

## Innovation Through Dumpster Diving?

Oriana HASELWANTER\*

University of Gothenburg

*In an attempt to deal with today's complex and confusing economical demands, more and more corporations are seeking collaborations with artists. They want to use the artists' creative mindsets and working methods to their benefit – stimulate innovative and creative capacity within the company (Guillet de Monthoux, Sjöstrand, 2003), create fiscal value and an increased competitiveness. So-called artistic interventions can come in many forms and a lot of theoretical texts have been published about these ventures. However, a gap between theory and practise exists and it remains questionable if the writings reflect the real world or are primarily theoretical concepts sometimes focused on positive outcomes alone. More case studies are needed in order to describe effects, impact and relevance of artistic interventions in industrial settings because it remains questionable if they can deliver concrete benefits for the companies – or if they even should. This investigative research project is an ambition to minimize this gap through the empirical research that is behind this paper and contributes with an actual case to this field. The paper highlights what happens if artistic interventions are laid out as temporary, independent provocations. In this case, a project group of a large engineering company was confronted with 'dumpster diving' as a type of provocation initiated by an artist. As a main conclusion of this essay I discuss the term 'artistic provocation' – a variation of artistic intervention. Artistic provocations are short-term activities provoking participants by confronting them with unorthodox worlds. Experiencing these worlds with all senses conveys an understanding on different levels. This arguably leads to a more open attitude and positively influences a learning process, which seems to be indispensable regarding long-term creativity and innovation on workplaces.*

**Keywords:** Artistic interventions, creativity, innovation, provocation

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\* Corresponding author: **Oriana Haselwanter** | e-mail: [oriana.haselwanter@gu.se](mailto:oriana.haselwanter@gu.se)

## **Introduction**

Due to the rising competitiveness, globalisation and complexity of today's society, corporations are faced with manifold challenges today in order to stay profitable. (Adler, 2006) Hence, companies are more and more willing to explore new paths and territories to find innovative ideas serving a sustainable development of their business. New logics are introduced to traditional business operations. One approach to counteract a slow or stagnating development of non-art or non-culture based firms is trying to infuse art and creativity into the company and expose the employees to unorthodox and provoking working processes.

How inspiration from art can show effects to increase creativity in organisations and companies has been of growing interest during the last decades. (Austin, Devin, 2003; Gagliardi, 1996; Guillet de Monthoux, 2004; Ladkin, Taylor, 2010; Linstead, Höpfl, 2000; Strati, 1999) These approaches – here called artistic interventions – are commonly described as processes bringing together the antithetic worlds of organisations and the arts. For example, the aesthetic dimension of the arts has become a role model for leadership and management (Guillet de Monthoux, Gustafsson, Sjöstrand, 2007; Guillet de Monthoux, Sjöstrand, 2003; Hansen, Ropo, Sauer, 2007; Hatch, Kostera, Kozminski, 2005; Ladkin, 2008), should help to create an understanding of organisational structures (Hatch, 1999; Barrett, 2000) or highlight the sensory experiences of the organisation (Gherardi, Meriläinen, Strati, Valtonen, 2013). These artist-company collaborations should then trigger change on different levels. (Schiuma, 2009; Taylor, Ladkin, 2000; Darsø, 2004) It is expected that these projects influence the innovative competence, the creative ability and the capacity of internal teamwork and external collaboration of the employees. Although these assumptions might be partly valid and look nice on paper, proving concrete effects of artistic ventures within organisations is difficult. For art to work its results cannot be pinned down in advance, claim Barry and Meisiek (2010) and in fact, the field of art represents inspiration, imagination and creativity – in other words soft skills that are hard to measure – while economy represents efficiency, rationality and profit. (Berthoin Antal, 2009) Hence, management often asks for hard evidence of creative approaches in an attempt to prove that their investment in these new working methods produces revenue.

In fact, the lack of research in this field is problematic because not only do we know little, what we think we know is quite biased towards a positive view of the phenomenon (Berthoin Antal, 2011) and moreover artistic

interventions seem to be buzzwords (Carlgren, 2009) when it comes to management strategies.

