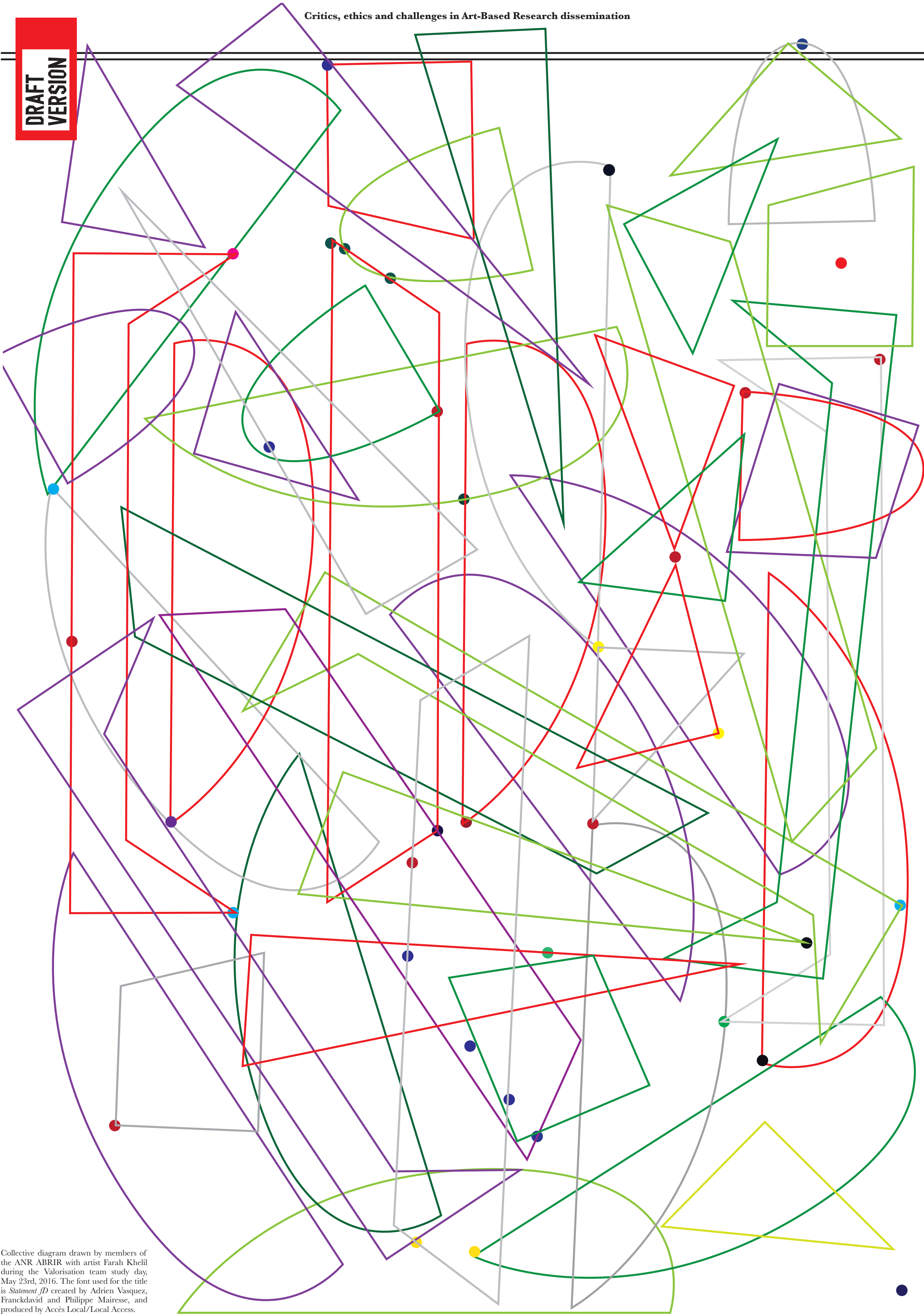


DYSFUNCTION

Critics, ethics and challenges in Art-Based Research dissemination

DRAFT
VERSION



Collective diagram drawn by members of the ANR ABRIR with artist Farah Khelil during the Valorisation team study day, May 23rd, 2016. The font used for the title is *Statement JD* created by Adrien Vasquez, Franckdavid and Philippe Mairesse, and produced by Accès Local/Local Access.

Dysfunction

Critics, ethics and challenges in Art-Based Research dissemination

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Abstract

This article aims at raising critical questions about the role of art-based research dissemination within academia, and to explain why it has become an issue. Even if art-based methods applied to management have exploded as a research field, today there are complex topics such as ethics positioning that remain unsolved and that should not be dealt with lightly. Our increasing preoccupation for the art and management research encounter has been a bit peachy until now, but it is important to highlight the risk of ingenuous ideals underlying the use of art-based methods in management research. Our article complicates “Ethics Creep” by proposing an understanding of ABR (art-based research) that locates it at the intersection of various discourses about the role of science and the ethics of knowledge production and dissemination. Our research brings three main contributions: First, it provides a methodological description of our process from raw data to artistic dissemination. Second, it provides a discussion about the ethical and political issues of knowledge dissemination through arts. Third, it links our method with ethics, by detailing our process in four moments addressing the main ethical issues we identified.

This article is based on the “ANR ABRIR” (2014-2017,) a four-year art-based research project supported by the French National Research Agency (ANR). It focuses on the work of its dissemination and valorisation team of which the three authors were active members.

Key words: **knowledge production, art-based research, ethic, research dissemination, artists’ publications, art outside of art.**

INTRODUCTION

1. ABR methods lack methodological guidelines about dissemination

While the rise of organizational aesthetics in recent decades has been integrated in real organizations and practices (Taylor and Hansen, 2005), there has been an increasing interest in the use of arts-based methods as a research approach to explore everyday organizational issues. Art-based research (ABR) can be defined as “a research method in which the arts play a primary role in any or all of the steps of the research method. Art forms [...] are essential to the research process itself and central in formulating the research question, generating data, analysing data, and presenting the research results” (Austin & Forinash, 2005: 458–459). “It emphasizes and draws on the use of artistic forms to look at aesthetic issues, [which] offers a medium that can capture and communicate the felt experience, the affect, and something of the tacit knowledge of the day-to-day, moment-to-moment reality of organizations. Not just the cleaned-up, instrumental concerns of “the business”, but the messy, unordered side as well.” (Taylor and Hansen 2005: 1224). The use of arts-based research methods (ABRM) as an approach to scientific inquiry originally grew out of the practice of creative arts therapy, in which artistic methods were used alongside therapeutic techniques to help people cope with their life situation (Larsson & Sjöblom, 2010; McNiff, 2008).

In the last two decades, researchers from other disciplines have successfully adopted ABR methods in their research inquiries: first, in artistic and design research (e.g. Hannula, Suoranta, & Vadén, 2005); and second, in the broad field of humanities including social and cultural sciences, public health and educational sciences (Brazg, Bekemeier, Spigner, & Huebner, 2010; Conrad & Kendal, 2009; Hornsby-Miner, 2007). Going further, ABRM have been useful to investigate contemporary social issues in management of organizations (Bakhtin, 1981; Strati, 2000, Barry, Meiseik, 2010; Hatch, 2002; Guillet de Monthoux, 2000, 2004; Clegg, 2005). Artworks constitute a precious source of information since they deal with the uniqueness of situations in a universal language (Barone, Eisner, 2012; Vicker, 2010).

Traditionally, ABR methods have been applied either as a data collection technique or as a dissemination technique. In the first case, the art forms are considered research data in their own right. Images, sculptures or collages replace the traditional interview excerpts or observational data or support the interpretation process of the researcher. In this case, art is used as a medium that allows researchers to investigate about the participants’ situation, experiences, concerns, challenges or obstacles in daily life. In the second case, ABR methods are used as a medium to translate an outcome of a particular research project, replacing a traditional research report and moving away from the traditional focus on textual accounts of phenomena under investigation (Foster, 2012). In this case, the art form is considered the vehicle for dissemination of research findings. The findings may present themselves as a drama or a dance performance, an exhibition of images or visual representation, an artefact or a collage (Bach, 1998; Bagley & Cancienne, 2002; Gray et al., 2000; Harrington & Schibik, 2003; Saldana, 2003).

Researchers using ABR methods are often situated within the qualitative research tradition that questions the triumphs of science and rationality (Bentz & Shapiro, as cited in Butterwick, 2002). They are motivated to challenge our conventions and assumptions about what constitutes research. Not surprisingly, the whole debate on the place and role of ABR methods in scientific and academic inquiry has been fuelled by paradigm shifts, such as the emergence of the postmodern period welcoming a more pluralistic attitude toward research (Leavy, 2009).

In line with other qualitative research traditions, ABR projects have been assigned many advantages, not in the least the fact that they open up a space for experimentation. In seeking other ways of interpreting the world, researchers can create “vivid realities that would otherwise go unknown” (Eisner, 2008, p. 11). Artworks for research are useful in terms of ethnographic investigation (Harris, 2008), presentational knowing (Seeley, 2011) or the value of emotions in management (Keremane McKay, 2011). As usually admitted (Berthoin-Antal et al., 2011; Strati, 2000; Barry and Meisiek 2007, among many others), art enables to keep tracks of invisible, subtle, ephemeral signals, giving the researcher access to more complex and hidden dimensions of phenomena. Researchers engaging with ABR methods often claim that, to some extent, the uncomfortable marriage between art and social inquiry allows them to closely connect with “the realms of local, personal, everyday places and events” (Finley, 2008, p. 71).



