Introduction and Paper 5

Body Mapping: A Personal and Professional Artful Inquiry Process

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Introduction

Why a special edition?
The International Journal of Professional Management (IJPM) has a broad scope. Professional management is defined as “activities which have an impact on personal and/or organisational development.” This invites papers ranging from one-to-one coaching to globalisation, and everything in between.

It is good to reach out like this, but it is also good to reach in, to explore one topic in more depth. Special editions give the opportunity to bring together writers with similar interests, and have each one explore a different aspect of the same subject. This could be, for example, green issues, training programmes, e-commerce, or any activity that “has an impact on personal and/or organisational development.”

On this occasion we are having a special edition on the role of the arts in management?

Why the role of the arts?
The scientific approach is good. Measurement, prediction, testing and reassessing gives you solid information. Sometimes too solid. It is rare, in human interaction, to have invariable truth with absolute proof. But we like to know, rather than just believe, and then assume we know, and unconsciously get in a rut that blocks alternative thinking. Scientific logic needs to be intermeshed with free flow human multi-directional thought, and the arts excel in that.

Often the arts are seen as the lesser discipline, less rigorous and therefore less reliable, but strict linear thought, especially in the social sciences, can lead to errors of omission. Linear thinking needs the addition of lateral thinking, as De Bono has eloquently pointed out in his six-hat model, for six types of thinking. We need regularly to don the green hat, for creativity, as part of balanced progress.

This is especially so in periods of change, and humanity is always in a period of change, with times of sudden and dramatic improvement – the wheel, writing, domestication of the horse, steam power, telephones, cars, and recently the computer and its many ramifications. Each of these changes has come about by somebody thinking of a new idea, something that didn’t exist, and not being discouraged by it seeming impossible at the time. The first spark has been imagination. Nothing new can come without initial imagination, and the arts nurture imagination.

New knowledge comes from people thinking, experimenting, discussing, and then thinking, experimenting and discussing again. It needs an all round approach encompassing freedom to depart from the norm for creativity and innovation, and rigorous checking through replication and measurement. Arts and sciences have vital roles to play. This special edition focuses on the arts, but also has research, experimentation, discussion and rethinking at its core. The arts and sciences are two sides of the same coin.

This special edition emerged from papers at the 2016 conference of the Art of Management and Organisation (AoMO) – Empowering the Intangible.

Many thanks to Cathryn Lloyd and Geof Hill for co-editing this issue.
Art of Management & Organisation (AoMO)

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The Art of Management & Organisation (AoMO)
The Art of Management & Organisation represents a vibrant international community of scholars, artists and creative practitioners passionate in their exploration of the intersections between management, organisations and the arts. They organise a biannual international conference, publish their own peer-reviewed open access journal, Organisational Aesthetics, have a prominent social media presence and support various other events and training opportunities. The Art of Management & Organisation conferences are something of a unique experience and continually strive for experiential difference and excellence in pushing the boundaries between management and the arts. But where did it all begin?

The aim was, and continues to be, the exploration and promotion of the arts (in the most inclusive sense) as a means of understanding management and organisational life and its contexts; as well as the utilisation of artistic processes in the activity of managing. The conference grew out of the Standing Conference on Organisational Symbolism (SCOS), especially its 1992 conference on Organisation and Theatre at Lancaster, and was informed by the dramatic growth of field of organisational aesthetics in the following decade, specifically a series of workshops organised by Heather Höpfl and Stephen Linstead in Bolton and...

September 2002 saw the launch of the first Art of Management and Organisation Conference on London’s legendary South Bank in collaboration with Tate Modern, followed up by the second in Paris in 2004 in collaboration with the Pompidou Centre. Since then the conference has continued its collaborative and open ethos in Paris (2004), Krakow (2006), Banff (2008), Istanbul (2010), York (2012), Copenhagen (2014) and most recently in Bled (2016) and has given rise to a vibrant global community of praxis – including both scholars and practitioners - and will continue to do so in Brighton on the 30th August – 2nd September 2018.

These experimental events focused on those dimensions of management and organisation that render them an art, not purely a science. However, the conferences rapidly evolved to encompass far more than simply a concern with organisational aesthetics. They came to embrace a cornucopia of ground breaking, exciting and informative encounters, extending from traditional academic papers, to displays, exhibitions, performances, screenings, demonstrations, community building processes, and skills sessions, all of which served to address the field of art and organisation in all its richness. However, throughout this blossoming they have most importantly continued to be informed by the themes of inclusivity, diversity creativity and innovation, pursued with a spirit of both inspiration and critical inquiry, which were central to the founding ethos of the conference series.

