

CIRCOSTRADA
LAB

USING FUTURE STUDIES TO TRIGGER CREATIVITY



How can we think and work differently? How do we foster innovation to find new solutions?

Using brainwork, creativity and future studies, the First Circostrada Lab gathered 18 persons, during three days in May 2016 in Balma (France) at La Grainerie (a space dedicated to circus arts and artistic mobility). This publication presents the principles and mechanisms that have formed the basis of this experience, which we hope will be inspiring.

ARTCENA

Coordinator of the network, ARTCENA is the French National Centre for Circus Arts, Street Arts and Theater, born from the alliance between HorsLesMurs and Centre national du Théâtre. Founded in 2016 by the French Ministry of Culture and Communication, it works towards the development of these fields through activities of documentation, resource, and counseling for both professionals and the general public.



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**This publication
was written by
Gentiane Guillot
and Cécile Provôt,
and coordinated
by Circostrada
Network.**

Since 2003, Circostrada Network has worked to develop and structure the fields of circus and street arts in Europe and beyond. With more than 90 members from 30 countries, it helps to build a sustainable future for the sector by empowering cultural players through activities in observation and research, professional exchange, advocacy, capacity-building and information.

FOREWORD

How can we think and work differently? In a changing environment, from economic, digital, environmental, territorial, community and political viewpoints, how can we develop adaptability and innovation capabilities in our work? These core questions were at the origins of the Circostrada Lab working group (also called CS Lab), one of the three pilot activities of Circostrada. In other words: “We, as circus and street arts professionals, work with and for artists and artistic creation. But are we creative enough ourselves?” These CS Labs aim at creating a shared space for experimentation, both for Circostrada members and external guests.

We have conceived and moderated this first CS Lab by gathering the participants around a common theme – working methods and work organisation – and by using the future studies approach; we organized collective and individual sessions, combining playful and creative approaches with more brainy modalities.

This publication describes the concepts and tools used during the CS Lab, the exercises given to the participants, and also shares the subjective points of view of the speakers. It also meets a further objective: to achieve the widest possible dissemination of the reflexions and the overall experience of CS Lab.

Gentiane Guillot and Cécile Provôt
CS Lab co-pilots

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CONCEIVING THE CS LAB: SIDE THINKING SUPPORTING INNOVATION

Gentiane Guillot

Stimulating inventiveness

Finding new solutions is about mental flexibility and creativity. To achieve those, time, space – be it physical or symbolic – and available brains.

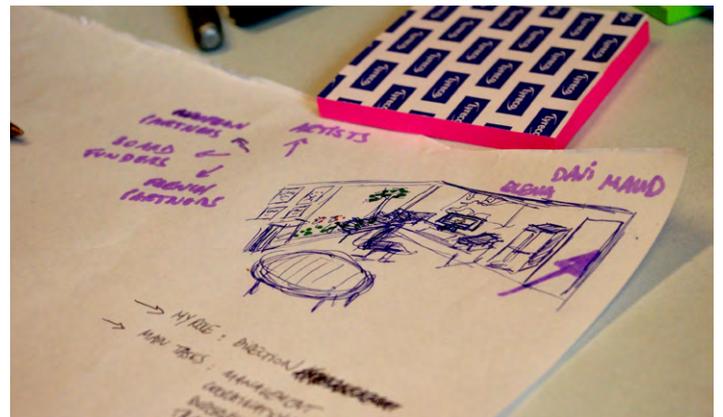
It is first and foremost a process that requires cultural acclimatisation - opening our minds to the ongoing transformations and becoming familiar with the latest developments and its lexicon; listening to the world, reading, exchanging ideas, avoiding the pitfalls of ideological paradigms (the word innovation itself carries a wide range of stereotypes) to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the contradictions and paradoxes and thus identify potential sources of inspiration.

The approach also involves a very personal component, which is to harness our own creative capability through play, paradigm shifts, new experiences and enjoying the pleasure of inventiveness.

When these fundamental aspects are in place, it is easier to move on to the next step of generating purposeful, meaningful and directed ideas with the aim of producing outcomes in the professional field (tangible results that may be intellectual, conceptual, material, organisational or human). This work can be supported and shared within the collective setting of a workshop, laboratory or focus group.

So that the relevant ideas may take shape, everyone must be given the opportunity to experiment and try

them out in their own area of work, with the freedom and boldness that should come when they know they are allowed to take reasonable risks. Indeed, experimentation is a trial-and-error process that, in this case, generates opportunities for learning. Above all, it is an essential step on the path to innovation.



All of this is not easy to implement, especially when we get caught up in the daily grind. CS Lab seeks to provide a reflective framework to think about ongoing structural shift. It also provides a stimulating environment where time stands still, leaving the mind open to creativity and new ideas.

