

WALKING WITH MUSEUM DIRECTORS: UNCOVERING ARTS-BASED MANAGEMENT

Master's Thesis
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Date of submission: 09-07-2021



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ABSTRACT

Every so often artists find themselves confronted by a challenging artistic endeavour. In that moment, producing a preparatory study serves as a means to dissolve the challenge into a manageable task. In particular, this is because they allow for exploration and experimentation. Thus, the artist gains apprehension of a subject before committing to a final work.

So as well, this thesis acts as a preparatory study to distil insights and considerations into arts-based management processes from Dutch art museum directors. Current literature emphasizes the influence of *people*, *practices* and *products* from the world of arts. However, the influence of *place* seems overlooked. In pursuit of closing this gap – and to truly experience the influence of place – a walking-interview method is employed. Thereupon, in the attempt to provide relevant spatial context, I present illustrations of museum place.

Results suggest that product-based interventions are most promising to enrich arts-based management practice. People-based and practice-based interventions were less heavily emphasized, while museum directors did provide valuable insights to their practice. Interestingly, almost all participating directors underlined the transformative character of museum place. Future research could further investigate the concept of space aestheticization and develop practical arts-based exercises.

KEYWORDS:

Arts-based intervention, arts-based management, museum director, walking-interview, space aestheticization

PREFACE

The famous dictum that a '*great artist knows when to stop*' is a humbling commentary on the oftentimes painstaking effort of producing art. Make no mistake, however, in thinking it refers only to the creator's ability to consider a work finished. Truly, it articulates the duty to resign oneself from the creative process, in turn permitting the beholder to complete a work of art by virtue of their own sensibilities. "*Art, after all, is a dialogue, not a lecture*" (Wolff, 1987, para. 1). I entertain this aphorism not because I consider myself to be a great artist, but because I feel it's perhaps even more applicable to the act of writing a thesis. Present research marks the end of my academic career and, as such, has been subject to intense cycles of revision. I have always met these moments of critique with enthusiasm though, knowing that it would ultimately only add to its depth. For this reason, though I could continue subtly improving this thesis for much longer, I finally recognize the time has come to sign off. I now leave this research in the certainly capable hands of my reader, bestowing upon you the task of completion. But before finally doing so, I would like to express my gratitude to the individuals that brought this very research to fruition.

I am appreciative of all the museum directors that enthusiastically invited me over to their museum, in spite of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. While some of these organizations faced enduring closure, they were never hesitant to offer me their full attention and cooperation. To me, this sincere and welcoming posture is testimonial to the value of our cultural sector. Furthermore, I would like to give thanks to my friends and family for their continuous support and encouragement. I hereby explicitly thank my close friends Joost Oliemans, Merlijn Zuidervijk and Rutger Hensbergen, who were never reluctant to share with me their thoughts that ultimately proved crucial in the development of this thesis. To conclude I thank my supervisor Jeroen Vermeulen for always thinking *along* with me, thereby also honouring the ambition to tread my own path.

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1 INTRODUCTION

No less than a week after starting the School of Architecture & Decorative Arts in Haarlem, Maurits Cornelius Escher abandons his studies. Under the influence and support of his teacher he decides to study Graphic Arts instead (M.C. Escher foundation, 2021). Upon graduation, he travels Europe in search of inspiration. During this period he develops an unmistakable fascination for perspective, characterized by realistic lithographs, woodcuts and engravings of landscapes throughout Italy – at the time his place of residence. Yet Italy doesn't seem to satisfy his artistic appetite. Perhaps in an attempt to broaden his own perspective, the artist begins exploring other countries. It is in his travels to Granada, Spain, where he is introduced to the impressive geometry and colour-schemes of mosaics used to decorate castle walls and floors (Fig. 1). With the benefit of hindsight we can safely mark these travels as a turning point in Escher's career. Fuelled by newfound inspiration he produces some of the most iconic works of graphic art to date: his *symmetrical drawings*¹ (Fig. 2).

In the end, his decision to take up graphic arts turned out to be a successful one. Nowadays, virtually every art enthusiast is familiar with the graphic works of M.C. Escher. His attention to detail combined with the most decisive and meticulous approach remains unparalleled. His greatest admirers, however, are not all art critics. It is actually mathematicians and other scholars who highly value Escher's capability of visualizing mathematical principles. For this reason, Escher's extensive oeuvre evokes a debate of possession: to which realm does he really belong? Escher found himself unable to settle the debate: "*For me it remains an open question whether [this work] pertains to the realm of mathematics or to that of art*" (Smith, 2014, para. 1). Nor should his work exclusively belong to either realm. His work serves as an exemplary argument to the question: why should art and science remain separate? A question that seems to gain traction within the scientific community as well.



Figure 1: M.C. Escher (1898-1972): *Wall mosaic in the Alhambra* 1/5 original size, 1922. Watercolour and ink on paper. Escher in het Paleis, The Hague.

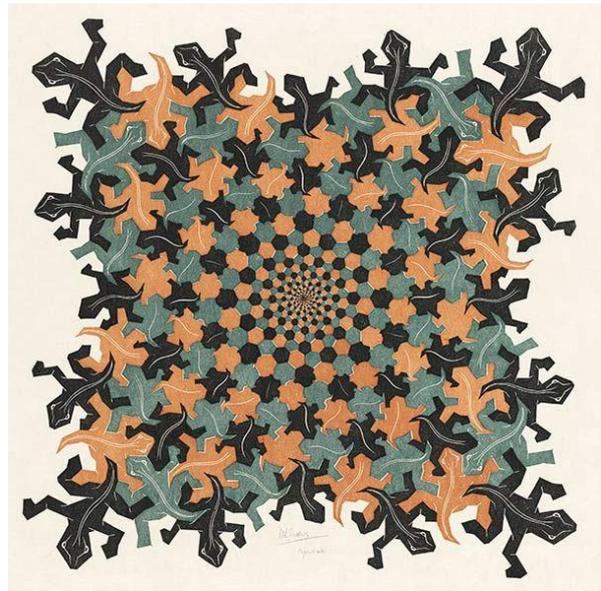


Figure 2: M.C. Escher (1898-1972): *Development II*, 1939. Woodcut in brown, grey-green and black. Escher in het Paleis, The Hague.

¹ All M.C. Escher works © 2021 The M.C. Escher Company - The Netherlands. All rights reserved. Used with permission. www.mcescher.com

1.1 PROBLEM DESCRIPTION

Over the past few decades, the organizational environment has become more and more turbulent, competitive and uncertain (Ancelin-Bourguignon, 2020). A general inability to solve these rising challenges effectuated the academic- and professional dismissal of then-prevailing (logical) organizational strategies. In their place rose creativity, which had rapidly come to be a deciding factor in the survival of struggling organizations (Williamson, 2001). Consequently (just as it had borrowed from the social- and psychological disciplines in the past), it was now time for management practice to turn its attention to the arts (Barry & Meisiek, 2014). Ever since the early 2000s, therefore, managers and organizational thinkers have attempted to transfer various artistic insights to the organizational domain in order to cope with the newly presented complexities (Ancelin-Bourguignon, 2020). Within organizational literature, these processes are called *arts-based interventions*². For instance, the *Leadership as an art* discourse (Ladkin & Taylor, 2010) essentially compares managers to artists – claiming the latter hold valuable insights and information. Likewise, the rhetoric that artistic produce, rather than its producers, acts as a catalyst for organizational understanding is ardently studied. In some cases even, it is the artistic processes that yield valuable insights. At any rate, over the years several distinguished thinkers have expressed their belief in the arts' capacity to elicit crucial organizational thought-processes and insights (Adler, 2006; Schein, 2001).

However, despite art's promising managerial message (Ladkin & Taylor, 2010), providing encompassing insights into arts-based management is easier said than done (Barry & Meisiek, 2014). Philosophically, artistic outlooks are easily adopted. But in reality, echoing artistic creativity requires far-reaching practical considerations, not in the least because artists and managers operate in sometimes heavily contrasting circumstances. Even though successful accounts of the 'manager as artist' are known (Barry & Meisiek, 2010), most studies lack generalizability. In these cases we are left with nothing more than an entertaining anecdote of an individually creative manager (Barry & Meisiek, 2014). In fact, critical scholars call into question the usefulness of the leadership as an art rhetoric as a whole: "*the moniker 'leadership as an art' is used rather indiscriminately, indicative of everything from 'skilful practice' to 'trendy title for a book'*" (Ladkin & Taylor, 2010, p. 235).

In a similar line of reasoning, Barry & Meisiek (2014) mention that arts' organizational benefits oftentimes remain somewhat of fictitious knowledge, quickly rendered meaningless whenever subjected to thorough empirical examination. Again, art's organizational impact is hard to concretize. One reason for this is that art and science emphasize two fundamentally opposing approaches to knowing: science signifies clarity, definition and stability; art signifies ambiguity, vagueness and disruption. As a result, art is rarely a basis for developing theory "*because there are often contrary and even conflicting interpretations of art forms*" (Barry & Meisiek, 2014, p. 138). Nevertheless, scholars seem determined to develop a 'paint-by-numbers' approach to arts-based management in which they repeatedly and reliably create successful outcomes across organizational contexts. Even the most prominent organizational thinkers have written personal statements on the relationship between art and management (Schein, 2001), yet seem unable to adequately support theoretical arguments. Chemi & Du (2018, p. 327) likewise mention a current discrepancy in "*theoretical conceptualisations and the practitioners' competence for actualising what is envisioned theoretically*". The result of which this is that arts-based interventions hold an interesting promise for management, yet remain too broad and vague to satisfy critical, empirical minds (Barry & Meisiek, 2014). And precisely this, according to the same scholars, is crucial:

"We hope that this paper is a step toward establishing more interest in art and management [...] This is important, because we fear that the community will be caught in repeating the promise that art holds for management without having much science to show for it" (p. 140).

Yet, while current literature adequately describes the role of the artist, the manager or the scholar, insights from another character of relevance are yet to be distilled. Even though, at the crossroads of art and management, they occupy a key position to deepen our collective understanding of arts-based interventions. Hence, present thesis constitutes a pursuit to concretize the promise that arts-based interventions hold for management at the hand of art museum directors. One particular reason for studying museum directors are the imminent changes in museum directorship. The art museum director's traditional focus was on preserving the cultural capital of its institution. However, as financial accountability is rising due to government demands, the director's role has become integrating and developing marketing techniques that ensure the museum's success. This development marked the organizational shift from a simple custodial perspective to a value-creating perspective (Gilmore & Rentschler, 2002). As a result of the increased complexity of cultural leadership, museum directors face rising tensions between

² Exercising specific arts-based interventions in turn accumulates to the general practice of arts-based management.

artistic or cultural autonomy (Booth, Ogundipe & Røyseng 2019). On top of that, the global COVID-19 pandemic has proven an additional challenge for museum directorship. Due to the enduring closure of public sector museums (Larkin, 2020), directors have had to face complicated decisions of re-allocation and lay-offs. I point out this development to illustrate how the increased complexity of museum directorship has possibly necessitated the use of creativity to ensure organizational continuance (Williamson, 2001), and thus fostered new insights with regard to arts-based interventions. What is more, whilst the museum sector provides crucial research participants, it synchronously hints at the possible relevance of another intervention. Prevailing arts-based intervention literature is laced with insights from people, practices and products from the world of arts. The influence of place, however, remains unknown. Even though museum place constitutes a literal physical environment in which artists, art-making and artworks are joint together. To this end I beg the hypothesis that museum place can thus be considered an arts-based intervention.

1.2 RESEARCH GOALS

Present thesis marks the attempt to deepen current theoretical understanding of arts-based interventions. In furtherance of this attempt I seek to offer contemporary insights, as well as considerations, into each distinct intervention process. For two reasons I specifically identify the museum sector as a desirable research setting. Firstly, it presents knowledgeable participants to provide said insights and considerations. Secondly, it allows for the exploration of museum place as a possible fourth arts-based intervention. In doing this I ultimately seek to enrich the existing body of arts-based management literature and provide clear and performable insights to its practice. Fundamentally then, the purpose of this thesis is to propagate and justify the understanding that art and management complement, rather than contradict each other.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION

Based on the problem description and research goals I concur that arts-based interventions warrant further methodological consideration (Chemi & Du, 2018). While museum directors occupy a relevant managerial position, this thesis is not exclusively aimed at examining their *use* of arts-based interventions. Even though I expect that the shifting organizational context has necessitated their use, I conjointly seek their general insights in an attempt to advocate art's relevance for the broader organizational context. In conclusion, this thesis' research question reads:

“What insights and considerations into four distinct arts-based interventions do Dutch public sector art museum directors hold?”