Thus, it seems relevant to critically evaluate creative approaches in businesses. Can these short-term provocations achieve a change of perspective and increased openness and can they have a positive impact on employee behaviour? By investigating this case of a collaboration between an artist and a big international technology based company in Sweden, some answers to these questions are expected to be found. The presented case describes and analyses what happens between the participants of a 24-hour artistic intervention workshop, which was laid out as a temporary, independent provocation.

At the same time, it is worth mentioning that this research case only describes one single intervention and the long-term effects can only be seen in weeks, months and possibly years to come. Hence, this example serves more as a pre-study of a potentially longer research project.

## **Relevance and contribution**

As mentioned earlier, one reason for this research is to immerse in the gap between theory and practise to find possible mismatches and overlaps. Thereby a presumably clearer and more realistic picture of these approaches can be drawn helping practitioners working with these methods in the actual implementation of these theoretical concepts.

## **Theoretical background**

In order to be able to conceptualize the findings of the empirical study, some key issues need to be approached from a more theoretical perspective in advance.

### *Creativity*

Artistic interventions of all kinds are always said to trigger creativity first and foremost. Creativity is a very complex term to define. Working creatively means (amongst other things) not knowing the outcome or result from the beginning – hence being in an open process – having time to work co-creationally and interdisciplinary and making space for trial and error. Creativity also is possibility thinking – it generates associations. Daring to think that everything is possible favours a constant flow of ideas, of which imagination is an important part. (Englund, 2010) Divergent thinking

(Shalley, Gilson, 2004) and process thinking (Hernes, Maitlis, 2012) are other ways explaining creativity.

Kirton (1989) even claims that the capacity to think creatively is common to all people – the major differences lie in the preferred style of expressing it. Hence, basically everyone is creative (DeFillippi & al., 2007; Gagliardi, 1996; Strati, 1999) because everyone is confronted with ideas (creativity is having good imagination or original ideas, states the Oxford Dictionary) and problem solving on a regular basis. So if creativity is defined as the ability to solve problems, then it could be easily argued that everyone is almost equally creative because everyone solves problems every day.

Styhre and Sundgren (2005) point out four different streams of creativity – (1) creative processes, (2) creative people, (3) creative products and (4) creative environments.

### *Innovation*

Creativity is often followed by discussions about innovation. Especially in this case, innovation is worth mentioning, because the brief of the 24-hour workshop included ideas about open innovation (which will be mentioned later on).

The word innovation comes from Latin 'innovare', meaning 'making something new'. Hence, innovation refers to the creation and application of a new idea to create value in a certain context and its goal is positive change, mostly leading to value creation, increased productivity and therefore increasing wealth in economy. (Dutta, Lanvin, Singh, Green, Berthelon, Bindra, 2009) Around the millennium, the discussion of innovation gained a lot of prestige; it was linked to business strategy and became the hallmark of companies in the forefront of the global economy. (Johansson, Woodilla, 2009)

Nowadays creativity-intense professions like design and art are more and more linked to innovation. (Jahnke, 2009) This means that creativity can be seen as an effective and important tool for innovation. (Englund, 2010) One could say that when creative ideas are translated and applied in the right way, they can become innovations, and further, if a person uses and benefits from this innovation, creativity is said to have been profitable. (Ibid.)

'Open innovation' is defined by Chesbrough (2003) as a paradigm that assumes that firms can and should use external as well as internal ideas, and internal and external paths to market, as the firms look to advance their technology. This means that collaboration between internal business units

or between companies and external parties are essential for open innovation attempts to generate new ideas. (Ibid.) Needless to say, to foster open innovation, companies need to be very open with their own ideas, strategies and developments, which requires a lot of trust between the partners. (Ibid.) It seems obvious that open innovation policies and strategies within companies are risky approaches since the ownership of the intellectual property is always questionable and therefore the ownership discussion and all its legal implications gain high importance. Regardless, open innovation projects are more and more established between various companies – again in search for competitive advantage.

