

TITLE: “Strategies to navigate the paradoxical relationship between Arts and Management: a study on Italian corporate museums”

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ABSTRACT: It is commonly understood that arts-based initiatives, defined as “the use of arts as a management device”, can be advantageous to organizations whose natural habitat is outside the arts. Nevertheless, little is known about the typical dynamics to inject arts into a non-arts organization to create value. Scholars have overlooked the latent tension that can potentially arise daily because of the different inherent qualities of Arts and Management and, simultaneously, their interdependence within the same organizational boundaries. Elaborating from previous studies, this paper frames the Arts and Management relationship as a paradox, and it asks: “how actors deal with the paradoxical tension that emerge when embedding arts into a non-arts organization to create value for the organization”. Using 62 interviews with experts coming from the exemplary setting of corporate museums, findings show that the duality of two opposites is never dispelled and that, in enduring arts-based initiatives as corporate museums, actors manage contradiction and tension through three strategies: strategic endorsement by Management, operational specialization of the Arts, tactical mutual acceptance. These three strategies enable to create a tolerable duality between Arts and Management in the everyday life and over time through learning at mutual boundaries.

KEYWORDS: arts-based initiatives; arts; management; paradox; tension; duality; corporate museums

1. INTRODUCTION

The boundaries in many organizations are becoming blurred with the arts, in the search for new perspectives to meet competitive and social challenges (Bzdak, 2022). In parallel, policymakers are thinking up programmes to increase collaboration between industry and the arts in projects for sustainable development (Flamand et al., 2021), where culture is seen as the fourth pillar of corporate sustainability. The same ebullience is found in academia (Masè, 2020), where artistic interventions by non-arts organizations (i.e., not naturally devoted to arts and driven by a management mindset) usually come under the umbrella concept of arts-based initiatives (here after ABIs), defined as “*the use of arts as a management device*” (Schiuma, 2009; Schiuma, 2011) to create value for the organization.

This co-existence of Arts and Management within the same organizational boundaries can so be beneficial for the non-arts organization, but it can also be challenging, since Arts and Management are competing forces, inherently different in terms of principles, processes, tools, and languages (Ancelin-Bourguignon et al., 2020; Chiapello, 1998; Styhre & Eriksson, 2008).

The academic community of ABIs has acknowledged this complexity, even though only at a superficial level. In fact, any potential friction from Arts and Management relationship has only been seen in a positive light and as an episodic arrangement where the arts take over management (Berthoin Antal et al., 2018; Schiuma, 2011), and not also as an occasion where distress and confusion might emerge, even in everyday dynamics (Chaney et al., 2018, Lafaire et al., 2022).

With the intention to “*explore rather than suppress*” (Erdogan et al., 2020, p. 23) the tension stemming in ABIs, the paper frames the Arts-Management relationship as a paradox, with paradox when “*contradictory but interrelated elements [that] exist and persist simultaneously over time and in the same context*” (Smith & Lewis, 2011). Reading the contributions on ABIs through the paradox lens, the paper identifies three operational dynamics, arising when arts are embedded in the non-arts organization, that can lead to the creation of three seminal categories of paradoxes (Smith & Lewis, 2011). The first dynamic refers to the forced proximity between people from Arts and people from Management under the same roof (Barry & Meisiek, 2010), which can create belonging paradox and conflicts in values and roles. The second dynamic arises when they collaborate on the same process (Dalpiaz et al., 2016), which can generate organizing paradox and contradictions in ways of operating and artefacts. The third dynamic has to do with the setting of goals and relative metrics for the ABIs towards the non-arts organization (Berthoin Antal et al., 2018), which generates paradoxical contradiction and tension on the level of performing (Smith & Lewis, 2011). Due to the paucity of studies on how the tension is experienced and how this tension can be mitigated in ABIs (Berthoin Antal & Strauß, 2014; Dalpiaz et al., 2016), this paper asks: “*how do actors deal with the paradoxical tension that emerge when embedding arts into a non-arts organization?*”.

Empirically, the paper looks at companies owning corporate museums, as an exemplary form of embedded ABIs (Comunian, 2009; Chaney et al., 2018). Methodologically, the paper is based on 62 expert interviews, with experts defined as people who have not just theoretical but also factual knowledge of a certain issue (Bogner & Menz, 2009). The decision was made because scholars of ABIs warmly suggest interacting closely with professionals (Taylor & Hansen, 2005), and scholars of paradoxes encourage contextualized field studies (Cunha & Putnam, 2019). Coherently, informants involved in a real corporate museum (e.g., museum curator, archivist, but also corporate managers working with museum’s staff), and external profiles with competences on corporate museums, were selected as experts for the study. Indeed, they all are likely to have experienced, or observed, the daily tensions from Arts and Management relationship.

The resulting theoretical model provides insights into how individuals working actively in the Arts unit (here the corporate museums as exemplary form of ABIs) and in the Management side of the non-arts organization (here the companies owning the museums), deal with the tension stemming from Arts and Management paradoxical relationship. A first point to transpire are three strategies that emerge to play a key role in governing the complexity: strategic endorsement by Management, operational specialization of the Arts and tactical mutual acceptance. The non-arts managers strategically give formal status to the space of the arts

within the organizational boundaries, but with wide-ranging directions, such that the arts people have a free rein on how to specialize in their daily operations. In this interplay between Management's endorsement and Arts' specialization, the two sides mutually accept their reciprocal differences and agree to live with contradiction. A second point to transpire is that the duality between Arts and Management is never dispelled but it is maintained, because the three strategies jointly create a tolerable duality in the daily life, but also in the long term if supplemented with learning at their mutual boundaries.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The seminal proposition about ABIs (Schiuma, 2009; Schiuma, 2011), on which this paper is also grounded, is that arts can be used as management device because they "*can play a strategic role*" for the non-arts organisation (Carlucci & Schiuma, 2018, p. 1). Various are the forms of ABIs (Comunian, 2009; Schiuma, 2011; Taylor and Ladkin, 2009). A first key dimension for classification is the locus of the blurring between Arts and Management. There are studies approaching ABIs at an inter-organization level, referring to the intersection between an organization and a cultural institution, like partnership (Lewandowska, 2015). There are studies on an intra-organizational level (Kapferer, 2014), so organizations importing arts within their boundaries for managerial goals (Dalpiaz et al., 2016). A second key dimension is the duration of the initiative (Schiuma, 2011; Comunian, 2009). For example, Comunian (2009) differentiates ABIs depending on whether the initiative requires short-term or long-term investments (of money and time), to the non-arts organization.

Among the variety of ABIs, this paper insists on the intra-organizational level and the long-term perspective, also said embedded (Kapferer, 2014). An embedded ABI is the situation where a non-arts organization imports art within its organizational boundaries (e.g. artists and works of art) (Taylor and Ladkin, 2009) and invests with a long-term perspective. It is indeed acknowledged that embedding arts "*has a bigger impact*" (p. 9, Schiuma, 2011) than network relations with cultural institutions, due to intensive and prolonged relation with arts (Comunian, 2009).

