Challenging Organisations and Society

reflective hybrids®

Beware of Art: ARTificial Intelligence Challenging Organizations and Society

Edited by Claudia Schnugg and Andrea Schueller

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Johannes Braumann interviewed by Liselotte Zvacek

Why didn't you stay until Sunday's brunch?

The idea of our conference was to enable people from different thematic and content-related backgrounds to exchange ideas, to introduce managers and consultants to the topic of AI, and to bring new ideas into the world together with technicians.

In addition to the discussion of AI, the conference concept included two streams: Art and Research. Artistic interventions should connect participants from different backgrounds and encourage inspiring things to happen. The main part of the artistic work was done by Paloa Mineo and Andrea Schüller: first, through the production for each participant of plaster cast fragments of their own face; and second, through a playful (remember your number), tangible and perceptible performance addressing the other side of artificial intelligence – threat through surveillance. The research stream was represented by students of Avans University through a performance on the last day.

In general, the conference design was structured in such a way that the results of participants' experiences and insights were processed together in dialogic processes on Sunday, the last day of the conference. Interestingly, almost exclusively managers, consultants, artists and students were present on Sunday, while participants from the technical world did not make it to the brunch.

A look at the round table on Sunday morning made it clear that we were more or less among ourselves, a moment of realization that surprised many participants in the dialog.

How did this come about, what hypotheses are possible explanatory patterns and what forces might have been at work here?

The world of technicians is still predominantly male, but the understanding of roles has changed – fathers of the younger generation take their role seriously and limit themselves to the essential, content-rich parts of the conference and spend the evening and the advanced weekend with their children.

But this was probably not the only reason, and Liselotte Zvacek, one of the conference chairs, reflected together with one of the keynote speakers, Prof. Johannes Braumann, and found some explanations that we would like to share in the following.

LZ: Prof. Braumann, what were your impressions of the COS-ARTificial Conference 2019 in the tobacco factory?

JB: My background is architecture, so I'm used to other formats of conferences, formats where you passively let yourself be sprinkled by presentations; here the interactive exchange format surprised me. This might be a first hypothesis – especially in the IT industry conferences are huge with several thousand participants* (*or were before the COVID crisis) and therefore much more impersonal. At these conferences, the contact to other conference participants is established through holding one's own lectures or workshop, which is often problematic. If you have your slot later in the conference, then you lose valuable time when you could be addressed by others or make contacts, because nobody knows or addresses you until then. At the COS Conference it was completely different; through the dialog groups you already got in contact in the first few minutes and were forced to overcome your shyness, because the talking stick (a 3D-printed ARTifish) came closer and closer and you had to contribute. This interactive format may have put some people off, although I liked the fact that people were more or less forced to raise their voice and contribute. You're not so used to getting in touch with other participants in the first few minutes, so you might prefer to stay in the background

and if the last day is completely in dialog format, that might be even more of a reason to stay away.

LZ: You mean that some participants were taken out of their comfort zone and thus reacted in a more reserved fashion?

JB: Yes, I can imagine that, certainly not consciously but on the unconscious level.

LZ: In the 1970s Edgar Schein made a long-term study of how careers develop and divided graduates into eight different categories, one of which is technical-functional competence – which is increasingly found in areas of technology, i.e. concentration on content, connections, deep diving and getting involved professionally. With this potential, social-communicative skills are subordinate to technical skills and are not practiced in this way. This also could possibly have contributed to being "taken out of their comfort zone".

JB: Another hypothesis would be that the subject of interdisciplinarity was not perceived in this way by the technicians. They saw themselves more as AI experts and not as contributors who, like the other researchers and artists, met and broke new ground together. The scientists from the AI side have an eloquence in their vocabulary which others who have taught themselves the skills cannot quite keep up with.

LZ: Do you think it's like when native speakers get together with those for whom it's a second language, or who have just started to develop their vocabulary?

JB: Yes, it may be that we didn't meet on the same level. It may have been more like AI masters meeting AI learners, and yet both learned from the encounter.

LZ: … and the encounter on the artistic level unfortunately did not fire up the process as much as we would have wished, although inspiring encounters, especially in the performance, occurred here. For our target group, the consultants and managers, it was very worthwhile to dive into the topic. The exchange format, which was rather familiar, was an energizer for them. It also became clear that there is no solution, that questions remained open until the end and that the exchange, awareness and mindfulness in dealing with the topic of AI are all particularly relevant.

JB: Perhaps you are also too critical. Consider the aspect we have at all conferences: The first day is very busy, the second day is also busy and then it flattens out. Conferences also should not be measured by the last day. Therefore, always take the group photo on the first day, remembering the usual patterns. If I take myself as an example, I had some interesting meetings and took some contacts with me; I think this is also true for those others who did not stay till the end.

LZ: Thank you for the interview.