Future studies as a vehicle for side thinking

Why was the future studies approach chosen for this first CS Lab? When describing possible futures, the scenario planning method (see page 6) emphasises the importance of gathering relevant information, using sources such as expert knowledge. It is obvious that in a few hours (two half-days for this first laboratory), forward thinking exercise cannot be scientific or serious.

However, the interesting thing is the freedom given by the chosen timeframe to play and imagine. For the CS Lab, the goal was for it to be far enough away to invent off-the-wall ideas, but close enough to be individually and professionally realistic: 2030 was the chosen time horizon.

It should be noted that these future studies games always inevitably talk about the present. It is very difficult to look beyond our own time and values and truly imagine a different future. However, the present can be approached differently, by first imagining the future and casting aside usual positions and influences (at least partially). The fun enabled participants to freely throw around ideas, thus partially forgetting their usual positions and conditioning around ideas, intuitions, fears, no matter how unspecific or controversial.



The benefits of the exercise lie in the fact that it involves:

- side thinking, thinking outside the box, freedom of thought;
- pooling ideas, for debates enriched by other people's diverse opinions;
- generating inspiring ideas;
- the sense that we can use our imagination and "blue-sky thinking", highlighting the need to change our current frames of reference.

Resorting to the forward thinking approach in a playful mode may also be considered as a first step. Some of the participants suggested that the method should next be applied in a "serious" mode to our own professional organisations as case studies. Why not?

1 - THE FUTURE STUDIES APPROACH

AN INTRODUCTION TO FUTURE STUDIES

Jean-Michel Guy

What are future studies? How could it be used as a relevant tool to think about the present and “potential futures” for artistic creation in street arts? Jean-Michel Guy, Research Engineer at the Department of Future Studies and Statistics within the French Ministry of Culture and Communication is a convinced supporter of contemporary circus and arts in public space. He was asked to write an article as part of the three-year forward thinking project “Objective 2032 – What arts for what streets?” supported from 2012 to 2015 by Aurillac Festival and HorsLesMurs (now ARTCENA). The abridged version below provides some keys to understanding future studies and avenues to be explored.

1 Objectif 2032 : <http://objectif2032.wixsite.com/objectif2032>

Future first: future studies for arts in public space by 2032

It is not science fiction or pure imagination, or utopian thinking. Its goal is not to determine or predict the future, but rather to act and make choices in the present that will affect the future.

Future studies has gradually become a relatively simple and standard management tool first used by large corporations and business groups, and now by public organisations. In theory, its chief goal is to reduce the range of potential choices in an uncertain environment. The ever-increasing uncertainty of today’s world has made it a popular tool. Future studies consists in identifying relatively probable or plausible possible futures and comparing them with the current situation. It is not science fiction or pure imagination, or utopian thinking. Its goal is not to determine or predict the

future, but rather to act and make choices in the present that will affect the future. It is therefore often geared towards defining strategy, hence its use in strategic planning.

It is not a science but a methodology or set of protocols that, in short, have become recognised due to their proven track record. This could be considered presumptive since, to the best of my knowledge, there are no retrospective (ex post) studies on future studies that have assessed how useful the exercise is for decision-making or strategy development, or whether there are any unexpected effects. However, despite the lack of a sufficient corpus of future studies exercises in various fields, some known effects (benefits or drawbacks) can be identified.

Projecting the present

Future studies is different from forecasting in that forecasting is generally based on extrapolating statistical series in a logical manner. Certain demographic changes (such as the number of one-hundred-year-olds in 2030) and other phenomena with “hard” regularities can therefore be predicted, obviously with

a certain margin of error. The starting point for future studies is uncertainty. The future is unknown and the role of future studies is not to know what the future holds. Once again, it is about steering present action based on the most reasonable idea of the future that we have right now. In some ways it is an exercise that

involves “projecting” the present, representing the present, or reviewing projects that could currently be foreseeable.

To provide a more specific answer as to the purpose of future studies, a distinction must be made between the ultimate objectives and the approach used. The objectives are not always stated or able to be stated - business leaders may initiate a future studies exercise not just to make a strategic decision but also to rally their colleagues or the entire staff team.



They may also use the exercise to subtly or underhandedly rubber-stamp a decision that has already been made by passing it off as one of the four possibilities. In some ways, future studies always opens up new possibilities and ever so slightly changes the balance, dynamics and positions within an organisation. It is potentially less traumatic than a corporate audit but can be used for similar purposes - to make the pill easier to swallow when it comes to large-scale changes. It is political, to say the least. It promotes confrontation between different representations of reality within a group, all of which reflect a certain world view. The exercise can also be manipulated in

ways that are often difficult to detect. One of these, which we will come back to, relies on an ingrained and widespread cultural model - our need for coherence and the fiction of a “story” that makes sense. Political risks in this case are intentionally exaggerated so that we keep them constantly in sight. However, if the debating procedures are monitored attentively and democratically, the results of future studies can be extremely beneficial in terms of action plans generated.