### *Artistic interventions*

Artistic interventions – due to their connection to creativity – are often meant to lead to some kind of innovation – at least from a managerial perspective. Berthoin Antal (2009) states that in recent years artistic interventions have developed as a mean by which it is possible to stimulate innovation. (Adler 2006)

Artistic interventions – sometimes also called arts-based initiatives – are commonly described as processes bringing together the antithetic worlds of organisations and the arts. (Berthoin Antal, 2011) Energy is released in form of new ideas, new visions and deeper understandings for what an organisation is doing on an existential or meta-level when the two contrasting logics (the logic of the artist and the logic of the organisation) clash. (Grzelec, Prata, 2013)

Organisations enter into collaborations with artists in seek for inspiration because arts-based methods, thanks to their 'otherness', are seen as stimuli for new ways of thinking and doing things. (Biehl-Missal, Berthoin Antal, 2011) This is what organisations expect from these kind of collaborative projects in order to trigger the innovative competence, the creative ability and the capacity of internal teamwork and external collaboration of their employees.

Artistic intervention can comprise all kinds of artistic expressions – from theatrical workshops, poetry slams, sculpting, conducting, storytelling, photography, filmmaking and painting to choreographic training and much more. (Biehl-Missal, Berthoin Antal, 2011) All human senses (tactile, visual, audio, taste and smell) – also described as aesthetic values – should get activated and stimulate the participants to see more, hear more and experience more of what is going on within and around them. (Berthoin Antal, 2012) These sensual, intangible, aesthetic values can be described as

soft skills. Soft skills are hard to evaluate in a world dominated by quantitative measurable results and deal with emotions, feelings and intuition. These attributes are essential for artists in their way of working and determine their decision-making processes but they are harder to grasp from a pure managerial perspective.

Taylor and Ladkin (2009) identify four different parts how artistic interventions can work regarding soft skills. They exist on their own or in combinations. (1) Skills transfer: Arts-based methods can facilitate the development of artistic skills in a group. (2) Projective technique: The output of artistic endeavours allows participants to reveal inner thoughts and feelings that may not be accessible through more conventional developmental modes. (3) Illustration of essence: Arts-based methods can enable participants to apprehend the 'essence' of a concept or tacit knowledge in a specific situation in a particular way, revealing depths and connections. (4) Making: The very making of art can foster a deeper experience of personal presence and connection.

Darsø (2004) describes three different levels of artistic interventions: (1) The individual, (2) the group and (3) the organisational level. First and foremost artistic interventions influence the individual. (Schiuma, 2009; Berthoin Antal, 2009, 2014) Concerning the (1) individual level, Darsø (2004) presents a model on how art may influence the participants to reflect on their everyday view of the world and thereby develop a deeper understanding of themselves and how they relate to the circumstances surrounding them. This model consists of the following phases: (1) Downloading – the participants see the world in their traditional way. (2) Seeing – the observational phase. (3) Sensing and pre-sensing – developing a reflective mode. (4) Crystallizing – creating a deeper understanding of who they are and how they relate to the world around them.

On the second level – the (2) group level – the participants of an artistic intervention start to spread and share their learnings within a group in the organisation, which facilitates more and different communication. (Berthoin Antal, 2009, 2014)

The (3) organisational level of a company might be affected when the interventions have an impact on the personal and the group level. Then this could lead to an effect that can be related to increased networking opportunities and visibility which might generate strategic interest from other stakeholders. (Berthoin Antal, 2009)

But it has to be noticed here, that it is problematic to really measure and evaluate the impact of creative initiatives because they are complex in

nature, interact with other influential factors and have outcomes that do not always fall within a clear time frame. (Biehl-Missal, Berthoin Antal, 2011) Many other processes going on in the organisation simultaneously definitely influence the employees and therefore the work of the artist.

## Research methods

As Hatch (2006) suggests, I use a descriptive and symbolic-interpretive perspective for this case. I utilize qualitative data collection methods (Hiatt, 1986) such as participatory observations in cross-disciplinary settings inspired by reflective ethnography (Kostera, 2007).

