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Introduction

**Table of contents for full Special Edition of Arts and Management
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Introduction	3
Art of Management & Organisation (AoMO) Jenna Ward, Stephen Linstead, Steven Taylor & Emanuel Guy	4
1. Stories as a Process for Organisational and Management Inquiry	9
Cathryn Lloyd & Geof Hill	
2. Structuring Storytelling in Management Practice	14
Martin Eley & Geof Hill	
3. Resonance and Restoration: How Generative Stories Shape Organisational Futures	22
Michelle LeBaron & Nadja Alexander	
4. Telling Stories in Organisations: Reflective Practice / Curated Practice	32
Jo Trelfa	
5. Body Mapping: A Personal and Professional Artful Inquiry Process	42
Cathryn Lloyd	
6. Towards a Methodology: Organisational Cartographies	55
Kate Carruthers Thomas	
7. Beating the Blues: Using Blues Music to Improve Organisational Performance	65
Jack Pinter	
8. Performative Poetry to Inform Change Practice	83
Hedy Bryant	

Introduction

Why a special edition?

The International Journal of Professional Management (IJPM) has a broad scope. Professional management is defined as “activities which have an impact on personal and/or organisational development.” This invites papers ranging from one-to-one coaching to globalisation, and everything in between.

It is good to reach out like this, but it is also good to reach in, to explore one topic in more depth. Special editions give the opportunity to bring together writers with similar interests, and have each one explore a different aspect of the same subject. This could be, for example, green issues, training programmes, e-commerce, or any activity that “has an impact on personal and/or organisational development.”

On this occasion we are having a special edition on the role of the arts in management?

Why the role of the arts?

The scientific approach is good. Measurement, prediction, testing and reassessing gives you solid information. Sometimes too solid. It is rare, in human interaction, to have invariable truth with absolute proof. But we like to know, rather than just believe, and then assume we know, and unconsciously get in a rut that blocks alternative thinking. Scientific logic needs to be intermeshed with free flow human multi-directional thought, and the arts excel in that.

Often the arts are seen as the lesser discipline, less rigorous and therefore less reliable, but strict linear thought, especially in the social sciences, can lead to errors of omission. Linear thinking needs the addition of lateral thinking, as De Bono has eloquently pointed out in his six-hat model, for six types of thinking. We need regularly to don the green hat, for creativity, as part of balanced progress.

This is especially so in periods of change, and humanity is always in a period of change, with times of sudden and dramatic improvement – the wheel, writing, domestication of the horse, steam power, telephones, cars, and recently the computer and its many ramifications. Each of these changes has come about by somebody thinking of a new idea, something that didn't exist, and not being discouraged by it seeming impossible at the time. The first spark has been imagination. Nothing new can come without initial imagination, and the arts nurture imagination.

New knowledge comes from people thinking, experimenting, discussing, and then thinking, experimenting and discussing again. It needs an all round approach encompassing freedom to depart from the norm for creativity and innovation, and rigorous checking through replication and measurement. Arts and sciences have vital roles to play. This special edition focuses on the arts, but also has research, experimentation, discussion and rethinking at its core. The arts and sciences are two sides of the same coin.

This special edition emerged from papers at the 2016 conference of the Art of Management and Organisation (AoMO) – Empowering the Intangible.

Many thanks to Cathryn Lloyd and Geof Hill for co-editing this issue.

Art of Management & Organisation (AoMO)

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Dr Jenna Ward is Senior Lecturer in Organisational Behaviour at De Montfort University and Co-Director of the Art of Management & Organisation. Her research interests focus on emotions in organisations, in particular difficult or challenging emotions. Throughout her career Jenna has developed and utilised arts-based methods of research and engagement.

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Stephen Linstead is Professor of Critical Management Studies at the University of York and one of the founders of the Art of Management and Organisation Conference. He and co-author, Heather Hopfl published the seminal text *The Aesthetics of Organisation*. More recently Stephen has moved into the area of film as a method of research and engagement. His first documentary film 'Black Snow', depicting the tragic events of the Oaks Colliery disaster, has won a number of international film awards.