When in 2005 the Academy of Management decided not to continue to support its Arts initiatives, AoMO became the major available global channel for arts based inquiry in business and management. The conferences have thus unfolded as an endeavour to draw in and provide a space for new, promising, burgeoning or potential avenues of exploration that are evolving in or around the field of study of management and organisation. They have encouraged material from other critical traditions in the humanities and arts, which may be unfamiliar to those working in the organisation and management field – and have eventually included spheres as diverse as sport, philosophy, painting, technology, theatre, poetry, film, dance and art history. Indeed, 2016 saw the inaugural Heather Hopfl AoMO Artist in Residence, Scholarship awarded to a woodcraftsman, Emmanuel Guy.

Emmanuel is also an academic holding a professorship in maritime transportation and public policy at Université du Québec à Rimouski. The Heather Hopfl Artist in Residence Scholarship will also be the occasion to embark on a deeper reflection about the entanglements of his academic and artistic practices and how they can or cannot feed one another. Between now and the conference in 2018 it is planned that as artist in residence, Emmanuel will share on social media his experiences and reflections in this journey with the AoMO community. In addition, Emmanuel will be compiling a photo essay detailing artistic process, inspirations and developments to the chair to be published in AoMO’s Organisational Aesthetics.

Organisational Aesthetics, as a journal, is attempting to create both a dialogue and a place for artistic forms and art-as-research within the domain of academic journals. In this way, it is a pioneer in the publication of management and organisation studies. Indeed, this special issue of the International Journal of Professional Management has emerged out of a successful stream of the 2016 AoMO conference, hosted by the IEDC in Bled, Slovenia.

Empowering the Intangible: Bled, Slovenia 2016

The 8th AoMO conference was hosted by the IEDC Bled School of Management in Bled, Slovenia. The IEDC boasts of being a ‘School with a View’ with every right. Danica Purg, founder of the IEDC had a vision to create a learning environment in which business leaders were taught and explored the value of the arts to leadership and management. More than 30 years on she is president of a thriving private business school set on the shores of the idyllic
Lake Bled. It was in this resplendent environment that the AoMO community came together to explore the theme 'Empowering the Intangible'.

The theme of 'Empowering the Intangible' was developed by Professor Ian Sutherland, formerly of the IEDC. Ian is both an accomplished scholar and musician and was keen to explore how these interests and skill sets, so often thought to be mutually exclusive, converged to inform and ignite one another. In the spirit of exploration, play, creativity and critique, the 2016 Art of Management and Organisation conference explored the intangible aspects of organisational life.

Proliferating our academic and professional discourses are calls to recognise, engage and empower the intangible aspects of organisational life – the felt, sensory and emotional aspects that so often go under the radar. Like the medieval court jester that could speak of things courtiers could not, the conference theme “Empowering the Intangible” sought out novel ways of exploring, feeling and expressing management and organisation through the arts. AoMO 2016 encouraged the community to explore, feel and express the felt, sensory and emotional aspects of management, leadership and daily organisational life.

This conference attracted 145 delegates from around the world, highlighting the growing movement in this area of scholarly and creative interest. There were 11 streams, each showcasing academic work, practitioner methodologies and techniques and performances. Each stream is convened and facilitated by a small team of academics and/or practitioners with the support and oversight of the AoMO host to ensure each conference captures the diversity of the field. 2016 certainly did just that with the following streams:

**The Power of Poetics** – This stream focused on the creative interplay between poetry, poetics and creativity in order to advance understanding of the concepts and their context. The stream encouraged participants to play with poetry of all varieties, to interpret poetics broadly and to be creative in exploring the power of poetry and poetics.

**Making the Intangible Tangible** – This stream encouraged participants to explore ‘stories’ and ‘storytelling’ as a post-positivist method of organisational enquiry in which stories are data.

**Leadership as a Performance Art** – Arguing that the ‘art of leadership’ has much in common with ‘performance art’ this stream invited diverse ways of understanding, imagining, framing, and expressing leadership as a performance art by welcoming submissions that advance, celebrate, challenge, explore and illuminate theory and practice.

**Fashion Futures** – Fashion is undeniably an aesthetic power with a strong influence on consumption, community building and style, including of management, leadership and organising. This stream explored the intangible power of fashion (able) organising.

**Art, Space and the Body** - This stream brought together theories and practices of art, creativity theory, phenomenology, performance and installation. The focus of the stream is the human body where the body in space can improvise, model and simulate forms of process-based creation, which in turn informs our understanding of the processes of organizing systems and structures and people.

**Organising Movement: On Dance, Sound, Embodied Cognition and Organisations** – Dance is more than an art form, it is a culturally shaped bodily practice and experience-based activity that allows the exploration of human movement, expression and sensemaking. This stream hosted papers, performances and demonstrations to explore dance as an art form, a social practice and its applications to organisational development and our understanding of organisation studies.
A Home for Happy People: Creativity, Critical Reflections and Belonging in Organisations
– In this ambitious stream in which the convenors asked, can we be at home in organisations in the contemporary world of work or are we condemned to an endless unfulfilled, restless searching. If we can ‘be at home’ what does this feel and look like, if this is still a challenge what might it feel and look like and how can we express our hopes, fears and dreams for it?