I took part in a 24-hour workshop and use my observations for my sense-making of what happened during this workshop. To analyse this personal data, I took a qualitative, reflexive and interpretive approach (Alvesson, Sköldberg, 2008, 2009). Also, as suggested by Johansson and Svengren Holm (2008), a narrative (Czarniawska, Sköldberg, 2003) and ethno-narrative (Hansen, 2006) approach is useful to create a contextual and aesthetic understanding built upon more than just words. This means that I utilize an on-going sense-making process for my own understanding whereby I constantly structure and stabilize my own reality. (Hernes, Maitlis, 2012; Chia, King, 1998) My approach was abductive (Alvesson, Sköldberg, 2009) in the meaning that certain experiences from the field led to seek literature in order to understand what is going on. Hence, the theoretical and empirical parts are interacting continuously meaning that I analyse the case during describing it.

## The case

As mentioned in the research methods chapter, I will here describe the case in detail and at the same time add observations and reflections that are all part of the on-going analysis.

### *Background*

The involved company

The presented case is a collaboration between some employees of a big company and an artist. The company is an international technology based corporation found in Sweden. It was established in 1876 and has about 110.000 employees worldwide. The employees of several departments of this company had already been in touch with other creative working

methods prior to this intervention. For example, a two-year long global innovation project focused on design thinking approaches, initiated in cooperation with IDEO, was introduced in 2010. So called 'innovation squads' were set up on three different locations of the company in an attempt to introduce the company to more creative working methods in order to reconsider ways of working to be more responsive, faster paced, and more innovative across the board. (Broner, 2013) The innovation squad located in Sweden consisted of three international innovation specialists / design thinking experts who were hired to carry out design thinking efforts, to implement, guide, audit, facilitate, enable and maintain the project. The results and the impact of this team were hard to evaluate, quite appreciated but did unfortunately not lead to a continuing project.

However, the company wanted to explore other creative approaches to stimulate the innovative competence of their workers. Therefore, they collaborated with an artist during a 24-hour workshop.

### *The artist's agency*

The 24-hour-lab was initiated and organised by an organisation establishing artistic interventions in companies. This agency built their business model around connecting artists and companies and acted as matchmakers in that sense. In this particular case, one agent of this organisation was negotiating with a department leader from the engineering company and finally the collaboration was formulated.

### *24-hour workshop*

For the 24-hour lab, a selected group of employees (around 12 people) from different departments of the company were chosen to take part in this experimental workshop that should challenge the worldview of the participants and bring them to the edge of their comfort zone. The 24-hour-lab should provoke this group of people in various ways to stimulate their creativity, their innovative capacity and change their perspectives. In other words – the employees were supposed to leave the convenience and security of their day jobs for 24 hours and got thrown into a world aside from computer screens, steaming coffee, familiar colleagues, regular 'fika' breaks (Swedish coffee breaks) and workflow meetings to engage in an experimental experience they would not forget for some time to come. This lab should function as a first test-round possibly leading to a greater involvement of the artist in the organisation.



The chosen employees were mostly working with engineering or administrative tasks in the company. The workshop should tackle two days of socially responsible open innovation. Three part-challenges were presented. Challenge 1: Dumpster Diver Afterwork – Creating a full-scale dumpstered afterwork menu. Challenge 2: Dumpster Diver Community – Coming up with a solution that serves a mutual partnership between the company and the Global Dumpster Diver Community. Challenge 3: Social Open Innovation – Finding an integrated method for open innovation adjusted to the company with the guidance of ISO 26.000.

The paper will mostly focus on challenge 1 – the Dumpster Diver Afterwork – analysing the artistic intervention laid out as provocation.

### *Dumpster Diving*

The dumpster diving term originates from the best-known manufacturer of commercial trash bins, Dempster, who use the trade name 'Dumpster' for their bins. (McKean, 2005) Dumpster diving is the activity describing the sitting through commercial or residential waste in mostly urban areas in order to find and re-use waste material – often expired or imperfect but still edible groceries but also other materials such as technological parts, kitchen supplies and other goods. This movement is rather new and a reaction to the large amount of wasted items produced by households, companies or supermarkets today. Dumpster diving mostly happens in the evening or during night since the legal implications for dumpster diving are not totally clear. Dumpster diving is a global movement gaining more and more interest from different groups in society and a combination of social critique, sometimes a political statement, environmental self-responsibility and life philosophy.