After an initial phase of exploration of the phenomenon (Comunian, 2009; Schiuma, 2011), and a subsequent collection of evidence about ABIs' value creation capacity (Masè, 2020; Strauß, 2018), with the first signs of debate's maturity, scholars have proposed the idea that the union of Arts and Management could be simultaneously advantageous but also difficult to govern, because of their innate divergent nature (Ancelin-Bourguignon et al., 2020). The patent differences between Arts and Management are connected to their intrinsic essence (Eikhof & Haunschild, 2007), and so are long-lasting and beyond question. While Arts are mainly slanted towards offering something for free, the Management world is utility-oriented (Ancelin-Bourguignon et al., 2020). While Arts engage with aesthetics, emotions and creating, Management relies on complex mechanisms, calculation tools and advanced technology (Chailan, 2018). While Arts follow intuition and improvisation in artistic processes, Management adopts efficiency and rationality to structure internal processes (Dalpiaz et al., 2016). However, even if the academic community on ABIs has acknowledged that this co-living of Arts and Management can hide a darker side (Parush & Koivunen, 2014), scholars have treated

with limits the frictions between Arts and Management. Previous studies have considered tension between Arts and Management as a sought-after situation where the Arts world takes precedence over Management for opening new possibilities (Berthoin Antal et al., 2018; Barry & Meisiek, 2010; Schiuma, 2009). Furthermore, scholars have not yet entered the daily and more operational dynamics of arts being embedded in a non-arts organization (Lafaire et al., 2022), even though previous studies have brought up ABIs' relatively high failure rate due to unstructured attempts to bring together artistic processes and more praxeological purposes (Lee et al., 2018).

To unpack this complexity, attention should shift from the outcome to the process of embedding arts in a non-arts organization (Baumgarth, 2018), and to enter the black box of more operational moments (Ancelin-Bourguignon et al., 2020; Mencarelli et al., 2020).

The present paper adopts a paradox lens (Smith & Lewis, 2011) to frame the discrepancies emerging from the juxtaposition between Arts and Management.

2.1 READING ARTS-BASED INITIATIVES THROUGH THE LENS OF PARADOX

A paradox is defined as when “*contradictory but interrelated elements exist and persist simultaneously over time and in the same context*” (Smith & Lewis, 2011), and is seen as analogous to the correlation between yin and yang, where the one cannot exist without the other. The co-existence of two opposites in the same environment encourages synergistic behaviour for the good of the collective space. However, the internal distinctions between the two sides also generate contradiction (i.e. diametrically opposed and mutually exclusive choices that cannot be resolved by choosing A or B). Their interdependence creates tension (i.e., discomfort, inertia, stress, feeling trapped or unable to make certain choices), and their groundbreaking and persistent differences always bring this tension to the fore and never fully resolve it (Smith & Tracey, 2016).

Contradiction, interdependence, and persistence are the three building blocks of paradoxical situations (Cunha & Putnam, 2019; Smith & Tracey, 2016), and they are all found in embedded ABIs. Arts and Management are governed by opposite systems of values, processes and tools that are often in contradiction, thus affecting the people involved in the initiative (Ancelin-Bourguignon et al., 2020; Chiapello, 1998; Eikhof & Haunschild, 2007; Styhre & Eriksson, 2008). People will feel that they are caught between two opposite but not mutually exclusive options, forced to pursue the Arts viewpoint or the Management viewpoint and having no choice in the matter. This interdependence means that the Arts side is tendentially dependent on Management if it is to adapt to management mechanisms, while Management is dependent on artistic people and practices if it is to achieve its arts-infused advantages (Flamand et al., 2021). People potentially experience perseverance of the juxtaposition of Arts and Management, all the time and over time (Barry & Meisiek, 2010), especially in enduring initiatives requiring long-term rather than one-off investment (Comunian, 2009). The visual metaphor of yin-yang also applies in ABIs, where arts are yin (the dark side), usually associated with emotions and

intuition, while management is yang (the light side), normally associated with logical and mental order. When the non-arts organization decides to bring arts within its boundaries, where the management mindset rules (Barry & Meisiek, 2010), conceptually the non-arts organization would be spurious (Kapferer, 2014) and composed of two poles, as in the yin-yang representation, which need to align carefully (Berthoin Antal, 2014) for creating organizational value (Meisiek & Barry, 2014). This condition generates a duality, in other words, a persistent co-existence and interdependence within the same unified whole between opposites that are not mutually exclusive (Smith & Lewis, 2011).

Four are the seminal categories of paradoxes in organizations, which generates related contradictions and tension (Smith & Lewis, 2011): learning (i.e., tension that emerge when building upon or destroying the past for the novelty), belonging (i.e., tension that emerge between competing values, identities, and principles), organizing (i.e., tension that emerge when the two sides collaborate but with competing designs and processes), and performing (i.e., tension that emerge when the performance depends on competing goals).

Searching for these categories in ABIs' literature, certainly, the more investigated one is the learning paradox, which has been extensively dissected with all the debate on arts-based learning and arts-based methods (Simpson et al., 2021). This wider attention to learning paradox is because it is the innate presumption of ABIs (Schiuma, 2011), that of the intentional generation of learning tension between arts and management ways of thinking (Ippolito & Adler, 2015; Ippolito & Adler, 2018) for generating novel ways of "*seeing more and seeing differently*" (Barry & Meisiek, 2010). On the other hand, the other three categories of paradox (i.e. belonging, organizing, and performing) have been only partially touched by previous studies on ABIs (Ancelin-Bourguignon et al., 2020; Mencarelli et al., 2020), even though they can emerge collaterally from induced operational dynamics, then generating tensions jeopardizing the success of ABIs (Parush & Koivunen, 2014). For this reason, the following part comments on the operational dynamics behind the creation of these three categories of paradoxes in ABIs, to shed light on run-of-the-mill areas of friction that could undermine any scaling-up of ABIs.

Belonging paradox might emerge from the operational dynamics of inserting people with different systems of values (e.g. artists and managers) into the same collective organization (Styhre & Eriksson, 2008; Barry & Meisiek, 2015). This situation might generate contradiction and tension in terms of values and identities: both sides would seek homogeneity and distinction over time (Smith & Lewis, 2011). The Arts Unit could be uncertain whether to embrace its artistic role or its place within the organization (Meisiek & Barry, 2014), feeling the loss of one's self-identity (Meisiek & Barry, 2018). The Management side could instead wonder whether to remain true to management principles or to flirt with the arts (Flamand et al., 2021), facing tension, which can take the form of becoming sceptic (Berthoin Antal et al., 2019).

Organizing paradox can be found when making decisions on how the two sides will collaborate on processes for the organization's value creation (Raviola & Schnugg, 2015; Schnugg & Song, 2020), which represents an additional operational dynamic, induced by the willingness to experiment with arts in a non-arts organization.

This operational dynamic can often create conflict as each tends to impose their own procedures, artefacts, patterns, and frames (Taylor, 2021). Tension inevitably arises, with people from the Arts Unit growing despondent and feeling that their creativity is being caged (Strauß, 2018) because expected to fit with management standardized operations (Raviola & Schnugg, 2015). Equally, the Management side might limit the artistic procedures via its efficiency schemata (Ippolito & Adler, 2018), because concerned about failing the assigned tasks and wasting time.