1.4 RELEVANCE

The 'paint-by-numbers' approach to arts-based management has been predominantly concerned with successful implementation. Consequently, the workings of possibly undesirable outcomes receive little attention. In the attempt to fully understand arts-based management, it's essential to also study possible weaknesses or conditions. In this process of finding answers, museum directors occupy a key position. While museum directors have been subject to research practices in the realms of education and gender studies (Gan et al., 2014; Trevino et al., 2017), as of yet they lack attention in the context of arts-based management. This might seem strange at first, though it's logical following ensuing consideration. With its propensity for borrowing (Barry & Meisiek, 2014), management has clearly come to see the arts as a source of inspiration. This is largely due to the practical posture of most organizations, centralizing a bottom-line question of 'what works?' (Barry & Meisiek 2014). Ever since arts-based management has been embraced as a legitimate practice, its popularity has skyrocketed. However, most bureaucratic organizations are extremely devoid of creativity (Baker & Baker, 2012). Therefore, these specific organizations are most likely to employ arts-based management: they are in need of it the most. Ferreira (2018) mentions arts-based management has been found relevant across several organizational activities including for instance HRM, marketing & strategy, corporate identity and strategic information systems. Because of this emphasis we study the effects of arts-based management among organizations that are faraway to creativity, yet the use of arts-based management among organizations that are specifically *prized* for their creative dimensions remains unclear. This is remarkable, as I expect a great deal can be learnt from studying museum directors. To begin with, art museum directors are frequently art historians (De Voogt, 2006). Over the course of their careers they have delved into the realms of art history, familiarizing themselves with a multitude of artistic insights, processes, artworks, artists and genres. In fact, art historians typically specialize in specific periods, generating a great number of perspectives that

add to the richness of their collective knowledge. Also, whenever obtaining new artworks or designing new exhibitions, museum directors co-operate closely with the corresponding artists and a well-informed pool of curators. In addition to their sophisticated expertise then, the museum directors' managerial skills are put to the test on a daily basis. For these reasons, I consider the museum director a character of relevance in the pursuit to concretize the promise that art holds for management. It is crucial to concretize this promissory note, as it might once and for all solve the rising challenges emanating from an increasingly ambiguous organizational field.

1.5 READING GUIDE

To provide the reader sufficient guidance, I shortly address the structure of present research. The upcoming conceptual framework serves to elucidate theoretical insights in relation to four distinct arts-based interventions. In doing so I subsequently corroborate their relevance. Next, I expand on and simultaneously justify chosen methodological procedures. Present thesis employs a so-called walking-interview approach to fully experience the influence of museum place as an arts-based intervention. To answer the proposed research question, the results section contains relevant insights and considerations into each distinct intervention. The following chapter discusses present thesis' results, arguing both in favour of and against theoretical expectations. This chapter also acknowledges shortcomings and proposes implications for future research. To conclude, I shortly reiterate the main research question and seek to imbue my reader with one last insight, hopefully convincing them of the belief that art and science do truly enhance one another.

2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This conceptual framework is divided into multiple segments. First I address the concept of organization aesthetics, in which the practice of arts-based management is embedded. Next I provide a disquisition on relevant concepts, theories, and findings relating to distinct arts-based intervention processes. The purpose of this framework is twofold: I seek to equip the reader with relevant theoretical knowledge, while concurrently raising arguments to expand the entirety of arts-based interventions at the hand of a fourth, currently overlooked intervention: place.

2.1 ORGANIZATION AESTHETICS

Over the past few decades, art has demonstrated its power to challenge, alter and invent organizational processes (Holm & Beyes, 2021). As art took its corporate turn, it introduced organizations to the world of aesthetics. The term aesthetics literally translates to 'through the senses' and it involves the application of a distinctive attitude towards an object or performance (Graham, 2005). Broadly defined, aesthetics is "*concerned with knowledge that is created from our sensory experiences*" (Taylor & Hansen, 2017, p. 1212). Aesthetics initially involved the application of any kind of distinctive attitude. Slowly however, it has transformed into a general "*study of taste and appreciation of beauty in the arts*" (Barry & Meisiek, 2014, p. 138). Nevertheless, aesthetics is considered the study of sensory knowledge while logic remains the study of intellectual knowledge.

Thus, a compelling dialogue between organizational theories on one side, and aesthetics and art theories on the other side commenced (Strati, 2018). *Organization aesthetics* became the general theoretical school claiming that organizations can benefit from lessons learned in the artistic field (Ancelin-Bourguignon et al., 2020, p. 718). For instance, Barry & Meisiek (2014) contend that the ability to understand aesthetic phenomena in art can similarly be applied to discover, visualize and understand organizational life. Moreover, Taylor & Hansen (2017) argue that aesthetic expression allows for reconsideration of dominant and counterproductive organizational attitudes. In other words, developing an aesthetic organizational perspective isn't merely an option: it's a viable strategy. Even though aesthetics is not synonymous with art (Hansen et al., 2007), the belief that art promotes powerful organizational values is actively practised (Barry & Meisiek, 2014), specifically because of art's capacity to elicit unique processes of organizational understanding. Schein (2001) mentions how art can "*sharpen people's attention to their environment, provoke them to question long-held beliefs, encourage developing new responses to challenges, help us get in touch with our creative selves*" (Barry & Meisiek, 2014, p. 134). As mentioned, the processes preceding these outcomes are called arts-based interventions.

2.2 ARTS-BASED INTERVENTIONS

An arts-based intervention is defined by Berthoin Antal (2009, p. 4) as the process whereby "*people, products or practices from the world of arts enter the world of organizations*". Arts-based management then is the umbrella term for practicing or employing certain interventions. The term intervention has a purposeful connotation, but it relates more closely to the provision of general and sometimes even unconscious organizational insights. Narrowing down this definition is difficult as arts-based interventions can span different time frames, and vary in means, methods

and objectives (Ancelin-Bourguignon et al., 2020). However, interventions from the arts oftentimes entail practical teaching methods (Osman et al., 2018). The intended purpose of arts-based interventions is to “develop non-rational, non-logical capabilities and self-knowledge that constitute and cultivate experiential knowing, aesthetic awareness and, in general, the so-called soft issues of managing and leading” (Sutherland, 2013, p. 26). Particularly important to this understanding is knowing how practicing arts-based interventions embeds in the notion of experiential learning (Sutherland, 2013). The need for arts-based interventions grew as the inadequacy of current logical and scientific sensemaking processes to understand the complexity of our world were laid bare (Taylor & Ladkin, 2009). This shift paved the way for arts-based interventions to prove their worth in coping with this complexity, “thereby offering novel ways of responding to it” (p. 235). In consequence, literature mentions various benefits.

To begin with, Taylor (2008) points out how arts-based learning processes (1) represent tacit/embodied forms of knowing or direct sensory experience; (2) can be interpreted holistically rather than logically or systematically; (3) encourage sense-making based on personal experiences and (4) may have a lasting impact as arts-based interventions are enjoyable and shareable. Ropo et al. (2013) further expand on the distinction between logical knowing and sensory knowing. The authors contend that sensory experience deviates from traditional epistemological knowledge in the sense that it generates embodied, therefore non-explicable knowledge. However, Taylor & Hanson (2006) argue that sensory experiences often precede intellectual experiences, and provide bases for other forms of knowledge because the structure of our understanding embeds fundamentally in cultural, historical and personal traditions and experiences (Ropo et al., 2013). Sensory knowing is therefore considered equally valuable as logical knowing. In a concrete manner, arts-based interventions are found to increase intellectual and emotional engagement, providing valuable social benefits in return (Azmat et al., 2018). For example, arts-based interventions increase individual levels of self-esteem, confidence and development (Durrer, 2008). It is additionally argued that these benefits remain not exclusive to the individual level, but actually spill over to overarching group and even organizational levels: increased self-confidence and self-esteem ultimately encourage an inclusive and innovative work environment (Azmat et al., 2014).

All in all, arts-based interventions constitute a wide variety of processes, employing different means to different ends. Yet perhaps the most important linking factor is that all interventions, to a degree, offer novel ways of responding to the rising complexities emanating from an increasingly turbulent and uncertain organizational field. These insights in turn might endow modern-day managers with the sufficient know-how to ensure organizational continuance. In order to thoroughly grasp *how* arts-based interventions provide these answers, and thus lessons, it is imperative to explicitly describe their workings. Within existing organizational literature I observe a tendency to classify the organizational effects of arts-based interventions according to distinct analytical principles. For instance, Barry and Meisiek (2014) mention how to improve organizational practice through (1) analogical reasoning, (2) artistic theory and (3) studying artistic practice. Taylor & Ladkin (2009) likewise propose four distinct arts-based interventions underpinning leadership. In light of this observation, I provide a classification of arts-based interventions adhering to the original definition provided by Berthoin Antal. Accordingly, the following paragraphs constitute an overview of arts-based intervention literature on the basis of (1) people, (2) practices and (3) products from the world of arts. In doing so I aim to answer the crucial question: What can be learnt from them?

2.2.1 WHAT CAN BE LEARNT FROM PEOPLE?

Proposing management to be something of the arts began at the understanding that it does not exclusively belong to a science-informed discipline (Barry & Meisiek, 2014). Lifting the scientific perimeters presented an opportunity to analyse management outside a strictly theoretical approach. Since then, a myriad of scholars has supported the claim that management is in fact an art (Ladkin & Taylor, 2010). This insight resultantly caused new queries into the relationship between managers and artists: if they can behave alike, what can they learn from each other?

This belief takes theoretical form in the *transferability thesis* – the rationale that management can draw inspiration from artistic creativity (Ancelin-Bourguignon et al., 2020, p. 720).

Barry & Meisiek (2014) describe one specific mechanism through which managers can draw inspiration from artistic creativity. In line with Lippin’s earlier finding (1999), they suggest that observing artists go about their practice provides valuable insights. Studying artistic practice specifically entails observing what artists do when they work, why they are doing this and how this ultimately leads to the production an artwork. The authors concurrently provide an explanation as to why this observation works. It is assumed that artists possess a degree of creativity that managers do not. This creativity is in turn both observable and transferable to the organizational context. Observing what and why artists do what they do, thus facilitates apprehension of artistic creativity and ultimately promotes organizational understanding (Barry & Meisiek, 2014).

Schein (2001) accordingly argues that visual arts (but also musical composition and performance arts) provide a perfect opportunity to broaden organizational perspectives. It is especially the individual artistic capacities that form a training tool for leaders to increase sense-making competencies. As artists are essentially guided by expanding their perceptual and expressive range, they challenge others to see more, to hear more and to experience more (p. 81). Again, in this process observational skills are essential: “*by analysing the skills that underlie different art forms, one can gain insight into what is needed to perform in general*” (p. 82). Stimulating improvisation the way that artists do, for example, can help break undesirable organizational habits.

Another contemporary study (Springborg, 2010) suggests managers could benefit from developing a more artistic outlook. Changes to the organizational environment are at some point inescapable. As these changes occur, history and common-sense reasoning (Watts, 2011) pressure managers into descriptive sense-making processes. Whenever facing an uncertain environment, for instance, it seems sensible to base decisions on that which is known to have worked in the past. However, in this process understanding what is happening is emphasized over experiencing what is happening. And sometimes prior experience actually obscures that which is happening. Springborg hence claims leaders should avoid defaulting to description-making processes. Instead, they should employ personal sense-making processes: “*in order to gain the greatest benefit from the data the world provides us, we must stay with our senses longer, the way that artists do*” (Ladkin & Taylor, 2010, p. 237). Whenever observing a work of art, artists do not praise its essence on the basis of prior experience, critic reviews or notions of popularity. Only through sensory experience are they able to comprehend and ultimately value a work of art.

Ladkin & Taylor (2010, p. 238) conclude that artists help “*leaders to develop and incorporate capabilities more usually associated with art or art making in their practice*”. Despite these promising insights, developing managerial sense-making capabilities remains difficult. Fortunately, Taylor and Ladkin point out another powerful factor to arts-based management: art making.

2.2.2 WHAT CAN BE LEARNT FROM PRACTICE?

Logically, no work of art is conceived without some sort of production, process, or thought. The upcoming paragraphs therefore contain an overview of existing practice-based intervention literature. I distinguish two theoretically relevant practice-based nuances that I respectively refer to as *doing* art and *studying* art.

Doing art refers to the creative process that is involved in art creation. Producing, or sometimes undergoing art, stresses the process over the product and possibly justifies a process being the product. Specifying onwards from the transferability thesis, Taylor & Ladkin (2009, p. 56) talk about *skill transfer* – a process “*facilitating and developing artistic skills that can be usefully applied in organizational settings*”. This is important to mention because practice-based intervention literature is inherently concerned with the adaptation of certain artistic skills. Moreover, Ryman et al. (2009) posit creative processes as a form of experiential learning, subjecting them to the realm of arts-based management. Sensory knowledge emanating from the production of art is therefore crucial in our understanding of organizational phenomena. The overall purpose of practice-based interventions is that they indeed allow us to “*surface feelings that we may not have been aware of in ourselves*” (Schein, 2001, p. 81).

There's plenty of anecdotal evidence that attest to practice-based interventions' organizational relevance. For example, Barry and Meisiek (2010) state that the act of painting facilitates individual expression in a way that promotes organizational understanding. On the one hand, this is because painting is a pleasurable activity that can foster mindfulness, on the other hand, it's because painting forces individuals to think about for instance colour and shape. Learning to analyse these attributes “*brings organizational members away from their usual instrumental orientation and lets them edge closer to an artistic way of seeing*” (p. 1516). What is more, specific management competencies can be trained through particular creative processes. Drawing from his experience as theatre director, Ibbotson (2008) devised a training exercise in which managers work on creativity, spontaneity, and innovative leadership (Barry & Meisiek, 2014).