The Virtual Studio – This was another ambitious stream which sought to explore diverse academic perspectives on the role and nature of the ‘studio’ in arts-based methods and approaches to teaching and learning. This stream attracted a number of ‘virtual’ contributions in which contributors were streamed in live from international destinations to present and perform.

Improvisation and the Art of Innovating Uncertainty - This stream explored how improvisation can contribute to a new understanding and practice of professional work, innovation and management in organisations. Times of uncertainty, disruption and overwhelming complexity call for an extension of the idea of professional work, innovation and management, which is often understood as a rational action of setting goals, planning, and controlling. While improvisation is often belittled as an unspecific and rather unprofessional dealing with messiness, we seek to look at improvisation differently. This stream brought together interdisciplinary scholars and practitioners with the goal of understanding and developing improvisation in organisation and management contexts.

Arts-based Community Development – Art is increasingly used as a catalyst in global communities to explore and tackle community development issues. This stream brought together a range of accounts and projects that explored the skill sets required to undertake such work.

The Open Stream – This stream captured innovative and unique submissions that did not fall neatly within the remit of the other streams. This year saw it play host to papers on artistic freedom, artful inquiry as a leadership skill, and silence as the essence of organisation.

Outside the streams were ongoing exhibitions, pop-up streams, events and gatherings and the freedom to express and explore ideas as they emerged. This special issue of the International Journal of Professional Management is a showcase of just some of the contributions made to the stream titled, ‘Making the Intangible Tangible: Stories as a Process for Organisational and Management Inquiry’. This popular stream ran for two days and included 13 experiential presentations. The stream took place in an amphitheatre style room, ideal for storytelling and wisdom sharing, yet, in a creative AoMO twist the space had access to an outdoor, enclosed private grassed area. Presenters took advantage of this surprise alternative sensory setting and thus, presentations or parts thereof alternated between the indoor and outdoor environs.

This is perhaps the essence of what makes AoMO conferences and events special – there are very few rules. Yes, there is a conference programme and yes, there is a book of abstracts but few days or hours at an AoMO conference will feel structured or predetermined. Organisers embrace and encourage changes to be made and creativity to emerge. Resources are provided to encourage such artistry from plasticine, to pastels, to paints and postcards. This culture of creative embrace, flexibility and democracy are among features that make AoMO conferences unique shared and safe spaces for innovation and liberal creation.

The University of Brighton, UK will host the 9th Art of Management & Organisation conference with the theme of Performance. Already, the organisers are encouraging events, workshops and performances in alternative spaces including the beach. To find out more visit www.artofmanagement.org

Bibliography
What do the articles published in this issue contribute to the knowledge associated with creativity and professional artistry in management?

The following papers reveal how the use of stories provides a meaningful and creative way for professional practitioners to gain deeper insight into their practices and the organisations in which they work, and in turn develop the professional artistry they need to navigate organisational life. In keeping with the spirit of the journal we provide a brief snapshot of the papers as we intend to let the stories speak for themselves.

1. Stories as a Process for Organisational and Management Inquiry
   Cathryn Lloyd and Geof Hill
   Practitioners are at the centre of organisations, and their personal stories are entwined with the company stories. Different professionals sharing their stories, in both artistic (hands on) and artful (using all the senses) can expand what we gain from experience.

2. Structuring Storytelling in Management Practice
   Martin Eley & Geoff Hill
   The authors discuss stories they have solicited from business professionals that speak to issues of leadership. They posit a model for drawing emotional distinctions within stories about leadership.

3. Resistance, Resonance and Restoration: How Generative Stories Shape Organisational Futures
   Michelle LeBaron & Nadja Alexander
   The authors discuss specifically at generative stories at work in organisations and how these types of stories can be crafted and how they contribute to organisational awareness.

4. Telling Stories in Organisations: Reflective Practice/Curated Practice
   Jo Trelfa
   The author articulates a process for generating organisational stories. Her model adds to the discussion of the literature about storytelling and reflective practice in organisational contexts.

5. Body Mapping: A Personal and Professional Artful Inquiry Process
   Cathryn Lloyd
   The author describes her use of body mapping as an artful inquiry and a way to facilitate professionals’ creative thinking and reflection about their professional practice.

6. Towards a Methodology: Organisational Cartographies
   Kate Carruthers Thomas
   The author uses a mapping metaphor, describing a very different approach to mapping.

7. Beating the Blues: An Exploration of the Value of Blues Music to Improve Performance
   Jack Pinter
   The author describes his use of blues to elicit and perform organisational stories of discontent in ways that are seen as celebratory rather than complaining.