This collapsible poster is the first document produced by the Valorisation team in the context of the ANR ABRIR. It is a mind map of the discussions between the members of the ANR on November 21st, 2014, at the very beginning of the project. This cognitive map shows the organization of the group around thematic subgroups and associated case studies: Leaders (The Direktor), Globalization (Mondovino), Artistic Organizations (Art&Flux), Territories (Fiery Féeries & Civic City), Cities (El Pocero), Social Struggles (Lejab), and a meta-subgroup that documents and links the work of everyone: the Valorisation team. Conception: Antoine Lefebvre and Philippe Mairesse for the Valorisation team. Reference: Lefebvre, A. and Mairesse, P. (2015), Poster 211114, ANR-ABRIR, 20 mars.

In doing so, it removes academics from their ivory towers. Moreover, the use of ABR methods encourages them to produce knowledge in less tangible forms, to explore the nuances of lived experiences and to foster dialog, rather than providing direct answers (Foster, 2012). As a result, these methods can provide us with “an amazing array of possibilities for creative research work: new fields of study, new things about which to inquire, new methods of inquiry, new ways of combining knowledge of different fields, new ways to incorporate the self and the social background into your research, new technologies to play with, and new social relationships with peers” (Bentz and Shapiro, 1998: 3, as cited in Butterwick, 2002).

Indeed, ABR methods open new paths to scientific research. However, dissemination of scientific results through arts is a topic that has been overlooked. Artists tend to work with visual formats, whereas management researchers, who tend to “reside” within academic institutions and rules, use language and standardized formats to represent their findings. Thus, little is known

about how researchers can mobilize arts to disseminate research findings. There are few examples of the actual employment of artistic forms in the presentation and analysis of “aesthetic” organizational research (Linstead, 10th OS Workshop, 2016), though some researchers and scholars have theorized their own use and production of art forms to communicate, illustrate, or make their intellectual argument (Nissley, Taylor, & Houden, 2004; Taylor, 2000; Steyaert & Hjorth, 2002; Szendy, 2012; Moriceau, 2012, among others). The hypothesis is that the reader experiences and co-constructs a different kind of knowledge by interacting with the researcher through the art form. Dramaturgy, for example, externalizes and emphasizes various inner experiences, then confronts them on stage, and at last enables the “spect-actors” to re-internalize and appropriate the experience. As Woodward and Ellison (2010) indicate concerning performing arts, viewers take an aesthetic object into themselves and in return project themselves into the aesthetic object. Going further, we argue that knowledge within our publications does not only reside in the content, but also in the shape and the process through which we made them. We therefore face four main issues:

1. How do we make our research results account for our research experience and, as in arts, produce results that account for the process?
2. How can we produce objects that make sense both as artworks and as knowledge forms?
3. Can we as researchers question the very nature of our publications to seek wider and more democratic distribution?
4. Which obstacles do we need to overcome in order to legitimize those dissemination formats?

In the section below, we attempt to analyze and model the stages that we went through from raw data to dissemination. These stages are not linear, they echo with what Linstead (2016) calls “rhetorical modalities” to create “Critically Affective Performance Texts.” For the author, this type of texts are “useful illusions” that “embrace negativity without rejecting positive possibility”.

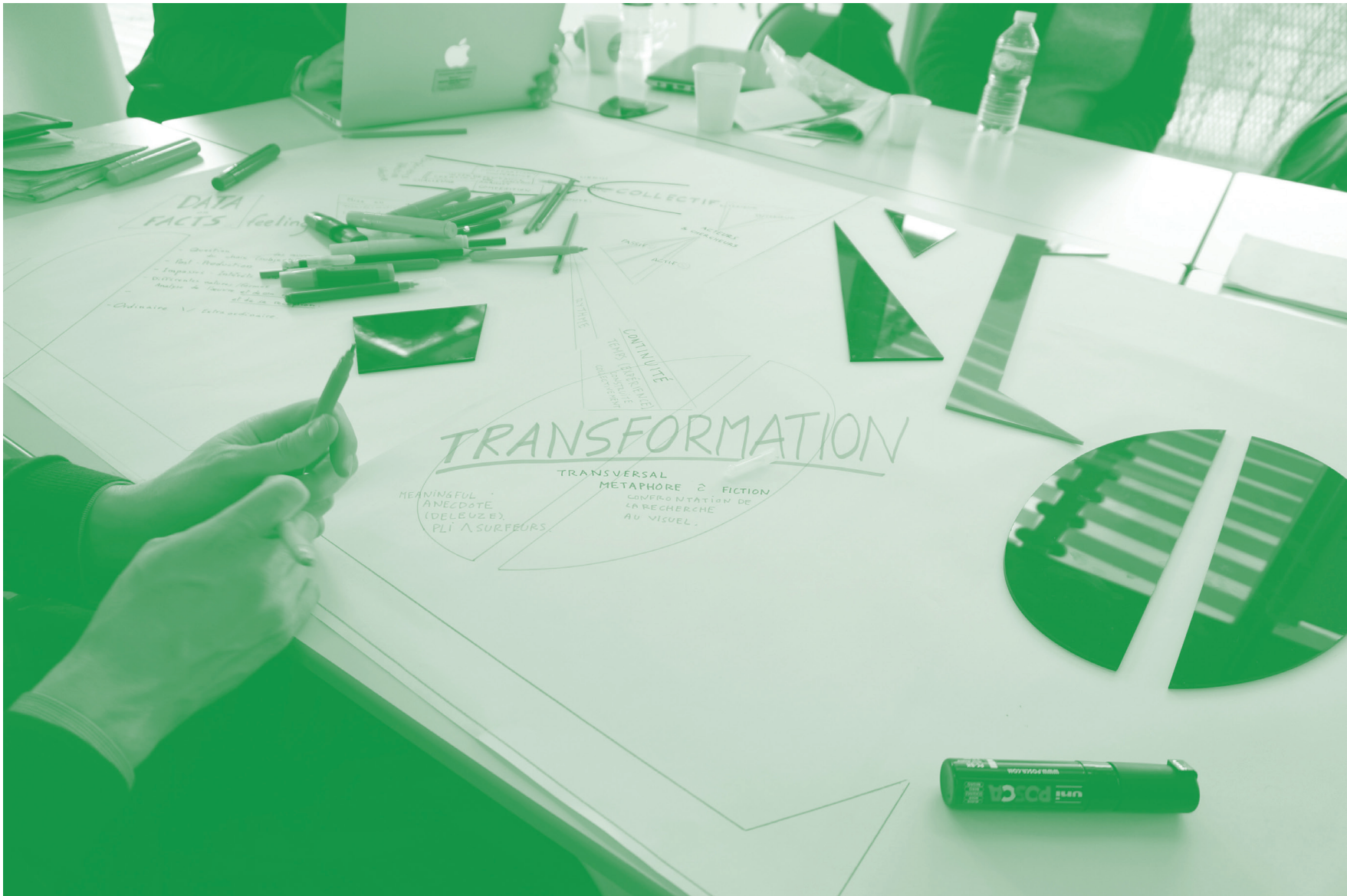
Our approach supports Linstead’s ideas, but we build into the paradigm to highlight the need for wider distribution and dissemination. Our conviction is that knowledge embodied in visual representations is generally underrepresented in scientific practice and management studies.

However, visual representations constitute objects that play a role in mediating knowledge and knowing. As Mullarkey (2009), we think reality can be regarded not as reflected by representational processes but refracted in them. Visual representations embody presentational knowledge. Among the four types of knowing identified by Heron and Reason (1997) —experiential, propositional, presentational and practical— presentational knowing is an implicit embodied knowing that requires aesthetic or artistic forms of representation (Statler & Hansen, 2005) and creates bridges between experiential and propositional knowing.

