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Understanding Arts-Based Methods in Managerial Development

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With the rising use of arts-based methods in organizational development and change, scholars have started to inquire into how and why these methods work. We identify four processes that are particular to the way in which arts-based methods contribute to the development of individual organization managers and leaders: through the transference of artistic skills, through projective techniques, through the evocation of "essence," and through creating artifacts such as masks, collages, or sculpture, a process we call "making." We illustrate these processes in detail with two case examples and then discuss the implications for designing the use of arts-based methods for managerial and leadership development.

At Virginia Commonwealth University, medical residents are taught theater skills to increase their clinical empathy (Dow, Leong, Anderson, & Wenzel, 2007). At the LEGO company in Denmark, managers build 3-dimensional representations of their organizational strategy using LEGO bricks (Roos, Victor, & Statler, 2004). U.S. Army leaders look to the film *Twelve O'Clock High* to illustrate key lessons about leadership (Bognar, 1998). MBA students at Babson College take art classes to enhance their creativity (Pinard & Allio, 2005). These are four examples of the many ways that the arts are used in managerial development. Although all four can be categorized as arts-based methods, we theorize that they are driven by fundamentally different processes; that is to say, they are informed by different assumptions about art and how it contributes to human development.

With the rise of the use of arts-based methods to assist individual, as well as organizational development and change, scholars have started to inquire into how and why these methods work (e.g., Darso, 2004; Nissley, 2004; Taylor, 2008). These explicit theorizations of art-based methods in organizations, as well as the implicit theorizations in other descriptions of arts-based methods (e.g., Beckwith, 2003; Gibb, 2004; Monks, Barker, & Mhanachain, 2001) come from a wide

variety of perspectives and address different levels of individual and organizational change. Currently, it is very difficult to talk about "arts-based methods" in any coherent way because a wide range of approaches that can result in a variety of different goals and outcomes are used. At worst, arts-based methods can act as the "flavor of the month," adding something new and engaging to managerial development activities with little idea of what that something is. At best, skilled practitioners use arts-based methods to help achieve well-defined objectives, but they provide little articulation of how and why these methods work differently than conventional approaches. We intend to honor the diversity of perspectives and methods that exist, while offering a framework that describes and categorizes the specific ways different arts-based methods contribute to individuals' development as managers and leaders.

To do this, we propose that arts-based methods are underpinned by four distinctive processes that do not operate within conventional organizational development approaches. These processes have been identified through a systematic review of the literature and supplemented through reflection on our own practices within the manager and leadership development fields:

- *Skills transfer.* Arts-based methods can facilitate the development of artistic skills that can be usefully applied in organizational settings (e.g., medical residents being taught theater skills to increase their clinical empathy).
- *Projective technique.* The output of artistic endeavors allows participants to reveal inner thoughts and feelings that may not be accessible through more conventional developmental modes (e.g., managers building 3-dimensional representations of their organizational strategy using LEGO bricks).
- *Illustration of essence.* Arts-based methods can enable participants to apprehend the "essence" of a concept, situation, or tacit knowledge in a particular way, revealing depths and connections that more propositional and linear developmental orientations cannot (e.g., the film *Twelve O'Clock High* being used to illustrate key lessons about leadership).
- *Making.* The very making of art can foster a deeper experience of personal presence and connection, which can serve as a healing process for managers and leaders who may so often experience their lives as fragmented and disconnected (e.g., MBA students taking art classes to enhance their creativity).

We hope the ideas we present here will assist those designing interventions that incorporate arts-based methods to think more clearly about the particular contribution such processes can make, and thus to use them in a more informed and discerning manner. We discuss each process in detail, but first we step back to explore the fundamental epistemological characteristics of arts-based methods.

Arts-Based Methods

Adler (2006) documents the recent increase in the use of arts-based methods as part of a broader cross-fertilization between business and the arts. She suggests that business has turned to the arts because of five trends: (1) increasing global connectedness, (2) increasing domination of market forces, (3) an increasingly complex and chaotic environment, (4) decrease in the cost of experimentation, and (5) yearning for significance. She sees business leadership potentially learning courage from the arts—the courage to see reality, the courage to envision possibility, and the courage to bring reality to possibility. Weick (2007) also sees a complex and chaotic environment and suggests that the traditional business tools of logic and rationality are ill suited to this environment:

Consider the tools of traditional logic and rationality. Those tools presume that the world is stable, knowable, and predictable. To set aside those tools is not to give up on

finding a workable way to keep moving. It is only to give up one means of direction finding that is ill-suited to the unstable, the unknowable, and the unpredictable. To drop the tools of rationality is to gain access to lightness in the form of intuitions, feelings, stories, improvisation, experience, imagination, active listening, awareness in the moment, novel words, and empathy. All of these nonlogical activities enable people to solve problems and enact their potential (p. 15).

Underneath both Adler's and Weick's arguments is a realization that there is a fundamentally different way of approaching the world than is embodied in the traditional tools of logic and rationality that have dominated management research and business school education. We argue that arts-based methods can provide a means of accessing and developing this way of approaching the world, which in turn could contribute to a more holistic way of engaging with managerial contexts. The field of organizational aesthetics (see Taylor & Hansen, 2005 for a review) articulates an epistemology consistent with this approach. In response to Descartes' focus on knowing as logic and rational thought, Baumgarten (1750/1936) and Vico (1744/1948) argued that there was also a different form of knowing that came directly from our five senses. *Aesthetics* is the study of this sensuous knowing (Strati, 1999, 2007), and the arts work from and with this sort of knowing rather than with knowing based in logic and rational thinking. It is in this sensuous knowing that Weick's lightness, intuition, and imagination resides. Working with this sensuous knowing is the source of Adler's courage.