Studying art is another relevant practice-based intervention based on the insight that art education, rather than art itself, holds valuable lessons (Baker & Baker, 2012). Even though the acquired skills are mostly general in nature, they provide valuable managerial insights (Barry & Meisiek, 2014). Cohen & Jurkovic (1997) performed a study that invited students to an art museum and had them observe and interpret a selection of paintings. Discussing their observations with fellow students enabled them to learn “*how their habitual patterns of seeing prevent them from noticing the marginal or counter-intuitive*” (Barry & Meisiek, 2014, p. 136). Breaking habitual organizational patterns is a crucial skill because noticing organizational changes can be a make-or-break issue for modern-day managers. This result simultaneously highlights the importance of sharing an individual experience in a collective. Dialogue then, is another important component of studying art. Additional evidence for the effect of studying art is provided by Adler (2006). She lists the results of a study in which first-year medical students at Yale

University were invited to attend an extracurricular art history seminar. Again, during this introductory course students were taught to observe details in paintings, influencing their habituated observational patterns. The crux is that breaking these patterns significantly increases broader organizational skills. After one year, the art-trained student doctors' diagnostic skills had increased with 25% percent compared to their non-art-educated counterparts. Learning to observe details in paintings improved their ability to base diagnostic decisions on visual cues, rather than global symptom interpretation. In other words, they learnt to see what was actually going on.

For most artists the reason for practicing art, is to produce art. Artistic endeavour therefore mostly ends in some form of manifestation or object. These objects are in turn subject to analytical and observational processes, from which we distil valuable insights. Sometimes however, it is the specific properties of an artwork itself, rather than its creator or conceptional process, that generate deeper insights.

2.2.3 WHAT CAN BE LEARNT FROM PRODUCT?

The relevance of product-based interventions relies on the notion that art, manifesting as perhaps a performance or object, holds certain properties that are valuable to management (Schein, 2001). In this sense a work of art acts as a catalyst for organizational performance in its own right. "*Common sense holds that a well-crafted, thought-provoking piece of art may edify or irritate, and in this way reaffirm or provoke the questioning of long-held beliefs*" (Barry & Meisiek, 2010, p. 1511). Most of those works of art specifically elicit analogical thought processes that question organizational beliefs (Barry & Meisiek, 2014). Analogical reasoning addresses the process of reflection, consideration and explanation of certain phenomena. The central idea is that works of art induce analogical considerations (Barry & Meisiek, 2010) that evoke a state of reflection and defamiliarization of organizational habits and attitudes (Schein, 2001). Especially works that possess artistic attributes such as for instance originality, symbolization, deconstruction or allusion (Davies, 2006) are liable to elicit analogical considerations. To some even, it is the primary purpose of art to objectify experiences in order to contemplate and understand them (Taylor & Ladkin, 2009). What is more, these works of art possess the ability to create tacit knowledge even on invisible organizational concepts such as culture (James & Linstead, 2006). In short, product-based interventions contain the following elements: they are a manifestation in their own right, containing complex elements of interaction, that require reasoning by analogy in order to experience and understand their underlying message or theme, ultimately increasing understanding of organizational phenomena (Ryman et al., 2009).

In this process of analogical reasoning, Barry & Meisiek (2014) mention the possible relevance of metaphors. A metaphor is usually defined as a "*transmission of the properties of one object (phenomenon or aspect of life) to another because of their similarity in any aspect or by contrast*" (Petrenko & Korotchenko, 2012, p. 535). Within organizational literature the purpose of metaphors is controversial. While they do not necessarily provide a deeper understanding of a phenomenon per se, they can present their beholders with new insights. (Barry & Meisiek, 2014). All of this is because metaphors "*help us grasp the unusual or unheard of ... and can lead our minds and imagination where they have not ventured before*" (Barry & Meisiek, 2014, p.137). The conjured imagery might just be enough then to plunge beholders into a state of reflection and defamiliarization. In some cases, the authors argue, a metaphor's imprecision constitutes its strength because it allows for re-evaluation of overlooked or undiscussed features of our world. Other scholars have argued that a shift from the information age (which requires left-brain logical and linear thinking) to the conceptual age (which requires right-brain abstract thinking) has justified the organizational use of metaphors (Ryman et al., 2009). As organizational thinking becomes fundamentally more strategic, managers need metaphorical thought because it "*enables us to understand the multiple relevant perspectives, grasp the multiple meanings of situations and allows us to manage the contradiction and paradox*" (p. 3). Being 'freed' from habituated patterns of organizational thinking in turn allows creativity to reign freely (Morgan, 1989). Literature mentions few anecdotal organizational benefits to metaphorical reasoning.

Ryman et al. (2009) indicate that metaphorical reasoning can be used as a means of collective identification through a shared understanding of organizational phenomena. It is the properties of a work of art that try to capture tacit organizational phenomena through shape or colour. In turn, "*understanding the relational components embedded into the work of art will facilitate ... understanding of management* (p. 4)". In this process, studying and discussing the work of art again takes precedence, as this is expected to magnify organizational results. Therefore, metaphorical reasoning does not simply bolster individual understanding, it allows for the creation of a collective strategic organizational vision. Building on the idea of creating a shared organizational vision, Cornelissen & Clarke (2014) found that metaphorical reasoning reduces uncertainty in situations that require accurate future predictions. In some situations the expected outcome of a certain venture can, to a degree, be estimated through accurate metaphorical comparison. This is because metaphorical reasoning concretizes

uncertainties through comparison to for instance preceding ventures. Reduced uncertainty and increased understanding of a venture's trajectory thus facilitates a shared organizational vision.

Up to this point, literature mentions the effects of three distinct arts-based interventions processes. While these processes are theoretically acknowledged, literature seems to ignore the possibility of place as a fourth arts-based intervention. I specifically identify museum place as a possible addition to the practice of arts-based management, as it constitutes a physical environment that hosts people, practices and products from the world of arts. I therefore hypothesize that the museum acts as a 'place from the world of arts' and can thus be considered an intervention. The following paragraphs contain an overview of the expected workings of museum place as arts-based intervention.

2.2.4 WHAT CAN BE LEARNT FROM PLACE?

As mentioned, today's organizational field is marked by a growing interest in the process of aestheticization. This process involves designing the aesthetic dimensions in a manner that invokes specific values and behaviour (De Molli et al., 2020). A particularly promising subject of aesthetic manipulation is organizational space (Beyes, 2016). Aestheticization of space is hard to define exactly, though the concept of *atmosphere* provides clarification: "*an atmosphere is the primary object of perception that, upon entering a new place, is immediately perceived, even before feeling the shape of the objects, or perceiving their colour*" (De Molli et al., 2020, p. 1494-1495). Given that it's a primary object of perception that generates sensory knowledge of a place, atmosphere is subject to the realm of aesthetics, and organizational space is thus considered crucial in organizational development. Put differently, atmosphere is a phenomenon that can be intentionally made up to influence its constituents through manipulation of environmental stimuli such as for instance light, sound or smell (Madsen, 2017, p. 127). A few decades ago, Alvesson and Willmot (1992) already indicated that spatial practices "*produce people*" (Ropo et al., 2013, p. 379). The benefits of space aestheticization are substantial: it has been found to increase motivation and creativity (Alexandersson & Kalonaityte, 2018) and invoke valuable organizational identities (Dale & Burrell, 2010).

One particular organization credited for its atmospheric qualities is the museum (Madsen, 2017). Due to the recent and radical reshaping of the organizational sector, museums found themselves progressively subject to processes of aestheticization. The changing organizational environment has challenged museum professionals to rethink architectural and spatial forms (Macleod, 2005), prioritizing primarily an interest in discovering: what dimensions of museum experience are affected by the way galleries and objects are organized spatially? (Tzortzi, 2016, p. 1). However, museum space is not limited to the architectural structure of a building, as it consists of display experiences, design choices and even a capacity for mutual learning (MacLeod, 2005). Soon, museum professionals came to recognize the "*constitutive character and transformative possibilities of museum space as well as the ability ... to reshape museum spaces through practices of appropriation*" (p. 1). From this recognition emanated a consensus that museum space is an active constituent of processes of making meaning and change. Literature congruently describes the museum experience as a "*multi-layered journey that is proprioceptive, sensory, intellectual, aesthetic and social. The end result might be learning, wonder, reflection and relaxation, sensory stimulation, conversation with friends, new social ties, creation of lasting memories, or recollection of past events*" (Levent & Pascual Leone, 2014, p. 13).

In processes of space aestheticization, literature specifically mentions the effects of material place on leadership (Ropo et al., 2013). Their research argues in favour of an aesthetic leadership approach, which "*explores symbolic meanings ... and felt experiences that material places entail and produce*" (p. 379). If places produce people, then places also produce leaders. The authors further distinguish between organizational place and space: the former being the objective evaluation from a realist perspective; the latter referring to a sensory experience of an environment. Museum place, however, often constitutes both: it is an objective materialist space that hosts fundamentally social experiences. Although processes of space aestheticization have been found to influence management, no specific attention is credited to the museum sector. In fact, most descriptions of the museum experience resemble the visitor's perspective. The organizational effects of place therefore remain little known, even though Madsen (2017) highlights the atmospheric qualities of museum. It can be argued that these qualities evoke embodied reactions amongst every beholder, thus influencing leadership or employee performance.

To sum up, arts-based intervention literature describes various processes that transfer insights from the world of arts to the organizational domain. Yet so far, the academic community has not been able to provide encompassing answers, as ambiguities and theory gaps surrounding arts-based management still endure.

3 METHODOLOGICAL JUSTIFICATION

The upcoming paragraphs explicate and justify methodological procedures. To begin with I describe organizational characteristics and the process of participant selection. I subsequently address the qualitative nature of this research and accordingly expand on the chosen research strategy. After this, multiple data-gathering and analysis processes are explicated, centralizing the idea of triangulation. To conclude I address research quality and ethics procedures.

3.1 ORGANIZATION CHARACTERISTICS

Present research seeks to deliver contemporary insights and considerations into the practice of four distinct arts-based intervention processes at the hand of Dutch art museum directors. Therefore only art museums were contacted. Other museums, such as for instance historical or educational museums, were excluded. Even though privately-owned art galleries were invited, only public sector art museums agreed to participate. Furthermore, specific geographical location of the museum was no relevant selection criterion, even though all of them are located in the Netherlands. All participating organizations are, with director's consent, summarized in Table 1.

Dutch art museums typically employ a dual leadership approach (De Voogt, 2006), separating business and artistic matters. While artistic directors are in charge of the general organizational mission, business directors handle the financial and logistical matters (De Voogt, 2006). The purpose of this organizational structure is to focus on the museum's core task: "*By differentiating the artistic practice from the financial and administrative practice, one is able to preserve the autonomy of the art as a constitutive category*" (Kleppe, 2018, p. 192). Consequently, the skills of artistic and business management are rarely combined in one individual (De Voogt, 2006). Due to organizational size, some smaller Dutch museums opt for a single leadership approach. In these cases, general directors are responsible for both artistic and business matters. This sometimes differing organizational structure raises a question of inclusion: which specific director type should be researched? Yet, even though director types possess different managerial skills, all directors within this study were, at some point in their career, schooled in the arts. While their responsibilities may differ in a practical sense, to an extent they share a similar upbringing. Practical evidence (Kleppe, 2018) additionally suggests that inclusion of all director types adds to the depth and dimension of a research. This is because every director type is expected to provide unique and relevant insights. Based on preceding arguments, falling in line with Maxwell's notion of *rich-data* (2008, p. 244), all director types were included for this study.

Name and location of the museum	
1	Stedelijk Museum, Schiedam
2	Mauritshuis, The Hague
3	Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam
4	Kunstmuseum, The Hague
5	Stedelijk Museum, Breda
6	Teylers Museum, Haarlem
7	Centraal Museum, Utrecht
8	Bonnefantien Museum Maastricht
9	Drents Museum, Assen

Table 1: Participating organizations in random order

3.2 PARTICIPANT SELECTION

All museum directors were contacted through formal communication channels provided by the museum's website. In doing so I was able to tactically summarize the intent of this research, and simultaneously invite directors to participate (Appendix 1). All museum directors were either general, artistic or business directors in charge of a Dutch public sector art museum at the time of interviewing. Further participation requirements, such as for example age or gender, were excluded. For this study a total of nine museum directors participated. While some scholars consider a sample size of N=9 insufficient, other scholars highlight the importance of *information power* (Malterud et al., 2016). This concept (also known as research saturation) argues that "*the more information the sample holds, relevant for the actual study, the lower amount of participants is needed*" (p. 1753). Information power depends on for instance the aim of the study, sample specificity and the quality of dialogue. The aim of this study is to seek the knowledge of a very specific participant group in order to deepen our understanding of arts-based management. That is to say, there are only so many Dutch public sector art museum directors. Moreover, interview duration lasted approximately one hour. Sample specificity and interview duration therefore indicate sufficient information power.

All participating directors were anonymized and assigned a random number ranging from 1 to 9. In doing so I guaranteed the participants' safety while providing sufficient methodological justification.

3.3 WALKING-ALONG METHOD

Qualitative research distinguishes itself as a research practice through its explicit emphasis on open, exploratory research questions that aim to understand phenomena in their own right (Elliott & Timulak, 2005). One specific method of conducting qualitative research that has gained popularity over the past few years is the so-called *walking-interview* (Evans & Jones, 2011; Kinney, 2017). This approach takes on various methodological sub formats, but they all require the researcher to accompany participants on foot at a given location while interviewing them (Kinney, 2017).