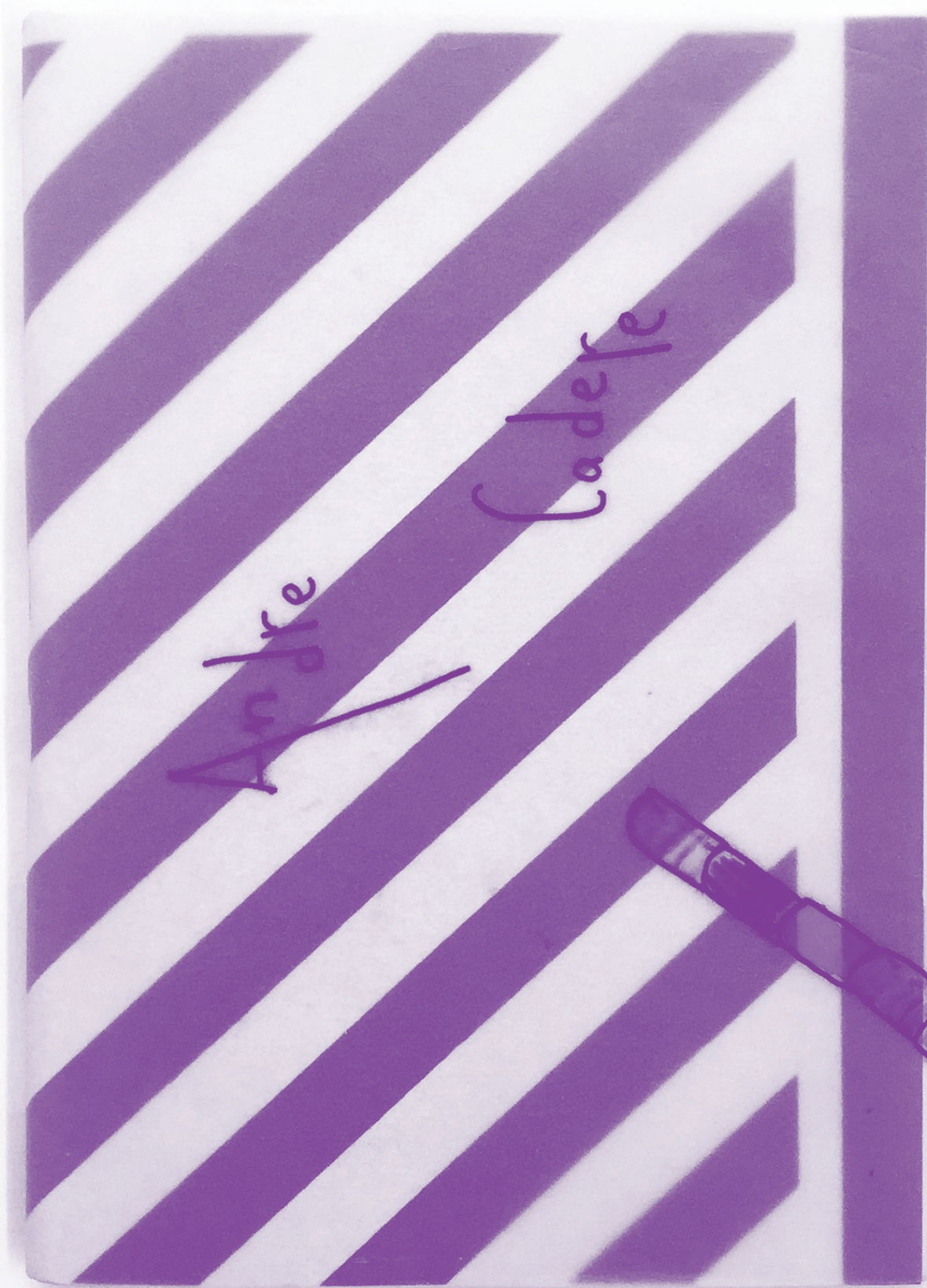
When this position is taken we are professionally no longer in possession of easily traded representational intellectual currencies in a world of “evidence”-based policy and research “impact” evaluation, rather than one of non-representational theory (Thrift 2008). In our view, research struggles today to cope with more creative forms for research output. Not so much in order to develop imaginative inputs and outcomes or to enhance the researchers’ creativity, but rather to trigger a motivated dynamic aimed at (re)defining an ethically and politically supportive positioning for research. We therefore strive to bridge a gap in current theorizing on art-based research or in the field of organizational aesthetics, which focuses on the means to enhance and develop creative research at all levels including outcomes, but scarcely wonder about the ground for such art-based knowledge production.

Two reasons could be tackled: the first is the impact of knowledge and its dissemination as a force able to transform society for the better. In that sense, the institutionalization and market logics that lead our practice have lead us to forget the real socio-economical impact that research should or could have.

The problems our society is facing need research that not only attempt to respond to contemporary questions but also is able to disseminate responses in real time to open new perspectives in the field beyond academia leaving a place for a non-specialist “spectator.”



Divided in two groups, the members of the ANR are invited to produce a graphic reaction to the methodological propositions of the Valorisation team on November 21st, 2014. They are invited to use the basic forms that compose the ABRIR logo as tools to make their drawing. One of the drawings produced this day is the diagram on the cover.



On June 19th and 20th, 2015, the Territories subgroup chose to invite artists and writers to share their exploration experiences of urban areas. The main guest of those study days was Anthony Poiraudau, a writer who was inspired Robert Smithson for his book El Poceró. The second production of the Valorisation team was created after the presentation of the Territories subgroup and the dialogues that ensued. It is composed of three elements: a blank notebook, which cover is made out of the tracing paper used for a collective note taking. A bootleg reprint of the 1967 Artforum article “The Monuments of Passaic: Has Passaic replaced Rome as the eternal city?” by Land artist Robert Smithson, and a full account of the debates of these two days titled “The Monuments of Nanterre: Has Nanterre replaced Passaic as the eternal city?” (See pp. 6-7.) Conception: Antoine Lefebvre and Philippe Mairesse for the Valorisation team. Reference: Lefebvre, A. Bobadilla, N. and Mairesse, P. (2015), Cahier 20062015_ANR-ABRIR_15-16 octobre.

In academic research, there is no such thing as a “spectator” like in an art exhibition. The spectator is neither a specialist nor an ignorant, neither a teacher, nor a student. In order to address this potential “spectator”, we need to go through a transformation process of our research facts and data, to be able to explain simply complex issues. How to address an average, non-specialist spectator is an issue for the art world as well as for the scientific community, as they both claim to bring incommensurable outcomes to society at large, when they stay parked in golden cages only insiders can access. That is why we struggle to bring more creative forms of research evaluation and dissemination.

We could say an epistemological dimension is at stake: where do we reconnect knowledge production and transfer? Should dissemination participate to knowledge production, as in a user-centred design process? Does it reconnect with the Marxist critique of production by unchaining the research workforce and branching it on the workers’ desires? Or do we attend here the ultimate phase of neo-liberalism and late knowledge capitalism deviating the search for knowledge into the production of value?

The second reason for questioning the grounds of art-based research is the taken-for-granted assumption that art and artists should pave the way for a “better” research (taking into consideration the subjective, the qualitative and the phenomenal), “better” phenomenal awareness (able to detect the untold, the invisible and the hidden, and to reveal the multiple layers involved in members’ experience), and above all “better” ethical positioning (based on the other-oriented dimension of art, in terms of interactions, and diffusion, and also in terms of philosophically caring for the otherness of the world, the self and the social). We will then face the problem of the legitimacy of our productions: their power dimension (the managerial use of art-based methods or the leverage of research by the means of a powerful art) is directly connected to their (lack of) ethics.

What is the actual significance and legitimacy of our productions? How can they, and should they benefit from, being considered artworks? Is it even relevant? This article is an attempt to be such an in-between object, what Winnicot (1971) described as an intermediary area: a zone of transition between the created and the given, the objective and the subjective: between being-in-the-world and researching it. **Between the functional and the dysfunctional: an area where the issue of functionality is suspended and replaced with a state of emergence and acceptance.**

As Foucault analyses, the antiauthoritarian struggles also denounce the way knowledge is built. They are an opposition against secrecy, deformation, and mystifying representations imposed on people.

What is questioned in our process is the way in which knowledge circulates and functions, and ultimately its relations to power. What Foucault

called the régime du savoir (Foucault, 1982.) The academic system is rooted by the interest to monitor the production and dissemination of research outcomes, while Foucault (1994, p. 292) cautioned against one-sided analyses of power, and insisted that where there are exercises of power there will also be resistance.

This is not to deny the prohibitive and dominating force of power, but to note that it also “traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, [and] produces discourse” (Foucault, 1980: 119). Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982: 120) explain that Foucault was most interested in those “cultural practices in which power and knowledge cross, and in which our current understandings of the individual, the society, and the human sciences are themselves fabricated”. Foucault took this question to an ethical ground by naming governmentality the “contact between the technologies of domination of others and those of the self.” To him, those “technologies of the self” are what may allow an individual to conduct oneself ethically within a group, within a social system. Foucault plays on the double meaning in French of the verb *conduire*, to lead or to drive, and se *conduire*, to behave or conduct oneself, therefore the word *conduite* refers to him to the conduct or the behaviour, to the way people may lead the others and the way they may lead their lives. “Perhaps the equivocal nature of the term conduct is one of the best aids for coming to terms with the specificity of power relations. For to “conduct” is at the same time to “lead” others (according to mechanisms of coercion which are, to varying degrees, strict) and a way of behaving within a more or less open field of possibilities. The exercise of power consists in guiding the possibility of conduct and putting in order the possible outcome.” (Foucault, 1982) What Foucault proposes in governmentality is not only to treat others as we would like to be treated, but to treat or conduct others as we behave and conduct ourselves. Foucault’s concept aims at creating oneself in the full awareness of the power system that influence us.

This idea of creating oneself ethically within society is always present in artistic creation and research as well, as artists and researchers are both held to high moral standards.