So now let’s look at how it works.

The most widely used method is the scenario planning method in which a limited number (between three and twelve) of potential future scenarios are generated. In theory, there are no rules about this number. It may or may not be arbitrarily determined from the outset. The most important thing in general is the user-friendliness of the scenarios. It is important that they can be easily memorised, that the differences can be identified, and that they can be appropriated.

The number of participants can also vary. The right number needs to be found to balance the various needs for diversity, effective debate, the availability of people involved, and the general financial aspects of the exercise (time-limited or long-lasting, expensive or not). Twenty or so participants is generally a good number. In general, these “analysts” do not have all the information and knowledge required for their task. They therefore have to refer to external experts, interviewing them collectively or requesting written reports. Free discourse and constant debate are the working principles of the group. A chairperson or secretary is necessary for each meeting. The method involves six steps.

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The six steps of future studies

Step 1: subject and timeframe

The first step is to agree on the detailed definition of the “subject” and “timeframe”. The subject can be very broad (e.g. “cultural life”) or relatively specific (e.g. “policy of the Ministry of Culture”). As for “arts in public space”, it can be useful to list certain sub-subjects to include and rule out others. What do we really want to envision? What will the aesthetic aspects be? What will be the institutional or cultural role of arts in public space? What kind of living conditions will artists have? All that? Are we sure we agree on what we mean by the words “arts” and

“public space”? The timeframe chosen clearly plays a significant role in the outcome from the exercise. In theory, a five-year change is easier to conceptualise than a change over a thirty-year period. Short-term and long-term timeframes each have their merits. A shorter timeframe demands a realistic approach and quick action. A longer timeframe can be useful for challenging set-ups that are historically more stable (e.g. when it comes to household chores, gender equality is much more foreseeable in thirty years than in five).

Step two: variables for change

The second step should answer the question “What factors are likely to drive changes affecting the subject within the given timeframe”. This involves creating a list of variables or “variables” and narrowing it down to a manageable number (forty at most, but a larger or much smaller number of variables can be used, the only limiting factors being the budget and the need for efficiency). In narrowing down the list, correlations between variables can already be identified. For instance, oil prices may be linked to the number of tourists. Therefore, one of these variables can surely be eliminated from the list.

Step three: detailed variables and assumptions

The third step consists in creating detailed notes on the variables. For each variable, a retrospective and current analysis of the situation should be performed. For example - Where are we at in terms of global warming? What do we know about climate change in the past and its current state? This analysis should lead to the identification of a major trend and factors of uncertainty. To take global warming as an example, there seems to be an agreement that the major trend is the inevitability of warming; however the uncertainties concern the rate and extent of warming and even the regions of the world affected. Assumptions are then derived from these uncertainties. In some cases there are two (either war takes place or not), or another number is needed (three or four options), or an indefinite number that should, however, be cut down to four or five to make the next step easier and more effective. The assumptions must be clear-cut and as distinct as possible from each other. However, they can be composites. For instance, A1: population increases due to rising birth rates, A2: populating increases due to immigration, A3: population decreases. Here, A3 is incompatible with A1 and A2, which are similar on one point (population increase) and differ on another (cause of the increase).

Step four: scenario framework

The fourth step consists in generating the scenarios. The framework of a scenario is the list of all the assumptions that define it, i.e. a single assumption per variable. The main difficulty lies in simplifying the matrix from a huge number of potential scenarios to a small number of plausible scenarios. The first big question: war or no war? Another Fukushima? An anti-capitalist revolution? Most “civilian” future studies exercises (such as forecasting changes in mineral water consumption) usually pur-

Establishing the list and properly formulating each variable can be a lengthy process. It may be helpful to organise the variables into broad categories such as fully extrinsic factors (growth rate changes, population changes, war between North Korea and the United States), factors closely related to the subject (changes to the FAI-AR (Formation Avancée Itinérante des Arts de la Rue), unemployment rate in Aurillac) and factors that are somewhat related (changes to public budgets for culture, government regulations such as a firework ban or controls on begging).

These detailed variables are usually prepared by outside experts under the responsibility of a group member, who will present the current situation and the assumptions for change so that they can be discussed by the group.



