations are generally valuable when artistic interventions take place in the organization, but we try to connect them with the three particular issues we discussed in the chapter. Given the increasing interest of organizations in achieving the benefits of artistic interventions (e.g., Purg and Sutherland, 2017), the growing participation of artistic institutions in the promotion of the outputs, and the development of stronger networks bridging different actors involved, we first address general recommendations for the organization aiming to undertake an artistic intervention, and we later specify the role of the arts managers to support identification processes, learning and innovation by referring to different phases characterizing their implementation.

Table 25.2 shows that, in order to support identification processes, the organization should first reflect upon its current values and future needs; the role of the arts manager in this first phase is to contribute to the selection of an artistic project that can challenge the people in the organization to reflect on a currently relevant issue. The second row shows the recommendations to include an artistic intervention aimed at supporting learning. In a first phase, the organization includes within the HR training an intervention that is coherent with the latest trends in management and adult learning. The role of the arts manager in this phase is to contribute to the selection and the structuring of the proper training intervention, by integrating its competences from management and the arts and by involving an artist open to embrace mistakes during the process. Later, while the artist should be allowed to create dissonance, the role of the arts manager is to mediate the actors involved and to act as a role model in embracing the creation of dissonance at the workplace. Last, with respect to artistic interventions with the aim to support innovation, the crucial part is the creation of an artistic residency within the organizational walls; the role of the arts manager is to share the need for innovation and change by inviting and sustaining the discussion on relevant business issues and by selecting the artist that is more capable of introducing groundbreaking innovation through the arts. Once the residency has started, the role of the arts manager is to manage these organizational spaces by integrating the needs of the artist with organizational practices. As summarized in the last column of each intervention presented in Table 21.2, the arts manager should always be in charge of the storytelling not only inside the organization but also with external institutions.

Beyond the implications and advantages discussed so far, extant research and practice has also highlighted the possible risks and negative effects that artistic interventions can produce at the workplace. The drawbacks can be summarized in three main categories:

1. The foundation/the company/the arts organization organizes artistic interventions without positioning them within the broader picture of the corporate values and performance. One of the main implications is that artistic interventions are interpreted by employees as outdoor or team building activities, meant more to generate an immediate sense of affection toward the organization or a team, than for developing strategic capabilities. In this

Table 25.2 Recommendations to support an effective implementation of artistic interventions, to foster identification, learning and innovation

<p>To support identification processes</p> <p>The role of the arts manager to support identification processes</p>	<p>The company values system</p> <p>Before articulating the artistic intervention, the organization should reflect upon its current values and how and whether they are going to change in the future. This reflection is fundamental to select an artistic project that can challenge the organizational population. The aim is to make them think about the new values and the new course of action the organization wants to take and to build a sense out of them.</p> <p>To contribute to the selection of an artistic project that is able to challenge the people in the organization to reflect on a current relevant issue.</p>	<p>Long term approach</p> <p>After the artistic intervention, it is important not to push for an immediate check of the outcome of the intervention in terms of identification (for instance through the results of the organizational climate survey, in terms of commitment and willingness to stay in the company). The stimuli the artistic intervention can provide to substitute the current values with new and alternative ones need time to consolidate and to be spread across the company. Especially in crisis times, pushing for an indicator to check the effectiveness of the intervention would only emphasize a utilitarian approach and being detrimental to the elaboration of new values.</p> <p>To be in charge of the storytelling inside the company and with external institutions, without pushing to immediately check an economic outcome. When the artistic intervention is organized by an art organization, this long term approach has to be nurtured also internally to give the organization the time to grasp the implications of this project for the theatre/museum life.</p>
<p>To support learning</p> <p>The role of the arts manager to support learning</p>	<p>The approach to errors in the poetry of the artist</p> <p>It is important that, when the artistic intervention is included within the HR training, the structure of the intervention includes a dialogue about the recent trends in management and adult learning. The acceptance of mistakes during training has been demonstrated to foster the acquisition of complex competences and to be more effective for the transfer of</p>	<p>The creation of dissonance</p> <p>To foster learning by introducing a new way of thinking in the organization, it is fundamental that the artistic intervention creates a dissonance – a break in the language, objects, processes the organizational population is used to. So, the objects, the words, the concepts the artist is going to rely on need to create a disruption, a ‘messy’ area, which can later support the involvement in the artistic experience and the experimentation of new frames and new styles of reasoning.</p>
<p>The role of the arts manager to support learning</p>	<p>The promotion of a ‘sensorial’ experience</p> <p>The artistic intervention has to propose a different way of processing information, stimulating aesthetic reflexivity and knowledge creation. This implies that, instead of deductive reasoning and traditional rational decision making, the artistic intervention stimulates an</p>	<p>The promotion of a ‘sensorial’ experience</p> <p>The artistic intervention has to propose a different way of processing information, stimulating aesthetic reflexivity and knowledge creation. This implies that, instead of deductive reasoning and traditional rational decision making, the artistic intervention stimulates an</p>

these competences on the job. Thus, if the company is aiming to reflect and transfer competences, such as team dynamics and project organization, it is recommended that the artist is open to embrace mistakes in its poetry and work and to accept them authentically.

