

# Museletter of the Standing Conference on Organizational Symbolism



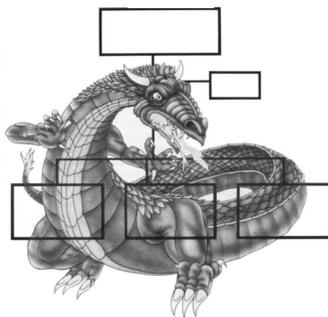
## *Notework*

May 2009

*SCOS is an international and interdisciplinary network of academics and practitioners interested in organizational symbolism, culture and change. The SCOS philosophy of 'serious fun' is articulated throughout the network's activities, particularly in the encouraging of unusual and groundbreaking ideas in the analysis of organizing and organization. We are committed to providing a forum for research that crosses traditional disciplinary and functional boundaries, and a reflective space for the development of new forms and new voices for this work.*

Visit: <http://www.scos.org> for further details or  
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# The World's New Profession



It was 1993. Ireland's footballers were getting ready to qualify for the USA World Cup (England's weren't) and the international dance floor-filling entity known as D: Ream announced what would, only a few short years later, come to mark the televised celebrations of a then emphatically elected Labour Government. It was nothing other than "THIIINGS", according to D: Ream's lead singer Peter Cunnah, which "can only get BETTTAH". These things, he continued, "can own-lee' get BET-AH-HAH...etc." And so on.

Fast forward about fifteen years and we find that various things have changed, albeit perhaps not for the better. The Boys in Green are, at the time of writing, 100/1 to win the forthcoming World Cup. Graham Taylor's face is no longer routinely juxtaposed onto a turnip. Brian Cox, D: Ream's keyboardist, is a Fellow of the Royal Society plying his trade at the CERN project. Yet the concern with THIIINGS somehow getting BET-AH-HAH remains. Uplifting lyrics? Perhaps! Wise words? Maybe! Cheap excuse for creativity strapped editors to imply that culture might play a role in organisation? For sure!

The discussions which greet us daily on our TVs, Radios and Internet Connections routinely announce the need for some sort of renewed general confidence in the economy. This renewal of confidence, we are told, might be helped along if we all go out into the world with our eyes peeled for "green shoots". Failing that, *signs* of "green shoots" will suffice just as well for now, it seems. Green, after all, is the colour of spring and of money, to see "green shoots" surely means that we can believe that *soon* will have been the winter of our discontent. Fine, but why such a pronounced concern with "green shoots", of all things, in any case? How is it that "green shoots" has come to be held up (of course it would be more correct to say looked down upon) as our saviours to be? Why are plants revered as a modern model of anthropological aspiration? Haven't economists read *The Day of the Triffids*?!

In its frequent assertion of the need to go out *to the shoots themselves!*, today's' economic commentary has become just so many exercises in what might be called phenomenological horticulture. "Green shoots", it is asserted, will eventually bear the fruits of prosperity. The task of the economist/phenomenological horticulturalist is hence one of identifying where and when these shoots will show themselves, of discerning between the phenomenon and the epiphenomenon. This task, for its part, seems to demand at least two things. Firstly it demands vision, that is, the ability to discern between green shoots and weeds. Many a crucial mistake has been made in the underdevelopment of this faculty.

Thankfully, the **SCOS 2010** conference is devoted to a consideration of the nature of **vision**, as can be read within this issue of *Notework*, so we have you covered on this front!

Secondly, however, the task of the economist/phenomenological horticulturalist won't be done without a large dose of hope in the future. This, unfortunately, is not something so readily prescribed, it is rather something which each individual will have to foster within themselves.

Now, it is more often said than proven that talking to plants can actually help them grow. Well, maybe there's something in that. Maybe playing D: Ream within earshot of the economy is the way to make those green shoots grow. That, as we understand it, is analogous to the essence of the argument that all we need is renewed faith in the economy.

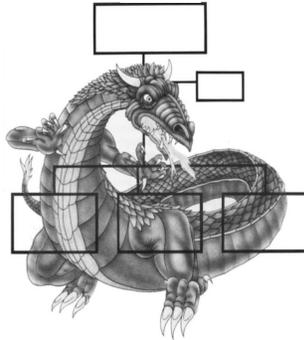
Enjoy the Conference (and this issue of *Notework*)!

Stephen and Sheena

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# SCOS: the Standing Conference on Organization and Symbolism (oo-r-ya?)



## **We are...**

...an international and interdisciplinary network of academics and practitioners interested in organizational symbolism, culture and change. Formed in 1981 as an autonomous working group of the European Group for Organisation Studies, SCOS has grown to become a global research network comprising of hundreds of members.

## ***Philosophy: scosophilia***

The SCOS philosophy of 'serious fun' is articulated throughout the network's activities, particularly in the encouraging of unusual and groundbreaking ideas in the analysis of organizing and organization. Since its formation, SCOS has run annual international conferences and regular workshops, producing both critical debate and a considerable output of original scholarship. SCOS has always been committed to a critical approach to qualitative research that crosses traditional disciplinary and functional boundaries as well as to reflection on the forms and voices that this work takes.

## ***Research***

*Moving into its fourth decade, the SCOS network continues to develop innovative views of organization and management, taking inspiration from a variety of different fields and disciplines. SCOS has always been committed to providing a forum for research that crosses traditional disciplinary and functional boundaries, and a reflective space for the development of new forms and new voices for this work. The SCOS Network also aims to produce and develop theoretically and practically innovative views of organization and management and seeks to:*

- encourage and foster new approaches in the study of culture and symbolism of everyday life in organizations
- provoke discussion of marginalised perspectives on the understanding of organized life
- provide an arena where the boundaries of conventional thinking about organized life can be challenged and blurred
- sustain continuity and development in this fast-growing field of study
- enable the continued exchange of information and the development of community amongst a highly dispersed group of researchers, scholars and practitioners

## *Notes from the Chair*

My dear old Constant, how the devil are you? It's now officially British Summer Time here in ChairLadyWorld™ and I am feeling correspondingly lighter of heart and step as a result. I have also developed an obsession with yet more US police procedurals, designed my own Mii on a friend's Wii despite having absolutely no hand-eye coordination, and continue to refuse to poke anyone or scribble on their wall on Facebook. Objectives for this month include learning to cook Nasi Goreng and turning 40. Ahem.

And with summer time of course comes SCOS Time<sup>1</sup>. Annette, Dave and Peter have been inundated with submissions for our twin location 2009 conference, as you can see if you visit the conference site at <http://www.scos.org/2009/>. Also if you haven't registered yet PLEASE make sure you do this as soon as possible – via the same URL – to ensure that you are able to stay in your chosen conference hotel, all of which are allocated on a first come, first served basis. For those who haven't visited Copenhagen and/ or Malmö before, you really do have a treat in store. Both cities are very different, but very beautiful in their own right, and we should also be lucky with the weather if my previous experience of Scandinavian summers is anything to go by. The conference programme begins on the evening of the 8<sup>th</sup> July, with a reception on the Copenhagen Business School campus. We visit Malmö University for our Big SCOS Day Out on the 10<sup>th</sup>. The conference ends with a gala dinner at the Carlsberg Academy on the evening of Saturday the 11<sup>th</sup>.

You will also have noticed either from the SCOS website or from e-mail correspondence that we have established a Special Events Fund for the calendar year 2009, and have set aside £3000 for this purpose. We aim to support events – such as symposia or workshops – which a) reflect the SCOS intellectual ethos; b) are inclusive, collegial and supportive, especially of younger researchers and those from locations less well represented in our existing network; c) use the funds we provide to maximize attendance; and d) are not already well supported by money from elsewhere. The deadline for the first round of applications has actually expired now, so we will discuss these at the Board meeting in London. We will then be in a position to inform members of a second round if appropriate, and you will also see reports from successful applicants about their events in future issues of *Notework*.

Another bit of important SCOS activity are the vacancies for two Board posts - Secretary and Elections Officer (two posts all wrapped up into one cute li'l package) and Web Officer - again as recently advertised by e-mail. Our deadline for nominations has also now expired, and the new incumbents will take up their positions shortly, following elections if necessary. I therefore want to say a huge thank you to Sam Warren who is stepping down as Secretary and Elections Officer to focus on organizing SCOS 2010, and Alf Rehn (whose name apparently roughly translates as Pure Elf), our outgoing Web Officer, for their sterling efforts in these roles over the last few years.

Finally in these Notes I would like to send another massive vote of thanks to Jane Malabar, our former *Culture and Organization* editorial assistant. The role has changed hands due to the journal moving house from the University of Essex to the University of the West of England. Jane's efficiency, warmth and patience were always much appreciated by all of us and she will be greatly missed. I am also very pleased to welcome John Doherty at UWE who has stepped into Jane's shoes: we are looking forward to working with him a great deal.

I am also looking forward to seeing lots of you in Denmark (I'm the one with the lopsided hair and bemused expression, probably rummaging in her bag for train tickets/ conference timetable/ cigarettes/ keys/ lighter/ purse/ whatever). Until then ...

May the road rise with you

Jo

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<sup>1</sup> Which is a bit like Hammer Time, only more so.

# VISION

*The 28<sup>th</sup> Standing Conference on Organizational Symbolism will be held in Lille, France from July 7<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> at the Institut d'Administration et Enterprise (IAE) Lille France, in collaboration with the Universities of Surrey and Anglia Ruskin University, UK*

## Call for papers

**The 28<sup>th</sup> Standing Conference on Organizational Symbolism takes Vision as a central motif of contemporary management practice and we invite delegates to think of vision and organisation as conceptual, ideological and metaphorical practice. We want to inspire you to broaden your vision of vision beyond that which is 'just' symbolic.**

## Motivation

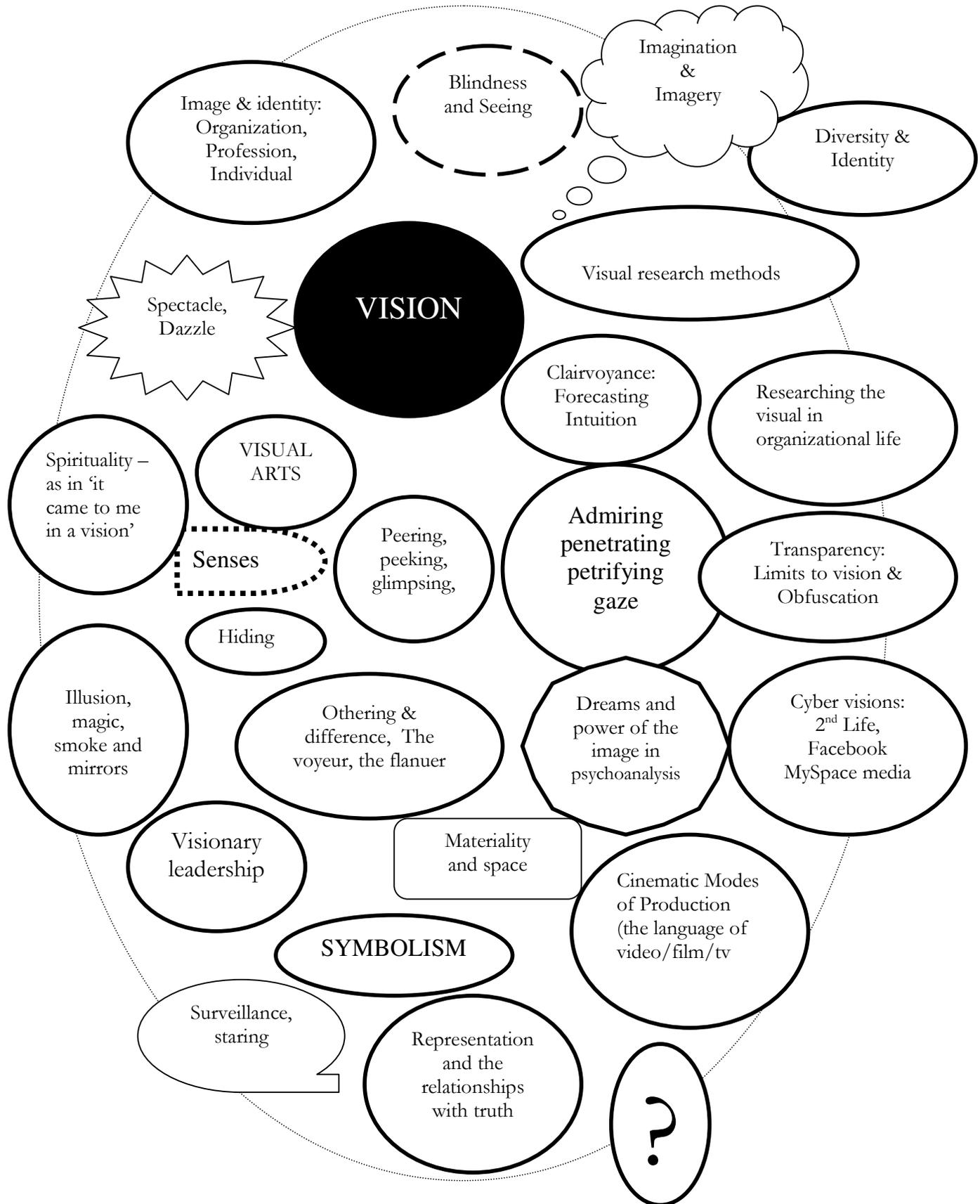
To *envisage* and to *visualise* – we are told – is the ultimate goal of organizational action. Having the ability to see the future in one mind's eye is the cornerstone of true (visionary) leadership. For to see into the future is to anticipate, be ready for and above all to attempt *control* of that which is unknown, unknowable and cannot be *seen*. Thus, all management disciplines are fundamentally concerned with vision. But to see is also to be seen. Who has the power to see and who is too weak to shield themselves from gaze(s)? Gaze is political – especially so in a mass mediated society where image is coming to stand for experience itself. Organizational images both reproduce and disrupt established orders of seeing. What is more, these ocular technologies of order are not new but have a long history in organization studies that is often belied by neophilic tendencies to emphasise 'The Visual' as a leitmotif of only our relatively recent past and present.