Concerns about the ethical quality of research are characteristic of a society where anxieties about the unintended consequences of science and technology are increasingly common (Beck 1992). Where modernity

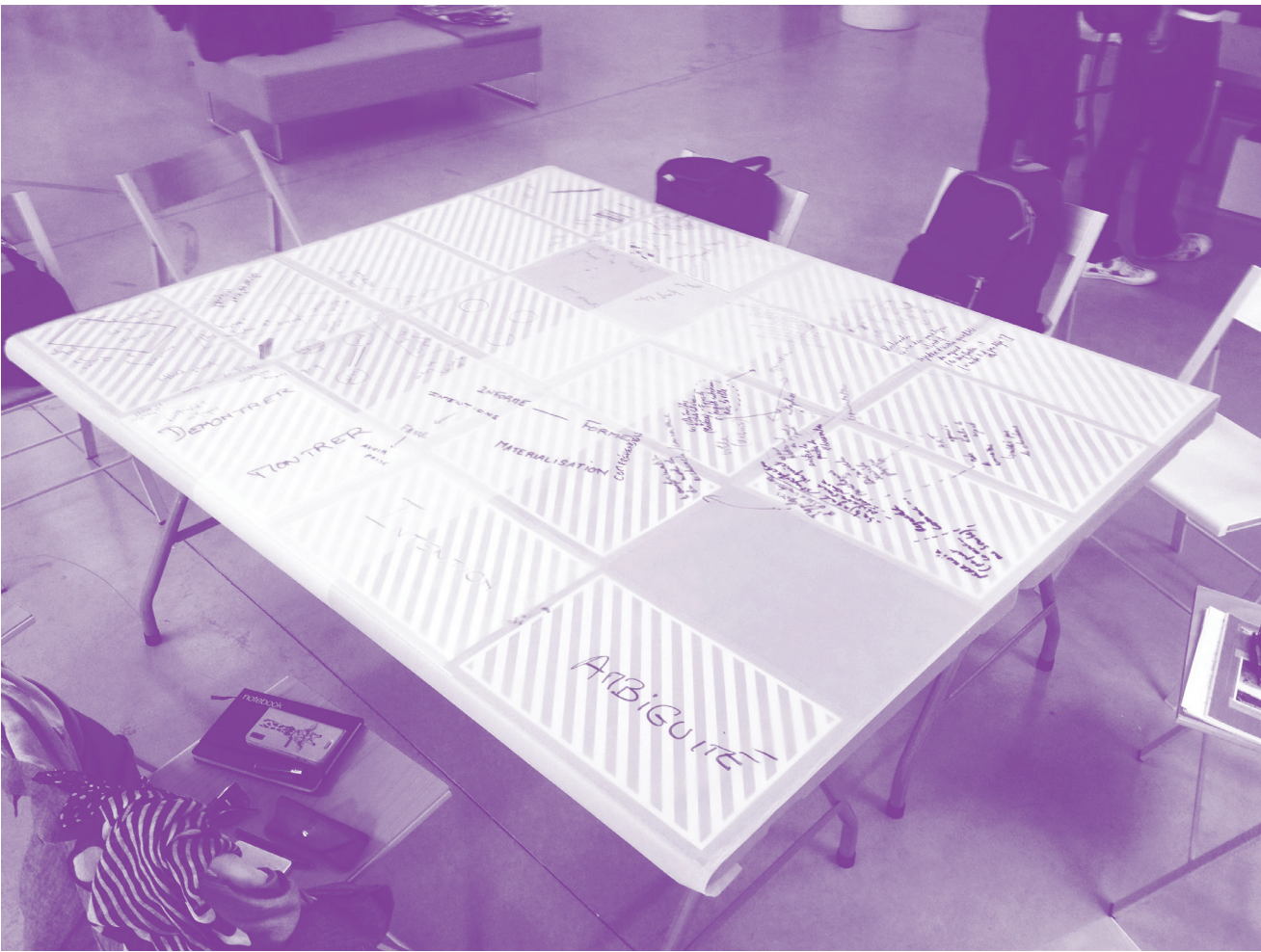
manifests a general trust in the ability of science to resolve our most pressing problems, we have become attuned to the truth that science itself poses risks and that these risks can no longer be explained away as temporary aberrations in the march of progress. Existing approaches to ethics review are seen as rooted in positivism and promoting a biomedical conception of risk and harm (Murray & Holmes, 2009), which may be at odds with social science research that is rooted in a critical or constructivist paradigm (Haggerty, 2004; Patterson, 2008). Critics have argued that qualitative research has been particularly challenged by reviews that did not reflect the norms and accepted standards of the qualitative tradition (Lincoln & Tierney, 2004; Macdonald & Carnevale, 2008). Furthermore, qualitative research on health and conducted in healthcare settings poses unique challenges for researchers who must negotiate the stringent requirements of clinical environments (Hoeyer, Dahlager, & Lynoe, 2005; Morse, 2007). Most recently, these debates have been taken up by researchers undertaking participatory and community-based health research, which promotes research partnerships, collaboration, and ongoing relationships (Blake, 2007; Boser, 2007; Bradley, 2007; Munoz & Fox, 2011; Shore, 2006). Ethics in research is thus mainly centred on “respectfully and equitably integrating community members’ perspectives in the research process” in accordance with laws, regulations, and policies for protecting human subjects and their privacy when participating in research (Yonas and al., 2016). Ethics rules and practices have developed widely on the basis of such a protection of the persons and become an imperative. More broadly, the concept of “ethics creep” has been linked to the erosion of academic freedom. This claim was first advanced by Haggerty (2004, p. 391) who argued it constrains “our knowledge production endeavours” and contrasted it with the comparative freedom journalists have. Strangely enough, the ethic concern was paralleled in these early years by the call to art: the ethnographic dimension of art and artists would help critically reflecting upon the other in general, even in such specific fields as the medical ones (for example the surgery field, Harris 2008). But sadly, the ethic about research cannot be limited to caring about the well being of participants and observers. **As we noticed above, the ethic part is also about the epistemological positioning and about the call to art and art-based methods. They both relate to power.**

In the first line of “Ethics Creep: Governing Social Science Research in the Name of Ethics”, Haggerty (2004: 391) evokes Michel Foucault’s claim that “knowledge is produced by multiple forms of constraint”. Recently, van den Hoonaard (2011) has argued that this power/knowledge articulation creates a seductive force that pulls various stakeholders into a bureaucracy that serves to normalize behaviour, but is not authentic ethics. This is a popular sentiment in the literature, but ignores that most ethical frameworks attempt to normalize and regulate behaviour. **In keeping with**

Juritzen, Grimen, and Heggen (2011), we aim to explore the relationship between ethics review and knowledge production by returning to Foucault’s work on governance, which moved beyond discipline to account for the role of discursive practices, and “dispositifs”. A dispositif entails more than discourse: it is a heterogeneous assemblage of knowledge, practices, discourses, techniques, added to « institutions, architectural settings, regulating decisions, administrative processes, philosophical, moral or philanthropic propositions, in a world: told as well as untold matter » (Foucault, 1976.)

It is such a “dispositif” that we experienced and that we will here describe. This article is based on the four-year art-based research project “ANR ABRIR” (2014-2017) supported by the French National Research Agency (ANR). It was focused on the investigation of the relation between the arts and the critical mutations in organizations. Would an art-based investigation produce new outcomes about how arts and artists provide a different understanding of critical mutations in organizations? Several research subgroups investigated on several organizational domains where mutations are currently very critical: leadership, restructuring, urban areas, cities, art organizations. Each heterogeneous subgroup included at least one artist and a number of researchers, and studied art interventions, artworks and artists participation in mutation processes. A group was dedicated to the valorisation and dissemination of the research outcomes, group of which the three authors were active members.

How art-based method could produce different results soon appeared to us as a meta-reflexive issue and led us to question the forms of the outcomes themselves, since the very beginning of our research process. Integrating the production of the results to the research process was one of our first goal. We thus designed a “dispositif” in order to produce intermediary outcomes that were injected into the research process of all sub groups. The intermediary products were themselves conceived as art-works as well as research results.



Discussion and collective note taking at the art center La Terrasse in Nanterre after an exploratory walk in the city, at the end of the Territories subgroup study days, June 19th - 20th, 2015.



Bootleg reprint of the 1967 Artforum article “The Monuments of Passaic: Has Passaic replaced Rome as the eternal city?” by Land artist Robert Smithson, with a translation in French by Anthony Poiraudreau.

Our research “dispositif”, we fully admit, could be an attempt to reinforce the researcher power hidden behind the transparent curtain of openness of art-based methods (Mairesse and Debenedetti, forthcoming). We consequently strived to avoid the blind and naïve belief of an automatic artistic authenticity and followed a strict process for building critical performative texts as research outputs.

The process is characterized by four moments that we identified as linked to four different issues in ABR ethics. Each moment expresses a specific relation to the field and an active positioning of the researcher, and each corresponds to an ethical aspect of the issue. The first one is the **‘dissen-sus’** moment in which we focus on how to create commons within a heterogeneous community. The second is the **alterity** moment, which emerges the most in relation to data collection. The third one is the **alteration** moment, which manifests through fictional narratives created from the collected data. The third and the latest is the **‘mise en scène’** moment, where our research stages its results, and risks its legitimacy by compromising with impure common-sense knowledge or prejudices.