According to Beyes & Steyeart (2020), the relationship between walking and knowing is as old as ancient Greece. For instance, Socrates' outspoken desire to walk while teaching earned him the title of 'street-corner-philosopher' (Goertz, 2018). In the spirit of meaningful appellations, Aristotle's nickname 'peripatetic' is translated as 'walker' and originates from the Greek verb "*to engage in dialogue while walking*" (Gros, 2014, p. 130). Succeeding philosophers have expanded on the specific types of knowledge that walking produces. Friedrich Nietzsche once postulated: "*One cannot think and write, except sitting (G. Flaubert). There I have caught you, nihilist! The sedentary life is the very sin against the Holy Spirit. Only thoughts reached by walking have value*" (Platt, 1976, p. 309). It is Nietzsche's position that *Sitzfleisch* (seated knowing) is only capable of producing predictable and formulaic thinking (Steyes & Beyaert, 2020). Ergo, only thoughts that come from walking count.

However, justification for a walking-interview approach stems not only from pre-21st century thinkers. In recent times, scholars have specified numerous practical advantages of the walking-interview. As opposed to sedentary interviews, the walking-interview is an inclusive process that recognizes researcher and participant as equals. As individuals literally walk side-by-side while sharing an experience, they engage in spontaneous conversation, thereby balancing out power asymmetry (Kinney, 2017). Furthermore, the walking-interview allows for reflection and contemplation that doesn't occur in sedentary interviews. While walking from one space to another, one can silently think of what they are about to share next. These silent intervals are considered detrimental to sedentary interviews, but are of specific value to the dynamics of a walking-interview. Lastly, walking-along methods integrate the benefit of experiencing an environment while discussing a research topic (Evans & Jones, 2011). Steyes & Beyaert (2020) likewise consider the act of walking as a catalyst for knowing beyond the normative approach. It is the combination of thinking, talking, performing a physical movement and experiencing an environment that are argued to enrich research data. Evan and Jones (2011) particularize environmental influences in relation to walking and knowing. According to the authors, walking is an intimate affair that offers unique and privileged insights into both place and self. For example, walking-interviews sometimes capture previously hidden or unnoticed relations between the individual and place. What is more, walking-interviews invalidate recollection of a place or atmosphere on an abstract basis. Instead, respondents verbalize their feelings or thoughts regarding an environment, while experiencing that environment. Thus, when "*in place*" (p. 850), informal and interesting interactions occur. These spontaneous conversations in turn enrich research data. In fact, Kinney (2017) posits that walking-along methods are specifically employed to explore the connection between the individual and place. One objective of this research is to explore museum place as a possible arts-based intervention. This supposition inherently stresses the relationship between the individual and place. Employing a walking-interview approach therefore isn't simply feasible, it is actually preferred. Thereupon it's necessary to describe how museum place is expected to influence the walking-interview.

The museum atmosphere, as described, is sensory, aesthetic and social (Levent & Pascual-Leone, 2014). Sharing this aesthetic, social experience can be expected to reduce power asymmetry. In part because the observed works of art may function as a bridging factor between researcher and museum director. The shared experience is expected to encourage spontaneous behaviour. Moreover, sensory experiences are elicited through the museum's atmospheric qualities, which in turn can be verbalized, adding to the richness of the research data. One last consideration for the specific museum place is that it's not "*outlined as an objective, static geocultural space-entity to simply walk through in order to reach the artworks but staged as a social event or process to participate in.*" (Thobo-Carlsen, 2016, p. 145). The important distinction here is that the museum environment doesn't provide the relevant context for this research – it is an integral part of the walking-interview experience.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

To answer present thesis' research question, I have included multiple methods of data collection. In doing so I aspired to answer the scientific call for triangulation (Bryman, 2012). The following paragraphs act as a justification towards chosen data collection methods. First, I elaborate on the specific walking-interview method. Next, I address the chosen interview strategy. Lastly, I expand on the included observational data.

3.4.1 WALKING-INTERVIEW

For this research, a combination between two specific walking-interview strategies was employed. In the *participatory approach* proposed by Emmel & Clark (2009), a researcher accompanies participating individuals through an area that is considered relevant to the related research topic (Kinney, 2017). The focal point to this approach is to “access the participant’s attitudes and knowledge about a specific geographical area” (p. 2) and deliver insights into the connection a participant has to their surroundings. According to Kinney (2017), the key take-away from this approach is that participants are in control of the interview: they decide which specific route is taken, and what they would like to show the researcher. During the interviews, for instance, I noticed that most museum directors immediately knew which specific works of art to show me, and consequently which route to take. In one case, the museum director did not even await any opening question, but simply commenced by sharing his affection for the museum at the hand of a specific architectural feature.

Chang, author of the *docent method* (2017), further explicates the relationship between researcher and participant. Within her approach, contrary to other formats of walking-interviews, participating individuals are regarded the experts (or docents) while the researcher is regarded as a novice, a follower and a learner (Kinney, 2017). That is to say, the researcher seeks to acquire new and relevant knowledge in the most openly manner. For this study I was interested in the museum director’s (1) specific knowledge that I did not possess, (2) connection towards their surroundings and (3) a way of clarifying their position. Thus, a combined *participatory docent* approach was warranted and employed. In fact, during every interview I felt like being guided by the museum director. Whenever I asked a question, for instance, museum directors immediately decided where they would prefer to answer the question, or at the hand of which specific work of art. Because of this, every interview felt like a conversation to which I was invited, though I was never fully in charge.

3.4.2 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Depending upon their specific purpose, walking-interviewers can employ different interview strategies. Most commonly, interviewers employ semi-structured interviews. This type of interview constitutes a balance between fully structured and unstructured interviews (Longhurst, 2003). By means of a *topic list* (Appendix 2), semi-structured interviews grant a researcher the luxury of preparation while maintaining flexibility. According to Longhurst (p. 145) semi-structured interviews “allow for an open response in the participant’s own words rather than a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ type answer”. Using a topic list specifically helped me to discuss arts-based interventions while leaving plentiful room for the museum directors’ personal thoughts, observations and contributions.

Additional factors of the semi-structured interview include the researcher’s ability to listen attentively and ask the right questions (Leech, 2002). This is important because it can make a participant feel at ease during the interview. To ensure a relaxed atmosphere I asked every participant which form of address they preferred. I also regularly summarized their statements. The purpose of this was threefold: it reassured the participants that I was listening attentively, allowed me to pose critical follow-up questions and, in case of misinterpretation, allowed participants to correct me.

A final consideration for researchers performing a semi-structured interview is question order, which should run from general to specific. Spradley (2016) advocates the so-called *grand tour* question as a starting point for this type of interview. This question asks participants to give a verbal tour of an environment they are familiar with (Leech, 2002). For example, the first question I asked museum directors was: “*What does a day as director X of museum X typically look like?*”. The benefit of such a question is that it gets participants to share information in quite a direct manner. This was important, as I noticed museum directors were so very keen to share their insights, that they sometimes digressed from relevant research topics. In these moments, I explicitly asked what the content of their statements meant in relation to their working environment.

3.4.3 OBSERVATIONS

To answer the scientific call for triangulation, I also performed critical observations. According to Maxwell (2013), observations are usually employed to describe a participant’s environment, behaviour and/or general happenings. The purpose, from a researcher’s point of view, is to understand the participant’s perspective and processes of

making meaning. In order to perform observations within a walking-interview, researchers need to heed additional considerations. For instance, walking, talking, observing and thinking simultaneously can distract from and ultimately undermine the research process (Evan & Jones, 2011). At the same time, experiencing the environment is a central focus point for this study. To cope with this quandary, a walking-interviewer needs to carefully consider his or her position and behaviour prior to a research.

While researchers usually note down observations during an interview, I was unable to do so simply because of the multitude of tasks at hand. To focus directly on my participants and their environment, I noted down any relevant observations after every interview. This was much more doable, as it simply required my memory skills. In fact, every train ride home from the museum provided the perfect opportunity to quietly and deliberately analyse the interview. Evan and Jones (2011) also posit that providing spatial context allows researchers to accurately locate discussions that add interpretational depth to the research data. Some walking-interviewers (Pink, 2007) for instance use video to engage their reader more directly into the shared experience between researcher and participant. For this particular study, using video to observe and capture the environment was beyond the bounds of possibility. However, I felt that the authors make a good point in providing relevant spatial context. While words can be used to describe a building or its atmosphere, I deemed them unable to fully embody my observations and sensory experiences. In some way, the content of these visual experiences outweighed my ability to express them verbally. In order to provide relevant spatial context, I have therefore translated observations of museum place into a visual image. According to Gravestock (2010, p. 1), drawing can act "*as a means to facilitate new encounters with the external world in order to reveal and create new embodied knowledge*". Aware of the subjective nature of this translational process, I emphasize that visualized observations were not treated as research data. However, I have included these drawings in the hope that they add to the reader's understanding and perception of an experienced place, as they may not be able to visit them. The included drawings, in other words, literally serve as an illustration.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

In total, nine interviews were conducted and successively transcribed. Transcribed data consists solely of interview content. Transcribed interviews were then coded in data analysis program Nvivo12.6. This program enables a researcher to familiarize and construct data while maintaining an open approach. Crucial to this understanding is that "*the software should follow the research design and not lead it*" (Brandão 2015, p. 492). Following this requirement thematic analysis was employed. This coding process allows researchers to search for themes or patterns in qualitative research data through repetitive examination (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Benefits of thematic analysis are relatively easy data accessibility and construction flexibility. Whenever facing a wide-ranging and complex dataset, thematic analysis can be exercised. The six described phases of thematic analysis with regard to this research are summarized below (Table 2).

This specific research explores four distinct arts-based interventions, which have acted as principal themes throughout the coding process. However, I have explicitly refrained from coding too categorically. In doing so I sought to prevent losing potentially relevant research data. This is a crucial consideration within thematic analysis: it is essential to provide relevant categorization while maintaining openness. For instance, I have coded interview data at the hand of people-based intervention processes. However, unexpected insights that were relevant to this specific intervention (e.g. propensity for self-development) were also included. Therefore some included codes relate directly to theoretical expectations, while other codes remain theoretically independent, yet were nonetheless paramount in order to answer the research question. All generated codes in relation to arts-based interventions were visualized in specific code trees (Appendix 4). Eventually not all codes were addressed in the results chapter as some did not directly contribute to answering the research question.

One last consideration for this methodological segment is that all interviews were conducted and transcribed in Dutch, as this is both the participants' and my own native language. Consequently, coding procedures were also performed in Dutch. In order to appeal this thesis' findings to a broader public, I have translated all relevant statements by museum directors into English. To prevent statements from getting lost in translation, thus losing potentially relevant research data, I have attempted to translate them as accurately and deliberately as possible. Sometimes this required literal translation of statements, while in other cases it required correct interpretation of that which museum directors were conveying in a non-literal sense. Again, frequently checking back with the directors increased my understanding, thus improving the translation of their statements.

Phase	Process description
Familiarizing yourself with your data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transcribing interview- and observational data - Re-reading data - Constructing initial insights
Generating initial codes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coding relevant features and overarching themes: exploring arts-based interventions, conditions and paradoxes for the organizational purpose of art - Evaluating relevance
Searching for themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collating codes into themes: four distinct arts-based intervention processes - Gathering all relevant data under these themes: the purpose of product-based interventions, how they fail, why they work
Reviewing themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Further specifying codes, judging the theme's ability to summarize codes: Are the four arts-based intervention processes relevant to construct relationships?
Defining & naming themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appointing specific attributes per theme - Clearly defining and naming each theme: people-, process-, product- and place-based intervention
Producing the report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Final data analysis - Checking the relationship between data, literature and research question - Providing a scholarly report

Table 2: *Phases of thematic analysis*, from Braun & Clarke, (2006, p. 87)

3.6 RESEARCH QUALITY

Inherent to any qualitative study is the question of reliability. As opposed to quantitative or experimental studies, qualitative research designs do not bear the advantage of pre-emptive threat elimination in the form of sampling strategies or statistical manipulation. Hence, it is the researcher's responsibility to acknowledge and justify threats to reliability. Bryman (2012) proposes four principles to ensure research quality: *credibility*, *transferability*, *dependability* and *confirmability*. In the following paragraphs I apply all reliability principles to the content of this research and concurrently formulate coping strategies. In doing so I aim to provide justification for any decisions made throughout the research process.

The concept of credibility refers to the literal truthfulness of a performed research. Think of for instance the truthfulness of statements proposed by either researcher or participant. In ensuring credibility then, a researcher is tasked with conscientious treatment of statements. To meet this requirement I have frequently paraphrased respondents during the interview. Checking back with participants allowed them to rectify any statements, and simultaneously rid the contents of the interviews from any interpretational filter. I have also attempted to ensure this research's credibility by providing an informed consent statement (Appendix 3). A signed statement namely guaranteed that participants were fully aware of the study's intent. Providing clear guidelines and expectations enables a researcher to accurately locate a focus point for discussion, while participants are aware of what to expect. The informed consent statement also clearly stated the independent nature of this research. Participants were therefore in no way, shape or form affected by its outcome. Ultimately, these precautions were aimed at reducing any risk of desirability bias (Grimm, 2010), which is detrimental to the credibility of a research.

Transferability of a research relates to the applicability of results to a broader context, also known as generalizability. Even though qualitative research is often conducted in a specific (non-transferable) context, scholars emphasize the importance of transferability to a broader context (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In order to estimate this research's transferability, I need to critically discuss its outcomes. Transferability, in this sense, is a subject of discussion rather than a preliminary concern. Notwithstanding this consideration, I have undertaken steps to ensure transferability. During the interviews, I directly asked museum directors what the use of arts-based interventions could be for organizations outside the museum sector. Thus, I implicitly stimulated museum directors to think about transferability before answering. That being said, I am aware of the specific context of this research, which unquestionably influences transferability. It is therefore my responsibility as a researcher to openly concretize

and justify decisions and actions throughout the research process. In doing so I invite the reader to perform their own critical evaluation of transferability.

