

THE AGILE MUSEUM: ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE
THROUGH COLLECTING 'NEW MEDIA ART'

Thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
at the University of Leicester

by

Catharina Hendrick BA, MA
School of Museum Studies
University of Leicester

2015

Abstract

Catharina Hendrick

The Agile Museum: organisational change through collecting ‘new media art’

This thesis investigates how collecting new media art affects the museum institutionally. The aim and purpose of this research was to understand how the process of collecting new media art within two regional case study museums (one in the UK and one in the Netherlands) is changing how they operate and function. The two regional museums in this research, I suggest, are innovative and adaptable organisations with agile organisation, agile curation and an agile organisational culture and leadership. Best practice is fostered, experimentation is cultivated and staff work in a collaborative and flexible manner so that new media art can be acquired. The theoretical approach, the *Congruence Model of Organizational Behavior*, considers how organisations are best aligned in terms of four major components: people, formal structure, informal culture and critical tasks/workflow. The research evaluated the congruence between the four major components and signals the subtle, but important ways in which new media art has reshaped them.

A case study qualitative approach was used; interviews were carried out with participants and thematic analysis was employed to analyse the data. Three broad themes emerged from the research. First, new ways of organising – agile teams with a project-based ethos were apparent. Second, collaboration inside and outside the organisation – working across units and disciplines inside the museum and building networks outside the museum which promotes knowledge exchange, learning and collaborative practice were evident. Finally, staff agency and leadership – the organisational culture facilitates autonomy for staff where informed risk-taking and proactivity flourish.

This research extends our knowledge of the reciprocal relationship between new media art and how the two museums operate and function. This study has gone some way towards enhancing our understanding of how new media art impacts, in nuanced ways, the museum’s structure and culture, and skills and expertise.

Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been possible without the support and guidance of many people for whom I would like to thank most sincerely.

I gratefully acknowledge the assistance and time given of those interviewed for assisting me in understanding how new media art is changing how their museums operate and function.

I am indebted to my supervisor Dr Janet Marstine, School of Museum Studies, for her invaluable advice, support and patience throughout my PhD. Thanks also to Dr Ross Parry, Dr Richard Sandell and Dr Suzanne MacLeod for their help, expertise and advice.

Most especially, I would like to thank my family and friends for their support when it was most needed. I am enormously thankful to my dear friends Caroline McNally, Dr Jim O'Brien, Dr Talat Farooq and Margaret-Rose Mervyn for their comments, encouragement and support. Thanks also goes to Sabine for her tremendous council, faith and championing throughout.

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CHAPTER 1 – Introduction

Because of its characteristics, the digital medium poses a number of challenges to the traditional art world, not least in its presentation, collection, and preservation.

(Paul 2008: 23)

The challenges that new media art presents to traditional ways of working in museums are neatly exemplified by the two online projects which Tate curator, Matthew Gansallo, was tasked with commissioning and curating from Simon Patterson and Graham Harwood (or Harwood@Mongrel as he prefers to be called) which went live in 2000 (Gansallo in Parry 2010: 344, 346). The title of Harwood@Mongrel's work was *Uncomfortable Proximity* and Simon Patterson's work was *La Match de Couleur*. Both artists recontextualised the Tate website to explore the relationship between new media, Internet art and museum institutions and its traditions (ibid.: 347). The recontextualisation gave the impression that the website had been hacked and attacked by viruses. The reworking of the site was intentionally subversive and operated like an intervention where every third visitor to Tate Online was unwittingly dropped into this 'Mongrelised' site (Web Archive 2014). Patterson's work took over the computer screen with colour shots, sound and coded information whilst Harwood's work sat behind it and 'pop[ped] up when the computer is being shut down, as a way of asserting its presence' (Gansallo in Parry 2010: 347).

In the process of curating this project Gansallo was involved in a considerable number of meetings with various departments including the marketing department, the development department as well as the exhibition, education and national programmes teams. All these conversations meant that everyone 'learnt how to create a balance – and that was the curatorial challenge' (ibid.: 348). The Harwood work would drop in to the Tate site so that visitors 'would get the Mongrel site popping up right in front, confusing whoever is using it, making them say "What's happening here?"' (ibid.: 348). Not surprisingly, the

marketing department were infuriated with the idea that visitors to the website would 'disappear'; through Mongrel's work they believed users would be confused and exit the site.

In addition, the Development Department at Tate expressed concern because certain web pages were 'mongrelised' including the 'supporters', sponsorship and corporate involvement pages. After consultation, all the funders were happy for their logos to appear on the Tate-Mongrel site. Furthermore, questions about contracts for the artists were also brought up as well as other issues including 'ownership, acquisition, procurement, collection, archiving and provenance – how do you collect and archive such a work? How long will the work be live on the Tate Web?' – all these issues had to be addressed and worked into the contracts for the artists (ibid.: 349).

This working example shows precisely the complexities involved in collecting new media art but also the clever strategies which were utilised in securing and exhibiting these pieces. The case raises interesting questions about how the institution is changed as a result of commissioning/collecting new media art. Specifically, how involved do individual departments get? Who makes the final decision on such delicate and important questions? Do we see a shift in the roles of curators, collection managers, conservation staff, documentation personnel and education officers, and a merging of tasks and function? These are some of the questions which my research project will seek to answer.

The aim of this study is twofold: first, to understand how the process of collecting 'new media art' is changing how the two case study museums operate and function. Second, to examine the effect new media art has on the museums' organisational structure and culture, workflow, skills sets/expertise, and decision-making and leadership. Therefore, the research sets out to assess the extent to which these museums are being reshaped and redefined as a result of collecting new media art.

Literature on new media art is expansive and considers issues covering documentation, curatorial practice and exhibition making, preservation and

conservation. However, the literature, I contend, has overlooked the implications that collecting new media art has on the museum's function and operations. The theoretical approach which I have employed, the *Congruence Model of Organizational Behavior*, considers how organisations are best aligned in terms of four major components: people, formal structure, informal culture and critical tasks/workflow. The research evaluated and assessed the congruence of the four major components and how, to some degree, new media art has reshaped them. The use of a business theory to assess the impact collecting new media art has on the museum is, I argue, what makes this research original and unique. This will be further explored in chapters 5-7.

New media art is a contested term, but, for the purposes of this research, it shares the following characteristics: computable, variable, networked, ephemeral, immaterial, replicable and interactive. This will be clarified further in Chapter 2. This research limits new media art to exclude all manifestations of video art or installation art. Finally, the focus on new media art will consider policy and practice since 2000 – this date marks the beginning of many US institutions becoming seriously committed to the collecting of new media art and thereafter the UK and Europe on which this research focuses.

The research project is grounded on a number of assumptions which should be set out. At the outset it was assumed that the museums to be investigated would have obvious and noticeable changes as a result of collecting new media art. Furthermore, the research questions predicted certain outcomes as a result of the fieldwork; specifically that new media art was an important factor in shaping the museum and, consequently, that staff would need to redefine their roles and workflow. In fact, the fieldwork revealed many questions, observations and complexities that were unforeseen and caused me to re-evaluate my assumptions. I found that the diverse context, history of the museum, resources available and staffing were key components to both why these organisations began to acquire new media art for the collection and also how each museum reassessed and reshaped their workflow, skills and decision-making process. In other words, I learned that the impact of collecting

new media art on the bureaucratic structures of museums is more subtle and complex than I had imagined with many factors playing a role as well.

Two case studies were carried out at regional museums - the Harris Museum and Art Gallery (Preston, UK) and the Van Abbemuseum (Eindhoven, the Netherlands). A case study qualitative approach was used; interviews were carried out with participants and thematic analysis was employed to analyse the data. Three broad themes emerged from the analysis: 1) New ways of organising (agility of organisation); 2) Collaboration – inside and outside the organisation (agility of curation); and 3) Staff agency and leadership (agility of organisational culture/leadership). The themes show a good example of agility in three significant ways.

First, agility of the organisation is expressed in a move to project-based ways of working where structures and hierarchies are flatter and there is less formality and rigidity; new media art collections are instituted by informal ground-up teams of museum professionals responding to the needs of the artwork. Second, agility of curation indicates that both case study museums exploited collaborative practices inside and outside the organisation. This practice enabled the museum to stimulate cooperation with partners and to share expertise and develop best practice. Finally, the agility of organisational culture and leadership was manifest through a culture of openness and experimentation; self-agency and autonomy were deepened enabling museum professionals to be active instruments in the museum to build a collection of new media art. Importantly, the directors within each case study museum promoted a culture of agility where staff could challenge orthodoxy, be flexible and take informed risks. Such agility enabled the Harris Museum and the Van Abbemuseum to actively acquire new media art.

The concept of the agile organisation has been researched and discussed in organisational theory and business theory but is becoming a more predominant idea within the museum field. For instance, the *Agile Museum* conference in 2015 considered issues surrounding agile curation, the museum as an agile concept and agile leadership as a model. One of the features of an agile

organisation design is shared leadership and identity. Shared leadership shifts the “organization’s thinking from leadership as an individual trait to leadership as an organization capacity” (Worley and Lawler 2010: 196). This feature, within organisational theory, is one which former museum director, Bob Janes, advocates. This thesis, therefore, connotes that the two case study museums have an organisational culture and leadership style which facilitates an innovative climate where museum professionals are in a position to be proactive, creative and agile.

Furthermore, this thesis contends that museums which are acquiring new media artworks for their permanent art collection are, to some extent, being redefined. New media art, this thesis asserts, does have the ability to subtly change how the museum works. The two regional museums in this research, I suggest, are innovative and agile organisations where expertise is shared within the organisation and beyond building best practice. Moreover, experimentation is cultivated and staff work in a collaborative and flexible manner so that new media art can be acquired. The agile museum is one which, I suggest, strengthens creativity, flexibility, curiosity, tolerance of ambiguity and resilience; such agility and ability to adapt supports the organisation to collect new media art. More importantly, new media art appears to facilitate a progressive style of working, which incorporates a cross-disciplinary approach, staff agency and empowered decision-making (alongside informed risk-taking and experimentation), and collaborative practice both inside the museum and outside.

This thesis is original in three distinct ways. First, the research explored two regional museums from an organisational perspective. Second, a theory which is employed in business analysis, the Congruence Model of Organizational Behavior, has been used to analyse and assess four major components: the formal organisational structure, the informal culture, the people and their skills sets/expertise, and the critical tasks/workflows to be accomplished. The theory determines the congruence or alignment of these four major components. In this model if a gap is identified or an opportunity exists then they need to be addressed to ensure the institution is performing effectively. Thirdly, this thesis

has used the business theory of congruence along with two regional museums to examine the impact collecting new media art has on the four major components and to assess whether they are in alignment (or congruence). These three elements have, I argue, illustrated the originality, usefulness and significance of the project.

Research Questions

This thesis attempts to address the following questions:

- 1) How does collecting new media art change the organisational shape/structure of the museum?
- 2) What is collecting new media art doing to the organisation in terms of:
(a) workflow, (b) skills sets/expertise, (c) decision-making process, (d) organisational culture and (e) overall impact on the museum (including leadership)?
- 3) Why do these changes take place?

Questions will be asked about whether departments are being re-shaped as a result of collecting new media art – whether they are shrinking, merging or being created. In what ways do museum professionals now work collaboratively and in a cross-disciplinary manner as a result of the acquisition of new media art? Have the skills sets and expertise of curators changed as a consequence of collecting new media art? How are decisions made when acquiring, documenting, conserving, curating and interpreting new media art, and by whom? Finally, what is collecting doing to the museums in terms of organisational structure, culture, leadership and the overall impact on the institution, and, why are these changes taking place? Attention to the context in which these museums operate will also be examined to determine to what extent social, political, geographic and economic factors impact the museum.

Thesis Argument

The research findings indicate that new media art is subtly changing how museums operate and function. New media art is focusing attention on the relationships between museum staff and professionals outside the museum. Indeed, collecting new media art is reshaping the museum itself from an organisational point of view albeit it in subtle and nuanced ways. A pattern of what emerged is evident in three ways: 1) an agile organisation with new ways of organising; 2) agile curation where collaboration inside and outside the museum is apparent; and 3) agile organisational culture and leadership illustrated through staff agency and informal leadership.

In answer to the question ‘how does collecting new media art impact on the shape/structure of the museum?’ the findings from the research indicate that new media art does not strongly impact on the structure, but, alongside other changes to how the museum operates, there is a move away from functional hierarchies and bureaucracies to a project-based approach with team working and a flatter, de-centralised hierarchy. The two case study museums under consideration are finding new ways of working. In particular, cross-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary ways which incorporate team working and a project-based approach. Each museum shares a move towards nimble teams which fosters flexible ways of working across the organisation. This is further advanced with a greater integration and interdependence within the museum. New media art is commanding a team approach due to its ambiguous and fluid nature. As a result, a group of talented and motivated museum professionals actively self-organise in project teams to enable the museum to acquire new media art. Collecting new media art is, to a lesser extent, possible due to flatter formal structures where there is less formality and hierarchy, as a result, informal ground-up teams configure and respond to the needs of the artwork as necessary. In addition, however, cross-functional ways of working illustrates that museums are adapting to the external environment and the challenges and cutbacks they face. Museums are adjusting to the economic climate and responding proactively to constraints by redefining new ways of organising,

thus, collecting new media art is part of this larger picture which is reshaping museums.

The second research question asks ‘what is collecting new media art doing to the organisation in terms of a) workflow; b) skills sets/expertise; c) decision-making; d) organisational culture and e) overall impact on museum (including leadership)?’ My research reveals that the two case study museums are exploiting the opportunity for collaborative practice both within the organisation and outside through agile curation. The acquisition of new media art demands collaborative practice – sharing knowledge, expertise and best practice. It is acknowledged that museum professionals in the Harris Museum and the Van Abbemuseum do not hold the skills sets and expertise necessary to collect, document, preserve and curate new media art. However, they have recognised the need to seek expertise across the organisation and beyond. A network of organisations exists to share best practice and knowledge and both museums have built strong relationships with such organisations to learn from one another and work collaboratively on projects, particularly collecting new media art.

Agility of organisational culture and leadership was evident where a culture of openness and experimentation enabled museum professionals to influence and form a collection of new media art. Importantly, the directors within each case study museum promoted a culture where the decision-making process is enhanced through staff agency and informal leadership. Museum professionals are empowered to work autonomously and exercise greater flexibility and responsibility in their roles. Furthermore, staff agency encourages staff to take informed risks and be inventive and creative. Staff agency and informal leadership emanates from an open exploration of the potential of museums. An open culture of innovation and experimentation is bolstered by a leadership style which cultivates an environment where staff can exercise agency. In both museums it is evident that the culture (informal organisation) has enabled staff to challenge the museum by actively acquiring new media art. The leadership style, coupled with the organisational culture, was a significant factor in determining and influencing the museum’s motivation to acquire new media art.

The ambiguity and fluidity of new media art demanded a team of museum professionals who could take on the challenge of collecting new media art whilst exploring opportunities across the organisation and outside through partnerships and networks. Establishing and building collections of new media art required agility, flexibility and curiosity which were facilitated by organisational structures which enabled cross-disciplinary teams to form, and a leadership style which fostered a climate of tolerance for uncertainty, experimentation and challenging orthodoxy. Furthermore, the organisational culture embedded a climate of openness, creativity and flexibility which encouraged museum professionals to assume greater responsibility, become informal leaders and share in the decision-making process of acquiring new media art. New media art has, in subtle ways therefore, redefined the way the museum organises itself through agile structures, the way work is accomplished via cross-disciplinary ways of working through agile curation and agile leadership which is responsive and participatory. Therefore, the presence of new media art does, in small but significant ways, change the way the organisation works. This will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 5, 6 and 7.

I argue that what makes these museums distinct is the strong congruence between the participative leadership style and the open organisational culture. This is important in shaping how things are done and why. I contend that this connection between the leadership approach and organisational culture is compelling; the case study museums have keenly collected new media art for their permanent collection. This has been overlooked in the literature on new media art, and, is a key finding of my research. New media art is collected, in large part, because the leadership style and culture fosters staff agency and autonomy; such agency and autonomy enables staff to actively shape the museum and its collection.

The directors have a leadership style which sits between a consultative and participative approach. This approach encourages museum professionals to actively participate in shaping the organisation. Museum professionals embrace the role of informal leader and engage with creative ways of working. The Harris Museum made a big advance by initiating the *Current* project – a project which

included an exhibition, debate, acquisition and evaluation of new media art. The Van Abbemuseum, a museum which has been proactive and experimental in terms of its programming, exhibition and collection, has actively acquired new media art for the permanent collection but does not categorise the work by medium. The work, rather, is acquired for the collection because it fits within the collecting research themes.

The leaders in both museums have a considerable role to play in how things are done and why. They surrender some authoritative power to museum professionals and feel confident and comfortable letting staff work across units, engage in new practices, share knowledge inside and outside the organisation, and take responsibility and accountability for building the museum's collection. This research finding was revealing in terms of the delicate intricacies and subtleties which are at play when examining the museum from an organisational point of view. Many factors come together to shape and redefine how things are done and why. Not least, the role the director/leader plays has a significant impact on the organisational culture and the environment which exists. Here, staff have the prospect of exploring and exploiting opportunities for the collection. In addition, they have the opportunity to expand their knowledge base and work with others across the organisation and beyond the museum.

These changes are taking place due to a number of contributing factors. The context highlights that, due to the economic climate, financial support from Council and government is declining. This brings economic challenges for the museum not least in staff reductions and layoffs. Research indicated that both museums had to make staff reductions. As a consequence, both external and internal factors will impact on the size of the museum and how it operates and its capacity to build museum collections.

Museum professionals can therefore begin to assume greater responsibility and work in new ways. New approaches to tasks are actively considered and expertise is shared across the museum and sought from outside through networks and partnerships. Learning and collaboration are pivotal to new ways of working. Moreover, the organisational culture enables such changes to occur

with leadership encouraging staff to experiment and take informed risks to collect new media art.

New media art plays a small, but, significant part in the overall changes occurring at the case study museums. In short, collecting new media art subtly redefines how the museum functions and operates. This redefinition impacts on the work to be done, the skills needed, the structure, ways of organising and decision-making and leadership. The acquisition of new media art illustrates that these two regional museums are proactive with ground-up working and responsiveness to the collection. It is important to emphasise, however, that such reshaping and redefinition might not be exclusive to new media art, that is, other artforms may elicit the same response. Therefore, further research in to other artforms could be considered to determine if they raise similar questions.

Importantly, however, I argue that organisational culture and leadership are real drivers of change to the operation and functioning of the museum and this, in turn, enables the Harris Museum and the Van Abbemuseum to actively acquire new media art for their permanent collection. The nature of new media art necessitates cross-disciplinary ways of working and sharing expertise so that issues related to the exhibition, documentation, preservation and acquisition of such works can be handled with a broad range of input to build best practice. The characteristics of computable, variable, immaterial, and replicable raise numerous questions for museum professionals and the systems and functions within the museum have to be responsive and agile so that the works can be collected and care for appropriately. There is a reciprocal relationship between new media art and the museum however it could be argued that the impact of new media art on the collecting museum is greater than the effect of the museum on the artwork. Simply put new media art demands greater integration in the organisation between units and territories, deeper communication and sharing of knowledge across the organisation to encourage shared decision-making and best practice.

Research Context – Literature Review

Literature on new media art has engaged with a wide variety of topics including commissioning, documentation, curation, preservation and authorship. Writers including Beryl Graham and Sarah Cook (*Rethinking Curating, Art After New Media* 2010) Julian Stallabrass (*Internet Art* 2003), Christiane Paul (*Digital Art* 2008) and Steve Dietz, ('Collecting New-Media Art: Just Like Anything Else, Only Different' 2005) have written critically about how best to curate, effectively preserve/conservate the artworks, and, how to document new media art. One criticism of much of the literature on new media art is that it fails to engage with the effect collecting new media art has on the organisation and how collecting this art is impacting on the functioning and performance of the institution. And it is this gap in the literature that, in part, this thesis attempts to address.

This section will sketch out the field of new media art and identify major debates and acknowledge key writers (both academics and museum professionals) in the literature. Gaps in the literature will be identified and what this thesis can contribute to the issue of collecting new media art will be explored.

Much of the available literature on new media art deals with the following issues: taxonomies/definitions, aesthetics, authorship and authenticity, audience participation, preservation/conservation, documentation, commissioning of new media art, curation/exhibition, and collecting new media art. This literature review will specifically address questions concerning audience participation, preservation, documentation, commissioning, curating and, finally, collecting new media art. The issue of taxonomies and definitions is beyond the scope of this research, particularly because there is a large degree of uncertainty around terminology. In this research the term 'new media art' will be used (detailed further in Chapter 2). Moreover, the thesis will not debate the validity of new media art but champion's new media art for its potential to create museological self-reflective practice. The matter of aesthetics, authorship and authenticity has been argued and debated in philosophical discourse (Hein 2000, Knell 2003, Witcomb 2007), but, it is not

integral to the discussion on collecting new media art and, therefore, will not be addressed in this literature review.

Literature on audience participation in new media art is seen as an opportunity for museums in the way it can foster collaborative, participative and audience engagement (O'Brien 2007, Ride 2012). Internet-based art can encourage visitors to:

connect to the work from more than one location or timeframe, you can collaboratively create and change the experience [...] of the work by interacting with it, alone or in a group, from within your own social, political, or geographic context (Cook 2007: 121).

Audiences can become actors and authors in a collaborative piece of net art. For example, Mark Napier's '*net flag*' is an online artwork which is both interactive i.e. it requires the user to choose colour, form, shape and so on, and, is generative i.e. it runs on an algorithmic process that produces the work anew each time (Tribe 2007: 70).

What emerge from discussion on audience participation are the levels which may exist. These levels of increasing engagement include interaction, participation and collaboration (Graham and Cook 2010: 114). The levels can signify certain behaviours which the artist implies with particular forms of new media art. For example, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer's *Body Movies, Relational Architecture No. 6* (2001) is an outdoor public installation where participants can make giant shadows with their bodies (ibid.: 119). Hannah Hutzig's *Flight Case Archive of Mobile Academy* (2003-2010), at the Van Abbemuseum (detailed further in Chapter 2), encourages visitors to actively take part and interact with the artwork; they have control over what they see and the order in which it is seen. Literature on audience behaviours and participation, artist's intentions and the role of the curator tends to be descriptive in nature. Literature helps us see the diversity of relationships at play in the new media artworks, but, it fails to critically examine the impact these relationships have on the institution, more

importantly, in collecting new media art and the needs on documentation, preservation and the role of museum professionals.

Preservation and conservation of new media art has a considerable body of literature (Laurenson 2011, 2013, Altshuler, Iles and Huldisch 2005, Dekker 2010, Graham and Cook 2010, Dietz 2005, 2014, Noordegraaf et al 2013). According to Iles and Huldisch, museums have been slow to address the issues of caring and preserving film and video art. This has now been superseded by concerns about conserving new media art (Altshuler 2005: 75). The challenges and strategies for preserving new media art have been engaged through heritage projects such as the International Network for the Conservation of Contemporary Art (INCCA), the Variable Media Network (VMN), and the Documentation and Conservation of the Media Arts Heritage (DOCAM) (Noordegraaf et al 2013: 12). Best practice is shared at numerous conferences, workshops and forums to enhance knowledge exchange and learning through practical case studies. Such extensive sources provide us with an important repository of critical practical challenges and perspectives on preserving new media art. Nonetheless, the literature does not critically assess the impact on the museum in terms of the culture, structure and work to be done.

Documentation needs to take account of the following matters: the acquisition process, the artist's intentions, how best to preserve the artwork (if indeed it is to be preserved) and what equipment is needed to run such art (if the work runs a live data feed where internet access needs to be available and, any firewalls which might need to be disabled). A wide range of knowledge and contextual documentation is important so that new media art can be archived and collected accurately (Graham 2012). Such information is acquired in order to guide new media art's care and display as well as documenting the concept, significance, production and experience of the work (Laurenson in Noordegraaf et al 2013: 282, 284).

Detailed examination of documentation of new media art (Graham 2012, Dekker 2012, Van Saaze 2009, Laurenson 2013, Jones and Muller 2008) shows that if

the documentation is not put in place, then, when curators, directors and archivists wish to look back at a particular artist's oeuvre it will be hard to gauge the intent of the artist's work (Taylor in Graham 2014). Graham argues that art movements are:

free-ranging, evolving, and border-crossing, art documentation needs to be structured and defined. If contemporary art is not documented, then it is very difficult to build a critical history of any media, unless the critics were at the very place an event happened, or present at the moment before the Web site ceased to function (2007: 105).

Case study examples (such as those given by van Saaze 2009, and Dekker 2012) are helpful in highlighting the importance documentation plays in relation to collecting new media art. Yet, it does not provide an in-depth analysis of the complex interrelationships between the conservator, registrar, curator and artist; the task to be done and how the skills sets and expertise within museums are being reshaped and redefined. The importance of documenting new media art contributes to a more complete picture of new media art's particular characteristics which often fall outside museum documentation templates.

In 2001, cultural producer and media consultant Susan Morris published a report commissioned by the Rockefeller Foundation on the challenges US museums face when commissioning new media art. In particular, Morris considered issues on the skills sets and expertise of the curators, where new media art was positioned in the museum, the blurring of roles and professionalism and the museum as a space for innovation and experimentation. The report is centred on conversations with curators, museum directors, artists and new media professionals (2001: 4). This report is insightful and shows the landscape of commissioning new media art. Morris' research is pertinent because it mirrors some of the findings of this thesis, namely, the impact new media art has on the formal organisational arrangements (structure), the potential effect on the skills sets and expertise of museum professionals and the role of the curator in the institution.

According to Morris, new media art is in a 'state of flux' in museums when seen from an administrative perspective (ibid.: 5). There is a fluidity and uncertainty in the field and this can present both challenges and opportunities for both the museum and its staff. One finding emphasised the various backgrounds which curators came from. Curators, Morris concludes, have wide-ranging backgrounds and experience. For example, Christiane Paul, new media art curator at the Whitney Museum of American Art, studied literature and came to new media via hypertext. Steve Dietz, Founder and Artistic Director of biennial 01SJ Global Festival of Art on the Edge, and Executive Director of independent arts agency Northern Lights, and former curator of New Media at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, studied art and was involved in publishing photography books (ibid.: 5). This raises the issue of to what extent do we see these new skills sets and expertise coming into the museum? Indeed, the job of many curators is perhaps shifting and many of them adopt the term 'producer', 'collaborator', 'enabler', and 'nurturer' (ibid.: 16). The role of the curator is not just to research, exhibit and interpret objects but also to be a conduit or mediator between artists and the institution (ibid.: 16).

Morris's report suggests that the fit of new media curators into existing administrative structures is still being negotiated. This is evidenced in terms of considering organisational structure where curators:

are not necessarily stationed in their own New Media department. Rather, some are in Film/Video/Media Arts, others in Painting and Sculpture, some in Contemporary, others in Architecture and Design. Others involved can be found in Education, Marketing, Publishing, Design, and more (2001: 5).

Morris argues that because of new media's interdisciplinary nature, it can present a blurring of roles and 'boundaries of professionalism have not been firmly established'; thus openness exists which enables staff who have an interest, talent or knowledge to use them in innovative ways (ibid.: 15). This blurring of boundaries is evidenced in this thesis. Collecting new media art pushes museum staff and opens the institution up to advance interdisciplinary ways of working. The strength of Morris' report is its analysis of the impact that

commissioning new media art has had on American museums. It examines the effect on the blurring of boundaries, territories and roles as well as pointing to museums which are dynamic, innovative and open to experimentation and informed risk-taking. The issues Morris raises in her report have shaped my thinking on the two regional case studies. The report has influenced my thinking in the way that commissioning new media art raises similar challenges and opportunities for museums. Such challenges and opportunities – agility and interdisciplinary ways of working, blurring of roles, knowledge sharing, collaborative practice inside and outside the organisation – shows significant overlap between commissioning and collecting new media art. The issues raised are strikingly similar to those found in my research. Yet, one of the weaknesses of this report, I argue, is the absence of analysis on the impact of the organisational culture and leadership style on these US museums in commissioning new media art. Specifically, there is no use of theory to inform the findings in the report whereas I have attempted to consider the challenges and opportunities of collecting new media art through a business theory. Such a theory critically examines the work to be done, the people, the culture, structure and leadership within each case study museum.

Some authors have principally written about issues concerning the display, curation and interpretation of new media art (Graham and Cook 2010, Paul 2008, Ride 2012, Ippolito 2008, Gansallo 2010, Gere 2010, Cook 2006, Quaranta 2012 and Krysa 2006). Curatorial practice and the impact new media art has on existing practices and models of curating have highlighted opportunities and challenges to exhibiting new media art. The specific nature of new media art, in which it experiments with technology, collaborates with multiple partners, and is variable and process-based, poses problems for locating the identity of a work within traditional museum practice (Noordegraaf et al 2013: 12, 17). New media curatorial practice has often explored the issues surrounding collaborative exchange, particularly artistic and cultural production, authorship and cultural contexts of communities (Diamond 2005: 213). Commenting on collaboration, Diamond argues that it is a discursive, open-ended and more ambiguous process with new media art. Nevertheless:

differences in work and communication styles, priorities, educational principles, institutional frameworks, temperaments, and fundamental beliefs and values have the potential to become either obstacles or stimulants to effective collaboration (2005: 215).

Collaboration can, therefore, identify best practice, and nurture communication and networks. In addition, shifts in curatorial understanding have opened a collaborative approach where new media art has been able to enter the more traditional museum (ibid.: 217). A collaborative approach fosters a vibrant set of networks to exchange knowledge, share ideas and develop best practice. Diamond concludes, on the one hand, that museums remain wary of new media art and are anxious about their ability to support new media art. Support requires resources and trained staff who understand the technical and network needs of the work to be exhibited. On the other hand, new media art presents an opportunity for the blurring of roles, a space for collaboration to thrive and agility for both staff and museum (ibid.: 228-229).

The agility and blurring of roles and boundaries is highlighted in the 2001 exhibition *010101: Art in Technological Times* at San Francisco's Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA). This exhibition had both a gallery presence and an extensive online web presence. SFMOMA commissioned new media and non-new media artists and artistic formats ranged from photography to drawings, installations to painting and virtual reality installations to video projections (Morris 2001: 18, 20). The Director at the time, David Ross, commented on the tone for how new media art had been approached by the museum. He points out that 'artists who choose video or choose media art are purposely choosing to blur lines' (ibid.: 25). This extended to the disruption to departmental territories. The exhibition was to be curated across four departments: Media Arts, Painting and Sculpture; Architecture and Design; and Education and Public Programs. His decision illustrates the cross-fertilization between knowledge areas (Graham, 2005). Nevertheless, staff questioned regarding this new style of organising commented on the 'blurring' of roles, departmental boundaries and working practices. In fact; there was no lead curator. The Department of Information Systems and Services was integral to

setting up the wireless communications systems for those artworks that were internet based (net art commissions) (Graham and Cook 2010: 195).

The exhibition presented opportunities to create long-term stability through collaboration. Such a collaborative approach has been built on over a period of time and the exhibition

illustrated the potential and challenges of communication among all departments of the museum. The need for excellent relationships with installation, technical and archiving staff is an obvious factor for digital media, and one that SFMOMA successfully developed collaboratively over a number of years. This approach, which necessarily crosses the boundaries between departments in museums, can be an anxious one for institutions, but the collaboration of archivists, technicians and curators can help to achieve more long-term stability than the shifting grounds of curating alone (Graham 2005).

This collaborative approach is reinforced by Graham and Cook who state that exhibiting new media art in an art museum necessitate good communication, cross-disciplinary collaborative teams, and the consideration of departments that are not often considered in relation to curating (2010: 198). The changing curatorial roles signify that both curators and institutions are 'at least to some extent, reconfigure[ing] their roles and adapt[ing] to the demands of the art' (Krysa 2006: 86).

Cook points out that shifts in the curatorial field have expanded to include not just those who manage a permanent collection but also curators who organise temporary exhibitions. Cook examines curating exhibitions of networked art through case study examples. The first, where she has participated in the commissioning of Internet-based work for presentation online, and, the second where new media art has been curated in a gallery space (Cook in Corby 2006: 42). Such projects have taken place in numerous organisational and institutional structures but she points out that the 'chief lesson learned from these examples is the need to work as closely as possible with each artist to

ensure the right context for their work is created' (ibid.: 43). She goes on to argue that her role can present ambiguity between generating content or context because 'the normally separate activities of production and distribution of work – so clearly defined in traditional museums used to exhibiting static, finished, and singly authored works – blur dramatically in a networked environment' (ibid.: 43). Therefore, the profile and curatorial process has reconfigured where collaboration between curator, artist and institution is apparent. Cook - as an independent curator - identifies collaboration as integral to her curatorial practice -she is engaged in open dialogue with not only the director of a museum but also the curator, technical staff as well as marketing and education personnel (ibid.: 50). As an independent curator, rather than a curator based in-house, she will discover challenges and opportunities, which, perhaps, may differ from the in-house curator.