This difference in ways of knowing is at the heart of Heron's extended epistemology (1992). He uses the terms presentational knowing and propositional knowing, saying, "*Presentational knowing* . . . provides the first form of expressing meaning and significance through drawing on expressive forms of imagery through movement, dance, sound, music, drawing, painting, sculpture, poetry, poetry, story, drama, and so on. *Propositional knowing* 'about' something, is knowing through ideas and theories, expressed in informative statements" (Heron & Reason, 2001: 183). Accessing our embodied, sensuous knowing through presentational methods and forms rather than through propositional methods and forms is the distinctive characteristic of arts-based methods.

The great benefit of presentational forms is that they provide relatively direct access to our felt experience and draw upon our emotional connection to our self, others, and our experience. Propo-

sitional methods and forms filter out the feeling and emotion in pursuit of precision, clarity, and objectivity. The result is often that “traditional accounts of management and organization often appear to resemble reality, yet fail to grasp the essence of their being” (King, 2007: 225). However, we suggest that presentational forms are not identical in either their underlying informing process or in the outcomes they foster. Different approaches have different powers. Managers engaging with Shakespearean plays experience a kind of engagement that is distinct from those invited to make masks representing their authentic leadership self. In the following section, we identify and describe four underpinning processes, which we suggest are the “drivers” behind different arts-based methods, and which will shape correspondingly distinctive outcomes.

FOUR PROCESSES UNDERPINNING ARTS-BASED METHODS

We have reviewed the literature on arts-based methods, paying particular attention to empirical accounts of how they are used to develop individuals. Many of the accounts focus on the actual methods and their results, with little exploration of the underlying mechanisms by which those outcomes occur. Those that do hypothesize about how these methods make their impact are largely descriptive. We have analyzed these accounts and distilled what we recognize as underpinning drivers for each method into the four processes explored in greater detail below.

Skills Transfer

The essential concept behind skills transfer is simple enough—there are particular skills learned in the arts that can then be effectively applied to the management of organizations. This idea has long been present in the discussion of the benefit of the arts in education (e.g., Eisner, 2002; McCarthy, Ondaatje, Zakaras, & Brooks, 2004). To begin, we look at examples of the transfer of particular skills, such as when senior executives learn to conduct an orchestra in the hopes that they will be able to conduct their management team with the same high level of collaboration.

Anecdotal examples of skills transfer are abundant in the literature. In some cases the skills have been learned in the arts, but aren't obviously arts-based skills. For example, Daum (2005) tells of two entrepreneurs who credit their success in business to skills they learned as artists. One recounted how her philosophy of “measure twice, cut once,”

which came from doing art installations on a budget, had helped her control costs. For the other, the skill was an ability to recognize a lack of commitment in band members who were thinking of leaving, which transferred to identifying a lack of commitment in brokers.

More typically, the skills are particular to the art and are then applied to business, such as Barrett's (1998) model of leadership development based on how jazz players improvise. Key lessons that are fundamental to jazz, such as “take advantage of errors as a source of learning” become skills that can be applied to leadership in organizations. In the case of jazz, these skills are often thought of as principles or applying the metaphor of jazz (e.g., Walzer & Salcher, 2003), perhaps because teaching managers actual jazz skills would require that the managers know or learn musical instruments with a relatively high level of mastery. Skills from improvisation in theater are more readily taught, for instance when improv games are used to teach participants skills of paying close attention (e.g., Corsun, Young, McManus, & Erdem, 2006).

There is an empirical basis for the concept of skills transfer, both anecdotally and from a study at Yale Medical School. The Yale study found that giving medical students an introductory art history seminar improved their diagnostic skills substantially because the skill of seeing the details in paintings had transferred to seeing details in their patients (Dolev, Friedlaender, Krohner, & Braverman, 2001).

In moving from considering the transfer of specific skills to how arts-based methods might be used in the application of broader principles, a different process may seem to be in operation, but we suggest that they are fundamentally the same. For example, Austin and Devin (2003) explore how software development might learn from theatrical production, and they suggest four qualities of artful making: release, collaboration, ensemble, and play. These qualities require a certain set of skills. For example, collaboration requires the skill of not being driven by vanity and ego and the skill to say “yes and” to others' contributions. At a slightly broader level Denhardt and Denhardt (2006) have undertaken a similar analysis, looking at what leaders might learn from dance, such as the interplay of space, time and energy, and the rhythms of human interaction. And broader yet, Richards (1995) suggests managers should approach all work as an art, suggesting that we seek joy in our work, work to nurture our spirit, claim ownership of our work processes, and use our whole self. Thus the process of skills transfer operates both in the application of specific skills, such as the oratory

skills of an actor being learned by an executive who needs to make many presentations, to more meta-capabilities, such as an approach to managing or leading as art (e.g., Grint, 2001; Vaill, 1989).

Projective Technique

A second process we have identified is that of using the arts as a means of fostering reflection through projection. The idea of using art as a projective technique is based in Langer's (1942) conception of art as a presentational form that expresses tacit, embodied knowing (as opposed to a discursive form, which represents intellectual, propositional knowing). Langer tells us, "the primary function of art is to objectify experience so that we can contemplate and understand it" (1962: 90). By making art about our own experience, we in effect make that experience exist as an object in the world. It is an object that can contain contradictions (logical and/or moral) as well as unrealized possibilities that are not constrained by logic or the limitations of our current lives. In this way, art making enables us to draw upon, and subsequently reflect on, a deep well of "unconscious stuff."