Dependability of a qualitative research addresses the notion of repeatability. This means the research should generate similar results when repeated over time. Unfortunately, there is no way for me to test the dependability of this research as I was only able to perform it once. This is a common concern for qualitative research. In explicitly describing all relevant procedures throughout this research, however, I seek to cope with the dependability dilemma. In doing so I namely enable other researchers to reconduct this study.

The last principle of confirmability relates to the more commonly known concept of *researcher bias* in which “*data collection or analysis are distorted by the researcher’s theory, values, or preconceptions*” (Maxwell, 2008, p. 243). For instance, personal affinity towards art and frequent museum visits influences the content of this research. When attempting to mitigate researcher bias, Maxwell underlines that these preliminary values and attitudes should not be eliminated. Rather, it is important to acknowledge their influence. Inherent to an affinity for art is a degree of personal preference. I simply like looking at some art more than other art. In that same way I enjoy being in a certain environment more than other environments. Even though personal preference is not inherently detrimental to a study, it must not interfere with its outcome. Employing the participatory docent method helped limit the influence of personal preference in this study as I was essentially guided by the participants’ expertise. That is to say I sought not specific outcomes of this research, limiting any personal tendency to influence or distort research data.

3.7 ETHICS

Every qualitative researcher bears a responsibility to conscientiously prepare and perform a research. To this end, I have undertaken multiple steps. To begin with, I clearly specified my position as a researcher as well as the intent of this research to every participant. Approximately one week before the interview, participants received an informed consent statement, containing a summary of the research objective, expected topics and anonymity procedures. Doing this also allowed participants to contact me in case they have any questions or doubts concerning their participation. Before every interview, I asked participants once again whether they were aware of the statements’ content, allowing me to commence. As described in the consent form, all gathered data was treated confidentially, stored safely and removed after analysis.

Aside from general ethical procedures, the walking-interview requires additional considerations regarding participant safety. For instance, I needed to assess every participants’ physical capability to walk (Kinney, 2017). Also, public interviews can undermine the confidentiality of an interview, as passers-by shouldn’t be able to form an understanding of the conversation. One way to address this question of confidentiality is to ask participants whether they are comfortable discussing topics in public. In both walking-interviews that took place while the museum was open to the general public, I have done so. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic however, most Dutch art museums remained closed. In a curious turn of events, the museum director and I were mostly alone. In these instances the question of confidentiality was automatically resolved. Additional implications of the COVID-19 pandemic required me to guarantee every participants’ wellbeing. In order to meet this requirement, both the participant and I followed organizational guidelines: prescribing mandatory facemasks, walking routes and regular disinfection. In every situation social distancing was maintained.

4 RESULTS

To understand what specific insights into processes of arts-based management Dutch public sector art museum directors hold, I present interview and observational findings in the established conceptual order, relating to (1) people, (2) practices, (3) products and (4) places from the world of arts. In doing this I seek not only to describe the relevance of arts-based interventions for managerial development, but for organizational performance on the whole. Moreover, I intend to convey how arts-based interventions are valuable to managerial development in theoretically unexpected ways.

4.1 PEOPLE-BASED INTERVENTIONS

The upcoming paragraphs contain results surrounding the relationship between the manager and artist. In some cases the museum director entertained a definition of a hypothetical manager, while in other cases the relationship between the artist and museum director was directly constructed. To begin with, I explore one mentioned difference between the artist and manager. After that, multiple similarities and insights are discussed.

One difference between the artist and manager that was explicitly mentioned is how they enjoy different degrees of freedom: *“The artist has to think authentically, and follow their own path. In that sense, they enjoy considerably more freedom than any manager. Managers are assigned a lot more accountability”* – director 9. While accountability can act like a constraint, it also provides valuable boundaries. Too much freedom, that is, isn’t necessarily beneficial: *“artists can produce a lot of their own work and never become influential”* – director 9. In seeking the balance between autonomy and accountability, a dual-leadership approach appeared vital to museum directors: *“The artistic director has to respect boundaries. They have to envision a plan, which they then present to the business director. In the end, the work has to be completed. You can’t just be a dreamer. Then nobody will keep up with you”* – director 7. Therefrom emanates an important sense of reality, in which the artistic and business director keep each other in balance. This finding underlines how a dual-leadership approach actually helps cope with the increased complexity of cultural leadership (Booth et al., 2019).

The first overlapping trait between the manager and artist that was mentioned is a certain propensity for self-development. *“There’s so much to be learnt. That’s why I said: listen carefully and admit any mistakes. People who are capable of doing this are the best leaders, because it allows them to grow, to develop”* – director 9. This finding seems to underscore theoretical suggestions, claiming that artists are essentially guided by self-expansion (Schein, 2001). It also implicitly stresses the importance of an organizational context in which a capacity to learn and freedom to admit mistakes is embraced. One important factor that was mentioned to force self-development is the ability to disrupt. Artists, with their *“rampant creativity and incredible ability to think differently”* – director 2, are known to force disruption through art. One museum director hinted at the possible relevance for managers because *“being able to disrupt doesn’t have to become real in a material sense, but it provides valuable freedom of thought, it can make you happy, it can energize you”* – director 8. This finding implicitly indicates how the ability to disrupt can help managers break free from habituated organizational ways of seeing (Cohen & Jurkovic, 1997). Interestingly, another museum director mentioned the importance of visual intelligence in this process: *“We know IQ exists, and we know EQ, or emphatic intelligence, exists. But there’s also visual intelligence, which artists eminently possess”* – director 2. In line with Barry & Meisiek’s (2014) contention that studying artistic practice helps managerial development, this finding assumes that artists possess certain visual skills that are relevant for the organizational context.

Perhaps it is a result of this high visual intelligence that artists are credited for their capacity to catalyze new perspectives (Barry & Meisiek, 2010). *“A true artist is capable of producing something that has never existed before. Something that is completely new”* – director 3. Likewise, leadership oftentimes entails inspiring people to join an uncertain organizational mission. *“It is about inviting people on a journey. The organizational horizon needn’t be fixed, but there has to be some direction. You never know what will happen down the road. As a museum director you therefore have to be able to remain resourceful and provide people with perspective”* – director 4. The organizational mission can be a statement of perspective in the same way artists materialize their perspective through a work of art. In this process, museum directors emphasize how the organizational mission essentially comprises multiple sub-perspectives. *“Whenever analysing something, it is important to realize that it is simply your perspective on a matter. Other people may have a different perspective. For art this is obviously the case. Yet it’s also true for broader management practice. In the end, a manager has to weigh all existing perspectives and form a decision”* – director 3. Therefore, it is important for managers to *“submerge these perspectives in the organizational mission”* – director 3. One museum director summarized managing as: *“In some way, you have to profit from all these perspectives before making a decision. Maybe it is a process of combining that which you are capable of, and employing it at the right moment. In doing this you can feel whether change is needed or not. It is a game of feeling, scanning and moving”* – director 5. The benefit of integrating existing perspectives is that they accumulate to an overarching understanding while providing valuable individual processes as well: *“It is important to provide people in this journey with the appropriate flexibility and space for individual development. It is about combining talents and skills in a way that evokes synergy”* – director 4.

Another insight that museum directors produced for the relationship between the artist and manager is knowing what kind of type you are: *“Know yourself. When you know yourself, you can organize complete freedom within boundaries. That generates a lot of new ideas”*. – director 2. This museum director clarified his position at the hand of Mondrian’s work: *“You could call Mondrian a very dogmatic artist, seeing as he only used straight lines, squares and the primary colours in combination with black and white. But in doing so, in this limitation, he could do everything he ever wanted and has he actually never repeated himself”* – director 2. One way for managers to get to know who they are is, again, by exclaiming a specific organizational identity: *“It can be quite clarifying to vociferate ‘this is what we are, this is what we are not’. Doing this provides picket posts that grant absolute freedom within boundaries”* – director 2. After explaining this position, the director and I discussed how doing this resembles what

museums do in providing biographic or anecdotal labels at the side of a painting. They provide the reader with some information, yet do not clearly spell everything out there is to know about the painting. Rather, they serve as a way of intriguing the reader, allowing them to form their own narrative based on a few clues. In a similar way, exclaiming a general organizational identity can act as a way of inspiring individuals to develop their own perspective.

In the end, self-development, learning to weigh different perspectives and knowing who you are accumulates to an overarching managerial skill: the ability to play to one's strengths. This is arguably also a crucial factor in what distinguishes a good artist from a great one. I am reminded of a famous anecdote in art history, which I discussed with museum director 3, that illustrates this point. Henri Matisse was perhaps the most influential French painter of his lifetime (McMullen, 2021). His vivid use of colour and confident strokes (Fig. 3) crowned him leader of the Fauvist³ movement. As such, he exhibited his work at renowned art galleries across the world. Towards the end of his career, Matisse was diagnosed with abdominal cancer and suffered from impaired eyesight. Condemned to a life of immobility, the artist ultimately lost his ability to paint. Yet, where the artist was forced to surrender his brush, he picked up a pair of scissors instead: the single appliance left that he could wield. Relentless in the face of adversity he started producing cut-outs (Fig. 4). It should be imprinted that these works are no mere testament to Matisse's tenaciousness, they actually signify the most brilliant chapter in his artistic career (Museum of Modern Art, 2015). According to director 3, this anecdote serves as a crucial insight for any manager: *"To be able to maintain an influential grip on your art like this, signifies the years of experience. In the end he was able to produce art that he enjoyed, and that he valued, because he knew that it wasn't over. This is perhaps even the best art that he ever produced, because it returns to the essence"*.



Figure 3: Henri Matisse (1869-1954): *Woman with a Hat*, 1905. Oil on canvas, 80.65 x 59.69 cm. San Francisco Museum of Modern Art



Figure 4: Henri Matisse (1869-1954): *Blue Nude II*, 1952. Paper mounted on canvas, 116.2 x 88.9 cm. Musée national d'art moderne, Paris

³ See <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/f/fauvism> for a short introduction on Fauvism.

4.2 PRACTICE-BASED INTERVENTIONS

I now address insights and considerations concerning practice-based interventions. In short, doing art is considered less relevant than the process of studying art, which is actually deemed highly valuable to managerial development.

Most museum directors did not directly emphasize the importance of practice-based interventions. Whenever asked whether producing art could be useful for the organizational context, I noticed museum directors were a bit surprized. For some reason, they did not expect this specific question. While museum directors were very keen to discuss with me the benefits of a work of art, the conceptual process as a subject was left mostly untouched. Then again, within the museum context a finished work of art takes precedence over its conceptual process. In the end it is paintings and other visual works that are displayed. This also implicitly acknowledges that works of art are therefore more *easily* subject to observation. The conceptual process, in other words, is intangible and therefore perhaps ignored. Be that as it may, museum director 8 did explicitly mention how he always aims to, in a way, visualize the conceptional process because it adds to the beholder's understanding of a work. Another museum director speculated on the potential benefits of producing art, following a conversation about vulnerability that I will address shortly: *"Once again I think it's about vulnerability. If you get people to produce a work of art, like a painting or a drawing, and they open up about it, I feel like that could help people"* – director 6. To be clear, this museum director did not speak from experience. During this conversation we were entertaining what the physical act of producing art could mean for people within organizations.

From the interviews did become quite apparent the relevance of studying art: *"Training is the basis for a lot of things. Studying art provides exercises in recognizing and analysing patterns. I think that is a valuable skill"* – director 3. Especially analytical skills seem relevant for an organizational context. *"In the end it is about analysis, the same way you analyse visitor numbers or financial statements. That is a parallel to studying art"* – director 3. One requirement for studying art that a museum director mentioned is taking enough time. *"With all due respect, before you can even begin to understand a painting's composition, light or brushwork you need at least half an hour"* – director 3. These insights underline the findings of Cohen & Jurkovic (1997) and Adler (2006) who already argued how studying art develops critical organizational skills. However, theory suggests that organizational benefits to studying art are in part derived from discussing observations. Another benefit of studying art is how it forms a connection between the object and beholder. *"The funny thing about art is that people get attached to it. Whenever art becomes a part of an environment, people start to study it, question it, talk about it"* – director 9. One museum director was convinced of the far-reaching effects of critical observational skills, following a conversation about how analysing a painting can foster inspiration: *"I am convinced that, whenever you can truly look at this painting, you will enjoy sitting in those chairs more than you did before"* – director 6. The relevance of process-based interventions is hence ambiguous. According to some museum directors, doing art may yield organizational benefits, although they cannot attest to its value on the basis of experience. On the other hand, museum directors emphasize that studying art has helped them across a range of organizational endeavours.

4.3 PRODUCT-BASED INTERVENTIONS

The following section addresses the relevance of product-based interventions. Relating to this topic I entertain benefits, insights and conditions. To conclude I provide a metaphorical example of how product-based interventions should be employed within the organizational domain. Results indicate a crucial distinction between an individual and collective art experience, as well as the organizational benefits of discussing art.

