



## BRIDGING THE GAP

### Mediating processes between artists and traditional companies

Elena Tammaro, art director at Creaa Snc

#### Abstract

*Non-technological innovation, including design, as well as culture-based creativity, are important tools to boost the economy's competitiveness and growth, thus improving the quality of life for the citizens of Europe<sup>1</sup>*

Here the words of Margarete Schramböck, Austrian Federal Minister for Digital and Economic Affairs, in the introduction of the second European Design Report of national facts and figures from 37 European countries. **These facts show that design and creativity are an economic asset in Europe.**

As stressed in the next long-term EU budget 2021-2027, to increase **matching between creativity and traditional industries is a leading theme**. EU research agencies confirm that where businesses need to innovate and improve to keep themselves competitive, creativity and enhancement of processes are essential.

Culture-based creativity has so many layers of information that can be an endless source of inspiration into cross-sectoral interaction. **The spontaneous, intuitive, singular and human nature of cultural creation enriches society.**

**However, the business world and the arts world speak different languages.**

**Intermediaries are the answer of bridging these two worlds together and the key for the success of ABI in complex organizations.**

**Intermediary's contribution is multiple:**

- **Making prior assessment to evaluate the context,**
- **choosing the artists, as you choose the tool for an intervention,**
- **taking care of the stakeholders involved in the process.**

**The mediator in ABI has developed in the professional figure of the producer.** The role of the producer is not only mediating the relationship between artists and entrepreneurs, but is actually an entrepreneur itself.

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<sup>1</sup> [European Design Report 2.0](#), realizzato per [BEDA](#), The Bureau of European Design Association. Margarete Schramböck Federal Minister for Digital and Economic Affairs



**As producers, we can count on practical experiences developed within Creaa**, an Italian CCI – cultural and creative industry -, in the last seven years.

**Creaa is a business company**, based in the North East of Italy that developed an original format for art-based interventions in organizations and offers communication and project management services to the creative sector.

Based on our experience, here are the **10 rules for mediating an Art based Intervention**.

- 1) Listen
- 2) Don't listen
- 3) Focus on the message
- 4) Choose the artist
- 5) Produce the unforeseen
- 6) Listen to the audience
- 7) Give back to the audience
- 8) Produce a memory
- 9) Share a memory
- 10) Repeat

**History teaches us that mediation is fundamental in recognizing and clarifying the added value of Art.**

Like Virgil in Dante's Divine Comedy, **the role of mediator is to enlighten and accompany the stakeholders though the astonishing and revolutionary processes of artist's virtuosity.**

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## FULL ARTICLE

*Non-technological innovation, including design, as well as culture-based creativity, are important tools to boost the economy's competitiveness and growth, thus improving the quality of life for the citizens of Europe<sup>2</sup>*

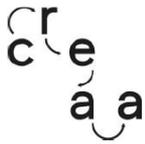
Here the words of Margarete Schramböck, Austrian Federal Minister for Digital and Economic Affairs, in the introduction of the second European Design Report of national facts and figures from 37 European countries. **These facts show that design and creativity are an economic asset in Europe.**

**In Symbola report of 2019 is under evidence that creative driven industries are increasing.** The report shows that in Italy

*All these cases highlight a positive phenomenon for creativity: when the door of creativity is opened within an organization, institution or community, it is always difficult to close it. The contribution of creative companies, and of design in this case, induces and favors a different way of approaching and solving (rather, better: defining) problems, proposing jumps of scale and a constant circularity between overall*

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<sup>2</sup> [Euroepan Design Report 2.0](#), realizzato per [BEDA](#), The Bureau of European Design Association. Margarete Schramböck Federal Minister for Digital and Economic Affairs



vision and quality of detail. And this happens not only in the traditional sectors of creativity (from fashion to furniture, from food to mobility) but in sectors that seem to be, apparently, less prone to contamination, yet, as seen, shrewdly activated in capable innovation initiatives to trigger growth and success.<sup>3</sup>

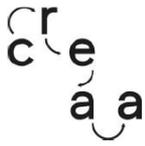
Creatività e innovazione		
Triennio (2016-2018)	Imprese che investono in A CREATIVITÀ	Imprese che NON investono in creatività B
+ Imprese industriali con innovazioni di prodotto/servizio <sup>1</sup>	62%	52%
+ Imprese industriali con innovazioni di processo <sup>2</sup>	57%	48%
+ Imprese industriali con innovazioni organizzative <sup>3</sup>	46%	34%
+ Imprese industriali con innovazioni di marketing <sup>4</sup>	47%	31%

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- A\_ companies that invest in creativity
- B\_ businesses that don't invest in creativity
- 1\_ industrial enterprises with product / service innovations
- 2\_ industrial enterprises with process innovations
- 3\_ industrial enterprises with organizational innovations
- 4\_ industrial companies with marketing innovations

As stressed in the next long-term EU budget 2021-2027, to increase **matching between creativity and traditional industries is a leading theme**. EU research agencies confirm that where businesses need to innovate and improve to keep themselves competitive, creativity and enhancement of processes are essential.