8. Bringing the Body into Change Practice through Storied Performance
   Hedy Bryant
   The author illuminates a particular form of storytelling in performative poetry and explores how her own poem ‘The Shapeshifter’ helped her to articulate her organisational practice related to organisational change.
1. Body Mapping: A Personal and Professional Artful Inquiry Process

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Cathryn Lloyd is a facilitator, creative development coach, and educator. She is the founder/director of Maverick Minds, a creative professional development consultancy that designs powerful and flexible learning experiences designed to shift your thinking, gain new perspectives and create positive change. Cathryn has extensive experience across the creative industries, arts, business, management, and education. With an arts and design background Cathryn brings a multi-disciplinary learning approach to how she works with clients.

Introduction

This paper explores body mapping through the lens of general and personal provenance. The word Provenance means the place of origin or earliest known history of something. Provenance is “a reflective practice tool that scaffolds a practitioner to recognise the elements and experiences that have contributed to their knowledge and acquisition of a practice” (Hill & Lloyd, 2015, 3).

Body mapping is a creative tool of inquiry that enables the producer of the body map to explore and articulate their personal or professional story in an embodied and visual way. Body mapping is a way of exploring identity and helps create meaning in relation to life circumstances that shape our lives (Gastaldo, Magalhaes, Carrasco & Davy, 2012).

This paper responds to the call for papers for the special edition publication of the International Journal for Professional Management, which is based on workshops and presentations from the 2016 Art of Management and Organisation Conference (AoMO) in Bled, Slovenia and in particular as part of the Making the Intangible Tangible: stories as a process for organisational and management inquiry stream in which I presented Body Maps: Embodied Stories and Artefacts. It tells the story of my personal encounter and provenance with body maps, and how I have developed body mapping as a creative process of inquiry for others to use from a personal and professional perspective. As part of my ongoing development with this process I have also discovered there is a general provenance to body mapping as a creative visual methodology (Gastaldo, Magalhaes, Carrasco & Davy 2012; de Jager, Tewson, Ludlow & Boydell 2016; Devine 2008). This paper discusses both the personal and general story to body mapping as a creative storytelling process.

Stories as a process of inquiry and meaning making

Storytelling is a deeply human meaning-making activity. Author and storyteller Geoff Mead (2011) proposes that we live in a sea of stories. Indeed we do, at the core of human communication is the telling of stories. We regularly share and disclose simple and complex stories of joy, sorrow, conflict, uncertainty, love, compassion, anxiety, fear and hope. Often people may not think about their communication in terms of stories. If we do consider how we connect many of us may describe our communication very simply – possibly in terms of talking and listening. At the heart of communication is a desire to have a voice and share meaning. Stories have a long starring role in how we make sense of our lives and the world we inhabit. Oral storytelling is embedded in many cultures and contemporary culture tells stories through a variety of channels. Technology now enables stories to be shared across many platforms at lightning speed.
I’m curious about the nature of stories and how they are communicated. I am particularly interested in the way stories can be revealed through visual artefacts, those objects made by human beings that have the capacity to tell so much without words. We only have to think of some of the magnificent artworks that convey the human condition - Rodin’s The Kiss, Picasso’s Guernica or iconic images such as the 1972 photograph of Vietnamese girl Kim Phuc running naked from the napalm attack that disintegrated her clothes – to realise the potency of visual imagery to tell a narrative. These powerful images and stories become etched in our individual and collective minds.

Storytelling through the creation of visual imagery is a powerful way to stir emotion, elicit individual experiences and gain new insights (de Jager, Tewson, Ludlow & Boydell, 2016). It’s not surprising that this work is of interest to me. I have a background in design and visual arts. I have spent years making imagery, looking at different types of imagery and in the past decade finding ways to use visual imagery in my facilitation and coaching practice.

Over the past three years one of the ‘artefactual’ processes that has captured my imagination is body mapping. There are two key incidents that led to my experience and exposure to this. The first incident was being thrown into a personal health crisis, in my case undergoing open-heart surgery for a congenital condition, and the second was my exposure to body mapping not long after my surgery. The timing of these two events proved to be a perfect storm. Firstly, it became a trigger for my personal exploration and expression of my surgery and recovery. Secondly, it became the catalyst for my interest in wanting to work with and adapt body maps as a creative tool for working with others.

**Body mapping**

**A personal provenance**

Allow me to take you back in time to these two major turning points in my life.

“Did you know that you have a heart murmur? It’s quite significant. You may want to get that checked out”.

After various scans, tests and MRI’s I am told the news -

“You have a congenital heart condition that requires surgery – open heart surgery”.  
*It needs to be done sooner rather than later.*

I’m stunned by this revelation and actually can’t believe what I have heard – it’s not what I was expecting to hear. Over time I come to terms with the fact that I have no other option than to have the surgery and start to plan accordingly. What also begins is an unexpected soul searching and questioning of my identity. Pre-surgery anxiety is very real and confronting. I realise I need to find ways to manage my anxiety and so I begin to explore strategies to help me deal with how I am feeling. These strategies include meditation and creating artworks as a form of art therapy, which I realise at times, is a conscious response to what is going on and at other times happens at a more subconscious level. The post surgery pain, anxiety and grief are also unexpected. I realise I need to continue with my creative coping strategies (Lapum 2055; 2012).