Vision also sees through things. It is transparency – seeing things as they 'really are'. We say that those with vision can 'see' things that other less gifted individuals cannot. What does this mean for organizations? How do organizations seek to see? How do they hope that others will see them? The artefacts that construct the corporation in others' eyes are techniques of transparency: "Look! you can see through us! we are clear! we are *accountable!*" In certain cultural contexts, to see is to believe, thus, if organizations make visible processes, products, ideas, ideals, thus, public may believe in their existence or in their good intentions. In this complex game, visions can be also used to obscure or to hide... as Foucault said: visibility is (also) a trap. If you are looking at something you cannot be looking at/for something else at the same time – thus vision is also illusion – perhaps even trickery. In this process, organisations may determine what can be seen or what/who is not seen, thus issues related to diversity, equality, identity and differences might be included here.

But vision locates us in time and space in an ocular relation with the world. To rely on one's sight is to flatten the embodied sensorium, to rely on 1/5,6,7,8,∞th of our being-in-the-world. So vision is impoverished, partial and that is before we begin to think about the partiality of sight itself. But often we do not see unaided – we use lenses to sharpen, enlarge, bring into focus and expand that which we do not see by ourselves and through technology we can 'see' things which we can only conceptually trust in – the electron microscope, the deep space telescope... scopic regimes which rely entirely on contemplation and that which we take on trust: theories as ways of seeing.

**Abstracts (of no more than 500 words) and proposals for other forms of presentation due by Nov 30<sup>th</sup> 2009. Further details will be posted on the SCOS website and mailing list.**

# Inspiration: Some Themes and Ideas....



## Musings of a Board Secretary....

As the rest of you settled into the salubrious luxury that is Hulme Hall, clutching your minimalist chic conference bags eagerly anticipating the start of the SCOS 2008 conference, your board were hard at work dealing with the issues that come with running a major international scholarly network on your behalf. As is usual at the annual conference board meeting, we have an almost full house – lots of voices to be heard and debate to be had – ironically at the one meeting where we’re also the keenest to keep things short and sweet and head off to the conference ourselves! So here’s the précis of a précis-ed (!) meeting...

As if he didn’t have enough to do, Damian our 2008 conference organiser started proceedings with an update on arrangements, including a last minute cancellation from the planned venue for the Gala Dinner (bet you didn’t even notice!) but in typically O’Dohertyesque style he quickly informed us of the new arrangements (phew!). Annette and Peter then followed with the latest from the 2009 Copenhagen/ Malmö conference office, swiftly rounded off with a report from Bea and Sam on preliminary arrangements for SCOS

2010 which will be held in Lille, northern France. Proposals are still being discussed for forthcoming years, so take note! If you fancy organising a future SCOS conference, our esteemed Chair Jo Brewis is always keen to hear from you.

Saara tabled the accounts and was pleased to report SCOS’s continued financial health (credit crunch, bah!) meaning we are able to support much needed PhD student bursaries for conference attendance for next year in continued SCOS tradition – enabling and growing as much new academic talent as we can. In the discussion that ensued, the issue of support for board members to attend meetings was raised but it was decided that being a SCOS board member is a labour of love that ideally should be supported by the member’s institution... but did you know that some of the Board fund themselves to attend meetings?! Dedication indeed for which the Board minuted its heartfelt thanks.

We were pleased to welcome two new members, Sumo Matilal as membership secretary, who you’ll all know very well by now... and Kathleen Riach who takes up Annette Risberg’s former role as Meetings Secretary. The regional reps then gave their reports, keeping us up to date with SCOS activities

and news from their part of the world.

Next up was the *Notework* editors’ report who updated us on their plans to balance the usual fun and frivolity we have come to know and love from *Notework* with more controversial issues and debates as befits our ‘mission’ and tradition, followed by Peter Case and Simon Lilley who reported on *Culture and Organization* (the SCOS journal in case you didn’t know!) These include a new editorial office to go with the new editors as well as a new managing administrator.

Alf Rehn then reported on the health of the SCOS website (which is good I’m pleased to say) and the board discussed possibilities afforded by developments in social networking sites, although we decided to revisit the idea if and when a need presented itself. It was also agreed to be a good idea to translate the SCOS website into other languages to better reflect our international profile, initially French, German and Spanish. The meeting closed just in time for us to get to registration and the rest, as they say, is history! More from your new secretary next issue as I turn my attention to co-organising the 2010 conference in Lille. See you there... ☺

### Your board are currently:

**Chair:** Jo Brewis (UK) **Meetings Secretary:** Kat Riach (UK) **Secretary & Elections Officer:** Sam Warren (UK), **2008 Conference:** Damian O’ Doherty (UK) **2009 Conference:** Peter Elsmore (UK), David Crowther (UK) and Annette Risberg (Denmark) **Membership Secretary:** Sumohon Matilal (UK) **Treasurer:** Saara Taalas (Finland) **Notework Editors:** Sheena Vachhani and Stephen Dunne (UK) **Web Officer:** Alf Rehn (Finland) **Journal Editors (C&O):** Peter Case (UK) and Simon Lilley (UK) **Regional representatives:** Peter Pelzer (Germany) Nina Kivinen (Nordic countries) Rowland Curtis (UK) Janet Sayers (New Zealand), Carl Rhodes (Australasia) and Beatriz Acevedo (Latin America).

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## Bursary Recipient Reports SCOS XXVI (Manchester)

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*SCOSed*

**By Steve Vallance, University of Leicester**

The opportunity to attend, and to present a paper, at the 2008 SCOS in Manchester was an incredibly inspirational and useful experience for me, at a very early stage in my PhD studies, and gave me a real sense of the breadth of work and thought in evidence among the group of scholars who were there. I am very happy to have been able to take part, and to have been a recipient of a bursary from SCOS which allowed me to attend.

The experience was all the more rewarding in that it was the first significant conference I had attended in the field of organisation studies, outside of my own institution, and yet I was made to feel very welcome. I quickly came to appreciate that the SCOS conference acts as a genuine moment and space for those who seek to pursue interesting ways of doing organisation studies, providing a sense of community, friendly conviviality and a challenging intellectual stimulus. This positive experience was I'm sure enabled by the conference's manageable and productive size, being compact enough to allow for interaction and sociability without being intimidating. The conference was also held, appropriately, in the hugely significant city of Manchester, in a pleasant and secluded part of the University of Manchester that allowed attendees to sense some of the organisational work of the urban complex constantly flowing around the conference itself.

As a SCOS first-timer, and a first-time conferee, I hope that I got a real sense of the SCOS experience; the deluxe student accommodation, the scanning over the conference programme to work out which sessions to attend and where they were held, the slight weariness that sets in towards the last panel of the day only to be revived on hearing that the bar had opened. The overwhelming sense that I took away from the conference was the sheer range of interesting people doing interesting work on such a variety of subjects, who congregated together. Indeed the difficulty of choosing what to attend among such a richness of paper titles and abstracts induced the faint paranoia of perhaps missing something that would be revelatory, life-changing or indeed contributory to the thesis. As it was, I thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated papers given by friends and colleagues, and by scholars I had been less aware of, often also PhD students, but who impressed in the work they were doing and their ability to present.

I think that I also shared the experience of many in being able to better enjoy the papers after having presented myself, first thing on the second day of conference, and then of being able to discuss my work alongside two other fascinating papers, and with a supportive audience who were generous with their useful questions and suggestions. It would be difficult to isolate highlights of the experience for me. The satisfaction of having been able to discuss my work was complemented by an appreciation of hearing from so many others, and the way in which scholarship in many disparate fields was able to suggest fresh directions of thought for the concerns which interest me. I also greatly appreciated the facility with which the many younger researchers were encouraged to participate and contribute to making the conference such an intellectually productive space, alongside more experienced scholars, without the feeling of differentiation that might be inhibitory in other academic situations.

My regrets, if I have any, are perhaps of not being able to see all the papers I would have wanted to. Oh, and missing a karaoke performance which I have been assured will go down in SCOS folklore.

***SCOS 2008: Manchester***  
**By Laura Mitchell, Lancaster University**

Well what can I say about my first experience of the Standing Conference on Organizational Symbolism?

To begin with, it wasn't really conference weather, or Mancunian weather for that matter, since the sun was out and the atmosphere glorious. I don't know to what degree that influenced the removal of jackets and the informality of the event, but it certainly made drinks in the evening a marvellously relaxed affair, and I was amazed by the number of interesting (and interested<sup>2</sup>) people I managed to meet in so short a time.

This was not only my first experience of SCOS, it must be said, but also of any conference where I had never before met a single attendee or delegate. This was quite daunting to begin with, and had I not been awarded the bursary to go I may very well have spent the time hiding in my room. I certainly spent the first evening there for the most part, enthralled by the proliferation of leaflets and information provided in 'yer bag' (of which I now have a small collection from various sources – please keep giving away bags at conferences, as it helps tremendously in organising my shopping now plastic bags are a supermarket *faux pas*). I spent a good hour or so with a highlighter pen trying to determine which sessions would be most relevant to my area, or most interesting, or most intellectually stimulating...sadly I failed in creating any meaningful taxonomy of the timetable to this effect. In the end I confess I left the choice to serendipity and chance. I reflect today on some of the concepts presented at SCOS 2008, as they continue to provide symbolic resonance with my ongoing struggles to understand my own work. I think that just goes to show the quality and diversity presented in the conference (or alternatively that trusting chaos theory is the most appropriate response to any timetable of events).

I was certainly struck by the number of other young scholars I met during the few days, and those from all over the international arena (though a dearth of Americans, interestingly). One fellow delegate even invited me to come and visit her home should I ever wish to holiday in Germany, leaving me feeling quite provincial in my knowledge of European geography<sup>3</sup>. It was quite fascinating, however, to hear of projects and studies being undertaken across Europe, as well as those further afield<sup>4</sup>. The conference's novel approach to interdisciplinarity also left me with a respect for Manchester's textile history and a desire to become acquainted with Gaskell's *North and South*.

I had only one main regret and criticism of SCOS 2008, and that was my place in the timetable. Presenting at 9 o'clock the morning after the main conference dinner is not a slot to be envied by many, and I felt it necessary to cut short on the evening's entertainments to return to my sleepless room and worry about the next day's presentation. Based on the dark glasses concealing hollowed eyes and the proliferation of black coffee among the organisers, I can only assume that the evening went swimmingly<sup>5</sup>.

However, as the conference 'newbie' was presented with what I think was a blow-up sheep, I definitely felt that I had missed out.

I can only hope to be more participative during SCOS 2009.

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<sup>2</sup> Though I have tended to note that almost all established academics you meet are interested in what PhD students are doing, or at least they pretend to be. I sometimes wonder if this is some sort of reminiscence back to their own carefree days before RAE paperwork and administrative nightmares. I can only hope for my own future that this is not true.

<sup>3</sup> Yes I am aware of where Germany is, but the smaller bordering states I am a bit fuzzy on. Is Bremen a really long way away from Antwerp – I honestly couldn't tell you.

<sup>4</sup> Just how important are attitudes to underwear among female professionals? Certainly more than males, by the sounds of it.

<sup>5</sup> This is not to imply there were any incidents involving Manchester's canals. No academics were harmed in the making of this conference.

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# Alien to the System: Specifics of the Relationship between Artists and Business Organisations

## By Anke Strauss

### ABSTRACT

This paper considers art as a particular form of communication, which thematizes perceptions and how those perceptions came into being. This is a rather new perspective, which opens up new possibilities for co-operations between artists and business organizations that do not make do with putting art to a functional use that is, for marketing purposes, for instance. We would like to give an idea of this concept of art in order to focus in the following considerations on attempts, where artists address individual business organizations, in order to create artworks, which relate to organizational issues; and to deal with two questions: what are the specifics of fine art projects in the business organizational context and what is art in contrast to artful approaches?

### INTRODUCTION

The question “What is art?” is a widely discussed issue and cannot be answered in general. Therefore, we want to refine our research in two aspects: First, we focus just on *fine art*, and refer to it as art in the following. Second, we will consider art in a business organization context, which provides the possibility to define art with reference to it. For that reason, we will focus on communication when considering business organizations that are accordingly conceptualized as particular social contexts that predetermine what and how events are perceived, communicated, and interpreted.