Performing paradox can emerge when defining the expected goals and related metrics to evaluate ABIs (Berthoin Antal et al., 2018; Schiuma & Carlucci, 2015). The Arts Unit employs more qualitative analyses (Schiuma & Carlucci, 2015), but it might be demanded to use traditional business indicators, for consistency with the collective reporting system (Liggeri, 2015). Equally, the Management side would opt for numerical indicators to evaluate the return on the investments (Liggeri, 2015; Masè, 2020). This contradiction can bear the consequent hurdle of translating artistic results into management terms due to the non-exclusive causality (Schnugg & Son, 2020), which are further augmented by the arts decision makers being reluctant to work with numbers (Kuttim et al., 2011).

From the seminal paper of Smith & Lewis (2011) and in the following contributions (Schad et al., 2016), scholars of paradox have studied multiple resolution strategies of contradictions and tension (Jarzabkowski et al., 2013). Resolution strategies twist between both/and strategies (Smith & Tushman, 2005), as the acceptance of living between the two gods (Smith & Besharov, 2019), or either/or strategic responses to eliminate the divergence, such as temporal and structural separation (Andriopolous & Lewis, 2009). To further complicate the portray, scholars of paradox also suggest that both differentiating and integrating practices, and simultaneous resolution and acceptance of the paradoxical situation (Dameron & Torset, 2013), should be contemporarily pursued to mitigate tension.

If searching for strategies to resolve tension in ABIs, studies to create the conditions whereby the Arts and Management sides can be operationally brought together (Berthoin Antal & Strauß, 2014) are limited, and somehow inadequate for providing practical recommendations. There are studies that suggest encouraging collaboration between the two sides for meaning making (Flamand et al., 2021) and finding the perfect situation where the initiative is most likely to be successful - the sweet spot - (Meisiek & Barry, 2018), but they provide only at a surface level how to frame this spot. There are studies where scholars invoke leaving artists free to impose their methods to change the organization (Barry & Meisiek, 2010; Ippolito & Adler, 2015), by solely suggesting bringing novel elements inside the organizations (Kapferer, 2014). Furthermore, previous studies seem inadequate to shed light on the operational discrepancies between Arts and Management in ABIs in the daily life and the relative coping strategies (Mencarelli et al., 2020). This is because the previous contributions are mainly investigating temporary and sporadic situations, such as courses held by artists (Ippolito & Adler, 2018; Meisiek & Barry, 2018), while scholars of paradoxical situations recommend focusing on routine and recurrent activities over time to shed light on the daily conditions, rather than dramatic

events (Putnam et al., 2016). At the same time, the focus on the more operational level of ABIs is warmly suggested by scholars because it would allow to better understand how to frame the initiative so to avoid its failure (Chaney et al., 2018) and to truly create the conditions to be generative and healthy (Berthoin Antal et al., 2016).

The limited knowledge on how to live and deal with the paradoxical relationship between Arts and Management in ABIs has so enlighten the research question: *“how do actors deal with the paradoxical tension that emerge when embedding arts into a non-arts organization?”*, with particular attention to the dynamics behind belonging, organizing and performing categories of paradox.

3. METHODS

Empirically, the paper takes stock of the case of corporate museums (Danilov, 1992), as specific form of ABI to study how actors deal with the paradoxical tension that emerge when embedding arts into a non-arts organization. Methodologically, the paper uses expert interviews (Bogner et al., 2009) to informants daily involved in corporate museums. Here after, first the research setting is justified, then the methodology is explained with the sample, and last data collection and data analysis are presented.

3.1 RESEARCH SETTING

The selected empirical setting is that of Italian corporate museums, facilities with a collection of artefacts displayed in a museum-like setting, that communicate the history, operations, and/or interests of a company to employees, guests, customers, and/or the public (Danilov, 1992; Nissley & Casey, 2002).

There are two main reasons for choosing corporate museums as the research setting.

The first reason lays in their positioning within the debate of ABIs. Previous studies in ABIs have generally overlooked corporate museums (Chaney et al., 2018). They have mainly looked at episodic and sporadic situations (Lee et al., 2018), as artists-in-residence programmes, and this has prevented them from entering the nuts and bolts of the daily operational dynamics. By difference, corporate museums are acknowledged to be long-term initiatives (Comunian, 2009), representing an ideal setting where to study the daily operational dynamics of embedding arts within a non-arts organization over time. The second reason lays in their acknowledged complexity, being described as the ultimate form of ABIs (Chaney et al., 2018). This is because, when a non-arts organization decides to invest on a corporate museum, its investment is potentially limitless (Liggeri, 2015) and consistent in terms of money and time (Comunian, 2009; Schiuma, 2011). It was therefore logical to select corporate museums as the means to study practices to solve tensions in Arts and Management relationship, since there would be the urgency to quit the frictions to maximize the investment and ensure its lasting over time.

The Italian panorama was selected to conduct the study because of Italy’s position at the forefront of corporate investment in the arts (Bzdak, 2022) and its place as a leader in creating corporate museums (Riviezzo et al., 2021), due to the presence of well-established historical companies using their heritage as a strategic asset.

3.2 EXPERTS INTERVIEWS

The research question was designed to investigate the research phenomenon in a real-life way, namely the interaction between Arts' affiliated members (the people in charge of the corporate museums) and Management's members (people of the company, external to the museums but who interact with it). For this reason, the paper adopts expert interviews (Bogner et al., 2009) to collect data directly from those subjects involved in the phenomenon under scrutiny.

Experts are people who have not just theoretical but also factual knowledge about their area of expertise or of a certain issue (Bogner et al., 2009). The decision to rely on experts interviews was made because suggested by previous studies. Scholars of ABIs warmly suggest interacting closely with professionals, to collect extensive descriptive accounts on how people live arts-based processes within their own tasks (Taylor & Hansen, 2005). Scholars who study paradoxes also encourage contextualized field studies that enable researchers to focus on routine tasks rather than dramatic events (Cunha & Putnam, 2019). It is worth noting that with the use of expert interviews, the author is not interested in their personal biographies and idiosyncratic perspectives, but as representatives of a larger domain, that of corporate museums (and their companies owning the museum).

A total number of 62 experts took part in the study. Informants involved in a real corporate museum (i.e., museum manager, museum curator, but also corporate manager supervising the museum and employees working with the museum), were selected for the study. On top of the informants coming from specific companies with a corporate museum, also experts of corporate museums were interviewed for their broader vision. See table 2 for further details.