One of the weaknesses, I claim, of such literature is the lack of a more complete picture of the impact collecting new media art has on the institution. Even so, the brief example outlined at the beginning of this chapter illustrates the challenges Gansallo experienced as commissioner and research fellow for the Harwood@Mongrel and Simon Patterson's works at Tate. The issues raised by such anarchic and ephemeral work necessitated much negotiation and new ways of working with numerous departments in the museum. The marketing, information, press and publicity, and development departments had to 'rewrite *their* approach' and Gansallo saw his position as a 'conduit' between all these organisational units (Gansallo on Crumb 2000). The curatorial process was a learning period for all involved in the project. Yet, it was also a platform for sharing knowledge and creating dialogue in 'museum curating and presenting new media' (Gansallo in Parry 2010: 350).

Similarly, Christiane Paul has written extensively on curatorial models for digital art (2003, 2008). She argues strongly that new media art, as an inherently process-based and participatory art form, has a 'profound influence on the roles of the curator, artist, audience, and institution' (Paul 2008: 2). This influence, she proposes, redefines the role of the curator to a more collaborative model. This is supported and evidenced in this thesis.

Collectively, these studies outline the wealth of literature on curating and exhibiting new media art. These writings provide important insights into the challenges and opportunities which exist for curators commissioning, curating and exhibiting new media art. In addition, it helps us understand the complexity and shifts taking place within curatorial practice, not least because of the demands new media art places on the relationships between artist, museum staff and institution. This overview of the literature on new media art has been constructive in mapping the emerging discourses and debates. Such discourse brings awareness of audience participation, preservation/conservation, documentation, commissioning, and curation/exhibition of new media art.

I will now turn to the subject of collecting new media art. The literature has addressed issues mentioned above, but, I argue that the literature on new media art neglects to assess the impact collecting new media art has on the museum. Specifically, how new media art may potentially reshape and redefine how things are done, who is responsible, where do they reside in the organisation, and what is the context and culture which exists to foster a climate of collecting new media art? What has emerged from this literature review is the fluid nature of this emerging field.

This fluid field presents museums with challenges when considering acquisition of new media art. Graham suggests that new media art disrupts 'safe categories', including departmental territories, roles, boundaries, knowledge and skills (2007: 93). This raises questions about the disruption collecting new media art has in terms of organisational change for museums. In particular, what impact does collecting new media art have on the skills sets and expertise, organisational culture, organisational structure and workflow within a museum?

Collecting new media art has been written about to a certain degree, but, it fails to address the issues pointed out above. Graham and Cook acknowledge that museums with a remit to collect new media art are 'relatively rare' (these include for example, Seoul Museum of Art (SEMA, Korea), SFMOMA, the Guggenheim and Whitney in the USA, and, the V&A and the Science Museum in the UK) (2014: 37,43). Private patrons such as Pamela and Richard

Kramlich do collect new media art and lend it to institutions. Whilst the private collectors are securing new media art, some museums are increasingly building new media art collections. Louise Shannon, curator at the Victoria and Albert Museum (UK), points out that following the *Decode: Digital Design Sensations* (2009-2010) exhibition, several acquisitions were made for the permanent collection (ibid.: 180). The artworks acquired for the Prints, Drawings and Paintings Collection catalogued as 'digital art' were primarily software-based pieces (V&A Collections 2015). The digital artworks included Aaron Koblin's *Flight Patterns* (2009) and Daniel Brown's *On Growth and Form* (2009). The V&A has an ongoing commitment to collect and document emerging art and possess 'one of the world's largest collections of digital art' (Graham and Cook 2014: 180). Whilst museums with a remit to collect new media art are relatively rare, there is a growing ambition to begin to build new media art collections. This is most apparent with the Harris Museum and the Van Abbemuseum.

Collecting new media art has been the subject of more recent literature, most notably Taylor (2014) at the Harris Museum, and Shannon (2014) at the V&A (see above). A greater focus on the process and effect collecting new media art has on staff and the museum is emerging, but, too little on this important area exists. As Dietz argues 'eventually new-media art will be as much a part of institutions' collections as photography, video, and installation art have become' (Graham and Cook 2014: 66). Hence, I argue that this area of investigation is worthy of critical exploration and analysis. This thesis, therefore, investigates the impact collecting new media art has on two case study museums to assess the extent to which they are being reshaped and redefined.

This literature review has provided a broad overview of the literature on new media art. It has encompassed fields from documentation to preservation, commissioning to curation and exhibition. I have argued that, whilst these texts are useful in foregrounding the key issues, it is important to recognise and acknowledge the scarcity of critical writing on collecting new media art for permanent collections. I assert that a deeper picture and examination of the impact collecting new media art has on the museum professional's workflow,

their skills sets and expertise, formal structure, culture and leadership of the institution is central to understanding the effect this art has on the museum.

Structure of Thesis

This thesis consists of eight chapters. The chapters to follow use different linguistic tones of language which are worthy of note. Chapters two and three are descriptive in nature whilst Chapter four is conceptual in style. Chapter five to seven are set out as systematic and analytical, discursive of the two case studies.

Chapter two introduces definitions of new media art and the characteristics it displays will be outlined and clarified. How the two regional case studies (the Harris Museum and Art Gallery, Preston, UK and the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, Netherlands) are collecting new media art will also be charted. The context in which each museum sits will be examined to consider its background in terms of its history, collection, organisational structure, staffing, size, context (both political and economic), policies, strategies and resources.

Chapter three sets out the research methodology and identifies methods for data generation, analysis and interpretation within a qualitative framework. The research design and selection criteria for the pilot study and the two regional case studies are set out. The data used in this research derives from two main sources: documents and interview. Analysis of transcripts sought out recurring themes and identified core consistencies and meanings in the data. Core consistencies and meanings were ascertained through content/thematic analysis.

Chapter four identifies the theoretical approach which this study employs and examines other theoretical approaches which were considered but not chosen for this research project. Instead, the *Congruence Model of Organizational Behavior* was employed and this chapter outlines how the model works and the steps taken to assess organisational effectiveness. The model examines in detail the four major components within any organisation: the critical tasks and

workflow to be performed and accomplished, the organisational culture (informal organisation), the people (human resources and competencies) and organisational structure (formal organisation). This chapter also sets out the requirements to assess the alignment of the four major components which will be tested in the analysis chapters to follow.

Chapters five, six and seven engage in data analysis from the fieldwork to identify and consider emerging themes through the lens of the Congruence Model. Chapter five examines the impact collecting new media art has on the two regional case study museums by assessing the congruence between critical tasks and the formal organisational arrangements. The formal organisational arrangement considers a) strategic grouping; b) linking mechanisms and c) formal reward and control systems. Analysis demonstrated new ways of organising in both the Harris Museum and the Van Abbemuseum. An integrated approach to organising was evident with nimble project teams. Thus, museums are agile organisations which are flatter in structure and more responsive to the needs of the organisation through cross-disciplinary ways of working. This finding is consistent with recent museum literature suggesting that museums are gradually changing shape from a hierarchical and role centred job to ones which are less structured formally and are more responsive to internal and external change.

Chapter six examines the alignment between critical tasks and people (human resources). The human resource competencies specifically considers a) competencies of staff b) motives c) demographics and) national cultures. One of the more significant findings to emerge from this study is the extent to which both regional case study museums exploited collaborative practice inside and outside the museum. The collecting of new media art, I contend, demands a collaborative approach from museum staff. Whilst staff may be motivated and committed to accomplishing the task, the expertise may not belong to the curator or the exhibitions officer. As a consequence, staff was keenly seeking knowledge across the organisation and outside the museum. A network of relationships exists to enable museums to collect new media art, to share knowledge, learn from one another and build best practice. Hence, agile

curation, I argue, is a valuable long-term opportunity for museums in any museum collection. New media art underscores the need for a practice of cooperation so that the art is collected, documented, exhibited and preserved; this calls for agile curation.

Chapter seven examines the congruence between critical tasks and culture (informal organisation). Organisational culture examines the a) norms and values of the organisation b) the communication networks and c) informal power in the organisation. The assessment of this congruence asks whether the organisational culture facilitates task performance and whether communication networks and informal power enables work to get done effectively and efficiently. The research suggests that staff agency and leadership are key indicators of whether the museum collects new media art or not. Indeed, the research reveals that each museum has a culture of openness and experimentation which fosters staff agency and autonomy. Such a culture encourages consensual decision-making where informal leaders can organise work and be inventive and creative. Such innovation invites flexibility, adaptability and interdependence. In sum, the research argues that an agility of organisational culture and informal leadership presents an opportunity for museums to build collections of new media art; to embrace uncertainty and to take informed risks and, ultimately, foster an institution where staff become proactive shapers of the museum and the collection.

Finally, Chapter eight synthesises the research to bring the main themes together and to pose questions about this subject. The chapter also considers what conclusions can be drawn from the research and what the significance of the research project is. To conclude, this thesis sets out some recommendations for further research and implications for future practice.

CHAPTER 2 - Case Studies: context and collecting new media art

Introduction

Collecting new media art: just like anything else, only different.

(Dietz in Graham 2014: 57)

Collecting new media art is, to many collecting institutions, very different than collecting material works. In this chapter I begin by clarifying the term 'new media art' within the research project and then set out and explain the characteristics which frame new media art for this thesis. I will then introduce two regional museums, one in the UK and one in the Netherlands and consider the history and context of collecting new media art. Finally, I will outline and describe organisational factors such as strategy and input which takes into account the history, environment and resources. This background detail is important in understanding the climate and nature of the museums under investigation to determine how such factors can have a significant influence on the museum deciding to collect new media art. For example, the history of the museum and its previous directors leave a legacy which is imprinted on the way strategies and collections are built and shaped through time. A progressive and innovative museum will therefore engage with informed risk-taking and challenge itself to experiment and build the collection in new ways. Likewise, the policies, geography and financial climate can also impact greatly on the likelihood of museums to exploit opportunities and build permanent new media art collections.

PhD Project and Characteristics and Definition of New Media Art

The categorisation and definition of new media art remains equivocal and settling on a definition for the sector is beyond the scope of my thesis. Cultural producer and media consultant Susan Morris points out that while ‘there is no single definition of new media art, there are some common characteristics: fluidity, intangibility, “liveness”, variability, replicability, connectivity, interactivity, computability, and chance’ (Morris 2001: 9). In addition, ‘new media art’ is fluid, ephemeral, networked and immaterial. Furthermore, it is being seen more and more as ‘process’ with ‘immaterial entities, relations, performances, software, goal-oriented and problem-solving activities and services’ (Strehovec 2008: 246). The term new media art is often used interchangeably with others including ‘computer art’, ‘cybernetic art’, ‘unstable media’, ‘emergent media’, ‘art you can plug in’ and ‘digital art’ (Graham 2005), however, Graham argues that seeking a firm definition is in short supply (2007: 93). The Tate calls such projects ‘intermedia art’ and the Guggenheim terms them ‘networked art’. The confusing array of terms presents an ongoing climate of debate and disagreements, but, for the purposes of this research, new media art will be used throughout this thesis and specifically shares the following characteristics:

- a) *computable*,
- b) *networked*,
- c) *immaterial*,
- d) *replicable*,
- e) *interactive* and
- f) *variable*.

These particular characteristics were chosen as they most aptly describe the main features which, I submit, comprise new media art. In addition, the artworks which were discussed with museum professionals at the two regional museums consisted of these specific characteristics (which will be considered in this chapter). The characteristics consider the production of the work (i.e. its materiality and form), the means of distribution of the work, and visitor engagement with the artwork (Cook 2004). Hence, the characteristics I have

selected take into account the materiality of the work, the accessibility of the artwork and how the work can be engaged with by an audience. Other characteristics which have been used by other artists and academics include nomadic networks (Paul 2003), participative (Napier), connectivity (Dietz 1999), collaborative and distributed (Cook 2004), and disruptive or unpredictable (Graham 2007). This research therefore has focused on artworks called new media art in several media but 'which present particular challenges for curator and audience' (Graham 2007: 100). The characteristics which I set out for each acquired artwork raises particular questions which required agile and innovative solutions. A discussion of the impact of new media art and its characteristics on the museum will be briefly explored on p. 52 and examined in detail in the analysis chapters to follow.

The two case studies, the Harris Museum and the Van Abbemuseum, have media artworks from 2000 but the acquisition of two artworks date from 2011 and 2003/2010 (catalogue data entry) respectively. The research excludes video art, digital photography and installation art from consideration. Each characteristic will be described through each new media artwork which was acquired in each case study museum.

The Harris Museum collected Thomson and Craighead's *The distance travelled through our solar system this year and all the barrels of oil remaining* (a networked gallery installation with two screen projections). The artwork acquired consists of two wall projections with live data stream from the internet (online Real Time Statistics Project). One of the projections shows the number of remaining oil barrels left in the world whilst the other reveals the distance the earth has travelled in a year. The instantaneous information comes live from the internet, so, the number of barrels of oil left will decrease in number and the distance travelled will increase over time. A soundtrack of the magnetosphere in the earth's solar system accompanies the projections (Taylor in Graham 2014: 125).

The Van Abbemuseum collected Hannah Hutzig's *Flight Case Archive of Mobile Academy* (installation, database archive and video 2003-2010).

Hurtzig's work 'is a continuously growing mobile audio-visual archive in the form of a transport case in which visitors can sit while researching the content' (see Figures 2.3-2.5) (Berndes 2012). Visitors are encouraged to sit in the case and interact with the database and video dialogue. The archive is centred on the theme of stories about places, cities and territories and consists of dialogues between two experts on numerous subjects. The dialogues/conversations were recorded live in installations. One part of the piece is linked directly to the internet and the other part is a computer programme housing the archived ideas of conversations between two experts (ibid.).

The characteristic of *computability* assumes that for new media art to function it must have some element which is computer based. In both case studies under review, the artworks chosen for discussion both demand a computer for the artwork to 'live'. As well as the works being computer born they are also *networked*, diffuse and connected. The art is distributed or networked often simultaneously. In the case of the Thompson and Craighead artwork at the Harris Museum it receives live data streaming which is a key feature of its content and visual aesthetic. Similarly, the Van Abbemuseum artwork is networked from the artist's studio (Hurtzig) where she uploads new database material complementing the video works which reside in a separate computer.

The artworks in both the Harris Museum and the Van Abbemuseum are shaped by their *immateriality*. The Thomson and Craighead new media art at the Harris Museum comprises two live data streams from the internet however, the museum does not have anything tangible for their collection, but rather a USB memory stick and a set of artists' instructions. Software-based artworks and internet-based artworks have distinct properties and depend on external links or dependencies such as websites, data sets, live events, or interfaces or technical dependencies such as web browsers, software environment or human intervention (Laurenson in Graham 2014: 77). They are inherently transformative and they do something in real time and, concurrently, exist over a series of locations or platforms.

Over much of museum history, objects in museums were considered as treasures in a 'treasure box', and had significance and value embedded in them (Walker 2012). With new media art 'all of that is much more fluid' where the object may not be unique, that is, it may be *replicable* or reproducible in many forms (ibid.). The artwork does not possess 'uniqueness' and so can be replicated in many different ways (taking account of the artist's intentions).

To a greater or lesser extent, both works I am investigating for my case studies have a degree of audience participation and *interactivity*. The Hannah Hurtzig artwork at the Van Abbemuseum (*Flight Case Archive of Mobile Academy* 2003-2010) is composed of video segments which are recorded and chosen by the visitor whilst the online database is constantly being updated with new material linked directly to the web and 'open' to new information. Visitors are encouraged to actively take part and interact with the artwork; they have control over what they see and the order in which it is seen. The Thomson and Craighead artwork is interactive to the degree that visitors hear the clicking sound which denotes the number of barrels of oil remaining in the world and the two mathematical streams of data are constantly updated so that visitors are always seeing new information which varies through time. Thus, the participative practice or interactive engagement of the visitor suggests that new media art is socially engaged, enabling new ways for visitors to engage with the world (Cook in Cameron and Kenderdine 2007: 118).

The Van Abbemuseum artwork is also *variable* in terms of its visitors' input and how they interact with the work and the variability of the material via the database. The work is designed to evolve and change over time which brings with it an open-endedness and variability with it.

These six characteristics will inform conservation strategies, documentation needs and exhibition competences which all need to be carefully considered as well as the central question for the collecting museum 'what are we acquiring?'. Laurenson points out that 'from a conservation perspective, understanding what is to be treated as part of the artistic medium matters because this identifies the medium as constitutive of the artwork and therefore as something that needs to

be preserved' (Graham 2014: 80). Obsolescence is a major factor for any new media artwork and it is important for the museum to understand the intention of the artist(s). Some artists may be open to the work being recoded, migrated, emulated or reinterpreted, but, for another artist, the bespoke code or website or server may be key to the meaning and identity of the work, thus, the artist's intentions is paramount. Therefore, the characteristics and artist's intent are central to understanding how the museum should document, exhibit and preserve the work. Conservator Pip Laurenson comments that museums can engage with new media art, but, they need to do so by 'growing awareness of what it is that is important to secure when a work enters a collection' (Graham 2014: 91). These issues will be considered in this chapter and the chapters to follow.

New Media Art Collecting – Two Case Studies

Research took place at two regional museums, the Harris Museum and Art Gallery, Preston (in the North West of England) and the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven (120km south of Amsterdam, Netherlands). They have both been at the forefront of collecting new media art. Whilst the Van Abbemuseum does not categorise their art according to medium, they collect artworks based on four research themes. However, the documentation database system does demand some form of categorisation and, as a consequence, the five or six new media artworks are either catalogued under 'various' or 'installation' for ease of categorisation (Berndes 2013). This section details the artworks collected and the institutional process to securing the acquisition.

Harris Museum (UK)

The Harris Museum sits within a Victorian neo-classical building in Preston run by the medium-sized regional local authority (Preston City Council) which also houses the main city library (Taylor in Graham 2014: 111). The museum houses collections of fine art, local history and decorative art and programmes a series of temporary exhibitions of contemporary art. The vision of the Harris is 'to extend our reputation as an outstanding museum and art gallery that is distinctive, ambitious, audience-focused and open to change' (Harris Museum 2014). In relation to contemporary art it states that it has a strong reputation for programming, showing, commissioning new work and exhibiting 'the best in contemporary art' that is exciting, high-profile and ambitious (ibid.). The *Current* project in particular set out with an ambitious and innovative vision to collect new media art which would challenge the museum but also raise the profile of the institution by demonstrating that it is collecting 'the art of now'.

In 2007 the Art Fund launched a funding initiative to encourage museums and galleries in the UK to build collections of contemporary art (Taylor in Graham 2014: 113). During this time the Harris Museum was exhibiting digital work by Ori Gersht and Julian Opie as part of a group show (*Static: Contemporary Still Life and Portraiture*) and planning an installation of a major international

co-commission with Turkish artist and film-maker Kutluğ Ataman. The Harris Museum applied to the Art Fund for funding to develop a collection of international new media art but was unsuccessful. Nevertheless, such explorative beginnings encouraged the Exhibitions Officer, Lindsay Taylor, to bid for funding from Arts Council England to scope out and develop a new media art collecting policy. Successful in obtaining funding for the policy in 2008, a Scoping Report 'Collecting New Media Art' was published as an appendix to the revised Collections Development Policy.

The developing critical awareness about collecting new media art was an attempt by Taylor to bridge the gap between exhibiting such works and offering a long-term legacy in terms of collecting (ibid.: 114). The Harris Museum was involved in commissioning new contemporary artworks including new media art, and exhibiting them but did not acquire them for the museum's permanent collection. The Harris Museum 'was a regional local authority-run organization that wanted to consider and address the issues' of actively collecting new media art (ibid.: 114). Taylor was 'interested in pushing boundaries, challenging artists and audiences, developing ambitious exhibitions, and bringing the latest in artistic practice to Preston' (ibid.: 114). She felt keenly that the museum should take the risk to start collecting new media art (Taylor 2012). The Harris and *folly* discussed the idea of developing a bespoke collaborative project which was 'ambitious and unique' (Taylor in Graham 2014: 117). *Folly*, a Lancaster-based digital arts organisation worked in partnership across the North West, collaborating with a wide range of cultural and non-cultural organisations from the UK and beyond. It presented an active artistic programme providing creative interaction and collaboration between artists and the wider community using technology. It closed in 2009 after 20 years in operation (Creative Times 2011).

This drive to experiment, to exhibit and, ultimately, collect new media art is pioneering. The Harris Museum was charting new territory and was keen to bring onboard many experts in the field, including academics and arts organisations. The Harris' approach was adaptive, responsive and experimental. The project, moreover, was seen as a partnership between the Harris Museum and *folly* (ibid.: 118).

The collaborative project which the Harris and *folly* initiated was titled *Current: An Experiment in Collecting Digital Art*. This project consisted of four components; an open call, exhibition, acquisition and public debate. *Current* enhanced the museum's mission to establish a nationally significant collection of new media art. The Harris Museum programmes contemporary art including commissioning new work for display; both national and internationally recognised artists (including digital media, installations and new media art) (Harris Museum 2012). Moreover, the museum, beginning in 2010, aimed to establish 'an ambitious and nationally important new media collection' (Collections Development Plan 2010-2015: 62). Ali, described the Harris Museum as a 'centre of excellence' for displaying, collecting and preserving new media art in the UK (2011: 32). Thus, the Harris' mission to build a nationally significant collection of new media art was established through the *Current* project. This project had two aims - first, to discover 'innovative and creative use of new media technology' and second, to carry out a case study for the 'collection and integration of digital artworks into existing permanent collections' (Taylor in Graham 2014: 118).

Taylor, alongside Catherine Lambert, Creative Director of *folly*, worked together to disseminate the Open Call for Artists across the UK in 2010 - artists were invited to submit works for exhibition and possible acquisition. A jury was set up to select new media artworks from the open call submissions for the museum exhibition. Led by Taylor and Lambert, the panel also included Mike Stubbs, Director of FACT (Liverpool), Ruth Catlow (Co-Founder and Artistic Director of art gallery Furtherfield, London) and Beryl Graham, a new media art academic (University of Sunderland). The diverse range of expertise among the jury was an advantage when shortlisting five artworks for the exhibition (Taylor 2012).

Out of 200 applications 147 were considered eligible. From that, 18 applicants were shortlisted. One essential criterion about the selection process was that the piece had to use technology in the making or distribution of the artwork in interesting ways. From the 18 that were shortlisted, five were chosen by the panel for exhibition in the gallery at the Harris Museum. From the five shortlisted candidates one would be chosen by a second panel and that piece would be

acquired by the museum for their permanent art collection. At the first jury stage, the technician from the Harris Museum was brought in and his opinion sought to consider any potential technical issues regarding the installation of artworks for the exhibition.

Taylor writes about the numerous issues involved in both displaying the five artworks and acquiring one artwork. One artwork by Boredomresearch, *Lost Calls of Cloud Mountain Whirligigs* 2010 (TFT screen display with custom built software), used computer game technology to create an imaginary world where the mysterious flying forms 'whirligigs' live, move, sing and die. As each whirligig dies, a new one is generated. This world consists of new forms, patterns and songs. Collecting this work would have been relatively straightforward; programming and software could be upgraded and screens and hardware could be updated as necessary (Taylor in Graham 2014: 121).

An artwork by Michael Szpakowski, *House & Garden* 2009 (animated GIFs with original soundtrack), consists of a large-scale projection of visual and musical clips. These sequences were randomly generated so that no visitors experienced exactly the same film. The artist used digital cameras, animated GIF files and JavaScript to capture images and sound on his house and garden. Collecting this work would merely involve acquiring the database. However, the work is freely available to download online, hence, the museum would not have anything physical to collect as both figures and the soundtrack are provided directly by an internet source (ibid.: 124-125).

The third artwork by James Coupe, *The Lover* 2011 (video cameras, software algorithms and projection), proved to be the most complicated and challenging both to exhibit and collect. Coupe's work involved installing six high-definition robotic cameras with face recognition software. These cameras would be positioned throughout the museum. Extensive use of cables had to be installed from the ground floor entrance to the galleries at the top of the building. In addition, the artist and his technician had to install the software and complex programming. This work depends on CCTV footage of visitors to the museum. The images would then be projected on to a large-scale screen in the gallery.

Data protection issues were covered by law, necessitating discussions with the City Council Data Protection Officer and Legal Services. Signage was displayed to visitors warning them that their image may be re-appropriated for the artwork. Taylor suggests that this work would have made it 'the most interesting in terms of collecting' (ibid.: 122). Nevertheless, the issues surrounding data protection (recording visitors, re-appropriating their image and then wiping the database after the exhibition), the complex face recognition software and equipment (which would need replacing and updating regularly) and the programming of the whole work (which demanded a specialist technician as well as the artist to install it) compounded the challenges for the museum (ibid.: 122).

Graham Harwood, Richard Wright and Matsuko Yokokoji's, *Tantalum Memorial - Reconstruction* 2008 (installation, 'Strowger' electromagnetic telephone exchange connected to a computer database) comments on globalisation, migration and our addiction to communication. The memorial remembers the victims of the Coltan Wars in the Congo. The material tantalum (derived from Coltan) is an essential component in everyday technology such as mobile phones. Export of this material to the West is seen as a significant source of revenue that funds the conflict in the Congo. The artwork is made up of a large electromagnetic telephone exchange connected to a computer database. The exchange presented some peculiar health and safety concerns for the Harris Museum.

The telephone exchange is housed on a bespoke metal framework which accommodates an uncovered PC. Concern centred on the potential harm if a child caught his or her fingers in the Strowger switches, or, indeed, if a visitor received a 'nasty' electrical shock from exposed wires in the PC (ibid.: 124). Safety issues had to be negotiated, and, so, the metal framework was earthed to reduce the likelihood of getting an electric shock and a covering of the exposed wiring of the PC was accomplished with a clear perspex panel. In addition, 'Please do not touch' signs were clearly displayed and the work deliberately positioned so that front-of-house staff could check to make sure visitors did not touch the sculptural piece. Taylor states that this work is 'relatively straightforward to collect'; the database could be transferred if needed

(ibid.: 124). However, the artists maintain that viewing the internal working is integral to the piece. It is noteworthy that Strowger switches are now obsolete but maintained by expert volunteer telephony enthusiasts (ibid.: 124). Finally, the large sculptural work would require considerable storage, which, is limited in the museum.

The final artwork shortlisted for the exhibition was Jon Thomson and Alison Craighead's *The distance travelled through our solar system this year and all the barrels of oil remaining 2011* (networked gallery installation, projection). New media artists Jon Thomson and Alison Craighead both live and work in London. They make artworks and installations for galleries, online projects and public spaces. Recent work looks at live networks such as the internet and how such networks are changing the way we understand the world around us. The piece that the Harris Museum acquired consists of two wall projections with live data streaming from the internet (online Real Time Statistics Project). One of the projections shows the number of remaining barrels of oil left in the world whilst the other reveals the distance the earth has travelled this year. This is instantaneous information coming live from the internet, so the number of barrels of oil left will decrease and the distance travelled will increase over time.

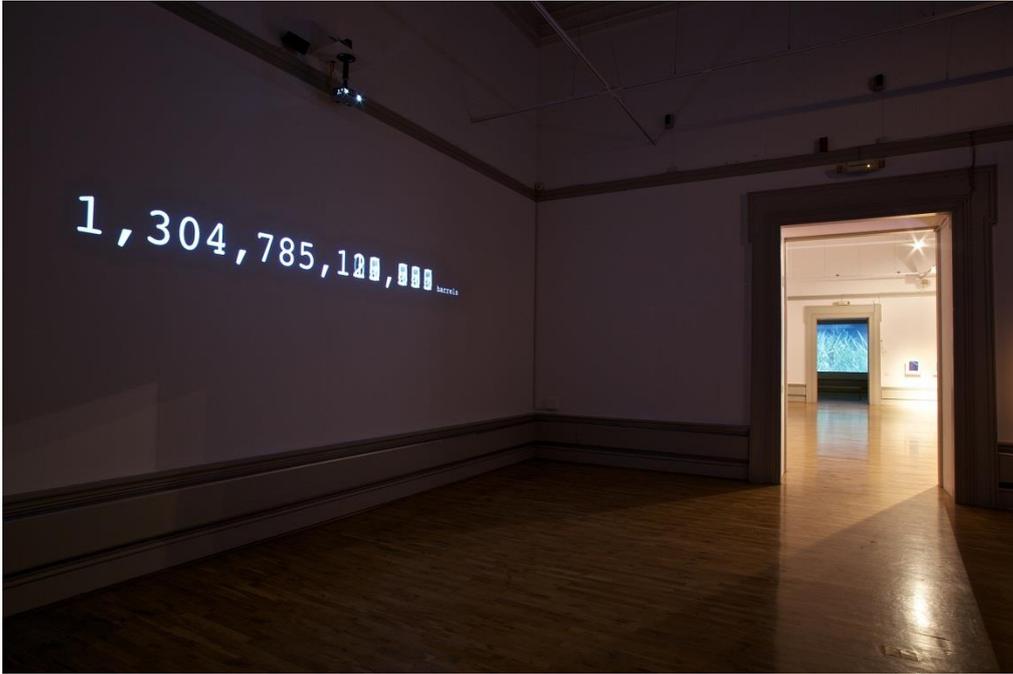


Figure 2.1 Thomson and Craighead, *The distance travelled through our solar system this year and all the barrels of oil remaining*, 2011 Harris Museum & Art Gallery Collection.



Figure 2.2 Thomson and Craighead, *The distance travelled through our solar system this year and all the barrels of oil remaining*, 2011 Harris Museum & Art Gallery Collection.

Collecting this artwork brought up some unexpected collection issues, not least 'what' was actually acquired? The artists provided the museum with the following information which formed part of the object: a USB memory stick with the software on it, documentation of the work (including drawings and photographs), instructions for set-up and maintenance of the piece, a URL of the work to be archived and a physical drawing of the representation of the artwork in the gallery space (ibid.: 130).

The artists, having thought seriously about the longevity of their work, understood the importance of providing a 'substantial body of unique supporting material within the artists' file which will inspire and instruct future generations of curators in the installation and preservation of the artwork' (ibid.: 131). This included the correspondence between the artists and the museum. Artistic intentions were explicit and documented for the archive of the museum hence providing a rich resource which will be beneficial for curators and scholars in the future. Taylor remarks that collecting this artwork 'is a really great way of having a really brilliant archive and understanding why something has come into the collection' (2012). Significantly, Thomson and Craighead were fully invested in establishing and maintaining a relationship with the museum once the work was collected. Such a relationship involves periodically checking that the work functions correctly, agreeing future formats for presentation and exhibition in the gallery, discussing the idea of potential technical updates in the future (new software or devices) and making the work available for lending through an exhibition copy (if appropriate) (Taylor in Graham 2014: 130). However, the Harris is in a position of change with a lot of conflicting priorities for staff (Jones 2012). New media art is, according to the Collections Officer, Lynsey Jones, more complicated in terms of acquiring and cataloguing this art. This, in turn, demands that both the Collections Officer and Keeper along with the Exhibitions Officer meet to discuss these issues (ibid. 2012).

Each artist was invited to come to the museum to carry out a site visit and get a sense of the practicalities of the space for installation of their artwork. The public exhibition of new media art was held between 26 March and

4 June 2011. Following the exhibition a second jury panel convened to decide which artwork would be acquired for the museum's permanent collection.

The second jury, again comprising diverse areas of expertise included the Director of *folly* Taylor Nuttall; Paul Hobson, Director of the Contemporary Arts Society; Sarah Fisher, Chair of Axis and FACT; Gavin Delahunty, Head of Exhibitions at the Tate; and Alex Walker, Head of the Harris Museum. After an extensive discussion and debate, the panel chose the Thomson and Craighead artwork, *The distance travelled through our solar system this year and all the barrels of oil remaining* (2011), for the museum's permanent collection.

Once the Thomson and Craighead work had been acquired for the museum collection a public debate took place in May 2011 to present and discuss the *Current* project and to consider the future of digital arts. In addition, it presented an opportunity to analyse the experiment and share findings and best practice on collecting digital art (Harris Museum 2014). The debate was developed with academics from both the University of Sunderland (Beryl Graham and Sarah Cook) and the University of Central Lancashire (Christopher Meigh-Andrews, from the Electronic and Digital Arts Unit). The audience included representatives from museums, arts organisations, and universities, the visiting public and Friends of the Harris (Harris Museum Minutes: no date). Presentations and discussion produced 'action points' to 'help support, develop, and increase the collection of digital and new media art, and to provide starting points for further action and research' (Taylor in Graham 2014: 131).

The action points revealed three important lessons. First, the *Current* experiment demonstrated that a museum could confidently collect new media art and this would hopefully encourage other institutions to collect. Second, critical debate on digital art stimulated discussion on building collections. Third, museums and galleries can play a vital role in supporting and collecting digital artwork through open communication and collaboration, for example, internally across departments and externally with institutions. Such collaboration can help build a model of 'shared expertise', such as best practice (Harris Museum Minutes: no date).

These action points are, I contend, a clear indication of the long-term thinking and vision for new media art. The Harris Museum identified a gap in collecting new media art and this experiment set out to critically assess new media for exhibition and acquisition for the museum's permanent collection. Furthermore, collaboration across institutions and within the museum is bolstered so that sharing expertise and best practice can be adopted. An atmosphere of being proactive and experimenting with art that challenges the institution is cultivated so that the gap which exists for collecting new media art is reduced. Collecting new media art reflects the art of 'now'. The danger is that retrospective collecting could prove to be a challenge.