Art, in contrast to that, is conceived as a specific form of communication that challenges our concepts of the world and thus supports a reflection of how we perceive, interpret, and evaluate certain events and situations. These characteristics, as we will see in the following, might also contribute to business organization survival. Before we start we first want to give an idea of our basic assumptions. The further considerations are about individual as well as collective sense-making processes, about communication and perception as distinction processes, and about the media within which communication takes place. The concept of distinctions is central. We assume that the world does not possess a certain structure *per se* but has to be organized some way in order to be perceived, interpreted, and cause for certain reactions. In other words, we do not assume that reality is something to be discovered but to be constructed. This construction is carried out by distinctions applied.

When being confronted with the world, we single out one aspect of the great pool of possible aspects by applying a distinction, which distinguishes this particular aspect ‘from everything else’. Consequently, it depends on the distinction applied what we perceive. Distinctions can be very coarse (‘a rainbow’) or very sophisticated (the five colors of a rainbow) and to a great extent are a fruit of socialization. The fact that Japanese people perceive one color in addition to the five colors of the rainbow western people perceive is just one example for it. This approach has two crucial implications for our further considerations:

First, we already stated above, reality is *created* through specific distinctions *made*, which means that it does not exist independently from somebody who selects and applies these distinctions. This somebody will be further named as *observer*. Yet, this ‘enactment’ process does not refer to the physical world but to the world as a meaningful concept to which individuals adapt their behavior. In the following, we would like to use the term relevant *environment*, when speaking about a reality that is transformed from its raw state (world) to a meaningful construction of it by distinguishing, selecting, and interpreting. Second, this shift to a constructivistic perspective also reveals that the distinctions are contingent, which means “also being possible otherwise” (Luhmann, 2005: 25). They are contingent although distinctions applied become less and less arbitrary in the course of time, because of their dependence on prior experiences, which often leads to the assumption that there is just one (objective) reality, that is the own.

## **SENSEMAKING AS COGNITIVE OPERATION**

What we describe as cognitive operations is a bundle of different conscious and unconscious activity a human being carries out. For further consideration, we will focus on perception and conscious activity that are two different operations, however, constitutively intertwined in the process of sensemaking.

Individuals constantly perceive, however, perceptions are only selectively transformed into information, which is subject to sensemaking processes. This happens, when consciousness in form of attention as well as memory participates on perception processing and transforms “an undifferentiated flux of fleeting sense-impressions” (Chia 2000: 517) into a situation or an event. It is needless to say that this is carried out via distinctions. Here, time plays a crucial role, because consciousness does not only make use of prior experiences in order to interpret a situation but also to form expectations.

Expectations are a product of our past experiences to which an individual refers, when scanning the world. This way, they determine *what* and *how* something is perceived and thus constitute a form of orientation. Thus, expectations do not only have impact on the set of distinctions we apply but also on interpretation. The determinacy on past experiences ensures that arbitrary or random expectations cease to occur after a certain period of conscious life and thereby individuals are able to keep ready a repertoire of behavioral possibilities to respond to fulfillment or disappointment of their expectations.

Sensemaking is constitutively dependent on prior experiences, which means that it is a matter of connecting the present situation with experiences of former situations that in turn necessitates memory. However, memorizing former situations in their full complexity would quickly lead to an overload of conscious memory. Therefore, prior experiences are memorized as abstract concepts rather than in their full concreteness. Those abstract concepts are generalizations that allow developing schema-driven knowledge and scanning current situations or events for similarities. However, to scan a current situation for similarities to former situations requires formalizing the concrete situation, too, by “differentiation and simple-location, identification and classification” (Chia 2000: 517).

## **SENSEMAKING AS COMMUNICATIVE OPERATION**

We know now how individuals create a situation out of an undifferentiated flux of impressions by applying distinctions and successively making sense of it by interconnecting current experiences with abstract concepts of prior experiences. In the course of this process the situation does not only become more and more concrete in its meaning but also in its resulting actions, whilst at the same time its complexity decreases. At the same time, the social impact on those processes cannot be overestimated. Individuals are social beings. They talk about experiences, discuss situations, and act in a way that can be observed by others. Hence, meaning is not only generated cognitively but also communicatively.<sup>6</sup> “We see communication as an ongoing process of making sense of the circumstances in which people collectively find [themselves] and of the events that affect them” (Taylor and Van Every 2000: 58).

We want to designate the operation of applying and processing distinctions as *observing*. In contrast to cognitive processes, communication does not only consist of an observation that generates information, this also has to be made available to further observations, which necessitates a certain form of utterance. Consequently, information constitutes a particular topic (what), whilst utterance describes how and why this topic is communicated. Thus, the selection of utterance can be conceived as a selection from a repertoire of *intentional* acts. However, there is a third distinction that has to be made in order to carry out communication – a distinction *between* information and utterance. This distinction between information and utterance - called *understanding* – can be conceived as an observation of an observation.

The concept of understanding as an observation of an observation reveals a certain hierarchy. We will take this into account and call an observer, who just applies a distinction, first-order observer, whereas we will name an observer, whose subject of observation is an observation, second-order observer. Accordingly, a second-order observation though it differs from first-order observations includes the distinctions presented by the first-order observer.

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<sup>6</sup> Paul Watzlawick (1983: 84-92) provides an excellent discription of how reality is a subject of collective sensemaking.

This concept of communication due to its rather abstract character may be difficult to understand. Therefore, we take an example from our everyday life that may be helpful. While she drives the car, he shouts: "The traffic light is red!" Hence, he generates information (what: red traffic light) and utters it in a certain way (how: shouting) via two distinctions. She, in turn, has to apply a distinction, which relates these two distinctions made by her husband in order to figure out its meaning. Here, the way he uttered the information might lead to the assumption that he wanted to warn her, but also might result in the supposition that he doubts her driving skills, or exclaims in delight on the color of the traffic light. Depending on what kind of distinction she applies, her response may be a quick physical reaction, a groan in exasperation, or just "indeed, this beautiful color can be found everywhere".

This example also shows us, that the second-order not the first-order observer defines the meaning of a message, which means that intended and understood meaning of uttered information do not necessarily be the same. At the same time it reveals that understanding, too, is conceptualized as a communicative event. "[C]ommunication emerges only if this last difference [between information and utterance] is observed, expected, understood, and used as the basis for connecting with further behaviors" (Luhmann 2005: 141). This is why understanding always implies ensuing communication that expresses understanding by rejecting or accepting the meaning of communication.

Falling back to our example of the couple sitting in the car, this means that he may respond to her possible groaning with "why are you groaning? I didn't mean to criticize you", which again provides an occasion for her to respond. This way, understanding is tested. With other words, understanding can be conceived as a second-order observation (a distinction *between* information and utterance), which at the same time constitutes a first-order observation (a distinction *of* information and of utterance) that can be subject to further (second-order) observations. Thus, within a communication process distinctions are constantly tested by further distinctions. This way, sense is subject to collective negotiation and coordination processes. Lastly, our example illustrates that a single human being is not capable of communication. In fact there has to be another one, who *perceives* that a particular distinction is intentionally made within a communicational process. Thus, it is crucial for communicative processes to ensure that a distinction between information and utterance is perceived as such.

## **LANGUAGE AS MEDIUM**

Language as a medium possesses two main characteristics that make it most adequate to serve communicative and conscious processes: it is artificial and abstract (we may also say symbolic).

Due to its artificial character language is adequate to support communication, as, contrary to non-verbal communication, the intention to communicate cannot be denied. Thus, the use of language does not only captivate individual's attention but also ensures that something is perceived as uttered information in a communicational process. With other words, the artificial character of language ensures that distinctions made are observed as intentional, which in turn triggers the search for meaning.

At the same time, language generalizes "meaning with the help of symbols that – rather than designate *something else* - *are themselves* what they perform" (Luhmann 2005: 94). This means that words do not refer to concrete objects but to certain meaningful *concepts* of them. Hence, those meaningful concepts constitute generalizations, which make the ascertainment of its (material) existence unnecessary, because they refer to sense that is attached to this concept rather than to the concrete object itself.

For communicational processes, this means that differences are blurred. Language in the form of acoustical or optical signs facilitates communication as the participating persons are by the use of the same signs reinforced in the *apprehension* that they mean the same thing. This does not mean that they necessarily do so. Actually, this is hardly ever the case. However, thanks to the use of the same signs, people can speak about a certain topic, as for instance freedom, without possessing a point-by-point congruence in their concepts. Hence, the use of language diminishes the probability that misunderstanding becomes so great that continuing communication becomes impossible.

For consciousness the use of language allows memory to store abstractions of former situations, their attached sense,

and resulting actions for later retrieval. This in turn provides psychological relief for consciousness because formalizing experiences allow people to categorize, to develop schemes, types, and stereotypes<sup>7</sup> and *recognize* similar situations in the future instead of exploring them each time anew. At the same time, people are more and more estranged from direct perceptions, which entails that situations are not perceived in their entire complexity anymore and, as to name a situation means to limit it in its possible meaning.

To sum up, language does not only have advantages for conscious activity and communication, it also organizes their interrelationship, because it is artificial and thus emphasized the intention of information that is uttered. Additionally, it allows leaving the level of direct perceivable stimuli (carried out by materially existing items) and facilitates the coordination of different cognitive structures of various individuals. Consequently, it allows communicating without processing a point-by-point congruence of individual's cognitive structure. At the same time, however, language seduces to simplify situations and to overlook differences instead of taking them into consideration. In most cases, this has no negative impact, however, there are situations within which this *modus operandi* leads to serious threats for individuals as well as for social bodies like business organizations.

### **ART AS COMMUNICATION**

Conceptualizing art as a certain form of communication means that we have to consider whether understanding an artwork depends on a distinction between information and utterance, each of which constitutes intentionally made by someone to be perceived by somebody else. Consequently, our consideration is about observing: second- as well as first-order observing.

We may easily conceive an artwork as an utterance of information that is intentionally made. "What does the artist mean?" is a frequently asked question, when people are confronted with art and reveal that the distinctions, made by an artist, are assumed to be made with regard to an anticipated beholder. However, can an artwork be perceived as a communication process? We have already mentioned that language emphasizes the distinction between information and utterance because of its artificiality. This is also a characteristic of an artwork. An artwork cannot be mistaken for something natural, as it consists of a combination of material, sounds, or gestures, and thus provokes the assumption of an intention.

Yet, in contrast to language art does reveal neither a particular function nor a certain purpose that can be *recognized*. This lack of purpose refers to Kant's (1790) concept of beauty that is characterized by a lack of purpose (*Zweckbeziehung*) and convenience (*Nutzen*), which provokes the question 'what is the point?' and make individuals concern further with the artwork in order to find its purpose or intention.

This reveals the difference between communication that is carried out within the medium of language and the one of an artwork. Language supports communication processes by generating immediate comprehension through recognition. Due to its abstract character that allows generalizations, language supports individuals' tendencies to confirm expectations, to strengthen particular distinctions applied, and to carry out schema-driven cognitive processing. In contrast to that, art triggers sensemaking efforts by incomprehensibility that never fully disappears. But how can incomprehensibility be maintained? Here the concept of thwarted expectations comes into play.

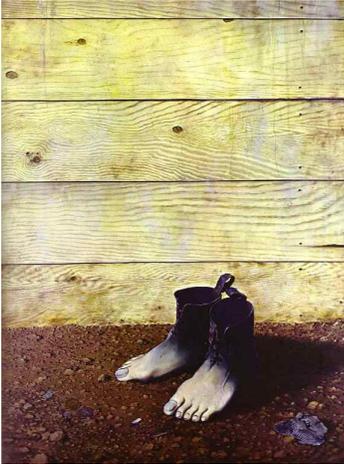
We already mentioned above, that we orientate ourselves with the help of expectations. Expectations do not only determine *what* but also *how* we perceive. At the same time, expectations are a result of and subject to retrospective formation and testing that is carried out via understanding, which we showed is constantly tested and retrospectively adjusted. Consequently, the context of further distinctions is crucial to understand the 'right' meaning of uttered information a fact, which an artist keeps in mind, when generating distinctions for an anticipated beholder.

When we are confronted with an artwork – a painting, for instance - we perceive different distinctions provided by an

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<sup>7</sup> Baron and Misovich (1999) call this kind of abstraction conceptual processing in contrast to perceptual processing that is meaning processing via active exploration.

artist for an anticipated beholder and like every other form of communication, those distinctions are to be used in order to search for sense. Hence, a beholder of an artwork can be conceived as a second-order observer, “when he engages himself as observer in the forms that have been created for his observation, that is, when he reconstructs the observational directives embedded in the work” (Luhmann, 2000: 70).



Standing in front of a painting, we start scanning the artwork for something familiar. In case of René Magritte's *Le Modèle rouge* (1937), this might be part of a foot. We easily recognize ten toes. In order to answer the question why the artist presents ten toes, we try to contextualize this distinction with further distinctions. Yet, advancing from this first distinction puzzles us, as we do not find legs but two boots. This thwarted expectation makes us insecure about our first distinction - are the feet we perceive in the first place something else? And if so, what are they? - and makes us search for further distinctions that might help us to make a plausible sense of what has happened, which serves to normalize the breach we have just experienced and to restore expectations. We may, for instance, focus on the locus of transition from foot to boot in hope of further clues.