Once this is done, a matrix is created, with the variables featured in the rows and the two, three, four or five assumptions associated with each variable in the columns.

posefully ignore extreme scenarios, i.e. disasters and utopias, and therefore do not include such eventualities in the list of variables. The reasoning is that future studies is no longer of any use in such cases, because the economy will be turned upside down. I do not share this reasoning, as I believe in the heuristic virtue of extremes. The unrealistic nature of extreme situations and their lack of utility for action are largely compensated by the intellectual gain, the potential for innovation, and the philosophical depth

that can be drawn from them. For example, arbitrarily excluding an “extreme” or apparently far-fetched variable such as “changes in spirituality” means choosing not to consider unlikely relationships (between global warming and the spread of Christendom) that may have deep impacts. The biggest risk of scenarios is to take a too-conformist approach.

Concretely, how do we choose the scenario frameworks? There are highly complex but rarely used mathematical methods where each assumption and each link is weighted beforehand. In other words, the link between two given assumptions is assigned a correlation coefficient - assumptions may be completely or partially independent, and co-dependent to a greater or lesser extent. This allows the matrix to be narrowed down to the independent assumptions only. Even when using these types of correlation-based statistical methods, there comes a time when the frameworks have to be chosen. This is where we need to be careful not to get trapped in the present. We were quick to identify a type of business-as-usual scenario, where nothing changes, and a “horror” scenario whose outrageous logic is evident: growth rate continues to drop, unemployment skyrockets, compensation system for temporary cultural workers is abolished, hundreds of thousands of climate refugees from Bangladesh flee to Europe, etc. Between these extremes, it is simple enough to come up with two or three “coherent” frameworks, which often reflect existing political ideologies in society that are more or less “green”, “pink” or “red”

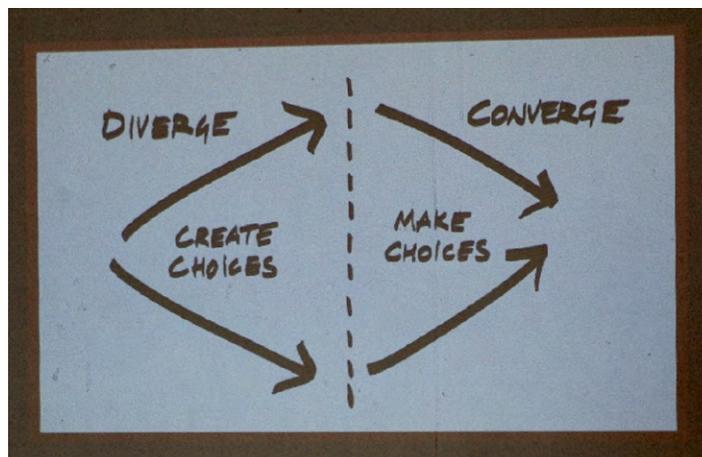
Step five: writing the scenarios

The fifth step is when the scenarios are written up. They will weave together all the assumptions and their consequences with regard to the subject. Written scenarios are helpful in identifying the issues, which is the final step in the process. The coherence of the scenarios will mainly depend of the logic of

Step six: the issues

The sixth step is to identify the issues, i.e. the challenges or “levers” that may impact the present in one way rather than another. The scenarios will all be

(environmentalist, social democratic or socialist). That is where the danger lies. Potential future scenarios do not make much more sense than our own life stories. We are constantly fictionalising our own biographies in order to fit the rebellious child that



we used to be and the well-behaved adult that we are today into a neat and tidy package. We have the same problem incorporating seemingly incompatible assumptions (extremely low growth rate, huge creativity) in the same scenario framework. Yet in all likelihood, the actual future will look more like a patchwork of incompatibilities, diverse timelines, and strange tensions, than a logically laid out fiction where everything unfolds according to a perfectly consistent and realistic plot (even one with the twists and turns of the movie *Inception*).

the participants. The goal is not to produce a logical world or frame of reference but to describe power relationships. In one scenario, artists may have no choice but to create a union, but at the same time the unions are weak, and mayors tend to favour businesses, etc.

unlikely, but they each reflect “realistic ideals” that make relative sense.

Full speed to the future!

In my view, the primary benefit of the future studies method is not its strategic purpose - even though this is important. The chief benefit is the way it opens up a public forum for analysis and discussion. It is a concrete conversation about any links between

phenomena, whether logical or otherwise. At the very least, the exercise will have shed light on the present, with a “retrospective” look back on current knowledge. At best, it generates a shared discourse. Between these two extremes, it provides an oppor-

STEP 1 - The variables: “What will have an impact on the evolution of work in 2030?”

Define the variables.

- Existing trends that will not be a variable, where no change is expected (yellow post-its)
- Possible variables (blue post-its)

And then choose:

- 4 or 5 important variables, relevant to the question asked
- 1 joker variable (wild card)

STEP 2 - The hypotheses: for each variable, identify 2 to 5 hypotheses (pink post-its)

STEP 3 - The matrix and the path: stick all selected variables and hypotheses, then choose a path, i.e. 1 hypothese per variable.