So it is a serendipitous and timely invitation I receive during the early days of my recovery from a group of creative management and academic colleagues based in the UK to join them virtually for their yearly professional development gathering. I’m grateful they asked me, as I have great respect for their artful methodologies in relation to working with the personal within organisational life. I appreciate the opportunity to engage at this level during my recovery from surgery, as I have felt isolated and vulnerable. I have not been working professionally and my confidence generally has taken a battering.
From other sides of the world, me in Australia, and the others in the UK, I am beamed in via technology to witness and hear the stories of what they have been working on. It’s approximately three months after my surgery and my colleagues at that moment are unaware that I have been through open-heart surgery. We talk for a while and then I am transported around the space via a laptop where I am exposed to a series of life size figures that this group has been working on. Even via technology and distance the images that appear on screen of these large-scale portraits has quite a profound effect/affect. Over time I have tried to understand the initial impact these artworks had on me.

On reflection there are a few factors that I think influenced my visceral response. The scale alone was striking, the aesthetics thought provoking, beautiful and raw, there was detail and creativity, and I sensed a heartfelt engagement from everyone in terms of undergoing a process of self-inquiry. The body maps (as I coined them) revealed to me stories of the human condition – each unique and yet somehow the same. As they showed me their artefacts they also told stories to accompany them – again they were deeply thoughtful and reflective just like the artwork itself.

As the conversation unfolded I felt a deep sense of emotion and began to cry. These large artefacts spoke to me in a deep way and I knew I needed to respond. As I shared my feelings to the group I revealed what had recently happened to me regarding my heart surgery. They were taken aback and moved. The discussion that flowed and the general response was that the sharing of my experience had an impact on their perception of their maps and seemed to deepen everyone’s appreciation of their experience.

After that virtual gathering I am compelled to produce my own visual artefact and I make my first ‘body map’.

As part of the process I ask my husband to draw the outline of my body. The conception of my body map is completely intuitive, immediate and expressive. What lands on the page is a completely somatic response, with no editing, and a pouring out of feeling and emotion. When I step back from the paper I am revealed to myself. It shows me in a curled and hunched up position. It embodies how I feel – hunched, constricted, inward, and not at all happy. The colours I’ve used are dark and heavy - black, red, dark bottle green and a big red swirl sits in the middle of my chest. A dark halo hovers above my head. The image depicts so much of what I have been feeling over the past few weeks. Wounded, raw, in pain a casualty of what has felt like a brutal assault. What is presented back at me is quite confronting. I stare at the image and wonder if I will ever be me again. I send the image to my UK colleagues who respond with respect and further appreciation of the deepening of their understanding of the process.
About 3 months later I have the urge to create another body map. This one is more open, spacious, lighter and brighter. The colour yellow features strongly and there is a vibrant orangey/red swirl over my solar plexus. I am beginning to feel more energised and the image shows aspects of that. I am beginning to look out into the world, to emerge; I’m not so stuck and contained within myself. Slowly I am beginning to feel more at peace, the pain is lessening. I am feeling more hopeful, less vulnerable and exposed. One day I will feel normal again…one day…the image tells me that.

When I compare both body maps they reveal the different stages of the journey I underwent through from the early post surgery days and further into recovery. The colours and body shapes in my maps tell their own stories. Doing the body maps was a profound experience that allowed me to experience and explore beyond words a significant turning point that I know has shaped my life. Along with a physical reshaping of my body there has also been a psychological reshaping. The entire experience is somehow captured in the words of artist Georges Braque who is quoted as saying “art is a wound that becomes light”.

What became clear to me through the intense effect the body maps had on me was also an overwhelming sense that I wanted to work with others using this process. My gut feeling at the time was that they could be a valuable and creative way for people to engage in a personal or professional exploration of critical events and turning points in their lives that may have shaped their identity. The flip side of my conversion was my concern that their resonance would not be the same for others. That maybe the body mapping impacted on me because of my particular experience and others would dismiss the process and not see the value in it.

Another reason I think the body maps spoke to me is my background in the arts and now, facilitation and coaching. It seemed to be a natural progression for how I might be able to work artfully with others in terms of self-inquiry and reflecting on critical experiences. Although I had reservations I decided that the only way I would know if body mapping could be a useful tool for Artful Inquiry (Lloyd, 2011) would be to start working with others; and so began the journey of how I might go about that.

**Body mapping - general provenance**

While I have a personal ‘Provenance’ (Hill & Lloyd, 2015) of body mapping through producing, writing and presenting about body mapping, my inquiry reveals there is also a history, a general provenance to this process. There are others who have used body mapping in other contexts and for different purposes. Body maps have been used as an arts-based research method and for therapeutic interventions in areas such as health, safety, educational and community development. In “Embodied Ways of Storying the Self,” authors de Jager, Tewson, Ludlow & Boydell (2016) undergo a systematic review of body mapping and identify various implementations of body mapping in research, therapeutic and educational contexts.