The Van Abbemuseum (Netherlands)

The Van Abbemuseum is one of the first European public museums of modern and contemporary art. The museum was established in 1936 and named after its founder Henri van Abbe (a cigar manufacturer). The museum's collection houses approximately 2700 works of art; 1000 items on paper, 700 paintings, 1000 sculptures, installations and video work. Today, the museum advocates an 'experimental approach towards art's role in society' (Van Abbemuseum 2014).

The collection developed most under the directorships of Eddy de Wilde (1946-1963) and Rudi Fuchs (1975-1983). De Wilde bought classical modernist works by Picasso whilst Fuchs bought conceptual work from the USA and Germany. The current Director, Charles Esche, has pursued a more geographically diverse collecting policy. He encourages staff to be experimental and to consider new theoretical approaches to curating and collecting. As a consequence, the museum actively collects art, not based on media or genre, but rather on 'research themes' which include: 'art and history', 'art and economy', 'art and social change/society' and 'art and autonomy' (Esche 2013, Berndes 2013).

The Curator of Collections, Berndes, points out that there might be pieces in the collection which are new media art but they are not defined as 'media art'. Acquiring a particular new media artwork which addresses contemporary issues dealing with autonomy, economics and social change is welcomed because of its ability to deal with such issues rather than the medium in which it is produced. For Berndes, collecting new media art can bring an added dimension to the collection and the museum. She comments that 'I am interested in the discourse between artworks and what can we learn from that?' (2013). As a consequence, collecting is undertaken in terms of research questions which the museum raises in its Strategic Plan and Collections Plan (ibid.). This strategy pushes the museum to play an active role in society and address its research themes through its art. The museum actively organises lectures and seminars involving researchers, curators, artists and the public. There is an emphasis on

'learning from others' and opening discussion about issues in contemporary society and how art, including new media art, can foster critical debate and thinking (ibid.).

Research carried out by the Dutch Foundation for the Conservation of Contemporary Art revealed that the Van Abbemuseum has approximately five or six new media artworks (Berndes 2013). In the database museum system (DMS) new media art is not listed or categorised as such. Instead, new media art appears under the category 'various' or 'installation' 'depending on the definition you give' (ibid. 2013). This suggests that documentation is done by someone who must exercise judgment in a field which is still nebulous and constantly shifting. Berndes notes that documentation is 'organic and growing' for new media art (ibid. 2013). One of the new media artworks acquired for the permanent collection is by Hannah Hurtzig.

Berlin based dramaturge, curator and artist Hannah Hurtzig creates projects which engages with platforms 'to allow professional knowledge and theoretical discourses to encounter the practices of everyday life, work, and individual narration' (Berndes 2012). The Van Abbemuseum collected her work *Flight Case Archive of Mobile Academy 2003/2010* which 'is a continuously growing mobile audio-visual archive in the form of a transport case in which visitors can sit while researching the content' (see Figures 2.3-2.5) (ibid.). The transport case resembles a trunk which can be closed and easily moved. In the images we see the flight cases in a gallery space as well as in the museum's library – Hurtzig intended for this work to reside in the library rather than a gallery space (Figure 2.5). Staff were on hand to assist visitors to sit in the case and to interact with the database and video dialogue. The archive is centred on the theme of 'stories about places, cities and territories' and consists of dialogues between two experts on numerous subjects. The dialogues/conversations were recorded live in installations. Thus, part of the piece is linked directly to the internet and the other part is a computer programme housing the archived ideas of conversations between two experts (between adviser and client or between autobiographer and listener) on various subjects (Berndes 2013).



Figure 2.3 – Hannah Hurtzig, *Flight Case Archive*, 2003/2010, Van Abbemuseum Collection, Eindhoven, The Netherlands. Photo: Peter Cox, Eindhoven, The Netherlands.



Figure 2.4 – Hannah Hurtzig, *Flight Case Archive*, 2003/2010, Van Abbemuseum Collection. Exhibition view Bregentz.



Figure 2.5 – Hannah Hurtzig, *Flight Case Archive*, 2003/2010, Van Abbemuseum Collection. Office of HAU2.

The Van Abbemuseum, like the Harris Museum, has built a relationship with the artist(s). Hurtzig is responsible for the website and, if there is a problem, the museum helps find solutions with the artist (ibid. 2013).

Our discussion so far has presented two examples to illustrate the ways in which the Harris Museum and the Van Abbemuseum have taken on the challenge of collecting new media art. The attempt here has been to show the characteristics of new media art as part of the research and the needs which arose for each institution when considering collecting such art.

Discussion of impact of new media art characteristics on the museum

The new media artworks described here and collected by the Harris Museum and the Van Abbemuseum displays particular characteristics including: *computable, networked, immaterial, replicable, interactive* and *variable*. However, how can we assess the impact these individual characteristics have on the collecting institution? In what ways do these specific characteristics shape the task to be done, the skills and expertise of the museum professional and the overall impact on the institution?

A brief discussion of the impact new media art's characteristics have on the staff and museum will be mapped out here but will be considered in-depth in the analysis chapters to follow. The Thomson and Craighead artwork acquired at the Harris Museum revealed many unforeseen issues which demanded inventive and creative problem-solving as a result of the characteristics of new media art. For example, the *immaterial* nature of the artwork comprised live data streaming from the internet (online Real Time Statistics) and the acquisition itself consisted of a USB stick. Staff across several disciplines were brought together to try and find innovative solutions to document the artwork. Discussion with the Modes Users Association was carried out to seek their expertise to develop a possible 'template' for documenting new media art. However, it was recognised that each new media artwork that would be acquired for the collection would require a case-by-case approach so that a comprehensive record of the documentation could be accomplished. A collaborative approach was necessary to bring in different skills sets and expertise in order to document the artwork accurately. The characteristic of the artwork being *networked* raised issues about the Council's firewall protection of internet access. Staff across the Council had to find a solution to relax the firewall so that the work could 'perform' in the gallery space.

The artwork acquired at the Van Abbemuseum by Hannah Hurtzig illustrates that the *computable* nature of the work requires that technical and curatorial staff are involved in ensuring that it is ready for exhibition and in working order. Whilst the artist is responsible for the website, the computable nature of the

work requires that staff across disciplines work together so that the work can be operable. In addition, the work displays a level of *interactivity* where visitors have to physically enter the flight/transport case and then select where they wish to navigate with the database and video dialogue. This project is ongoing and the artist is intending to add further material to the artwork over time. Hence, the characteristics set out here demands greater technical input from technicians who have the skills to assist curatorial staff with exhibition installation.

The characteristics of new media art, I assert, have a distinctive impact on the role and function of the museum. Staff from across the organisation (such as collections management, technical units, legal services (insurance and asset management), and exhibitions) and professionals externally are brought together to share expertise and build best practice; to find solutions in a collective manner to consider issues for documentation. Furthermore, the technical expertise of technicians is being used to a greater extent because new media artworks demand a certain degree of technical skills. Hence, the characteristics do impact on the skills sets required, cross-disciplinary ways of working and decision-making processes. Alongside these issues the museum must be guided by the artist's intentions which will set out the needs and requirements of the artwork being acquired, how it should be documented, exhibited and preserved.

This discussion of the particular characteristics of new media art will be further considered through the Congruence Model in order to assess how both museums are being redefined as a result of collecting new media art. It is this model which will help consider the components which may be impacted as a consequence of acquiring new media art (that is, the people, the task/workflow, organisational culture and organisational structure). The inputs will be defined for each museum; the environment in which it operates, the history of the museum and the resources available, and then the strategy for each institution will be discussed. These factors will shape the four major components which will be assessed for congruence in Chapters 5-7.

New Media Art collecting and the Congruence Model of Organizational Behavior

The Nadler and Tushman Congruence Model suggests that in order to fully understand an organisation's performance you need to understand the organisation's four major components (work, people, culture, structure). This is set out fully in Chapter 4. Preceding the major components it is necessary to define the inputs in terms of the organisation's environment, resources and history as well as its strategy. Once these have been outlined a review of the current performance of the organisation can be understood.

This section will set out the two case study museums' strategic and objective goals to be achieved as well as the factors which influence these goals: the environment in which the museum operates; the resources available to the manager; and the history of the organisation or unit (Tushman and O'Reilly 2002: 42).

Inputs

The museum is shaped by the inputs in terms of its environment, its available resources and history of the organisation. Each input will be discussed in turn for the two regional museums. The organisation exists within, and is influenced by, a larger environment comprising legal, political, technological and social factors. This includes changing government policy, visitor demands and expectations, and technological shifts which may offer opportunities or threats to the organisation.

The environment which the Harris Museum resides is one of constant upheaval and change. The challenges which face the museum are primarily financial cutbacks which impact on the resources of the museum in terms of budget and personnel.

The Van Abbemuseum, like the Harris Museum, is part of a City Council and is managed with a budget from the local authority. It is evident that the external

'economic and political [environment] has an effect and it will affect the museum quite a bit in the future' (Erbslöh 2013). The City Council threatened to privatise the museum following extensive discussions around cuts and the political involvement in the museum's artistic policy. The Deputy Director notes that there was a lot of involvement and pressure from the City Council because 'this museum is kind of "too radical" in their idea of a provincial museum' (ibid. 2013). The period 2011-2013 were 'very intense' with negotiations between the Council and museum where the museum fought to secure its autonomous position (ibid. 2013). The Deputy Director, Erbslöh (2013) states that the radical position of the museum will influence the positioning of the Van Abbemuseum for both sponsors and the private sector. Sponsors may not want to appear associated with a museum which is 'so polarising'. The museum polarises press reception – between good critics and bad critics - it is never middle of the road (ibid. 2013). In the future, the museum will need to consider raising funds through sponsorship, but this, in turn means thinking about how sponsors relate to a museum which is 'more outspoken in its political role in the Netherlands' (ibid. 2013). The museum recognises and acknowledges its unique and specific role within the Netherlands; it has a strong political agenda and considers itself to be a 'democratic tool' (ibid. 2013). The turbulent world and the environment which surrounds the museum is one which brings challenges and opportunities.

The second input for organisations stems from its resources. Resources span financial, technological, reputational and personnel. Tushman and O'Reilly suggest that greater financial, technological and human resources afford greater strategic flexibility than limited resources (2002: 45).

In recent years, the Harris, like many cultural institutions in the UK, has, due to the economic climate, faced unprecedented cutbacks. In 2010, the Director drew up charts to consider how staff reductions would be made. In 2012 ten staff were made redundant as a result of cutbacks in government funding. Walker commented that another round of cuts is expected 'and we will be quite affected by that from 2013 onwards' (Walker 2012). The staffing resources are, therefore, in a state of flux. The staff amount to thirty (including Front of House staff) but half of that would be professional staff (ibid. 2012). Professional

museum staff consists of three curators (fine art, decorative art and history), one exhibitions officer, one programmes manager, one fundraising officer, one marketing officer, one access officer, two learning officers and one operations manager (ibid. 2012).

The museum is a publicly funded local authority museum (Scoping Report Collecting New Media Art 2009: 6; Walker 2012). The acquisitions fund is modest and additional funding for acquisition is sourced from the Heritage Lottery Fund *Collecting Cultures Scheme*, Contemporary Arts Society, Art Fund International and the Friends of the Harris.

Within the Van Abbemuseum the resources are shaped by its organisational structure. It has an uncommon structure in that it has two distinct units that respond to each other – the artistic unit and the production and presentation unit (Erbslöh 2013). The staffing totals 40 full-time employees who are paid by the City Council. In addition, there is a large contingent of museum volunteers (approximately 80 people). There are seven curators – Esche is both director and curator. There are staff which make up the library and archive, marketing and fundraising, facility management, production and presentation, technical services and administration units.

The diverse skills, experience and national cultures of human resources in the museum are an asset, but the different approaches can sometimes cause tension and miscommunication. In 2009, Eindhoven City Council carried out a consultancy and introduced a tool for staff to build up their profiles in order for them to better communicate with staff who may have a different profile from them (this is further discussed in Chapter 7). Such a process was adopted by the city council for all civil servants so that staff can work effectively and communicate better (Berndes 2013).

Financially, the museum's budget is €200,000 for acquisitions (Esche 2013). At the time of interview (2013), the museum had to save €100,000 and 'we have to do that over the next few years' (ibid. 2013). The Van Abbemuseum recognises

that diversifying funding revenues will involve being more opportunistic and strategic with sponsorship (Erbslöh 2013).

The museum has strategically aligned itself with a group of European museums to share resources and expertise. The museum is a member of the *Internationale Group*, a European Union funded project (€5m) to develop a collaborative programme with museums in Spain, Turkey, Belgium, the Netherlands and Slovenia (Esche 2013). The five-year programme will lay down a 'new model for public museums in Europe' where collections, artistic research, technology and public access can be shared amongst the confederation of museums (Van Abbemuseum 2014). There is an emphasis on collaboration between institutions which goes 'quite deep' (Esche 2013). The Director remarks that such collaboration between the institutions seems much easier for the Van Abbemuseum than for some of its partners because staff have the autonomy to act independently (ibid. 2013). Building a new model which recognises and aims to secure institutional collaboration is a sustainable plan to share expertise and to use resources more effectively. This model of sharing expertise and collaborating will be discussed in Chapter 6.

The final input considers how the history of the organisation of today has been shaped by developments in its past. Crucial developments that have shaped it over time can include – the strategic decisions, behaviour of key leaders and evolution of values and beliefs (Wyman 2003: 6). Indeed, the history of the organisation is most evident in the current culture, work processes, organisational structure and competencies/skills set (Tushman and O'Reilly 2002: 45).

The Harris Museum is a municipally funded institution (by Preston City Council) located in the North West of England. It opened in 1893 and houses a collection totalling 80,000 objects in three main collecting areas: fine art, decorative art (including costume) and social history (including photographs) (Scoping Report Collecting New Media Art 2009: 4). The Harris has been actively collecting contemporary British art since 1985. Furthermore, the museum has a strong track record of working with regional, national and international artists including

the commissioning of new work for temporary exhibition (Starling 2001, Prophet 2005, Seaman 2007). The temporary exhibition programme includes digital media; for example, in 2009, the exhibition programme displayed work by pioneering French artist Robert Cahen. The Harris has sought to 'collect work which reflects changing arts practices and which reflects the impact of new technology across all collection areas' (ibid.: 5). Acquisition of American artist Mark Amerika's *Museum of Glitch Aesthetics* is a good example of a web-based artwork which was commissioned for *Digital Aesthetic* in 2012 and since collected in 2013 (*Digital Aesthetic 3 'Art in a Digital World'* 2012).

The vision of the Harris is to be responsive to the needs of the local community but to also push the collections and staff in innovative ways. Hence, the *Current* project was unconditionally supported by the Director, Walker, and her encouragement of the Exhibitions Officer to pursue this new form of collecting has enabled the museum to engage with many partners and organisations. This has, in turn, built a new media art collection which is of the highest quality and international significance.

The Van Abbemuseum's collection of approximately 2700 works has been acquired from its founding in 1936. The artworks span different media and genres. The museum actively collects art which focuses on specific research topics rather than artist or medium but is focused on contemporary art regardless of medium. Such a collecting strategy resists the motive to collect based on importance of artist. Rather, the importance of how the work communicates ideas which resonate with research themes and the permanent art collection are at the fore (Berndes 2013).

This section has put forward the inputs to an organisation according to the Congruence Model; the environment, resources and history. The next section will consider the organisation's strategy which sets down aims and objectives to be accomplished where the aforementioned inputs commands how these strategic aims will be achieved.

Strategy

Underpinning any organisation, including a museum, is a set of strategic choices which is shaped over time. The shared mission or vision sets out a broader aspiration of an institution. This overarching vision shapes the strategic plan of the museum with specific strategic aims. These aims shape detailed objectives which are measurable and sets out targets to assess organisational performance. This section will detail the strategic aims for the Harris Museum and the Van Abbemuseum specifically in relation to new media art.

The Harris Museum Collections Development Policy sets down future collecting objectives as a priority and the museum 'will continue to acquire work of nationally significant artists to maintain the calibre of the collection' (Collections Development Policy 2011-2014: 25). Significantly, the Harris Museum has outlined the intention to build on its reputation for showing British and international contemporary art by forming a selective new media collection. The Policy notes that collecting new media art is 'an emerging discipline' (ibid.: 25). Whilst the collecting of new media art is considered an emerging discipline, it is one which the Harris seeks to acquire for the permanent collection.

The appendix 'collecting new media policy' sets out a long-term commitment to build on the strength of its collections and aims to establish an ambitious and nationally important new media art collection (ibid.: 62). The new media collection should be broad in scope and of the highest quality with the aim of integrating new work with existing collections. A further aim of this policy is to develop links between the exhibitions programme and the permanent collection so that acquisition through the exhibition and commissioning programme can be extended (ibid.: 63, 65).

A final aim is to develop partnerships with a network of organisations involved with contemporary art and new media (e.g. FACT, Tate, Arts Council, University of Central Lancashire (UCLaN), Contemporary Arts Society) to stimulate debate, co-commission new work, share expertise, develop technical support facilities and to collaborate with university research units (ibid.: 63, 65).

The artistic programme and vision of the Van Abbemuseum is strongly shaped by the Director. As a leader, Esche has opened up the 'house' for discussion and pushes staff to experiment, challenge orthodoxy and to work in new ways (Erbslöh 2013). Part of the museum's ideology is also political, the notion that art can be a mechanism to building empathy. Indeed the museum's 'emancipatory ideology' sees the value of art at a social and political level which can be shared with the public (Esche 2013). The vision for radicality, creativity, experimentation and public engagement has been difficult for some staff. As a consequence, at least ten staff left the museum since Esche became director because they didn't share the vision (staff were conservative or right wing). Taking on responsibility and ownership for decisions, sharing knowledge, collecting new media art and being a conduit for public engagement has been a challenge for some museum staff.

The museum organises a series of strategic meetings which shape the mission and vision of the Van Abbemuseum. There are three key meetings which set down strategic directions. Moreover, all staff are encouraged to actively participate; indeed, visiting curators and guests are welcomed in meetings. The Strategic meeting sets out the strategic direction in terms of exhibition planning and programming, acquisitions for the collection, working with partners, operations and marketing and is a space to discuss the creative process, define planning and programming (Erbslöh 2014). The Tactical meeting sets out short and mid-term decision-making regarding planning of events, exhibitions and current affairs; this meeting is an opportunity to exchange information and share knowledge. Finally, the Collection meeting decides on future acquisitions for the collection as well as registration issues, travelling exhibitions, loans and documentation. All meetings feed in to one another and are interdependent.

The Deputy Director points out that planning for 'things we can actually sell is too short-term – we need to have the chance to sell exhibitions two years ahead to be able to engage private money' (Erbslöh 2013). The director (Esche) is averse to planning two years ahead (ibid. 2013). Such a process indicates that staff felt pressure and stress because of this acute short-term planning. Hence, a large part of the museum's planning is focused on short-term planning;

something which the deputy director remarked 'other museums would have a heart attack!' (ibid. 2013).

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the scope of the research project by defining the terms and specific characteristics which, I contend, represent new media art. The context of each regional case study museum has been set out and an example of a new media artwork which each museum has acquired for their permanent collection has been given. In addition, the environment, resources and history of the museum has been sketched out to give a broader picture of how the museum operates in the current climate. This context and background will feed in to the subsequent chapters in terms of assessing the museum's congruence between the four major components (people, work, culture and structure).

With the Harris Museum we saw that what emerged was a sense of this institution developing an ambitious and distinctive project in which an open call, exhibition, acquisition and public debate took place. A new media artwork was collected for the permanent collection and the *Current* experiment included many contributors (arts organisations, academics, practitioners and museum directors) in the process. Due to the particular nature of this project, the Harris Museum set out to engage with organisations with which they could collaborate with and share knowledge and expertise on new media art. In our second museum example, the Van Abbemuseum has a vision to collect contemporary art regardless of medium and to engage with art which resonates with contemporary issues consisting of research themes dealing with autonomy, economics and social change.

In both cases we note that both institutions are prompted to explore and collect new media art, to build collections for the museum and the community, but, also to illustrate that the quality of the art, rather than the medium, is what is important. In addition, the museums are interested in understanding the challenges and opportunities that collecting new media art presents, both for how the museum functions and, the relationships between staff that occur as a consequence of collecting such art. And it will be these qualities, relationships amongst museum staff and how collecting new media art in particular impacts

on the functioning of the museum that will prove crucial to our understanding of the impact collecting new media art has on the four major components within the institution In the next chapter I set out the research methodology which was adopted for this research study.

CHAPTER 3 – Methodology

Introduction

This section sets out the overarching methodology and research design of the thesis, identifying the methods used for data generation, analysis and interpretation. The decisions which have been taken concerning the research design are justified here in relation to methodological concerns such as epistemological and ethical issues and the specific research questions which frame this project. The use of a qualitative approach to the research will also be justified. The aim here is to present an informed and cogent research design which can then enable the systematic and rigorous generation, analysis and interpretation of data.

Position of Researcher

This research draws upon management and business theory from David Nadler and Michael Tushman which looks at the ‘Congruence Model of Organizational Behavior’ of organisational alignment. In addition, I will examine the theory of Charles Handy, an organisational behaviour and management specialist in relation to organisational culture and leadership. His organisational theory will be applied within the museum context to illuminate the importance of the culture of an organisation and the style of leadership and, how collecting new media art impacts upon these factors, if at all. The models, from a business and management perspective, can expertly reveal how collecting new media art may be reshaping and redefining the museum and the impact this has on relationships between museum professionals and working practices.

Hence, the aims of this research are a) to understand how the process of collecting new media art is changing how the two regional case study museums operate and function and b) to examine the effect collecting new media art has

on the organisational structure, organisational culture, human resources, work flow and skills sets/expertise.

Although it is clear that Nadler and Tushman, and Handy developed their theories in the context of for-profit businesses, I see them as useful tools to analyse the museums under examination. The Congruence Model, in particular, assesses the congruence between the organisational strategy and four major components: the critical tasks/workflows, the formal organizational arrangements/structure, people/human resources, and the informal organizational arrangements/culture (Tushman and O'Reilly 2002: 58). The model did highlight key areas where the museum adapted and reconfigured new ways of working.

The theory proved to be useful whilst undertaking fieldwork yet findings did not always fit into the theory. Fieldwork revealed many subtleties and grey areas which simply did not fit into the model; specifically the four major components (task, people, culture, structure). These complexities enabled me to consider the usefulness of the Congruence Model, but, also the gaps that exist. Such gaps presented opportunities for the research in terms of how collecting new media art impacted on the museums decision-making, new ways of working and leadership.

Coupled with the Congruence Model was Handy's consideration of organisational culture and leadership (1990, 1993). He has written extensively about organisational culture and how this can impact on the formal structure of the organisation and the work to be carried out. Furthermore, the leadership style of any organisation directly impacts on the culture of the organisation and its workers. Therefore, Handy's theories will be used alongside the Congruence Model to delve more deeply into the culture of each case study museum, how decisions are being made to acquire new media art, the style of leadership and the structure of the institution. Handy's research on organisational change is, therefore, helpful to this research because it provides a means of understanding the four major components in the Congruence Model. It also presents an opportunity to answer the research questions within the Congruence Model and

to assess to what extent the museums in question are being redefined as a result of collecting new media art.

Investigation of the organisational culture and leadership in the case studies illustrated the impact they had on the functioning of the museum and the relationships between museum staff. Thus, the two theories (Nadler and Tushman, and Handy) will gauge whether the museums are being redefined and reshaped through its organisational structure, organisational culture and leadership.

Researching Reflexively

In order to undertake reflexive research it is important to acknowledge that the outcome of research is a direct result of the biases, background and expectations of the researcher (Gibbs 2007: 91). My PhD research has been shaped by my position as a student during my Masters studies at the University of Leicester. My dissertation examined organisational change in the Ulster Museum, Belfast (Northern Ireland). This case study attempted to look at the question “is the Ulster Museum embracing organisational change?” At the time of writing (2006-2007) the Ulster Museum was in the process of considerable change. Restructuring of the organisational structure was being undertaken and a major capital re-development programme to increase public access to the building and interpretation were being carried out. The dissertation examined organisational change focussing on organisational culture, leadership and change management. The case study gave an insight into how the organisational changes were affecting staff through interview. This research provided an opportunity to examine a museum from an organisational perspective and to gauge how organisational change impacts directly on museum staff.

When approaching the PhD project, it became clear that very little had been written about the process of collecting new media art, and, more importantly, how acquiring such art is reshaping and redefining how museums operate and function. Reading literature on business theory and organisational change

suggested the usefulness of exploring two case study museums that are actively collecting new media art; to delve deeper into the institutional processes which are being impacted. These processes are the work to be done, the skills of staff, the culture of how things are done in the museum and the formal structure of the organisation. This research precisely maps the reciprocal nature between collecting new media art and the effect on the two regional case study museums.

It is important to acknowledge that the qualitative researcher 'cannot claim to be an objective, authoritative, politically neutral observer standing outside and above the text of their research...' (ibid.: 91). Consequently, research as a 'reflexive' thinking process requires continuous attention of the researcher, those being researched and the integrity of the process (O'Leary 2004: 11). This continuous attention will involve critically reflecting on the decisions being taken and justifying why they were taken; critically assessing the grounds on which knowledge claims are being justified; assessing the data by outlining how data was categorised and interpreted; emphasising the contextual nature of respondents' accounts and ensuring that the complexity of data is highlighted i.e. avoiding the notion that there is a 'simple fit' between the situation under scrutiny and the theoretical representation of it (Gibbs 2007: 93). Through thematic analysis of the data set, interpretation will be nuanced and emphasise the richness of the data and critically set out the argument from the overarching themes.

Research Design

This research project is firmly located within a qualitative approach through case studies. This involves in-depth inquiry, interviews capturing relevant staff members' perspectives and experiences (Quinn Patton 2002: 40).

Quantitative approaches (also termed 'positivist') rely on the epistemological assumption that there is objective truth and reality. Such truth can be revealed through the scientific method which rests on measuring, or quantifying, a claim. Such measurement is deemed to be 'reliable, valid and generalizable in its clear predictions of cause and effect' (Symon and Cassell 1994: 2). In contrast, the qualitative approach 'emerge[s] from phenomenological and interpretive paradigms' which insist that there is no objective truth or reality but, rather, that perspectives are subjective and constructed realities (ibid.: 2).

Therefore, the qualitative research process is much more holistic and 'emergent' with researchers interacting with the participants and perceptive of the complexity of the situation. As a result, recurring themes emerge from the data providing 'context-bound' information and patterns which illuminate the phenomenon under study (Leedy and Ellis Ormrod 2010: 95). Appropriately, the defining characteristics of qualitative methods include: a focus on interpretation rather than quantification; an emphasis on subjectivity rather than objectivity, an orientation towards process rather than outcome and, a concern for context (Symon and Cassell 1994: 7).

It is important to recognise that qualitative inquiry elevates context as critical to understanding. Therefore, the context and the setting (physical, geographical, temporal, historical and cultural) becomes the framework, the reference point for placing people and action in time and space and as a resource for understanding what they say and do (Quinn Patton 2002: 63). Historical information and perspectives can shed important light on the social environment – thus the history of an organisation is an important part of the context for research. Questions help to frame inquiry such as 'To what extent does collecting new media art affect the organisation?', 'How does that impact on

how people work and the skills needed to carry out the tasks?', 'How has the political, economic, cultural environment changed over time and impacted on the museum?' (ibid.: 284).

Qualitative research seeks to understand how people construct the world around them. As a result, the qualitative approach accepts the 'inherent subjectivity of the research endeavour' (Symon and Cassell 1994: 4). This may include, for example, investigating professional practices and analysing the interactions of staff and the form of communication, either formally (documents, formal instructions) or informally (the culture of communication in the organisation). Hence, what is happening in the organisation and what staff are doing is meaningful and offers rich insight (Gibbs 2007: x). The use of rich description is helpful in answering the question 'what is going on here?' and contributes to an understanding of the setting to be studied and its analysis. Rich description defines what is happening and the intentions and strategies of the people involved in the study (ibid.: 4). Drawing out the personal perspectives of the respondents engages the interviewee and they are seen as 'active constructors of meaning' rather than passive observers of events (Symon and Cassell 1994: 6).

A qualitative approach will generate rich, dense and deep data which is used to identify and evaluate the processes of change involved i.e. the 'how' questions, and, the circumstances and motivations of the stakeholders i.e. the 'why' questions. Moreover, such methods are sensitive to investigation and allow detailed analysis of change (ibid.: 5). Thus, exploring the reasons why changes are taking place, and, the impact it has on organisational effectiveness in the two regional case study museums, will illustrate the processes involved in collecting new media art.

The qualitative approach highlights the idiographic (concerned with the individual facts and processes) nature of the research to reveal the interplay between the factors such as person, place, event and setting. Such interplay highlights the 'particular, the distinctive or even unique' (Gibbs 2007: 5). Accordingly, the two case studies which will be discussed later emphasise the

distinctive and particular through the analysis, but, also the similarities and cross-over between the two regional museums.

Whereas theory is deduced as a result of testing hypotheses in the quantitative approach, the opposite is the case in qualitative/interpretive approaches, i.e. theory is generated from the data collected. Qualitative research employs both an inductive and deductive approach in order to seek out patterns and offer explanations. Such research therefore enables the theory or concept to be tested alongside the data collection process in order to produce new knowledge and understanding (ibid.: 5). Testing of the Congruence Model and the thematic analysis underlined the gaps in the model. As a result, the data, I argue, could improve the model for future study.

The qualitative design was sufficiently open and flexible to permit exploration of whatever the phenomenon under study offered for inquiry. The design continued to be emergent even after data collection began i.e. a chain sampling approach for locating information-rich informants was evident (many contacts recommended converged as a few key names emerged over and over).

Selection Criteria for Pilot Study and Case Studies

Pilot Study – Gallery of Modern Art, GOMA, Glasgow (UK)

A pilot study was carried out in 2012 to refine the questions and to determine how best to answer the research questions so that they employed the Congruence Model as a conceptual framework for this project.

The pilot study was undertaken at the Gallery of Modern Art (GOMA) in Glasgow. GOMA, although part of a much bigger organisation, (GOMA sits within Glasgow Museums which, in turn, sits under Glasgow Life), is a smaller institution than the Tate for example, and was ideal as a pilot study (it was a good example of an information rich case). The gallery had a collection of contemporary art including audiovisual (AV) and installation, conceptual and ephemeral art (ICE). In order to pragmatically manage these collections a Working Group was formed. The members of this Working Group included curators at GOMA (Harman and McGlashan) and conservators at Glasgow Museums Research Centre (GMRC) in Nitshill (outside the city). The core members of the Working Group were the curators and conservators but, as required, other members of staff took part in meetings (for example the registrar, technician and documentation personnel). A broad mix of backgrounds and expertise was exploited to debate and seek solutions to challenges in relation to collecting AV and ICE work.

Hence, GOMA was chosen as a pilot study because it had a Working Group examining the challenges and opportunities collecting AV and ICE artworks raised for the museum. Discussion with the director of GOMA, Victoria Hollows, indicated that the Working Group might be a helpful pilot study for my research. It was my intention to uncover the impact collecting new media art had on the organisation, but, once onsite, it became evident that new media art is not part of the collection at GOMA. It is acknowledged, however, that the pilot study was particularly helpful in considering the dynamics of negotiating AV and ICE artworks in a museum collection. For example, one of the key findings from the pilot study at GOMA argued that the Working Group could be used as an

example to create similar Working Group 'pockets' within the larger institution of Glasgow Life to secure organisational effectiveness. This example of 'agile curating' enabled me to think about the potential impact that artworks, in particular, new media art might have on a collecting institution. Thinking through the research findings gave me an opportunity to consider what future themes might be discovered in the two regional case studies to follow.

The advantage of this pilot study was seeing how the fieldwork findings and the theoretical framework could be integrated, through thematic analysis, to present research findings. In addition, it was useful to see how the Congruence Model could be adapted for museums and to determine where potential gaps lay in the model so that suggestions could be put forward. The pilot study gave me an opportunity to refine my Question Sheet and to consider the use of structured or semi-structured interviews and to assess the effectiveness of closed and open-ended questions.

The methodological mix included document analysis and interviews. It is noteworthy that access to documents was difficult in light of the fact that tremendous restructuring and service reform was occurring across Glasgow Life (which comprises Glasgow Museums down to GOMA). A complete overhaul of the organisational chart, strategy documents and collection policy was still being worked through (a proposed organigramme from 2011 was being finalised and implemented). The organisational chart is not publicly available but the draft was given for information purposes only. GOMA's manager, Victoria Hollows, pointed out that they were 'still trying to find their feet and navigate through these changes' (2012). Hollows provided the Collecting Policy (2008/09) but stressed that a new policy was being drafted. A copy of the AV register (taken from the collections database) was presented for information only.