Table 2. Experts

	TOTAL
Museum	37
<i>Director</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Manager</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Curator</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Other staff</i>	<i>10</i>
Company	18
<i>President</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Manager</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Operative staff</i>	<i>4</i>
Other profiles	7
<i>Heritage consultants</i>	<i>7</i>

Informants have been selected with a purposive sampling (Ritchie et al., 2013) for more likely matching the sample to the research question, thus improving the trustworthiness of the findings. The selected informants, who are anonymous for privacy's concerns, all come from museums where the collection is business-based

(i.e. composed of historical artefacts, like past iconic products, blueprints, epoch photos) for comparability. Furthermore, all the informants belong to corporate museums censused by MUSEIMPRESA, the Italian National Association of Corporate Museums. This condition was introduced for more rigour in the selection of only certified corporate museums. The informants come from corporate museums of companies working in diverse business sectors (e.g., food, alcohol, services etc) and from corporate museums with a diverse governance (i.e., under the company, as a foundation), to ensure heterogeneity for transferability. More precisely, the 58% of the companies operates in the consumer goods field (e.g., clothes, alcohol, coffee), while the remaining part delivers services, such as insurance services, and produces industrial goods, as heavy vehicles. The 67% of the institutions are corporate museums placed under a function within the company, such as the marketing and communication department, while the remaining part is run by a separate foundation.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The 62 expert interviews were face-to-face individual interviews, all held in Italian, between March 2021 and December 2023. The interviews were semi-structured and organized as follows. The first section was a self-introduction about the informant's professional background, to have contextual information. The second section was about the relationship between the corporate museum and the company. The third part was instead about the challenges of the daily life, probing experts to consider whether and how the differences between Arts and Management world have contributed to those challenges. The fourth and last part was about practices they have found helpful to solve the challenges induced by the divergence of the two sides. Interviews were mostly held online, they lasted on average one hour, they were all video-taped and transcribed verbatim. The overall transcriptions of the 62 interviews resulted in a corpus of around 600 pages. The moment of the interviews was the occasion to ask informants to share materials, such as organizational charts, strategic plans, specific outputs produced by the museums for the affiliated companies and, viceversa, excerpts of requests made by the companies to the museums. The materials were collected to triangulate what the informants were telling with archival data.

The data analysis consisted of four steps. A first preliminary step was creating a memo-writing paper with accounts on the specific tensions that were emerging while checking under which categories of paradoxical tensions those frictions were falling (belonging, organizing, and performing). This preliminary step helped the author gaining adequate confidence with the diverse interviews and the emerging categories of tension. The second step consisted of open coding, which was made paragraph by paragraph and labelling codes by retaining informants' words and using gerund forms. A third step involved axial coding to search for similarities and differences among the first-order concepts and aggregate them into second-order concepts, distinguishing between tensions and strategies to deal with them. At this stage tensions and strategies were sorted to distinguish between those emerging at the belonging, organizing, and performing levels. In the fourth stage, drawing attention to the strategies to deal with the tensions, the second-order concepts were grouped in strategies put in place by the management or the arts side or both, and a visual framework was built (figure 1, Discussion section).

4. FINDINGS

Through the medium of corporate museums and based on experts' interviews, an arsenal of strategies was identified for handling the paradoxical tensions that emerge when embedding arts within a non-arts organization, specifically to address the operational dynamics subtending paradoxes of belonging, organizing, and performing. The clearest finding observable is that both the referees for the companies and for the corporate museums are equipped with their strategies to deal with tension. Further, a feeling of reciprocal acceptance is emerging: informants recognized that the strategies envisioned by the management define the perimeter of action for the corporate museums, which are free to self-organize but within the given directions.

The following section is divided into three parts, one for each of the three dynamics subtending the paradoxes of belonging, organizing, and performing. For each section, the tension and strategies are presented.

4.1 BELONGING

Belonging paradox (with contradiction in roles, principles, and values) stands clear when the people working at corporate museums and people working at the company are caught between homogeneity and distinction within and for the collective organization.

Across the diverse interviews to experts, belonging tension featured prominently and they were mainly manifested by informants from corporate museums, with references to distress of being caged in typical industrial values. For example, one interviewed curator confessed:

“We here do another job, we work on the collection. It's not easy, believe me ... the business rules fit us so tight, and it is so uncomfortable at times” – COMuseumStaff

At the same time, excerpts from company experts' interviews signalled reluctance about museum's role, because only naively working to the brand, as one informant criticized:

“Let me tell you, sometimes there is a risk of dealing with things that are so beautiful, that they lose their basic role, which is precisely that of working for the brand” – MIManager

This was triangulated with the shared discomfort of museum staff from being perceived as the “weirdos” of the company, due to their colleagues at the company mocking the role of the museum as a game park or as a storeroom:

“Sometimes, we for them are the ones having fun and doing nothing, because we work with art” – RMMuseumManager

“Sometimes they see us as sad and dusty places, full of old things and papers.” – FICurator

Furthermore, many respondents from the museums' side showed the distress of being perceived as invisible by the employees of the company, especially in those cases where the companies are multinational. This is also crystal clear in the words of one company's referee, stating:

“Even if we wanted to reduce ourselves to the Italian reality only, we are talking about almost 40,000 people. It is as if we were a city... Just as we should not take it for granted that the inhabitants of a city have visited the local museums, in the same way not all our employees, I believe, are aware of the museum.” – LOManager

Belonging tension has drawbacks also in more praxeological moments, for instance in the assignment of budgetary resources. Indeed, if the role of the museum is not sufficiently clear to the eyes of management's people, the museum's bargaining power in requesting additional funds is very limited. This viewpoint was confirmed by one of the interviewed heritage consultants:

“The challenge of every corporate museum is to make the management understand how many people and resources are needed... that is a lot.” – Heritage Consultant #1

When asked to think about practices to resolve tension, almost all the informants confirmed that a clear formalization of museum's positioning within the company favours a sense of homogeneity between museums' people and management's people. This is especially valid if certified on tangible documents, making clear the hinging of the museum under the business rules:

“For example, if one decides that heritage is at the centre of the CSR strategy and places it in the organisational chart in that direction and narrates it in the sustainability reports, as an internal reasoning it is then automatic that we think of it under CSR and we recognize its role here” – PNManager

The formalization of corporate museums' positioning is much more helpful, based on experts' experience, if under the direct control of top management. Indeed, managers and employees will not question about their unification with the museum within the organization, because imparted by the upper echelons. On the other hand, the museum's staff will be granted with top management's sponsorship:

“Since 2020, the museum has been under the direct control of the president. So, it is a top-level directorate that reports to the president because the president has wanted this directorate. It really turned our life around.” – AMMuseumDirector

Beyond the organizational position, three informants shared that physically locating the museum in a central physical place for the organization can also make the difference. Exemplary is the story told by one manager arguing that the position of the museum in front of the canteen is a happy place:

“If at Christmas the Chief decides that the Foundation sets up the space for a festive greeting with coffee and panettone... and if it does it every year because the Chief decides it should be a tradition, you understand that the rest of the people perceive you as an integral part. It is no coincidence that they are in front of the canteen, in a passing place, not elsewhere, inside.” – PIManager1

In combination with the formalization of museum's role and organizational position by top management, a second strategy emerged to be valid, but this time carried by the museums' staff. The experts from the corporate museums and the heritage consultants agreed that the company sets the key position of the museum, but then the museum is free to self-organize internally its activities. This is confirmed by experts when interviewed, but it is also clearly stated in a written publication edited by one heritage consultant:

*“The founder founded the *name of the museum* by stating its mission, within which to develop - in a culturally free and creative way - services, initiatives and projects.” – Heritage consultant #2*

The capability of self-organizing, in terms of initiatives and projects, allows the museums to not suppress the arts principles but to also chase a cultural role, if not detrimental for the overall organization and if remaining within the given perimeter, as one curator recalled:

“It is clear that we do not deal with the company's main business, but art must always find a thread and a connection with what is happening within the company, while also taking into account contemporary issues, the impact on the territory, on its own community of reference...” – COCurator

The practice of self-organizing does not insist only on the initiatives of the museums, but it also regards the internal skills. Among the informants, museums testified to have space for self-selecting people. For instance, one museum's manager shared the decision to recur to cultural skills only through external services, such as cooperatives, while maintaining internally to the museums only the necessary professionals to deal with the management:

“The company gives us carte blanche on how to organize ourselves, if we respect the budget. The approach we have is that internally there are just the two of us, me and the curator. We save money by being in-house only, and for the rest, as open-door visits to schoolchildren, we turn to external services.” - MCMuseumManager

Like this, there is the experience of another museum's manager that prefers to not hire professional curators by choice, to avoid further tension with the management side:

“We do not formally have a curator by our own choice, we preferred to have people who could coordinate between heritage and management, not vertically on heritage. Why? Because management is very much present on the collection, the curator would like a say and tensions would increase.” - FUMuseumManager

All in all, practices to flatten belonging are a clear formalization about museum's organizational position to ensure museum's consistency with the company, coupled with a gradient of freedom to the museums to self-organize to maintain distinction.

4.2 ORGANIZING

Organizing paradox (with contradiction and tension from discordant practices and artefacts) emerges when the people at the corporate museums and those working at the affiliated companies are caught between full integration and zero collaboration.

Before entering in the details of organizing tension, it is important to underline that, across the interviews, there were also references to tension in the collaboration which were not explained by differences in artefacts or procedures, but they were the consequences of mismanagement of the relationship. As a matter of example, one of the museum's referees, working as social media manager at the museum, lamented a difficult relationship with the communication department of the company, but he recognized that the divergences were due to more personal issues:

"It's a topic of discussion with my colleagues, but it's a matter of age... They are of a different generation to me, they think like 20 years ago, I clash with them because we have different visions on how to use social media, not because they are from the company." – COOperative Staff

Organizing tension, instead, were mentioned by both referees of the museums and the companies, and they were linked to diverse ways of treating the museum's collection. On one hand, referees from corporate museums think about the preserved artefacts as heritage objects and they process them following historiographic rules:

"There is a whole set of technicalities, clear rules to follow to build, maintain, update and keep a repository or museum alive. It is not a discipline that can be improvised one day! Let's stop thinking that!" – Heritage consultant #4

On the other hand, referees from the company interpret the same artefacts from the viewpoint of their business functions, and they would process them in a more utilitarian way.

"We would like to do more posts that ride on the topics that are active at that moment, do a kind of peaky betting on the topics of the moment using heritage instrumentally. We have seen that it works. It's a little bit of a "as long as it's talked about!" - PNManager

In this background, frustration emerged. On one hand, museums' staff confessed that they sometimes are warmly invited to gloss over sensitive periods, episodes, or characters from the past. This generates frustration among people working at the museums because contrary to history's disclosure:

“There are certainly grey areas in the history of companies. As an historian, you are obliged to tell the entire story. Also, if you start hiding things, you make things worse. You let people imagine things that are much worse than what it is.” – Heritage consultant #3

This frustration leads to inertia of museums’ staff, caught between accomplishing professional rules or the managerial requests. In turn, this inertia fuels managers’ impatience and persistence in requiring contents for their department. For example, one curator shared that she is always in a rush for addressing managers’ request:

“Sometimes I don't have time to do all the necessary archive research. it's a pity because the content would look better if you worked with less haste” - MICurator

Organizing tension also took the form of snootiness among museums’ staff when telling how managers and employees at the company appropriate the museums’ contents and self-adjust them to their needs. For example, one archivist shared that he is bothered from seeing his contents squeezed *“by the dirty hands of managers”*, as he confessed. On the other side, companies’ referees lamented that sometimes museum’s staff is excessively rigid in sharing materials and tends to overcontrol, with the consequence of lengthening the time:

“When I present a piece of content to the archivist, he often complains that things that are essential to him are missing and that he must rework it. But then you waste time, sometimes you have to mediate for a middle way” – LOCompanystaff

Looking at the practices to resolve organizing tension, the concept of mandate emerged from interviews of the two sides. Companies’ referees pointed out that a way to solve tension is assigning the museum a mandate with specific outputs (e.g., contents for communication, dossiers on historical artifacts for the R&D department, suggestions for training courses etc), but then delegating all the moments for the operational development of those outputs to the museums’ people.

The management’s mandate of producing certain outputs to museums can happen both formally and informally. If formally, the museums can receive an invitation to sit to strategic and more functional meetings, where the main business plans are explained and the museum is asked to contribute in terms of stories, research, dossiers:

“The indications that come to us from our general management, in the meetings that are organized fortnightly, are general indications of the areas of activity in which the group intends to operate, e.g. wellness, mobility” – COMuseumoperativestaff2.

If informally, the mandate to museums is given with managers’ directly visiting the museums’ offices, email the museums’ staff with written request, or just calling them for specific research, as one employee described his relationship with *“the archive’s guy”*:

“There is no real scheduling, when needed we talk on the phone. I ask him and he signs off, then emails me what he thinks is appropriate” – LOCompanystaff2

On the other side, the museums’ staff accepts to serve the business and to produce requested outputs, with the promise of being let alone when working on the collection:

“If you are grafted into marketing, you must submit to marketing. If you are a foundation, you have to be connected to the company’s corporate strategy. If you stay stick to this relation, and you do your job, then you are autonomous.” - AMCurator

More precisely, museums’ informants were concord in stating that the major leverage of freedom they asked for is the application of curatorial practices when caring about the collection, because helping them to also satisfy their professional rules:

“In short, Global Communication asked us to create an exhibition. Given the assignment, then everything behind was done by just us, but because we know all the constraints for example of handling the works, the rights, the lighting... it's our profession.” - CIMuseumManager

An interesting excerpt that illustrates this agreement on management's mandate but with the museum's autonomy is a passage from an interview with one of the heritage consultants who recalls her first job. There, the museum she worked for was part of the innovation department and its task was to help the sales managers to present the new products. As part of this mandate, the museum staff also took the liberty of adding more historical data to the technical data sheets, so that they could be used to simultaneously to fill the archive. In this way, the museum respected the management's mandate, while at the same time exercising its professional expertise:

“We now do the texts for the product sheets and use them as a form of cataloguing. At a certain point we realized that it was important for us that the technical department's product sheets were well written and that in the end it was minimal effort to write down even the most technical things... so we started to do them ourselves, we explained this to the technical department and told them that this would optimise time and they left us in charge of this activity.” – Heritage consultant #2

All in all, a practice to flatten organizing tension consists of managers calling the shots when defining the expected outputs, but then delegating museums’ staff with the more operational and material duties while tacitly allowing them to chase their heritage norms.