Body mapping as a technique has been used for clinical purposes and the first instance of body mapping was recorded in 1987 in a research study to compare high fertility rates in rural Jamaica and the UK (de Jager, Tewson; Ludlow & Boydell 2016). Body mapping was also used as an advocacy tool to bring attention to the issue of HIV/AIDS in Africa and rapidly became a tool for story-telling, helping women with HIV/AIDS to sketch, paint, and put their journeys into words (Devine 2008; CATIE).
In another context Dr Katherine Boydell from the Black Dog Institute reflects on how Boydell and her colleagues are starting to use body maps to map anxiety and issues around mental health (ABC Interview online, 2016). They are keen to see body mapping develop and become “an acceptable form of data and qualitative research tool” (2016).

In ‘Body Mapping Storytelling’ researchers Gastaldo, Magalhaes, Carrasco & Davy (2012) use body mapping to tell the complex stories of the lives of ‘undocumented migrant workers’ in Canada. The authors adapted body mapping from a group therapy model for its application as a research method for their study, and see body mapping storytelling as a biographical tool that can be used to show and tell people’s life stories (2012).

**Body Mapping – a process**

While research shows that body mapping has been used in a range of contexts and for a range of purposes it also reveals similarities and differences in how the body mapping process is used and facilitated. There are some core characteristics to be considered. For instance the scale of the body map – should it be life size, can it be smaller, or larger than life? Another consideration is the purpose and to question the how and why use of body mapping (de Jager, Tewson, Ludlow & Boydell 2016). Is it being used as research methodology to collect data or is it purely as a creative tool for self-inquiry, and what about ethical considerations?

In this paper I explain the way in which I have used body mapping as a process for working with others. The premise from which I work is that body mapping is a storytelling and inquiry process that enables people to reflect on personal and professional life experiences through the creation/production of a visually rich picture or artefact – a body map – to gain a different perspective or insights which may influence what they do now or in the future.

In workshops I begin the process with the ‘body mapper’ having their bodies drawn (by another person) as a life size outline drawing in a pose they have chosen. The outline can be as detailed or as simple as the body mapper decides, and they in turn instruct the person who is drawing them. As a facilitator coach I am aware I have a responsibility to help set the scene for the body mapping process and I am conscious about how much direction and input I offer, and where I stand back to allow each person to find their own way. This is where the art of facilitation makes itself known; and involves sensing and feeling into the group experience as well as working individually with participants. There are choices I make in relation to the questions I may communicate to the entire group and then how I may engage with individuals. For instance at the beginning of the process some of these questions are focused on the group and quite specific such as:

> “Consider what you would like your outline shape to look like – this might be based on a present feeling or situation or it could be future focused – what or how would you like to see of yourself in that initial drawing outline?”

Another aspect to be aware of is that the drawing of another person can be perceived as intimate and therefore requires sensitivity and respect. Not everyone is necessarily comfortable working so intimately with another person, particularly a stranger.

Some of the initial questioning is meant to trigger an internal conversation as to how the person may currently see themselves; or it may be future focused and is more about how they would like to see themselves. The body outline becomes the starting point for a visual and textual self-inquiry. Part of the initial questioning and kindling is to encourage people to focus on whether there a particular story, incident or angle they have identified and feel there is value in further exploration.

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As the process unfolds and people work on their body maps, that line of inquiry may continue and deepen, or shift, as the artefact emerges and makes itself known. There are also aesthetic decisions to be made. What emerges is often a combination of the conscious choices and decisions people make during the process as well as responding to the emergent image. This might be in the colour choices, in the particular materials used, or whether they stay in a one-dimensional mode or they move it up into a three-dimensional image. For instance they may add objects that are significant in shaping the inquiry and providing granularity to the image and story; they may hang the body map from the ceiling as a way of articulating facets of an unfolding story as depicted in the images. These are either deliberate or emergent choices people make as they engage in a reflective inquiry as revealed in the two images – Layers of Inquiry.

As Gastaldo, Magalhaes, Carrasco & Davy (2012, 10) point out - Body-Map Storytelling reflects individual's embodied experiences and meanings, attributed to their life circumstances, that shape who they become. People’s lives are a rich tapestry and when exposed to the body mapping process a person may see and work with the multiple stories that make up their life, or they may focus on a particular story they think would be worthwhile to explore in more detail. What I have often noticed during the process is the emergence of stories that have been hidden from view.

The process therefore provides the opportunity to explore an obvious primary narrative or a subtle partially formed story waiting to be noticed and brought to life.
For instance the body map, Love and Loss, emerged from a story about love, the grief felt from the loss of a parent at a young age, and a realisation that too often for this person decisions are made based on time and schedule rather than from the heart. Later the person who created this shared with me that in the lead up to body mapping they experienced some anxiety about the process of making the body map, and at one point considered finding an excuse to leave the workshop. Fortunately they stayed and found the process worthwhile from a personal and professional perspective.