Interviews were carried out with Working Group members as well as the GOMA Manager and Director of AV Technical to seek their perspectives. Standardised open-ended questions were designed and each interview was transcribed as a verbatim report and from each transcript the recurring themes were drawn out.

Data analysis from the interviews revealed that the Working Group was 'borne out of need' (Hollows 2012). GOMA actively started collecting AV and ICE works from 2006 onwards. As a result, acquisitions began to grow so there 'was a high demand for conservation to document these new acquisitions' (de Roemer 2012). Thus, the Working Group met to try and adopt 'best practice' in an institution which did not have a lot of resources (Brown 2012). The Working Group had a clear purpose and rationale for the work that needed to be done (Hollows 2012). Thus, the main purpose of the group was to find solutions to problems about how to register, display and maintain all the AV and digital artworks that were being bought (Harman 2012).

The pilot study was instrumental in revealing the strengths and weaknesses of my initial research idea. The pilot study also helped me to recognise that the Congruence Model could assess the extent to which the critical tasks were congruent (or incongruent), thus, the congruence between critical tasks with formal structure, informal structure (culture) and people (human resources) could be accomplished. However, the model did not examine the important role leadership plays on the organisation's culture and structure. From the pilot study it became evident that further theories of organisational culture, structure and leadership would need to be researched and assessed to determine how useful they would be in the two regional case studies. Thus, Handy's theory (mentioned earlier) of organisations were assimilated in to the Congruence Model so that the case study analysis could be undertaken. The pilot study offered an opportunity to refine the question sheet and consider where the main case studies could be undertaken.

Case Study 1 – Harris Museum and Art Gallery, Preston (UK)

The case study approach provides an opportunity to focus on specific instances of the phenomenon that is to be investigated. The Harris Museum was purposefully selected as a unit of analysis to permit inquiry into and understanding of a phenomenon in-depth. In addition, the Harris Museum was chosen as a good example of an information rich case from which to address the research questions at hand.

The Exhibitions Officer at the Harris Museum, Lindsay Taylor, had given a talk at the Manchester Contemporary Art event in 2012 about the Current project at the Harris Museum. Shortly after this presentation, I attended the Digital Aesthetic conference in Preston in 2012. Digital Aesthetic³ showcases the latest and best in digital art from around the world through a programme of exhibitions and a two-day conference. Lindsay Taylor gave a presentation about how they were able to secure a new media artwork for their permanent collection and discussed the issues and challenges that were raised as a result of this acquisition. From these two events it became apparent that the Harris Museum would make a good case study in light of their unique position in the North West of England to actively collect collecting new media art for their collection and to consider and examine the impact that collecting the artwork had on the function of the museum.

The Digital Aesthetic Project ran from 2001 to 2012 between the Harris Museum & Art Gallery and the Electronic and Digital Art Unit at the University of Central Lancashire, Preston. Digital Aesthetic³ was chaired by Professor Sean Cubitt (Goldsmiths, London) and Dr Sarah Cook (CRUMB, University of Sunderland). The event also included talks and performance by: Ruth Catlow (UK), Terry Flaxton (UK), Maria Chatzichristodoulou (UK/Greece), Peter Callas (Aus), Alexa Wright (UK), Lindsay Taylor (UK), Beryl Graham (UK), Peter Campus (USA), Chris Meigh Andrews (UK) and Mary Lucier (USA). Alongside the conference there were two exhibitions on display which demonstrated some of the diverse ways that artists are utilizing digital technology. One exhibition took place at the Harris Museum and Art Gallery and the other at the PR1

Gallery, University of Central Lancashire. The exhibition at the Harris Museum comprised of a new commission by American artist Mark Amerika, *Museum of Glitch Aesthetics* – an online-turned-physical project that sees the whole museum subjected to the notion of the ‘glitch’ (co-produced with AND Festival) (subsequently acquired by the Harris Museum for its permanent collection).

A key consideration was access to key staff who were working in the museum at the time of the fieldwork (including the Director, Exhibitions Officer, Curators and *Digital Aesthetic* Project Assistant); all have considerable experience and awareness of the issues under investigation. Practical issues of access, cooperation and convenience were also a factor. Initial contact with potential interviewees revealed an interest on their part to take part in the research. The use of ‘snowball’ sampling was employed to locate information rich informants. For example, after asking staff who would be best suited to answer my questions, the contacts recommended converged as a few key names were mentioned again and again (Quinn Patton 2002: 237): my initial contact with the Exhibitions Officer at the Harris Museum through a conference underscored the need to interview the director and the Chair of the Friends of the museum. Whilst interviewing the Collections Officer and the *Digital Aesthetic* Project Assistant, the two names were mentioned once again.

Six semi-structured interviews were carried out between Monday 5 November and Wednesday 7 November 2012. Interviews were carried out with staff members in the Harris Museum meeting room at a time that suited each participant. Interviews were carried out with: Greta Krypczk-Oddy, Chair of the Friends of the Harris; Alex Walker, Head of Arts and Heritage (Director of Museum); Lynsey Jones, Collections Officer; Lindsay Taylor, Exhibitions Officer at that time; Steph Fletcher, *Digital Aesthetic* Project Assistant and Anonymous A. Each interviewee signed the Consent Form and had received the Information Sheet setting out the research project and questions to be asked. Transcriptions were typed up verbatim and data analysis sought out recurring themes across the data set.

The Harris Museum was selected as a case study for research because it actively chose to acquire a piece of new media art for its permanent art collection. The process of collecting a new media artwork was set out in Chapter 2. Therefore, the primary focus of data collection is to see: a) what is happening to professionals in the museum and, b) how both individuals and the museum are affected by collecting new media art.

Case Study 2 – The Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (The Netherlands)

During Research Week (2011) I spoke with a fellow PhD student, Marieke van der Duin, Reinwardt Academie (the Netherlands) about my research proposal and she suggested that I should consider the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven as a case study because they are taking a lead in problematising digital heritage and the role of the museum in relation to ephemeral art. She also sent me an article by PhD student Vivian van Saaze entitled *Doing artworks. An ethnographic account of the acquisition and conservation of No Ghost Just A Shell* (Krisis 2009, Issue 1, pp. 20-32). Additionally, the Van Abbemuseum was recommended to me by my supervisor who had undertaken her own research at the museum. She had carried out interviews some months previously and felt that it would make a suitable case study. Furthermore, substantial reading on new media art indicated that the Van Abbemuseum have been very active on the issue of networking and collaborating with partners to document and debate issues concerning exhibition of new media art (van Saaze 2009), the preservation and conservation of such art (Laurenson 2013, Noordegraaf 2013) and the challenges acquiring new media art raises for the museum (Baltan Laboratories 2012).

Contact was made with the Director's assistant to seek interviews with key staff such as curators, the deputy director, head of research, guest curator, and the director. Regular e-mail communication with the assistant revealed that many staff was not available. Nevertheless, the following staff did confirm their willingness to participate: Charles Esche, Director; Ulrike Erbslöh, Deputy Director; Christiane Berndes, Curator of Collection and Annie Fletcher, Curator of Exhibitions. A private meeting room was secured for the interviews and permission was given to digitally record the interviews. Interviews took place between Tuesday 22 and Wednesday 23 January 2013. Consent Forms were signed and permission to quote was freely given.

The Van Abbemuseum is a regional museum of modern and contemporary art south of Amsterdam. Eindhoven, as a city has a long history of technology and experimentation, for example, the famous Philips electronics company resides

in Eindhoven and the city carries out numerous innovative arts and culture projects. The Van Abbemuseum was chosen as a case study because the issues concerning collecting new media art echoed those of the Harris Museum, but the Van Abbemuseum differed in the way that they collect. They did not employ an open call, exhibition, acquisition and evaluation like the Harris Museum. Nevertheless, the Van Abbemuseum could offer an insight into collecting new media art and the processes involved and the impact on staff and, how acquiring such art could reshape and redefine how the museum operates and functions.

Miscellaneous – supplementary interviews: Tate and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA)

Throughout the pilot study interviews at GOMA (Glasgow), interviewees put forward ideas about potential case studies. First among the suggested case studies was the Tate which had been my first intended case study. This institution has been at the forefront of developments in the UK and, as remarked by Working Group members, the ‘gold standard’ in terms of looking at issues concerning collecting new media art.

Secondly, the world-class modern and contemporary art museum Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam (Holland) was also considered. Curator at GOMA, Ben Harman, pointed out that it has a big film and video art department but they are not shy about collecting anything! After carrying out further research it was not evident that they had a collection of new media art.

In the United States, MOMA and Ps1 (New York) were considered as a likely case study. Also, a consideration was given to investigating Tech museums looking at their development and including an overview of US museums who acquire ‘new media art’ but are not art galleries/museums. Examples included the MIT museum, the Tech Museum in San Jose, USA (Silicon Valley) and the Computer History Museum (California). However, discussion at my Annual Review (2012) focussed on the intended case study at MOMA (and other possible US examples). The panel thought it unnecessary to complicate the thesis by carrying out a case study in America (geography, context, funding of institution and training of staff). Consideration of the Science Museum in London which also holds ‘new media art’ but is a science museum and the V&A which also contains ‘new media art’ were also considered but through the two conferences at the Harris Museum and the Van Abbemuseum it was decided that these two regional museums would be best suited to my case study approach.

Securing interviews with staff at Tate proved difficult - Frances Morris, Head of Collections and Dr Pip Laurenson, Head of Collection Care Research. Other

staff members, for example, Jennifer Mundy and Nigel Llewellyn e-mailed to say they do not have the expertise in this field. After a period of time, I successfully secured interviews with the following staff - Frances Morris, Ann Gallagher and Stuart Comer at Tate Modern and Tate Britain respectively (interviews November 2012). Frances Morris, Head of Collections (International Art) at Tate Modern was interviewed in her office. She was only available for 30 minutes. A Consent Form was signed, but, she insisted that any phrases or quotes that were of interest should be approved by her first before being used in the thesis. Curator of Film at Tate Modern, Stuart Comer, was able to speak for over one hour. He was happy for all information to be used in the thesis. Finally, Ann Gallagher, Head of Collections (British Art) at Tate Britain was interviewed in her office. She was interested in the research project and freely offered printed material and information which was particularly insightful into the collecting process of Intermedia art at the Tate. Due to lack of time we agreed to continue the interview by telephone at a later date (9 January 2013). A Consent Form was also signed but she stipulated that she wanted to be given the opportunity to review and correct the interview transcription.

Hence, the conference at the Harris Museum (Digital Aesthetic in 2012) and the conference at the Van Abbemuseum (Collecting Born Digital Art 2012) strengthened the plan to carry out two case studies at regional museums – the Harris Museum and Art Gallery, Preston (UK) and the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (the Netherlands). The Harris Museum are actively commissioning and collecting digital art. The Van Abbe Museum, Holland have a permanent collection of new media art and have written about the questions raised about collecting and documenting new media art.

I had the opportunity to interview Jill Sterrett, Director of Collections and Conservation and Layna White, Head of Collections Information and Access (CIA) from SFMOMA during a conference at the Van Abbemuseum in 2012. Consent Forms were signed and transcripts made of the interview. They were able to give vivid examples of working practices and styles of leadership when considering collecting, documenting, interpretation, and preservation of new media art.

Research Methods and Data Sources

The case study approach provides an opportunity to focus on specific instances of the phenomenon that is to be investigated. Detailed study of an example should illuminate the question under study (Quinn Patton 2002: 46). The case study shall make use of multiple sources of data and multiple methods of data collection and generation such as interviews and documents. The advantage of focusing on a particular case is that relationships and processes can be examined, as well as the outcomes of change. This method allows great flexibility and accommodates emergent themes and idiographic descriptions (highlighting the distinctiveness of each case) (Symon and Cassell 1994: 4).

The data used in this study was derived from two main sources: documents and interview. The documents derive from primary data including organisational documents such as scoping and evaluation reports, organisational charts and collecting policies of museums; the interviews with museum professionals including directors, curators, exhibition officers and collections care officers were transcribed and analysed for emerging patterns.

Secondary data sources include journals including Leonardo and Convergence and online websites for new media art including FACT (Foundation for Art and Creative Technology, Liverpool). The CRUMB discussion list on new media art (University of Sunderland) was particularly useful in sourcing interviews with curators involved in new media art projects (such as Matthew Gansallo). Online e-zines such as Artforum, Mute and S-Edition were also consulted to consider the nature of new media art commissions and exhibitions for emerging artists. Collecting databases and archives such as Rhizome were examined to understand the taxonomies given to new media art, the range of artworks on the database and current conversations with theorists and practitioners in the field. I also researched contemporary art museums who are actively collecting new media art such as Seoul Museum of Art (SEMA), SFMOMA, the Guggenheim and the Whitney in the United States, the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Science Museum in the United Kingdom. Such documents provide evidence

which is stable i.e. they can be reviewed repeatedly and the process of reviewing is unobtrusive.

Furthermore, the documents provide contextual information about the museum at certain phases of its existence and constitute a particularly rich source of information about the organisation. Comparison between official documents, for example, Collecting Policies, Scoping Reports, with Evaluation Reports and minutes can be a revealing form of analysis. However, some of the documentation was either 'in progress' and thus not available for public scrutiny or were private in-house documentation (not for circulation). Nonetheless, much of the documentation was given as informational copy but some were explicitly not for public view although it is possible to discuss issues without referring directly to the text.

Undertaking interviews as part of a case study provides a number of advantages. Firstly, it enables the interviewer to obtain in-depth information by probing. Second, questions can be explained in order to avoid any misunderstanding and, finally, using open-ended questions allows interviewees the opportunity to express themselves thus removing any interviewer bias (Kumar 2005: 131, 135). Carrying out semi-structured interviews demanded competence in using appropriate language, questioning, listening, summarising understanding and recording the interview (Saunders, Lewis, Thornhill 2009: 336).

Interviews with a small number of museum staff were conducted to explore their perspectives on their collecting strategy, decision-making, working practices, organisational culture, structure and leadership. Thus, qualitative interviewing assumes that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit (Quinn Patton 2002: 341). For that reason, the purpose of qualitative interviewing is to 'capture how those being interviewed view their world, to learn *their* terminology and judgements, and to capture the complexities of *their* individual perceptions and experiences' (ibid.: 348).

The design of research and its conduct ensured integrity and quality at all times. Museum staff was made fully aware of the aims and objectives of the study by means of an Information Sheet for Participants. Furthermore, the use that would be made of the data accessed through, and, generated by the research process, was made explicit to participants. Consent to participate and permission to name individual staff (and to quote them directly in the research) were freely given. Confidentiality was assured. Staff requesting anonymity was respected and no names were recorded. Thus, pseudonyms have been used where appropriate in the thesis (one pseudonym 'Anonymous A' is used). Participants had the right to withdraw consent to participate in research at any time. Each interview was recorded in full and a written verbatim record was captured.

Standardised open-ended questions were designed in the Interview Protocol, which included an 'Opening Statement' conveying the overall purpose of the interview. The use of standardised open-ended questions facilitated the generation of rich and thick data, offering the possibility of recording the perceptions, feelings and knowledge of people. As Quinn Patton notes the 'purpose of gathering responses to open-ended questions is to enable the researcher to understand and capture the points of view of other people without predetermining those points of view through prior selection of questionnaire categories' (2002: 20-21). It was clear from the qualitative interviews that respondents became actively involved in providing descriptive information.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The process of analysis and interpretation was evolving and inductive. Qualitative inquiry is particularly oriented towards exploration, discovery and inductive logic. Thus inductive analysis is immersed in the details of the data to discover important patterns, themes, and interrelationships (Quinn Patton 2002: 41, 55). All data gathering was meticulous and full records were kept and securely stored (in accordance with the Data Protection Act, 1998).

A case study is advantageous because it offers both multiple sources of data and multiple methods of data collection and generation. Within this case study, the following methods were used: document analysis and interviews. These methodological mixes strengthen a study by combining numerous methods (triangulation). Thus, a rich variety of methodological combinations were employed to illuminate the inquiry question (ibid.: 247-248).

A verbatim interview transcription was carried out and transcripts were analysed to seek out recurrent phrases and themes that might identify core consistencies and meanings (for example, new ways of working, staff agency and informal leadership, museum culture and structure).

Coding of the transcripts involved analysing the text and identifying a name or code for that piece of text. Thus, coding, as a way of categorising the text is a tool to establish thematic ideas from the fieldwork (Gibbs 2007: 38). The list of codes can be developed into a hierarchy which helps to appreciate relationships between the case studies (ibid.: 39). The process of coding is part of analysis so that data can be organised into meaningful themes (Braun and Clarke 2006: 88). To ensure analytic quality it is crucial to carry out analysis with care and thoroughness. Hence, constant comparison and code hierarchies and rereading of interview transcripts was undertaken to ensure that the analysis was well balanced and supported by the data collected (Gibbs 2007: 145). The relationship between codes and themes began to emerge and comparisons could be made between the main overarching themes and sub-themes and the relationships between them (Braun and Clarke 2006: 89-90).

Analysis of transcripts sought out recurrent themes and phrases. Such analysis was able to identify core consistencies and meanings. For example, collaboration between staff, changes to decision-making processes and staff agency and autonomy emerged again and again. The data was analysed critically to seek out core consistencies and meanings (i.e. patterns/themes) and using content/thematic analysis (inductive analysis of institutional documents and interview transcripts) uncovered patterns, themes and categories in the data. Thus, findings emerged out of the data through the analyst's interactions of the data (Quinn Patton 2002: 453).

Thematic analysis is a useful research tool in revealing a 'rich and detailed, yet complex, account of data' (Braun and Clarke 2006: 78). It is an active process by the researcher in identifying patterns and choosing which are of importance in relation to the research questions (ibid.: 80). Thematic analysis provides advantages including summarising key features of a large body of data, highlighting similarities and differences across the data set; and, generating unanticipated or unforeseen insights (ibid.: 97).

It is important, however, to go beyond description and interpret the data to be mindful of significance and make an argument in relation to the research questions. This significance involves stating what was found, providing explanations, considering meanings and drawing conclusions (Quinn Patton 2002: 480). In addition, use of a deductive process enabled the researcher to interpret the data and hypothesise about the relationships between concepts (ibid.: 453). Data analysis, therefore, is an ongoing process and reflection and consideration on the emerging themes is continuous (Dawson 2002: 115). Analysis is a recursive process rather than a linear process where the researcher goes back and forth with the data as needed (Braun and Clarke 2006: 86).

Validity and Reliability

Quinn Patton points out that 'studies that use only one method are more vulnerable to errors linked to that particular method (e.g. loaded interview questions, biased or untrue responses) ...' (2002: 248). These case studies, by using multiple methods of data analysis and data collection, provided cross-data validity checks. However, it is important to emphasise that the different data sources may, in the end, yield different results. Therefore, we must be conscious of the fact that the organisational theory and the findings of the case study may be divergent but, the purpose of this research is to test for consistency. Indeed, understanding such inconsistencies in findings across the data can be revealing and may indeed offer opportunities for deeper insight into the relationship between inquiry approach and the phenomenon under study (ibid.: 248).

The aim of the researcher has been to employ a research tool which is consistent and sound. Such a process, if accurate and predictable, can be said to be reliable. As a consequence, the research project sets out to present findings which can be verified (Kumar 2005: 156). The use of multiple sources of data such as interview transcripts and documentation should converge to support the theory chosen (the Congruence Model). Thus, the internal validity of the research project has been warranted using a method of triangulation – comparing multiple data sources in search of common themes to support the validity of the findings (Leedy and Ellis Ormrod 2010: 98-100).

Research Ethics

Interviews were carried out in accordance with the University of Leicester's *Research Ethics Code of Practice*. The research design and its conduct ensured integrity and quality at all times. Museum staff were made fully aware of the aims and objectives of the study and the use that would be made of the data accessed through and generated by the research process. Participants had the right to withdraw consent to participate to withdraw their participation in research at any time.

Online authorisation for the initial pilot study and each case study was sought through the University's ethics site and considered by the Departmental Ethics Officer (DEO). The completed online forms were submitted for approval before any fieldwork proceeded. The form addressed issues such as risks, proposed participants and procedures in relation to consent and confidentiality. The research project was found not to raise any ethical issues and formally accepted. All research was collected, analysed and presented as honest and open to scrutiny.

Conclusion

This chapter has set out a methodology which allowed for evidence to be gathered and generated for analysis. Data drawn from the research sits within a qualitative framework where perspectives are subjective and meaningful. Such an approach generates rich data which endeavours to answer the ‘how’ questions (the processes involved) and the ‘why’ questions (the circumstances and context at play) of the impact of collecting new media art on the two regional case study museums in question.

A thematic analysis of the data uncovered patterns, emerging themes and categories where comparisons could be made between the overarching themes and sub-themes and the relationships between them. The significance of these relationships will be further discussed in Chapters 5-7. An important consideration for this research has been the building of a robust conceptual framework. And, it is to this – specifically the use of the Congruence Model – that our discussion now turns to.

CHAPTER 4 – Theoretical Framework: *Congruence Model*

Introduction

This chapter establishes the theoretical framework which will shape the research. This framework will help us understand the four major components (task, structure, people and culture) in the two regional case study museums. Specifically, these components will be assessed to determine to what extent they are being reshaped or redefined as a result of collecting new media art. Thus, the Congruence Model is a tool to evaluate how congruent the four major components are in each museum.

The theoretical approach which guides the research is chosen from Nadler and Tushman's '*Congruence Model of Organizational Behavior*' which suggests that the alignment, or congruence, between organisational strategy and four major components or organisational building blocks - 1) critical tasks/workflows, 2) formal organisational arrangements/structure, 3) people/human resources, and 4) informal organisational arrangements/culture - are key to organisational success and effectiveness (Tushman and O'Reilly 2002: 58). Whilst this model has been used in the for-profit business sector I argue that it can also be a valuable tool within museums.

The model provides a lens in which to uncover how the case study museums are operating and how the impact of collecting new media art might be reshaping them. Additionally, Handy's use of organisational theory and organisational culture will be investigated in the case studies to learn how the theory of organisations impacts on their functioning and the relationships between museum staff. Handy's theory will be coupled with the Congruence Model to gauge whether the museums are being redefined and reshaped through their organisational structure, organisational culture and leadership.

Hence, the museums can be evaluated to assess how effective they are. Therefore, the Congruence Model and Handy's theory can be used concurrently to uncover how the museums are being redefined, and if so, in what ways and why.

This chapter will first outline and qualify what other theoretical frameworks were considered and explain the usefulness of the Congruence Model for the case studies. Next, I will set out the steps taken in order to use the model, how it works, how to determine organisational 'fit', and, how to evaluate congruence or alignment within the organisation. This will be illustrated through the pilot study research at Glasgow's Gallery of Modern Art (GOMA). The usefulness and drawbacks of the model for the research project will also be set out.

Theoretical approaches considered

Considerable research into numerous theoretical approaches was undertaken to determine which theory would be best suited to answering the research question:

- 1) How does collecting new media art change the organisational shape/structure of the museum?
- 2) What is collecting new media art doing to the organisation in terms of:
(a) workflow, (b) skills sets/expertise, (c) decision-making process, (d) organisational culture and (e) overall impact on the museum (including leadership)?
- 3) Why do these changes take place?

At the beginning of my research project the APG panel recommended reading work by Chun Wei Choo and Etienne Wenger as possible theoretical approaches. Choo's book *The Knowing Organization* considers how organisations use information to construct meaning, create knowledge and make decisions, where, organisational knowledge comprises tacit knowledge, explicit knowledge and cultural knowledge. Whilst Choo emphasises the importance of cultural knowledge as shared beliefs, norms, and values

(1998: 112), it was unclear how this theoretical approach could be practically applied to serve the focus of my research. Wenger's research sets out a theory on 'learning as social participation' (Wenger 1998: 4). The social theory of learning sets out elements which are integrated, i.e. a process of learning and knowing. The components form a concept called 'community of practice' which we exercise everyday (often unknowingly), for example, at home, in the office, at a sports club etc. In relation to organisations, Wenger suggests that organisations should believe in staff so that they can contribute to the organisation's goals by participating 'inventively in practices that can never be fully captured by institutionalized process' (ibid.: 10). Organisations should, then, be places where staff can develop these practices and value the work of 'community building'. This will result in staff taking actions and making 'decisions that fully engage their own knowledgeability' (ibid.: 10). Whilst this theory is interesting, I note that Handy talks about the importance of organisational culture and how style of leadership can, together, facilitate action and decision-making which uses staff participation to foster change. In addition, Janes promotes the system of 'self-organisation' where teams work together on achieving organisational effectiveness. Therefore, Handy's theory of organisations and management of change which takes account of organisational culture is more suited, I believe, to the theoretical framework for this research.

Theories ranging from grounded theory to social constructionism and from action research to post modernism were investigated. Following discussion with my second supervisor (Parry) it was suggested that the following theories could be considered: organisation theory, media theory/studies, new media theory, and digital humanities.

In addition, change management theories were surveyed such as Robert Janes (museums adapting to change and meaning and role of museum), Richard Sandell (museum management and marketing), Charles Handy (understanding organisations – organisational culture, motivation, leadership, power, group-working), Kevin Moore (management in museums, organisational cultures, creative management), Michael Fopp (modern business management

techniques for practical application in galleries and museums), Christopher Mabey (HRM, managing people in organisations and strategic decision-making), Edgar Schein (organisational culture and leadership), Colin Carnall (managing change in organisations), and Stephen Weil (rethinking the museum, purpose and function of a museum, pursuit of excellence). This diverse range of literature proved extremely useful in determining the direction of the research and, in particular, providing greater focus on those aspects of collecting new media art that were more pertinent to the research question. Thus, work by Handy, Janes and Fopp occur throughout the analysis chapters (5-7) as they set out approaches to the changing nature of the museum and organisational culture and leadership in particular. It was whilst reading these theories on change management that I encountered the Congruence Model by Nadler and Tushman. Through this model I determined that it would be most beneficial to the research alongside the theories of Janes, Handy and Fopp. This Congruence Model has been used in the for-profit business environment, but, I suggest, this is the first use of the model in a museum context. Whilst this model has been most apposite for the research project, it did, highlight problems which, I argue, the model did not take into account such as leadership style and staff agency and ground-up change.

Exploration of change management theories were considered with Professor Burrell (School of Management, University of Leicester). In particular, 'skunk works' was examined as a potential theoretical framework. In the effort to keep up with smaller, more nimble competitors, large high-technology companies are increasingly turning to skunk works-small groups of scientists, engineers and other personnel who tackle specific problems and try to commercialise the solutions. For instance, skunk works is the dynamism behind Microsoft with irreverent groups of people making change at the coalface. It is tolerant of innovation and individualism with a bottom-up and informal approach to change. This approach was examined however it is more relevant, I assert, to industry and production companies including aerospace and high-technology corporations.

Other theories such as Japanese teamwork 'Ringi' (Delbridge 1998), and re-engineering the organisation (Hammer and Champy 1993) were researched, yet, they are more focused on contemporary manufacturing environments and lean production, something which museums do not undertake. Additionally, reading on organisational change and development was considered (Morgan 1988, Kanter 1983, Boddy and Buchanan 1983, Brunsson and Olsen 1993, Bach and Kessler 2012), however, the literature was primarily focused on employee relations for targeted change, and major reform within large public organisations such as the NHS, BBC. I was keen to investigate how collecting new media art impacts (if at all) the museum and, specifically, the components which all organisations share, i.e. staff, task, organisational structure and organisation culture. Therefore, such theories were very narrow and focused on particular areas which did not facilitate investigation for my research.

Managing knowledge work and innovation (Newell, Robertson, Scarbrough, Swan 2009) sets out to illustrate that knowledge work depends primarily on the behaviours, attitudes and motivations of those who undertake and manage it. It considers factors such as knowledge creation and teamworking, approaches to managing knowledge work and knowledge intensive organisations. The term 'knowledge work' refers to professional work such as accountancy, legal work as well as consultancy and public relations (2009: 24). In such environments, knowledge acts as the main input into the work and often involves the creation of new knowledge or the application of existing knowledge in new ways (ibid.: 24). The research by Newell et al. provides a useful lens in which to understand knowledge work in the 21st century and how to provide an enabling context that supports the processes and practices of applying knowledge for specific tasks and purposes. This process of developing enabling contexts through organisational culture, structures and collaboration are particularly helpful in my research project. Specifically, the emphasis on collecting new media illustrates the need for collaborative practice and sharing expertise across the organisation and beyond and the need for knowledge workers (in my research museum professionals) to have autonomy in their work (often characterised by creativity and problem-solving) and ways of working which encourage self-organised teams and minimal hierarchy (ibid.: 36). Hence, the

characteristics associated with more flexible forms of organising highlight a shift to more agile ways of organising and this is clearly demonstrated in my research. Whilst this knowledge work approach is valuable to my research, it does not delve into the organisational components which are intricately interconnected such as inputs, strategy, leadership and decision-making which emerged from the case study analysis. Nonetheless, the literature does indicate that there is a shift in the management of such knowledge intensive organisations and this has been evidenced in my research.

Finally, reading around the theories and approaches of Cook/Graham, Gere and Ride in relation to new media art were studied. Literature focused on curation and exhibiting strategies, art practice in a digital culture, and new collecting, but, they did not, I suggest, consider critically the impact collecting new media art has on the museum through its institutional lens. Nevertheless, examination and reflection of these theories enabled me to build a larger picture of this field of inquiry and to identify a gap in the literature.

The Congruence Model of Organizational Behavior

Nadler and Tushman set out an integrative model of managing organisational change. This approach is based on a *Congruence Model of organizational behavior* which views the organisation as an 'interdependent set of elements including tasks, individuals, formal organizational arrangements, and the informal organization' (Nadler, 1981). In relation to museums and, in particular, the two regional case studies undertaken, the model suggests that the four major components of any organisation (outlined above) are intricately connected and need to be in alignment for the organisation to be effective and successful.

The heart of the model is the transformation process which draws upon the inputs (environment, resources and history) and strategy to produce outputs (policy outcomes, performance of units, and performance of people) to examine how well it performs and how effective it is (Wyman 2003: 7-8). The inputs and strategy have been outlined in Chapter 2. In order to achieve the necessary outputs, the four major components (critical tasks, formal structure, people and culture) need to be in alignment.

The relationship between these four components is the basic dynamic of the Congruence Model which ultimately seeks balance or 'fit'. Consequently, the model considers each organisation as a unique case and therefore the organisational effectiveness is determined from a 'contingent' approach, that is, there is no one size fits all approach. Thus, there is not one best organisational structure or organisational culture, for instance.

How the Congruence Model works

The organisation is composed of interdependent parts, so, if there is a change in one part it will result in changes to other parts of the system. Consequently, organisations seek equilibrium and the Congruence Model suggests that the basic framework is this relationship between the interdependent parts. The Congruence Model is a tool to evaluate how congruent the major components are. Thus, organisations that have problems with effectiveness due to organisational factors will identify problems of 'poor fit' or lack of congruence amongst four major components (Nadler in Mabey and Mayon-White 1993: 86).

The Congruence Model sets out to examine the inputs coming into the organisation and how these inputs are transformed by the organisation's strategy and four major components – the people, the task, the culture and the formal structure. The model considers the major inputs into the organisation which includes the environment, the resources at its disposal and the history of the organisation. These three have been detailed in Chapter 2 but are now considered briefly in turn here. First the environment – every organisation 'exists within – and is influenced by – a larger environment, which includes people, other organizations, social and economic forces, and legal constraints' (Wyman 2003: 5). As a result, the environment presents constraints, demands and opportunities for every organisation. Second, every organisation has resources, assets such as human resources, information, technology and capital; it is important to take account of the extent to which those resources are fixed, or can be flexibly reconfigured. Third, the history of the organisation takes into account the major phases of development in the life of the organisation. History is significant in determining the input in terms of the impact of strategic decisions, acts of key leaders, core values and mission (ibid.: 5).

The most significant input is the strategy which sets out the key decisions to match the organisation's resources to its environment. This will include public policy objectives, the organisation's priorities and strategic control for non-profit organisations (including museums). The environment, resources, history and

strategy inputs are part of the transformation process which impacts on the organisation and determines to what degree the organisation is successful.

Transformation of inputs, strategy and the four major components produces outputs. Outputs are measured in three ways: the organisation's performance (job creation, community impact, service outcomes), the group performance (performance and behaviour in various departments and teams within the organisation) and individual behaviour (performance of people to carry out the tasks of the organisation) which, ultimately, contribute to the organisation's performance (ibid.: 7). Therefore, the inputs coming into the organisation plus the outputs should balance to provide 'fit' or congruence within the organisation. According to Wyman, the challenge then is to guarantee that, the design of the organisation is configured in the most appropriate way to enable it to create outputs projected by the strategy. If that is not the case, then organisational performance is not aligned and needs to be re-assessed and reframed (ibid.: 8).