2. The four moments: Modalities to keep in mind when moving from raw data to research dissemination

In order to disseminate the work of the ABRIR research project, the Valorisation team¹ started by doing the usual communication work (creation of a logo and a website), but it wasn’t sufficient and experimental enough for a collaboration involving artists. We then decided to create a series of publications inspired by the tradition of artists’ books and artists’ publications and influenced by artistic movements such as Dada, Fluxus, conceptual art and the Situationist International. The history of artists’ books starts in the nineteenth century with the works of William Blake and William Morris in Great Britain, and the collaborations between the painters Manet and Redon with the poet Mallarmé in France (Drucker, 1994). For Mœglin-Delcroix and Phillpot however, the term artist book should only be used for works produced since the historical moment of conceptual art in the 1960s and 1970s, for a type of publication that is produced and inspired by the neo-avant-gardes (i.e. Fluxus and Concrete Poetry). For the theoreticians of artist books what seems important in the context of the 1960s ideals is that these new types of publications are affordable for a couple of dollars and that they draw away from the *Livre d’artiste* or *Livre de peintre*, which were very expensive and fancy objects produced by merchants rather than artists (Mœglin-Delcroix, 1997). The ideal of artist books stems from the counter-cultural context of the 1960s and 1970s and aims to produce new forms of art that can be collected by anyone and bring art and everyday life closer, “as a kind of possible ‘mass market literature’: a popular book, something one could pick up in the train station to pass the time on a long journey somewhere, perhaps even on holiday.” (Monk & Siegelau, 2004)

Today, the commentators tend to broaden the definitions, in order to include other types of works printed and distributed by artists. Artists and theoreticians now prefer the term artists’ publications because it shows that any type of printed matter made by artists, such as ephemera, artists magazines or self-published zines share the same issues and ideals. The focus of today’s research on such materials also took a practical turn and shifted from the medium, the object, towards the process, the act of publishing as an artistic practice (Gilbert, 2015; Lefebvre, 2014.)

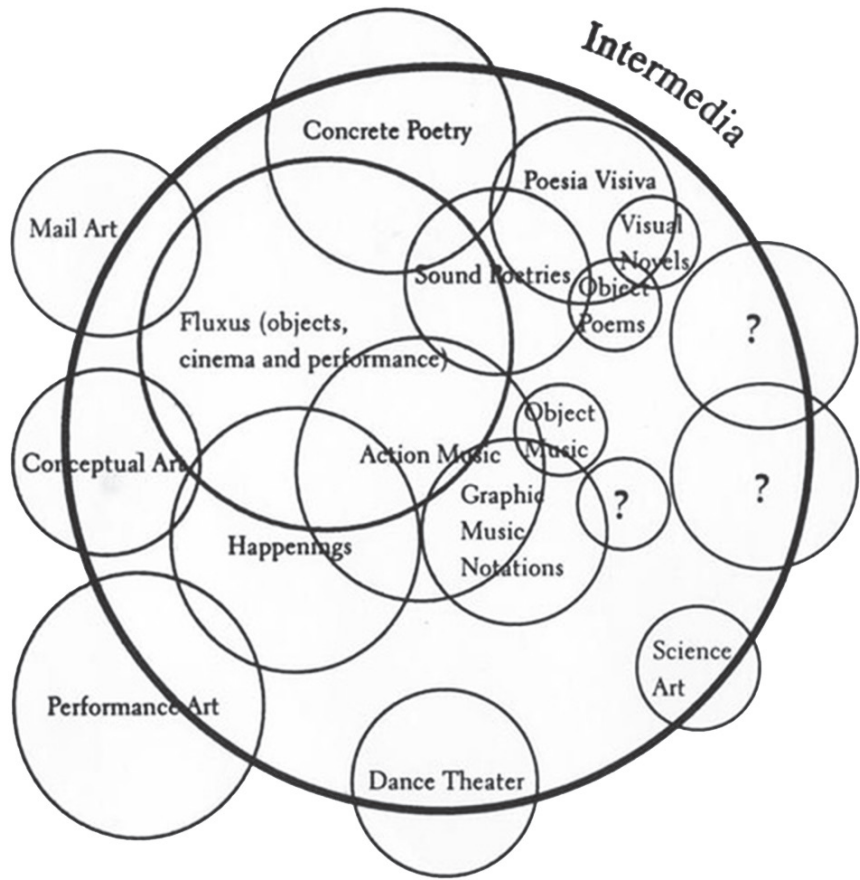
In this context, we engaged our fellow researchers in creative experiences, such as collective note taking, writing photo novels, filming each other, etc. We invented a series of processes in order to introduce a playful dimension in data gathering and to create hybrid forms such as: a collapsible poster, a notebook and its brochures, or a pocket book of a play. Inspired by the explosion of traditional artistic media in the 20th century avant-gardes, our way of working included different forms of expressions: drawing, voicing, acting, performing.

We used documents from different types of sources: from the sources of our fellow researchers, but also documents generated from our own process in order to question what could be considered as data or not. But our main material is text of different natures and types: from the sources and documents of research, from the hand written and typed notes by the members of the project, from recordings and recallings of the different participants. Our artistic and theoretical background being in conceptual art, dealing with text and language as a raw material to create artworks was natural for us.

¹ This team is composed of three people, divided equally between artist researchers and management researchers. Indeed, two of us are contemporary artists involved in the field of (post-)conceptual art, and two of us are management researchers, as one of us is both at the same time.

Indeed, Henri Flynt defined concept art in 1963 as “first of all an art of which the material is ‘concepts,’ as the material of for ex. music is sound. Since ‘concepts’ are closely bound up with language, concept art is a kind of art of which the material is language.” This definition could also apply to research, which material is concepts and language; therefore, we decided to play with the language and ideas produced in our research project to create hybrid forms that would be research publications and artworks at the same time.

This way of working playfully with text was inspired by Higgins’ concept of Intermedia. Artist publisher, member of the Fluxus group and poet, Higgins was instrumental in popularizing the Fluxus ideas through his publishing house Something Else Press. He also theorised the way Fluxus artists worked and travelled between different media through the concept of intermedia summarized in 1995 with his famous diagram.



One of the biggest challenges that we face is the way in which we present and represent our work. In the introduction of Publishing as Artistic Practice (2016), Gilbert introduces the idea of reinventing “Publishing Studies” in relation to the field of artists’ publications, and to the consequence of the recent “practical turn” in social sciences. Our experimental publishing process took place in this new field. As the experience started on a rather instinctive basis, we analysed our own process on the go, and tried to understand it so that other people might be inspired by our way of working. As it wasn’t backed up by any scientific protocol, the first question that arose was about the nature of the data we gathered through these creative experiments.

But the more important to us was that any type of data we gathered would have to go through a transformation in order to make it even more meaningful.

In this subjective, unnecessary transformation resides a part of what makes our publication and process art, as we aimed at expressing a viewpoint as artists, as researchers and individuals. When classical researchers try to reach a semblance of objectivity, our goal was to take a stand and create a result that would represent us. The following four moments are the core of our methodology:

Moment 1- **Dissensus:** *Build commons on agreeable disagreements.*

The moment “build commons” is crucial in our methodological design.

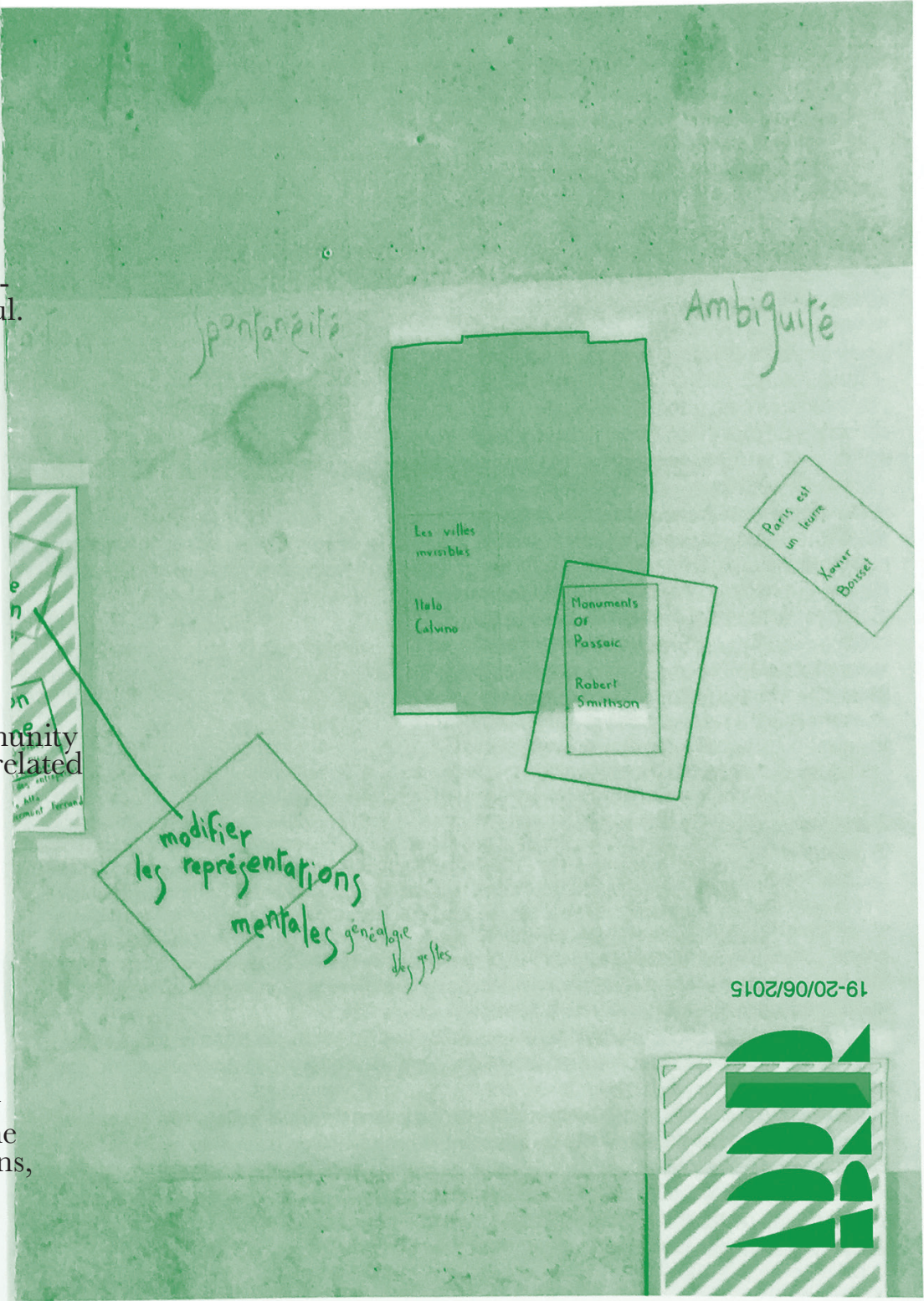
This stage is about building a heterogeneous community of inquirers that collectively analyses the artworks related to the core of the research problem.