The philosopher of aesthetics Paul Crowther (1993) begins to explain how this occurs by suggesting that in art making, sensible material is invested with form in a way that exemplifies the interaction between attention, apprehension, and projection, the three key requirements for self-consciousness. The creation of artifacts, or engagement with such artifacts, he argues, enables us to articulate the structures of attention, apprehension, and projection in a way that draws on our cognitive and perceptual capacities operating as a unified field—rather than our intellectual capacities alone. Crowther (1993) elaborates on the power of the interplay of attention, comprehension, and projection when he writes:

Our present attention to and comprehension of the artifact declares that flesh of the past, and of future possibilities which is always projected around self-consciousness's immediate moment of awareness . . . it enables "projection" to be grasped in a more total way . . . it presents the projective relation in an enduring, and objective form, thus lifting it from that zone of transient and distracting every day pre-occupation which cloud our subjective experience of it (166).

In this way, the art objects that are created are a window on the unconscious (Malchiodi, 1998) and

can allow participants to see things they cannot with words alone (New Zealand Management, 2005). Linking these ideas to the organizational theory literature, Linstead (2006) suggests that aesthetic forms have an important role to play in helping to make tacit knowledge of "invisible" concepts, such as "culture" visible. In fact, he proposes that culture can best be explored and presented through artistic forms because they make the tacit and felt experience of culture an object in the world. Culture is a particularly good example of where arts-based methods are useful; however, any organizational phenomena, such as group dynamics, leadership, or politics that is to some degree tacit and felt can be the subject of arts-based methods to be made visible and projected into the world.

An example of using art as a projective technique is Visual Explorer (Palus & Horth, 2001), a set of 200 images. Individuals select the image that best captures a complex problem or issue they are trying to address, and then they discuss what the image says about the issue in a group. The person who selected the image may see one thing, while others may see something else. The resulting dialogue helps everyone see the issue from new perspectives and delve into the unspoken ways in which each perceives the situation. Similarly, Imagination Lab's Serious Play method enables people to use LEGOs to build organizational strategy (Burgi & Roos, 2003; Burgi, Victor, & Lentz, 2004; Burgi, Jacobs, & Roos, 2005; Roos et al., 2004).

One way of thinking about how projective techniques work relates to Taylor's (2003) explication of "knowing in your gut" and "knowing in your head." He suggests that tacit, felt knowledge is more readily known from a bodily, rather than rational perspective. What projective techniques enable is a nondiscursive representation of this "gut-felt knowing." The resulting object can be reflected upon and worked with in ways that are impossible until the felt knowing becomes an "object in the world." Through working with the object, the knowing it embodies can be intellectualized into "knowing in the head," and this knowing is now much richer, more nuanced, and more complete than it would otherwise be. This is the power and benefit of using projective techniques within manager and leader development.

Illustration of Essence

The third process we consider, "illustration of essence" is conceptually similar to projective technique yet distinct in ways that merit discussing it

as a separate process. Like projective techniques, using art to illustrate essence involves art as an object that can be reflected on in the world. However, when art is used to illustrate essence, rather than as a way to evoke personal meaning and sense-making, it embodies universally recognized qualities, situations, emotional responses, or ways of being.

Perhaps the most common way that this process gets enacted is when literature is used in management education to provide a complex and nuanced view of organizational life (Cohen, 1998). There has become a virtual cottage industry in mining Shakespeare's work for management lessons (e.g., Augustine & Adelman, 1999; Burnham, Augustine, & Adelman, 2001; Corrigan, 1999; Shafritz, 1999; Whitney & Packer, 2000) as well as other playwrights (Garaventa, 1998). There is also a significant use of film within management education in the same way (e.g., Champoux, 1999).

In addition to using great works of art, such as Shakespeare, or works from popular culture, such as current films, the illustration-of-essence process can draw upon other arts-based methods. For example, improvisational theater games have been used to make participants aware of the perceptual shortcuts they tend to take (Corsun et al., 2006). Rather than using improvisation as a window into participants' subconscious, (as would be the case were the activity being used as a projective technique), Corsun et al. show how improvisation can be incorporated to illustrate the essence of an ongoing tendency.

Similarly, Grisham (2006) describes how leaders in cross-cultural settings can build trust and empathy through storytelling and the use of poetry. By sharing and highlighting the essence of something that is important to them in their sense-making of such art-forms, leaders bridge cultural gaps and find common understanding and ways of connecting with one another. The purpose that illustration of essence serves, particularly in relation to leadership and the use of narrative is further explored in Taylor, Fisher, and Dufresne's (2002) theory of the aesthetics of leadership storytelling. They suggest that the power of storytelling rests in its ability to convey felt meaning directly without being "explained" by our rationalizing faculties. Furthermore, because the story is enjoyable it is remembered and retold. When art is used as illustration of essence, we get the idea of the essence of the concept being communicated directly, and much of our intellectual filtering is bypassed.

For example, consider the cautionary tale of the Chevrolet Nova. Countless marketing students are told that General Motors introduced the Nova into

Spanish-speaking markets only to be surprised when it didn't sell because "Nova" literally translates as "doesn't go" in Spanish. It's a great story, but it isn't true (Mikkelson & Mikkelson, 1999). Nonetheless, it is told and repeated again and again. The audience gets the felt meaning of the story and doesn't engage in the intellectual filtering that might lead to discovering that it isn't true. Additionally, the audience connects to the idea of a powerful corporation making such an obvious mistake and enjoys the story, which leads to its retelling.