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The Art of Management & Organisation (AoMO)

The Art of Management & Organisation represents a vibrant international community of scholars, artists and creative practitioners passionate in their exploration of the intersections between management, organisations and the arts. They organise a biannual international conference, publish their own peer-reviewed open access journal, *Organisational Aesthetics*, have a prominent social media presence and support various other events and training opportunities. The Art of Management & Organisation conferences are something of a unique experience and continually strive for experiential difference and excellence in pushing the boundaries between management and the arts. But where did it all begin?

The aim was, and continues to be, the exploration and promotion of the arts (in the most inclusive sense) as a means of understanding management and organisational life and its contexts; as well as the utilisation of artistic processes in the activity of managing. The conference grew out of the Standing Conference on Organisational Symbolism (SCOS), especially its 1992 conference on Organisation and Theatre at Lancaster, and was informed by the dramatic growth of field of organisational aesthetics in the following decade, specifically a series of workshops organised by Heather Höpfl and Stephen Linstead in Bolton and

Northumbria, culminating in an influential book 'The Aesthetics of Organisation' (Linstead and Höpfl 2000) published by Sage.

September 2002 saw the launch of the first Art of Management and Organisation Conference on London's legendary South Bank in collaboration with Tate Modern, followed up by the second in Paris in 2004 in collaboration with the Pompidou Centre. Since then the conference has continued its collaborative and open ethos in Paris (2004), Krakow (2006), Banff (2008), Istanbul (2010), York (2012), Copenhagen (2014) and most recently in Bled (2016) and has given rise to a vibrant global community of praxis – including both scholars and practitioners - and will continue to do so in Brighton on the 30th August – 2nd September 2018.

These experimental events focused on those dimensions of management and organisation that render them an art, not purely a science. However, the conferences rapidly evolved to encompass far more than simply a concern with organisational aesthetics. They came to embrace a cornucopia of ground breaking, exciting and informative encounters, extending from traditional academic papers, to displays, exhibitions, performances, screenings, demonstrations, community building processes, and skills sessions, all of which served to address the field of art and organisation in all its richness. However, throughout this blossoming they have most importantly continued to be informed by the themes of inclusivity, diversity creativity and innovation, pursued with a spirit of both inspiration and critical inquiry, which were central to the founding ethos of the conference series.

When in 2005 the Academy of Management decided not to continue to support its Arts initiatives, AoMO became the major available global channel for arts based inquiry in business and management. The conferences have thus unfolded as an endeavour to draw in and provide a space for new, promising, burgeoning or potential avenues of exploration that are evolving in or around the field of study of management and organisation. They have encouraged material from other critical traditions in the humanities and arts, which may be unfamiliar to those working in the organisation and management field – and have eventually included spheres as diverse as sport, philosophy, painting, technology, theatre, poetry, film, dance and art history. Indeed, 2016 saw the inaugural Heather Hopfl AoMO Artist in Residence, Scholarship awarded to a woodcraftsman, Emmanuel Guy.

Emmanuel is also an academic holding a professorship in maritime transportation and public policy at Université du Québec à Rimouski. The Heather Hopfl Artist in Residence Scholarship will also be the occasion to embark on a deeper reflection about the entanglements of his academic and artistic practices and how they can or cannot feed one another. Between now and the conference in 2018 it is planned that as artist in residence, Emmanuel will share on social media his experiences and reflections in this journey with the AoMO community. In addition, Emmanuel will be compiling a photo essay detailing artistic process, inspirations and developments to the chair to be published in AoMO's Organisational Aesthetics.

Organisational Aesthetics, as a journal, is attempting to create both a dialogue and a place for artistic forms and art-as-research within the domain of academic journals. In this way, it is a pioneer in the publication of management and organisation studies. Indeed, this special issue of the International Journal of Professional Management has emerged out of a successful stream of the 2016 AoMO conference, hosted by the IEDC in Bled, Slovenia.