<sup>3</sup> Produzioni *creative driven*. I modi della creatività per l'innovazione e la competitività – Io Sono cultura 2019 – Symbola



Culture-based creativity has so many layers of information that can be an endless source of inspiration into cross-sectoral interaction. **The spontaneous, intuitive, singular and human nature of cultural creation enriches society.**

*To emerge, culture-based creativity requires:*

- *personal abilities (ability to think laterally or in a non-linear way, to be imaginative),*
- *technical skills (often artistic skills or craftsmanship),*
- *a social environment (a social context through notably education and learning that encourages, and appreciates creativity as well as an economy that invest in culture and culture-based creativity).<sup>4</sup>*

**Therefore, artist's skills bring those improvements when integrated in the organizational context.** The method of arts-based interventions (ABI), "*when artists enter private and public organizations to enable people to undergo an experience-based process to make a change*"<sup>5</sup>, is the new way of matching arts and the business world.

**However, the business world and the arts world speak different languages.**

**Intermediaries are the answer of bridging these two worlds together and the key for the success of ABI in complex organizations.**

**Intermediary's contribution is multiple:**

- **Making prior assessment to evaluate the context,**
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Intermediaries evaluate the interventions and give feedbacks to the stakeholders, using their context linguistic register.

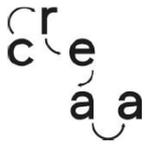
**The evolution of mediation in the past decades has been addressed by experts, which underline its extraordinary importance in current times.**

*The relationship between new artistic practices and new models of production, new forms and new meanings – and the specialized economies they engender – cannot be considered without taking into account the recent transformations in the global markets. (...) Already we see more and more artists turning the ordinary into novel forms, bringing to the forefront a more democratic structure for art practices and their social function. Among the major figures to have come of age in this cultural milieu is the independent curator, whose importance can be compared to that of the literary critic's in the 1950's or the business consultant's in the 80's. Yet, aesthetically, curators are more like theater directors, and it could be argued that they follow a performance paradigm rather than one based the object or commodity. **We could say***

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<sup>4</sup> THE IMPACT OF CULTURE ON CREATIVITY A Study prepared for the European Commission (Directorate-General for Education and Culture) June 2009 - KEA

<sup>5</sup> THE IMPACT OF CULTURE ON CREATIVITY A Study prepared for the European Commission (Directorate-General for Education and Culture) June 2009 - KEA



**they are translators, movers, or creators whose material is the work of others – but in any case, the role of mediator is inescapable.** <sup>6</sup>

An abstract from a collection of ten interviews realized in the early years of this century emphasizes the significance of mediating the artwork through the translating work of the independent curator. Nowadays mediation plays an even more crucial role as art connects and contaminates with other sectors.

*The growth of learning-oriented relationships between arts and organizations has started to attract attention from researchers, who have undertaken various mapping exercises to represent the diversity of types of activities (for overviews see for example Barry & Meisiek 2010, Biehl-Missal 2011, Darsø 2004, Berthoin Antal 2009, Schiuma 2011, Schnugg 2010). They have proposed various umbrella terms, such as “workarts” (Barry & Meisiek 2010), “arts-based initiatives” (Schiuma 2009), “arts-based learning programs” (Boyle & Ottensmeyer 2005), “artful learning alliances” (Darsø 2004), “artsbased interventions” (Biehl-Missal 2011) or “artistic interventions” (Berthoin Antal 2009). The word “intervention” reflects the fact that the entrance of the arts into the work setting intervenes in the organisation’s culturally engrained routines and perspectives. (...) How does an artist find an organisation to work in and with? How does an organisation find the right artist for its needs? What does a fair contract look like? What happens when there is a misunderstanding or conflict in the process? These questions also point to the need to study the actors who bridge between the worlds, to whom very little attention has been paid in research so far: intermediaries who understand the values, codes and practices of both worlds and are equipped to find and bring together artists and people from organizations. Their significance has been noted by such observers as Lois Bartelme (2005), but their multiple roles have not yet been studied systematically throughout the process of artistic intervention residencies.* <sup>7</sup>

**An ABI is an artist from any field that moves his or her studio into a business to react on the circumstances with constructive disturbance** (Darsø, 2016); a workshop to improve leadership skills or teamwork through the use of artistic skills; a project with a trained artist that helps to innovate products, processes or organisational changeover or a long-term residency of an artist for social interests of a company (Berthoin Antal, Sköldberg, & Woodilla, 2016).

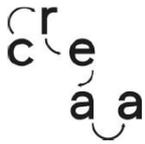
**The mediator in ABI has developed in the professional figure of the producer.** The role of the producer is not only mediating the relationship between artists and entrepreneurs, but is actually an entrepreneur itself.