Body mapping can enable people to generate new stories of becoming. The body mapping process is not static; it is experimental, dynamic and playful. The process allows stories to emerge, retreat, and be reworked. Body mapping becomes a tool of articulation (Hill & Lloyd, 2013) – a creative visual tool that offers a visual language for people to reflect on and reframe their story. Body mappers can imagine a metaphorical artefact (Hill & Lloyd, 2013; Gauntlett & Holzwarth, 2016) that may be based on past, present and future stories. This spirited process is not only a story of becoming but one of having arrived.

In the workshops body maps are drawn on large pieces of paper generally on the floor at least at the start. If people have problems working on the floor for a long period of time, tables need to be supplied. An alternative approach would be to attach the paper to the wall and work from a standing position, which does happen at various stages as people start to refine their body maps and have a desire to view them from a different perspective. Body mapping can employ a range of materials and artful making including drawing, painting, found images, collage, symbols, three dimensional artefacts, poetry, key words, basic mark-making and metaphors as some of the key elements. I encourage people to play and experiment with creating their own symbols and images rather than relying on too many pre-existing commercial images.

This aspect of body mapping can be challenging for people – often in terms of an individual’s perception about their creativity and artistic ability – however it does provide an avenue for a unique, idiosyncratic and personalised body map. Pre-existing images can be useful and provide starting points for people and stimulate ideas. For instance in one workshop, as part of the preliminary work prior to the body mapping process participants selected a couple of commercial images to start a discussion about where they felt they were currently in a professional capacity. One of the participants selected an image of a pair of ballet shoes and spoke about the influence of performance and dance in their early life, and how they didn’t dance anymore. This illuminated for them that they needed more creativity in their life, and how their current professional life was not providing that. The ballet shoes image influenced their approach to their body map, and in the process they created portrait of themselves as a dancer. The body map became a dancing metaphor – a reminder of what was missing and was needed. It became a stimulus for action in terms of making changes to their work situation.
As part of the process I encourage people to take photographs of the Body mapping in progress. This allows the individual to follow the development of their body map story. The process of recording stages allows people to return and see the points at which change has occurred and where they have made certain choices. This provides opportunities for further reflection and questioning. For example from various change points in the body map we can ask why did I make that change. What was I thinking when I chose to position myself in such a way? What is it about that the colours, symbols and icons that are significant? Each time a conscious reflection is made it has the potential to inform the future development of the body map and potentially influence future personal or professional choices.

I have a preference for building or integrating the body mapping process into a bigger creative learning scope, such as a full day workshop, or part of a longer-term programme. From my experience people often find the process challenging and at times somewhat confronting. Sometimes this is linked to feelings about their creative ability such as ‘I don’t make art’, ‘I can’t draw’ ‘I’m not creative’, and ‘I don’t know how to use art materials’, it can also trigger personal commentary about their bodies. So it is important to spend time building relationships, particularly in a group setting. Spending time with other creative methods as part of warming up to the body mapping encourages conversation, movement, and reflection, and offers a more holistic journey toward the body map rather than crashing into it.

Body mapping requires time – it is not something that should necessarily be rushed. It often takes people a while to get a feel for what the process is about, and what they are going to do. The settling in to body mapping is part of the process. It is sometimes met with some resistance or anxiety as people grapple with assumptions or commentary around their creativity and in how they perceive the process. The time required will depend on how much time I have with those I am working with. At a minimum my preference is for a full day or two half days in which we journey toward the body mapping process. At a minimum I set aside three to four hours for the process itself although it can take longer. I would encourage more time rather than less to allow for a deeper inquiry. This includes time for reflection and if people are willing a discussion about their body maps, the process and what insights they have gained. Not everyone is comfortable in sharing, and in one situation a body mapper did not want to discuss the body map as they felt they would be judged. On the whole I find people do want to share and are very interested in hearing their fellow Body Mapper stories. It is a bonus if people can return to their maps another time, such as the next day or over the following week. This allows for incubation and to see what emerges when people have had time to process and reflect. One person who has been through the body mapping process a couple of times said:

“The body map is very different this time. I had to consciously move away from what I did before. I wanted to create something different. It’s created a shift and that’s the lived experience of doing something rather than talking about. In the doing we transform…so if this is action-based learning it is happening in the moment and we are transforming as we do it. We are becoming the embodiment of the change”.

How people respond to body maps:

Over the past three years I have delivered workshops that invite people to delve into their personal and professional lives by working with a range of creative methods, which also includes body mapping. From my observation and the discussions that unfold once people have created their body maps, it seems most people have quite a visceral and meaningful response to their maps. At times it is not always an immediately positive engagement, for some it can be challenging and confronting.