Congruence Model of Organizations

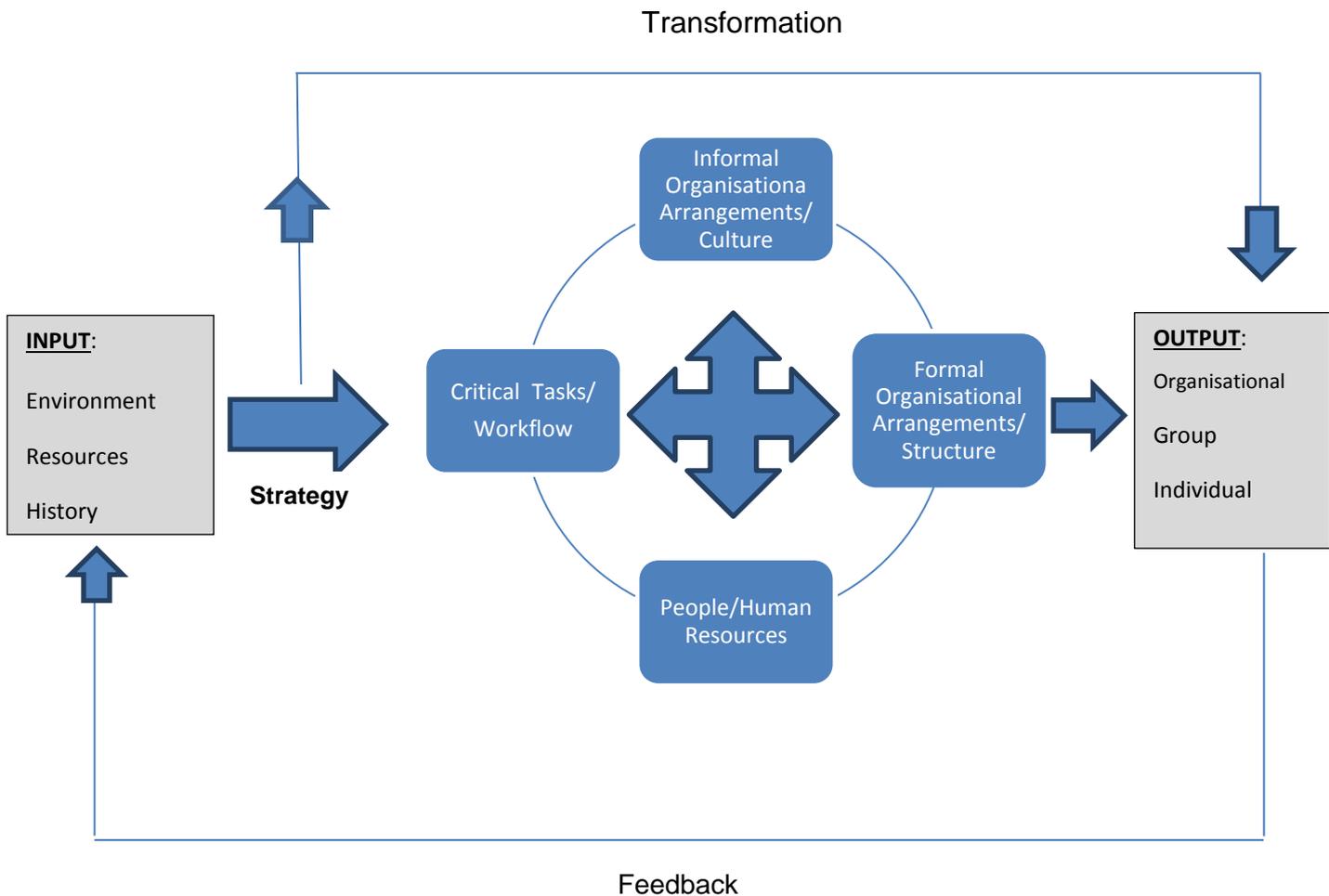


Figure 4.1 Congruence Model of Organizational Behavior
(Nadler and Tushman)

The Congruence Model above conceives of the organisation as being composed of four major components – 1) *Critical Tasks/Workflow* (work to be done), 2) *Formal organisational arrangements/Structure* (organisational structure, reporting systems), 3) *People/human resources* (who will perform the key tasks), and 4) *Informal organisational arrangements/Culture* (the culture consists of norms and values, power and influence and patterns of communication within the organisation).

The relationship between these four major components is the basic dynamic of the Congruence Model which naturally seeks balance or 'fit'. Nadler states that

'organizations will be most effective when their major components are congruent with each other' (Nadler 1993: 88). Accordingly, the organisation's performance rests upon the alignment or 'fit' of the four major components (Wyman 2003: 9).

The *work* (critical tasks and workflow) is the activity which is undertaken by the staff to further the organisation's strategy. In this regard, it is important to identify the nature of the tasks to be performed, anticipated workflow patterns and the knowledge or skills of the worker (ibid.: 8). The critical tasks which are most likely to be found in museums include: curation, documentation, interpretation, care of collections, exhibition as well as administration, personnel, finance, publicity and education/outreach. Each manager will analyse the tasks and workflows within his/her unit to identify how the tasks and workflows with other interdependent areas and will ask whether these tasks help achieve strategic goals (Tushman and O'Reilly 2002: 78-79). The workflows within each unit/department are examined to determine who does what and with whom in order to accomplish the task. Such examination closely looks at the workflow or interdependence among component tasks within and among units (ibid.: 80).

Work on a project or programme can be accomplished in one of two ways. On the one hand, within museums, pooled interdependence can be seen where component tasks have no linkage to one another (each subunit carries out its own critical tasks). For instance, documentation of artworks can be inputted by a museum professional onto a data management system without having any connection with other units (e.g. publicity/marketing or finance). On the other hand, reciprocal interdependence can be found where each component task is inherently linked to other tasks (the completion of one task is dependent not only on the preceding task but those that follow). Such interdependence depends on complex feedback loops and requires teamwork, trust and collaboration because the task to be achieved must be accomplished mutually (ibid.: 81). This is perhaps most evident with temporary exhibitions where many units or people come together to ensure that the exhibition is publicised widely, installed and interpreted appropriately, and audiences can engage and learn via

education and outreach programmes. Many professionals need to be involved in successfully developing an exhibition.

People/human resources are central to the organisation in that they are responsible for carrying out the critical tasks (work) to be performed. Scrutinising human resources involves examining people's knowledge and skills and identifying their perceptions and expectations about their relationship within the organisation. Furthermore, the manager must assess the degree to which employees at all levels are aligned with the critical tasks and work processes and determine whether they have the necessary skills, motivation and abilities to undertake the work (ibid.: 83). If staff are not competent in their work then there will be incongruence in the organisation. Hence, examining human resources involves assessing the competencies of staff, what motivates them, their demographics (how long they have worked together and whether there are any differences in ages and backgrounds which may affect group dynamics), and the cultural mix (whether there is a broad diversity of national and cultural backgrounds within the organisation or is it, instead, quite narrow?). All of this is necessary if one wishes to evaluate how congruent people are with the critical tasks and work processes.

The Congruence Model proposes that every organisation is comprised of its *formal structure*, which includes the *formal organisational arrangements* such as the hierarchies and divisions within the organisation, roles, procedures, systems and processes in place to enable people to undertake their critical tasks in order to accomplish the strategic objectives. There is no optimal organisational structure, but, it nevertheless has a direct bearing on the organisation's performance. In formal hierarchical structures, senior management have the greatest control over formal organisational arrangements whilst, middle management control formal procedures such as promotion, job design and sub-unit organisational design (ibid.: 87). Choice of formal structure will impact on both allocation of human resources and the informal organisational arrangements/culture. The formal structure should be assessed to determine to what extent the formal arrangements (hierarchies, roles, procedures and systems) are congruent with the accomplishment of critical tasks.

One of the most intangible properties of an organisation is its *informal organisational arrangements/culture*, yet, it is one of the most powerful forces within an organisation. It is neither tangible nor easily grasped, but, it nonetheless shapes how people interact and carry out their work. Such 'unwritten guidelines ... exert a powerful influence on people's collective and individual behavior' (Wyman 2003: 9) and encompasses the values, beliefs and political relationships which are implicitly understood by the workers. Significantly, culture can facilitate innovation but also inhibit it. Thus, organisations which share widely held norms and values will indicate both consistency of attitude but also behaviour (Tushman and O'Reilly 2002: 93). Informal patterns of communication within and across the organisation reveal details about the informal social networks and alludes to where the distribution of power resides within the organisation (ibid.: 94). When assessing congruence within any organisation it is important to consider how the communication networks align with the task requirements. An organisation cannot pursue its strategy and reach its goals unless its core values and informal social networks (communication) are strong and congruent with each other. Tushman and O'Reilly point out that 'it is the social control system [i.e. people and culture] that may hold the key to the effective management of innovation and change' (ibid.: 98).

Five Steps to use the model and complete a Congruence Analysis

Five steps are necessary within the Congruence Model to complete a congruence analysis. Once a gap has been identified, the next stage will be to diagnose the cause of the gap, or, 'lack of fit'. I will first explain the steps briefly and then use them as an example of how they were employed in the pilot study at GOMA (Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow).

Step One involves identifying the unit's or department's crucial performance or opportunity gaps. Performance gaps in the unit may include lack of innovation by staff or high staff turnover. In contrast, opportunity gaps could comprise innovative ways of working or building a stronger organisational culture. This step is important in identifying where the unit or organisation can improve on performance and exploit opportunities which would make the organisation more effective.

Step Two describes, in detail, the critical tasks and work processes within each unit in order to gauge the level of integration and interdependence within the organisation's system. In addition, the breadth and depth of 'integration is a critical determinant of the skills, structure, and culture required for successful execution of the strategy' (Tushman and O'Reilly 2002: 62). Critical tasks and workflows are made up of component tasks and the manager needs to define these in order to assess how they meet the strategic goals of the organisation. The manager must also examine how work flows among these component tasks and with other interdependent areas. Workflows or interdependencies among component tasks within and among units identify 'who has to do what and with whom' to accomplish the task (ibid.: 79, 80). For this research project, this means understanding the work flows between units, for example, between curatorial and staff in exhibition, education, IT, legal, marketing and conservation units. According to Tushman and O'Reilly, the interdependencies include: pooled, sequential and reciprocal. Each type of interdependency requires different formal organisational, informal or cultural, and human resource capabilities (ibid.: 80). This will be explored in the analysis Chapters 5-7.

Step Three sets out to check for organisational congruence. Once the critical tasks and work processes have been identified the remaining three major components - formal organisational structure, people/human resources, and culture/informal organisation - need to be tested to assess whether these three components are facilitating the accomplishment of the critical tasks. Such examination should systematically describe each component and then assess the alignment of the components with the critical tasks. The formal organisational structure should be examined to determine whether it is aligned with the tasks to be carried out. In other words, does the 'structure facilitate the accomplishment of both the component tasks and their required integration?' (ibid.: 63). Hence, a heavily tiered organisation may display a slow response to changes in its environment and may, as a result, be more costly in terms of coordination. Moreover, rigid job specifications are likely to result in overstaffing and slow response to changing inputs (environment, resources and strategy). This will, in turn, impede the performance and effectiveness of the organisation.

Following the review of the formal structure with the critical tasks the congruence analysis between critical tasks and people/human resources should be undertaken. Therefore, the skills sets, motivations and commitment of the workforce need to be congruent with the tasks to be achieved. This process will facilitate decisions as to whether staff requires additional skills through training and whether new staff should be brought in.

The final stage of Step Three involves an assessment of the informal organisational arrangements/culture with critical tasks. Does the culture foster innovation and creativity? If there are any factors which may hinder the execution of tasks then the culture should be carefully examined, and if necessary, appropriate steps should be taken to make the culture coherent. For example, the appraisal may discover that staff are unwilling or unable to take initiative because the structure creates boundaries and territories which makes them cautious of 'stepping on other people's toes'. Conversely, staff who are encouraged to take ownership and who are empowered to take part in decision-making will be motivated and this will facilitate cross-functional and collaborative ways of working.

Step Four develops solutions and corrective action once core inconsistencies have been identified. Thus, targeted action can be brought to bear in the unit or department, and across the organisation, to enable it to perform more effectively. This may include, for example, identifying that the skills needed to perform certain critical tasks are lacking. This will be followed by a decision to undertake additional training or to recruit new staff to undertake the tasks. Or, the formal organisational arrangements/structure could, on examination, be seen to be too top-heavy which would hamper communication and innovation within the organisation. Once this gap has been remedied, the organisation can be re-configured to create a flatter and more integrated management structure. The process of identifying performance gaps, specifying the critical tasks to be accomplished and assessing the congruence between critical tasks, people/human resources, the formal organisation/structure and informal organisation/culture will, depending on the diagnosis, facilitate targeted action to bring any inconsistencies into alignment (Tushman and O'Reilly 2002: 69).

Finally, Step Five is a process of continuous monitoring and ongoing readjustment to secure congruence of each unit. This process demands observing the response to, and learning from, each targeted action once it has been initiated. This process of observation and learning is continual and fluid. Constant analysis and identifying gaps and opportunities are instrumental in securing long-term organisational effectiveness.

The Concept of Fit – determining degree of fit and assessing congruence

Once the data for all four major components (building blocks) have been examined (critical tasks, people/human resources, informal structure/culture and formal organisation/structure), we can begin to determine the fit between them and evaluate whether the ‘needs, demands, goals, and structure of each component are aligned with the others’ (Tushman and O’Reilly 2002: 71). The following table lists the full set of congruence relationships among the four major organisational components.

Fit	Issues
People/Formal Organisation	How are individual needs met by the organisational arrangements? Are individuals motivated to accomplish critical tasks? Do individuals have clear perceptions of organisational structures?
People/Culture	How are individual needs met by the informal organisation?
Formal Organisation/Culture	Are the goals, rewards and structures of the culture consistent with those of the formal organisation?
Critical Tasks/People	Do individuals have the skills and abilities to meet task demands? How are individual needs met by the task?
Critical Tasks/Formal Organisation	Are formal organisational arrangements adequate to meet the demands of the task? Do they motivate behaviour that is consistent with task demands?
Critical Tasks/Culture	Does the culture facilitate task performance? Does it help meet the demands of the task?

Figure 4.2 Concept of Fit – Relationships (Nadler and Tushman)

Whilst each relationship is important, the three relating to aligning or realigning organisational components to achieve the critical tasks are pivotal (highlighted in bold above). Hence, a close examination of the relationships between *task-formal organisation*; *task-people*; and *task-culture* will enable us to identify the arrangements that are most appropriate for each organisation. A figure which sets out these pivotal relationships are shown pictorially below (they will each appear in the respective analysis chapters to follow):

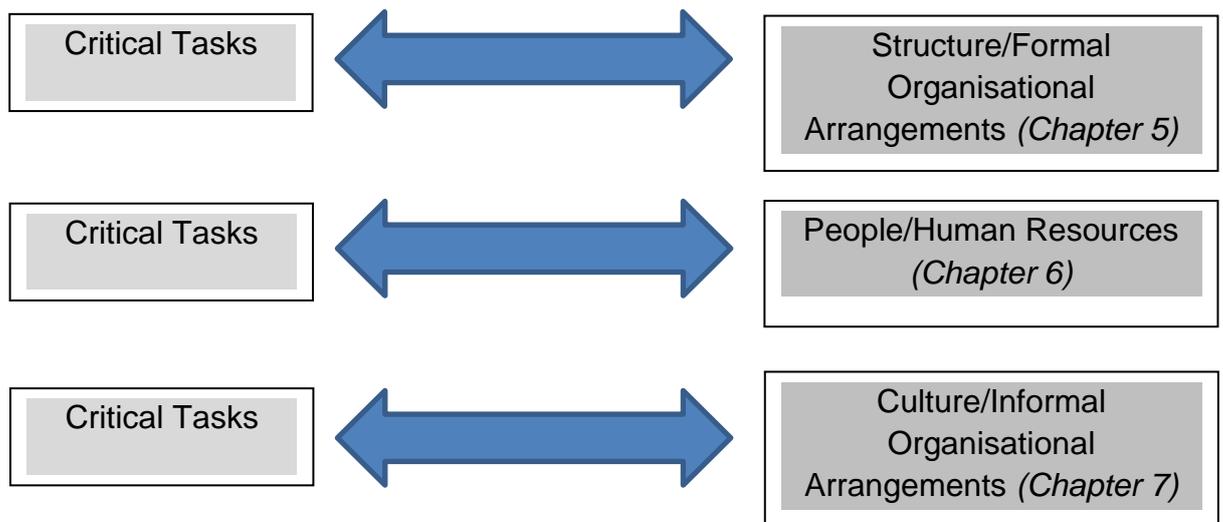


Figure 4.3 Concept of Fit – organisational components

Thus, an examination of the congruence between *task-people*, enables us to determine the extent to which skills, competencies and motives of human resources fit with the task to be accomplished. When the skills, knowledge and aptitude of the people 'match the job requirements of the work at hand, you can reasonably expect a relatively high degree of performance' (Wyman 2003: 9).

Similarly, an examination of the relationship between the *task-formal organisation* will identify the extent to which organisational arrangements fit with task requirements. If the organisation is highly structured and hierarchical, then innovation, integration and interdependence across functions might not be strong and may require new ways of working, such as teamwork, agility and adaptability.

Finally, an examination of the congruence between *task-culture* determines to what extent the unit's culture fits with the tasks to be accomplished. Therefore, if a performance gap exists between the informal organisation (how things are done and why) and the task to be achieved, then, this will need to be addressed.

The model can be employed to assess the fit between the critical tasks and the organisational structure (formal organisational arrangements), the culture (informal organisation) and people/human resources in museums collecting new media art. Hence, this thesis examines the congruence between the critical tasks/workflow with people/human resources; critical tasks/workflow with formal organisational arrangements; and critical tasks/workflow with culture/informal organisation to determine the impact collecting new media art has on the two regional case study museums. Assessment of the organisational impact collecting new media art has, will in turn, indicate any incongruence amongst these components, if any.

Usefulness of Model for PhD project

Copyright permissions have been granted by Nadler and Tushman to use this model for my research (Nadler, Tushman, 2012). The Congruence Model is a useful way of looking critically at organisations to identify any gaps or opportunities in its performance (Wyman 2003: 13). Thus, the model proved to be effective and useful in revealing potential problems or opportunities as a result of collecting new media art. For example, the model highlighted key areas where the museum adapted and reconfigured new ways of working (see Chapter 5 for detailed discussion).

Drawbacks/gaps of model for PhD project

Although it is recognised that both the Congruence Model and Handy's theories are beneficial to the research process, it is acknowledged that some of the case study findings brought up many issues which could not be easily fitted into the Congruence Model. As a result, the case study findings required new ways of engaging with the Congruence Model. New ways of engaging with the model involved modifying the model to take account of the specificities of the two case study museums. For instance, the model examines inputs and strategy and the transformation process on the four major components to produce an organisation's outputs. However, the museums under investigation do not operate like commercial corporations where revenues, profits, shareholder return or production of goods is paramount to the organisation's success. Outputs, I suggest, for the two regional case study museums comprise outreach programmes, exhibitions, educational programmes, community impact and strategic outcomes set out by the governing body. Thus, output is considered in terms of services provided (it is recognised however that revenue from the shop and/or café is generated). Output, according to Wyman, 'describes what the organization produces – how it performs, and how effective it is' (2003: 7).

Perhaps a criticism of the model is that it is mechanistic – it looks at the organisation from a top-down, managerial and bureaucratic perspective (Burrell 2012). As a consequence, it does not deal with bottom-up working or

staff agency (see Chapter 7 for discussion). It was evident from the fieldwork that both staff agency and informal leadership were recurring themes which arose in both case studies. It can be argued that the model is conservative, but, nonetheless, a valuable tool. Despite being designed as a model for profit-making businesses, it does offer a way of assessing how collecting new media art is impacting on the task to be completed, the people undertaking the work, the culture of the museum and the organisational structure.

The Congruence Model begins with Step One. This step identifies the unit's performance or opportunity gaps. However, this research set out to uncover if indeed there was a gap or opportunity for the case study museums. The gaps and opportunities, I argue, could not be identified until Step Three (which checks for organisational congruence). Therefore, it would appear that Step One is premature. Instead, Steps Two (detailing critical tasks) and Three (undertaking a congruence analysis) should perhaps be carried out in unison to first investigate any gaps or opportunities in the institution and then Step Four could be considered to take correction action.

Handy: understanding organisations

In this research project Handy's theories on organisational structure and culture are used to scrutinise the structure and culture within each case study in order to determine the extent to which they fit. As a consequence, I shall be using the Congruence Model coupled with Handy's theory to see how congruent each museum is and identify any performance gaps or potential opportunities.

Handy emphasises that each organisation and each part of the organisation have 'a culture, and a structure and systems appropriate to that culture' (1993:209). Handy identifies four types of 'tribes' or organisational structures/cultures. The Tribes are: the Club (or Power) Tribe, the Role Tribe, the Task Tribe and the Person Tribe. For the purposes of my research I will be focussing on the Role Tribe and the Task Tribe as these are most often to be found in museums.

The **Role Tribe** is found in functional or hierarchical organisations with job titles and roles joined together in a logical manner in the organisational chart. In such organisations we see 'role piled on role, and responsibility linked to responsibility', that is, a bureaucracy (Handy 1990: 148). This type of organisation is one in which change is infrequent and there is a strong attachment to routine, predictability and certainty. Government offices and administrative organisations are notable examples, but, museums often sit within this tribe too.

The **Task Tribe** is one where a group or team of talents and resources is applied to a problem, task or project. This facilitates work which is not standardised but once the work is completed the group can be disbanded or changed depending on the next project. Handy identifies this tribe with competent professionals who seek self-autonomy and the ability to share their skills and work on new challenges (ibid.: 50). Organisations which have a task tribe include advertising agencies, consultancy firms and surgical teams. Museums have tended to function organisationally as Role Tribes but it is becoming evident that many museums are utilising the Task Tribe for particular

projects or tasks which require a dynamic and responsive team of professionals to share skills and work together to find a solution to a problem (Moore 1994, 1997; Fopp 1997). Such taskforces bloom 'where speed of reaction, integration, sensitivity and creativity are more important than depth of specialisation' (Fopp 1997: 165).

The museums selected for case studies were examined to determine what kind of organisational structure they inhabit (examined in detail in Chapter 5), and the type of culture they exhibit (set out in Chapter 7). This analysis, in turn, sheds light on the research question how collecting new media art is, perhaps, in some way, changing how the museum is being structured. If organisational changes are taking place it will be necessary to assess whether such change is congruent with the four major components in the museum.

How the Congruence Model Is Employed for Research: an example - Pilot Study at GOMA (Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow), 2012

The pilot study is used to show how the Congruence Model and Handy's theory are employed. This will, in turn, facilitate a clearer understanding of the purpose of the model in highlighting gaps in the organisation which need to be addressed and improved. The main findings of the pilot study will be explored to consider organisational fit and alignment. The objective is, therefore, to establish whether any components need to be reassessed and re-aligned to enhance organisational performance (Wyman 2003: 3). The two main case studies themselves will be analysed and assessed using the Congruence Model and discussed in detail in Chapters 5-7.

The Congruence Model requires that inputs (the environment in which the organisation operates, its history and resources) and the strategy (legislative mandate, objectives of organisation) are specified at the beginning of the assessment. Then, the assessment of congruence of the four major components can be undertaken. This section will carry out a congruence analysis of GoMA to determine, if there are any gaps or opportunities.

Inputs

1. *Environment* – the organisation exists within, and, is influenced by, a larger environment. This includes people, social and economic forces, government bodies and competitors. GOMA sits within a larger authority structure. Glasgow Life manages Glasgow Museums (which manages and oversees ten museums) which, in turn, manages GOMA. This present authority is responsible for over 3,000 staff across museums, libraries, sports clubs, leisure centres etc. A major restructure of Glasgow Life and Glasgow Museums was undertaken. As part of the restructure a 'service reform' to save money was instituted (over £10m over the next three years). GOMA had formed a Working Group to examine the Audiovisual and Installation, Conceptual and Ephemeral Art (AV/ICE) collections and this group will be considered within the complex structure it resides.

2. *Resources* – the organisation’s resources includes employees, capital, technology and information. Within GOMA, staff was not informed of how the restructuring would affect their jobs, and, there was a substantial degree of uncertainty. However, the success of the Art Fund International (AFI) £1m acquisitions fund and the UK acquisitions fund secured staff and the collection at GOMA. Nevertheless, it is recognised that the demands on staff and on the institution are high and that GOMA’s resources are stretched to capacity.

3. *History* – the organisation of today has been shaped by its past. Past developments which have had a notable impact include its strategic decisions, the behaviour of key leaders and evolution of its values and beliefs (Wyman 2003: 6). The history of GOMA reveals the importance of Julian Spalding, former head of Glasgow Museums. He had a great love for modern and contemporary art and founded GOMA in 1996. He was highly influential in acquiring key pieces for the collection. Spalding knew many artists and encouraged them to produce artworks for the gallery. GOMA Curator at the time of the research project, Sean McGlashan, points out that ‘GOMA would not be here right now if that director [Spalding] had not opened the gallery’ (McGlashan 2012). Mark O’Neill, who has a social history background, took over as Head of Museums from 1998 to 2005, and then Head of Arts and Museums from 2005 to 2010. O’Neill introduced socially engaged practices, social justice shows and human rights exhibitions (ibid.). Evidently, the gallery is shaped by its history and key leaders. Those who work in contemporary art are always working ‘with the new’ and GOMA thrives on newness, challenges and coming up with creative solutions to new problems (Hollows 2012).

Strategy

The strategy of an institution reflects its legislative mandate which, in turn, sets out its public policy objectives and priorities. Glasgow Life's '*Creative and Cultural Industries Strategy and Action Plan*' sets out to develop an international reputation for the city and to exploit international opportunities (Glasgow's Cultural Strategy 2006: 20). Its fundamental purpose is to support the city in its efforts to compete in the global economy (Glasgow's Cultural Strategy Executive Summary 2006: 1, 6). The vision of GOMA, for the next 20 years, is to build 'a world-class collection of contemporary visual art through the acquisition of important national and international works of art' (GoMA Collecting Policy (Revised 2008/09)).

Outputs

The output is the effectiveness of the organisation's performance consistent with the vision and strategy of the organisation and outputs include: goal achievement, use of resources, group performance and individual behaviour (Nadler in Mabey and Mayon-White 1993: 86).

Major Components

The heart of the model is the transformation process which draws upon the inputs (environment, resources and history) to produce outputs (impact, policy outcomes, performance of units and departments, and performance of people) (Wyman 2003: 7-8). To achieve the necessary outputs the four major components need to be in alignment. Each component is now discussed briefly as well as the relationship between each component to determine congruence or incongruence.

The Work

Organisational diagnosis begins by systematically describing the critical tasks and asking 'do these tasks help achieve our strategic goals?' (Tushman and O'Reilly 2002: 78). The critical tasks data is gathered within a manager's unit (what tasks does the unit perform?) and between this unit and other interdependent areas (are our tasks interdependent within and outside our organisation?) (ibid.: 78). The research carried out at GOMA illustrates that

each staff member had a core set of critical tasks which had to be accomplished alongside the challenges which emerged as the demands of its growing increasing AV/ICE collection became more and more acute. The paper conservator observed that this prompted and facilitated ‘collaborative decision-making because a lot of decisions concerning the new media and mixed media contemporary art couldn’t be made by me alone’ (Brown 2012). There was recognition that the tasks being carried out at that time were not sufficient to take account of this growing AV/ICE collection. Hence, staff members of GOMA and GMRC (Glasgow Museums Research Centre) came together to tackle the tasks of documenting, storing and caring for this collection. However, each staff member pointed out that this new set of tasks had, in effect, doubled the workload. They also noted that the foregoing developments lead to a more project based approach to collecting than was the case in the past.

The People

Given the critical tasks, do people have the necessary competencies needed to perform them (Tushman and O’Reilly 2002: 65)? The conservators (who initiated the idea of the Working Group) said that they learned a lot from these artworks and, moreover, learned from external sources (primarily Tate’s ‘New Media Department’). The staff on the Working Group came together from various backgrounds – curation, conservation, technical, documentation, access and learning (on occasion) and brought a wealth of knowledge and skills to managing the AV/ICE collection. Additionally, each member understood the need to learn from others’ expertise and to collaborate closely together in the Working Group. The coming together of these ‘very intelligent, passionate, considerate people’ ensured a strong group characterised by mutual respect, the sharing of ideas and working ‘side-ways’ in a collaborative way (Hollows 2012).

The Formal Organisation

The formal organisation consists of the formal structures, systems and processes designed to coordinate people in their performance of the work to be done. One question which should be asked is ‘does the current structure

facilitate the accomplishment of both the component tasks and their required integration' (Tushman and O'Reilly 2002: 63)? The formal arrangements at GOMA situate the museum in a linear and hierarchical institution which sits within a much larger organisational structure within Glasgow Life.

The organisational structure throughout is highly bureaucratic and jobs are clearly identified in a hierarchy with a line of authority and chain of command. Such a structure provides for specialisation i.e. individuals and departments are broken down into well-defined tasks (Fopp 1997: 138). Decision-making is often made at senior management level. All members of the Working Group expressed the view that the organisation is still very hierarchical and communication is 'top down' with little or no communication going upwards.

The reform which brought about the large-scale restructuring from Glasgow Life senior management means that 'it should enable us to work across the organisation much more rather than in vertical silos' (Brown 2012). Furthermore, the matrix structure within GOMA and elsewhere has been a 'hangover from being part of the Council' which was largely paternal and hierarchical (Hollows 2012). Some members of the Working Group were frustrated by the obvious hierarchy.

Fopp (1997: 13) points out that one of the criticisms of bureaucracy is its slowness and stifling of initiative. Within the Working Group it became clear that it could not have functioned within such strict hierarchical lines. Consequently, an alternative approach was adopted. This alternative hierarchy was more matrix and project working in nature. It was formed specifically to deal with the emerging issues which were becoming ever-present in relation to AV and ICE work. Formally, the Working Group does not sit anywhere in the organisational chart of GOMA or the larger hierarchical organisational structure. The Working Group exists and hovers outside the formal hierarchical structure. Within the pre-existing formal structures the Working Group could not have been accommodated because the structure was highly formalised and hierarchical. The issues which confronted the Working Group 'could not really be fitted into any of those existing structures' (Brown 2012). One of the benefits

of such a group is that it could be set up quickly in response to a need (ibid.: 142). This group brought together professionals from various departments with different skills with an evolving and organic nature.

The Working Group does not attach any importance to rank or role. Instead, it brings together the skills, experience of people who are able to work collaboratively and consensually around a problem. Not surprisingly there is no leader or manager of the Working Group and the hierarchy is flat and informal. There are no formal procedures or well-defined tasks. Instead, decisions are taken at group level and are consensual in nature (McGlashan 2012). The group members are democratic and respectful of one another and this, in turn, has facilitated a closer working relationship with open communication at its heart (Harman 2012).

The Informal Organisation

Co-existing alongside the formal organisational arrangements is the informal practices or organisational culture which encompasses the values, beliefs, and accepted behavioural norms of the individuals. This pattern can exert a powerful influence on individual and group behaviour. Within the Congruence Model the culture needs to be in alignment with the critical tasks/workflow (the work to be done). The organisational culture is, I argue, paramount to understanding how things are done and why they are done in particular ways.

The culture of an organisation can be difficult to define and identify but Handy suggests that certain organisations attract certain kinds of workers. In cultures which are strong people feel good about what they do and they share common values, beliefs and believe they are part of something which they take pride in. Handy identifies four organisational cultures: power, role, task and person. In the pilot study I considered briefly the Role and Task Culture as they are most often to be found in museums.

The role culture is often seen as bureaucratic in the sense that rules, procedures and standardisation are predominant. Such institutions, with a role tribe, are slow to change and they avoid risk-taking. Museums tend to fall into

this category although the 'efficiency of this type of culture depends on the rationality of the allocation of work and responsibility, rather than on the individual's personality' (Fopp 1997: 164). Such institutions rely on organisational charts, manuals, guidelines and forms because they are reliable, routine and efficient. Yet, as can be seen with the formation of the Working Group, no guidelines or rules were set down for the AV and ICE works being acquired for the collection. The innovation and cross-collaboration that were needed could not be found in the role culture.

The task culture is one which relies primarily on a project orientated approach. Such people are 'excited by what is new' and are team people (Handy 1990: 160). Problems can be tackled by a mix of talents and the environment is one of solidarity and equality. The taskforce encourages discussion and everyone has a contribution to make. Those working in such a culture thrive on experimentation, thinking 'outside the box', and being free to work in their own way. Evidently, the Working Group is a broad mix of talented professionals who, seeing a problem, work through open discussion and consensual decision-making to find innovative ways to look after AV and ICE works in the collection. Such taskforces bloom 'where speed of reaction, integration, sensitivity and creativity are more important than depth of specialisation' (Fopp 1997: 165). Members of the Working Group commented that there was greater communication across the services and by a 'duty of care' to the collection which had not been evident beforehand.

The Working Group is, I contend, a task culture sitting within a role structure/tribe, that is, a taskforce which is dynamic and proactive sitting within a large government bureaucracy. The people in the group share a sense of purpose and ownership of the role they are undertaking and decisions are taken consensually. Staff expressed a sense of empowerment and value within the Working Group. The size of the Working Group – it was relatively small - enabled the Working Group to adopt the task culture. According to Fopp, this culture is 'most in tune with current ideologies of change, adaption and individual freedom' (1997: 166).