*An intermediary creates a link between the artist and the organization in order to support both. They effectively close the gap between the two worlds by continuously communicating what value ABI’s can bring to artists, organizations and the society. At any time the intermediary is a neutral person that equally respects all stakeholders, encourages full participation, promotes mutual understanding and cultivates shared responsibility. (Definition of a facilitator by Sam Kraner) an Intermediary can be one or more person. Sometimes the divers and many tasks are split between different people. For example some split the task in*

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<sup>6</sup> Carolee Thea, On curating//Interviews with Ten International Curators, 2009 d-a-p/ Distributed Art Publishers, Inc.

<sup>7</sup> Ariane Berthoin Antal, Artistic Intervention Residencies And Their Intermediaries: A Comparative Analysis, 2012 Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung (WZB)



*producer or facilitator that manages the link among the business and the artist; and in consultant or broker that analyses the client's needs and follows the group dynamics.*<sup>8</sup>

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**Creaa is a business company**, based in the North East of Italy, that developed an original format for art-based interventions in organizations and offers communication and project management services to the creative sector.

Creaa sold and realized more than 20 ABI in the last four years, and developed a specific know-how in producing those action, selecting and training the artists, auditing the buyer's needs and evaluating the results.

**As producers we focus primarily on our reliability both for the art sector**, to engage the most talented candidates, **and to the business word**, to assure our artists an environment of respect and appreciation of their work.

**Reliability is earned in years of professional work and implies a specific know how in both the environments**, the artistic and the business one. The aim of the producer is to let the artist be the artist, the entrepreneur/buyer be the entrepreneur/buyer, mediating the flow of information between them, giving value to the match of competences.

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Art Based Interventions, performed into traditional companies, contribute to the development of general competences and leadership skills, strengthen the group communication and cooperation abilities and call into question any pre-existing working practices. They help relieving stress and increasing motivation, while strengthening the internal branding.

Creaative Bump is one of Creaa's services implementing an ABI to deliver a training group experience while mixing a collective artistic creation with the support of an artist and a trainer.

**Mass age, message, mess age** is a concrete example of the Creaative Bump format applied to a group of employees of an engineering industry. Regione Autonoma Friuli Venezia Giulia supported this action

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<sup>8</sup> TOOLKIT FOR INTERMEDIARIES IN ARTISTIC BUSINESS INTERVENTIONS COPYRIGHT © 2017, Lena Rufli



through the POR FESR 2014-2020 grant, Action 2.1.b.2 «Concessione di sovvenzioni per il finanziamento di programmi personalizzati di accelerazione e consolidamento d'impresa, finalizzati allo sviluppo imprenditoriale di progetti a valenza culturale, rivolti a imprese culturali, creative e turistiche».

Creaa produced the intervention, engaging Elena Mazzi, a professional artist based in Venice, who has an international experience and has recently won the Italian Council grant<sup>9</sup>.

Our Creaative Bump format is based on an assessment (rule 1 and 2), a few briefings among the producer, the artist and a professional trainer that mediates the group (rule 4).

Then the artist makes a proposal and Creaa produce it (rule 5).

The intervention takes action (rule 6 and 7), and the producer is an active participant, who translates, develops and returns a range of meanings to the audience.

All the process is constantly supervised and translated into a narrative product (rule 8).

The narrative is shared in a moment of recollection of the experience (rule 9).

The cycle of the experience is closed, but the audience is so engaged that aims to repeat similar experiences, a deep dive into another point of view. (rule 10).

The aim of this ABI was to improve the communication between two working sectors of the factory. The artist solved the challenge engaging the stakeholder in building actual art works with the raw material of the production department of the corporation. The intervention has been a great success, nevertheless – or maybe exactly for this reason - Elena Mazzi is an expert in relational art, a form of art intangible and far from the common knowledge of what art is.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YLcLmXYIv2A> Here's a concrete example of the Creaative Bump format applied to a group of employees of an engineering industry.

**The success of similar interventions has been possible thanks to the role of the producer. The producer validates and develops a format from a creative process that cannot be proceduralized as the artist's method of creating an art work.** Creaative Bump is the practical instrument that Creaa developed to perform as professional producers of Art Based Intervention.

In a nourishing environment for creative industries that became a driving force for the economic and cultural strength of the EU, **we assume that experiences of encounter between ICC and traditional enterprises are catching on. Those innovative services are going to be useful at an intersectoral level, although the quality of the intervention has to be assessed with a professional's mediation.**

Therefore in a fluid contest such as the art world could be, it is essential to spread mediation models as Creaative Bump or similar experiences. **History teach us that mediation is fundamental in recognizing and clarifying the added value of Art.** Like Virgil in Dante's Divine Comedy, **the role of mediator is to enlighten and accompany the stakeholders through the astonishing and revolutionary processes of artist's virtuosity.**

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<sup>9</sup><http://elenamazzi.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Elena-Mazzi-cvportfolio-IT.pdf>