Sometimes people rush into making quick judgments about the process for instance:
“I had to suspend judgment, cynicism. I had to allow myself, give myself over to the process and to play. I felt exposed. We've been trained to distance ourselves”.

For others the process can be liberating as one person explained:

“It was far more practical, kinaesthetic and immediate which helped bring me into the present moment. I warmed up to it and began to feel free and liberated - there was a level of trust that had built with the group”.

For others it provides further insight into how they currently see themselves as well as realising there are other ways to navigate their life. As one person shared:

“There is a richness and depth in the pictures. It shows things that often can't be verbalised. The imagery in my body map is powerful...there is stuff around the heart and the head. It's not natural for me to keep my heart open I have to work at it although I know I am sensitive I need to protect myself. It taps into other ways of knowing, creating images of sensations making connection to the parts of the body that have different knowledge”.

Body mapping at the AoMO conference

At the beginning of this paper I mentioned the 30-minute presentation at the AoMO conference where I shared my body mapping story. I took delegates on a very brief spoken journey similar to what is reflected in this paper. I was also keen for delegates to have an experience of the process albeit a very brief one. As a simple gesture I invited conference delegates to draw a part of their body as a taste of what is involved in producing a body map. This was well received in terms of moving from hearing a theory and process to putting it into practice. It also provided delegates with the opportunity to consider how they might work with body maps.
Body mapping for organisational and management inquiry:

Body Mapping is an embodied, creative and humanistic process to explore human territory and to share those stories. There are times when we need another language beyond words to describe what our life experiences mean. As Gastaldo, Magalhaes, Carrasco & Davy (2012) explain in their research about undocumented migrant workers Body Mapping was used to:

“engage participants in a critical examination of the meaning of their unique experiences, which could not simply be achieved through talking; drawing symbols and selecting images helped them tell a story and at the same time challenged them to search for meanings that represented who they had become through the migration process” (2012, 8).

This is potent work that can be used in different contexts including organisational life. I have worked with a couple of organisational groups in the corporate and not-for-profit sectors. In both situations I used body mapping within the framework of a one-day professional development workshop. Feedback from both groups was positive in terms of being given the space and time to individually reflect on and explore their professional life and to help create a shift in their thinking.

For instance people commented:

“It’s great to have the time to reframe and think in a different space not about the business but about ourselves”.

“Creativity needs energy and we need to allow ourselves to be energised”.

“I saw more in the body map of myself than I have seen for some time”.

They also commented favourably on body mapping as a collective process with their colleagues, which they believe provided an avenue to get to know one another in a “different way”. As one person said:

“It was worthwhile using different mediums to engage the senior management team in understanding and appreciating our differences”.

Most seemed to think there was value in doing this type of creative reflective work on a regular basis to re-invigorate themselves and build relationships with their colleagues. As one person offered:
“I’m big on team building and so I will continue to implement creative team-building activities for all staff to continue to create effective working relationships”.

There are potential benefits within an organisational context in undergoing professional self-inquiry at both an individual and collective level. There are times when the complexity and challenges of professional life can be difficult to articulate clearly in words (Caza & Creary, 2016). Making the intangible aspects of professional life tangible can help generate new insights and understanding in terms of one’s own practice and that of others. As the world becomes more complex, and organisational life becomes more multifaceted, the ability and courage to reflect on how one experiences professional life becomes critical (Caza & Creary, 2016). Never has this been more needed than in terms of leadership and management (De Courtere & Magellan Horth, 2016).

Equally, as concepts such as creativity and innovation are emphasised as key drivers for organisational success, creative professional development and insight become crucial. As organisations experience uncertainty there is increasing demand for people to be more flexible and adroit in thinking and behaviour (Caza & Creary, 2016). That does not happen easily in organisational life if the culture is one of business as usual. People and organisations can stagnate, and we have seen many institutions disappear or get taken over by more agile competitors.

With any intervention one needs to be mindful about how a creative process like body mapping is used. There are ethical considerations of using any process of reflection and inquiry that asks people to reveal personal and professional stories in the workplace. It needs to be undertaken with great care, transparency and with the goal of helping people understand the purpose and potential benefits as well as deal with concerns. Ideally these sorts of professional development processes are done with participants who are willing and see the value in undertaking such a process.

If an environment of trust, psychological safety and the benefits of an Artful Inquiry (Lloyd, 2011) within an organisational context are understood there is the possibility of deepening connections, relationships and bringing our humanity into professional life. Creating space for people to explore and flex their personal and professional identities provides a way for participants to see the depth and creativity of their colleagues.

Body mapping is an aesthetic and artful inquiry and provides a way for people to reflect creatively on their practice and in the process generate theories for and about themselves (Gauntlett & Holzwarth 2006). To individually and collectively inquire into current professional identities and to experiment and play with future professional identities can provide new perspectives and insights for how people see themselves and others professionally. When fully explored body mapping involves the head, heart and body, and is a creative process for professionals to make tangible the intangible aspects of professional life.
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