There are similarities between the way art is used to illustrate essence within presentational forms and the way theory is used to illustrate essence in more propositional forms of knowledge. In both cases, the aim is to distill the key aspects of a situation and provide some important insight into those aspects. However, there are important differences too, which point to the particular power arts-based methods can have within this arena. Theory states an abstract concept that is meant to have *convergent generalizability*, or be true and the same for all. Art offers a specific illustration that is meant to have each observer connect to it in their own particular way and thus has *divergent generalizability* (Taylor, 2004).

For example, two people could watch the same production of *Hamlet* and both could resonate with the truth of the play for themselves. However, for one that truth is about a self-questioning, existential crisis and for the other it is about the problematic nature of taking revenge. For both there is a strong claim for generalizability in the play, but the nature of what is generalizable is divergent. In this way, using art to illustrate essence overlaps into using it as a projective technique.

Following the idea that using art to illustrate essence is similar to the role that theory plays in our understanding of events, we can then recognize the other side of the process. Just as with theory, art shows us the essential aspects of something and then guides our action in that situation. If Shakespeare's *Hamlet* has shown us the problems of indecision for a leader, then we can be guided to be more decisive in our own leadership. While most social science theory makes its claim to truth based on empirical evidence and rigorous testing, art makes its claim to truth based on resonance with the individual. The power then, of using art in this way is through the way it can connect with a direct, felt-sense of knowing, which includes the totality of one's experience and emotional response.

Making

Richards (1995) tells us, "as the artist creates the work, the work creates the artist" (pp. 9, 81, 119)—it is part of his credo for artful work. Richards sees all work as something that "does us" rather than something "we do." He suggests that work which lacks "artfulness" is cut off from the individual's deep interior life. When we detach from that interior life, a little of the self dies. In contrast, artistic making draws upon the richness of the inner life and allows it to flourish and contribute to our experience of more fulsome living.

The field of art therapy recognizes the power of art making as a method of healing independently of any artifact that results. Malchiodi tells us:

Art making is seen as an opportunity to express oneself imaginatively, authentically, and spontaneously, an experience that, over time, can lead to personal fulfillment, emotional reparation, and transformation (1998: 5).

She goes on to argue that art making can provide an emotional release through the cathartic effect of containing largely subconscious ideas, experiences, and emotions. Furthermore, the physiological process of making art tends to be calming and is associated with increases in serotonin (a neurotransmitter linked to alleviating depression).

The evolutionary biologist, Ellen Dissanayake argues that as humans we have an inherent drive to make things. She says:

Human brains and minds evolved to enable the learning of manual skills from others and the devising of practical solutions for the requirements of ancestral environments—to cope, "hands on," with the demands of life. Simply by doing what we were born to do evokes a sense—subliminal or fully felt—of competence, of being at home in the world. Such a sense is often undeveloped in modern humans, because they inhabit a prefabricated and electronic environment and pay others to provide their food, clothing, shelter, utensils, and everything else. If making things for our lives was necessary, then manual interaction with the natural world (for the source for all of those things from which ancestral lives were constructed) would also have to be inherently satisfying. Hating one's work, feeling demeaned by it, failing or being unable to do it would have put individuals at such a selective disadvantage that they would not have propagated these negative

predispositions or ineptitudes (Dissanayake, 2000: 100).

But it is not just satisfaction that we get from making art. Dissanayake also speaks of the meditative aspects of the seemingly repetitious, detailed work that is part of many forms of making art such as throwing pots, carving wood, and so forth. It can produce a "contemplative state with access to remote parts of the mind seldom available to those who dash continually after novel experiences" (Dissanayake, 2000: 124).

Dissanayake also describes art making as elaboration (2000) or "making special" (1995). This elaboration is important because it enables us to change and structure our feelings. For example, our ancestors might have changed feelings of terror and anxiety about an impending hunt into feelings of purpose and honor through a communal ceremony involving dance and chanting. For the modern individual, making art likewise offers a means by which they can reevaluate and reflect on their own deep feelings about events in their life.

The use of making as an arts-based process that is independent of the other processes seems to be rare within the current business environment. Making often exists as part of a projective technique process, such as the leadership mask-making exercise described below. Perhaps because the results of "making" are so deeply connected with the individual, and thus somewhat more difficult to relate to instrumental goals of the organization, it has not been explicitly discussed. However, we see exploring the ways in which "making" can impact both on individuals' practice, and more broadly on organizational life as a key area for further inquiry.

A TYPOLOGY OF ARTS-BASED PROCESSES

In practice, we find that many arts-based methods used within manager and leader development include more than one process. In order to increase conceptual clarity and aid in identifying processes, we now turn to the question "in what ways are the processes the same and in what ways are they different?" To address this question, we identify two key dimensions that then form the typology in Figure 1.

Arts-based methods involve both an art process and a resulting product. The horizontal axis of Figure 1 indicates whether a particular method focuses on the art process or the art product. For example, in theater there is a lengthy rehearsal process that results in an art product—the theatrical performance. We draw this distinction from art

Particular	Making	Projective Technique
Universal	Skills Transfer	Illustration of Essence
	Art Process	Art Products

FIGURE 1
A Typology of Arts-Based Processes

therapy which can be thought of as being divided into two camps, one that focuses on the art process independent of any art product that is produced and the other which focuses on the art product as a window into the subconscious (Malchiodi, 1998). Using this distinction, making and skills transfer are focused on the art process. Making is concerned with the deep work that goes on “as the artist creates the work, the work creates the artist” (Richards, 1995: 9, 81, 119). The product of that work is of little importance. An example of this is Buddhist monks who spend weeks carefully creating a beautiful sand mandala and then pour it into the River Thames soon after its completion. Similarly, skills transfers also focuses on the art process rather than the product. When senior managers conduct an orchestra as a developmental exercise, they are doing so primarily to learn how to lead a highly collaborative group, not primarily to produce a beautiful musical performance.