4.3 PERFORMING

Performing paradox (with contradiction in expected performances and related metrics) comes to light both when setting a priori and when measuring a posteriori corporate museums' performance towards the company. Referees from corporate museums noted that the difficulties are most pronounced when functional managers (e.g., Accounting & Control department, as well as the functions overseeing the museum) request them to explicitly define their objectives using business-like numerical targets, which will later be evaluated quantitatively.

For example, one of the museum managers shared her concerns about presenting the budget for the coming year. She said that she could already imagine a possible drop in expectations when it came to assessing the museum's achievements through numerical figures at the end of the year.

“When you're cutting unnecessary cost in the company, the first one you put under the magnifying glass is the museum. However, if one had metrics that demonstrated the benefits for the final community and showed them to the board, then perhaps alternative ways could be found to avoid brutally cutting funds. But I am not so confident we will have those metrics...” - AIMuseumManager

Across the interviews, with both affiliates to museums and companies, the impossibility of putting a number near to museum's activities emerged. Indeed, experts from museums remarked that it is difficult rather impossible to express artistic achievements through a synthetic indicator. Exponents of corporate museums claimed that, in cultural institutions as corporate museums are, it is vital to provide space for letting the complexity but also empathy to emerge, and they lamented that numbers are not the right medium to do so.

“How do you put the memorability of the experiences a business museum leaves you with on an indicator? A single number? A book of 100 pages would not be enough, imagine a set of numbers...”
– Heritage consultant #6

At the same time, when interviewing referees from the companies, the author asked them to think about possible business indicators they would suggest applying to corporate museums. What emerged is that also informants with a more managerial background experienced distress in finding a numerical formula. They indeed tended to concentrate on words rather than formulas, and to call for complex econometric models to come into help.

“Maybe we should think of an algorithm where you throw in data... as econometric models, they give you a correct concise number.” – LACompanyController

There was so a general frustration among interviewees, subtending the difficulty yet cruciality of making evident the work of corporate museums for the companies, for legitimizing the effort and seizing the

investment. This urgency is also traceable in official speeches of President and Advisor of the National Association of Corporate museums, as the one reported on Italian newspaper article:

Making the intangible tangible, in the activities of corporate culture. And therefore define precise metrics capable of returning a defined value of the historical heritage offered by the museums and archives of Italian companies.” – IlSole24Ore, President of MUSEIMPRESA, May 2022

Coming to practices, the idea of setting boundaries by the companies but letting museums free to experiment emerged also for dealing with performing tensions. Experts from the companies shared that posing an open accountability demand is a way to overcome tensions by museums, with “open” meaning both free of conventional business indicators and free of deadlines.

“The museum's budget is different from our budget, even in the order of magnitude, so the economic results it can achieve are so infinitesimal that it makes no sense to measure it based on the classic EBIT and to use for budgeting again... On the other hand, no one else does that job on historical heritage... it is important to measure what the museum does distinctively” – COManager2

This open accountability demand has a dual value. Since it is a formal request for accountability, it pushes the museum to design its metrics because it makes the museum feel the responsibility to reply to it. However, without time and technical constraints, museum’s people are reassured that the developed indicators, if not applied and working properly, will not be used against them, thus they are more encouraged to give a try.

When probed during the interviews through direct questions on “what could be a measurable performance for a corporate museum”, without the bias of using canonical business metrics, most experts admitted that they are already measuring their achievements, even if different from those expected by the business:

“Actually, if I think about it, but this is not what the business asks, we monitor everything that happens in the archive, we don't have economic KPIs of results but we monitor our activities. There are KPIs also internal to the team, to see how we spend our time, on which projects. Then there are indicators on the key projects of the year...” - MIMuseumCurator

Museums’ experts justified the measurement with the availability and easiness of data collection: “*data is already there*”, as one museum curator said. With the probing during the interviews, it stood out clear that if museums take their daily and idiosyncratic operations as basis for measurement, and if they focused on material elements (e.g. selling tickets and data from the online ticketing system), they succeed in producing numbers:

“We can't give the founding partner an economic view of the collection, as they asked, but I can definitely tell what is being done for the conservation and what is not, and I have the numbers to back it up” – LOMuseumManager

This immediacy in defining measurable performances (visitors, catalogued pieces, pupils of schools educated, dossiers for internal research...) and easiness in the access of data (CRM system, digital catalogue, registration forms, emails...) provides museums' staff with a heightened sense of trust in the information conveyed:

"We cannot directly imply that the company sells more products because of the museum. We can, however, say how many people who have come to the museum have stopped by the brand's shop, from the reception we see them coming through the door, just count them. What could go wrong?" - AIMuseumDirector

All in all, a practice to flatten tension and contradictions in performance and metrics consists of managers launching an "open" demand for numerically reporting museums' performances. A second practice for museums, to reduce difficulties in "counting the uncountable" through traditional business-like indicators, is to craft indicators based on their more operational activities and through material data. This second practice allows the museums to make the overall process of performance measurement more factual.

5. DISCUSSION

The potential and often beneficial implications of ABIs have been widely discussed in the literature (Chiappello, 1998; Masè, 2020). Scholars, however, have only recently questioned the complexity of sustaining the daily co-existence, interdependence and persistence of Arts and Management within the same organizational boundaries (Ancelin-Bourguignon et al., 2020; Meisiek & Barry, 2018).

Based on 62 expert interviews with referees from corporate museums, this paper is instead concerned with developing knowledge on how actors can manage the paradoxical tension that emerge when embedding arts into a non-arts organization to create value for the organization, especially at the belonging, organizing, and performing levels.

Findings allowed to identify three strategies to cope with the ensuing tension arising from Arts and Management relationship, every day and overtime, and these are labelled: strategic endorsement by Management, operational specialization of the Arts, and tactical mutual acceptance. Figure 1 shows the three strategies and visualizes how they can be used to retain Arts and Management duality over time while limiting the emergence of paradoxical tensions at the belonging, organizing and performing levels.