STEP 4 - The scenario: taking into account the chosen path, write a scenario answering the question asked at the very beginning: “In 2030, how will artists and culture professionals work (organisation, relations, means, tools)? Environment described may be physical, digital, legal, philosophical, ethical, political...” Any means, any methods are welcome. Paper, computer, words, pictures taken, video, pictures cut in magazines, drawings...

Sharing and feedback: Within each group, and then with all participants, share collectively: “What stakes are highlighted by the scenario? What can we work on today, to prepare for the future, and/or to make the best happen?”

OUTPUT EXAMPLE: ONE OF THE GROUPS' SCENARIOS

VARIABLES AND HYPOTHESES					
EXISTING TRENDS VARIABLES	DIGITALIZATION	CLIMATE CHANGE	AGING POPULATION	VIOLENT GEOPOLITICAL CONTEXT	
Hypothesis 1 Legal and social work environment	Labour deregulation law	Project-based status	End of « intermittence » ²	Working time and space	Money and job redistribution
Hypothesis 2 Social and cultural diversity and inequalities	Affirmative action	Mentality change	Less salary inequalities	Right-wing government / citizen empowerment	
Hypothesis 3 Technologies	Robotisation	Less human interactions	Augmented workforce	Enabling long-distance cooperation and mobility	Ubiquity
Hypothesis 4 Ecological sustainability	Legal constraints	Awareness	Energy crisis	Environmental catastrophe	
Hypothesis 5 Education	Intergenerational knowledge sharing	Collective intelligence	No more education system	No more elitist schools	Life-long learning
Hypothesis 6 Economical sustainability	Exchange economy	Local economy	Diversified income resources	100% public	100% private

² The “intermittence” in France is a compensation system for temporary cultural workers.

The scenario

1/ At macro level

Starting from the situation of a **right-wing government vs. citizen empowerment**: lots of regulations bring more citizens movements and reaction.

It means:

- There is no more public funding
- There is a need to find different ways to organize work, teams, skills, etc.

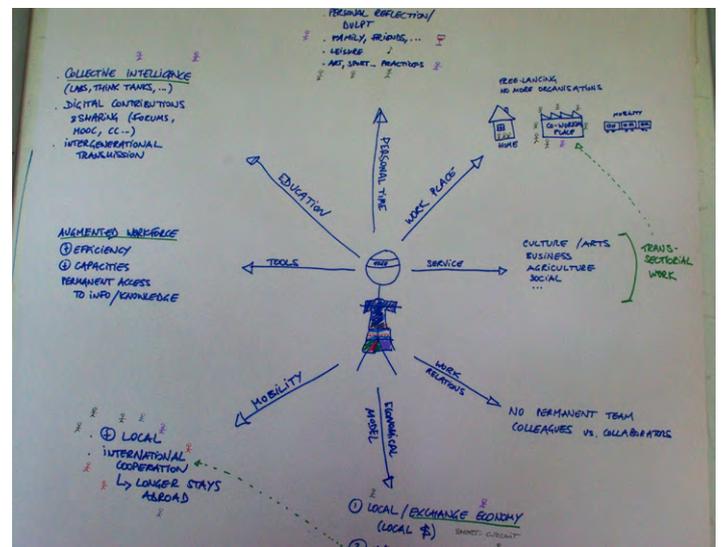
Other starting point: energy crisis. There is no more oil, travelling has become very expensive. Travellers stay in the same place for a longer period. There is thus more local work that is community-based and more locally organized, but yet global (we still work on cultural exchanges).

An **augmented workforce** supports all this: thanks to technology and digitalization, administration work and burden can be automated. Basically, things happen in the background and the processes take care of themselves so that the people can concentrate on creative work and using their minds.

This entails more value creation by people. The augmented workforce supports an alternative and/or creative way of working.

The circle of life as outlined here is based on 3 sections:

- **Trans-sectorial work**: individuals work in various fields, each person having many different positions, doing very many different things.
- **Exchange economy**: the value of money decreases because people exchange services and goods. The exchange economy becomes more consistent.
- **Collective intelligence**: there is no public education system anymore, now it is about teaching and learning from each other. As an outcome of deregulation, collective intelligence and exchange economy: money and jobs are redistributed.



2/ At micro level

Starting statement: there are no organizations anymore, only individuals, all freelancers within a **s[l]o[w]ciety** (pun between the words *slow* and *society*).

Looking at all aspects of the individual's life:

- **Work place**: there is no work place anymore since there is no organization anymore. Individuals work from home, from a co-working place, during travelling time (when there is travelling).
- **What individuals do**: they provide services in very many different sectors (culture, arts, private/commercial business, agriculture, social work, ...) because they are all working in a trans-sectorial environment. People have many competences and activities because everything is project-based.