With other words, in our search for sense, we are forced to advance from one distinction to the next in order to return eventually to the distinction from which we began. However, in contrast to non-art communication, advancing from and returning to a distinction does not confirm expectations and decrease complexity. Quite the contrary, further distinctions do not limit the possible meanings of prior distinctions but open up additional ones. As a consequence we constantly move between the different forms inherent in an artwork in our search for sense. Surprisingly or not, Magritte does not offer an ultimate answer to our questions, and this way, a conclusive comprehension of the artwork is avoided (we may also say incomprehensibility is maintained). Yet, this increasing complexity makes the beholder perceive a contingency that was invisible in the first operation.<sup>8</sup>

A communication process is usually structured by a theme to which certain contributions relate but keeping our example in mind, art seems to communicate something else than what can be assumed at first sight. Thus, art only *seemingly* makes a particular contribution to a certain theme. This impression is often supported by a particular title that the artist gives his artwork. Here the title of the painting *Le Modèle rouge* – the red model – may in first place create the expectation of red color – a color that cannot be detected within the painting. However, in combination with bare feet that seem to stand on a street the artistic communication resemble a contribution to a political theme. Hence, on second glance also this impression is instantly undermined. The contributions turn out to be deceptions that are replaced by further ones. This way, the ambiguous contributions to a particular theme do not serve to *confirm* the distinction applied and this way our expectations that fall back on cognitive schemes that were formed in the course of time, but to *deconstruct* it.

But what then is the theme to which art contributes and what is different to what it seems at first sight? Art is able to deconstruct meaningful structures that are related to a certain theme, because it uses themes as an *occasion* to present its own theme that is how perception is guided by communication and this way makes expectations, meaning structures and interpretations schemes that occur with different themes become apparent and subject to reflection. Consequently, even though the function of art is an intensively discussed issue, and seems to vary within the course of time, we may describe the main function of art within this context as ‘making perceptions perceivable for perception in a communicational act’ (Baecker 1994). Consequently, a work that intends to be a work of art, does not only communicate perceptions but also the communication of the communication of perceptions, i.e. how one comes to have that kind of sensation (Baecker, 2007: 9).

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<sup>8</sup> For a good impression of this process see for instance Fisch (1987).

This is carried out through deceptions that are transparent and that draw on the concept of 'beautiful appearance' a notion of classical aesthetics.<sup>9</sup> Consequently, understanding an artwork as communication – understanding the difference between information and utterance - requires the perception of perception, whether the beholder's participation is explicitly demanded or not. Therefore, the artist anticipates the beholder when creating his work of art and incorporates ways that guide the beholder's expectations. He refers to the familiar simply so that he can reveal it as deception by frustrating expectations in order to surprise. Supposedly applicable schemes turn out to be useless within the context of artworks. This results in astonishment on the part of the beholder and provokes a reflection about his perception, and how this is guided by collective sensemaking via communication.

Here, we may have gained a first idea of what art is in contrast to artful approaches. Yet, we will dwell on this difference after we have considered the specificities of an artwork within the business organization context.

### **BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS AS SOCIAL CONTEXTS**

We already mentioned, that we conceive a business organization as a particular social context – we may also say a communication context, which constitutively differs from other social contexts, like a university or a political party not only in how communication is carried out but also what is communicated. Applying ideas of constructivism, we can say that a business organization possesses an own way to make sense of the world, concerning what, why and how. Therefore, it falls back on a set of relatively stable patterns that are often called interpretation schemes, cognitive codes, or meaningful structure, and which are developed and formed through experiences made in the course of time.

The rigidity of those patterns allows a business organization to be capable to operate despite a world that is too complex and fast changing to be considered comprehensively. However, in case of profound environmental changes, this behavior may cause a severe crisis that even might threaten organization survival, if those changes are too long overlooked and decisions are based upon assumptions that do not correspond to developments in the relevant environment anymore. Overlooking important environmental changes does not have anything to do with a probable incapability of the participating organization members but with a meaningful structure of an organization that is too rigid. People orientate on their current social context, in order to know what the relevant aspects of an event or a situation are and how these aspects have to be interpreted, because adherence to or deviation from those interpretation and behavioral rules decide whether a person is identified as a member of or a stranger to a particular social context. As at the same time social contexts are constitutional for individual identity formation (Devereux 1978) business organization members tend to rather follow than deviate those rules.

This has important implications for art projects that are meant to take place in the context of a business organization. Therefore, we want to consider some specificities of a business organization's communicational context, before we give an idea of how artworks deal with those specificities.

### **COMMUNICATION IN THE BUSINESS ORGANIZATION CONTEXT**

Art does not naturally belong to the relevant environment of a business organization as long as it is not an art enterprise like an art gallery or an auction house. Consequently, it does not become a theme around which contributing communication may form. However, if art attracts business organizations' attention it is usually perceived and interpreted with reference to the firm's logic, which means that it is considered from a marketing perspective or with reference to customer retention programs.

At the same time the contribution of art to themes a business organization regards as relevant cannot easily be identified as such by the business organization, because art often deals with those themes in a general manner or refers to an example that is not the individual business organization. However, if an artwork explicitly refers to a business organization's theme, like *Quite Normal Luxury* of Plamen Dejanov and Svetlana Heger<sup>10</sup>, who referred to the BMW Z3 Roadster 2.8 and therefore cooperated with BMW, still does not guarantee that a company occupies itself with what this artwork communicates.

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<sup>9</sup> See for instance Schiller (1795), who also uses the notion of aesthetic appearance within this context, translated by Snell, 2004: 124ff.

<sup>10</sup> Christiane Zentgraf gives an impression of this project in Mir (2003).

However, apart from the theme an artwork refers to, art is also a specific *form* of communication. This form of communication constitutively differs from communication that is carried out within a business organization. Within a business organization, distinctions are applied in a routinized manner, expectations are met, and contingency as well as complexity is hidden within the communication process. This enables an efficient distribution of time and individuals' capacities of attention that are scarce resources within a business organization.

Usually these scarce resources are distributed according to priority and complexity (as more complex tasks require more time than simple ones). A simple task of high priority is preferred to an important but complex task, whereas complex tasks of low priority will be fulfilled last, and sometimes never.<sup>11</sup> Art can be conceived as complex and time-consuming. At the same time, with regard to the organization's core business, the importance of this process can be described as rather low, because it does not immediately contribute to business performance. Consequently, art as a kind of communication does not automatically take place, when an artwork is placed into a business organization's premises.

In addition to factual and time aspects described above, we also have to consider a social dimension. People are at work. Thus, when being confronted with art at work they will probably behave according to what is expected from them in their professional context, which differs constitutively from behavior in an art-related context. Consequently, they initially try to relate art or art practice to the firm's product and evaluate it according to the firm's interests (i.e. can this artistic work add a certain value? Or is it a threat? Can I use it somehow?). They will behave this way, because they are geared to their current context, although they might have experience with the 'appropriate' behavior towards the arts. If a dealing with art usually does not take place in the organizational context, individuals tend to expect that this will not be appreciated and refrain from engaging in art communication in order to avoid meeting with a refusal of the other organizational members or being held personally responsible for it.

When people enter a museum or a gallery they do it, because they want to spend their time with works of art. They know that what they will find in an art institution is art. An art institution does not solely guarantee a certain amount of attention but also the appreciation of an object as art.<sup>12</sup> However, if an artist leaves the supporting framework of an art institution, he has to incorporate those supporting frameworks that create attention and appreciation in his work somehow, especially if art shall take place within a context where communication constitutively differs from the way art communicates. Therefore, considering at least three dimensions becomes crucial when art should be introduced into the communicational context of a business organization: the factual, the social and the time dimension.

### **SPECIFICITIES OF ART IN THE BUSINESS ORGANIZATION CONTEXT**

Using a business organization's theme as an occasion for art communication only attracts a firm's attention if this theme is not a topic of business in general but attributed to an individual business organization like Svetlana Heger and Plamen Dejanoff did in their project with BMW. Their artwork did not refer to cars in general but to a very specific one: the BMW Z3. At the same time, taking particular *objects* like a company's product or its premises as occasion for art communication often leads to situations where those objects are promoted with the help of the artwork.

Here art supports business organization communication within well-known routines instead taking place as an own communication that challenges and reflects our understanding, expectations, and assumptions that are associated with those objects. Therefore, referring to organizational *processes* in some way provides the advantage that a particular business organization can take the artwork personally without having too easily the possibility to use art as a tool for business organization's communication.

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<sup>11</sup> Usually there are tasks which are not fulfilled as they are complex and of low priority. Often, these are long-term considerations or meta-level issues, which are constantly covered up by decisions that have to be taken immediately. A striking example is self-reflection as it binds a lot of time, which is then no longer available for everyday business. That is why a firm usually does not reflect on itself and only if it faces a severe crisis.

<sup>12</sup> Marcel Duchamp reflects with his ready-mades upon this supporting function of the art institutional framework.

Thinking about the social dimension leads us to at least two aspects:

First, how can the attention of business organization members be captivated by an artwork whilst resisting to be instantly processed within the business organizational logic (as marketing tool, for instance)? Second, we have to think about the issue of legitimacy, which determines whether and how business organization members participate in art communication.

We already discussed the first aspect above with regard to the theme but we once again want to consider it with reference to the social dimension, because referring to a particular theme of a business organization does not mean that the artwork also captivates the attention of individual members: not being *personally* addressed often means not being in charge of. Many fine art projects that take place in a business organization context therefore try to integrate business organization members into the process of art production. This kind of integration may range from participation through interviews or voting to a tangible co- production.

Participating organizational members in fine art production, also takes the time dimension into consideration. Like every other kind of communication, art also exists as a systematically ordered succession of events. Yet music, dance, or stage productions exclusively consist of a sequence of events. The period within which they occur is prefixed, it begins at the beginning, and it ends at the end. One cannot begin in the middle of the play or just render parts of it.<sup>13</sup> The pure episode of events causes a synchronization of the sequence of the performance and its experience. This way, a feeling of simultaneity is created.

In contrast to that, fine art neither provides a fixed period within which it occurs. The possibilities to observe are rather ensured by the physicalness of the art object, whose inherent composition of distinctions facilitates the occurrence of communication under conditions of complete de-synchronization. This leaves it to the beholder of an artwork how much time he grants the artwork. As we have already stated, a business organizational member will most probably grant an art object few or no time, when it occurs in the context of the business organization. However, participating organization members on the process of creation catches their attention, because they are personally asked to contribute. This way, verbal communication, which is direct and simultaneous, form around the art creation process and can support the time-consuming art communication. At the same time, contemporary art practice often exceed object-centered concepts of art and make verbal communication, dialogue, and interaction a crucial, if not the exclusive element of an artwork.

Additionally, framing and re-framing play a crucial role for both, art to take place within the business organization context as well as the business organization context to take place within art. Framing organization member's activity and communication as *art* provides possibilities for perception, interpretation, and behavior, that go beyond what is usual within the business organization context. This way, framing an activity that takes place within the context of a business organization as art creation does not only make organization members contribute to art creation but also allow them to pause for a moment and reflect the way they think and perceive as members of a particular business organization. Hence, art introduces an external perspective on the business organization, its rules and processes but from within.

Nonetheless, we have stated, that the creation of and occupation with art is not a usual activity of a business organization. Therefore, organization members run the risk of being held fully responsible for their activity as art creation deviates from normal behavior within the business organization context. Consequently, art creation necessitates a specific kind of legitimacy that is not provided by the organization's interpretation schemes in order to make business organization members venture on such an unusual undertaking. Therefore, it is crucial that organization members of higher if not the highest hierarchic level legitimize or even participate in this artistic activity. It has to be communicated that the artist is authorized to asked organization members to contribute to art creation and that the

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<sup>13</sup> There are also pieces of music, whose sequence of events is a subject of choice, like those of Stockhausen, the play of all sequences is crucial for the composition to be complete.

occupation with this art is appreciated within the organization context. If an engagement in art is legitimized by the organization's superiors, then, as we will see in the following section, art can serve as legitimization for deviant behavior.

### **ART AND ARTFUL APPROACHES**

Distinguishing art from artful approaches is a difficult venture, because their transition is smooth. We will nevertheless try to differentiate between them by considering two aspects that are somehow intertwined. Firstly, an artist is not a service provider for a business organization and secondly, his work does not create a value in economical terms but a value that is to be located outside a business organization that is, an art value.

Being 'at work' means that the product (or theme), and the specific technology to produce it – hence what and how something is produced - are not defined by the individual but by its organization doing 'business'. Consequently, business organization member's activities are not self- but other-determined by the business organization. The world is observed with the help of distinctions that are predefined by the organization. Artists, in contrast to that, define product (or topic) and technique by themselves, although they may work in the organizational context. "I am doing the research as an artist. And this research is how people live in complex systems that have been developed by themselves. That is my artist's topic. And that's a big difference to a 'usual' manager, because a manager is serving. I am not serving the system. I am looking on that system and I ask people to do that with me for a short moment" (Glaudemans 2007: 49).

The independence of the artist allows an art project to develop its own logic that does not concur with the business organization's logic though it refers to it. To this logic also belongs, in contrast to artful approaches, that the art project neither aims at immediate comprehension, it rather aims at irritation, nor intends a final, unambiguous comprehension, quite the contrary. "The ultimate test for the quality of artworks [is] that [...] we can perceive them again and again, each time with different eyes"(Luhmann 2000: 39). This own logic causes the following differences to artful approaches, which are also capable to surface unconscious processes in organizations impressively described by Daved Barry (1994).