### *Opening phase of the workshop*

Starting the 24-hour challenge, the workshop members met on a Thursday afternoon at the office and were confronted with the three challenges to be tackled during the next days in three groups of four. The schedule was tight, the time was short.

Most of the people were unfamiliar with each other although they were colleagues. This fact got evident rather early in the process since most of the participants spoke quite openly and freely without much hesitation during the first getting-to-know phase. The artist in charge motivated everyone to come up with a nickname or alias connected to dumpster diving and everybody's own personality. Pia, Olessia, Mike and John turned into

pineapple, potato, passion fruit juice, melon stone, computer trash or lettuce. Most of the people were quite happy to take part in this game but the question of why these names were relevant was asked very early by one of the most engineer driven participants.

After this introductory phase, the first brainstorming session dealt with questions, thoughts and associations about the Dumpster Diving Afterwork. Although these first ideas and thoughts about the Dumpster Diving Afterwork were not taken any further at this point, it was a good exercise to start a reflective process and a discussion which then continued with general questions about dumpster diving since the group was not introduced to this concept beforehand.

### *Confrontation with dumpster divers*

Two young, bearded, casually looking members of the local Dumpster Diving Community were invited to the workshop to answer as many questions as possible from the group, which were stated on post-it notes. An intriguing observation was that most participants stuck their post-it notes very accurately and in one straight line onto the wall. This could have been a reaction to the first person sticking the notes so perfectly onto the wall so that the others followed her routine but it could also be a sign of the engineer-driven mindsets of most participants where structure and accuracy arguably are very common concepts. However, the different preconceptions about dumpster diving became one of the most thought-provoking discussions of the evening, because a lot of misconceptions and stereotypes were revealed. The session even had to be expanded because a lot of questions wanted to be answered and clichés wanted to be explored. Some people had not even heard of dumpster diving before, whereas others were very much influenced by local media and had never encountered dumpster divers in their lives. A lot of people were surprised by the fact that this sub-culture seemed to be so big in Sweden and that one could even create a company and a successful business model out of it which went very much against their preconceived knowledge and understanding.

Interestingly, the two dumpster divers used a very different language compared to the workshop participants with mostly business, administrative or engineer backgrounds, who were mainly dealing with totally different people and concepts on their workplaces. One of the most surprising statements for one of the participants was a specific attitude of one of the dumpster divers. The participant was concerned about the reason for being a dumpster diver and very amazed by the fact that the two present

dumpster divers apparently did not do this ‘to save the world or make any political statement or protest against the establishment’. For the dumpster divers, dumpster diving was basically a way of living, a mental state and a way to react to ‘society’s failings’ without making too much fuss about it. What they really wanted to achieve was to make people aware of this problem and inspire others to follow their example in order to create a change in the long-run. Even if they partly lived from dumpster diving at the moment, their main goal was to abolish dumpster diving naturally due to the lack of existing leftovers and trashed but still edible food. So basically they wanted to end dumpster diving through dumpster diving – a silent rebellion.

The second discussion of this evening was formed around solutions for mutual collaboration between the company and the dumpster diving community. In the brainstorming of one group, ideas circled around very technical solutions (for example smart phone apps) that mainly benefitted the company – but not really the dumpster diving community. Social aspects were hardly considered. The focus was clearly on finance, legal and tax issues, commercialisation, feasibility, net sales, market impact and implementation, practicability and marketing. This might have been due to the fact that all group members (only men in this case) worked with the technical or managerial side of the company in one or another way. At the same time, this was also an obvious sign that they did not yet leave their usual stream of thinking and their thoughts stayed within their known territory.

### *Dumpster Diving Activity*

After this, it was time for the real excitement – the real-deal, the stop-talking-and-start-doing, the get-outside-and-get-dirty, the stepping-into-the-unknown action. It was time for dumpster diving! The company’s employees got out and scabbled in garbage, took what others left behind, explored the boundaries of legality, carried away heavy bags with found goods, got dirty, crawled into unknown territory, stuck their heads in trash cans, got confronted with reality, climbed onto containers, were uncomfortable, surprised, disgusted, moved, cold, touched, amazed and challenged.