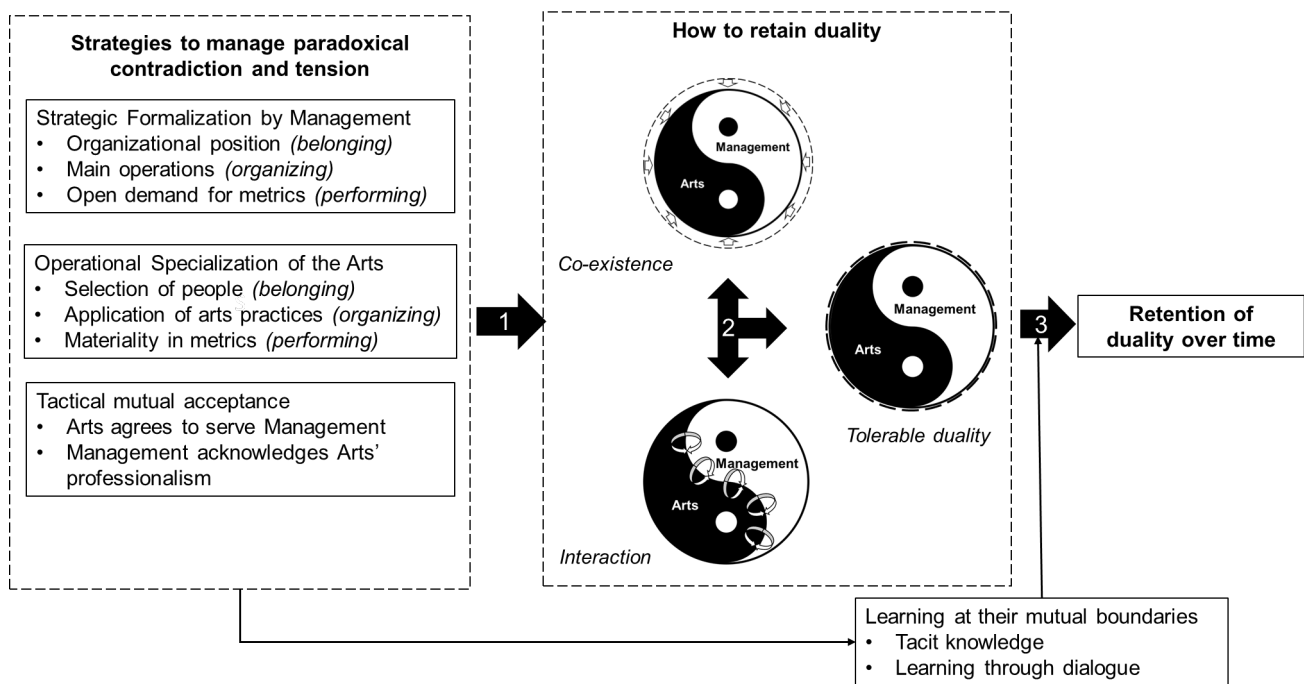


Figure 1. Strategies to navigate the paradoxical relationship between Arts and Management

The following section is divided as follows. First, the three strategies are presented with the ways in which they help to tackle tension (5.1). Then, the three strategies are discussed in relation to how they can be used to retain Arts and Management duality in a tolerable way and overtime (5.2.).

5.1 THREE STRATEGIES TO TACKLE ABIs' PARADOXICAL TENSION

Findings show that the tension arising when arts are embedded into a non-arts organization can be managed through three types of strategies, which are called: strategic endorsement by Management, operational specialization of the Arts, and tactical mutual acceptance.

The first strategy is “*strategic endorsement by Management*”, which means that the Arts Unit is given an official position within the boundaries of the non-arts organization, and setting out its main functions, and the suggested performance metrics. The managers’ strategic endorsement gives the Arts Unit recognizability within the non-arts organization’s perimeter, as well as setting out day-by-day guidelines and priorities in terms of performance. The emphasis on the managers’ endorsement can be already found in former studies on ABIs (Berthoin Antal & Strauß, 2014; Schnugg & Song, 2020), but mainly in episodic situations, as brand-artist collaborations (Flamand et al., 2021), and mainly related to the prevention of unclear expectations of artists involved in ABIs (Meisiek & Barry, 2018). Differently, the findings of this paper show that the strategic endorsement by management is helpful not only in providing legitimacy for arts people, but also in helping non-arts people to find points of connection with the arts and to understand the reasons for the arts' presence in the organization. For example, if the museum is placed under the Corporate Social Responsibility department, managers know they can turn to museums to produce contents for social initiatives, and they are

more comfortable in requesting the adoption of specific business indicators because imposed by social reporting. All in all, this first strategy, even if taken by the Management's side, enables the mitigation of the tension that previous scholars only raised but not fully explored, such as arts' people feeling trapped in an inhospitable space (Barry & Meisiek, 2015), their uncertainty linked to the plurality of their assigned tasks (Raviola & Schnugg, 2015), but also employees' and managers' scepticism or concern about wasting time, missing deadlines and losing sight of the required output if engaging with the arts (Meisiek & Barry, 2018).

In paradox theory the tension should be a shared responsibility throughout the organization (Andriopoulos & Lewis, 2009; Jarzabkowski et al., 2013), and the findings show that this premise is valid also in Arts and Management relation. The second strategy is "*operational specialization of the Arts*" and involves recognizing that Arts have expertise in contextualization. More precisely, the Arts Unit can select people freely, apply its professional practices and customize its reports through material metrics. Former scholars have suggested that giving the Arts' people the autonomy to use their own schemata could pave the way to the emergence of contradiction, and cause tension between artists and employees (Ippolito & Adler, 2015). In this paper, instead, awarding the Arts Unit operational specialization was found to be a strategy to solve (rather than to fuel) tension, because it enables the Arts Unit to keep going with its operations. For example, if the Arts Unit is free to apply its rules, it will accomplish the task on which the mixture of Arts and Management is expected in a more professional manner. This difference with previous studies can be justified with the rationale behind initiatives that draw primarily on the arts. Underpinning any episodic ABI is the intention to give managers food for thought about their normal ways of doing things (Ippolito & Adler, 2018; Taylor, 2021). Thus, contradictions and tensions are deliberately sought as they are part of the process itself (Flamand et al., 2021; Parush & Koivunen, 2014). Conversely, in a more enduring initiative such as corporate museums, as they also tend to require higher investment (Comunian, 2009; Nissley & Casey, 2002), when tensions arise, these tensions need to be soon managed to ensure productivity (e.g., assets rotation).

Tactical mutual acceptance is the third strategy found to tackle tension. Based on this strategy, both sides accept to live with "the diverse" and learn to live with tensions rising from their forced proximity. In previous studies on episodic interventions, such as collaborations with artists, tension is anticipated, and is expected to be felt forcefully, with artists and managers being in constant and severe confrontation (Schiuma, 2011), to the point where only one force will prevail. In relatively long-lasting initiatives, as corporate museums, it is apparently less draining to live with the paradox than to try to beat it in an all-out fight, also because the Arts and Management relationship is supposed to last over time. However, this acceptance of the Arts-Management duality is not a disinterested consideration, but it is tactical. The Arts Unit agrees to fit in with Management's guidance for the sake of integration. The Management side accepts the Arts' diversity for strategic gain because its game plan is to source them. In episodic interventions, such as collaborations with artists, contradiction is extemporaneous, and tension is temporary (Meisiek & Barry, 2018). In short-term initiatives, one of the two sides can push the pause button and stop being who it is for a brief while (Lee et al., 2018), and tension can be perceived more forcefully (Schiuma & Carlucci, 2015), there being no further occasions for debate.

Conversely, in enduring initiatives, such as a corporate museum, contradiction is a daily occurrence, and likely to recur over time. In these situations, where tension is likely to manifest more than once during a day, the idea of always opposing the other side and/or putting everything up for discussion does not seem to be sustainable compared to the more expedient mild tactical acceptance of the duality.