In contrast both projective technique and illustration of essence are focused on the art product. When managers craft their strategy out of LEGO bricks, they are primarily focused on what the resulting sculpture tells them and allows them to discuss about their strategy. They are not as interested in the process of building the LEGO sculpture. Similarly, when managers look to Shakespeare for lessons in leadership, they are not interested in the process that Shakespeare went through to write the plays, but rather are interested in the result of the process—the play itself—and the lessons that it contains for them.

The vertical axis depicts the continuum between focus on the particular, or universal nature of the art. Although great art manages to be both particular and universal, we find that the arts-based methods tend to be focused on one or the other. In our typology, making and projective technique are focused on the particular, while skills transfer and illustration of essence are focused on the universal. For instance, making is focused on the individ-

ual’s unique experience and the personal growth and enrichment that occur during the process of making art. Projective technique is focused on providing a window into the individual’s subconscious and the particular meaning making of each individual. At the other end of the spectrum, skills transfer is concerned with universal skills, such as listening, that can be transferred from the arts experience to other realms. Similarly, illustration of essence is concerned with art that captures a universally recognizable understanding, such as the nature of leadership in Shakespeare’s *Henry V*. When we combine these two dimensions, we have the typology of arts-based methods in Figure 1.

COMBINING PROCESSES

Up until this point we have discussed the four processes as being separate. However, many, if not most, arts-based development approaches combine two or more of these processes. In this section we will discuss two contrasting arts-based methods, which between them draw upon all four processes in order to gain clarity about how they operate both separately and together. We start with a case of leadership mask making at the Banff Centre, which incorporates “making” and “projective technique” processes, and then follow with the Concert of Ideas as conducted by Creative Leaps, which draws on three processes: skills transfer, illustration of essence, and projective technique. The two examples illustrate how different underpinning processes work in practice and provide a flavor of each experience by including commentary from participants in each event.

The leadership mask-making exercise at the Banff Centre is an example of a leadership touchstone exercise (De Ciantis, 1995). In this case it was undertaken by one of the authors. The idea of a leadership touchstone exercise is to engage in art making that captures the essence of the individual’s sense of her own leadership. Creating the touchstone draws on the “making” process, while the finished art object serves as projective technique or touchstone for the individual and her own leadership practice. Both processes are focused on the particular experience of the individual, while making focuses on the process and projective technique focuses on the resulting product.

We shall attempt to show something of the process with an illustration of a leadership mask (the artifact is pictured in Figures 2 and 3) that one of the authors made as part of a leadership development course at the Banff Centre. Below is a partial first-person account of that work:



FIGURE 2
Internal Leadership Mask

We spent the better part of three days (out of five) working with masks. Most of that work did not directly produce any artifact—not even a record of the exercise other than what was etched into our memories. We started with neutral mask work—a completely blank piece of plastic in the shape of a face that shows no expression at all. The neutral mask allowed us to concentrate on being, on having no past or future. I find that when I manage to really be in the present with no past or future I am able to go more deeply into myself, into the deep recesses that are well below the level of thought and verbal articulation. The neutral mask allows me to explore the shifting, mythological, perhaps even archetypal morass from which I construct my many selves. It reminds me of my more successful attempts at meditation. Later we do a photo mask exercise, letting a photo select us (rather than selecting one of the many photo masks) and then becoming the character in the mask that picked us. I realize later that my photo is a seeker and I learn much about the seeker within me, always restless and looking for more.

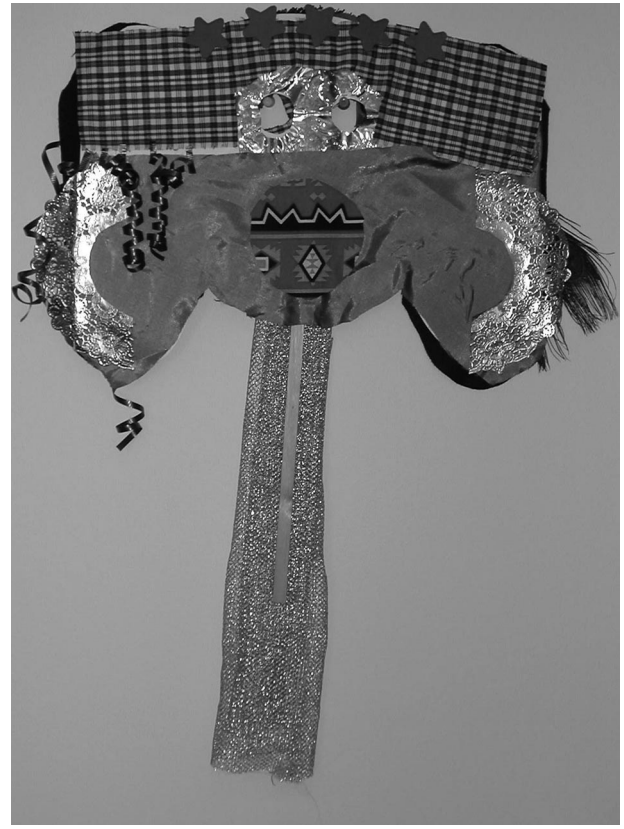


FIGURE 3
External Leadership Mask

We see here something of the way in which art making can resemble meditation and give the maker access to deep places within themselves that otherwise might not be accessible. Here, the mask maker has gained access to “the seeker” part of himself in a way that he had not had before.