The classic question 'what is art?' was in most cases deflected by museum directors, who were keen to state its purpose instead. Yet I did not feel this deflection rose from an inability to provide a satisfying answer. Rather, I felt museum directors were simply quite invested in art's societal purpose. Definitions, when given, oftentimes remained personal, while their purpose always involved some bigger picture. Herefrom grew my understanding that it was perhaps more relevant to discuss why art is important on a macro level. According to director 4 art is not strictly relevant to artistic domains, but is indeed a pillar for a successful society: *"In its essence, art revolves around imagination. I believe that is what makes us human. Eventually, that imagination, albeit fantasy or inspiration, translates to creativity. That creativity then encourages innovation and entrepreneurship, which are the cornerstones of our modern methodological society. I guess without imagination, we simply wouldn't have the world we live in today"*. To an extent this quote stresses the relationship between art and science, in which both can be considered the product of a linking factor: imagination. Museum director 9 pointed out how a society will keep producing and experiencing art simply because our *"need for imagination is enormous"*.

In the process of experiencing art, multiple museum directors emphasized a distinction between the individual and collective experience. Or rather, how it is simultaneously both: *"The beauty of art, to me, is how it is a hyper individual, yet collective experience. When we go look at art, in a few minutes, you will see something*

different than I will, even though the picture is the same for us both. The way art appeals to our meaning-making apparatus just differs: that is exactly its strength. This is also a parallel to the organizational context. I don't believe in laws. I believe in intentions. And based on our collective examination of intentions we come to fruitful endeavour" – director 6. Complementary to this insight is how the individual experience in turn aggregates to a collective understanding. This finding points to theoretical suggestions claiming that art can act as a means of shared organizational understanding (Ryman et al., 2009). According to other museum directors, the answer to successful aggregation is discussion. In fact, the very importance of art is how it facilitates conversation: *"Because of art, people get to ask questions, to feel amazed, to feel joy. Somehow, art mentions exactly the things you wish to say, but can't yourself. That is exactly what art does: it negotiates the non-negotiable"* – director 5. The key understanding from this insight is that discussion yields not just organizational understanding, but forms a basis of mutual human respect: *"People have always felt the need to share, to show and to discuss our great struggles, desires and dilemmas. In doing this, art enables to recognize, understand and respect other human beings"* – director 5. Organizational benefits to product-based interventions then, to a degree, stem from the overlapping human interconnectedness it depends upon. Concurrently, museum directors hint at the use of teambuilding exercises through art, because they allow for sharing an individual experience in a collective of individuals: *"Go look at art together. Come up to each other and ask what other people see, and share with them what you experience. I think that is the organizational value of art: it is a vehicle for a constructive dialogue."* – director 6. There are however a few considerations to performing this constructive dialogue.

Discussing art isn't just a process of sharing observations, it requires attentive consideration. An important condition for art to work as a product-based intervention is taking the whole of it seriously: *"The biggest threat to the effective impact of art is a group that is too insecure to express how they feel towards that which they see or feel. Every experience and emotion should be respected. For art to work then, these boundaries need to be clear and taken seriously"* – director 6. In this process, vulnerability takes a key position. Not only should it be ensured, it should be encouraged. *"In the end, it is all about vulnerability. Without it, there is no use in discussion"* – director 6. That same director also indicated that our insecurity to share emotions originates from cynicism and an organizational sense of perfection. *"It is hard for art to work because people are so cynical. Whenever a subject touches upon emotion, or feeling, people are quick to poke fun at it"* – director 6. We should avoid such attitudes, principally because this whole process is not about perfection: *"It's a learning process. Whether you are an expert or not is irrelevant. What is important is that art impresses you, it questions your beliefs"* – director 3. One museum director explicitly mentioned that taking a conscious moment of consideration before observing a work of art can help facilitate this open attitude. *"I love the saying 'to feed your eyes' because it is so important. When you do this, when you are open to this, it becomes effortless to be touched by art"* – director 6. In that moment of perception, you therefore need to stand still for a minute, be aware, and open up. Another way to ensure this open approach when collectively discussing art is professional supervision: *"It is crucial to take these conditions seriously. Skilful supervision could help in this process"* – director 6.

Results so far indicate the usefulness of discussion as well as its conditions. In turn, discussing art induces analogical reasoning that sheds new light on organizational aspects and generates crucial insights. In this process, literature mentions the importance of metaphors. Interview results indicate that museum directors take a more contrasting stance towards the use of metaphors. On the one hand, museum directors mention its arbitrariness. To them, metaphors are not exclusive to the world of arts, therefore irrelevant to organizational performance. On the other hand, the organizational importance of metaphors as mentioned by Cornelissen & Clarke (2014) was underlined by another museum director: *"Whenever explaining something that isn't here yet, that lies in the future, metaphors help me to explain my position to others. In this process art is crucial as it provides so many metaphors"* – director 4. Metaphors are also a way of understanding and embracing how people develop different narratives. One museum director relayed an anecdote in which he discussed the metaphorical value of a work of art with another person. *"I noticed how he and I interpreted this image completely differently. Perhaps my view is shaped too much already by being a museum director. But this moment highlighted how art belongs to the artist and the observer. Your perception of a work of art allows you to construct your own narrative"* – director 6. Metaphors can thus help to construct an individual narrative to share in a collective. This quote implicitly also indicates that sharing metaphors can help break habituated patterns of perception.

Building on the idea of constructing a narrative through metaphors, there is one painting that serves as a metaphor for the whole product-based intervention process. Towards the end of one interview, a museum director and I stumbled upon "Groupshow" by Marlene Dumas (Fig. 5). Remarkably, we immediately saw its metaphorical relevance. I pointed out how it is a depiction of equal vulnerability. Its voyeuristic representation is a testament to how art demands vulnerability, to literally expose oneself. Yet they all stand equal, on the same platform, indicating

no difference in hierarchy. In some way the differing skin tones only seem to imply that exact equality. After explaining my position, director 6 added: *"It is a depiction of that individual, yet collective experience. They all share a similar viewpoint, yet each of them sees individually. Somehow, they seem very relaxed, unbothered. I feel groups should look at art the way these ladies look at whatever it is they're looking at"*. Moreover, I noticed when analysing and discussing this painting we were doing exactly that which we had argued to be crucial to the workings of product-based interventions. We both saw something individually, and shared our insights that aggregated to a collective understanding and appreciation of the painting. All the while in this process we were equal. I was undaunted by the director's overwhelming expertise, and felt my observations were just as valuable. Ultimately, talking about the painting and being vulnerable in this process formed a connection between us, as we both recognized something on the basis of our initial individual experience. Yet this moment also signified another important product of discussing art: the opportunity to learn from each other.



Figure 5: Marlene Dumas (1993): *Groupshow*, 1993. Oil on canvas, 100 x 300 cm.

4.4 PLACE-BASED INTERVENTIONS

To conclude I provide interview results and observations relating to museum place being a possible fourth intervention. Firstly, I mention results relating to museum place as an intervention in its own right. Secondly, I address results in line with the assumption that museum place is an environment that hosts acknowledged arts-based interventions. As mentioned this chapter will include drawings in an attempt to provide relevant spatial context. In general, museum directors recognize museum place's direct and indirect capacities as an arts-based intervention.

To begin with, I would like to share the observation that every museum building I have encountered has an undeniable 'sense of self'. The specific architecture, in combination with the location in the city network, awakened an unending sense of wonder in me. Each and every walk up to the museum was characterized by a renewed sense of curiosity, as I never knew exactly what to expect. I mention this because it is a relevant statement to the unique character of museum place. Every single building was different, beautiful in its own right, yet according to entirely different sets of rules. For example, Bonnefanten Museum (Fig. 6) is an impressive modern building that abruptly emerges from the horizon. Its undeniably interesting and eccentric structure forces itself upon the skyline, demanding recognition from the beholder. Teylers Museum (Fig. 7) is an equally impressive building, yet in an entirely different sense. Its monumental appearance immediately indicates that it's a product from a different time. Separately this building could be a grand statement, however in some way the neighbouring buildings add to its gentility. Its intrinsically unique features are less obvious in this avenue-like composition which only seems to add to its profoundness. And so, as every museum building had an unmistakable impact on me, I wondered how it would influence the director.

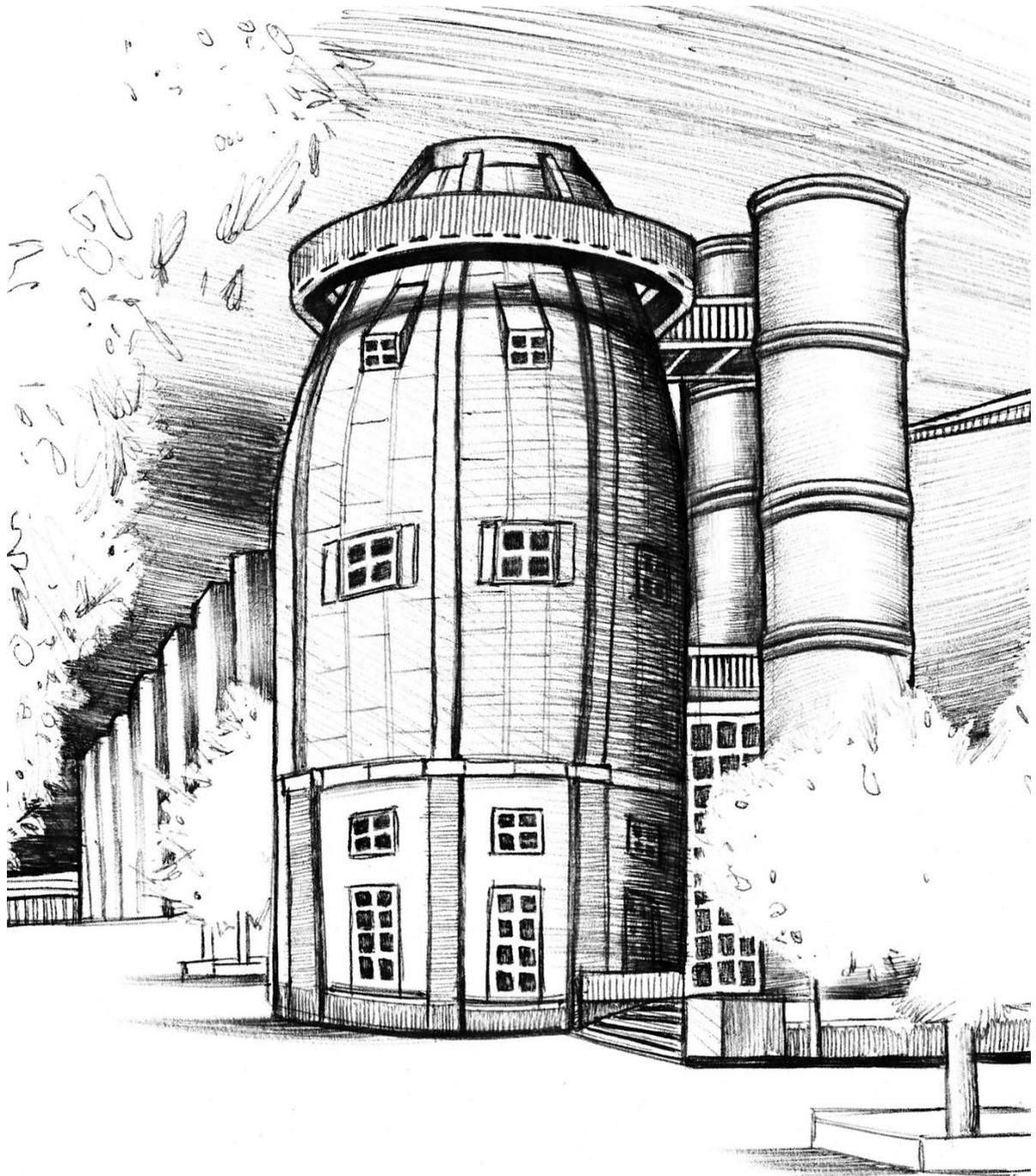


Figure 6: Sketch of Bonnefanten Museum, 2021. Pen on paper, 29,7 x 21 cm.



Figure 7: Sketch of Teylers Museum, 2021. Pen on paper, 29,7 x 21 cm.

Interview results indicate that almost all museum directors effectively recognize and appreciate the transformative character of the museum: *"It is a certain enthusiasm that is noticeable among all the people that work here. It is almost intangible, or implicit. You unconsciously notice these environmental influences, but they are real. This museum has a certain 'Spirit of Place'"* – director 3. Museum director 4 mentioned something similar, which was called a 'sense of connection': *"Every museum has its own atmosphere, or culture. Resultantly people are very much connected to the place itself"*. Another museum director also directly emphasized the explicit and unique properties of museum place: *"The aesthetics of this building are very much noticeable. It's highly intimate. Even the halls differ in size, yet they are never too big or too small. In a lyrical sense you could almost compare the rhythm of this building to the beating of a heart"* – director 2.

The effects of museum place were underlined in different ways by museum directors. Director 3 mentioned how museum place has the capacity to elicit valuable organizational benefits: *"I solemnly believe that architecture, but also the interior, allows for a statement that [whenever done right] can become more than the sum of its parts. In turn everybody will be lifted by this atmosphere, and find daily inspiration"*. To a degree, this atmosphere is a product of daylight: *"In some ways, organizations can be draining. Yet this museum energizes, it makes sure you leave happier than you went in. This has also to do with daylight"* – director 2. In fact, almost every director highly

valued the workings of clear daylight. In some cases even, the pleasurable benefits of clear daylight are conscientiously integrated into the architecture. In Kunstmuseum The Hague, for example, the windows are very high up into the wall, almost touching the ceiling (Fig. 8). In effect daylight doesn't just illuminate the room, it trickles down in layers, each one of them falling differently upon the multidimensional interior.