Underneath the “commons building” lie design and ethical questions that concern different aspects: heterogeneity, time to build the collective, the acceptance of uncertainty and enabling dialogism.

Since we are talking about art-based research the recommended choice is to form a community of inquiry displaying a high degree of heterogeneity (Bakhtin, 1981) in both the actors and the topics to be explored.

The collaboration between artists, researchers, key stakeholders and practitioners is likely to support the co-construction of a wider range of issues and visions,

making more room for social polyphony, giving voice to groups, mental perceptions or feelings that are not heard, and sometimes motivating researchers to address these in the perspective of building a better sustainable society (Berthoin-Anthal et al., 2011). However, the heterogeneity also means that each person has their own view on artworks, speaks the specific language of their professional and cultural background. Thus, everyone needs to confront everyone’s otherness, since each participant is a kind of partial “terra incognita” to each other. The experience of building commons has to go through strong moments where to confront the many logics of the participants. Each of these logics is based on different principles of justification and judgement (‘orders of worth’ or ‘dignity’) (Boltanski and Thevenot, 2006). To allow different point of views, a dialogue,



Booklet titled “The Monuments of Nanterre: Has Nanterre replaced Passaic as the eternal city?,” giving a full account of the debates of the two days of exchange, and the exploratory walk in Nanterre, (a suburb city in the west of Paris along the river Seine, historically a bastion for the left wing)



Pocket book of an untitled play written by the members of the Valorisation team after the study days organized by the Social Struggle subgroup around the Lejaby case study, October 15th and 16th, 2015. The untitled play attempts to give a subjective and fictionalized account of the debates based on notes taken by different participants.

Text cover: *The Valorisation team wishes to apologize in advance to the actors of this play for their unintended participation. Their words have been manipulated, rewritten, tempered and some-time miscredited. The result is a new form that is not meant to be a faithful and objective account of the debates, but rather to express a point of view on these discussions.*

Conception: Antoine Lefebvre , Natalia Bobadilla and Philippe Mairesse for the Valorisation team.
Reference: Lefebvre A., Bobadilla N. and Mairesse P. (2016)_16102015_ANR-ABRIR_16 janvier.

as intended by Bakhtin is fostered:
“The nature of human life itself, in dialogue a person participates wholly and throughout his whole life: with his eyes, lips, hands, soul, spirit, with his whole body “ (Bakhtin, 1984: 293).
Bakhtin also mentions that dialogue is a kind of speech which leads to the competition of voices. Through this dialogue which is a kind of discourse as well as a model of consciousness, communication and language learning become possible. It is through the language sharing that commons build.
By gathering the heterogeneity of the group around a variety of artworks a perception of the common though heterogeneous understanding is fostered.

Nevertheless, the conversational process takes time to build, it cannot be a one shot experimental method with a precise framing targeting a specific effect or output. This phase asks for specific skills from the collective: be good at sharing, dealing with the difference, the uncertain, the unexpected, the surprising; be able to suffer embarrassment, deceit, affection, confusion, and so on. It places research within the stream of situated inquiries that are: “the controlled or directed transformation of an indeterminate situation into one that is so determinate in its constituent distinctions and relations as to convert the elements of the original situation into a unified whole” (Dewey, 1938/1993: 108). The inquiry is situated: “that term underscored the view that every course of action depends in essential ways upon its material and social circumstances (Suchman, 1987: 50) and it stresses the view that any production of knowledge has a social character (Journé, Raulet- Croset, 2008). The situation has also an emotional character (Follett, 1924: 13) as “the situation as a qualitative whole is sensed or felt” (Simpson, Marshall, 2010).

The meaning of the situation and the resulting course of action are not generated by a subjective cognition process but by a conversational process in the broader sense of “conversation”: “a conversation with the situation” (Schön, 1991), a “conversation of gesture” (Mead, 1934). In that sense, the research process is reflexive, but not in the subjective sense of reflexivity when one subject mentally assesses and redesigns his/her own activity: this is the dialogical sense of reflexivity that is meant here, i.e. reflexivity through conversational interaction (Bakhtin, 1981; Todorov, 1981; Tsoukas, 2009, Lorino & al, 2011; Lorino, Mourey, 2012).

Moment 2- **Alterity.** *Let data affect you.*
The recent “turn to affect” (Clough and Halley, 2007) is not so much concerned with emotions and feelings, though those are given more and more attention by research on organizational life, but mostly on affect in the sense of what moves you.

Studying the capacity of being set in motion, transformed or pushed beyond frontiers and categories, is originated in ethnographic research, where ethnographer confronted with foreign cultures and groups have to deconstruct their own beliefs in order to understand the studied groups. It led to conceive the position of the researcher as a stranger, a metaphor which has been widely taken as archetypal, since Schütz’ seminal book and essay “The Stranger” (1944). The essay draws on Schütz’ own experience as a migrant and describes how the stranger is the perfect figure of the researcher, the one who “becomes essentially the [wo]man who has to place into question nearly everything that seems to be unquestionable to the members of the approached group” (Schütz, 1944: 502). Soon her own “unquestionable” knowledge is also put to question, for it do not suffice to understand the organizational members’ experience. She has to consider the group’s knowledge not as a matter of her thoughts but as a segment of action for her own being-in-the-world with them. She therefore makes a shift from the disinterested observer to a would-be member of the studied group. The paradigm of the stranger has spread in the social sciences under the anthropological paradigm and the ethnographer’s figure (Fine and Hallett, 2014). The anthropological or ethnographic turn, as it could be called, is still active. Ethnography is being reactivated in international conferences as a master research category. In art-based research, it is referred to by Linstead’s above cited recent paper as “the congruency between much ethnographic research and aesthetic approaches to organization”. The term is not only descriptive of the factual relation observer-observee. It also entails a political and moral dimension, the interest of which being not only to tackle the issue of respect but also the issue of knowledge. Hal Foster, speaking of a “quasi-anthropological paradigm”, was the first to theorize the artist “as ethnographer” (1995), struggling in the name of the other, thus claiming for a political and ethical engagement. Art then becomes the site for political transformations, Foster noticing this site always remains elsewhere, and the other always outside. These externalities being taken as warrant of subversive potential, the artist strives at being considered as the other, the stranger, thus getting automatic access to the site of transformation.

The researcher like the artist protects and promotes her alterity in order to get access to the site of critical emancipatory knowledge.

Far from the romantic position of the inspired and visionary self, and equally far from the position of the carnivalesque buffoon, the postmodern artist or researcher thus embodies the position of the nomad, the expatriate and the stranger who has the power to really “see” and criticize the given order – and who is consequently submitted to rejection, as both a result and an evidence of her subversive power. Affecting the given and being affected by it are the specificities of this dynamic position. Far from pretending at any objective truth in the name of which to criticize the false, the drive is now the imperious necessity to move and avoid any kind of immobility, rigid order or calcifying constraints and classifications.

Alterity is the method and the purpose: the self can be altered because it is alter. Accessing the given is not a question of objectivity nor subjectivity. It is the question of the mutual relation between the given and the observer.

They both affect each other by confronting any imposed order (data) to its possible alternatives or reconfigurations (Rancière 2000). The moment of alterity, by tackling the issue of “data that affect you”, puts to question the comfortable position of the stranger as the warrant of critical movement against sclerosis and rigid imposed orders.