Each of the three groups was guided by at least one semi-professional dumpster diver to the most popular dumpster spots all over the city. Everyone armed themselves with torches, gloves, warm jackets, rubber boots, rubbish bags and tried to be as open-minded as possible. Then everyone was released into the night.

The 'men-only-group' was already quite successful at their first location where they found a hidden shed with trash bins. Although the shed was locked, they could squeeze through a narrow opening to get inside the shed. For two guys of the group this really got to be a task and a challenge they clearly wanted to tackle. The atmosphere became were exciting. It felt like being in a detective story where the forbidden and hidden treasure had to be discovered and the heroes of the story could show off their amazing climbing and rescuing skills. Passing cars and people where observed with a hint of anxiety. Clearly, everyone enjoyed this spectacle in the middle of the night and was amazed by what type and amount of thrown-away but still original packaged goods the two found in the shed. Everyone left this first spot with an ambivalent feeling of excitement and surprise but also a discrepancy of doing the right thing on the edge of legality. The next stops were at a lower excitement level and also not as successful. Even shop owners were asked for expired products and production companies were explored. It was apparent that some group members got really exhilarated, did not want to stop this adventure and even grabbed fruit and vegetables out of full bins holding all kinds of mixed and open groceries. Although it was a really cold night, everyone seemed to be enthusiastic and have fun.

Coming back to the company's premises hold a rather substantial surprise for every group. The big dinner / conference table in the office started to flow over with found food collected at the different spots. Bread, apples, tomatoes, potatoes, peppers, mushrooms, corn, leek, lettuce, oranges, onions, cauliflower, pastries, sweets, cans and bottles of all kinds fought for their space on the table.

### *First reflections*

During breakfast (not dumpstered) on the next morning, first conversations about reflections from the previous evening commenced. Comments about the unbelievable vast amount of still eatable food, discussion about the hypocrisy of food production and supermarket offers, the various existing preconceptions and stereotypes about dumpster diving, the obscure policies in politics and law but also the experience to see things with different eyes when getting in touch with a marginal group in society led to interesting insights for everyone individually. Most 'neo-dumpster-divers' wanted to find out more about how much food was actually wasted on a daily-basis and some wanted to introduce dumpster diving as an exercise for kids to teach them the value of food.

### *Dumpster Diving Afterwork*

A delegation of the group was ordered to set up tables with the dumpstered food very publicly next to the company's canteen later on the same day. This action sparked a lot of interest and discussion not only amongst other employees of the company but also at the canteen. Due to this unexpected development and interest, all the lab participants were asked to mingle around the dumpster table, socialise, engage other employees in provoking conversations and approach anyone passing by. At first, this task was hard to fulfil for some because it took a lot of courage to actually approach people and inform them about this unusual initiative – bearing in mind that they were all colleagues and not used to something like this at all. Some said that they felt a bit ashamed but proud at the same time. But everyone seemed to be pleased that this action gained so much attention.

The preparing of the afterwork menu was organised rather differently in all the groups. Some were struggling to come up with a menu (mostly groups with a bigger percentage of male participants who had less cooking experience) whereas others started to arrange different dishes immediately (engaging in various cooking and food preparing tasks quite naturally). Although the cooking facilities were limited at the premises (only knives, cutting boards, plates and microwave oven were available), the 'dumpster cooks' handled these restrictions very well and even tried to look for cooking equipment in other departments in the building. Everyone seemed really motivated, excited and high-spirited. Maybe a sign that their creative capability was already influenced by the experiences on the previous day.

Although time for last touches on food and decorations on each of the group's table was as short as was the time to come up with a final concept and presentation idea for challenges 2 and 3 they were working on simultaneously, all the groups managed their time well. They prepared inviting tables with different dishes from a variety of tastes. Apples, oranges, pineapple and bananas were transformed into fruit salads. Bread, corn, mushrooms, onions and eggs were used to make experimental types of tacos. Potatoes were cooked and presented in little cups. Mashed biscuits and apples became the ingredients for self-made apple crumble. Even Indian, finger and raw food could be tasted. Besides all of this, a lot of food was still left over and presented for the guest to take with them.

