

From AIR to CARE

Testimonials as acupunctural gestures in the development of and reflection on timelab driven by an undefined artistic program.

there is not one goal, but multi-perspective approach of impact.

It is not the organization or the artists or the funding or the world that has the final benefit. The impact can be multiple or undefined at the start. Looking back sometimes it is the livelihood of the artists, sometimes it is the organization, sometimes it is the partnership with other organizations and sometimes it is the community that benefits most from the process. Here is no hierarchy in results. Lisa Ma: partnership and positioning of the organization / Kaffe Mathews : livelihood / Duncan Speakman : new skills, empowering of practice / Z. blace : political stance of organization / Jesse Howard : experiencing new role as a coach / Stefan Klein : deconstructing communication / Rasa : connecting to staff/board on level of hosting and coaching

production and presentation is a means not a goal. Not producing and presenting is a purpose

By opening up to not produce and present something meaningful happens in the process and the relationships with others, but it also brings the individual artist out of its comfort zone. The organization often misses the strength and power to take the stance and defend the idea of not producing. cfr casco and the effect of switching from arts presentation to redesigning the organization on the support of public and funding partners

if commons is built upon “the wisdom of the crowd”, how strong is the foundation if the crowd seems not skilled to organize in a way power is not corrupting the group dynamics.

The exercise of letting the group decide on the distribution of monetary resources led to manipulation and competition. But is the only alternative to give the authority to an external entity. cfr the Flemish subsidy system of peer review commissions vs top down

the institution vs the artist and the structural inequality that leads to mutual expectations that violate the commons transition

how to transition to a reciprocity coming from a (perception of) hierarchy of the strong provider (institution) vs the poor artist? All the exercises of the sprinting resulted in ‘recommendations’ towards the organization on how an AIR should be provided. At rare times there was a genuine interest in the people behind the organization. Rasa started inviting the team at the table during the sprint and intro week. this opened up the relationships between staff and artists. Mixing in an artist in the team and board also mixed up the distinction

time for growth

from the early years there was something appealing in the fact that the artist was brought together with local makers. Sharing space that was not empty, but equipped with all new

learning possibilities invited the artist to play and try. Duncan speakman learned how to produce parts of his work. Wendy stretches her work into the space of timelab. Nikolaus gansterer and Juliana Borinski did their own production. Stefan Klein had the time to observe and explore the waiting concept without the pressure of presenting.

A political stance

The radical choice of making our work at timelab a political stance. In case of the building, in case of the SOC, in case of the artistic program

Being aware of the political stance and the labeling of an organization through a superficial reading of its activities.

What is the impact of this? How do we deal with it? Or is it a chance, a way of power through hybridity (article on power, commons and arts)

In other words not putting all our cards on the table, or embracing complexity also makes it hard to tackle the work, but also drains energy being suppressed by the need for clarity.

Artists/partners understanding that process (for example Tim ost, Rachel, binna choi, ingrid, els silvrants-barclay, Dirk De wit, ..) feed the dialogue but also those who don't understand help us to root (makers group, conflict artists, ..)

On boundaries and rules

An interesting concept comes from the method Holacracy where power is distributed. What is very clear is that this is not a 'flat' organization with the tragedy of consensus.

A good holacratic system has found the balance between structure and freedom. So not over bureaucratic and not in the open. It is developed based on constant practice and adjustments of a group that is explicitly committed to accept the constitutional power instead of top down power. The constitution defines 'the way' we adjust the system and what the elements are and mean we agree to use.

The structure is not drafted upfront but built upon proposals that fit the purpose of the general circle. Based upon these, all members have the total freedom to work within their roles, as long as it does not violate the domain of other roles. A program is not pushed on the members, but emerged from the proposals. In order to pull resources to the role, the role needs to bring this to the circle to discuss.

We don't start from ideas but from tensions!

Can we translate this to the work relationship of the institution and the artist?

They often said they need a structure, a question, a request from timelab to start working and delivering something that they feel fulfilled as an artist, but also validated by the organisation. (to accept/get the fee)

key elements to make it work:

both parties agree on the constitutional power

organization should be really clear about its purpose and boundaries (domains of the roles)

artists contribute via proposal in making something better (based on tension, not idea). in

order to do so, the artists needs to be involved in the daily work

artists brings the proposal to the circle to ask for resource allocation

all roles can ask questions and bring up possible objections

The artists commit to the execution of the proposal and go proactively looking for what they need from the others to make it happen. If along the way this violates the domains of other roles or the purpose of the organization, this will be brought to the circle meeting.

How can we learn from the commons?

How can we put CARE before production and presentation?

How can we measure the impact of care?