- **Work relationships**: no permanent teams, people have colleagues (vs. collaborators), i.e. working with peers, not having a team to do the work for oneself.
- **Education**: it is all about collective intelligence, people learn from digital contributions and sharing, creative commons, inter-generational transmission, life-long learning.

- Tools as augmented person: tools help people be more efficient, no more administrative or operational burdens, more capacities through applications (for example, giving all your input to an application that will come up with different scenarios, from which one can choose and work; or another example is an immediate translator so everyone can speak their own language and be understood by foreigners and vice-versa; or giving informational input to a machine that will establish a model for the project in 3D). Through our tools we have permanent access to any information and knowledge.
- Mobility: more local work and activities but, in order to work on international level, since travelling is more expensive, we stay longer so we have a more

immersive experience and relationship with our international project partners.

- Economical model: local currency in a short-circuit economy (for an exchange economy, a local currency is needed). Everyone has a minimum wage which some decide to use to do international cooperation projects.
- Personal life / Personal time. This model gives people more freedom to manage their time, and potentially gives more time as well. There is room for personal (or professional) reflection and development, family, friends, leisure, culture, any practices. One is always in contact with other people in diverse contexts.

Conclusion

This is quite an optimistic scenario, especially since it started from a right-wing government inducing a citizens' reaction to its policies, empowering themselves, making their own policies, regaining power within their local communities.



ISSUES RAISED BY THE SCENARIOS

« Reporting findings »

Included in the process was an open discussion based of the following questions: "What issues are highlighted by your scenario? What can we work on today, to prepare for and/or bring about a hoped-for future?" Here are some of the key points that came out:

Observations:

- There is an emergency for change
- We can change NOW
- Working as a free-lancer may be an opportunity
- During the exercise, we kept our current values and applied them in a future reality
- Irony may be a conservative reaction
- Art is a solution, we should not fear this statement as being arrogant
- Next generation will do more than ours, they have less to loose, will be able to take more risks

Main stakes identified:

- There is a need for creativity at problem solving
- We need to develop cross-sectorial work
- We can consider technology as facilitating
- We should promote empowerment
- We should work more together
- Regarding communities, and getting together: we should not wait, we bear a responsibility



2 - THE CREATIVE APPROACH

PLAYFUL EXPERIMENTATIONS

Gentiane Guillot

« Low-tech selfie »

"Ice breaking" is an essential preliminary step to warm up a collective process, consisting in "breaking the ice" between participants. The CS Lab started by combining different ice-breaking techniques, from single-word post-its to *low-tech selfies*, in order to quickly bring participants together and to let them engage in a collective work. It gives them the chance to get to know one another and the environment, to let go and forget about their day-to-day responsibilities. In short: to make themselves available.

- The first instruction was simple. Each participant was asked to answer two questions in one word (on two different coloured post-its): What are you expecting out of this seminar? How are you going to contribute? On a third post-it, the participants were asked to write a "joker" (wild card) word. This type of introduction allowed eachone to get a sense of their current state of mind.

- To add to the fun, a fourth post-it was added, where several words could be used: each participant had to write his or her "useless skill" (at least useless in theory and for the purposes of the seminar). This post-it ended up becoming the most important of all, forming the starting point for discussions, light-hearted humour and bonding.



- The third step in the icebreaker took on the form of a "low-tech selfie". Each participant had to create a self-portrait on a small piece of card board using pictures, words, drawings, phrases and collage. They were provided with dozens of magazines, cultural programmes and newspapers, as well as scissors, glue, tape and markers. The fact that digital technology was not allowed, and the irony of calling it a selfie, made it all the more fun for participants to enjoy their craft skills.

- Sharing. Each participant displayed his or her selfie and post-its for everyone to see on the wall. Everyone was clearly curious and paid close attention. This first presentation set the tone and the other participants were equally engaged in the exercise.



The level of concentration from each participant, the manual aspect of cutting and pasting, their creative choices and placement of images and words, the unexpected desire of some to fully and accurately portray themselves, and the emotion of sharing with the group transformed the activity. What was initially just a simple icebreaker became a real process for introspective thought, self-expression and an opportunity to get to know others, creating warm personal and group dynamics.



NB: The “useless” skills included:

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| ● Rollerblading | ● Knitting |
| ● Kayaking | ● Swedish |
| ● Dancing Lindy hop | ● Organising treasure hunts |
| ● Composing music | ● Travelling and getting by in other countries |
| ● Opera singing | ● Comforting someone who is sad |
| ● Singing in Japanese | ● My grandmother |

Games for the brains

Anita Gaspar Da Silva is a Creativity and Collective Intelligence Consultant. She worked with the participants to precipitate (in the chemical sense of the word) all the elements that had been generated over the first two days but had remained in suspension. She offered refreshingly offbeat viewpoints, a playful approach (“If it’s not enjoyable, it’s not sustainable”), exercises to promote individual or collective reflection, drawing links between all the previous subjects of discussions.