5.2 USING THE STRATEGIES TO RETAIN THE DUALITY BETWEEN ARTS AND MANAGEMENT

The three strategies jointly bring the Arts Unit and the Management side to where they can maintain a tolerable duality, including in the long term. The theoretical model of figure 1 shows the three strategies that can be used to manage the paradoxical contradiction and tension (see lefthand side box), emerging at the belonging, organizing, and performing levels. The three strategies must be used in conjunction (arrow 1) to maintain a tolerable duality (arrow 2). Through strategic endorsement, it is possible to create a space within the non-arts organization for the Arts' contextualization, so favouring the co-existence of the two opposites within a unified whole (top yin-yang in Figure 1). The coupling of strategic endorsement and operational specialization ensures that the two can interact effectively (bottom yin-yang in Figure 2). Strategic endorsement identifies the grounds for interaction, with the Management site specifying the Arts Unit's place and function. Operational specialization enables the Arts Unit to work towards interaction actively and autonomously. Tactical mutual acceptance establishes an acceptable environment where the two sides agree to live with contradiction and feel the burden of tension much less sharply (arrow 2). Scholars in previous studies have explored the continuous alignment between the two sides, seeing it as a collegial approach to give sense to the differences between Arts and Management (Berthoin Antal & Strauß, 2014; Flamand et al., 2021; Ippolito & Adler, 2018; Lafaire et al., 2022). The novelty of the array of strategies proposed here is that two of the three strategies are unilateral, and it was found that they can help to preserve a sense of self. On the one hand, with strategic endorsement, the Management side satisfies its hidden inclination towards control and order. On the other hand, through operational specialization, the Arts Unit satisfies its inclination towards creativity and crafting. Tactical mutual acceptance then favours their co-existence, as both accept contradiction as a matter of fact and for the benefits it gives each.

If the two parts continue their process of learning at their mutual boundaries (arrow 3), the duality is likely to be retained throughout the years. It is possible to speculate that, over time, the Arts Unit and the Management side can learn how to experience (but also avoid) contradiction, so making tension part of their routines. The process of learning at mutual boundaries may take place tacitly, through tactical mutual acceptance, or also through dialogue, as suggested in previous studies on paradoxical situations (Cuhna & Putnam, 2016; Smith & Lewis, 2011). The two opposite ways of acquiring knowledge, together with how they can potentially work towards retaining the Arts-Management duality, suggest that the learning micro-dynamics in play (i.e. how things can be changed in future) has yet to be explored in ABIs. While former studies on arts-based initiatives have investigated how managers and employees can learn new ways of doing and seeing from artists (Flamand

et al., 2021; Taylor & Ladkin, 2009), there is scant knowledge on how mutual learning actually happens (Ippolito & Adler, 2018), and if and how mutual learning can support the future retention of the duality between Arts and Management.

6. CONTRIBUTIONS AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The aspiration in this paper was to “*explore rather than suppress*” (Erdogan et al., 2020, p. 23) the tension emerging from the paradoxical relationship between Arts and Management in ABIs, to understand how to deal with them, whilst safeguarding ABIs’ synergic role for the non-arts organization. With the knowledge developed on this matter, the paper offers both academic contributions and practical implications.

From an academic point of view, the paper contributes to the debate on ABIs, in that it explores the beneficial yet complex relationship between Arts and Management while also covering the paradoxical contradiction and tension that arise from their duality, here with a specific focus on embedded arts-based initiatives.

The first cumulative contribution is the theoretical model developed in Figure 1, with three strategies to navigate the paradoxical relationship between Arts and Management. In previous studies, it has been claimed that arts’ integration can be beneficial for organizational value creation (Berthoin Antal et al., 2018; Carlucci & Schiuma, 2018; Masè, 2020; Strauß, 2018), although the complexity of embedding arts in a non-arts organization has been overlooked (Ancelin-Bourguignon et al., 2020). This paper takes a step forward with its line-up of three strategies, which collectively enable the actors involved to work towards co-existence and interaction of Arts and Management within the same boundaries, including in the long term, for the purposes of organizational value creation. The paper corroborates the scholars’ view whereby the Arts and Management worlds are so opposing that total fusion, or the dominance of one over the other, is unlikely (Ancelin-Bourguignon et al., 2020; Chiappello, 1998). Nevertheless, it shows that the two parts can possibly create a tolerable environment, with each preserving its sense of self even in the long-term.

The second overarching contribution is the empirical corroboration of a previously proposed concept when integrating Arts into Management, “arts’ transferability” (Ancelin-Bourguignon et al., 2020), is not applied equally across all forms of ABIs. In previous studies, academics have mainly considered tension between Arts and Management in episodic situations, like those concerning artists-in-residence (Chailan, 2018; Meisiek & Barry, 2018; Lee et al., 2018). This focus has led them to see friction between Arts and Management mainly in a positive light (Berthoin Antal et al., 2018) and as something to be sought after, for the good of the initiative (Schiuma, 2011). The decision to focus on embedded ABIs, and the decision of selecting corporate museum as research setting, extend previous knowledge, showing that, in more enduring initiatives, contradiction is experienced daily and can cause negative tension, including inertia and the impossibility to continue a task. The implications are that experience of the Arts-Management duality varies according to the form taken by the ABIs, and that there is the need to develop more contextualized strategies to sustain the favourable relationship between Arts and Management for organization’s value creation.

Last, the paper suggests a road to cross the chasm between the more practice-based knowledge on ABIs with more theoretical managerial streams, a limitation which has been evidenced by former scholars in ABIs (Ancelin-Bourguignon et al., 2020; Meisiek & Barry, 2018), by introducing the idea of paradox as a paradigmatic lens to read the phenomenon of non-arts organizations investing and blurring their boundaries with the arts.

The paper also has important practical implications, targeting both people working in the arts but collaborating with the business, and people working at companies investing in arts. The objective to enter the operational dynamics of ABIs has led to considerations on the practical challenges faced by the actors involved in the initiative, as well as it has enabled the identification of an arsenal of strategies that practitioners can implement. The theoretical model of figure 1 has thus practical validity, and practitioners can make it their own and use it in its entirety or by specific needs.

Lastly, it is important to outline suggested future directions that stem from the limitations of the present work. The qualitative approach adopted meant that it was possible to reach new conclusions that untangle the complexity of the Arts and Management relationship in embedded ABIs, but they are in some ways specific and need to be unpacked for purposes of generalizability. This could be done by retaining the focus on corporate museums but changing the variables for their selection. The relative distance between the arts and the non-arts organization's sector (consumer, or industrial), the governance of the corporate museum and the intrinsic nature of the collection itself (here history-based) are all features that could reveal diverse nuances in the duality between Arts and Management, and so demand different strategies. Also, it would be interesting to investigate in more detail the three strategies, separately and jointly, in other forms of ABIs, such as such as cultural studios in organizations. Finally, it would be helpful to delve deeper into the role that learning at mutual boundaries plays in the retention of the Arts-Management duality over time in ABIs. Overall, these three avenues for research would lead to sharper practice-based solutions to prevent barriers from obstructing the embedding of arts in non-arts organization, as well as to refocus ABIs debate from the optimistic rosy story to a more critical investigation of the relationship between the Arts and Management.

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