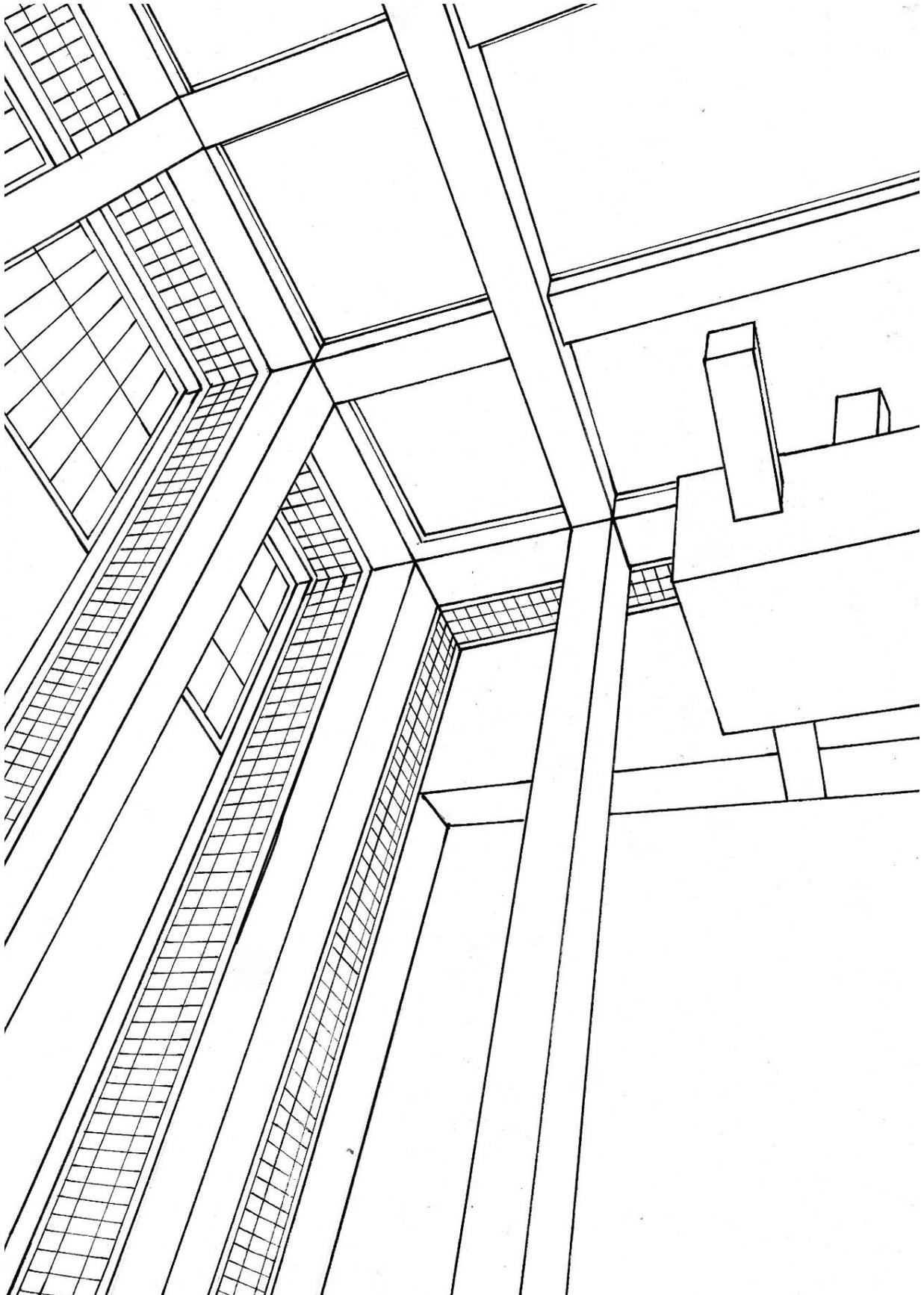


Figure 8: *Windows at Kunstmuseum The Hague*, 2021. Pen on paper, 29,7 x 21 cm.

There are some considerations to the effects of museum place however. To begin with, “you can’t just do anything. There has to be a certain philosophy. Without any purpose, there is no use” – director 3. This insight acknowledges the importance of knowing who (or what) you are, as described in the preceding paragraphs. The importance of knowing yourself is also directly acknowledged: “It’s about organizational values. You have to think very consciously: What values do we want to propagate, and how do we visualize these in our building?” – director 3. As mentioned the museum environment can be intangible. This consideration can complicate any effort to analyse the workings of museum place. Yet it can help to discuss the possible effects, as one interview indicated that intangibility also emanates from a general tendency to ignore the effects of atmosphere: “I feel like we do not really discuss Spirit of Place, while I think it is essential for so many organizations. Why would you want to be the so-manieth white cube office?” – director 3.

Museum place, according to museum directors, acts directly as an arts-based intervention because it has the capacity to influence its beholders in numerous ways. However, another reason for thinking so is that museum place is an environment that hosts known processes of arts-based management. For example, director 8 mentioned his responsibility to “in some way or form visualize the making process of the artist”. In this specific instance, museum place becomes an environment through which people-based and process-based interventions become visible, thus subject to analysis. Visualizing this process doesn’t spell out what the beholder must think of the work of art, but it does provide a deeper understanding, hence possibly affection for it. In fact, during one interview this is exactly what happened. While discussing the meaning of a particular work of art with the director, a woman was standing closeby, overhearing our conversation. After some time she dared approach us and said: “I’m so glad I heard you talk. I was in here with my husband but he didn’t really understand it so he left. I somehow was intrigued by the painting, but hearing you discuss it has completely changed my opinion of it”. This woman openly stated her initial disliking to the work of art, yet admitted that the extra insights had helped reshape her evaluation of the work. This was quite an intriguing moment that highlighted how art appreciation can be encouraged through exposure to additional information. In turn this perhaps fosters openness and vulnerability that is essential to the effective workings of product-based interventions.

Aside from visualizing the artist’s production process, a museum’s core responsibility is to display artworks. These artworks are then subject to discussion, which fosters various organizationally relevant insights. Especially because museums oftentimes display intriguing, thought-provoking or sometimes even critical works of art, people are liable discuss them. While walking through the exhibition at Bonnefanten, for instance, the works adorning the spacious and illuminated halls were these eerily bizarre, yet comfortingly beautiful statures (Figures 1, 2 & 3). Intriguing, to say the least. Notwithstanding my personal appraisal of them, however, the reason why I mention this experience is that their confrontational nature fully denied any attempt to ignore them. Consequently, this made me want to examine them, to understand them. Their mere presence, in other words, forced my evaluation of them. This experience signifies how art’s provoking nature drives people to form an attachment to it. Museum director 4 mentions this also happens with the people working within the museum: “people are connected to this place because of its atmosphere. The atmosphere is largely determined by the works of art. You oftentimes see an immense connection to the specific museum collection”.

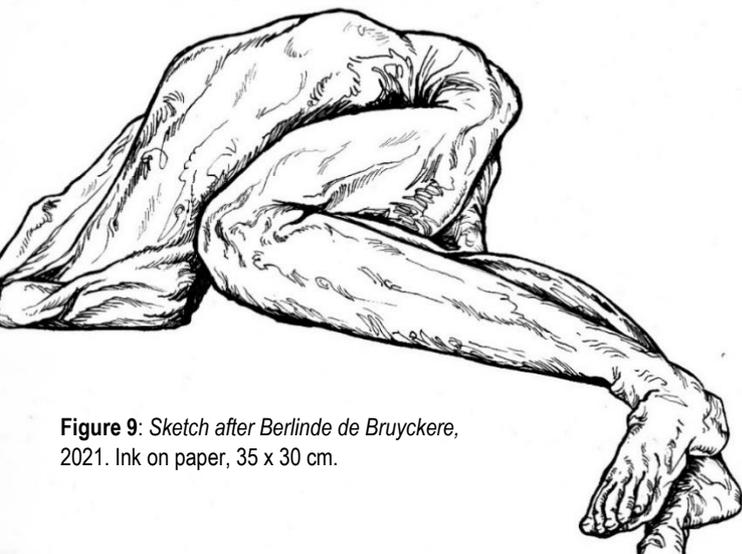


Figure 9: Sketch after *Berlinde de Bruyckere*, 2021. Ink on paper, 35 x 30 cm.



Figure 10: Sketch after *Berlinde de Bruyckere*, 2021. Ink on paper, 29,7 x 21 cm.



Figure 11: Sketch after *Berlinde de Bruyckere*, 2021. Ink on paper, 35 x 30 cm.

Yet the museum environment doesn't just display singular works of art, which in turn foster insights and realizations. Some works of art actually become *part* of the environment. For instance, one stairway in Kunstmuseum The Hague (Fig. 12) displays an artwork of American painter Sol LeWitt (1928-2007). The flow and harshness of the strokes guide the individual down the staircase in an almost vortex-like manner. It is this specific example that illustrates how museum place acts as an environment that hosts processes of arts-based management. Ultimately, one could argue these processes will intertwine, as art and place become inseparable. This integration pleads in favour of space aestheticization (De Molli et al., 2020) in which an environment can be intentionally made up of art.

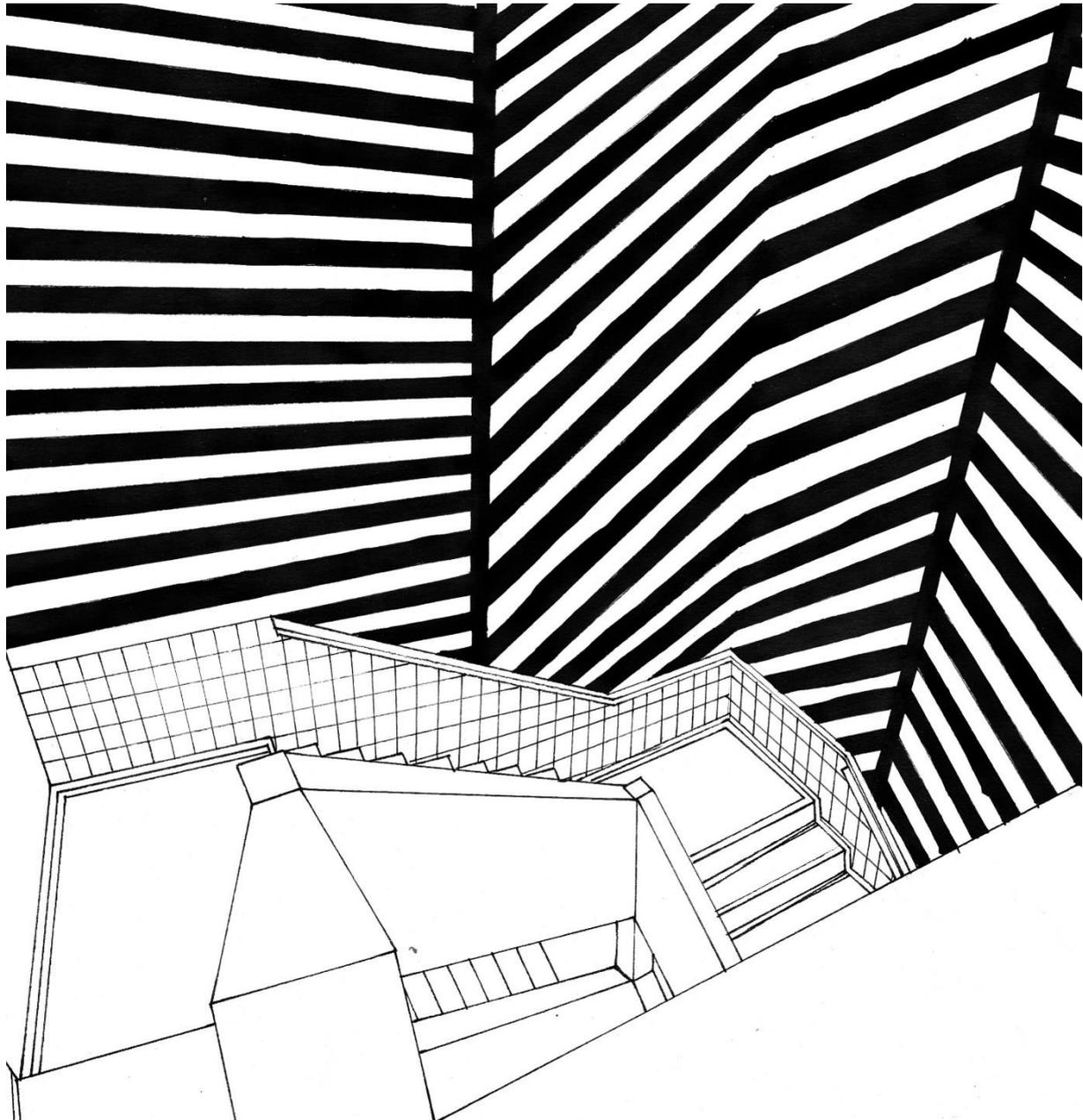


Figure 12: Sketch of staircase at Kunstmuseum after Sol LeWitt 2021. Pen on paper, 29,7 x 21 cm.

All in all, museum directors directly acknowledge the transformative character of museum place. For most directors daylight takes a crucial position in transformative processes that ultimately lead to a certain Spirit of Place. Be it through deliberate discussion of artworks or more intangible influences, results indicate that museum place acts as a fourth process of arts-based intervention. Insights and considerations concerning all arts-based intervention processes are summarized in the table below (Table 3).