Empowering the Intangible: Bled, Slovenia 2016

The 8th AoMO conference was hosted by the IEDC Bled School of Management in Bled, Slovenia. The IEDC boasts of being a 'School with a View' with every right. Danica Purg, founder of the IEDC had a vision to create a learning environment in which business leaders were taught and explored the value of the arts to leadership and management. More than 30 years on she is president of a thriving private business school set on the shores of the idyllic

Lake Bled. It was in this resplendent environment that the AoMO community came together to explore the theme 'Empowering the Intangible'.

The theme of 'Empowering the Intangible' was developed by Professor Ian Sutherland, formerly of the IEDC. Ian is both an accomplished scholar and musician and was keen to explore how these interests and skill sets, so often thought to be mutually exclusive, converged to inform and ignite one another. In the spirit of exploration, play, creativity and critique, the 2016 Art of Management and Organisation conference explored the intangible aspects of organisational life.

Proliferating our academic and professional discourses are calls to recognise, engage and empower the intangible aspects of organisational life – the felt, sensory and emotional aspects that so often go under the radar. Like the medieval court jester that could speak of things courtiers could not, the conference theme "Empowering the Intangible" sought out novel ways of exploring, feeling and expressing management and organisation through the arts. AoMO 2016 encouraged the community to explore, feel and express the felt, sensory and emotional aspects of management, leadership and daily organisational life.

This conference attracted 145 delegates from around the world, highlighting the growing movement in this area of scholarly and creative interest. There were 11 streams, each showcasing academic work, practitioner methodologies and techniques and performances. Each stream is convened and facilitated by a small team of academics and/or practitioners with the support and oversight of the AoMO host to ensure each conference captures the diversity of the field. 2016 certainly did just that with the following streams:

The Power of Poetics – This stream focused on the creative interplay between poetry, poetics and creativity in order to advance understanding of the concepts and their context. The stream encouraged participants to play with poetry of all varieties, to interpret poetics broadly and to be creative in exploring the power of poetry and poetics.

Making the Intangible Tangible – This stream encouraged participants to explore 'stories' and 'storytelling' as a post-positivistic method of organisational enquiry in which stories are data.

Leadership as a Performance Art – Arguing that the 'art of leadership' has much in common with 'performance art' this stream invited diverse ways of understanding, imagining, framing, and expressing leadership as a performance art by welcoming submissions that advance, celebrate, challenge, explore and illuminate theory and practice

Fashion Futures – Fashion is undeniably an aesthetic power with a strong influence on consumption, community building and style, including of management, leadership and organising. This stream explored the intangible power of fashion (able) organising.

Art, Space and the Body - This stream brought together theories and practices of art, creativity theory, phenomenology, performance and installation. The focus of the stream is the human body where the body in space can improvise, model and simulate forms of process-based creation, which in turn informs our understanding of the processes of organising systems and structures and people.

Organising Movement: On Dance, Sound, Embodied Cognition and Organisations – Dance is more than an art form, it is a culturally shaped bodily practice and experience-based activity that allows the exploration of human movement, expression and sensemaking. This stream hosted papers, performances and demonstrations to explore dance as an art form, a social practice and its applications to organisational development and our understanding of organisation studies.

A Home for Happy People: Creativity, Critical Reflections and Belonging in Organisations

– In this ambitious stream in which the convenors asked, can we be at home in organisations in the contemporary world of work or are we condemned to an endless unfulfilled, restless searching. If we can ‘be at home’ what does this feel and look like, if this is still a challenge what might it feel and look like and how can we express our hopes, fears and dreams for it?

The Virtual Studio – This was another ambitious stream which sought to explore diverse academic perspectives on the role and nature of the ‘studio’ in arts-based methods and approaches to teaching and learning. This stream attracted a number of ‘virtual’ contributions in which contributors were streamed in live from international destinations to present and perform.

Improvisation and the Art of Innovating Uncertainty - This stream explored how improvisation can contribute to a new understanding and practice of professional work, innovation and management in organisations. Times of uncertainty, disruption and overwhelming complexity call for an extension of the idea of professional work, innovation and management, which is often understood as a rational action of setting goals, planning, and controlling. While improvisation is often belittled as an unspecific and rather unprofessional dealing with messiness, we seek to look at improvisation differently. This stream brought together interdisciplinary scholars and practitioners with the goal of understanding and developing improvisation in organisation and management contexts.