At around 16:30 first curious people started to arrive at the location. The invitation for this afternoon stated that not only special afterwork food would be served but also three new concepts for open innovation ideas for

the firm would be presented. The public was asked to act as a voting committee selecting the best project. Each project consisted of the presented idea and the dumpster menu. Every group used visualisations to present their concepts. In their core, the developed ideas did not vary that much from each other and turned out to be quite realistic – again possibly a sign of the business driven background of the workshopers. But the ideas and innovations included a variety of new and unusual aspects which could have been results of the 24-hour-workshop and the dumpster diving activity. The presentations were elaborate, clear and enthusiastic and definitely something the company's employees were used to do.

Most surprisingly, the guests did not seem to have any kind of reservations against the offered dumpster food at all. People mingled, tasted food from each table, voted for the projects by sticking coloured stickers onto a prepared voting system on the wall, talked and had fun. In this respect, the afterwork was really successful.

## **Findings**

### *Questioning stereotypes*

As a first conclusion or reflection, one could say that this 24-hour-experiment brought out a lot of interesting reactions about the current attitude towards the food consumption in our society today but also highlighted a variety of existing preconceptions and stereotypes towards marginal societal groups. This exercise definitely gave an impulse to rethink certain values and assumptions and was food for thought for the participants. The largely engineer and business driven participants got to question their norms and their reality and started to take social aspects into consideration. Through bodily experiences they started to understand and relate to unknown or ignored social challenges and could use them to open up their minds and lose a part of their rigidity.

### *Group dynamics*

It could be observed that the group dynamic within the teams was influenced significantly by the activity they did together. Of course, typical roles in the groups existed as well. Before the dumpster diving activity, scepticism, critical questioning and strong resistance clearly determined the atmosphere. At the end of the workshop great energy, less distance, a higher level of collegiality and a collective problem-solving attitude could be seen. Especially the collaborative cooking and preparing of the dumpster

food and at the same the team-work on creating ideas and concepts for challenge 2 and 3 led to a strong and positive group-feeling.

### *Innovation and creativity*

The creative capacity of the groups certainly increased during the 24 hours. They came up with solutions for challenges 2 and 3. Most creativity was seen while cooking the dumpstered food since the team members were very restricted in cooking equipment and ingredients but managed to create well-prepared meals. If all this was due to a good atmosphere during the whole workshop or the type of activity they carried out is hard to evaluate and hence questions this venture.

The potential for increased innovation competence could be seen at the final presentations of the groups but can probably only turn into long-term effects when these multi-disciplinary groups keep working together, keep working with creative methods and find a ways how to implement their ideas.

## **Analysis**

On a more conceptual level, the 24-hour-lab revealed that in order to open up, be creative and stimulate innovative and creative capacity, pure artistic interventions do not necessarily need to be the only way to go. However, models found for artistic interventions might also work for artistic interventions as provocations – or artistic provocations such as dumpster diving.

Following Darsø's description of the affected individual level of artistic interventions, many similarities to artistic provocations can be seen. Darsø says that art may influence the participants to reflect on their everyday view of the world and thereby develop a deeper understanding of themselves and how they relate to the circumstances surrounding them. (Darsø, 2004) This certainly happened during and after the dumpster diving activity as described in findings but is not really related to art, artistic methods or processes since the dumpster diving exercise can hardly be seen as such.

However, all phases of Darsø's model can be identified in this project. First 'downloading' – the participants see the world in their traditional way. (Ibid.) The group members were mostly rather sceptical towards dumpster diving and asked a lot of questions in the beginning. They felt safe in their known roles and rather defensive against anything new.

During first confrontations with dumpster diver professionals and dumpster diving, they were a bit hesitant and observant – just as described in ‘seeing’ – the observational phase. (Ibid.) But thanks to a good workshop design and a general curious atmosphere they trusted the process and explored the activity themselves.