Firstly, organization members do not create a symbol that is meant to mediate the inquiry process between consultant and client and to constitute "device though which insights can be elicited" (Barry 1994: 2). In fact, they participate on the creation of a certain value – an artistic value – which cannot be comprised by the logic of a business organization but can be appreciated by the participating organization members. The fact, that the co-production does not aim at creating an economical value but an artistic one opens up new scopes of actions, because it extricates business organization members from the business organization's logic.

At the same time, art legitimizes their deviant behavior and protects them against usual negative respond, which allows for experimentation with alternative distinctions and interpretation schemes within the business organization context. This is even more the case, if an independent authority from the art world verifies the importance and quality of the artwork created within the business organization context. In addition to that, an independent verification of the artwork's quality also has an impact on the motivation and commitment to the art project, because it gives importance to the contributing activity, which in turn encourages and bears out in unusual or deviant behavior within the business organization context.

Secondly, they do not participate in a creative process to solve a particular organization problem but to create art that refers to organizational issues, which is a different target. Participating in an art project relieves organizational members of the duty to present a single unambiguous solution, and this way allows dealing with and not suppressing ambiguity. Here, the creation process takes on greater importance than in artful approaches, where creative processes are a means to mediate a subsequent inquiry and interpretive process. Consequently, the period of irritation is prolonged, which might also prolong organization members' concern with it.

Allowing business organization members to deal with issues in a way that that differs from the organization's logic and exposing them to a prolonged period of irritation possesses the potential capacity to contribute to a business organization's long-term survival on the individual level of a business organization member as well as on the

organizational level itself. As we already described above, engaging in art that is, participating in art communication, can lead to a fundamental reflection of what thitherto has been taken for granted and may even shift of the mindset from an epistemological to a constructivistic conception. This way, an individual starts to focus on differences instead of similarities. A sensibility towards differences and a constructivistic mindset provides a multitude of advantages for an individual. The ability to cope with intercultural issues is just the most obvious example of it.

On the organizational level a preoccupation with art contributes to resilient performance under conditions of increasing uncertainty – one of the biggest challenges for today’s business organizations - by providing the possibility to increase what Weick and Suttcliffe (1999) call “mindfulness”. Mindfulness describes a sensibility towards events that diverge from the expected, and that are usually made plausible within the well-known concepts by the help of simplifications (abstractions). A mindful infrastructure comprises: tracking small failures, resisting oversimplifications, being sensitive to operations, striving for flexibility, and taking advantages of shifting locations of expertise.

The concept of mindfulness emphasizing the importance of incorporating physical movements, individual perceptions and sensemaking processes into the decision-making process of a business organization, because the sensitivity towards changes in the environment can only be increased via individual organization members and their ability to perceive. Certainly, art does not contribute to all aspects of mindfulness. However, allowing art to take place within the business organization context and encouraging organization members to engage in it loosens the rigidity of hierarchic organization and opens up the opportunity to resist oversimplification as well as to increase the sensitivity to operations.

Confronting business organization members with art that refers to their own business organization context means introducing ambiguity, complexity, as well as alienating thitherto self-evident assumptions and resulting expectations about the relevant environment and the organization itself. It follows Weick’s call to “Complicate Yourself” and this way allows individuals to see more, even as organization members that are used to the fact that only few, predefined perceptions are of interest for further business organization processes.

Sensitivity to operations means becoming conscious of what organization members “are actually doing regardless of what [they] were supposed to do based on intentions, designs, and plans” (Weick and Suttcliffe, 2007: 59). Participating and engaging in art, which thematizes the business organization’s processes and deconstructs underlying assumptions of causal relationships can make its members become more conscious of them. Being conscious of those processes is one step towards a transition to a more flexible handling of hierarchically structured organization processes. This might mean, for instance, superiors being aware that it is impossible to manage all operations hierarchically and to evaluate every deviation from the expected regarding its impact on the organization on their own and to trust their subordinates much more than usual.

## **CONCLUSION**

Conceptualizing art as a certain form of communication that shows us how our perception and interpretation of situations are predefined by social contexts such as the business organization we are member of, reveals that putting art into functional use (for marketing purposes, etc.) stops short of recognizing the main potential of art within the business organization context. Taking place within a business organization and referring to it can make positive contributions to a business organization’s long-term survival in an age of uncertainty.

We have stated, that art is only capable to support organization processes as art, which means that it must not follow the business organization’s perception and interpretation patterns. It rather has to be considered by organization members within its own logic. However, this is a difficult venture, because art is usually not part of a business organization’s concern. Therefore, an art project that is carried out within a business organization possesses specific characteristics and has to deal with particular aspects that result from this particular context.

One of these characteristics called framing serves to interconnect art and business organization. We may also say that framing serves to prepare organizational processes to be treated by art. In this context we also mentioned the concept of re-framing yet, without further discussing it. Re-framing can be conceived as the complement of framing, because it serves to re-introduce art into the organizational contexts. Re-framing is an issue of either *reintegrating* insights from the

art project into the organization process or *generating* insights by interconnecting activities of the art creation process with operations of the business organization context. Consequently, re-framing means generating connectivity (*Anschlußfähigkeit*) of the art project for the business organization context.

However, transforming experiences with art into a form that can be processed by the business organization – hence generating its connectivity – must not be the artist's duty, because for this subsequent task he would have to subordinate under business organization's logic, which in turn would have impact on the foregoing process of art creation. Besides that, an artist's core competence is not the transfer but the creation of art, which means irritation not explanation.

Consequently, the re-integration of insights resulting from experiencing a business organization from within an art process cannot be underestimated as this constitutes the eye of the needle, which decides, whether dealing with art in the business organization context successively contributes to organization's performance or not. Given the potential contribution of our concept of art to spot its potentiality for the business context apart from functional use, management and social studies hopefully increase their interest in this field.

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**THE EXHIBITION OF THE FLYING DAGGERS  
KUNIYOSHI AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY (LONDON)**

(21 March to 7 June 2009)

By Beatriz Acevedo



Benkei and Ushiwaka-maru fight on Gojo Bridge c. 1839. Kuniyoshi.

Image source: <http://www.japaneseprints-london.com/images/warriorslegends/warriors91a.jpg>

<p>The towering figure of warrior monk Benkei haunts the Gojo Bridge before Tokyo. Mighty and cruel he has been terrorizing citizens by stealing their weapons: one by one he had already collected 999 and just one sword is necessary for him to fulfil the prophecy and seize the city. Nobody dares to oppose the evil fighter whose blade drips with blood of hundreds of valiant adversaries.</p>	<p>It is an early night in the spring...the river flows quietly, the moon rises up covered in her white silence ... the city waits in agony... the bridge and its thousands pillars -former symbol of trade and buoyancy- had become an spectral place bathed by the early night... and apart of the sound of prey birds cawing nothing seems to disturb the scene. The evil monk waits for his next victim, immobile in his black robes, covered in daggers, swords and all sort of blades....</p>	<p>Suddenly, a crossing shadow -- a man or a creature -- whose silent speed tears the tense scene... the agile body borders the bridge, we see it in the distance, now in micro seconds it has advanced to the fore, we could hear the imperceptible cry of the old wood. His nimble feet seem to fly over the cracking timber, and we guess the flash of a blatant sword, a mirror of death...</p>
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The young brave is the skilled Ushiwaka who was trained in the swordplay by the tengu of Mt. Kurama. The figure is clearer now, only just when the dreadful monk reacts by throwing his deadly cloak over our hero. Fast in their movements, skilful in the use of the sword, Ushiwaka flies from left to right whereas his sword meets the monk's sable... the fight is furious, the sound of clanking metal sparks the air of this blue night, the agitated rhythm of hearts and breath, the reverberation of the warriors gasping for air, a confusion of metal and blood. And then, an audacious twist gives the victory to Ushiwaka. Defeated, the monk swears loyalty to Ushiwaka and followed him henceforth... After the years Ushiwaka would become the mythical hero Minamoto, not Yoshitune admired by generations to come.

\* \* \*

The scene described above can be associated with one of the latest films by Zhang Yimou's (*The House of the Flying Daggers; Curse of the Golden Flower*) or taken from the popular comic genre of Manga; however, this is the description of a printing dated c. 1839 by the Japanese artist Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797-1861). A generous sample of his oeuvre is currently exhibited at the Royal Academy – London (21 March to 7 June/2009). This exhibition is based on the collection of Arthur R. Miller, the curator is Timothy Clark, Head of the Japanese Section at the British Museum, and Canon Europe sponsored it. The vitality and audacity of these printings allow the audience to discovering a mysterious Japan during an important moment of their history. Moreover, this collection is an exciting journey where daggers, blades, monsters, sea creatures, brave warriors, beautiful women, floating landscapes, city scenes, theatre and cartoons reveal a rich world of tradition and imagination.

Utagawa Kuniyoshi was alongside Katsuhika Hokusai, Utagawa Kunisada and Utagawa Hiroshige, one of the leading artists of what is called the 'pictures of the floating world' or *ukiyo-e* school, active in Edo -- modern Tokyo) -- during the early to mid-nineteenth century (Clark, 2009: 19). Kuniyoshi was the son of a dyer and being just a youngster he embarked onto the long path of apprenticeship in the booming business of printing. In fact, it is important to highlight that the exhibition is not only about Kuniyoshi genius, but it stresses the collaboration between artists and publishers, block-cutters and printers. While learning the skills of his profession Kuniyoshi explored various kind of subjects; nevertheless, his career was transformed by the success of his first major print series, 'One of the 108 Heroes of the Popular Water Margin' also known as *Sukoiden* c. 1827-1830.

The first room of the exhibition is filled with the menacing figures of tattooed warriors covered in swords and daggers, all of them belonging to the tradition of brave outlaws who followed their own moral code. Although Japan had been ruled since 1185 by a succession of military regimes, the selection of this topic as a best seller coincided with a peaceful moment of the Edo period. Kuniyoshi's heroes and heroines were part of popular legends facing incredible adventures and gargantuan creatures such as the gigantic spider of thousand eyes, monstrous birds, feral tigers, or the colossal skeleton of an evil witch.

A favourite source of subjects for Kuniyoshi was the tales by *Minamoto no Yoshitune* and his henchman the warrior monk *Benkei* and many of the printings of this period depict scenes of the warrior life... (In fact, Kuniyoshi adopts the 'yoshi' of his hero for his name). In order to achieve a most powerful impression, Kuniyoshi adopted the triptych format. The use of three sheets also obeyed a technical condition, since the printings were carved in cherry wood, thus the size of approximately 39 x 26 cm was a constraint that the artist overcame in a creative way. By using this format Kuniyoshi was able to tell stories of myths and legends, of savage creatures in the submarine world, he relates vendettas and revenges, as well as the heroic tales of men and women against adversity.



Title: Eight Hundred Heroes of Our Country Suikoden



Miyamoto Musahi kills a great whale 1847-48

Image source: <http://www.harmoniemburg.nl/menu/whale.jpg>

The inclination of Kuniyoshi for this type of scenes made him a distinctive figure against his rivals. However, this specialisation actually obeyed a marketing strategy, for the trade in printings involved complex process of production aimed at offering a cheap product to a growing urban population of the Edo period (the price of each print was equivalent to two portions of noodles). Kuniyoshi's printings became part of the publishers' strategy to create and control niche markets, while responding to social demand and at the same time seeking to avoid the strict censorship by the government. For instance, the popular warriors so close to the Samurai past were highly censored, since the Tokugawa shogunate wished to emphasise their authority against the previous predominance of the Samurai regime. Indeed, the heroes in Kuniyoshi printings needed to be disguised by using different names, and the scenes depicted were quite ambiguous: very often people guessed that certain printing was in fact a critique to the shogunate and its policies in the guise of an historical scene. On the other hand, the heroes symbolised a brave past in a time when foreign ships were a regular presence in Japanese waters, threatening with their menacing presence the 200 years of the Empire isolation.

The increasing unstable political and social climate aggravated the censorship toward printings and other cultural activities. The country was polarised between, on one hand, the imminent and necessary process of modernization, and on the other, the traditional loyalty to the figure of the Emperor represented by Tokugawa shogunate. Consequently, the depiction of politically sensitive events (even those taken from history and legend) was generally banned. At the same time, the shogunate insisted in a moral purge of images related to geishas, explicit erotica and other representations of the 'floating world'. Rather they favoured the encouragement of virtues amongst citizens, especially for children and women.

In response to that, Kuniyoshi's exuberant imagination produced a number of beautiful women depicted as virtuous wives and young ladies. The irony lies on the fact that the genre of *bijin-ga* was initially designed to present pretty women dressed in fine robes posing seductively for the delectation of the viewer. This type of images was at the heart of the *ukiyo-e* (pictures of the floating world) and women were part of highly specialised hierarchy including high ranked courtesans, bathhouse women and shop girls, and they were the speciality of Kuniyoshi's senior rivals, Kunisada and Eisen. However, the strict regulations against the depiction of geishas and women pushed Kuniyoshi to explore this topic by producing a series of 'Biographies of Wise Women and Virtuous Wives'.