The Concept of 'Fit' and Congruence

The fit amongst the four major components can be evaluated by determining the degree to which the demands, needs, structure and goals of each component are congruent with the others (Tushman and O'Reilly 2002: 71). Thus the tighter the fit between the four major components the greater the organisational performance will be. The analysis undertaken for the pilot study will now be assessed to determine how congruent the four major components are within GOMA.

First, the fit between critical tasks and the people involved should determine if the skills, abilities and motives of the available human resources fit with the task requirements. When the skills, aptitude and knowledge of the people match those of the job requirements we can expect a high degree of performance. The research, I argue, identifies a very good fit between the people on the Working Group and the task to be performed. The findings indicate that there was a high degree of congruence between the critical tasks and people/human resources. There was a high degree of performance because the skills, aptitude and knowledge of the people matched those required by the job.

The second determinant of congruence is the fit between critical tasks and organisational culture (informal arrangements). In what ways does the culture fit with the task requirements? I suggest that there was no performance gap because the people on the Working Group had a strong task culture which emphasised teamwork, initiative and collaborative problem-solving. These were exactly the qualities that were needed to ensure that the task in hand was carried out with great success. Therefore, the fit between the critical tasks and organisational culture was also in alignment.

Our analysis of the alignment between the critical tasks and the formal organisational arrangements revealed that the organisational arrangements did not always fit with the task which needed to be achieved. One must therefore consider the extent to which organisational arrangements fit with task requirements. The pilot study revealed that the formal structure was very

hierarchical; it did not create any opportunity to work across units, nor did it offer the chance to innovate or work flexibly. This led to the decision to set up an ad-hoc team. Such a flexible and open approach revealed a taskforce which was informal, egalitarian with consensual decision-making and adaptability at its core. The recognition of the need to form a Working Group specifically to tackle the challenges of collecting AV/ICE art indicates the need for a new operating structure which sat outside the existing hierarchical structure.

Evaluation

The Congruence Model is a useful way of looking critically at organisational performance as it provides a framework for identifying gaps in the organisations performance. If there is a performance gap in perhaps any two components e.g. between critical tasks and people/human resources (people do not have the right skills sets or experience to do the task required) then minor adjustments can be made. However, if there are bigger gaps between at least three main components then a major overhaul needs to be considered if significant problems for the effectiveness of the organisation are to be avoided in the longer term.

The final evaluation within the model is to uncover the output of the organisation i.e. how well it performs and how effective it is. The Working Group members have come together to find solutions to problems which presented as a result of collecting AV and ICE artworks. They have come from various backgrounds, nationalities, demographics, experience, gender and skills. This mixture of characteristics offered a dynamic, proactive and creative way of seeking solutions which would otherwise have remained hidden.

The Working Group as a unit within the overall system performed on an informal level which was autonomous, self-led and highly motivated. The performance of the unit has shown that it actively considers each new acquisition on a case-by-case basis and is resolute in considering, maintaining and preserving these works for the long-term.

Finally, this thesis proposes that the output, in terms of the total system is, yet to be determined. The Working Group has had some impact internally in the sense that outcomes from meetings feed into update meetings with the Gallery Manager and also move up the chain of command to senior management. This Working Group has worked under the radar for some years, but, now perhaps, following major restructuring, there is an opportunity for the organisation to utilise this style of working and foster the task culture to stimulate such creative and professional staff.

The pilot study revealed that collecting AV/ICE art demands that the museum critically assesses how it collects with greater awareness and scrutiny. The Working Group saw that the formal organisational arrangements were not suitable and set up a team to consider the problems and opportunities for the AV/ICE collection. They identified a problem which needed to be tackled and set about dealing with the issues outside the formal hierarchical structure. The members of the Working Group recognised a responsibility to the collection and found innovative ways of working across departments and sharing knowledge alongside consensual decision-making. Thus, the model proved to be very effective and helpful in revealing where potential problems may lie and, as a result, how to enhance organisational performance and effectiveness.

Conclusion

The Congruence Model has been set out and explored in this chapter. Although used as a tool within the for-profit sector, I have chosen this model as a framework in which to assess the impact collecting new media art has on the museum. Thus, the model assesses the congruence or alignment between four major components - the critical tasks, the people/human resources, the organisational structure and the organisational culture). Shaping these four major components is the inputs which includes the environment, the resources and the history of the organisation. In addition, the strategy and vision shapes the task to be achieved by the organisation.

A congruence analysis of GOMA, as a pilot study, was useful in determining where the four major components were strong and areas which could be improved and redefined (specifically the organisational structure). The Congruence Model, coupled with Handy's theories of organisational change and organisational culture, were useful in exploring the interrelationship between these four major components. The evaluation of the pilot study did raise the issue of leadership which appeared to be lacking in the Congruence Model.

In the analysis chapters to follow (please see Chapters 5-7) I will employ a congruence analysis on the two regional case study museums using Step Three and incorporate Handy's theory. The alignment of a) critical tasks and structure/formal organisation, b) critical tasks and people/human resources and c) critical tasks and culture/informal organisation will be assessed in each respective chapter to determine where potential gaps lie, and where future opportunities are. The congruence between critical tasks and formal organisational structure will be examined in Chapter 5 *New ways of organising*. The congruence of critical tasks with people/human resources will be explored in Chapter 6 *Collaboration inside and outside the museum* and the critical tasks and culture/informal organisation will be analysed in Chapter 7 *Staff Agency and Leadership*.

CHAPTER 5 – Findings: new ways of organising – the agile organisation

Introduction

I think the organisational structure is a mixture of formal and informal; it will always be inherently a little bit bureaucratic as a Council organisation, you are always going to bump into procedures which have to take place.

(S Fletcher, Harris Museum, 2012)

This chapter argues that the Harris Museum (UK) and the Van Abbemuseum (Netherlands) are adopting new ways of working where agile teams with a project-based approach were apparent. An emphasis on cross-disciplinary ways of working and a 'synergy' and focus on working in partnership with staff across the museum (Janes 2013a). Both these museums reside within a City Council organisational structure which is bureaucratic, where staff 'bump into procedures', but, they are also finding new ways of working which is more informal, cross-functional and agile.

The Congruence Model, set out in depth in Chapter 4, proposes five steps to analysing an organisation's congruence. This chapter examines the formal organisational arrangements to see whether the formal structure is aligned with the critical tasks to be carried out (Step Three of the Congruence Model). The *task-formal organisation* congruence, according to Nadler and Tushman, investigates to what extent do the formal organisational arrangements fit with task requirements? If the organisation is highly structured and hierarchical, then innovation, integration and interdependence across functions may be weak. New ways of working, such as teamwork, initiative and staff empowerment may need to be adopted to facilitate interdependence across functions.

The formal organisational arrangements comprising strategic grouping, linking mechanisms and formal reward and control systems will be outlined in this chapter. A diagnostic question to assess congruence between the critical tasks and the formal organisation (structure) will also be put forward to assess the degree to which the critical tasks are congruent with the formal structure for the two regional case studies.

First, the types of organisational structures to be found in museums will be presented. These range from hierarchies with formalisation and standardisation at their heart to the ad hoc or matrix structure which comprises an organic form with project teams and cross-disciplinary ways of working.

Second, the steps used to assess congruence of the organisation within the context of the Congruence Model will be examined. An analysis of the two case studies under investigation will determine whether the formal organisation is congruent with the achievement of the critical tasks. Such an assessment will illustrate how the organisation of each case study museum accommodates a structure which is both formal (bureaucratic) and informal (project-led). The structure in the Harris Museum and the Van Abbemuseum, is, I argue, one which exhibits flexibility and new ways of working which are responsive and agile. The significance, I suggest, is that a formal structure which supports teamwork and a cross-disciplinary style of working cultivates a more adaptive museum which is able to respond with agility both to the internal and external environment.

Organisational Shape / Structure

Every organisation, large or small, has a formal structure which determines the chain of command, the hierarchy, the tasks to be undertaken and the key decision-makers. Indeed, 'the formal structure of an organisation is its framework of roles and procedures' (Clegg, Kornberger and Pitsis 2009: 528). Management theorist Mintzberg points out that the consistency and coherence between organisational design or structure and the work to be done is key to success (ibid.: 551). Therefore, consistency between structure and task is paramount. Furthermore, those organisations whose structures are best suited to the task to be accomplished are said to have a 'good fit' (ibid.: 532).

A dominant theory of organisational design is contingency theory (ibid.: 528). Organisations have to deal with different contingencies and, how they are managed is manifested in their shape/structure. The contingencies of environment, size and technology are key factors in shaping an organisation and how it is managed. The external environment impacts on the kind of structure that an organisation adopts. For example, in an environment which is stable and predictable, highly bureaucratic organisations flourish: whereas innovative and dynamic organisations with flatter hierarchies thrive in uncertain and changeable situations. Museums have tended to exist in relatively stable environments where routinized tasks are accomplished without much accountability or scrutiny. However, today's museum is situated in an environment which is ever-changing and ambiguous; museums have to manage complex demands with fewer resources (financial and personnel). Consequently, the museum structure, I argue, reflects the need for flexibility and responsiveness so that it is able to engage with societal and political issues to facilitate civic engagement (Janes and Sandell 2007: 10).

Organisational theorist Charles Handy states that the 'size of an organisation has often proved to be the single most important variable in influencing a choice of structure or of culture' (Handy 1993: 192). Thus, the greater the size of the organisation the more need there is for formalisation and lines of authority. The more formalisation there is within the organisation the more we see a

hierarchical structure with functional units/departments where tasks are clearly designated and roles delineated.

The most recognisable and long-lasting form of organisation which has been adopted within the museum is the functional bureaucracy. This may, for example, be a national museum which is built in a pyramid shape where the top level comprises senior management. Next, the line managers sit below senior management and manage units or departments such as Collections Care, Conservation, Education and Outreach, and Operations. However, some museums are embracing and adopting a new approach to managing and working – the hybrid organisation which brings together some bureaucratic and hierarchical aspects but with a matrix structure as required (project teams overlaid on top of a bureaucracy).

This chapter now considers how the two regional case study museums' formal organisational structure is shaped, and, considers whether the structure is congruent with the critical tasks to be accomplished.

Functional Bureaucracy

The functional structure is most easily understood by means of an organisation chart (see below). Units such as departments are formed according to the professional function which must be performed by that department. For example, within museums there is often a formal structure by department which will encompass Collections Care (curators, conservators, registrars), Public Programmes/Visitor Services (exhibition, education and learning, marketing), and Administration/Operations (finance, personnel, security, press).

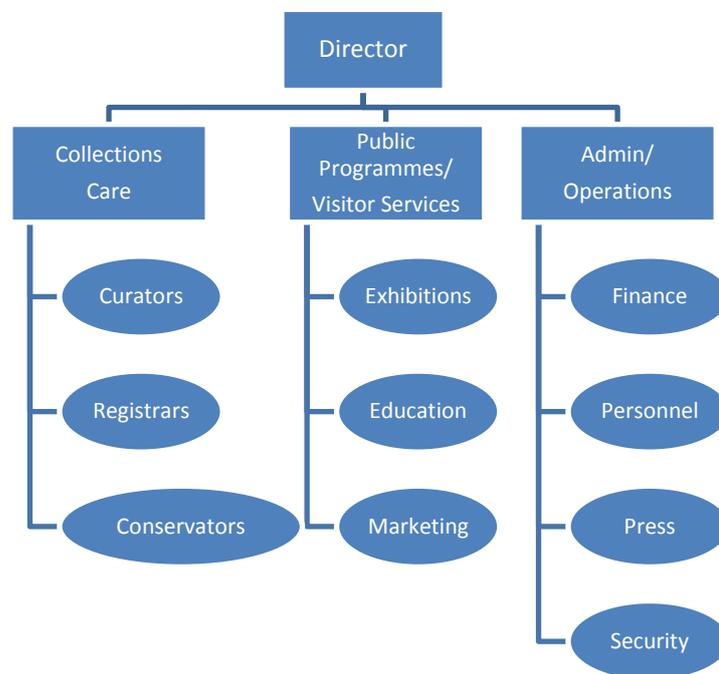


Figure 5.1 Functional bureaucracy – organisational chart

This structure tends to ‘attract and develop experts in each functional speciality’ (Davis, Weckler 1996: 29). The advantages associated with such functional specialisms are: it is easier to manage work within the group because line managers and staff share the same job-related knowledge; each group/department shares the same ‘language’; and each department shares and nurtures expertise. However, there are drawbacks to the functional structure: in order to complete a job more than one department will be required,

but coordination and communication between departments may be slow and inaccurate; and each department will have differing priorities so decision-making for staff may be limited (ibid.: 29-30).

Conventionally, the structure of most museums has tended to be one of bureaucracy. Museums have a mix of professionals with specialised knowledge and a number of support staff such as administration, personnel, finance and marketing. Jobs are arranged in a hierarchy with each member given clearly defined roles and authority. According to Fopp this type of structure is considered to be the most efficient way of organising and structuring (1997: 37). However, the criticism of the bureaucracy includes: it stifles initiative, follows rules rigidly, and is slow to respond due to overstaffing and numerous lines of decision-makers (ibid.: 138). The traditional professional bureaucracy can be found in hospitals, large consulting firms and universities where the environment demands highly trained staff to deliver their services. A certain degree of autonomy is evident but, alongside such expertise, there is support staff to enable the professionals to carry out their job.

A bureaucracy functions most visibly in large and complex organisations. As a consequence, it could be argued that innovation and agility are often slower to emerge due to routinized tasks and numerous lines of authority. Janes points out that the 'silo thing' is an issue in large and complex organisations such as museums. Whilst there needs to be some structure, Janes suggests that they can be minimised to a great degree. He comments:

I think museums are stuck in this corporate hierarchical model. I guess it is tradition, they are comfortable with it, and, there is still this worship of the 'lone CEO model' and the hierarchy. It is a hard nut to crack. The bigger the organisation the harder it would be (2013c).

Where an organisation faces change and uncertainty it must be able to respond without being bound by established procedures; this is especially the case in today's uncertain environment and tough economic times (Fopp 1997: 141). There is a 'need for a parallel structure that can be invoked when changes are

perceived to be necessary' so that certain aspects of a bureaucracy do not hinder the organisation (ibid.: 142). Such an approach has been shown in the Harris Museum and the Van Abbemuseum. This parallel structure is the adhocracy and elements of it can be integrated with museum bureaucracy to alleviate problems.

The Adhocracy

According to Fopp, the adhocracy is an organisational structure which emphasises flexibility, adaptability and responsiveness to new situations (1997: 143). An adhocracy tends to form in an ad hoc or organic fashion, i.e. there is no conscious development of structure hence it develops spontaneously. Adhocratic structures can be set up quickly to respond to a sudden need and can include temporary task forces in which 'membership will shift as needs and problems change' (ibid.: 142). Members may come from different departments/units with varying skills and experience. Rank and role are not important in the task force whereas the skills, experience and training 'will be the deciding factor as to their status within the group' (ibid.: 142). Power is equally distributed within the project team, and decision-making is consensual and democratic with a flexible approach to problem-solving. Task forces or project working exploits creativity and expertise of various specialists to work on a problem, a project or a task to accomplish (ibid.: 143). Fopp suggests that 'it is difficult for the museum structure to equate with a system where few rules and standardised procedures exist' – an ad hoc approach has limited procedures and rules are open for discussion (ibid.: 143).

The ad hoc approach was evident in the pilot study undertaken at GOMA as discussed in Chapter 4. An ad hoc organisation does not seek standardisation as core to its function (Clegg, Kornberger and Pitsis 2009: 553-554). It is therefore flexible, creative, adaptive and responsive to new situations. There is a tendency to organise towards flatter, less bureaucratised ways of working which are organic and flexible. Architectural practices, design companies, advertising agencies and creative think tanks are examples of an adhocracy.

At the heart of the adhocracy is the *matrix* structure. The horizontal structure of the matrix organisation has fewer levels of management and can be said to be 'flat' (Davis, Weckler 1996: 36). One of the most significant advantages of the matrix structure is that the resources (staff, finance, facilities) are utilised more flexibly and efficiently. For example, project teams may be superimposed on a functional/bureaucratic structure. An example can be seen below:

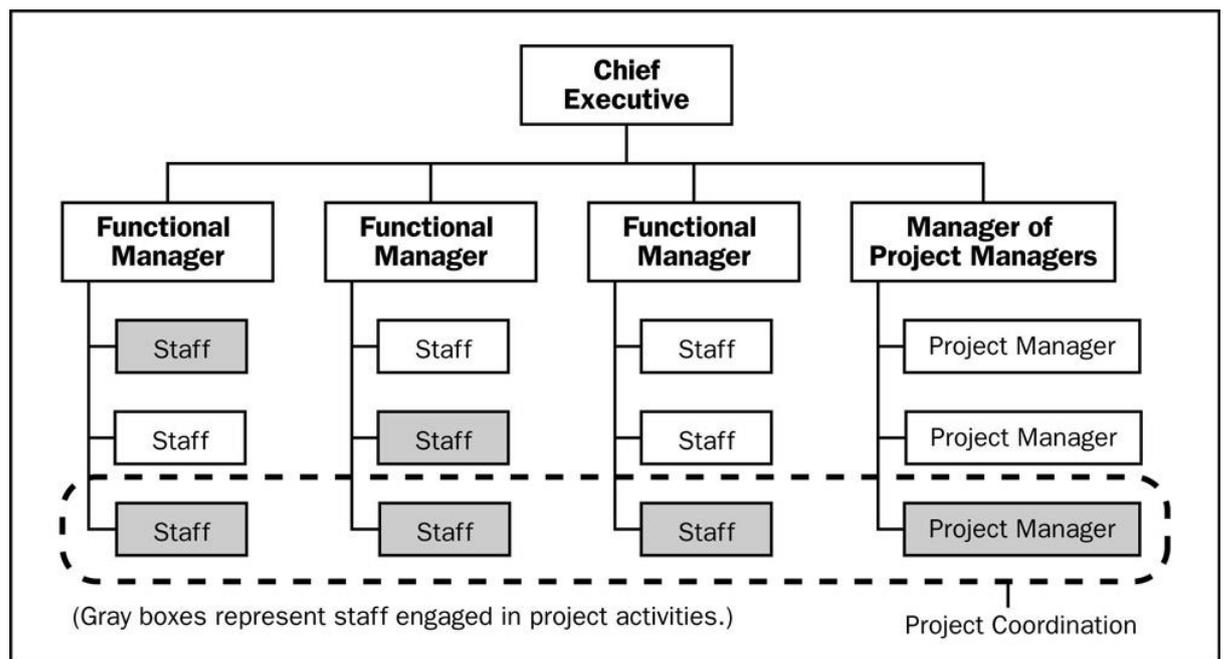


Figure 5.2 Matrix structure – organisational chart

Cross-functional teams are used in matrix organisations to accomplish projects. Such teams are beneficial in terms of the flexibility they afford and the input that can be sourced from staff across the organisation. Staff given the opportunity to work with other members of the organisation who hold a different sets of skills and experience builds upon organisational learning, knowledge sharing and innovation which is crucial when flexibility and responsiveness are required to tackle new challenges and opportunities.

Ultimately, the matrix structure enables the organisation to make full use of teams as necessary, but also holds on to technical expertise in critical functions (ibid.: 40). Teams promote self-management and greater autonomy with bottom-up decision-making, hence, less coordination is required.

Communication in the organisation is enhanced and staff feel motivated and committed (Clegg, Kornberger and Pitsis 2009: 561).

Nevertheless, drawbacks of the matrix structure do exist. Staff may be part of more than one team and consequently may have more than one supervisor. Indeed, staff within functional units may find ‘themselves overloaded with demands from too many project teams’ (Fopp 1997: 145). In addition, conflict among individuals may occur within the team due to very different backgrounds and perspectives; power struggles between managers may also add to the stress of the individual or slow down the decision-making process.

The Harris Museum and the Van Abbemuseum demonstrate a blend of functional hierarchy with an ad hoc preparedness in the form of a matrix structure. As a result, the traditional vertical hierarchy is overlaid with a horizontal structure. This structure strengthens the need for greater coordination and cohesiveness in order to achieve the strategy and goals of the institution. Both museums have project teams to carry out temporary or special projects, but in addition, staff sit within their own functional or specialist unit/department, for example, fine art, conservation and, learning. However, something else is happening to the matrix structure – these regional museums are adopting a ‘*hybrid*’ form of adhocracy. And this hybridity or agility facilitates ways of working and organising which encompasses a greater degree of flexibility, adaptability and proactivity.

Hybrid organisations

Museums are institutions which operate within a framework of academic, administrative, curatorial and commercial interests. As a result, the ‘complexities involved in such diverse operations require bureaucratic procedures in part and an adhocratic preparedness – with an essential watch on the environment, culture and competition’ (ibid.: 146).

Research into the case study museums attempts to show that there is a move towards hybrid organisations where a mix of structures is utilised to suit the

demands of the organisation. A functional structure is present for those activities which are stable, routine, standardised and bureaucratic such as personnel, finance, security, facilities management and administration support. Yet, within the functional organisation there is also a hybrid of project teams which are formed for particular projects such as exhibitions, collections care and collections management. Such hybridity enables staff to engage with others to share knowledge and foster collaborative alliances. The matrix structure, with a more team-based approach, results in more integration across the organisation. Furthermore, such organising is important so that the organisation is both flexible and innovative 'in order to respond to change as well as be efficient' (Newell, Robertson, Scarbrough, Swan 2009: 64).

The research argues that experimentation and innovation are evident in the two regional museums under investigation. The case studies illustrate that museum professionals are establishing these hybrid forms so that collecting new media art can be done capably and effectively. Whilst they both are positioned within City Council functional bureaucracies, they have adopted a matrix style to include project teams and cross-disciplinary ways of working which fosters a holistic and adaptive approach. The case study museums indicate that collecting new media art has facilitated cross-disciplinary teams so that documentation, exhibition and preservation can be realised.

In the past, long-established museums had been paternalistic (and perhaps still are) in terms of their governance with a reactive approach and a top-down management style (Anderson 2004). Management strategies were cautious, insular and hierarchical with unilateral decision-making. The communication style was privileged, one way and protective. However, today's hybrid museum displays governance which is characteristically proactive, inclusive, multicultural and open-ended. In addition, the management style is positioned within a framework of team-working, shared decision-making, strategic long-term planning and informed risk-taking. It is also an agile, responsive and learning organisation. Communication is open and two-way; differences are welcomed and exchange of knowledge is encouraged (*ibid.*: 2). My research highlights that within the Van Abbemuseum, in particular, museum staff are included in all

levels of decision-making and encouraged to participate and exchange differing opinions; hence, it actively promotes participation and two-way communication.

The acquisition of new media art is advancing new ways of organising which are highly productive and rewarding for staff. The flatter hybrid form of organising is becoming more prevalent and the horizontal structure enables creativity to flourish and new ways of organising to be supported (such as self-organisation). Self-organisation occurs 'spontaneously when members of a group produce coherent behaviour in the absence of formal hierarchy within the group' (Stacey cited in Janes and Sandell 2007: 5).

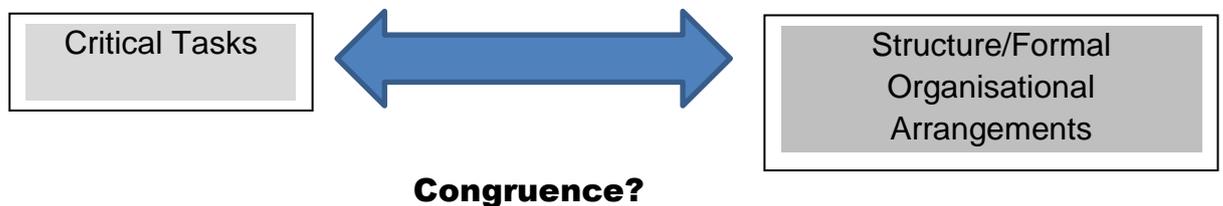
Self-organisation is an ideal solution to the problems which exist within a rigid hierarchy (Janes 2009: 74). Indeed, this new way of working – agility, adaptability and resilience - involves flatter structures with self-organised teams which are proactive, have greater flexibility and to stimulate innovation (Morgan 1988: 79). The promotion of self-organised groups enables staff control over their work and greater autonomy, open communication and consensual decision-making. This new style of organising facilitates open communication and informal leaders who can foster interaction and interdependence.

Janes and Sandell note that museums are making increasing use of 'multidisciplinary, multifunctional and cross-departmental teams that may include educators, marketers, and security staff, as well as curatorial and exhibition staff' (2007: 5). External partners and stakeholders are invited to participate in the teams to facilitate knowledge exchange, learning and cultivate collaborative alliances. Janes and Sandell argue that multi-functional teams are 'essential in cross-fertilizing the rich storehouse of knowledge, skills and experience inherent in museums, not only to develop programmes and exhibitions, but also to enhance the general level of creativity, innovation and problem solving' (ibid.: 5). Based on organisational research by Clegg, Kornberger and Pitsis 'organizations learn through collaboration' and this may be in-house collaboration across units or external partners who bring to the table new ideas, creativity and questions (2009: 360). The knowledge base is expanded and innovation can be promoted and skills that an organisation lacks

may be expanded (ibid.: 360). The museum is transforming into an adaptable institution, one which encourages flexibility, decentralised decision-making and active adaptive management (Janes 2009: 159).

Having identified the evolution of organisational structure, this chapter will now set out to determine whether the formal organisation/structure is congruent with the accomplishment of the critical tasks for the two case study museums.

Congruence Model – Assessment of Congruence: Critical Tasks and formal organisational arrangements / structure



The model sets out five steps to complete a congruence analysis. This section explores Step 3 – the analysis of the alignment of critical tasks with the formal organisational structure. The formal arrangements includes roles, procedures, structures, measures and systems which managers employ to direct and motivate staff to perform the organisation’s critical tasks (Tushman and O’Reilly 2002: 86-87). Alignment between these two components demands that a diagnostic question be answered: ‘does the current structure facilitate the accomplishment of both the component tasks and their required integration?’ (ibid.: 63). This question will be answered in relation to the two case study museums to determine to what extent the organisational arrangements fit the task requirements.

Formal arrangements have a significant impact on how work is accomplished and the performance of an organisation. Managers have control over the rewards system, design of units and formal procedures such as job design and promotion. They can also facilitate training and rewards to best fit the needs of workers. Hence, any potential gaps or performance problems should be carefully considered and detected.

In order to make a diagnosis several dimensions of the formal organisation must be considered. These include: strategic grouping, linking mechanisms, and formal reward and control systems. These dimensions will be outlined

before assessing congruence for both the Harris Museum and the Van
Abbemuseum.

Strategic Grouping

Strategic grouping sets out the unit or organisation's formal structure. According to Tushman and O'Reilly the strategic grouping is the most important choice managers make after the strategy, vision and objectives of the organisation (2002: 87). However, they emphasise that there is no 'optimal' formal structure. Furthermore, the structure will need to be revisited and reassessed as the organisation and its strategies evolve and develop over time.

As stated earlier in this chapter, the formal structure most adopted by museums was the functional bureaucracy, overlaid with layers of hierarchy, formal procedures and delineated job roles. Such organisations thrive in environments which are stable. However, in an environment which experiences constant change, the museum structure has had to become more adaptable in order to cope with external challenges. As a result, the structure has tended to operate as a matrix or ad hoc design, with fewer layers of managers and a mix of project teams with greater interdependence and integration across the organisation.

The matrix structure, whilst adopted from a business approach, has been further modified to suit the needs of the museum. The evolution of the matrix structure has formed into a 'hybrid' form, with a flatter structure and consensual decision-making which is more responsive to internal and external changes. Staff shortages, as a direct consequence of Council revenue cutbacks, mean that the two regional case study museums are finding new ways of organising which include 'nimble' teams; bringing together staff from across the organisation to work as task forces to accomplish the organisation's goals. The creativity and inventiveness of problem-solving and thinking about the collection facilitates 'joined up thinking'.

This chapter now attempts to assess the structure of each case study museum and explore how the structure – with nimble teams, greater coordination and interdependence - is aligned with the task to be achieved.

The strategic grouping within the Harris Museum indicates a formal organisational structure which is matrix in shape. This structure consists of designated units where work is delineated but work is also carried out across the units with project teams. An organisational chart was drawn up following interview with museum staff (see Figure 5.3). The museum resides within a functional bureaucracy as a local authority body with staff designated specific roles, with rules and procedures for tasks to be accomplished within the regional authority. The hierarchy is heavily tiered in this government organisation; however, the Harris Museum illustrates a different way of organising.

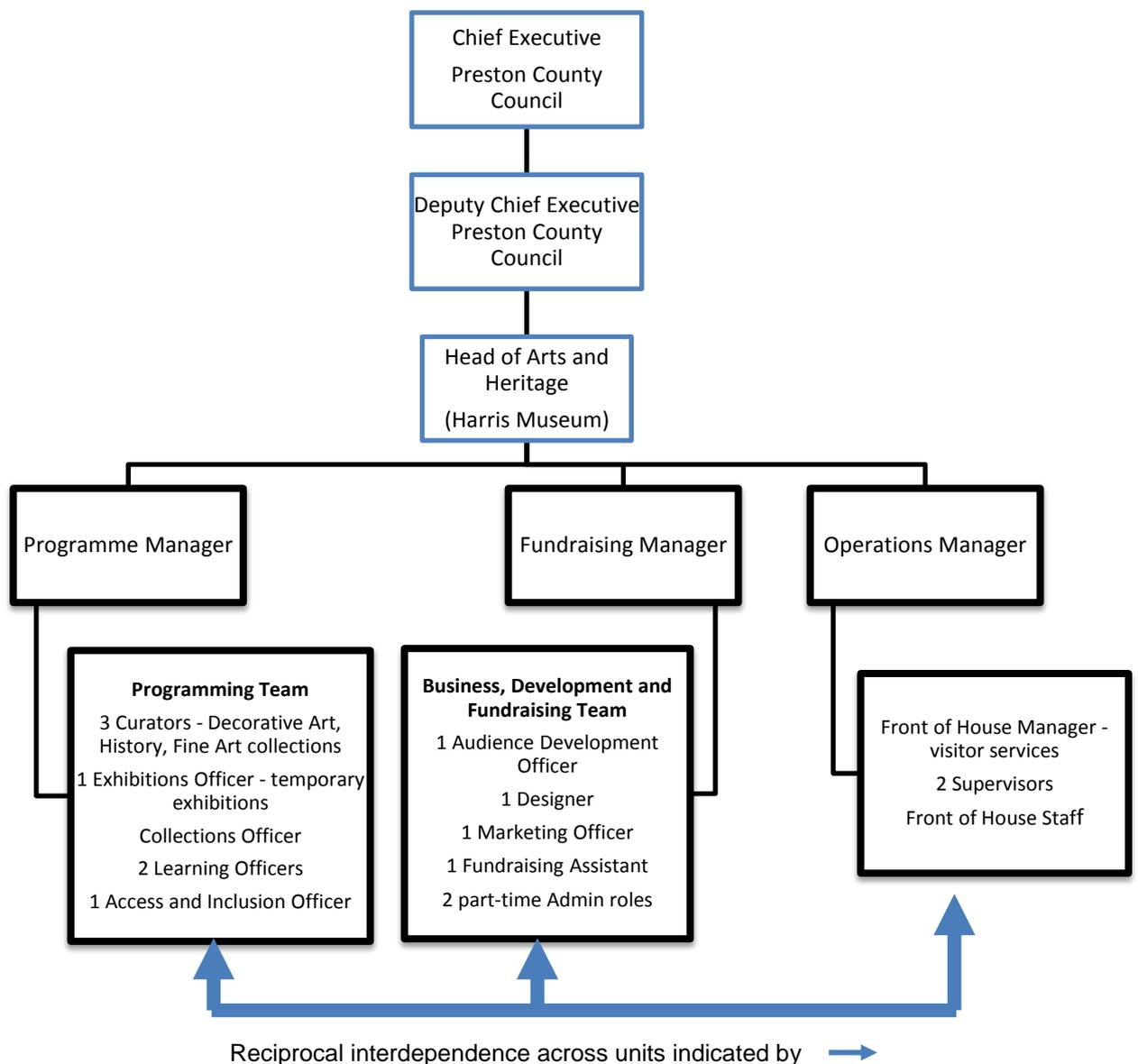


Figure 5.3 Harris Museum – organisational structure

As can be seen, the Head of Arts and Heritage (Alex Walker) reports directly to the Deputy Chief Executive of the Council. She is in charge of the museum and whilst there are three managers, Programme, Fundraising and Operations, there is a hybridity for staff across the organisation. Broadly speaking, there is an opportunity to work sideways across disciplines on projects. The Exhibitions Officer notes that there is crossover with marketing, audience development, front-of-house and fundraising and they all work very closely (Taylor 2012). This is reinforced by Walker (2012):

we don't have departments – we are a section of a much bigger department of the Council. In fact, we are a small group of people and I would say that we are a team of people which has a multi-disciplinary team and I would really like to get away from the idea of us thinking about ourselves as departments. We are one department.