The process culminated in making the mask, which then serves as a projective technology for the individual’s sense of her own leadership. If we look at Figure 2, which represents the creator’s view of self as leader, we see there is a stack of turtles on the right hand side. It seems unlikely that those turtles are meaningful or particularly resonate with most (if any) viewers of the mask. However, listen to the creator talk about the turtles.

I saw the turtles and just started stacking them up. At first I was paying attention to the differences of color and how they balanced the feathers on the other side. Then someone commented on how cute they looked. And I started to tell them about the story of the little boy who is telling his friend the story of how the earth is balanced on the back of a giant turtle and his friend asks him what the turtle sits on and he says that it’s another turtle. The

friend keeps asking and he keeps telling him that it's another turtle until finally he gets frustrated and says, "it's turtles all the way down." And the turtles are a reference to that story, but only because that story is a reference to a discussion of action research, in which someone said, "it's questions all the way down." And that's what the turtles mean—it's questions all the way down. And every time I look at the mask hanging on the wall of my office, I see the turtles and I think, "it's questions all the way down."

The artifact (in this case the mask) then serves as a window into the well of subconscious stuff/material/ knowing. It resonates in ways that can be easily verbalized, such as the story about the turtles and ways that are not so easily verbalized, such as what the feathers mean to the mask's creator. It allows for ongoing reflection as the creator continues to come back to the mask and engage with what it means as a leader for it to be "questions all the way down."

Likewise, such an artifact can embody contradictions and tensions in a way that more discursive forms cannot. For example, consider the tension between the authoritarian aspects of leadership and mutuality that the mask's creator feels:

The stars and plaid area on the top of the external mask are sort of like a crown and there is a part of me that feels the strong, "leader as king" role. This strong royal feel is echoed in the bits of the same plaid that are blotches on the internal leadership side. There is a tension between the king role and the questions of the turtles—which one is my sense of my own leadership? Both are and both exist within the mask—not in conflict, but together supporting the whole.

This example shows how in this case, the two processes of "making" and "projective technique" work together to help the participant draw out aspects of self-understanding as a leader, which probably would not have come to the fore using a more discursive technique. First, the making process enabled the author to "go more deeply into myself, into the deep recesses that are well below the level of thought and verbal articulation" and thereby brought this unconscious knowledge into more conscious awareness. The knowing that had been unearthed found a "container" in the resulting mask, which could then be reflected upon and made sense of in various ways. Furthermore, through hanging the mask on the office wall, the

creator could continually refer back to both the meaning inherent within the mask and the memory of the experience of connection making it afforded. The combination of the two processes incorporates both the art process and the art product, while staying focused on the particular individual.

While "making" is an essential ingredient of the previous example, in *The Concert of Ideas* (Cimino, 2003; Darso, 2004) skills transfer and illustration of essence can be seen to be working alongside projective technique. Its creators, Creative Leaps, describe the concert as

music, poetry, theater, storytelling, virtuosic performance and imaginative dialogue across the footlights. It is Broadway classics, original compositions and American masterpieces performed live and weaving through ideas and stories from Einstein, Picasso, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Margaret Mead, James Baldwin, Richard Feynman, Langston Hughes and more—all blended and sequenced to set the mind in motion and help participants access multiple creative connections, deeper personal insights and rich new solutions to the challenges at hand (Creative Leaps International, 2003).

As the concert starts, participants are asked what they see when various pieces of music are played. In this way the music works as a projective technique, described by Creative Leaps President, John Cimino as an aural version of the Center for Creative Leadership's Visual Explorer (personal communication, February 11, 2007). Here the focus is on the art product, the music, and the individual's particular experience of it.

There is also a strong element of skills transfer as the concert pushes the audience to listen deeply. This adds a focus on the universal process of listening. Cimino describes it this way:

The first and central learning is clearly about listening. We approach it through playful, engaging activities at different levels. At the very beginning, participants hear some curiously inviting words of William Blake ("To see a world in a grain of sand . . .") and Albert Einstein ("The most beautiful experience we can have is . . .") on the processes of imagination and the value of mystery in our perceptual processes. They hear these words underscored with music by William Schumann, thereby opening a "second" channel of listening. Then, we play a listening game called "snippets" in which we explore participants'

individual emotional perceptions of brief musical pieces. "How [does] the music make you feel?" We are cuing up reflective style listening, inviting a look inward. In this way, participants learn to listen not just for content in the music, but content elicited by the music from within themselves. This is key. The next dimension is the pictorial, "What do you see in your mind's eye as you listen to the music?" Here, perception and reflection merge and become generative of visual imagery, even storylines and inner narrative. In playing these listening games and doing these exercises, participants add "dimension" to their listening practices, not only when listening to music, but when listening to one another and to themselves. They also witness the uniqueness and originality of one another's listening processes, especially the variation in emotional and inner visual experiences belonging to each person. This too is a key learning. Additionally, their listening also re-acquires some of its "synaesthetic" potency, echoing through our myriad other internal and external senses. (Cimino, personal communication, December 12, 2006).

These enhanced listening skills are then used for illustration of essence as the concert brings in the works of great artists such as Picasso and Shakespeare. This adds the universal aspects of the art products being performed. We note that although all three processes are present, they are not independent. The processes happen together and reinforce each other. Access to one's own inner reaches through a projective technique makes it easier to relate to the essence that is illustrated in a great work of art. The two processes work together to connect the particular experience of the individual with the universal content of the great work. Enhanced listening skills increase the understanding of that essence. And that essence that has been shown helps us to understand those deeper aspects of our own selves that we have identified with the projective technique.