'Ouch, that hurts' 1852

Image source: <http://upload.wikimedia.org>

[/wikipedia/commons/8/84/Kuniyoshi\\_Utagawa,\\_Japan,\\_Women\\_8.jpg](http://wikipedia/commons/8/84/Kuniyoshi_Utagawa,_Japan,_Women_8.jpg)

By using the same artifices of the *bijin-ga*: i.e. fashionable clothes and charming poses, Kuniyoshi managed to escape censorship by perfecting this lovely type of paintings. In the third room of the exhibition, the value of perseverance is celebrated in the exemplary behaviour of Hatsuhana who prayed for a hundred days under a freezing waterfall to cure her husband's illness (Catalogue, 2009: 125). In this room it is possible to see also early advertisements of national products shown by lovely girls. Additional printings include alluring triptychs of young ladies in their luxurious kimonos, dancing under the rain, or simply women in pensive poses and intimate moments.

The oblique allusion to the floating world is a constant game between Kuniyoshi's printings and the government's strict censorship. The next room in the exhibition is filled with colourful landscapes of Tokyo and its surroundings. However, what it looks at first sight as tranquil scenes including boats and water, in fact reveal the richness and buoyancy of the 'floating world'. Boats full of customers looking for enjoyment, sellers haggling with travellers and women in their trade, should not be confused with a picturesque view of the city. Subtle signs reveal what is this all about... the protective branches of the 'successful-deal pine tree' are not just a decorative aspect in the cityscape, but a landmark looked out for by travellers up and down the river, a term given by young playboys referring to 'the morning after'.



Source: <http://visipix.com/search/search.php?userid=1616934267&q=%272aAuthors/K/Kuniyoshi%201797-1861%2C%20Utagawa%2C%20Japan%27&s=6&l=en&u=2&ub=1&k=1>

A constant theme in Kuniyoshi's printings is the presence of cats. He adored cats and they are depicted in all sorts of scenes. On the advertisements of national products, playful images on cartoons and exemplary tales, purring between the arms of charming women, or as a central theme in the form of letters and signs... even as part of the complicated scenery of the Kabuki theatre. In fact, Kuniyoshi paid tribute to this type of theatre and the magnificent productions of his time. Kabuki theatre was part of the popular culture during the Edo period. In contrast to the No Theatre, Kabuki plays were often historical and mostly they referred to townspeople's lives. Music, sound effects, onstage chanting and elegant dances performed by the actors, became important elements in the daylong program (Clark, 2009: 223).



Image source: [http://www.printsofjapan.com/Image2/Ichikawa\\_Danjuro\\_VIII\\_as\\_fox\\_Tadanobu2.jpg](http://www.printsofjapan.com/Image2/Ichikawa_Danjuro_VIII_as_fox_Tadanobu2.jpg)

Kabuki theatre became a source of endless inspiration for Kuniyoshi and he capitalised on the popularity of its actors – famous celebrities of his time- by producing portraits avidly purchased by the expanding fan base. For instance, the handsome actor Danjuro VIII (son of the talented Danjuro VII) was a central topic for Kuniyoshi. As a memorial for his tragic end, Kuniyoshi produced two major printings: a magnificent *surimono* print commissioned by two clubs of fish merchant poets, and later, a memorial portrait in a grand triptych format (Clark, 2009: 223).

Kabuki theatre was also a major target in the censorship implemented by the reforms during 1841-1843 concerning a strict prohibition of painting actors. Once again the playful genius of Kuniyoshi transforms this constraint in a new genre. By using figures of animals as personifications in certain type of scenes, Kuniyoshi escaped the ban by creating what was known as 'crazy pictures'. Although he firstly used these crazy pictures in the representation of moral tales, the contrivance helped him also to producing humorous printings.

Additional printings in this last room of the exhibition reveal a more comical and psychedelic side of Kuniyoshi's imagination: audacious representations of faces by using contorted bodies, boisterous compositions bridging

mythology with political criticism, and finally a series of nightmare erotica of gargantuan phallus and spectral erections. There it concludes this exhilarating journey through the world of Kuniyoshi and moreover through the deep and subtle Japan, still a mystery for Westerners.

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## *A reverse takeover*

**By Peter Pelzer**

Takeovers are normal business in a capitalist economy. There are good reasons for it. External growth it is called when one company takes over another to increase turnover and profit. Small companies are taken over to make use of their unique product, the list of their customers, to achieve entry into another geographical region and many other reasons. These deals tended to become ever bigger over the years with the extreme of Vodafone taking over Mannesmann with a volume of about € 190 billion.

Also very common during the past years was the politics of private equity. Investing in companies for an often only short period to sell it again with huge profits. The company is reorganised, costs cut, i.e. employees fired, it is torn to pieces with the assumption that the sum of the pieces sold is worth more than the price the investors paid.

Another model is also common. A management buy-out means that the owners of a company want to sell the company and instead of an anonymous investor, the competition, or in the extreme, when the previous owners simply want to give up business, the management take over the company with own money or usually heavily supported by credits of banks.

Three all too familiar forms of takeovers which I would like to contrast with a story which took place in a very specialised business and runs counter to all the normal expectations. The products involved is mature cheese, usually made from raw milk. This is much better and naturally more expensive as the usual variations you get at supermarkets. You may notice that I love this kind of cheese and therefore know the sources in my home town, Frankfurt. One source for high quality food is the 'Kleinmarkthalle', a market hall with a long standing tradition and well known in the town. It is a market hall with the prefix 'small', indicating that it is for consumers and consists of little independent shops which present their goods like the ones outside. The peculiarity of it are the specialisations of the shops: in principal one can get any food from almost anywhere in the world, from local meat, fruits and vegetables to more specialised or exotic food. Two of the shops are specialised in cheese. The obvious reason why I realised that what I call the reverse takeover is of course my preference of mature cheeses. Soon after I moved to Frankfurt a colleague made me aware of the Kleinmarkthalle and I soon found the cheese stands. One of them was easily to be liked more: better choice, but also with personnel who combined their knowledge of the goods with a very personal, direct style of acting with the customers, cheeky, always with a big grin in the face.

A, perhaps not typical, dialogue was this:

"I'd like to have a piece of Comté."

"No."

"What do you mean? Is there nothing left this week?"

"No, you don't get it!"

"???"

"I'm sure you won't like it. It's not mature enough for your taste."

"Okay..."

Unusual, to say the least, but it can also be taken as an example of a self-confident customer strategy. KYC, introduced as a means of risk management in banks, shows its meaning here without disguise: know your customer. They certainly know theirs.

After several years the owner, inspired by the success of this stand moved away and opened another cheese shop in a suburb, after a while a third one. He left two guys in the shop in the Kleinmarkthalle who were acting like the owner with full responsibility for the program, even for hiring additional sales personnel, but still present for the regular customers. Judging from the queues it was an immensely successful business. All of a sudden, after the summer break, it didn't open again. There was a sign saying that it was intended to open again by the end of August. By mid-September the sign was still there and it was clear that there was something wrong. Inquiries by other stands soon resulted in the certainty that the stand in this form was closed forever: the owner was bankrupt. When I accidentally met Klaus, one of the two guys, he told me that the traditional stand was running very well, but that at least the third cheese shop was too much and the profits of the old one couldn't save the others. He himself was unemployed and searching for another shop where he could use his knowledge and enthusiasm for excellent products. Supposing I still like cheese, he told me to go to a garden centre in a suburb. There would be a surprise and I could meet someone I know. Of course I went there and found the entrance of the garden centre refurbished with stands for all the stuff you need or do not need when you buy plants, but also tea, sweets, fruit – and cheese. The owner tried again but left the sales job to Sam, the guy with whom I had the remarkable little discussion. Sam told me about the deal and that he was happy to have a job despite the long distance he had to go by public transport. At least for some time I had my source back. For a very short time, as it turned out. The stand soon disappeared and I only got to know when I met Sam in front of another cheese shop where he found a job. The stand in the garden centre was closed after he left it: Sam wasn't paid regularly and was still waiting for outstanding wages.

Meanwhile Klaus found another job and it is there where it slowly started to become interesting. He was hired by a stand in the Kleinmarkthalle whose owner knew him quite well: it was opposite the old cheese stand. Despite the fact that the stand was specialised in Italian fine food, after a while Klaus managed to get a few of those cheeses in the programme where he knew that there is a stable sale. And the people kept asking him anyway. Two facts of him working there were peculiar. The first was that the Italian stand was directly opposite to the former cheese stand, less than two metres between them. This could perhaps only serve nostalgia, having the image of the good times in sight every day. The second reason was even more subtle. The same day Klaus started his job the cheese stand reopened with a different owner. A friend of Klaus, but he didn't start there because they were not able to agree on the program policy. The other wanted to concentrate on less expensive cheese of a lower quality. So Klaus was left with a job, but with the view of a choice of cheese which made him suffer, as he knew that the former customers didn't approve of this choice. Well, I didn't and had a tough time without a decent choice of cheese. Luckily for me, at least in this respect, I moved to Switzerland for almost a year and it turned out to be impossible to taste myself through all the excellent cheeses produced in this country.

After several months, on my weekend home trip, I visited the Kleinmarkthalle and to my huge surprise I saw Klaus on the other side of the aisle, back to the cheese stand where I met him first. He told me he had been asked to join this stand after personnel problems there and he agreed, satisfied to be back to the products he knew best. He was also to reintroduce several cheeses, so he felt more familiar with the products, but indicated that he was less than happy with the range of cheeses on offer. It takes time, he said, with the huge smile I knew from former years.

I had to go back to Switzerland and therefore didn't visit the market hall for a few months. When I went there again, about two years after the bankruptcy of the old stand, my surprise was complete. I saw Sam, cutting cheese at this special stand. Where I met him last, he told me, was not really working, because he and the owner had too different concepts in mind of how to run such a shop. So he was glad when Klaus told him about the possibility to apply for a job at exactly the same stand where they had worked together and that they could work together again. But to my real amazement I found the cheese program heavily changed: back to the cheeses of high quality, perfectly matured, and the cheaper ones removed or only very few left. The owner still the same who reopened the stand, still working there himself, but the concept changed back to what was successful in the past. And the queues are back.

What is the result after about two years of slow development? One business bankrupt, two employees jobless, and a slow reconstruction of the old successful kind of operating in completely new circumstances with the same two protagonists involved, but with no possibility to act themselves because of a lack of capital. No investor understood their crucial contribution to the former success, but closely watching the development the two were able to take their chances, without influence, without any power. This is what I would call a strange reverse takeover. Not hostile, somehow gentle, and without the protagonists qualifying the development as such. They are glad that they can work in the same style as before and didn't plan to recreate the situation. Besides that they do not own the place, they claim, they are still employees. Which is correct. In their view it is just good luck. Looking from the outside, however, with all the takeovers described in the media of the past years in mind, the parallels are striking, only reversed. In this case it is not a private equity funds investing in a bankrupt business to achieve a turnover, but the story is also about bad management, actually twice: the bankruptcy of the original shop and wrong product policy of the actual one. The new stand, so could be claimed, was saved by the two guys who know the business. The change in the products was not loudly demanded or announced, it was slowly and silently done. There was no external investor who criticised the management and fired parts of it, but replacing parts of the management was an implicit topic here as well. Klaus revived his old connections to the suppliers and practically replaced the new owner as purchaser. And of course the old customers, including me, have their sales persons again whom they can trust.

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# SCOS Regional Reports: News From Around The Globe.

Thoughts, views and news from the SCOS regional representatives, take it away reps!

## Nina Kivinen (Nordic Rep)

### *High Notes-Work*

Choosing a topic for my contribution to *Notework* always causes me some headache. I tend to hope for an idea to come to me in my sleep or through divine inspiration. Finally I end up writing about something more or less silly which more or less addresses issues relating to the Scandinavian community or the economy in general. This time I decided to trust the divine inspiration and write about my experiences of the past few weeks.

As some you might already know, I sing classical music and over the past few weeks I have sung a lot - primarily sacred music at services relating to Easter. But the most memorable thing about this Easter has been the second performance my choir Key Ensemble gave on Easter Monday. Our choir aims to professionalise the 'choir market' in Finland with high quality performances of music that is seldom performed. Our new artistic director wanted to jump right into the deep end and so he chose Sergey Rachmaninov's Vespers or All-Night Vigil (1915) as our first joint production. So for about 6 weeks we were rehearsing this marvellous piece of music. The 15 Vespers relate to Easter and contrary to, for example, Bach's passions; they are particularly a celebration of the resurrection of Christ. In the vespers Rachmaninov uses very old Russian Orthodox chants as well as Russian and Ukrainian folk songs. The vespers are sung in Church Slavonic, an older version of Russian.

Our performance of this beautiful music on Easter Monday took place in the Orthodox Church in my home town of Turku. The church is centrally located next to the market square in the middle of town. Historically we have in Finland a small minority of Russian Orthodox faith and increasingly so with the immigration from Russia. The Orthodox church is in fact the second state church in Finland. And yet for a Lutheran such as myself this whole project revealed my limited knowledge of the church, the faith and its music.

Rachmaninov's Vespers are sung in Russian, a language I unfortunately do not speak at all, and the language distanced me from the music. Rachmaninov's music is not difficult to read but as a performance of 50 minutes of sensitive a cappella music it really is a tremendous effort for most singers. Rehearsing this music made me feel even more the other of this music. I could recognise the beauty of the notes, the challenge in arriving at the correct intonation and movement, but I did not understand the music.