This led to ‘sensing and pre-sensing’ – developing a reflective mode. (Ibid.) After the task, most of the participants started to reflect, discuss and critically analyse what they did and how this affected them.

Later discussions brought a lot of personal realisations and a deeper understanding of who they are and how they relate to the world around them as defined in ‘crystallizing’. (Ibid.)

How these insights and learnings could then effect the participant’s behaviour could be observed in increased creativity and better group cooperation.

## **Discussion**

### *Artistic provocation*

Opening up groups for seeing things differently, questioning their routines and attitudes can lead to new and unexpected ideas and reflections possibly resulting in some kind of innovative thoughts. But these processes do not need to have a pure artistic character, result in an artistic artefact or be facilitated by an artist. Group dynamics and other organisational and personal influences are equally as important. Therefore, I want to suggest an arguably new term describing a variation of artistic interventions – the artistic provocation. To elaborate on this concept, the two terms ‘artistic’ and ‘provocation’ need to be described further.

My understanding of a ‘provocation’ in this sense is a short or time restricted activity provoking the employees of a company on different levels – such as experienced and observed during the dumpster diving exercise – by confronting them with unusual contexts, unfamiliar worldviews, unorthodox working methods or extraordinary lifestyles. The very nature of this total otherness, which is hard to grasp or relate to in the beginning since it does not fit in ones perspective of the world, often triggers fear and resistance but also curiosity at the same time. It can stimulate self-reflection and self-questioning which are good starting points for introducing creative work methods for example. The provocations can inspire creative thinking since personal principles and viewpoints might be reassessed or at least questioned.



The 'artistic' aspect in artistic provocations deals more with the aesthetic value of such activities. Experiencing this otherness with all senses can be the main cause to really understand and comprehend new or foreign concepts. This could be observed after the dumpster diving exercise for example, when the workshop participants started to understand and less critically judge the dumpster diving movement and even found positive aspects they wanted to promote and incorporate into their lives. After this experience they saw dumpster diving and even their own attitudes with other eyes. They felt, heard, smelled, saw and tasted how it is to dumpster dive and accordingly were affected by it. They started to create a new understanding not only on a theoretical or abstract level but also on a practical and personal one. They learned to understand a new concept with all their senses. Hence, only through experiencing the group members started to understand and open up. This is why a rough sketch of a model for artistic provocation can be outlined and hopefully developed further.

### *Realising – Experiencing – Reflecting – Changing*

Following and analysing the described 24-hour workshop focusing on dumpster diving as a kind of provocation led to the formulation of a rough model for artistic provocations. (1) Realising. Through the confrontation of an antithetical world the participants of an artistic provocation realise their fears, stereotypes and preconceptions. (2) Experiencing. Through experiencing this antithetical world with all senses they start to understand this new world not only on a theoretical but also a bodily level which seems very important for their understanding and acceptance in order to open up. (3) Reflecting. After this, they start to reflect on their experiences in a deeper and more holistic way. (4) Changing. In the best case, participants then are able to open up and use their insights and learnings for a long-term behaviour change to increase their creativity capacity, influence their innovation competence and inspire their surroundings.

## **Conclusion**

Following an artistic intervention workshop facilitated by an artist in a group of 12 employees of a large engineering company in Sweden, laid out as a 24-hour-lab focusing on dumpster diving as a type of provocation, led to the realisation that not alone art or artistic processes necessarily achieve a change of perspective, an increased openness and positively impact employees' behaviour. Artistic provocations can achieve similar things.

Artistic provocations are short-term activities provoking the participants by confronting them with unusual or unorthodox worlds. Experiencing these different worlds with all senses – aesthetic values – conveys an understanding on different levels. This possibly leads to a more open attitude and positively influences a learning process. Through this individual and bodily learning process the participants are likely to be able to implement new perspectives or new methods concerning creativity and innovation more easily.

Concluding, the 24-hour-lab and especially dumpster diving stimulated and provoked a lot of discussions and self-reflection, positively influenced teamwork and creativity. But if the participants can incorporate their learnings into their daily lives inside and outside the company and translate their experiences into meaningful outcomes for their company remains to be explored.

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