New media art, due to its complexity and challenges, facilitates a new way of working and organising which emphasises greater integration across units. The Harris' mission to build a nationally significant collection of new media art was established through the *Current: An Experiment in Collecting Digital Art* project. The Harris and *folly* developed a bespoke collaborative project consisted of four components; an open call, exhibition, acquisition and public debate (Taylor in Graham 2014: 117). The acquisition of one new media artwork by Thomson and Craighead by the Harris Museum necessitated the Exhibitions Officer, the Keeper of Art and the Collections Officer join together to consider how best to catalogue the piece and how to think about display and interpretation in the permanent gallery alongside more traditional works. Discussions also focused on 'what they had acquired' and how it should be cared for long-term in the collection (Jones 2012). The Collections Officer at the Harris remarks:

there is a lot more cross-over and working with each other than there used to be when I first came... Now, there is a lot more integration. We have worked more interdisciplinary in the last few years, I wouldn't say it is because of the new media, because that is a very small part of what we do, but, we do it with new media (Jones 2012).

Open dialogue, consensual decision-making and flexibility were instrumental in guaranteeing that the Thomson and Craighead artwork could be acquired for the permanent collection. A flatter structure in the museum ensured that decisions were made quickly and innovation and creativity were exercised when problems arose (for example, the firewalls on the internet access had to be 'relaxed' by the Council's IT department to ensure that the live data feed could be streamed into the gallery space as part of the work).

Three issues raised regarding the artwork centred on accession (documentation), technical issues (IT as mentioned earlier), and insurance issues (Jones 2012). As one member commented, 'you have to work with lots of departments to make this work' (Anonymous A 2012). Thus, meetings were arranged across the museum and Council to consider the firewall access to the internet. In addition, conversations were had with the MODES User Association (collections management software provider in the UK) concerning the documentation and accession of the work (Jones; Anonymous A 2012). The Audit Commission examined and audited the Harris Museum's permanent collection in-depth in 2012 to value objects as part of the 'heritage assets' exercise. The museum, had, in principle, acquired an artwork which was essentially a web address for £10,000. The Collections Officer recalls the task of explaining to an auditor that the permanent collection has a website; an ephemeral and intangible 'object' (Jones 2012). Thus, the acquisition, technical aspects and cataloguing of the artwork were novel challenges which required complex relationships to secure solutions.

The Van Abbemuseum's organisational chart is not for publication. However, there are approximately 40 full-time professionals paid for by the City Council, as well as a group of around 80 volunteers. The two units which operate concomitantly in the museum are the Artistic Unit and the Production and Presentation Team.

The *Artistic Unit* consists of six curators and the Director, Charles Esche. Esche did not want a 'Director's Office' and chose to work in an open plan office with the curators, in the interests of 'displacing this centre around the director'

(Esche 2013). The museum also welcomes guest curators and visiting scholars to do a specific exhibition for example. Esche is responsible for the artistic process, shaping content and the vision for the museum; accomplished by focussing on the artistic translation of a bigger theoretical idea or vision (Erbslöh 2013). However, the Deputy Director states:

we try to have this 'eye level' – we try to put everything that is production and presentation, marketing, facility management onto eye level with the curators. They are all in the same hierarchical order. Our head of department has the same hierarchical order as a curator. We meet each other and relate to other people in the organisation - it works – sometimes it works very well and sometimes it has its difficulties (Erbslöh 2013).

Esche has created an ambiguity and openness in the museum which has unsettled some staff. The hierarchies which had existed previously have been deliberately overturned. In its place, a more dynamic and egalitarian structure was instituted. This new structure encouraged staff to work across units on projects where a collaborative approach was necessary. The Deputy Director comments:

it took a really long time for people to adjust because of the leader that Charles is. The discussion he creates in this house is very unusual for a director. I have never worked for a director that is so not interested in hierarchical structures, in the idea of structures whatsoever and he breaks through structures all the time (Erbslöh 2013).

The Van Abbemuseum, like the Harris Museum, is a hybrid organisation with a mix of functional units but with a strong emphasis on a matrix structure. This flat structure consists of lots of cross-over and multi-disciplinary ways of organising. The 'eye level' approach reduces the levels of management and different functions are all seen as being on the same level and of equal importance. No distinction between a curator or a Head of Department is perceived and there is a strong impetus for integration across the museum. The hybridity of the museum enables it to shift and adapt according to needs internally, but, also

outside the 'house'. Thus, the structure is organic, agile and responsive. It has a relatively flat hierarchy where the two units react to each other with an overarching 'dual leadership' character (Esche 2013). This structure has taken time for personnel to adjust to (Erbslöh 2013). Arguably, therefore, the strategic grouping (formal organisational structure) of the museum as a hybrid form is aligned with the tasks to be carried out.

The Van Abbemuseum's strategic grouping is very similar in form to the Harris Museum. Both function within a local authority functional bureaucracy. Yet, the Van Abbemuseum has adopted an atypical way of organising which was discomfiting for staff. Although the organisation is hybrid to a certain extent, there is a clear split between the artistic side and the programming and presentation functions. The Artistic Unit is headed by the director who shares an open plan office with the curators and guest curators. The Director pushes through structures all the time and insists on a flat, egalitarian and proactive museum. On the other hand, the Deputy Director brings some order and structure to manage the pragmatic business of the museum and create some constancy for staff. The hybridity of the museum stresses teamwork, networking, openness and autonomy. The organisation purposely encourages informed risk-taking, creativity and consensual decision-making.

The design of the organisational structure is arranged intentionally to accomplish the museum's vision and strategy exploiting cross-disciplinary ways of working. However, it is not evident that new media art is explicitly changing the structure. Rather, it is apparent that the structure has openness and flexibility embedded at its core. Such embeddedness ensures that new media art is acquired for the permanent collection. However, it is recognised that new media art does require increased reciprocity across the organisation, especially with regards to acquisition, installation, documentation and collections care. Ultimately, the hybridity and reciprocal interdependence across the museum guarantees that challenging works such as new media art can be accommodated and collected.

Linking Mechanisms

The degree of formal linking mechanisms may include plans, committees, task forces, project managers and liaison roles. Once the critical tasks have been identified, the linking mechanisms can be evaluated to see how congruent the mechanisms are to completing work processes (critical tasks are outlined in detail in Chapter 2). If the mechanism is simple, then the links across the organisation will be minimal. However, if the task to be undertaken is complex in nature, then greater links within and across the organisation will be necessary.

The work flow or interdependency among component tasks demands differing formal organisations, cultures and human resource capabilities (Tushman and O'Reilly 2002: 80). Interdependence covers three types: pooled, sequential and reciprocal. Sequential interdependence exists when component tasks are linked in a linear sequence. Such linear sequences are to be found in manufacturing or production companies where coordination is required to complete the product or task in a predetermined and predictable line. The remaining two types of interdependencies, pooled and reciprocal are, I suggest, found in the museum. These interdependencies should be strong and close to ensure that workflow is carried out effectively.

The pooled interdependence is the simplest work flow. Work can be done independently by different people or units, hence, no work flows between these independent systems. Because there is no cross-unit interdependence, minimal coordination to complete actions is entailed. An example of pooled workflows may be found in the Personnel Unit or Finance Department within the Council authority museum (the Harris Museum for instance). The centralised and functional units carry out independent tasks which do not require any interdependence across the organisation. Whilst such units may share common resources (including staff and finance) there is no work flow between these units. In terms of the Harris Museum some operations reside within each unit and can be accomplished independently (e.g. marketing and fundraising may be undertaken within this unit with little need for interdependence across other

units). However, the third type of interdependence is one which is most prevalent in the Harris – reciprocal interdependence.

Reciprocal interdependence ‘exists when each component task is inherently linked to other tasks’ (Tushman and O’Reilly 2002: 81). Hence, completion of a particular task is highly dependent on the preceding task but also the task to follow. Such dependency requires a complex interdependence where there are interlinked feedback loops to ensure that coordination and cooperation facilitate completion of the task. Such reciprocity necessitates teamwork, trust and collaboration. Collecting new media art commands complex feedback loops and interdependency across the museum.

Strong and close linking mechanisms were apparent in the Harris Museum, specifically, in relation to the *Current* project and collecting new media art. Close links were evidenced through teamwork, sharing of power and empowered decision-making. Such links enabled reciprocal interdependency among members of the Programming Team, but also between the Programming Team, Business, Development and Fundraising Team, and the front-of-house team.

This thesis argues that, in order to acquire new media art, the two regional case study museums organise its structure with crossover and nimble teams across disciplines to nurture innovation and creativity so that highly complex and interdependent work requirements are achieved. Collecting new media art warrants complex reciprocal interdependency across the organisation. The greater the coherence and congruence between professionals, the more effective and efficient the process to successfully acquire a new media artwork will be. Significantly, the research revealed that collecting new media art demands much closer linking mechanisms than in most other projects in order to collect unorthodox art. Such linking mechanisms require inventive ways of problem-solving, learning from one another and consensual decision-making.

The formal linking mechanisms at the Van Abbemuseum were reconfigured – directors and heads of department from the Head of Collections, Head of

Presentation and Production, Head of Facility Management, and Head of Marketing, Education and Sponsoring sat on a management team. For members of this team there was a certain 'status' associated with being on it. As a consequence, a decision was taken to disband the Management Team and to share the decision-making process across the organisation in order to support all staff to input ideas and question institutional assumptions.

In place of the Management Team, the following meetings were set up to function across the museum: the Strategic meeting, the Tactical meeting, the Collection meeting and the department meetings. The Deputy Director states that:

once people get used to the idea that there is not just one team that makes all the decisions, but, decision-making can be done in different teams depending on the decision that needs to be made, they are comfortable with that' (Erbslöh 2013).

Therefore, Heads are tasked with reminding all staff that they can attend meetings and input their ideas and that 'positions are not fixed' (ibid.). Whilst the organisation may, in essence, have an organisational structure with lines of authority, in practical terms, staff are seen as equal contributors to the work and the role of the museum. Each professional is valued and has a role to play in the way the Van Abbemuseum functions and operates. I suggest that this approach is rather unique in its strong egalitarian approach and inclusive nature of staff at all levels in the decision-making process. The linking mechanisms are highly complex and rely on considerable reciprocal interdependence. Staff are expected to actively attend and participate in meetings, challenge authority and orthodoxy and bring new ideas to the table. The 'eye level' approach does not differentiate between levels of staff, and, as a result, everyone is considered equal.

The most important meeting is the strategic meeting which the director, Charles Esche, heads. The meeting includes heads of departments as well as curators and guest curators and here strategic discussions can be shaped, developed

and formalised. The meeting devises the exhibition programme, planning of acquisitions, and strategic policy for the collection. In addition, marketing and communication strategies are laid out and operational considerations are discussed. The main purpose of this meeting (held every four weeks) is to discuss the creative process, define planning and programming, and is a forum of 'food for thought' (General Meeting Structure Van Abbemuseum 2014).

The tactical meeting, in contrast, is held every two weeks and deals with everyday issues in the house. Short-term decisions are made regarding planning exhibitions, events, and dealing with any issues in the departments. Curators, heads of departments, assistants and guests attend these regular meetings. The main goal of this group is to signal any problems and put forward solutions (ibid.: 2014).

The collection meeting is led by the Head of Collections, Christiane Berndes, which is held every two weeks. The main purpose of the meeting is to consider acquisitions, loans, registration, documentation and travelling exhibitions. The goal of this meeting is to be a platform for knowledge and information exchange with the Head of Collections, Head of Production and Presentation, collection department and the Registrar.

Accompanying these main meetings are smaller unit meetings such as the Projectgroepoverleg (PGO)/project group discussion which meets to discuss specific exhibitions or projects. Matters discussed consist of, for example, the details for an exhibition opening, planning, installation, press and publication. The team can be made up of the responsible curator and staff from marketing, education, technical department, security and the registrar. The Van Abbemuseum organises several exhibitions in the museum and guest curators are encouraged to participate and shape the content, interpretation and dissemination of the exhibition. A strong culture pervades the museum which forges a climate of proactive and adaptive working, sharing knowledge and working in a cross-disciplinary style.

The Van Abbemuseum, as a whole, is organised to exploit cross-disciplinary ways of working. It is recognised that these strong links between units in the Van Abbemuseum is favourable to collecting new media art. The challenge of collecting new media art demands a reciprocal relationship amongst staff. This reciprocal interdependence is conducive to collecting new media art as staff from across units can contribute to knowledge exchange in terms of acquisition, documentation, exhibition and preservation.

As was evidenced with the Harris Museum, strong and close links in terms of teamwork, empowered decision-making and shared power were established. Strong and close links are, in part, due to the challenges of collecting new media art. Hence, reciprocal interdependence across the organisation and outside the museum is evident. Like the Harris Museum, the Van Abbemuseum has strong and close links in terms of teamwork, empowered decision-making and shared power with a reciprocal interdependence across the organisation. Esche's leadership institutes an organisation which embeds a flat structure with teamworking and consensual decision-making at its heart. Such a structure, I suggest, is suitable for collecting new media art and collecting new media art reinforces the usefulness of this flat system. The leadership style of Esche emphasises that 'people very much function without too much leadership or direction' (Erbslöh 2013). Some staff left the organisation because they could not easily adjust to this approach – they were used to a 'strong hand' where their jobs were clearly defined. Remaining staff who were able to adapt now have much greater autonomy in their work, and have the agency to shape what they do and how they do it while doing so within the strategy and vision of the museum.

At the Van Abbemuseum there are, nevertheless, pockets of pooled interdependence within units which undertake specific workflows without a great deal of cross-over. For example, the Technical Department has a Head who gives staff 'clear working space and clear ideas of what they need to do, but they always get interrupted by a very chaotic artistic process' (Erbslöh 2013). Throughout the museum, units do carry out work which does not require working with other units (for example, finance, security and press)

The greatest form of interdependence is reciprocal and it is clearly exploited at all levels in the Van Abbemuseum. There are multiple complex feedback loops (as discussed previously regarding the numerous meetings which take place) with cooperation and coordination at their heart. Teamwork and projects underscore reciprocity and collaboration. Staff are encouraged to be adaptable, proactive professionals who contribute ideas and challenge orthodoxy. There is a high degree of cross-over in the museum with nimble teams who collect, display, document and care for all art, including new media art (Chapter 2 – Hannah Hurtzig's *'Flight Case Archive'*). While new media art is not the defining factor on how the museum organises, it does, nonetheless, underpin the need for close formal links and reciprocal interdependence across the organisation and beyond.

The formal linking mechanisms at the Van Abbemuseum nurtures staff at all levels to actively engage and participate in formal meetings. Moreover, guest curators are invited to take part in these meetings to share expertise and learn from one another. There are numerous informal channels of communication with feedback loops across the museum. The workflows within the organisation call for an extensive level of reciprocal interdependence. Staff across the museum depends on their colleagues to accomplish projects. However, they are also encouraged to adopt a self-organising attitude and an autonomous and responsible posture to their job. I assert therefore that the linking mechanisms are aligned and congruent with the work flow to be done. However, this form of organising took quite some time to be fully embraced by staff, in part, because the previous system was quite hierarchical and could not facilitate this way of organising.

Formal Reward and Control Systems

Formal reward and control systems must be consistent with the critical tasks to be achieved. Hence, managers must assess existing rewards and control systems (Tushman and O'Reilly 2002: 89-90). If staff do not see that their work is valued then there is little incentive or motivation to work beyond the minimum required. If an organisation avoids risks and is highly conservative it will be slow to adapt when the external environment demands adaptability and flexibility. Therefore, the component tasks needs to be compatible with the reward systems.

Cooperation and integration were essential to successfully complete tasks in the Harris Museum and the Van Abbemuseum, particularly in relation to collecting new media art. Each museum proactively sought a collaborative approach both inside and outside the organisation (this will be further explored in Chapter 6) which encouraged museum professionals to work and organise in new ways. The control systems actively promoted and rewarded new ways of working. Staff members at the Van Abbemuseum are actively encouraged to take risks, network and be innovative in the ways they organise and function. They have organised many conferences on 'born digital art' and collaborated with partners including labs, research centres and other museums across Europe. Such ways of working are promoted and rewarded and staff are encouraged to be adaptive, responsive and proactive. This recognition is also embedded within the culture of the organisation (discussed in Chapter 7).

The formal reward and control systems within the Harris Museum are shown to promote and reward new ways of working. It is noteworthy that this new way of working and organising, i.e. integrated, team-working and innovation, was driven by the Exhibitions Officer (whose main responsibility was to run the temporary contemporary art exhibitions programme) and the Head of Arts/Director who felt that the innovative nature of this project should be pursued to promote and raise the profile of the Harris. A common purpose in securing a new media artwork for the museum's collection was the main driver to collecting the Thomson and Craighead work. The museum professionals

were highly motivated and enthusiastic about the project and worked across the organisation to enable staff to become involved in acquiring the artwork. Cooperation, integration and adaptability were core components in this project, but, also recognition, prestige and value was awarded to both the museum as a progressive institution as well as the staff involved in the *Current* project.

According to Walker, the Harris Museum has always been known as a progressive and contemporary space and the staff goes beyond what is expected because they want to bring the 'best to Preston' (2012). The museum, from its early beginnings, collected contemporary art. Indeed, sometimes the art has been 'reasonably contentious' (Walker; Krypczk-Oddy 2012). For example, the curator and art director Sydney Pavière (1926-1959) embarked on a redisplay of the collections at the Harris. Gray suggests that Pavière initiated 'what appears to have been a deliberately controversial acquisitions policy for the fine art collection' (Gray in Hill 2012: 48). Pavière purchased paintings from the Royal Academy which challenged ideas about respectability (ibid.: 48). One painting which caused great controversy was George Spencer Watson's *Nude*. Bought in 1927 it caused 'an outbreak of letter-writing in the local newspapers' (ibid.: 48). Nevertheless, such an acquisition gave the Harris a profile outside Preston (ibid.: 54).

Such a progressive museum encourages professionals to push the organisation and its collection in new ways, ways which mean the structure adapts to the needs of the work; it is not fixed and static but responsive and adaptable. This form means that staff can work across units and collaborate on projects which are hugely progressive, challenging and, ultimately, rewarding. The Exhibitions Officer suggests that her role has shifted over time and has challenged some of the old processes. Her role to acquire works for the permanent collection from temporary exhibitions was a new departure but one which she felt was important i.e. leaving a legacy for the museum, the collection and the people of Preston (Taylor 2012). The critical tasks are, I argue, compatible and congruent with the formal reward and control systems at the Harris Museum.

The Van Abbemuseum holds a unique position in the Netherlands. The Director believes it should be a 'democratic instrument' – one which maintains a political position (Erbslöh 2013). The projects that are chosen, and the ways staff work, aligns with the overall vision of the museum. Esche remarks 'it is tough if you don't share it and we have had people who don't share it, that are more conservative or right-wing and that has been difficult for them' (Esche 2013). The museum is enthusiastic about 'institutional experimentation' and being progressive and challenging (A Fletcher 2013). The organisation is firmly balanced between the free, avant-garde, 'let's try this' experimental approach and the formalised, pragmatic, functional form.

The Van Abbemuseum strives for innovation and creativity and the formal reward and control systems within the museum favour experimentation, progressiveness and a forward-thinking approach from staff. Staff are encouraged to give their input into the decision-making process – something that is highly valued and recognised. Staff are required to be team players but also self-organised and willing to take responsibility for their work and projects. The museum is future oriented and progressive, so swiftness and alertness in staff is vital. The organisation never rests and is always adapting and finding new ways of organising; thus, hence, exist in in a dynamic, chameleon-like institution.

The Van Abbemuseum has an organisational openness and there is a clear sense of mediating, facilitating and communicating across units and through the levels of the museum (Berndes 2013). Learning from others is important and knowledge exchange is encouraged between research curators, art schools, lectures and conferences. The museum is focussed on harnessing proactivity amongst its staff, giving people more responsibility, challenging them and working in projects (ibid.). This new approach encourages staff to see 'what they are good at and try to give them the opportunity to develop in that direction' (ibid.). Such a process of openness and challenging staff can cause tremendous anxiety for employees, but, it can stimulate personal development and growth in areas that staff did not envision. Personal development can, I suggest, enable staff to gain personal reward and also professional recognition

in the museum. It can, ultimately, broaden and strengthen the skill sets of staff and foster a climate of staff actively being creative and innovative in the organisation.

The dynamic approach of the Director fostered and endorsed an atmosphere of experimentation, encouraging staff to push boundaries and challenge authority; something that long-term staff initially found uncomfortable and intimidating. A vivid example of Esche's influence is when he recognises untapped potential in staff; Diana Franssen (Head of Research) was running the library and archive and Esche said 'come on and curate'. As a result, Franssen began to curate the '*Living Archives*' bringing the museums' archives alive through performance and display (A Fletcher 2013).

Creativity, collaboration and openness are valued in the Van Abbemuseum. For that reason, staff who are motivated, dynamic and adaptable are recognised and rewarded. Initially, the rewards and control systems disrupted the safe and functional ways of organising in the museum. Many people had to be coached and 'cajoled' (Esche's term) in order to adopt the new system, others chose to leave. The congruence between work flow and formal reward and control systems is now secure but the process of securing alignment has not been without instability and turmoil.

Assessment of Congruence – Harris Museum (UK)

The Harris' model for collecting new media art was quite different from other acquisition projects. The acquisition of a new media artwork developed an experimental approach where many actors, both inside the museum, and outside the museum, had an important part to play. This collaborative approach fostered a new way to collect. The Head of the Museum commented:

It was a different model for collecting in that the decision to collect that particular artwork was done by drawing in a group of external advisers. That tends not to happen so much with the other artworks where we are continuing an established area of collecting. That was interesting and an interesting way of working. Learning from external advisers gave us confidence that we were making the right decision about the work (Walker 2012).

The formal structure of the Harris Museum is a hybrid form which is a blend of bureaucracy and an ad hoc organisation, constantly adapting and responding to the needs or tasks to be achieved. The hybridity of this museum enables it to organise with a flexible approach encouraging considerable cross-over and multi-disciplinary ways of working. There are formal teams such as the Programming Unit and Business, Development and Fundraising Team which carry out core functions, but, the reciprocity of tasks and the integration across units is evident. The *Digital Aesthetic* Project Assistant commented that collecting new media art demands a more cross-disciplinary way of working. Moreover, she remarked that:

I think it [new media art] is a key factor in helping it happen [collaborative working and cross-overs in expertise across departments] – I think it necessitates a cross-over, other departments might enjoy and might benefit from these cross-overs but I think something like new media art necessitates it to function (S Fletcher 2012).

The strategic grouping of the Harris Museum highlighted a hybrid structure with a mix of functional form and an ad hoc nature with project teams. The collecting of new media art came within the *Current Project* which was a unique opportunity to exhibit, collect, debate and evaluate new media art in the museum collection. The team-based approach facilitated greater integration across the organisation. Moreover, this approach to organising embraced a flat and informal organisational structure. The hybridity of the project emphasises significant flexibility and innovation – one which pushed the museum and its staff to work in ways which underscored informed risk-taking and shared decision-making. The ‘systemic obstacles’ to creativity and freedom often to be found in hierarchical institutions were overcome in the *Current project* (Janes 2009). Multi-disciplinary and cross-functional ways of working in the *Current project* fostered autonomy of staff and self-organisation. Moreover, the project stimulated inter-organisational networking and knowledge exchange. This was also evidenced through external partners who were involved in the project to judge which new media artworks should be exhibited, and, to determine which piece should be acquired for the museum’s collection. Hence, external collaborative alliances were cultivated and such ways of organising guaranteed that the rich ‘storehouse of knowledge’, skills and expertise could be shared. The *Current project*, overall, suggests a structure which was agile, proactive and adaptive to the ever-changing needs and pressures on it.

The *Current Project* at the Harris Museum displayed a hybrid organisation with a nimble and dynamic project team willing to push the boundaries of how to work and organise in order to collect new media art for the permanent collection. The organisation adapted to this situation with responsiveness and enthusiasm, sharing knowledge, learning from partners and building alliances. The Harris Museum’s organisational structure, I suggest, is congruent with the critical tasks to be achieved.

The *Current Project* actively sought a taskforce which brought together a multi-disciplinary approach. The project welcomed an open and ever-changing set of skills and ways of working. The Harris Museum, I suggest, is a matrix structure within a larger local authority bureaucracy, yet, it is evident that the

matrix structure has become more pronounced and dynamic within the *Current project*.

There are formal procedures and hierarchies but the structure is flat enough to allow reciprocal interdependence and complex feedback loops. The *Current Project* (as set out in Chapter 2) was a good example where museum staff across many disciplines joined up to work out how best to collect, display, document and care for the new media artwork. The workplace facilitated creativity (Janes 2013b) and cultivated self-organisation through multi-functional teams. Such ways of organising empowered staff and advanced 'collective intelligence' (Janes 2013c).

Formal linking mechanisms highlight that some tasks and work flows are pooled, i.e. requiring little or no interdependence (for example, Personnel or Finance), but most work flow, substantially collecting new media art, was accomplished through reciprocal interdependence and complex feedback loops. The museum was structured to facilitate flexible ways of working and organising, therefore the existing linking mechanisms were congruent with work flows in the Harris Museum.

The linking mechanisms for the *Current* project included many stages of reciprocal interdependence. For example, at the start of the project many external partners were involved in assessing and judging the new media artists for selection both in the long list and shortlist for exhibition, and then, collection. The first stage consisted of a team in the Harris Museum and an external judging panel, whereas, the second stage of judging was made solely by the external panel for selection of an artwork for acquisition into the museum's permanent art collection. Once the Thomson and Craighead piece was acquired a series of informal meetings between the Exhibitions Officer, Keeper of Art and Collections Officer took place to consider how best to document, catalogue and care for the piece long-term. Following acquisition, a public debate took place in the form of feedback groups to share findings and consider best practice on collecting new media art. The debate included academics, sector professionals, students and members of the public. Finally, an evaluation of the *Current*

project was carried out to inform future collecting of new media art for the Harris Museum. Throughout this entire process the complexity of the linking mechanisms were close and strong to achieve inventive ways of organising and problem-solving. Such linking mechanisms advanced integration across and through the museum. Furthermore, consensual decision-making and power sharing were exercised.

The formal reward and control systems were aligned with the *Current* project. Staff involved in the project was highly motivated and conveyed their enthusiasm with colleagues across the organisation. The *Current* project was progressive and staff involved admitted pride in the project and prestige for the museum. Staff were flexible and proactive in actively collecting new media art for the museum's permanent fine art collection, which enabled informed risk-taking and creativity to flourish. The nimble team exhibited trust, teamwork, collaboration and complex feedback loops. Such loops encouraged openness, dialogue and a great deal of reciprocity. I contend that the project was particularly unique and challenging. Therefore, an adaptable team, able to deal with ambiguity and secure high levels of integration across the organisation, was required.

Within the thesis' overarching question how collecting new media art changes the organisational shape of the museum this chapter has attempted to show how the Harris Museum is subtly changed as a result of collecting new media art. The organisational form within the Harris Museum adapts to both institutional and external demands. As a result, staff can respond to work flows and critical tasks in cross-functional ways which promotes integration and interdependence across the organisation. There is a tight fit and alignment between the task to be achieved and the structure to expedite its completion. The structure is hybrid with a functional bureaucracy at its core but with an ad hoc preparedness for innovative and challenging projects. This project brought together professionals from diverse disciplines and was evolving and fluid in its approach. It is interesting to note that the organisational chart which I constructed earlier does not have the *Current Project* formally in the chart, but, rather, hovers across and outside the units where the arrows go backwards and

forwards between units in the museum's structure. This indicates the many cross-overs across through units and individuals. The museum structure is designed so that it could accommodate this unique project. Hence, the cross-fertilisation of knowledge and new ways of working and organising are being exploited to its full potential (an asset when resources are pressed).

Assessment of Congruence – Van Abbemuseum (The Netherlands)

The Van Abbemuseum, like the Harris Museum, is a regional museum funded by a local authority. The Van Abbemuseum sits in a larger hierarchical structure of a Council bureaucracy (similar to the Harris Museum). The main purpose of the museum is to collect and display contemporary art within key research themes (it does not collect based on medium). The structure operates in a rather unique way. The Director deliberately split the management of the museum in to two key units with shared leadership of the Artistic Team and the Production Team. The director and deputy director therefore has responsibility for each specific unit. The museum had been quite hierarchical under the previous director. Once the incumbent director, Charles Esche, joined the museum, he purposely disrupted the organisational shape. He notes 'it is always down to individuals but I think for most people it was disruptive and not necessarily comfortable' (Esche 2013).

The design of the organisational structure is arranged intentionally to accomplish the museum's vision and strategy. However, it is not evident that new media art is explicitly changing the structure. Rather, it is apparent that the structure has openness and flexibility embedded at its core. Such embeddedness ensures that new media art is acquired into the collection just like other forms of art. However, it is recognised that new media art does require increased reciprocity across the organisation, especially with regards to acquisition, installation, documentation and collections care. Ultimately, the hybridity and reciprocal interdependence across the museum guarantees that challenging works such as new media art can be accommodated and collected. Similarly, the linking mechanisms are congruent with the work to be done. However, it is recognised that this form of organising took time for staff to adopt (in part because the former organisational structure was hierarchical and could not easily facilitate this way of organising).

The Van Abbemuseum's strategic grouping is very similar in form to the Harris Museum. Both function within a local authority functional bureaucracy. Yet, the Van Abbemuseum has adopted an atypical way of organising which was

discomforting for staff. Although the organisation is hybrid to a certain extent, there is a clear split between the artistic side and the programming and presentation functions. The Director pushes through structures all the time and insists on a flat, egalitarian and proactive museum. On the other hand, the Deputy Director brings some order and structure to manage the pragmatic business of the museum and create some constancy for staff. The hybridity of the museum stresses teamwork, networking, openness and autonomy. The organisation purposely encourages informed risk-taking, creativity and consensual decision-making.

The linking mechanisms are highly complex and rely on considerable reciprocal interdependence. Staff are expected to actively attend and participate in meetings, challenge authority and orthodoxy and bring new ideas to the table. The 'eye level' approach does not differentiate between levels of staff, and, as a result, everyone is considered equal.

The formal reward and control systems endorse experimentation, progressiveness and forward-thinking. This system was, at first, hard to adopt by some long-term staff, but, over the past eight years, they have learned to champion this way of working. The blend between those members with the institutional memory along with the 'anarchic' biennale-type people facilitated a new way of organising which was refreshing and dynamic. Staff were recognised and valued for 'having a go' and for pushing both themselves and the institution.

As evidenced in this chapter the formal organisational arrangements are in alignment to achieve the critical tasks. The structure within the museum is adaptive and exhibits great hybridity – it is never static and fixed, but rather, is surging ahead with dynamism and agility. Staff have had to acclimatise to substantial change, in part due to the 'anarchic' leadership style of the Director (A Fletcher 2013). Boundaries have shifted and new approaches to working and organising have been implemented. Whilst it has taken some time to implement, staff now work cross-functionally and in an atmosphere of freedom and creativity (ibid.: 2013). As a result, staff can respond to workflows and critical

tasks in cross-functional ways which promotes integration and interdependence across the organisation. There is a tight fit and alignment between the task to be achieved and the structure to expedite its completion. The structure is hybrid with a functional bureaucracy at its core but with an ad hoc preparedness for innovative and challenging projects. Hence, the cross-fertilisation of knowledge and new ways of working and organising are being exploited to its full potential.

Conclusion

Museums have largely been organised as bureaucracies. Such ways of organising have often consisted of hierarchical levels of power and control residing at the top of the organisation. Staff were positioned in functional departments and their tasks were clearly defined and often standardised. Such organisations operated successfully in stable and unchanging environments.

However, in this chapter, I have shown how the organisational structure within the two regional case study museums was predominantly hierarchical and functional bureaucracy (where role is piled upon role and functional units often operate independently) and integrated a matrix structure with teamworking, strong and close links in terms of reciprocal interdependence and knowledge sharing. These museums have negotiated new ways of structuring and organising how they work. There is more cross-disciplinary ways of working with greater interdependence and integration across the organisation.

Whilst the Harris Museum's *Current* project clearly adapted new ways of working and organising in direct response to collecting new media art, the same cannot be said of the Van Abbemuseum. The structure is moulded constantly and whilst new media art is collected and presents certain challenges, it does not impact greatly on the museum's structure.

The safe bureaucracy with standardised and routinized tasks is no longer the dominant force in the case study museums. Instead, we find nimble teams where staff are given responsibility and shared decision-making in a flat and informal structure. Staff are responsive to change, utilising knowledge exchange both inside the organisation and outside. The structure is never fixed or static, but, rather, dynamic and agile.

The research has shown, through the Congruence Model, that new media art presents challenges to the organisation and its structure. But, it is clear that collecting new media art brings many more opportunities to the museum. New

ways of organising mirrors changes occurring in organisational theory in general, and how museums are adopting these hybrid forms in particular.

In the next chapter I will use Step 3 of the Congruence Model to assess alignment between critical tasks and people (human resources) to see whether the people have the necessary skills sets and motivation to carry out the critical tasks. The research revealed potential gaps between this congruence but also highlighted the growth of collaboration both inside the museum but also with external partners and alliances. Through collaborative approaches the museum and people are learning and sharing knowledge, skills and expertise.