It would be quite difficult to share the depth of the experience felt by the participants; however, the games and exercises can be described. Below are three ludic exercises : they may not be exactly reproduced.

Indeed, they were carefully weighted and contextualised, adjusted to the group and working dynamics. Nevertheless, they can be adapted and may inspire similar processes.

Flying cards

Everyone was asked to divide a oval card into three spaces (some used parallel lines, others split an oval like a pie, others drew curves), and to take a few minutes to write down:

- three ideas or interesting things that had struck them from the seminar,
- three personal qualities or skills,
- and finally three challenges that need solving.

Then the cards - which were anonymous - were randomly redistributed among the participants, who had to read it and write an anonymous piece of advice in response to one of the challenges mentioned. Then the cards were randomly redistributed once more, followed by a second-round of advice-giving. A third throw-and-inept-advice session followed.



At the end of the game, everyone retrieved their original card, with a few things to think about:

- Some serious - or less serious, but always inspiring - advices
- the striking new links that could be identified, between one's qualities and the problems that needed solving

Small arrangements for a greater formal freedom

It is a common thing to use papers with different sizes and colours to stimulate playfulness and creativity. It is more surprising to bother oneself to cut curved-shaped papers. Anita's oval-shaped papers, which were thrown in the air to ensure a random redistribution (a disorderly method being better than a very ordered one in this case), did set the tone for the session.

"What if?..."

Anita suggested this game just at the right time, following on from a whole range of manual games that hadn't required much thinking, and a subsequent time of individual or collective reflection about the way work is organised (in terms of space, time, and relationships). The participants had just written down the individual challenges that needed to be solved. Everyone was both unbalanced and focused, ready to be surprised by new ideas and open to strangeness.

It is a classic game - asking an unrestricted, boundless "What if?" question about a situation or an issue that is presented.

The game, played in pairs, involved going round the room, (re)reading different people's contributions, in particular the future studies scenarios, which were displayed on walls or on the ground, observing the toys and objects laid out, and freely making uncenso-

red, hypothetical suggestions, such as: "What if... we had a collective herb garden that we all worked on?" "What if... I chose my working hours and workplace for myself every morning?" Very simple instructions were given. It was not about giving rational answers, but noting and keeping all the inspiring ideas for later - a window into a field of limitless possibilities.

Letter to one self

The last step by Anita was the most moving. Everyone was asked to choose a piece of paper (including down from the "wall of free expression" that had been plastered with pictures, quotes and references over the course of the seminar) and then write a letter to themselves. The letters were brimming with feelings, ideas and desires that crystallised in this pri-

vate time of refocusing. Some wrote themselves advice and noted down ideas and resolutions. Others comforted or reassured themselves. The letters were sealed up in secrecy and addressed to their writer, awaiting the right time to send them out, a few months after the seminar, to have a real impact when they are received.

The importance of conviviality

It seems obvious, yet it is not... During the CS Lab, everyone was asked to both use their brains and engage with their emotions, hosting facilities and conditions were hence essential. All the participants appreciated the importance of this "cocoon", which during three days allowed them to concentrate, let go, and enjoy, without neglecting the necessary various social occasions.

POINT OF VIEW: IN SEARCH OF A THIRD WAY

Blandine Bréchnac

Blandine Bréchnac (HR&D), independent consultant in innovation for human resources and workplace organisation, gives a particular focus on the issue of the physical and digital environment of the workplace. This article presents her viewpoint and analysis of this shared approach during the CS Lab.

Uncovering the real question: "bridled" creativity

I am a consultant who specialises in workplace innovation and I was invited by Circostrada Network to join the first CS Lab. The "mission" I was given was to provide input into the "future studies" exercise and shed light on their discussions by talking about current changes in the world of work - a different perspective which sought to push them towards creativity in the way they work.

But as I listened to the participants introduce themselves, I realised that they were all very creative people.

As I heard them talking about the scenarios they had produced, I realised that, compared with people working in more "conventional" organisations (especially large corporations), they were acutely aware of the major changes going on in the world around them - social, economic, political and technological changes, etc. This may partly be because of their work in supporting artistic research and creation, partly because they are by nature "connected into today's world".

From what I saw, the CS Lab participants showed no shortage of creative resources or vision for the future.



However, they themselves did not feel creative. While admitting that they were creative in terms of managing constraints - otherwise their projects would never exist, they expressed frustration at not being more inventive in the way they worked. They felt like they worked in fairly conventional organisational structures and ways of operating, and that they were “held back” or “bridled”, preventing them from bringing in new approaches.

Why change?