The arts manager need to be both an expert in training processes and to be able to understand how the research of one artist could be more or less suitable for discussing errors, dissonance and promoting an aesthetic experience.

To support innovation The role of the arts manager to support innovation

Opportunity to intervene on a relevant business/organizational issue

If process or product innovation is the goal of the company, the artist should be invited to work on a precise and relevant business issue. For example, the brainstorming for the launch of a new product or the renewal of a particular production/ideation phase rather than, for instance, working on more general and organizational issues such company identity or training strategies. Being located in this area, the artist intervention could be focused on a specific matter and contribute to it more explicitly. To share the need for innovation and change by inviting and sustaining the discussion on relevant business issues. To contribute to the selection of an artist whose poetry includes the discussion of change and innovation.

inductive process, relying on data collection approaches based on the five senses stimulation.

The artistic residency/the art studio format

The residency is the ideal format to contribute to product innovation, since it implies a long stay of the artists within the company and the opportunity for them to intervene on company spaces and objects, in a mutual exchange and in a process of slow and reciprocal familiarization between the artist and the organizational population.

To manage the organizational spaces in which the residency is taking place, by integrating the needs of the artists with organizational practices.

The material production

The format of the residency and of the studio are important because they generate the chance to create multiple and intermediate artefacts at the interspace between the world of art and the organizational settings.

These artefacts are essential to leave a 'heritage' of the artist intervention that can be a source of reflection and inspiration to organize new ideas and concepts eventually.

To build the storytelling around the artefacts, inside and outside the company.

way, the employees miss the value of artistic interventions as the chance to look at and to think about their organization in an unedited way and to propose an initiative to change and improve their work processes. In particular, Berthoin, Debucquet, and Frémeaux (2017) have shown how the lack of visible support from top managers and of sensemaking orientation generate interventions of little added value.

2. The artistic interventions can generate a feeling of *muteness* (Taylor, 2002). It might happen that the art process and the artist do not manage to connect with employees' work and daily activities; or that employees do not manage to articulate the meaning of the artistic intervention, remaining metaphorically *mute*. The art work and the process are too distant to be perceived as powerful means to reflect upon the organizational life and employees find it impossible to interpret the experience and its implications. In these cases, it is likely that this impossibility to articulate their thinking on the artistic intervention is followed by a reinforcement of the 'old' stereotype of the relationship between art and daily work, seen as opposite and pertaining to the different realms of creativity and standardization.
3. Once the artistic intervention is over or the art work is removed from the organizational space, this absence can generate a sense of emptiness. This is especially true when artistic interventions had the chance to change the organization physically, to influence the patterns of interpretation employees were used to, and to change the contents of their conversations and the way they approached their daily working tools. Both in the case of muteness and emptiness, the role of the arts manager, as depicted in the previous paragraph, can be crucial to support employees' interpretation and to create a feeling of continuity between interventions.

In this chapter, we explored the nature of artistic interventions with the aim to highlight their benefits and the possible criticalities for organizations; therefore, we framed the role of the art manager for the implementation and the success of these interventions and we provided recommendations and made a list of the possible drawbacks.

We hope this chapter will contribute to stimulating interest in introducing artistic intervention in organizations. Indeed, it is important to create opportunities for accumulating more evidence about the implications of artistic interventions, in order to advance our knowledge about how these interventions should be implemented at the workplace. Finally, we believe that a more extensive use of artistic interventions could enlarge the role of arts managers both in the for-profit and in non-profit organizations.

Notes

- 1 For a full view of the activities of the foundation: www.fondazionecasoli.org/
- 2 For a full profile of the artist and of his work: www.danilocorreale.com/
- 3 For a full description of 'The Game': www.danilocorreale.com/the-game/; 'The Game', Artist Book, 2014, produced by FEC
- 4 For a full view of the project VITRIOL: www.andreamastrovito.com/index2.php?pagina=works&id_cat=0013&id_prod=00000167; VITRIOL, Artist book, 2016, produced by FEC
- 5 For a full profile of the artist and of his work: www.andreamastrovito.com/index.php
- 6 For a full profile of the artist and her work: <https://cargocollective.com/sissi>
- 7 'Aspiranti Aspiratori' means literally: 'aspiring aspirators'. The artist was asked by the company to work on the concept of air purification and she decided to name the all project with this pun. For a complete review of 'Aspiranti Aspiratori': www.fondazionecasoli.org/attivita/fec-for-factories/fec-for-factories-aspiranti-aspiratori-di-sissi-2012/.

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