The issue then becomes to make room for the self within the other,

which amounts at a twofold issue: on the one hand, how to consider (and find access to) the inside self (feelings, experience, affects, activity, beliefs and so on) of the studied other, a question that has been widely considered answered by art-based methods, emphasizing the expression of the members’ experience. On the other hand, how to recognize the self (concerned individuality and subjectivity) of the researcher within her otherness as a (disinterested) outside observer? Here we reach the problem raised by grounding the researcher’s ethic on the consideration of the other and the taking into account of differences. First, “this projection of politics as other and outside may detract from a politics of here and now” (Foster 1995). Second, being in part a projection, the attention to the other could be a selfish tactic for getting recognition.

Keeping in mind the above objections about the two risks of “self-othering” and of a neo-romantic externalization of the truth within the outside other, it is important to remain conscious of our own self-involvement into the supposedly detached research process.

Art and artists should not be taken as warrants of attention to the other, of openness to alterity, of sensitivity to difference, when approaching the mysteries of organizational life (Linstead 2016). Rather than pretending accessing the perfect alterity through the gate of data, we should remain conscious of how our self is affected by the data.

If research wants to be art-based, it should produce and act like art, not just refer to art as a justification.

In this jump out of the ethnographic paradigm, this “surge of affects” (Steward, 2006, quoted by Linstead 2016) and their recognition naturally lead to writing “affective performance texts” that no longer deal only with words and rather consider culture as performance.

In the post-ethnographic turn, the dominant self-representation of the researcher as a stranger is questioned by the attention to data that affect you and by the “texts” it leads the researcher to produce (as works of art): “ethnographer and members willingly suspend belief to act in the gaze of others “as if” the research situation were entirely natural, but both tacitly acknowledge that it isn’t fully natural. Performance then in these circumstances is in (unnatural) motion, and ethnographic outputs, including ethnographic texts, themselves perform in dynamically engaging” (Linstead, 2016).

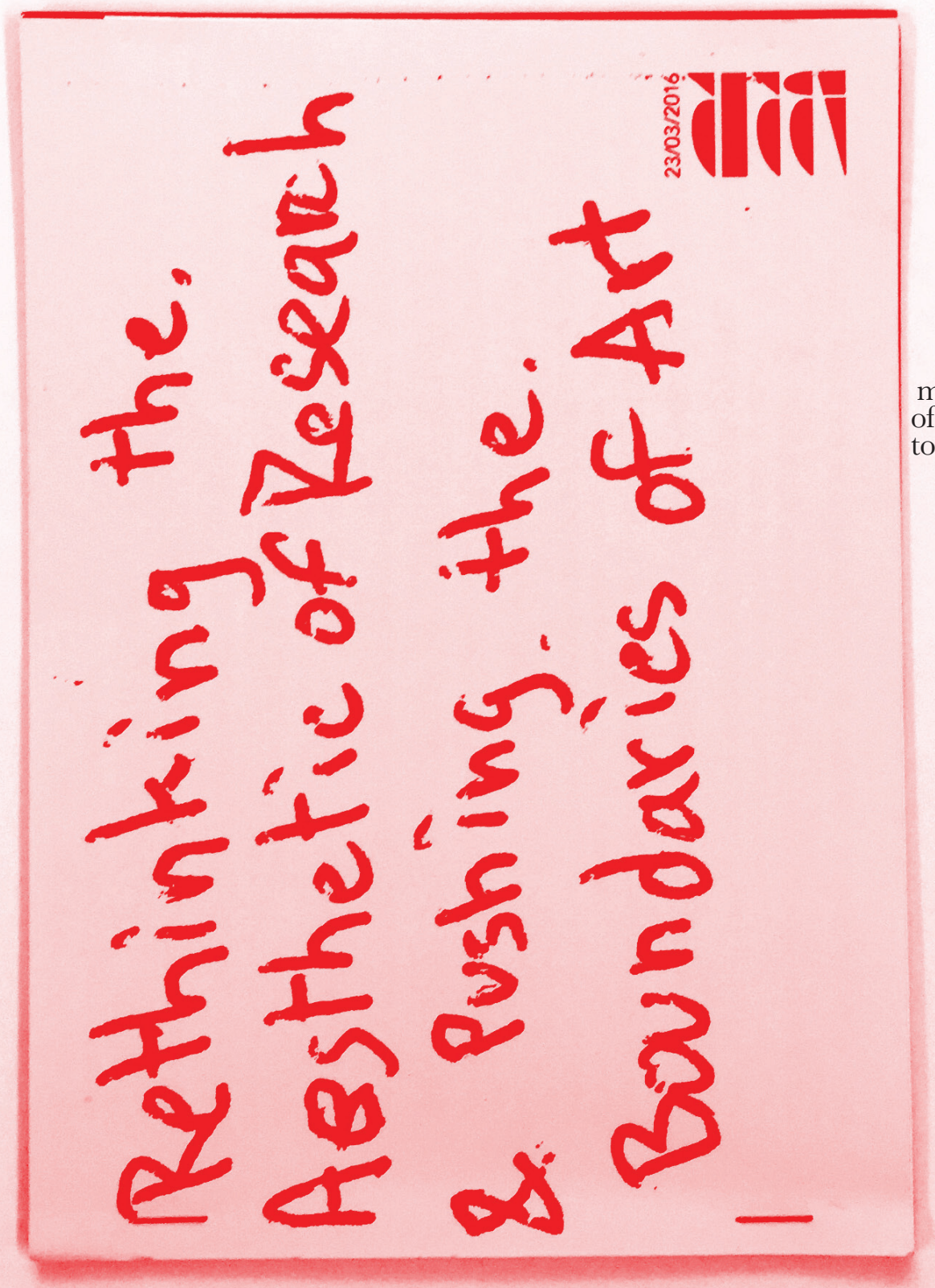
Moment 3- **Alteration.** *Fictionalize the experience*

Fictio “and” fingere “basically refer to the activity of “making “,” inventing “,” potentially involving different levels of psychic life. The heuristic dimension of fictions corresponds to the creativity of a thought in quest of concepts, as it participates in the creative function of speech and narrative. The word “fiction” refers to heterogeneous conceptual and epistemological fields. Littré’s Dictionary of the French language states that there are two principal meanings. The word “fiction” may refer, in the first place, to all that concerns the “invention of fictitious things” making reference in particular to poetry, novels, fables, mythologies. Among these “fictitious things,” Littré mentions the fictions of the law and what is worth by convention. “Fiction” may mean, in the second place, a matter of falsehood and dissimulation, that is to say, the dimension of feint and deceit.

Freud’s definition of fiction in the “aesthetic” sense is a clear starting point for us. However, fiction cannot be reduced to the field of art and literature (Bourlot, 2015). The complexity of the concept of fiction also results from the existence of different “mod-



Co-creation *dispositif* ABRA PALABRA to create short photo novels featuring the different actors of the Lejabby social struggle case study. Some of the spreads created by the participants are featured in the booklet of the untitled play.



Dysfunction booklet published for the Art of Management conference 2016, in Bled, Slovenia. The booklet is composed of the short paper presented at the conference intertwined with an email discussion between the members of the Valorisation team. It exposes for the first time the four stages of our method, along with the preliminary discussions that lead to this type of presentation.
Conception: Natalia Bobadilla, Antoine Lefebvre and Philippe Mairesse, for the Valorisation Team.
Reference: Dysfunction (2016) Bobadilla, N. Lefebvre, A. and Mairesse, P. Art of Management Conference, Bled, Slovenia, September 1-4. (2016)_29082016_ANR-ABRIR_28 Aout.

els”, which evolved from Freud to Lacan. So while the Freudian model is “heuristic”, Lacan’s approach explores another dimension, essentially linguistic. The key point is that fiction does not only concern the work of art and the literary narrative, but also concerns the activity of thinking itself. The radicality of Freudian epistemology consists, in a fundamental way, in integrating fiction into theoretical elaboration. The establishment of such a “construction” implies accepting a principle of uncertainty at the heart of representation. Through fiction and facing the uncertainty of knowing objectively, the spectator can “build his own knowledge”; instead of knowing objectively. Winnicot “intermediary area” for example is a zone where the mother and the child together agree on not distinguishing between what is fictitiously created by the child (her mother’s breast) and what is “real” and given. They play the game “create the given”, or “believe in the baby’s almighty power”, a game that is necessary to the sound development of the subject, as it is also for grown-up adults through the games of arts, science, religion or philosophy (Winnicot, 1971:14). It is not a matter of proving facts but rather of forging an idea or assumption for sharing and believing it, because it is a necessity for our development. By doing so, in some way we find the origin of the word “fiction”: in a narrative of fiction, it is a matter of “modelling”, “giving a form” to a part of our experience. Fictional stories may sometimes take place in fantasy worlds that are completely divorced from reality, but more often they include information about real-world people, places, and situations. Evidences show that fiction can actually serve as practice (Mar and Oatley, 2008) or some kind of mechanism for learning (Sugiyama, 2001). In presenting an abstract version of the social world, fiction may sharpen and hone real world skills and social understanding (Mar and Oatley, 2008; Mar et al., 2006).