Arts-based Community Development – Art is increasingly used as a catalyst in global communities to explore and tackle community development issues. This stream brought together a range of accounts and projects that explored the skill sets required to undertake such work.

The Open Stream – This stream captured innovative and unique submissions that did not fall neatly within the remit of the other streams. This year saw it play host to papers on artistic freedom, artful inquiry as a leadership skill, and silence as the essence of organisation.

Outside the streams were ongoing exhibitions, pop-up streams, events and gatherings and the freedom to express and explore ideas as they emerged. This special issue of the International Journal of Professional Management is a showcase of just some of the contributions made to the stream titled, ‘Making the Intangible Tangible: Stories as a Process for Organisational and Management Inquiry’. This popular stream ran for two days and included 13 experiential presentations. The stream took place in an amphitheatre style room, ideal for storytelling and wisdom sharing, yet, in a creative AoMO twist the space had access to an outdoor, enclosed private grassed area. Presenters took advantage of this surprise alternative sensory setting and thus, presentations or parts thereof alternated between the indoor and outdoor environs.

This is perhaps the essence of what makes AoMO conferences and events special – there are very few rules. Yes, there is a conference programme and yes, there is a book of abstracts but few days or hours at an AoMO conference will feel structured or predetermined. Organisers embrace and encourage changes to be made and creativity to emerge. Resources are provided to encourage such artistry from plasticine, to pastels, to paints and postcards. This culture of creative embrace, flexibility and democracy are among features that make AoMO conferences unique shared and safe spaces for innovation and liberal creation.

The University of Brighton, UK will host the 9th Art of Management & Organisation conference with the theme of Performance. Already, the organisers are encouraging events, workshops and performances in alternative spaces including the beach. To find out more visit www.artofmanagement.org

Bibliography

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What do the articles published in this issue contribute to the knowledge associated with creativity and professional artistry in management?

The following papers reveal how the use of stories provides a meaningful and creative way for professional practitioners to gain deeper insight into their practices and the organisations in which they work, and in turn develop the professional artistry they need to navigate organisational life. In keeping with the spirit of the journal we provide a brief snapshot of the papers as we intend to let the stories speak for themselves.

1. Stories as a Process for Organisational and Management Inquiry

Cathryn Lloyd and Geof Hill

Practitioners are at the centre of organisations, and their personal stories are entwined with the company stories. Different professionals sharing their stories, in both artistic (hands on) and artful (using all the senses) can expand what we gain from experience.

2. Structuring Storytelling in Management Practice

Martin Eley & Geoff Hill

The authors discuss stories they have solicited from business professionals that speak to issues of leadership. They posit a model for drawing emotional distinctions within stories about leadership.

3. Resistance, Resonance and Restoration: How Generative Stories Shape Organisational Futures

Michelle LeBaron & Nadja Alexander

The authors discuss specifically at generative stories at work in organisations and how these types of stories can be crafted and how they contribute to organisational awareness

4. Telling Stories in Organisations: Reflective Practice/Curated Practice

Jo Trelfa

The author articulates a process for generating organisational stories. Her model adds to the discussion of the literature about storytelling and reflective practice in organisational contexts.

5. Body Mapping: A Personal and Professional Artful Inquiry Process

Cathryn Lloyd

The author describes her use of body mapping as an artful inquiry and a way to facilitate professionals' creative thinking and reflection about their professional practice

6. Towards a Methodology: Organisational Cartographies

Kate Carruthers Thomas

The author uses a mapping metaphor, describing a very different approach to mapping.

7. Beating the Blues: An Exploration of the Value of Blues Music to Improve Performance

Jack Pinter

The author describes his use of blues to elicit and perform organisational stories of discontent in ways that are seen as celebratory rather than complaining.

8. Bringing the Body into Change Practice through Storied Performance

Hedy Bryant

The author illuminates a particular form of storytelling in performative poetry and explores how her own poem 'The Shapeshifter' helped her to articulate her organisational practice related to organisational change.