Our choir also suffered from the flu and numerous infections, so there very always voices missing, emphasising the incompleteness of the music. The ensemble was not complete until Easter Sunday when we gave our 'dress rehearsal' concert in the city of Pori. There was othering taking place on so many levels. I am not a practising Christian although I do perform Christian sacred music quite often, I represent a language minority in my country but I know hardly anything about the situation of the Orthodox minority or the Russian minority. I could sing the music but not understand the words I was performing. A translation of the text simply is not enough. But then on Easter Monday our concert in the small Orthodox church was sold out. In this intimate building with the distinct sent of the service from the night before still hanging in the air, it all came together. Благословен еси Господи, (Blessed art Thou, O Lord).

Performing music in a setting like this suddenly reminds me of how bridges can be build, where spaces in-between are created, how feelings and emotions can transcend language and politics. This is pompous, I know, but it reminded me of the importance of community. As researchers we spend much of our time by ourselves and our laptops tapping away in bliss or horror towards a never ending stream of deadlines, journals and book contracts (or as in my case I wish I would dare spend more time like that, but that is another story). We do not often see or experience those movements when the texts we have written make a difference and create community as the text is read, interpreted and reused.

Perhaps this is another reason for my passion for making music. Music gives me an opportunity to meet others halfway and others can see me.

So let's keep on going the extra mile and see you all soon at SCOS'09!

The University of Manchester  
**Manchester  
Business School**

**Rowland Curtis (UK Rep)**

*Original Thinking Applied*

Perhaps it's safe to assume that by now every contemporary business school will be aware of the importance of making sure its brand profile matches up with its intellectual strengths. Indeed, as we sometimes see, business schools can be academically successful, producing world class research outputs and offering first class executive education programmes, but without the right marketing strategy an unfortunate disconnect between such core offerings and a schools' international esteem can develop.

As many of us will be familiar, business schools have started to take brand management considerations increasingly seriously, seeking to promote an awareness among their faculty of the important work being undertaken by their marketing office colleagues. In this direction, some have also encouraged their academics to get into better habits by promoting their business school's brand by using institutionally logo'd templates for PowerPoint presentations, by making explicit their institutional affiliation in communications and presentations, or by becoming more aware of the power of making subtle changes in writing style and delivery for maximizing impact. Of course, these initiatives should come as no surprise to us - after all, business school faculty should be well versed in the importance of such practices from their day-to-day engagement with the challenges of shaping best practice at the cutting edge of our contemporary brand-driven environment.

However, in responding to these challenges, both as individual academics and institutions, we might take a moment to consider the example of an initiative

launched by one top business school in the UK that has recently reaffirmed its commitment to maintaining its rightful place at the sharp edge of things.

Early this year Manchester Business School (MBS), following close behind its hosting of last year's SCOS conference, staked its claim to a place alongside the 'golden triangle' of business schools in the UK (London-Oxford-Cambridge) with the launch of its MBS Gurus' Club. This is an innovative and some might say thought provoking incentive scheme launched as a component of its wider marketing strategy as a means to encourage its academics to extend the department's presence beyond academic scholarly publications and fora into the mass circulation journals and newspapers where brand influence and profile can most profitably be enhanced.

How the MBS Gurus' club works is that academic faculty can strive to achieve club membership by earning a total of 20 points in the incentive scheme over a 24-month period. Points are earned each time academics achieve significant editorial coverage in a mass circulation publication: 5 points for an international publication such as the Financial Times or an international broadcaster such as Bloomberg; 4 points for a national publication such as The Independent or Guardian (UK) or an interview on a broadcaster such as Sky News; and 3 points for a trade (sector-specific) publication such as Public Finance or Retail Week or a regional news outlet. Points are also scored for letters to the editor in the above categories at a rate of 3, 2, 1, points accordingly. Coverage, of course, has to refer to activities undertaken at MBS and must reference the school's name. Points expire after 24 months and must be renewed for qualification to be maintained. In terms of the awarding of places in the club, it is said that the committee awarding will take a generous attitude towards those who coming close to the required tally and so will ultimately take the points scheme as illustrative rather than being too formulaic about the threshold of membership. Those who manage to be successful and join the Gurus' Club can expect the prestige within the school of having their name added to a plaque in the MBS lobby identifying the school's Gurus, and an invitation to the annual Gurus' Club event.

As you will probably already be thinking, the very notion of a Gurus' club will resonate for many with the shining achievements of the 1980s excellence movement and the lasting legacies of charismatic communicators such

as Tom Peters & Robert H. Waterman. With a scheme like the Gurus' Club, perhaps we have a perfect prototype for the kind of innovative thinking that could reaffirm the competitive offering of contemporary business schools in the challenging globalised marketplace we all face today. Indeed, the scheme can also be seen perfectly to embody the brand identity of the newly re-launched MBS brand, and its tag line "Original Thinking Applied", which could serve well as a touchstone for all of us in the field who would hope to maintain ourselves at the cutting edge of our enterprise.

## **Beatriz Acevedo (Latin American Rep)**

### *Latin America, A New Beginning*

The new approach from the President Obama administration toward Latin America, symbolised by the latest diplomatic intervention in Cuba, is the topic of this brief reflection from Latin America. After years of economic blockage in the context of the Cold War and the hard approach of the Bush administration that determined the dark and difficult days during the so-called 'Periodo Especial', Cuba is just experiencing some signs of recovery prompted by the helpful aid of President Chavez from Venezuela and the increasing investment of the Spanish government in the island. In this process, the US propose a 'new beginning' concerning the painful relationships between these two countries and moreover, a change in the dialogue of this super-power with the rest of the continent.

Cuba still represents a dream and a utopia in the Latin American imaginary. The globalised image of Che Guevara, the music of Buena Vista Social Club, the charisma of their artists -- some having to live (and die) during a sad exile like the fabulous Celia Cruz -- and the prominent role of athletes in the Olympic games; Cuba continues to be a wonderful example of courage and independent thinking. However, the tragic story of families divided, the drama of a forced exile and human rights abuses linked to Fidel Castro's dictatorial regime, have made Cuba represent a deep wound between families and ideologies. Nowadays the island is experiencing a slow but steady process of transition. The economic measures and the rapid development of trade and tourism are allowing Cuba to adjust toward the challenges of the twenty-first century. Cuba is well equipped: an excellent Health Service and one of the highest literacy rates in Latin America, as well as a proud country growing in diversity and creativity.

More transformations need to be implemented: freedom and democracy as well as structural changes in the Cuban institutions are urgently required. However, these changes cannot be forced. President Obama's acknowledgement of the autonomy and individuality of L.A countries is evidenced on the recent US diplomatic interventions stressing dialogue, respect, human rights, trade agreements and collaboration; these terms seem to announce a great change for Latin American countries, normally considered the US backyard and another piece in the global chess game. This shift at the political level will bring changes in the way organisations and countries are managed. It is expected that the authoritarian approach in countries such as Colombia, guided by a patriarchal and predatory approach, should give place to more harmonious and sustainable practices.

Examples and innovations from neighbouring countries such as Brazil suggest a pragmatic and successful way in the governance of our economies and societies. Now, instead of looking up to the North, we rather look at our brothers and sisters in culture and language, those who have shared the distance heritage of colonialism and the broken promises of perennial elitist rulers. Further, at the level of communities and regions, the urgency of considering feasible ways of sustainable development in responding to the challenges of a growing poverty and inequality, by embracing biological and cultural diversity and the hybrid nature of Latin American societies, will require more creative and versatile approaches. Instead of copying the trends of First World countries, we need to develop our own way of addressing local and regional problems.

The example of Cuba is one of those many ways to tackle poverty and illiteracy; however, the idea of a revolution is not a recipe that can be copied, as demonstrated by the tragic end of Che Guevara trying to replicate a revolution in other countries. Indeed, the consequences of an ill-defined revolution have revealed the abominable realities of left-wing guerrillas now turned drug-traffickers and human rights violators. As Cuban filmmaker Tomas Gutierrez Alea once put it: the Cuban revolution represented a great idea for a film, but its development had many difficulties...

A revolution does not need to involve blood and weapons but a radical change in our own souls and our ways of understanding the world. Perhaps, it is precisely this 'new beginning' which is an important revolution for the American continent. Indeed, this

revolution can be reflected in the management of our organisations and societies, encouraging entrepreneurship, compassion and solidarity – already great assets in our communities – and in this way providing the conditions for Latin America to find its place in the global scenario. In this endeavour, scholars, researchers, rulers and managers need to adjust their practices and discourses: times are changing... and with them, our view on our own realities inevitably connected in an inter-dependent world.

## **Peter Pelzer (German Rep)**

### *Heated Debate*

Fees for universities still are a very controversial topic in Germany. Regionally organized, as the university landscape is, there are different rules not only regarding the amount, but also if fees can be charged at all. Only for one topic there seemed to be a coherent view in the past. The total amount should be reserved for an improvement of the situation of teaching, mostly understood as improving the lecturer/student proportion in times of increasing numbers of students. This is also the legal basis for student's fees.

This is obviously not a common understanding any more. The present situation demonstrates both the almost desperate budget situation in many universities, and, as a consequence, the limits of the student's involvement in decisions of the university. There is participation, a student's parliament and a representation of the students (ASTA) with a negotiation mandate with the university's administration and its Rektor (vice chancellor). It often served as a platform to discuss decisions and an attempt to achieve consensus. In this way solutions can be achieved which help both sides, even if they contradict, as in the case of the use of student's fees, the original understanding of their exclusive use for teaching.

New professorships are taken from this budget, even if half of the time of the hired person is reserved for research. The research may increase the quality of the teaching as well, one might argue. However, during the past months, the increasing budget problems of universities lead to a shift. The poor condition of buildings, or difficulties to pay the bill for heating, increasingly makes the administration aware of the nice budget post of student's fees. Not that it is a huge amount compared to the total budget.

For that the rates are too moderate. But nevertheless, there is some money and several Rektors (re)discover that they have the responsibility for the whole budget and that there is legally no possibility for students to interfere with their decisions. Reality's back, as to be expected when money runs out, and shows the real power relations. Consensus only applies in the good times, or, at least when other problems are absent.

And a heated building is an improvement of teaching as well, isn't it?

## **Carl Rhodes (Australia)**

### *Carrying the Load...Northward Bound*

Once again it comes my time to re-report – and to write this re-report for *Notework* regarding the goings on in the region that I purportedly re-present. Again ... the report is supposed to give the chance to send a missive that carries with it a news that those involved in SCOS worldwide might be interested in. Like a global SCOS with hands joined across the globe we can all share in our endeavours and be brought to light with what others are doing (yikes!?). But as I sit down to write, I feel nervous about the geographical direction in which the re-reporting takes place, and the direction in which the hands pull.

But before getting to that, let me begin. The last time I re-reported I wrote of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Australasian Caucus of the Standing Conference on Organizational Symbolism (ACSCOS) which was held in my home town (Sydney) last December. But this is actually a double re-report, as I was asked also to re-report on ACSCOS to the SCOS Board, and this *Notework* re-report was to act as a proxy for that other one – ah! Two birds with one stone.

But I have felt burdened and anxious about this re-report – quite literally an act of carrying back (re- + portāre). This carrying back is in a very particular geographical direction: from south to north, or more directly from the formerly colony to the former colonizer. My cultural allusions trouble me. Is this to be like a regional office reporting back to the head office on the goings on in far flung lands hoping to win favour and approval from on high? Or worse, is it as if an anthropologist were reporting back on adventures in strange lands to a European audience keen on hearing stories of exotica and intrigue from the new world? Yes, I want to say it again, this re-report as it moves in a geographical direction that causes me troubles.

It is indeed such troubles that informed the very formation of ACSCOS some years ago in the lead up to the first conference in Brisbane in 2004. Concerned about the status of the Australasian academy, existing as it does in the twin shadows of Europe and the United States, we wanted to have a local event where we could meet with our colleagues outside of the physical domain of the metropolitan centre of the north where we so often go in pilgrimage. We recognised all too well that to be successfully academically down here, meant that we had to have presence up there. This hasn't changed, of course, but we hoped in some small way to try to interrupt this both through the ACSCOS' geographical location as well as through the sorts of idea that might be discussed. In 2004 the conference blurb opened with the statement:

This colloquium has been designed to create a forum to discuss and problematise cultural, organization and individual boundaries in organizations with a particular emphasis on the positionality of Australasia in relation to organization studies.

It was a similar set of issues that, in part, circumscribed the 2008 conference, with the call for papers suggesting that:

The colloquium is positioned under the ambit of SCOS both in recognition of that body's long and innovative contribution to critical and *avant garde* organization studies as well as to continue SCOS's excursions against its own Eurocentricism.

There is always the feeling, though, that not enough can be done, and this very act of re-reporting carries with it those doubts. But doubts aside, the conference went ahead with the collective contributions of an organizing committee from the University of Technology Sydney (David Bubna-Litic, Stewart Clegg, Martin Kornberger, Tyrone Pitsis, Alison Pullen, Anne Ross-Smith and me) and some other great folks from the region (Craig Prichard and Janet Sayers from Massey University, Bob Westwood from the University of Queensland, Julie Wolfram Cox from Deakin University and Loong Wong from the University of Canberra).