Language and fiction are structurally intertwined: fiction is not a contingent element of human discourse; it is constitutive of the symbolic order (Lacan, 1956). Hence, to the extent that the truth of a subject is that of a speaking being, this truth is like a fiction. Beyond the aesthetic field, then, is not everything that a subject speaks in speaking or writing, then, fiction? As soon as experience is conscious, spoken or thought about, it becomes in a way a fiction. The power of it resides in that it creates a safe area where the real can be experienced in various or unrealistic ways, like in a flight simulator. Simulation is a learning process that is powerful exactly in that it provides a safe approximation of reality where to experience different behaviour, feelings and thoughts. Fictionalization of the real should consist in reading it like a novel or a tale or a film: a fiction from which to learn how to behave in the real. It also can be referred to as models: a model is a fake real that works as the real under certain conditions and within certain limits. Though often and scientifically presented as a perfect understanding of the laws underlying the phenomena, modelization is rather the powerful fictionalization of the real that modern science has invented in order to better grasp the real. The mixture of narrating data thus turning them into fiction, and simulating the real in the shape of a safe training zone, constitutes what we call fictionalize the real. After letting herself be affected by the data, this third moment enables the researcher to “modelize” the real in an involving way, avoiding the dry objectivity of abstract models in favour of the vivid potential of experiencing simulations, or “fictions”, not in the sense of unreal or utopian dreams but in the sense of potential worlds to put to test. It requires the researcher the ability to produce “texts” as constructions to be experienced – leaving apart the question of truth and universality, of generalizing and absolute in favour of pure contingency.

Moment 4- **Mise en scène:** *Creating hybrid forms that stage their own production.*

The question of reaching out to an audience is central for anyone creating an artistic or an academic form. In art-based research, art is usually considered in a very broad acception that includes every type of creative endeavours from theatre to literature and music. When the artist researchers of the Art&Flux team think about art, they think of the field in which their practice makes sense, and that is the field of visual art and moreover the legacy of neo avant-gardes such as Fluxus, conceptual art or the Situationist International. In this context, creating hybrid publications that would “not necessarily be viewed as art” (Bochner, 1975) is not a problem at all. It is even a step further towards the dissolution of art in the everyday life (Kaprow 1993, Vaneigem 1967.) The artist who are at the core of Art&Flux research create an economy for their practice outside of the art world and broaden the limits of what can be considered as art. They are house painters, curators, publishers or consultants and they create their own structures and organizations in order to make their

work possible and visible (Barrientos, 2011, Barrientos & Toma, 2008.)

As stated above, the role of the non-specialists “spectator” is to be considered seriously. When the reader of academic publications is thought to be a specialist of the field, it should be asked if non-specialists could not be addressed too. The anthropological paradigm here needs to be fully accepted: the informant are the members. Staging means demonstrating, publishing, disseminating, rather than closing and isolating a world of specialists separated from the profane. It could be argued that one of the main function of academic discourse and publication norms are to keep research inside the field of these who produced it. Avoiding dissemination across ignorant non-specialists would damage the exactness and relevance of research outcomes – such is the old pride of scholars (and of high art). What is at stake is the reversal of power into more democratic ways of producing and evaluating. Can management and artistic research lead and accept such a “dysfunctional” program?

What we did could be called a “meta-functionality of research;” because it takes the form a dysfunctional process that permanently mixes the object and the method, the process and the result. Indeed, interchanging results and processes in art has been a trend since the 1960’s, and it was already linked at the time to critical, political, aesthetical and sociological questions. It started with minimal and conceptual art in the guise of tautology, as in Frank Stella’s famous statement “What you see is what you see;” or in Joseph’s Kosuth tautological works such as **FIVE WORDS IN ORANGE NEON**, 1965. But later on, the abrupt truthfulness of tautology turned towards self-reflectiveness, which left more room to interpretation. Many post-modern artworks, such as appropriations works for example, make use of self-reflectiveness to lead the viewer to the idea that there is more to understand than what is just blatantly visible. Because they contain their own explanation, our publications stage “a theater without theater;” (Blistène, 2007) a stage without representation, or an absence of stage and a representation. While we openly transform, fictionalize our data and results, we stage and make a representation of the everyday life, like an invisible theatre. Our process therefore inscribes itself in a critique of representation (Debord, 1967; Rancière, 2008) a way to erase the stage as in Shakespeare’s famous quote “All the world’s a stage, and all the men and women merely players.” By creating incentives through our publications and actions, we invite our fellow researchers and public to not be passive spectators, but rather users that may put to use some of our ideas and processes in their everyday life (Wright, 2013.)

We referred above to the **intermedia concept**. It raises the issue of hybridity, which is closely related to the one of staging. Like staging means democratizing, hybrid forms mean the renouncement to purity and absolute. Impure, mixed, hybrid forms can and must disseminate knowledge and culture. Cultural studies have proven how popular culture is a powerful political defence of minorities and constructs culture as much as high arts.

But creating a hybrid form also means that it has to be powerful enough to be understood and appreciated in different fields that are ruled by their own value systems. In ABR hybridity means first that we have to think of forms between art and research.

The idea of creating forms that would both act as artwork and research results was inspired by the self-reflectiveness of conceptual art. By creating artworks that seemed like tautologies, conceptual artists showed that there was always more than what seems to be at stake, and that there is always room for interpretation. “Language is not transparent;” as Mel Bochner stated in a 1970 wall piece. By seemingly stating what they are and how they were produced, our publications outline their subjective dimension, showing that as artwork they are subject to interpretation even if as academic form, they tend to some kind of scientific objectivity.

In that framework, the artistic dimension of those hybrid objects creates a dysfunction, like sand in the gears of the research machine. They allow our ideas to exist in other contexts, to reach out of social science, or out of our own art world (Becker, 1988.)

Our process insists on the necessary acknowledgement of artistic forms of knowledge dissemination within an academic context, which is not often welcomed even in art and management related research. But moreover, we insist on the fact that mixing conceptual art and research, rethinking the aesthetic of research and pushing the boundaries of art is a way of expressing a critical vision of the world.

3. Conclusion/ limits and avenues for future research

By investigating closely the grounds of art-based research and the problem of ABR dissemination, we have delineated two main issues. First, the issue of understanding and conceptualizing the processes by which ABR could produce art-based outcomes. Second, the ethical issue underlying the process, which amounts at clarifying and



Dysfunction installation for the Art of Management conference 2016, in Bled, Slovenia, displaying the four moments of our method and their associated statements: DATA — Let data affect you, TRANSFORMATION — Fictionalise the experience in order to grasp it, COLLECTIVE, Build commons on agreeable disagreements, STAGING — Creating hybrid forms that stage their own production.

Conception: Natalia Bobadilla, Antoine Lefebvre and Philippe Mairesse, for the Valorisation Team. Reference: Dysfunction (2016) Bobadilla, N. Lefebvre, A. and Mairesse, P. Art of Management Conference, Bled, Slovenia, September 1-4. (2016)_29082016_ANR-ABRIR_28 Aout.

conceptualizing the issue of ABR ethics beyond the accepted understanding of research ethics as the protection and well-being of the observees. Introducing aesthetics into research creates specific ethical issues that have to be tackled not only in conceptual terms, but also in practical consequences. We have identified four moments in the process from raw data to artistic dissemination of research, each moment questioning different ethical issues.

Dissensus and the ethical issue of dialogism among a heterogeneous community wider than the specialists is the first. The second deals with alterity and raises the issue of a relation to knowledge liberated from any pretention to objectivity, nor falling back into subjectivity. This ethical issue leads to question the dominant paradigm of the stranger and its special ability to criticize, in favour of a renewed relation to the other, less idealistic and more hybridised with the



self. The third moment is the alteration one, where fictionalizing the real in order to better grasp it, is central. Fiction as a shared construct not distinct from an hypothetical “real” leads to accept pure contingency, which put to question the researchers’ ethics of delivering knowledge and replace it by co-producing, together with numerous others, fictions or alterations. The fourth moment is the staging, with the issue of the hybridity of forms. There raises the question of dissemination to avoid its degradation or misinterpretation. We have paralleled these ethical issues with some current contemporary problematics in the art world, and demonstrated how art-based research in human science and organizations theory meets issues about knowledge, expression, and dissemination that are common to the arts as well to society at large. ABR should not ignore these issues if it wants to become a serious alternative to classical research, though we do not claim that our findings are generalizable in the traditional sense of having a representative sample that can be extrapolated to an entire population. Rather, we aspire to what Fine (2006: 98) has described as provocative and theoretical generalizability. This is measured by the extent to which others react to a piece of research and whether they are inspired to think beyond it. We offer our findings as an invitation to think about ethics and dissemination of scientific work through arts differently. We believe that theoretically interrogating research ethics and dissemination as an institutional (and, we would add, academic and political) discourse opens up the possibility for asserting counter-discourses that promote alternative frameworks and create possibilities for critical resistance. One of our solutions towards a more ethical practice of research is Open Access research (Swartz, 2008) that was inspired by the free software movement that was at the creation of Internet. Our paper is dedicated to computer programmer and Internet hacktivist Aaron Swartz who committed suicide in 2013 when the FBI was harassing him for downloading hundreds of thousands of scientific articles from the scientific database JSTOR to make them accessible to everyone. No one should go to jail for breaking the chains of knowledge! Before this tragic end he was one of the creators of Creative Commons, an open access alternative to copyright. We decided to place this article under a Creative Commons Attribution – Non Commercial – Share Alike 4.0 International License, because questioning the way research is produced and disseminated reveals the underlying power structure of research.

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