Intervention	Insights	Considerations
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Artist and managers share a need for self-expansion - Both artists and managers should accumulate perspectives - Developing skills allows a manager to play to one's strength 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Artist and manager enjoy different degrees of freedom - Dual-leadership approach influences management practice - Experience is an important explanatory factor to skill-development
Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Studying art develops analytical skills - Studying art fosters inspiration - Processes hint at the possible relevance of teambuilding exercises through art 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Studying art is a deeply individual experience - Conceptual process is often intangible - Impact is easily ignored - Doing-arts-based intervention perhaps irrelevant
Product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yields valuable personal and organizational understanding - Metaphorical reasoning helpful in constructing a narrative - Products hint at the possible relevance of teambuilding exercises through art - Importance of discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demands vulnerability - Avoid cynicism in case of discussion - Possibly requires supervision
Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Museum place acts as environment for arts-based management processes - Developing 'Spirit of Place' can be helpful to organizations - Daylight is crucial according to museum directors - Attachment between individual and environment happens through art 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concept of place can be intangible - Place as intervention requires central idea - Concept of place remains undiscussed

Table 3: Summarized results on arts-based intervention processes

5 DISCUSSION

The results section reveals that certain arts-based interventions take precedence over others. With respect to this understanding, it is necessary to describe precisely *why* and *how* some interventions outweigh others. The following paragraphs therefore address points of discussion for each distinct arts-based intervention process. To conclude I acknowledge shortcomings of this research and provide suggestions for future research.

The leadership as an art discourse discusses how managers have a great deal to learn from artists. In reality however, this relationship is more complex than it seems. One reason for this is that both individuals operate in sometimes entirely different circumstances. It is important to remember this condition as it is an explanation for the differences in experiential sense-making processes (Springborg, 2010). While artists bring with them valuable insights, their attitudes and beliefs are perhaps less readily adoptable. Results also indicate a mutual propensity for self-development. Intuitively this feels like a more readily adoptable skill, as it isn't necessarily impeded by accountability. In the spirit of critical evaluation however, the Matisse anecdote highlights how most similarities between the artist and manager are moderated by another, perhaps more important factor: experience.

The doing-arts-based intervention was considered almost wholly irrelevant by museum directors. Useful as this insight might be in the sense that it therefore warrants no further attention, I must also acknowledge that the museum director was, in the first place, perhaps the wrong individual to ask. Even though museum directors could have sufficiently familiarized themselves with artistic practice over the course of their career, the artists themselves remain authoritative on this subject. In fact, the most elaborate and to-the-core conversations I had with museum directors were about product-based interventions. This insight might designate that product-based interventions should receive priority over people-based and practice-based interventions, yet this is possibly only indicative of who it is you ask. It is perhaps logical that product-based interventions seem popular among directors as it is the intervention relating most closely to their daily work. Be that as it may, the end products of doing art ultimately end up on a museum wall, presenting the perfect opportunity for studying art. Consequently museum directors were

excited to elaborate on the benefits of studying art. Most museum directors mentioned how studying art has helped them observe marginal or detailed aspects of management practice. In general they underline the importance of seeing, in line with theoretical expectations (Adler, 2006; Cohen & Jurkovic, 1997). Herefrom also arises the understanding that the benefits of studying art are not merely exclusive to managerial development, but can actually affect organizational performance on the whole.

As mentioned, product-based interventions were most heavily emphasized by museum directors. I noticed how museum directors implicitly all took a similar position in their belief that a work of art has the most contemplative power. The main insights for product-based interventions are the importance of sharing an individual experience in a collective, and accordingly the importance of discussion. Whenever sharing any thoughts or opinions regarding a work of art, vulnerability takes a key position. Opening up and embracing other people's thoughts is critical to the success of product-based interventions. One detrimental factor to their success is cynicism, which should be avoided at all costs. Professional supervision could be a practical tool to solve this issue, though I personally feel that this might serve an additional purpose. Besides cynicism, the inability to understand a work of art can undermine one's ability to open up to its benefits. Some individuals simply do not understand a work of art, due to which end they can feel insecure or unbothered. But the result can be that the benefits of art completely elude them. The previously mentioned anecdote in which a museum visitor's valuation of a work was influenced after being provided additional information illustrates this point. Discussing a work of art can be critical to understanding it, which is in turn critical to any personal valuation. I am convinced that discussion, perhaps through professional supervision, adds to the individual's understanding of art and therefore opens them up to its benefits.

Museum directors almost unanimously underlined the unique and valuable character of museum place. Direct effects of museum place were mentioned, as museum director 2 emphasized how the museum building alone boosts daily organizational performance. Moreover, the museum as specific place acts as an environment that hosts arts-based intervention processes. Therefore, organizations outside the museum sector could consider adopting museum-like attitudes to improve organizational performance. Present thesis provides multiple viable reasons as to why they should, however I feel the most relevant argument is: why shouldn't they? To the critical empirical reader these results may seem trivial. Of course it is important to take art seriously for it to yield the desired organizational outcomes. And surely, displaying a few paintings throughout the office halls doesn't hurt anybody. Yet the biggest current discrepancy in arts-based management is the fact that copious amounts of evidence⁴ suggest the importance of art in organizational development, yet so little organizations successfully incorporate arts-based methods. From this understanding arises the question not if, but when organizations will come to see art's organizational potential. Admittedly, the argument can be raised that museums display 'highbrow' works of art that are expensive or hard to come by. However, this needn't be a hindrance. Museum director 5 mentioned that *"there are multiple, easy ways to make the world around us a more beautiful place"*. For instance, organizations could employ the help of business art services to reap the fruit of art's labour while minimizing effort and expense. These businesses provide an art rental service, that allows other organizations to decorate office buildings for a set monthly fee. In fact, museum director 1 already mentioned a similar undertaking: *"I have led certain programmes in the past to take art outside the museum walls and introduce other organizations to it"*. This is therefore not an entirely new concept, yet the pressing organizational agenda has side lined the museum to further develop this idea. Employing business art services then seems like a relatively low effort manner of employing arts-based management. As for processes of space aestheticization, one could argue that museum buildings are specifically constructed around a certain set of principles, with the corresponding means at their disposal. While this is true in most cases, organizations outside the museum sector shouldn't simply give up on processes of space aestheticization. One argument for which is that again, achieving some Spirit of Place might not require more than just attentive consideration and a few interventions. Talking about these concepts, as well as propounding a certain organizational identity can bolster processes of space aestheticization. Another argument for thinking so is that sensory experiences elicited through atmosphere are more than a mere product of architecture. However, the concept of space aestheticization is a relatively new phenomenon, and therefore warrants further theoretical consideration.

5.1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

While I have subjected the content of this research to the four principles of reliability proposed by Bryman (2012), a few research constraints and theoretical acknowledgements deserve recognition. First of all, transferability of this thesis is impeded by fact that all participating museums are public sector organizations that receive government

⁴ See Lisi and Nguyen (2017) for an overview of psychological and health benefits of art in the workplace.

subsidies. While they make a significant effort towards generating their own revenue, about half their budget consists of tax money. Resultantly, museums have certain means at their disposal that allow them to perhaps invest differently than private sector organizations. This is not to say they can invest the money recklessly. In fact, director 7 mentions how the awareness of spending tax-payer money can actually burden investment decisions, especially during a worldwide pandemic. Nevertheless, government funding does to an extent influence risk-taking behaviour as illustrated by museum director 8, who firmly posited that “*Money always follows a decision. Never in the reverse order*”. In line with organization characteristics, I would like to acknowledge that museum employees also share a specific and unique relation to their work environment. Transferability is therefore perhaps also impeded by the fact that all museum employees display certain levels of intrinsic motivation to work for a cultural institute. This was acknowledged by multiple directors who mentioned some unmistakable similarities among their employees. In turn this shared attitude affects organizational performance: “*knowledge, in combination with enthusiasm and gut, almost always yields the desired outcome*” – director 8. Aware of transferability impediments, I express doubts surrounding my ability to analytically classify arts-based interventions. Based on Berthoin Antal’s definition of arts-based intervention, analytical classification seemed plausible. Whenever discussing them, however, I noticed how arts-based processes are more fluid, without clear distinction. From this observation follows a critique on the chosen theoretical approach. Should the acts of producing, studying and discussing art be considered a continuous process rather than a phased one? In all honesty, I haven’t the answer. Yet it does raise a causality problem. If arts-based management is in fact a more continuous process, the outcomes of certain interventions may in turn be attributed to the wrong origins. These acknowledgements add to the realization that this research perhaps brings about more questions than it produces answers. Even though I was adamant to provide concrete and valuable insights to arts-based management, I have now come to see the gravity of this task, just as Daved Barry and Stefan Meisiek had already mentioned. Inability to fully grasp the implications of arts-based management is perhaps inherent to the topic of art, yet it should be noted nonetheless that I, as a researcher, had influence over these ambiguities.

5.2 FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

Fortunately, future research could further attempt to mitigate these shortcomings. In this sense, present thesis functions not as the end- but starting point for new inquiry. For instance, future research could investigate the benefits of teambuilding exercises through art. Have individuals, as described, share that individual experience in a collective, and closely observe what happens. This could provide valuable practical evidence for arts-based management. Museums themselves could contemplate further developing organizational programmes to bridge the gap between art and organizations outside the museum sector. Perhaps museums should consider developing some art-exchange programme of their own. Surely their expertise and vast collection allows them to envisage such undertakings. Furthermore, processes of space aestheticization are a relatively new phenomenon. Researchers could therefore conduct qualitative experiments to test the effects of space aestheticization on performance, the same way museum place elicits behaviour among its constituents. Whenever doing so, research could investigate the topic of arts-based management as a more continuous, subjective and open-ended process in which lessons are extracted less distinctly. Ultimately, these propositions for future research complement the understanding that there is no best-practice approach to studying arts-based management: “*What is significant here are the many different co-creative perspectives for future studies, in the awareness that there are no correct or single approaches for and to ABM*” - Chemi & Du (2018, p. 33).

6 CONCLUSION

The organizational relevance of arts-based interventions is simultaneously recognized and ambiguous. It seems no longer the question if, but how they become organizationally relevant. Currently this nuance constitutes a considerable dilemma within arts-based management. In many ways, the attempt to provide a step-by-step account of the considerations surrounding arts-based interventions is so ambitious and time-consuming that it hardly ever takes precedence over organizational status quo. The museum director, however, seems to hold a suitable position to deepen our understanding of arts-based management. This is largely due to their extensive knowledge of the subject as well as their prominent managerial position. It is for this exact reason that this thesis' main research question read: *"What insights and considerations into four distinct arts-based management processes do Dutch public sector art museum directors hold?"*. According to them, successful arts-based management starts at the collective understanding and celebration of a few considerations. Perhaps the most important of these is that all interventions, to a degree, have the power to break habituated organizational patterns. This insight adds to the notion that organizations should not be considered objective realist spaces but, like the museum, environments that host processes of making meaning and change. In these defamiliarization processes, vulnerability takes a key position, while cynicism should be avoided. Knowing what you are, as organizations or manager, was another crucial insight that directors provided. Practically, organizations could consider teambuilding exercises through art, or employing business art services. The museum also presents a plausible argument for the effect of a fourth, formerly overlooked, arts-based intervention: place. At heart, these insights and considerations intend to provide penetrating answers to the newly presented complexities marking today's organizational field. Any further theoretical attempt at deepening our understanding of arts-based management could consider these insights a starting point, as they clearly delineate requirements and hindrances.

What isn't so clearly delineated however, is art. Over the past centuries, scholars and philosophers have shared an interest in the laborious effort of defining art. So far, its multidimensional nature has sabotaged most attempts to capture the concept in an encompassing manner. Classical, contemporary, Marxist, feminist, conventionalist, institutional, historical, functional and even hybrid definitions of art pass in revue (Adajian, 2018). This plethora of definitions bestows upon us one insight: art is essentially personal. I consequently acknowledge and embrace the fact that this study, like art, is subject to opinion and discussion. Resultantly I cannot defend its absolute truthfulness. Then again, this was never the purpose. At the start of this thesis I entertain an aphorism suggesting that a certain endeavour is only successfully concluded whenever the author dares resign influence. Now, at its end, I have come to see that this research acquires its meaning exactly *because* it is subject to opinion:

"Art invites tastes, considerations, and interpretations. It is its concurrence of tangibility and mystery which draws our minds and attention to it, and which makes it a hotbed for seeing more and seeing differently, without prescribing at all what will be seen, why, or how" (Barry & Meisiek 2014, p. 135).

To me, the content of this quote is equally applicable to the whole of scientific endeavour. Would science be science if it served only as a means of uniform understanding, prescribing absolute truths, in which no room for mystery or seeing differently remains? I recognize that I hereby question the bedrock of contemporary science. Still, I ask my reader to contemplate this: doesn't science particularly *thrive* when it is questioned, discussed, refuted and misinterpreted? Isn't science inherently personal? I would argue so. In fact, these intrinsically subjective and mysterious properties are, to me, the basis of compelling human interaction. In spirit of this (perhaps too) philosophical train of thought, permit me to end with a quote by a man that was, in so many ways, ahead of his time.

“Science and art sometimes can touch one another, like two pieces of the jigsaw puzzle which is our human life”

M.C. ESCHER

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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