We had almost 70 delegates here with just over half from Australasia, and the rest coming from all over the globe – UK, USA, Netherlands, Switzerland, Sweden, Denmark, Austria, India, Germany, Finland, and Italy.

In fact if anything we were surprised, and a little disappointed, that we did not have a greater proportion of delegates from the Australasian region, and that a greater proportion of the papers did not deal with specifically local issues. The show goes on.

As expected people met and talked, papers were presented, ideas were floated and decent local wine was consumed – particularly the New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc and the Aussie Shiraz. People seemed glad to be in Sydney, and with the conference venue at the University of Technology Sydney just across from China Town and Darling Harbour. And they seemed to find it worthwhile (at least that's what they told me!) On a blustery early summer Sydney evening we held the conference dinner on the roof top of the Sydney Museum of Contemporary Art – a building more deco than a set from Batman. Looking out through Circular Quay and framed by the harbour bridge on the left, and the opera house on the right, this was a very Sydney location. Even the menu was planned with a Sydney feel – from lambs on the paddock to fish in the sea. Oh! A land that abounds in nature's gifts ... all the hallmarks of European-ized Australia were present.

So my re-report, as it carries itself north with the speed of light, is one that brings with it not so much a tyranny of distance, but the feeling that what is done in the south is always to be judged closely by the criteria of the north. Moreover, one's own complicity and privilege, as they emerge from this geographical positioning are always part of the question. For those of you who attended the conference – thanks for coming and we hope to see you here again. There will be another ACSCOS in 2010 – exotic antipodean location to be advised. Trek south!

## **Janet Sayers (New Zealand)**

### *Giddy from New Zealand!*

As I write I am basking in the sunshine in a long hot Indian summer in Auckland. The temperatures wonderful, and yet the sun does not burn. For the first time this summer we were able to stay outside all day, swim, and not worry about getting burnt to a frazzle.

New Zealand is as a lovely little soapy bubble, bobbing along in the middle of the South Seas, in its own little world, inured from the hysterias that seem to come in from the rest of the world - benign and self-contained.

Recession?

So the newspapers and television keeps saying, but not so that most people would notice it.

Terrorism?

If you like farce – more on that later.

Property developers and private finance companies are in the poop, but hey .....

I live next to a Marine reserve in Long Bay, near where I work at Massey University, and a large development is on hold while financiers and developers panic. I often see Killer Whales and dolphins from the beach and we occasionally rescue wind-blown little blue penguins (but too many dead ones) tired and hungry and lost on their way home. So the little fishes and sea creatures have a bit longer to enjoy their life-cycles before all the filthy run off starts polluting the only urban marine reserve in the Southern hemisphere.

Personally I have built and planted another vegetable garden. My lettuces are doing well by the way, but the tomatoes got blight again. I have given up my car. No great loss. Driving in the city is a greatly overstated pleasure anyway. I catch the bus and watch people, listen to BBC comedy shows on my iPod and generally feel a bit smug.

But I digress.

There is a lot happening in the thinking department going on in New Zealand between gardening, whale watching, and bus-catching. But, it all escapes me at the moment because I have just killed a number of trees by applying for promotion. I have just finished making 19 copies of this ruddy great big huge bloody application for which many native flightless birds would have died.

I have kept several people employed though. So that is the upside. We have just had AACSB Accreditation visits so apparently we have to be thinking about that too. I did read the bloody great big huge frigging document on that too and even contributed on a working committee as well, so I did my bit to make that paper, but I can't help wondering though about where we are going with this.

And then I get distracted.

So, the little mouses' wheels are turning very hard here in NZ, same as everywhere probably. We amuse ourselves by bitching and moaning at lunchtime and making up gossip about our Australian colleagues to keep ourselves amused. Occasionally I read papers about cars and labour process theories and wonder what it all means. I email my friends so I feel like I have some. I text my children to ensure they are sufficiently submissive to my will and know I am watching them wherever they are. I am thinking about imbedding a global positioning device under the thigh-skin of my 13 year old son, who likes to skate.

I did go the ACSCOS Conference last year at the University of Technology in Sydney. This was a wonderful event and a real feather in the cap for the organising committee and SCOS. As usual I didn't understand most of it, but everybody was really friendly and I made a couple of new friends. For those of you that don't like me and thought my paper was crap, well f\*\*\* you. I had a look around the Sydney Art Gallery while I was there, but I have to say that I have seen quite a few piles of stuff in the middle of the floor at art galleries lately, and I am confused about it.

If you want to be anywhere in the world right now I suggest you come here. A couple of years ago we had the NZ version of a terrorist scare. There were claims that groups of Maori wandering around in the Ureweras being trained as terrorists. The completely stunned bemusement that greeted this claim was a hoot to watch. Even the press seemed to just not know what to say. I mean, HELLO!!? Where do you think we are? The USA or the UK? The recession may hit here harder eventually, but there is mainly a feeling of optimism here. And the sun is still shining.

Sadly I cannot come to SCOS in Copenhagen this year, and my apologies for that. I have to spend some time with my Mum, and we are in yet another round of budget cuts as we have not quite escaped the worries of the world, despite my positive up-beat comments. All the best for this event and I will read the abstracts on-line with interest. Can you possibly introduce a review process and publish proceedings with an ISSN number. You wouldn't believe the hoops we have to jump through here to get the money to travel to Europe and present a paper. Anyone would think it didn't cost about \$9000 a pop for the trip. Arohanui.

Janet

# Tales from the Field

Dr. Zoe Bertgan – over to you Zoe!

'Field informant. Available, immediate hire, all climates, good rates. Competent reader of English and German, i.e. Heidegger. Full CV on request. Jim McStooly, P.C.F.C.'. I saw this advert in the backpage personal ads of the popular journal *Anthropology in Action* and it piqued my interest. After spending 17.5 days cooped up with a throng of noisy undergraduates inside a labyrinth of Zanussi cardboard freezer-chest delivery boxes on the lower basement floor of our Radcliffe Ladies library, I was looking for a way out of the dirty and tiring necessity of empirical research. And this advert seemed to answer and caress my lassitude. It happened to coincide with that wonderful moment in the day - about 11a.m. for Radcliffe ladies – when we lick clean the rim of our organic yoghurt pots. "Milk the cow!", I cried out in relief, for I had been struggling to work out how to take my recent interest in the Heideggerian notion of *Sorge*, or the care of self, forward as an ethnographic project. I immediately sketched a letter of introduction and sent it off to the author of this advertisement. By return of post I had a full CV, and jeez – it makes us all flush. This guy claimed to have worked not only on the Levi-Strauss Namikwara ethnographies, but also lists as 'extra' his role in the famous Geertz cockfight episode. References included Claude Levi-Strauss and to my surprise Professor Ernest Fredric Walpole (EFW to his friends) currently on sabbatical in the Antipodes. I emailed Ernest immediately and received the following reply:

'Despite a penchant for occasional plagiarism this guy knows his Heidegger and when I last interrogated him on section 44 he made, as I recall, only 2 or 3 minor citational errors, mainly – I suppose if one was inclined to generosity – on account of the unreliable Macquarrie and Robinson 1962 translation. When last in the field with McStooly he had the strength of mind to place me in a reverse *Felicitio* head-lock to escape the attentions of a mature *paranaja multifasciata* (aka the burrowing cobra) whose girth was sufficient for a double reach-around. This is rare in today's academy'.

For those who know EFW, this is a strong recommendation. Indeed, my hand was trembling with excitement as I set the dates for an interview with McStooly, the results of which, I believe, hold important lessons for the way we currently conduct ethnography. I'm not sure if I can claim to be the first person to spot the talents of McStooly, but the *originality* of his techniques, clearly raw and intuitive, indeed wild and untutored, surely need to be explicated and formalised in order that more people can return to the field of empirical research. I know y'all shit scared of plunging your hands elbow deep in actual fieldwork, but mark my words all you Scossians, ain't nuthin happenin' if the beat ain't happenin'. *Shit*. And to air the strip, shit just be happenin' out the blue!

McStooly was 98, but abseiled into my office window on the quad at high noon. He had the stubbly air of a 1950s Marlboro man but with a pair of Olala skinny dip hipster jeans ruffled up at the top of a pair of silver spray platform pimp boots and a tummy ripped mottled gold lame Guayabera cascading down his chest in rivulets of fractal swirl. '*The temptation to overlook the finitude of the primordial and authentic future and therefore the finitude of temporality, or alternatively, to hold 'a priori' that such finitude is impossible, arises from the way in which the ordinary understanding of time is constantly thrusting to the fore*' he announced as he dismounted from his swinging carabineer. He might as well have signed the contract there and then. In a swoon, as I was, he could have done this with the subtlest of gestures to motivate my delicate and limp outstretched hand, cupped and awaiting his methodology and instruction. We talked late into the night covering topics as diverse as Lévinas and the other; the merits of DV capture and the place of cabinets of curiosity; Radcliffe-Brown in contrast to Boas; ayahuasca rituals and its contribution to structural functionalism; the Rabinows and the infamous incident of the Yerba Mate inspired mating dance; Steve Linstead; etc. This guy was the real thing. He had recently gone freelance after a rather unfortunate episode with the front desk secretary at Ethnolnc Manpower and so his rates were affordable and I grabbed him with both hands. I am just back from a 3 week trek in the Rift Valley sifting artefacts of a highly organized civilization as yet, I believe, unknown and undiscovered. Perhaps undiscovered even to themselves! An explanation for this can be developed on the basis of a fundamental methodological lack, the details of which I am about to publish to the world, but in essence might be understood as the virulent but silent inhibition of the *Wendes-Yerkes* threshold detection that continues to afflict our empirical research in organization studies. Reader, a standard deviation is an assback clockwise rag when viewed in the absence of the *Wendes-Yerkes* cloud, under which most of us continue to labour.

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## Calls and announcements



### Call for papers for a Special Issue

#### Visual Narratives of Organization

Guest editors: Henrik Schrat, Samantha Warren, Heather Höpfl

Deadline for completed papers: September 1, 2009

The intention of this special issue is to provide an insight into the world of organizations and work. Drawing on an emerging methodology within organisational theory (Warren 2008) this special issue is concerned with visual narratives of work.

The way visual material is used to describe and mediate organizations and the processes by which they are performed has become of increasing interest in Organization Studies. Organizations can be seen as cultural contexts, offering coherent/reproducible conditions to study how pictures both mobilize and reflect organizational action and how these may differ across the corporate and not-for-profit landscape. With roots in the study of organizational symbolism (Dandridge 1980) and developing through a concern with the aesthetic dimensions of organizational life (Strati 1999; Hopfl & Linstead 2000), the visual – as both subject matter and methodology – is a fertile ground for innovative organizational enquiry. On one hand this includes all the qualities which differentiate visual from verbal communication. On the other hand, attending to the visual in organizational life *links* with different uses of verbal communication, especially storytelling and narration, (Boje 2001). Here we are *particularly* interested in the aspects that cannot only be told (or written), but those which are understood by the act of seeing.

The issue will focus on the special ways narration is constructed through seeing, say, by artefacts or pictures. How do narrative elements in an organization such as character or plot develop from seeing, and what are the key differences to those elements as developed in text? What can change if the visual component of a narrative is privileged and is germane to its interpretation? Interpretation taken as the basis for action would push the question further: Which streams of meaning are running through an organization, connected with visuals, never surfacing into text or spoken word, but springing directly into action? For instance, how can *unconscious* processes be surfaced through images? (Sievers 2007).

Springing from this, contributors are invited to consider:

- Moving/ Movie: The person acts as a creator of a narrative by moving through an organisation, by walking from the entrance hall through the corridors to an office and the canteen, for example. It is the observer that moves through real objects, not the movie that simulates narration. How can

these mobilizations be recognized and analysed within existing methodological frameworks? Are new ones needed?

- Sense / Cyber – distinctions between an aesthetic reading of a real object and the disembodied images of the cyber age, which exist in non-material, non-dimensional spaces yet are increasingly vital for 21<sup>st</sup> century organizational survival via Internet and mobile technologies. How do these elements of organizational imagery become fused or remain distinct in various milieus?
- The Seeing Body – the visual sense as a function of the body, a body which can be managed by external institutions and techniques.
- Fixed/ Fluid - How different would individuals within one organization interpret the same picture? What would that say about the organization? The construction of subjectivity in a wider context could be relevant. The notion of *visuality* needs to be critically reviewed in this context as a concept which has its own history and conditions.
- The visual as positioned between Gestalt and Semiotics; between Psychology or Linguistic reading. Principles of perception like proximity, similarity, continuance, and closure are seen as a key to understanding, or is the way to better plotted through metaphors and Semiotics?

We anticipate a high quality of submissions but will only be able to publish a limited number. Instructions and guidelines for contributors can be found here: <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/authors/rvstauth.asp>. Authors are responsible for securing the necessary copyright permissions for images included in submissions.

Please direct inquiries and submission to: [henrikschrat@gmx.net](mailto:henrikschrat@gmx.net)

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## ....and finally

We hope you've enjoyed this edition of *Notework*. Please continue to support your locally global SCOS museletter by sending your contributions to us. Any suggestions for new features, don't hesitate to contact us.

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