If change is on the agenda - a re-evaluation of professional practices - there needs to be a good reason to change (particularly if the change is radical). This reason will help people give sense to the necessary shifts and will help mobilise the energy and creativity required.

Have the participants clearly identified this “reason for change”? Is the reason strong enough to gene-

Taking the first step

Once the diagnosis has been understood and accepted, objectives have been set and decisions made, things have to get started. Stepping out implies being out of balance, wobbling on one foot

Two factors came through in the things they talked about, that “bridled” or “hindered” their creativity.

- The first set of issues concerned organisational and management methods and relations with institutions. To a lesser extent, a limited capacity to adopt and uptake potentially interesting practices from the corporate world, which are often deemed taboo;
- The second issue is a tendency towards self-censorship, and not letting oneself rally (at least consciously) one’s own creativity in one’s professional activities.

There would be a stark divide between “creative” things, which only artists can do, and “serious” things (management, admin, organisation).

This dichotomy prevents a more creative form of management. Might there not be a third way, where creativity becomes part of work processes and management methods in cultural organisations?

rate deep-seated change in the way their organisations work? To be bold enough to invent and promote new ways of working? If not, one way forward could be for the participants to take the work on initial diagnostics further, in order to shore up the thinking that justifies the need for change (if it is needed).

before the other comes down. It is therefore easier to take the first step when you are already uncomfortable or out of balance.

A physical exercise is an interesting way of showing what it means to start moving- and the idea came naturally, since the participants work with and on behalf of artists that specialise in movement. Why not ask artists to give some input?

Choreographer Ucka Ludovic Ilolo works with businesses to give an interesting perspective on the relationships between artistic movements and organisational change ([see video](#)).

Developing adaptability rather than trying to "manage change"

Initiating change is not necessarily a big one-off event, requiring massive resources, aimed at making the journey from A to B. In an environment of increasingly rapid change (and where no one knows quite where "B" is), organisations must develop adaptability and see change as an ongoing process. Adaptability could, for instance, be demonstrated by running small-scale experiments, with limited resources, to "prototype" and test solutions to deal with organisational issues. If the solution proves relevant, it can be developed. If it is irrelevant, the failure will have limited consequences since the resourcing was minimal, but the organisation will have learned useful lessons for solving the problem. This approach no-

Digital era - new ways of working

Digital technologies open up all sorts of opportunities to work differently: options for remote working, for "meetings" without needing to physically be together, file-sharing, collaborative work on the same document. Digital technology changes the way we relate to time and space, promoting the development of collaborative approaches and resource-sharing; it alters the way people interact within collectives. Digital culture in general tends to give rise to much more horizontal organisations, with peer-to-peer,

Making space for innovation

One way to nurture innovation and to kick-start transformation in ways of working could be to create a physical space earmarked for innovation. This space would be a tangible sign of the organisation's intention to shake up the way it operates.

In order to open themselves to other practices and cultures and to foster the emergence of partnership projects, to gain access to new resources and generate new ideas by coming up against other frames of reference, CS Lab participants could decide to create spaces in their offices where they could invite people from other fields to come and work and discuss approaches in a collaborative atmosphere. This is sometimes referred to as "corporate co-working"³.



etheless requires the organisation to allow itself and its teams to make mistakes.

trust-based interactions, without always deferring to line management. This culture strongly challenges the way traditional "top-down", silo-mentality organisations work.

IT developers (and now interaction designers) were early adopters of new ways of working that have been heralded in digital culture - project-driven approaches with multidisciplinary teams, rapid prototyping, agile methodologies, etc.

The physical space could be echoed in the virtual world with any number of collaborative tools that can be used to create working and sharing communities. Corporate co-working is related to "open innovation", a concept promoted by US Professor Henry Chesbrough. In his book of the same name, he posits that greater speed and efficiency can be achieved in innovation if an organisation does not only rely on its own research - as long as collaborative ways of working can be implemented, based on peer-to-peer collaboration and a horizontal structure. Could open innovation help inventing a third way that will foster the sustainable development of circus and street arts?

³ * Corporate Coworking: what is the reality behind it? European exploratory study, HR&D, October 2015. <http://tiny.cc/sll85x>

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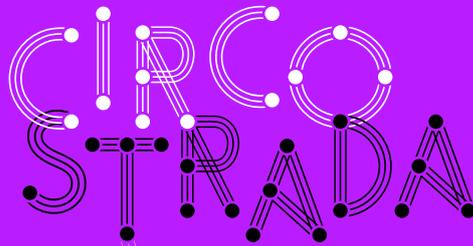
Frédéric Schaffar

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ARTCENA

Centre national des arts du cirque,
de la rue et du théâtre
134 rue Legendre, 75017 Paris, France
infocircostrada@artcena.fr