Although these three processes are bound together and it is the way that these are combined that makes The Concert of Ideas the unique arts-based method that it is, identifying these processes gives us a deeper understanding of what is happening in the Concert of Ideas. We now turn to a discussion of how we can take that deeper understanding and use it to guide the use of arts-based methods for managerial and leadership development.

USING ARTS-BASED METHODS FOR DEVELOPMENT

As we have shown, the four processes work in fundamentally different ways. Following from this, we argue that different arts-based methods will result in different developmental outcomes, and it is useful for those employing these methods to consider the kinds of outcomes they hope to generate before employing these methods in a random fashion. That is to say, if we want to be able to assess to what degree we succeeded, it is helpful to have had some idea of both where we were headed and how we intended to get there. Furthermore, as illustrated in the preceding examples, many arts-based methods involve a combination of processes, and there may well be significant synergy in those combinations. We will now explore the individual processes in terms of their expected outcomes and the implications of these for how arts-based methods based in each process could be used in managerial development.

Skills Transfer

The premise underneath the skills transfer process is that there are skills used within the arts that could enable managers to perform their roles more effectively. These range from very basic skills, such as listening and paying attention to perceptions, to the more complex improvisational theater skills like saying "yes and" to others' improvised offers and utilizing errors as a source of learning. Arts-based methods allow managers to feel the experience of those skills rather than think about them, such as when theatrical improvisation exercises are used to get managers to feel what it is like to listen deeply and be listened to deeply. With short-term arts-based methods (single training events), there is the hope that experiencing the feeling of the skill will provide enough of an anchor for the manager to follow through with developing and using the skill in his or her daily work. The personal connection and felt experience that arts-based methods offer can provide a significant advantage for anchoring the skills over more conventional cognitive techniques. However, with any skill acquisition, practice is essential. By practice we mean both the sense of using it within the routine work of managing and practice in the sense of consciously working on improving the skill on a regular basis.

We see arts-based skills transfer methods as being particularly appropriate for helping managers to develop specific skills. For example, by providing a "felt sense" of how the skill can be embodied, this arts-based method serves as a

powerful introduction and anchoring experience for acquiring the skill. However, to make the skill a reliable part of the managers' embodied repertoire, ongoing practice is essential. This could be based in continued work within the arts, such as ongoing training in theatrical improvisation, or it could be more directly applied to the work environment or some combination of both.

Consider a group of managers who are not communicating well with each other. That poor communication is diagnosed as being based in poor listening skills. So *Second City* is contracted to offer one of their funny and engaging training sessions based in theatrical improvisation and focusing on listening skills. The managers experience the embodied feel for what it is like to really listen to each other and to have others listen to them. The training session is then followed up with an ongoing program featuring weekly improv work and sessions to discuss ongoing situations where the managers have the opportunity to critique and be critiqued on how well they have been listening in their work as managers. Without the ongoing work, old patterns may prove hard to shift and the "felt experience" alone may not be enough to support prolonged behavioral change in the workplace.

Projective Technique

The premise informing the projective technique process is that there is a wealth of meaning making that either is not accessible through conventional techniques or has some violence done to it when it is translated into the rational discourses that dominate most organizations. This embodied knowing is often tacit, not logical, self-contradictory, and heavily laden with emotionality. Artistic forms present this knowing in a way that honors and values these characteristics and makes it accessible to other members of the organization. In this way, projective techniques allow for an "analogically mediated" (Barry, 1994) discussion of the embodied knowing, which means that the art object becomes a physical analog of the topic being discussed. Discussing the art object rather than discussing the issue directly provides a certain distance and detachment from emotionally charged issues. For example, two managers can have a discussion in which they differ about what an image that has been created means in a way that doesn't make them feel defensive but rather fosters learning about each others' perspective. A direct discussion about their differing views of the problematic issue the image represents might be filled

with conflict, as they hear the others' views as attacks. The projective technique process then provides access to the multiplicity of meaning makings that exist with an organization in a way that allows the nonlogical, contradictory, and emotionality to be part of that knowing.

Projective technique is useful in a manager's development in that it helps the manager to understand and work with the multiplicity of meaning making that surrounds complex organizational issues. There is a tendency for less developed managers to see their own sense-making of complex organizational issues as being the singular objective truth of the situation (Kegan, 1994; Torbert, 1991). Projective techniques can be used to help managers develop a more complex and nuanced understanding of organizational issues. This is generally done for specific organizational issues, such as building strategy (Roos et al., 2004) or looking at a current problematic challenge the organization faces. A key aspect of using projective techniques for developing managers is to consciously develop the metaskill of working with the multiplicity of meaning making that projective technique facilitates in addition to addressing the instrumental issues of the specific situation.

Illustration of Essence

The premise underneath the illustration of essence process is that there are essential aspects of management and leadership that are universal and that great art expresses these aspects in a way that allows people to personally connect with and understand them. Thus the primary outcome from arts-based methods based in the illustration of essence process is an understanding of the essence of these fundamental aspects of management and leadership. The advantage of this understanding is that it is based in a felt experience and resonates with the manager. The understanding is complex, nuanced, and perhaps even self-contradictory. For example, when the scene where Henry V rallies his outnumbered troops before the battle of Agincourt in Shakespeare's play is used to illustrate the essence of leadership, there are a variety of ways that the lessons of leadership could be articulated. One person might say that it is all about creating a vision, another may say that it is about making the rewards of victory clear, and another may say that it is about creating unity. Each articulates the essence in the way that resonates with his or her own experience.