About the Authors

Johannes Braumann heads Creative Robotics at the University of Art and Design Linz. He is co-founder of the Association for Robots in Architecture and the main developer of the intuitive robot programming environment KUKA | prc, which is used by more than 100 universities and 50 companies worldwide. The focus of his work is the development of methods of robotics for new user groups. Thereby, Creative Robotics cooperates closely with the Innovation Center Grand Garage and develops innovative robot processes for (and with) SMEs and craft businesses.

Sougwen Chung is an internationally renowned artist and a pioneer in the field of human-robot collaboration. In her work she artistically explores and researches ways to work with machines and the potential of artificial intelligence in creative cooperative processes. Chung has been artist-in-residence at distinguished organizations like Nokia Bell Labs, is a former research fellow at MIT's Media Lab and was selected as the Woman of the Year in Monaco in 2019 for achievement in the Arts & Sciences.

Elisabetta F. Jochim is creative AI lead at Libre AI and co-founder at Cueva Gallery. She has a background in Arts and Humanities and extensive experience in project management working with heterogeneous teams in dynamic environments. Finding her passion in the intersection of technology and art, she explores how artificial intelligence can enhance human creativity. Her interests focus on digital aesthetics, human-computer interaction, human and machine creativity, and society.

Paola Michela Mineo is an Italian visual artist: her research is rooted in relational art, but she uses an interdisciplinary language that ranges from performance art to photography, from the purest sculpture to installations. She graduated in Architecture at the Polytechnic of Milan and Athens; she reinterprets the concept of human cast and fragment, transforming them from

an anatomical copy to a real pieces of personal identity portraits. She has exhibited her work in various museums, and is always committed to extracting beauty from the darkest social realities.

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Elena Raviola is Professor in Business and Design at the university of Gothenburg. She is recipient of the Tortsen and Wanja Söderberg Professorship in Design Management at the Academy of Design and Crafts Gothenburg and Director of the Business and Design Lab. Her research incorporates artificial intelligence and design, and its implications of work processes, most importantly on creative work. Her main research interest lies in understanding the role of technology and other material artifacts in organizing professional work, especially in news production. She was visiting researcher at Stanford, Bocconi University, Harvard, and Sciences Po, and worked at Jönköping International Business School and Copenhagen Business School.

Claudia Schnugg is independent researcher and curator in the field of art and science. Her work focuses on analyzing the effects of art in organizational and social settings, including change processes and new technologies. As advocate of artscience collaboration, she has been the catalyst for numerous projects. Claudia is working with leading scientific institutions, tech corporations and cultural partners. She researched at JKU in Linz, Copenhagen Business School, UCLA Art|Sci Center+Lab, and at European Southern Observatory, Chile. She headed the Ars Electronica Residency Network and was first Artistic Director of Science Gallery Venice. Her most recent book is "Creating ArtScience Collaboration" (2019).

Andrea Schueller is an independent business consultant, executive coach and lecturer at various universities specializing in generative change and transformation, organizational design, systemic identity, social innovation, creative emergence. Over the years she has qualified in various fields and applies her work shapeshifting in different contexts pursuing the red line of fostering embodied consciousness development through fresh presence and

holistic working designs. She is teaching trainer for Group Dynamics with the OEGGO (Austrian Association of Group Dynamics & Organization Consulting) which she chaired and served as a Board Member (2012-2018). She is a co-founder of COS Collective.
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Liselotte Zvacek is management consultant, leadership coach and lecturer at different universities in Austria; teaching trainer (train the trainer) of OEGGO (Austrian Society of Group Dynamics and Organisational Development) and member of the board of OEGGO (2000-02 and 2012-18); facilitator at the Graduate School of Business of Stanford University (USA) 2011-15; member of the faculty of the Hernstein Institute; member of NTL (National Training Laboratories Institute, USA), photographer. She is a co-founder of COS Collective.
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Join COS, a Home for Reflective Hybrids

The future is an unknown garment that invites us to weave our lives into it. How these garments will fit, cover, colour, connect and suit us lies in our (collective) hands. Many garments from the past have become too tight, too grey, too something…and the call for new shapes and textures is acknowledged by many. Yet changing clothes leaves one naked, half dressed in between. Let's connect in this creative, vulnerable space and cut, weave and stitch together.

Our target group is reflective hybrids – leaders, scientists, consultants, and researchers from all over the world who dare to be and act complex. Multilayered topics require multidimensional approaches that are, on the one hand, interdisciplinary and, on the other hand, linked to theory and practice, making the various truths and perspectives mutually useful.

If you feel you are a reflective hybrid you are very welcome to join our COS movement, for instance by:

- Visiting our website: www.cos-collective.com
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Being global and diverse in thinking and acting outside the box are the targets for its authors and readers in management, consulting and science.