Illustration of essence is useful as a way for

developing managers to grapple with the complex and nuanced essence of the central tasks of their work in a way that is deeply connected to their own felt experience. Thus we see illustration of essence as being useful for developing managers when a particular conceptual weakness is identified—"he just doesn't get what leadership is" or "she doesn't know what listening is"—and as a method for developing more complex and nuanced understandings of key aspects of their work. Reading and seeing *Henry V* performed and engaging in extended discussion of leadership as Shakespeare has portrayed it can help a manager have a much more complex and nuanced understanding of leadership in a way that is based in a felt, emotional, personal connection rather than through an abstract, intellectual theorization.

Making

The premise underneath the making process is that the act of making art can foster a deep experience of personal presence and connection. We suggest that this experience can be healing for managers, who experience so much of their work as being fragmented and disconnected. It can also help to develop a sense of personal authenticity that can be the foundation of authentic leadership. Darso (2004) calls this "presensing" and the place where individual transcendence occurs. To experience presensing, Darso suggests a process, which begins with "downloading," our normal way of thinking within our established routines and patterns of mind, and moves to "seeing," which is when involvement with art pushes or allows us to see things in new ways. From seeing, we move to "sensing," which is being fully open to our internal experience in the way that "seeing" was being open to the external world. This enables the movement to "presensing," the word being a combination of being present in the moment and sensing. It is in this state of being open to the external world, being open to internal sensation, as well as being fully present in the moment, that we make art.

Making is useful for developing the foundation or base from which managers act. It is a form of personal development that is not tied directly to specific organizational outcomes, but rather is undertaken with more generic long-term goals in mind. Thus we can imagine arts-based programs being included as part of wellness initiatives aimed at the long-term health and development of employees. Alongside yoga and Weight Watchers

classes, organizations could offer ongoing poetry and improvisation classes.

Issues and Concerns With Arts-Based Methods

We close our discussion of the use of arts-based methods by raising some of the potential issues and concerns with incorporating arts-based methods in a developmental intervention. In his study of the use of expressive aesthetic techniques within groupwork, George (2006) identified that participants sometimes expressed deep-seated resistances to engaging in art forms in which they considered themselves to have limited talent, and this could have significant impact on an intervention's outcomes. Furthermore, his work identified the potential difficulties of transferring learning from what were often high-impact interventions back to day-to-day organizational life. While this may be a problem with any "one off" developmental effort, it highlights the way in which arts-based methods tend to be farther afield from the day-to-day reality of most organizations than conventional methods, which suggests that the translation from the arts-based method back to organizational life may be more difficult than with conventional methods.

The task of enabling participants in an arts-based intervention to translate their experience back into their organizational contexts in some meaningful way suggests that the facilitator needs some expertise in both artistic and organizational worlds. Otherwise, there is the risk that arts-based methods can be intellectualized and gutted of their rich, embodied connection to felt sense by facilitators who do not have some sort of ongoing arts practice. Alternatively, artists without experience of organizational realities can flounder and not make adequate connections between the intervention and participants' contexts. Thus it is not as simple as hiring in an artist or asking an organizational development specialist to do something with clay—our experience suggests that in order to realize their developmental potential, arts-based methods require facilitators with sufficient experience and understanding of both arenas. Exploring the validity of this claim is a ripe area for further research, and it is to those considerations that we now turn.

A RESEARCH AGENDA

In addition to the practical aspects discussed in the previous sections, the four processes conceptualization suggests a research agenda. First on that agenda would be gathering empirical data from

arts-based methods to both test the conceptualization presented here and to add nuance and refine it. For example, we might consider differences associated with different media when using projective techniques. What is the difference between sculpting strategy out of clay rather than LEGOs? And what would guide us to design an arts-based method that uses clay rather than LEGOs? Is there a difference between drawing with crayons and painting with watercolors? Similar questions of detail and nuance exist for the other processes as well.

We have theorized the four processes without a specific connection to context, but we are aware that art is always contextual (Dobson, 1999). This raises the question of context and how the four processes relate to it. Are there contexts that enhance or inhibit the processes? There is also the question of interaction that is raised in the mask-making and Concert of Ideas examples discussed earlier. Are there ways that the processes can be used synergistically? Are there ways in which the processes inhibit each other when used together?

We also recognize that we have framed this conceptualization in terms of individual development. There may be different process needed to describe arts-based methods at the group and organizational and levels as well as the interactions between the individual and those more macrolevels. All of which is to say, that there is a large research agenda left to engage.

CODA: A CLOSING CAVEAT

Our aim of making arts-based methods more understandable, and in that respect more like other methods for development and change, could be interpreted as our advocating using the arts as an instrumental tool for organizations (and by extension as an instrumental tool to further the goals of late-stage capitalism). There are many within the art world who would argue this is a prostitution of art, that art is an end in itself, and to subvert the power of art to serve capitalistic goals of greater profit is wrong. If anything, profit should be pursued so that we can have more art in our lives, not the other way around.

Although we are sympathetic to these ideas, we see the relationship between art and business as being more complex and nuanced than that. We hope that the use of arts within businesses will result in more artful (more full of art and run more as an art) businesses rather than more efficient or more effective art.

We hold this aspiration because we believe art

making can facilitate a process of becoming more holistically aligned within ourselves as we learn to reflect in an embodied way. This in turn allows us to free more of our potential as human beings, thereby enabling us to act more artistically in the world at large, as well as within the organizations in which we spend so much of our creative life working.

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