CHAPTER 6 – Findings: collaboration – inside and outside the organisation – agile curation

Introduction

I am much less conscious of needing to be an expert, but, rather much more conscious of asking the right questions.

(A Fletcher, Van Abbemuseum 2013)

Asking the right questions is a feature which resonated with most of the respondents in relation to collecting new media art. The need to find solutions to the collection, documentation, exhibition and preservation of new media art is something which requires collaboration and agility. This research project set out with the aim of assessing the effect new media art has on the skills sets/expertise and workflow in relation to the Harris Museum and the Van Abbemuseum. The research found that new media art has a marked effect on skills sets and workflow. Analysis illustrates that human resources are applying collaborative approaches to close the gap in skills sets and expertise in relation to collecting new media art. Specifically, the two regional case study museums underscore the need for collaboration across the organisation, but, in addition, collaborative relationships and partnerships outside the museum.

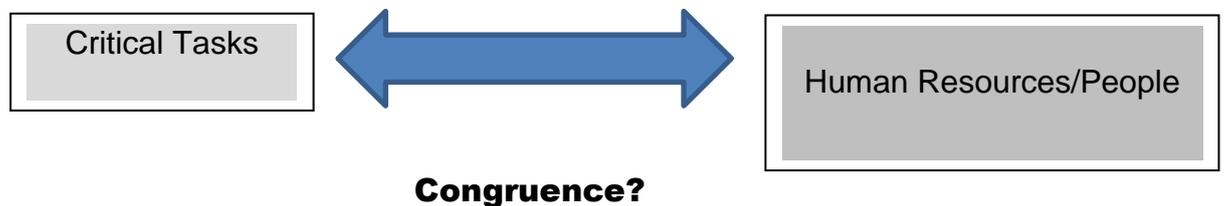
Collaboration is used inside the museum to draw on many areas of expertise involving registrars, curators, collections officers, conservation workers, learning officers, volunteers, and technician's knowledge. Collaboration draws on the expertise of those professionals who have a deep skills base and knowledge; technical issues to install the work in the gallery, documenting the unorthodox in the catalogue system (for example characteristics of new media art such as its intangibility, medium, dimensions, authorship). Finally, acquisition of new media art necessitates a more holistic approach across the museum where professionals work together to manage the collection, exhibition, documentation and preservation of new media art.

Outside the museum, networks of expertise and knowledge sharing are prevalent. National and regional museums, alongside arts organisations, funding bodies, research centres, technical laboratories and universities are collaborating on collecting new media art. Collaborative projects include initiating commissioning projects and sharing knowledge on the challenges and special requirements of new media art. Sharing knowledge and learning from one another is evidenced through exchange platforms including workshops, conferences, and books on new media art.

This chapter argues that new media art demands a complex set of collaborative relationships and partnerships both inside the museum and outside. This finding has important implications for developing formal networks and building relationships both within the museum and outside the museum to strengthen knowledge exchange, develop learning and expertise. The results, therefore, provide important insights into the need for such collaborative approaches. As the economic downturn forces museums to adapt and respond to cutbacks there is an opportunity to exploit collaborative partnerships to share knowledge, learn from one another, shape best practice and build new media art collections. New media art reveals gaps in expertise, but, it also provides museum professionals with the skills to be active shapers to build a rich resource for future museum professionals.

This section examines human resources and assesses the extent to which the critical tasks are congruent with human resources. Whilst I argue that there are gaps in terms of the skills and expertise for staff regarding new media art, these findings may help us to understand the complexity and needs new media art requires of museum professionals. I conclude by considering the implications of new media art on collaborative practice.

Congruence Model – Assessment of Congruence: Critical Tasks and Human Resources / People



Human resources are the lifeblood of any organisation. Yet, it is important to secure staff who have the skills and competencies necessary to carry out the critical tasks. Within the Congruence Model the human resources are assessed through four aspects: 1) competencies of staff 2) motives necessary to enthuse employees 3) demographics of staff and 4) country differences (cultural mix of workers) (Tushman and O'Reilly 2002: 83). Each aspect will be discussed in turn and then illustrated later through the case study findings. However, each aspect demands the following assessment questions be answered:

- Q. do staff have the knowledge, skills and abilities to achieve and perform the critical tasks and workflows?
- Q. what are the strengths and weaknesses of staff in relation to task requirements?
- Q. are there additional skills or incentives that are needed for staff?
- Q. can staff be trained in these new skills or do we need to bring in new people?

Human Resource Competencies

In a thriving organisation staff will demonstrate that they have the knowledge, skills and abilities to perform critical tasks. Critical tasks for an organisation have been set out in detail in Chapter 2. The manager undertaking a congruence assessment should consider the skills of their own unit to understand whether there are any gaps or opportunities for growth. Part of the assessment seeks to ascertain the strengths and weaknesses of staff and to identify strategies to address any human resource needs from incentives to training (Tushman and O'Reilly 2002: 83).

The competencies of the following staff at the Harris Museum were assessed: the Head of Arts and Heritage (Walker), the Exhibitions Officer (Taylor), the Collections Officer (Jones), Anonymous A and the *Digital Aesthetic* Project Assistant (S Fletcher). These people were the principle members involved in the *Current* project, and collecting new media art. Thus, this study does not consider the competencies of other museum professionals in the Harris Museum.

The critical tasks of the Head of Arts and Heritage, Exhibitions Officer, Anonymous A and Collections Officer have been built up over many years, and, therefore, probable that the knowledge, skills and abilities of practitioners employed in those positions have become highly refined and deep. However, the knowledge, skills and abilities of the museum professionals does not adequately prepare them to make decisions on collecting new media art independently of one another. New media art then, I contend, requires a more joined up approach which is symbiotic and organic.

The Collection's Officer is responsible for documentation of the museum's collection. The Harris Museum employs the MODES database for the cataloguing the collection. The database records for the fine art collection consist of fields for medium, size, frame, glazing, provenance, artist, subject, date. But, as Jones comments 'you need an awful lot more for cataloguing new media; just describing what it is is difficult' (2012). The documentation process

necessitated several meetings with the Collections Officer, the Exhibitions Officer and Anonymous A to work through the best way to catalogue the new media artwork. In addition, the Collections Officer contacted the MODES User Association to discuss the idea of creating a template for new media; to create a standard catalogue record. She asked the MODES Users Association if they knew of any other museum that was doing such templates and the response was 'not to their knowledge'. She highlights that:

MODES is absolutely brilliant for cataloguing the collection but for more abstract concepts which new media does bring we have drawn up a template that we want to try out and adapt and see if that works. Can we actually adapt them [the fields] to what we want them to do? (Jones 2012).

The post of Collection's Officer was made redundant in December 2012. As a result, the burden of responsibility for documenting new media art has transferred to both the Exhibitions Officer (normally responsible for contemporary art exhibitions and collecting new media art) and the Keeper of Art (responsible for the vast museum collection spanning several collection disciplines) which will be done on a case-by-case basis. The Thomson and Craighead artwork is not something physical so it involves thinking about how to record the details which is an ongoing process (Anonymous A 2012).

In terms of competencies for new media art, and collections management, it is evident that 'documentation requires a very good knowledge and experience of just how the whole process works for you to be able to even start thinking about how do we adapt this to make it work for new media?' (Jones 2012). Museum accreditation demands an up-to-date and complete documentation system, therefore, the Exhibitions Officer and Keeper of Art will need to collaborate and work together to document new media art which is faithful to the artist's intentions. They will have to take up the role of documenting new media art in addition to their present duties and work through what is the best way to do it (Jones 2012). Jones expressed concern that finding time to carry out documentation of new media art will be a challenge for those staff given responsibility for documentation as they have 'a lot of conflicting priorities'

(ibid. 2012). She continues 'there are a lot of things that you need to capture at the outset and if you don't do it then it's much harder to do retrospectively' (ibid. 2012). The Collections Officer commented that new media art was 'a very steep learning curve' in terms of the risks of cataloguing and thinking about the future interoperability (ibid. 2012).

Future interoperability would require clear instructions about the artworks technical, exhibition and display needs. The website in which the Thomson and Craighead artwork runs uses an algorithm to stream live data. The work also uses two projectors, Mac mini computers and speakers (Taylor in Graham 2014: 125). The software and hardware components define the artwork, but, it is important to make explicit the future decisions needed for these two components at the outset; the acquisition phase. Dietz emphasises that the Variable Media Initiative serves this function. The VMI is used as a platform to 'have the artist specify, in a more systematic way, which aspects of a given project can be changed and which must remain for the project to retain the artists' intent' (Dietz in Graham 2014: 64). The VMI then prepares a museum to plan for the obsolescence of ephemeral technology. It is acknowledged that media fail physically and software and hardware system often change radically. Therefore, the museum needs to understand how to plan for such future operability and to document clearly whether software code will be migrated or emulated.

Migration involves refreshing files and converting them to currently readable formats. Dietz points out that 'very few institutions can still read WordStar word-processing files' even if they have been refreshed (moving a particular file with the format it is encoded in from one physical storage medium to another) from floppy disc to DVD (ibid.: 69). Emulation is a way of using contemporary software to emulate the way older software and/or hardware ran. So, if the current algorithm for the Thomson and Craighead live data feed can be encoded (including a computer's operating system), then, in the future it could be possible for a contemporary system to run the older software. The VMI thus is a key tool to documenting the artist's intentions at the time of acquisition.

In both case studies the 'documentation gap' is one which requires building relationships and networks of expertise. The Harris Museum acknowledged the skills gap in documenting new media art and has built networks of expertise through other museums including Tate and institutions including FACT (Walker 2012). For each case study museum they are continuing to work through the documentation challenges. It is noteworthy that the Tate too is still dealing with new media art and documentation with great care and handling each object on a case-by-case basis (Gallagher 2013).

With respect to human resource competencies at the Van Abbemuseum the following staff was considered: the Director (Esche), the Deputy Director (Erbslöh), the Curator of Collections (Berndes) and the Curator of Exhibitions (A Fletcher). In order for staff to perform their tasks it is necessary to have the appropriate knowledge, skills and abilities. The strengths and weaknesses of staff should be assessed so that any gaps can be dealt with either through skills training or additional staff.

The Director has dual leadership of the museum with the Deputy Director. His role is primarily to shape the artistic programme and its content (Esche 2013). Esche started in the museum in 2004 and came into post not having a strong interest in management. He comments 'I was learning all the time because I have very little interest in management' (ibid.). Esche's background is in art history and contemporary art as well as medieval studies, but, his drive for the museum is to use it as a 'tool' and to see what you can do with that (ibid.). Before joining the Van Abbemuseum his position was as a thinker, teacher and writer around the process of curating and contemporary art (A Fletcher 2013). His experience before entering the museum was curating biennales in Korea, China, Indonesia and the Middle East. Berndes comments that he brought in this extensive knowledge and made us question the modernist position (2013). Overall, his breadth of expertise and experience is wide-ranging and taps into the contemporary art museum as a driver for change.

In contrast, the Deputy Director comes from a management background and worked for 15 years with artistic directors in Germany before joining the Van

Abbemuseum in the Netherlands. As well as her role as dual leader, she is also the Business Director and oversees the running of the museum including leading the Tactical Meeting. This meeting deals with everyday issues 'in the house' such as planning exhibitions, presentation and production, marketing and facility management (Erbslöh 2013). Erbslöh does not make decisions on artistic content but she 'thinks about how the museum can think creatively in order to facilitate the curatorial practice' (A Fletcher 2013).

The Curator of Collections, Berndes, is a curator and head of collections. She is responsible for the execution of the Acquisitions Policy as well as loan requests, conservation and exhibitions. Berndes has worked in the Van Abbemuseum in one role or another for over 25 years. In terms of experience and skills she has covered a diverse range of jobs. From 1980 to 1994 she worked at the front desk carrying out numerous functions. In 1994 she became assistant curator before moving up to curator in 1997. Her background and knowledge is art history and post art education (Berndes 2013). With over 15 years in post as curator she has amassed an extraordinary depth of knowledge of the collection as well as a large network of organisations outside the museum and extensive knowledge of the history and memory of the museum.

The Curator of Exhibitions, A Fletcher, started at the Van Abbemuseum in 2006 as an independent curator before becoming a full-time curator in 2007. Her role is to work on temporary exhibitions in the museum (between seven to eight exhibitions per year). Before joining the museum she, like Esche, was involved in various art biennales and has brought this knowledge into the museum. Her interest in 'institutional experimentalism' encourages new ideas to blossom and to try new ways of doing things (A Fletcher 2013). Recently, Fletcher's position affords her the opportunity to 'look at both the policy and pattern/planning of all the temporary exhibitions' (ibid.). Fletcher remarks that her curatorial practice has always been collaborative (ibid.)

From this brief compilation and outline of knowledge, skills and abilities of museum professionals, it is evident that staff possess a varied and wide-ranging

set of skills, experience and expertise to manage, collect, display and document contemporary art.

Motives

The second human resource factor asks to what extent do the motives of human resources fit with task requirements? (Tushman and O'Reilly 2002: 72). The reward system which motivates and rewards staff falls under the sphere of responsibility of the manager. They can create an atmosphere which stresses what values and norms are rewarded, punished or promoted. Furthermore, diverse staff in a range of roles and organisations will seek particular kinds of motivation (either monetary or intrinsic rewards such as social recognition for achievement). Hence, the challenge for managers is to design a reward system which motivates and rewards staff in a manner which is consistent with the underlying values, norms and behaviour of the workers (ibid.: 114). Managers have a role in recognising individual differences and motivating people accordingly (ibid.: 84). It could be argued that motives are closely allied to organisational culture, that is, how things are done and why. The culture of an organisation is shaped over time and emphasises certain values (such as quality), behaviours (teamwork) or norms (what is acceptable and what is not). The organisational culture of each regional case study museum will be discussed in Chapter seven.

The motives at the Harris Museum suggested that intrinsic rewards were highly important. Specifically, team working, knowledge exchange and collaboration across the institution were apparent. This is most noticeable with the *Current* project. Museum professionals engaged in the *Current* project commented that they were 'passionate' about what they do and like to try new things and are ambitious and versatile (Taylor, Jones, Anonymous A 2012). The Harris Museum has a reputation for collecting 'the new', taking risks and challenging themselves and the organisation (Walker 2012). Walker states that staff are clever, talented and they care about what they do. Staff are opinionated and will question what is said by the director (ibid. 2012). The Exhibitions Officer had been responsible for exhibiting contemporary art in the museum but saw a need

to collect new media art in particular. She spoke with the Head of the Harris Museum, Walker, and in partnership with arts organisation *folly*, decided to initiate a project to collect new media art and to involve many practitioners, academics and arts organisations. The nature of the project demanded an adaptable and flexible approach as well as openness to new ways of working.

Staff interviewed emphasised that they all work to promote the Harris Museum as a progressive, forward-thinking and inventive museum. From the outset, the project was framed within a collaborative approach – from initial idea, funding, display, acquisition, debate and evaluation. Sharing best practice through networks was emphasised and apparent. The motives and rewards are, I suggest, closely allied to the organisational culture and this strong relationship supports staff in challenging themselves and the organisation to collect new media art. Staff are, I contend, committed and dedicated to the job but also to the museum. The intrinsic rewards – collaborative working, versatility and agility, passion for the job and the museum – motivate staff to accomplish task requirements, most vividly through the *Current* project to exhibit and collect new media art for the museum's permanent collection.

Motives at the Van Abbemuseum, is I argue, and strongly allied to the organisational culture. There is openness in communication and trying new things; a willingness to learn from one another and experiment (Erbslöh 2013). A culture of proactivity is encouraged to permit staff to take more responsibility and challenge themselves (Berndes 2013). Staff is recognised if they take opportunities and take risks. Such an environment stimulates creativity and innovation, but, also adds pressure for those staff used to doing a job which does not demand much adaptation or flexibility. A balance between stability and long-term institutional memory and ambiguous and open experimentation took time to adopt (A Fletcher 2013). Trust was a word that many interviewees mentioned; trust in each other, trust in their skills and abilities, but, also trust in seeking expertise or collaborating with others. Staff in both case studies commented that the opportunity to learn about new media art as well as from other people, either inside or outside the museum, was a key motivator for them personally and professionally.

Demographics

The demographic mix of workers comprises of the following factors: how long have the unit or team worked together; what is the age range and backgrounds of those working in the group and does this affect the group dynamics; and, how different is the manager from the team? Such questions need careful consideration as the 'greater the demographic differences, the greater the potential for team conflict' (Tushman and O'Reilly 2002: 85). This issue will be discussed later in this chapter in relation to the case study findings.

The demographic mix of personnel in the *Current* project displayed a diverse range of age, background, experience and position. All members of the Current project at the Harris Museum were female and English. The youngest member (S Fletcher) came from University and has a broad experience of working with digital art and arts organisations. She brought a dynamic perspective and substantial network of contacts for the project. Her role was curated as a joint role – a hybrid role – between the Harris museum and arts organisation *folly*. Her role was to assist the Exhibition's Officer in this project and to coordinate the exhibition, organise the debate and evaluation and to take part in the acquisition process (the first judging panel). Fletcher points out that her role was a deliberate attempt to have a connection 'to make stronger links with people who already specialise in digital/new media to see what we can share with them' (S Fletcher 2012). This broad mix of ages, backgrounds, skills, abilities and experience blended into a coherent whole so that new media art could be exhibited, debated and collected for the Harris Museum. Fletcher comments 'if you need different backgrounds, different knowledge, different expertise, then more group decisions need to take place' (2012). Throughout the Current project collaboration and cooperative decision-making was embedded in the exhibition, collecting and documentation of new media art. Group decisions were taken as the Exhibitions Officer worked with colleagues to handle the myriad challenges which presented throughout this project (some of which are highlighted in Chapter 2). A collaborative approach was pivotal to success given the ambiguous and ever-changing nature of the project (Taylor 2012). At each

stage of the process different actors were brought in with different skills and experience to ensure that new media art was acquired (Walker 2012).

The Exhibition's Officer, L Taylor, joined the Harris Museum in 2000 as an Assistant Exhibition's Officer and took up her position as Exhibition's Officer in 2004. Her role was to organise a series of contemporary art exhibitions over a 12-18 month period. Her primary role was to curate and coordinate the exhibitions alongside the Front of House staff, volunteers, learning team and marketing staff. The Exhibitions Officer had acquired an extensive network of contacts with contemporary artists, arts organisations, art festivals, funders and university, (Taylor 2012). Taylor began to think about collecting art from the exhibitions programme as the artwork leaves after the temporary exhibition and 'there is no legacy of the exhibitions programme' (2012). She wanted to build a legacy for the museum's permanent collection because the exhibition programme was curating more digital media and new media.

The Head of Arts and Heritage, A Walker, began in the service in 1975 and then in 1992 became Head of the museum. Her role is strategic in nature and involves operations management of staff and resources within a County Council bureaucracy. Her position involves liaising with councillors, her seniors including the Deputy Chief Executive, as well as contact with the Pro Vice-Chancellor and lecturers at the University of Central Lancashire (UCLaN). She actively encouraged the Exhibition's Officer to pursue the *Current* project and gave approval for it to proceed.

The Collection's Officer, L Jones, commenced in 2004 and before that was the museums Collection's Care Officer. Her role is to document the entire museum collection (this covers social history, decorative art and fine art) and administer collections management and preventative conservation tasks. Jones became part of the *Current* project towards the end when discussions took place concerning the documentation and long-term thinking of new media art.

Anonymous A started in 2011 and her role in the *Current* project centred on the acquisition phase. She worked alongside the Collection's Officer and the

Exhibition's Officer to consider new ways of how to document and care for the new media artwork. Finally, the technician was a key part of the project at the exhibition and acquisition stage. The technician had been an in-house technician in the museum for 17 years and was subsequently brought in to the project on a freelance basis. His task was to give advice on how the install was going to come across (Taylor 2012).

The demographic mix at the Van Abbemuseum is a distinctive organisation where staff is made up from a diverse mix of ages, backgrounds and nationalities. The established and longstanding staff have worked upwards of 25-30 years. The Director, C Esche, has dual leadership of the museum with the Deputy Director. His role is primarily to shape the artistic programme and its content (Esche 2013). Esche started in the museum in 2004 and his background is in art history and contemporary art as well as medieval studies. His experience before entering the museum was curating biennales in Korea, China, Indonesia and the Middle East.

The Deputy Director, U Erbslöh, comes from a management background and worked for 15 years with artistic directors in Germany before joining the Van Abbemuseum in the Netherlands. As well as her role as dual leader, she is also the Business Director and oversees the running of the museum including leading the Tactical Meeting.

The Curator of Exhibitions, A Fletcher, has worked for eight years in the museum whilst the Curator of Collections, C Berndes, has been in the museum since 1980. The museum also has a programme of inviting guest curators to reside for a brief period. Guest curators such as Galit Eilat (she developed the Digital Arts Centre in Israel) was a research curator on digitisation of the museum's archive (A Fletcher 2013). The role of guest curator/research curator is not permanent but brought in for short-term special projects.

National Cultures

Human resource practices may have a greater impact on a unit's employee characteristics and competencies than country cultures and practices (Tushman and O'Reilly 2002: 85-86). Nonetheless, people from different national cultures deal with interpersonal differences and resolve conflict in different ways. Such national outlooks can have an influence in how staff work together and how they relate to the organisation. Thus, managers need to be sensitive to differences in managing individuals from different countries, but, also in managing the consequences of the diversity in their management teams (ibid.: 85).

Members of the *Current* project had a strong relationship in working on previous exhibitions and projects and, the group consisted of a small number of staff (the Exhibitions Officer, the *Digital Aesthetic* Project Assistant, the Collections Officer and the Head of the Harris). All members of the *Current* project are English so there were no other national cultures; however, it is not known whether staff in the project came from Preston or elsewhere. The issue of interpersonal differences or conflict was not discussed. Nonetheless, it is acknowledged that members of the *Current* project, with a broad demographic and motives which were concordant, worked together to build a new media art collection for the museum's permanent collection (Taylor 2012).

The national cultures within the Van Abbemuseum highlights the combination of nationalities - from Irish to Turkish, Dutch to German - the mix of nations is remarkable. It is evident that there is a diverse range of cultural differences in the Van Abbemuseum. The director decided to bring in other international curators; and developed a guest curator programme. The museum had cultural clashes and insistence on speaking English (the museum views itself as international in ambition and vision), did not go down too well with a lot of people (A Fletcher 2013).

The City Council brought in *Management Drives* which the museum uses to create 'profiles' of staff. Such individual profiles enable staff to understand their motivations, drivers and ways of communicating. It is important to recognise

and understand the different range of profiles so that museum professionals can find consensus, work together and minimise any potential conflict. In addition, it is recognised that in the Netherlands, the cultural difference is denoted by a culture of consensus i.e. autocracy or directive styles of managing are not tolerated. Staff expect participative decision-making and prefer a consensual approach (unless major cuts are envisioned; this requires the directors to take decisive action most often without consulting staff) (Erbslöh 2013). Therefore, the complex relationship between individual profiles, cultural differences and how the museum operates requires skill and intelligent handling.

Having set out the four human resource factors (competencies, motives, demographics and country differences) for each case study museum, I will now move on to discuss and assess congruence between critical tasks and people (Human Resources). The most obvious finding to emerge from this research is that new media art necessitates a collaborative approach; from inception of project to display and from acquisition to preservation. The collaborative practice is realised inside the museum and outside the museum.

Assessment of Congruence – Harris Museum (UK)

The project '*Current: An Experiment in Collecting Digital Art*' comprised of an open call for art, exhibition, acquisition and debate on new media art (set out in detail in Chapter 2). The project set out to engage with the issues of collecting new media art through a 'pioneering practical case study' (*Harris Museum Minutes*: 1). The Harris Museum ambitiously set out to showcase the best in digital art in the UK by acquiring a new media artwork for the fine art collection. Such an innovative project brought up a series of challenges and staff involved in the experiment actively sought answers to unique sets of questions from staff across the organisation and beyond. Moreover, one of the aims of the project was to 'further develop existing professional knowledge of new media and museum collecting, through a meaningful collaboration' (ibid.: 1).

Collaborative practice inside the Harris Museum

Throughout the process of installation and display, the museum technicians, County Council IT Department and other staff were essential to give their knowledge to protect the visitors, the gallery and the artworks; hence, a strong collaborative approach was engaged. Staff interviewed about how new media art affects the organisation state that working with lots of departments to make this new media art work is essential (Anonymous A 2012). Indeed, new media art is a key factor in helping collaborative working and cross-overs in expertise across departments (S Fletcher 2012).

The *Current* project was a unique experiment which, at different stages (the exhibition, acquisition, debate and evaluation) demanded many different players as required. Internal collaboration outlined in the evaluation report on the *Current* project emphasised the importance of supporting collaboration across the organisation. The *Current* experiment did combine expertise across departments to deliver the project (*Harris Museum Minutes*: 4). This is vividly shown when the County Council IT department had to assist the museum in disabling certain firewalls to allow the Thomson and Craighead artwork to run successfully (please see Chapter 2 for details) (Taylor 2012).

Whilst the *Current* project exhibited collaborative practice inside the museum, the greatest evidence of collaborative practice was outside the museum. Such collaboration occurred with different organisations including other museums, arts organisations, funding bodies, universities and academics and technical centres. At each stage of the *Current* experiment these organisations and their expertise were used to ensure that a new media artwork would be acquired for the Harris Museum's permanent art collection.

Collaborative practice outside the Harris Museum

New media art is highly fluid and ambiguous, and, I suggest, requires different degrees of collaboration. Such open and ambiguous characteristics often mean that solutions have to be found in a wide range of experts and organisations. This section considers collaborative practice outside the Harris Museum concerning new media art.

The Harris Museum undertook a Scoping Report on collecting new media art and this formed part of the Collecting New Media Policy included in the Collections Development Policy (CDP). Within the Scoping Report the principle of partnership is central to building networks and collaboration outside the Harris Museum specifically related to collecting and preservation of new media art. Examination of the Collections Development Policy, the Scoping Policy on Collecting New Media Art and an evaluation of the *Current* project identified networks for partnership working. These networks are summarised in the table below (see Figure 6.1) and will be discussed in brief to give an overview of the partnerships and collaborative approaches which the Harris Museum fosters and exploits.

The Collections Development Policy identifies a network of organisations that are ideally placed to work with the Harris Museum (Collections Development Policy 2011-2014: 63). Such relationships include partnerships with organisations in the North West of England, nationally and internationally. The Harris Museum is building relationships and partnerships with arts organisations (such as funding bodies), academic research at UCLAN, technical support and

expertise, and professional development of museum staff to build models of best practice and standards for new media art with other museums (nationally and internationally).

1.	2.	3.	4.
External relationships and partnerships	Academic Research	Technical expertise, documentation, archive	Best Practice and CPD
Contemporary Arts Society (commissions)	Tate research	<i>Tate Matters in Media Art</i>	<i>Tate Matters in Media Art</i>
Artangel – co-commissions	Arts Council: research programme, Legacy and Learning	FACT	MODES
<i>folly</i> (no longer exists)	FACT: PhD students, research	MITES	CPD – CAS North West
Cornerhouse	UCLaN – <i>Digital Aesthetic</i> 2001, 2007, 2012: exhibition, conference and website EDAU	REWIND	Subject Specialist Networks (SSN's)
FACT AND Festival	UCLaN: Sandbox	LUX	Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI)
FACT co-commissions	CRUMB: University of Sunderland	ZKM Germany	Arts Council: Legacy and Learning
Tate: National Programmes, loans and events			
Arts Council: North West and England, Collections Strategy			
Biennial			
Art Fund International			

Figure 6.1 Collaborative Networks – Harris Museum

Collaborating with external partners draws on external resources and expertise to 'layer up' knowledge (MA Working Wonders Action Plan 2013: 22). The Museums Association identifies a shift in museum work becoming more interdisciplinary (ibid.: 22). This point has been fully examined in the previous chapter on how the two regional case study museums are working in a more interdependent and cross-disciplinary way. This shift in new ways of working deliberately brings together staff across the organisation to share knowledge and expertise. Yet, this research makes a case that such capacity to harness knowledge and expertise is more pronounced when building partnerships with external bodies.

One key finding which was evident in the Harris Museum case study was the recognition of what skills and knowledge the museum has and where the gaps are so that expertise can be sought from outside (Walker 2012). Hence, not all expertise may reside within the museum, but, rather, in organisations such as FACT, Tate or the University. As one interviewee stated 'you need to have that relationship with people and work collaboratively and use the expertise when needed'; facilitating a broadening and deepening of expertise (Anonymous A 2012).

The research has found that the Exhibition's Officer's role had grown considerably. Before the *Current* project she was responsible for organising temporary exhibitions of contemporary art. However, networking and building relationships outside the museum was the catalyst to her thinking freshly about collecting new media art. Taylor's relationship with *folly* grew and a strong relationship cemented the idea to develop the partnership further. This partnership, the *Current* project, came to fruition and the process of sharing knowledge and expertise was pivotal (Taylor 2012). Ultimately, the scope for partnerships with organisations to combine resources and expertise, develop new audiences and raise the profile of new media art and the museum is favourable. The *Current* project, I suggest, is an excellent example of how collaborative practice externally brings fruitful opportunities for collecting new media art.

The *Current* project was 'particularly successful in sharing skills, knowledge and technical expertise between two organisations' (Harris Museum Minutes: 4). The project was adapted to fit the needs of the Harris Museum and *folly*. Hence, an exhibition and collecting opportunity were exploited, but, in tandem, the project enabled the Harris to develop their knowledge of digital art. A 'cohort of colleagues' from other institutions who had specialist knowledge of new media art were instrumental in acquiring a new media artwork (Walker 2012).

Following acquisition of the Thomson and Craighead artwork, a public debate took place. The notes from this debate highlighted the need to 'communicate and collaborate across institutions' (Harris Museum Minutes: 3). Recognition that institutions need to know what other organisations are collecting was highlighted. Such awareness can help collecting institutions to build new media art collections and to 'understand their role within the bigger picture and nationally/collectively represent cultural history' (ibid.). Hence, building relationships and networks of knowledge with other museums, arts organisations and funders is important to collecting new media art assiduously.

The CDP identifies an important priority link with academic research. The connection between the Harris and the University of Central Lancashire (UCLaN) through the *Digital Aesthetic* project is important. The collaborative approach to bringing research, production and exhibition in the form of an international conference, public exhibition, website and publication is an important forum for artists, theorists and academics of new media art. A strong relationship between the two partners has produced long-lasting collaboration (Scoping Report 2009: 11).

This has been achieved through UCLaN and the *Digital Aesthetic* 1 (2001), 2 (2007) and 3 (2012) exhibitions, conferences and website. The Harris Museum and UCLaN have a 'long and fruitful history of collaboration, particularly in relation to the contemporary art programme at the Harris and the Fine Art Courses at UCLaN' (Harris Museum Letter 2012). The *Digital Aesthetic* Project commenced in 2001 and in 2012 the third conference was convened in collaboration with the Harris and the Electronic and Digital Art Unit (EDAU) at

University of Central Lancashire (UCLaN). The EDAU unit is a specialist research unit set up in 2004 within the School of Art, Design and Performance at the University. The EDAU Unit has been involved in numerous projects of electronic and digital art as well as publications, exhibitions, curatorial projects and fine art practice and research into new media practice (*Digital Aesthetic* 2012).

The 2012 conference was held at the University and discussed and explored 'concepts, ideas, approaches and concerns related to fine art practice in the digital domain within a contemporary critical context (ibid.). The event featured presentations by a diverse range of invited artists, practitioners, curators and academics. An international exhibition was housed in two of Preston's key venues – the Harris Museum and the University's PR1 Gallery.

In addition to the exhibition, the University's School of Art, Design and Performance (ADP) organised the ADP Lecture Series. This lecture series (2012-2013) consisted of a series of guest lectures with invited speakers from design, art and performance to consider questions which had been raised in the *Digital Aesthetic* conference. One of the lectures was given by Mark Amerika, an American artist who exhibited a web-based work *The Museum of Glitch Aesthetics* (produced in association with the AND Festival). He gave an artist's talk at the museum and a lecture entitled *Culture Recoded: Location, Identity and Reality in the Digital Age* to an audience made up of academics, students, art professionals and the general public.

It is evident that the collaborative approach between the Harris museum and UCLaN has been considerable in view of the activities that they have jointly co-hosted. Recently, the *Current* project at the Harris Museum has been seen as a critical case study for academics, practitioners and museums and galleries. Taylor states that this unique case study demonstrated 'the power of collaborative working and the importance of strong relationships' (Taylor in Graham 2014: 132). The *Current* project has proven that research exploring the particular nature of this innovative venture is one which has lessons for museums, academics and artists.

Research institutions open up an opportunity for museums such as the Harris to partner together to share knowledge and expertise, expand networks and build high quality new media art collections. The Harris Museum has worked closely with the University of Central Lancashire to co-host such events. Similarly, Tate Liverpool has built strong research links with Liverpool University, and FACT has established links with Liverpool and John Moores Universities for a 5 year PhD research programme (Scoping Report 2009: 14). By pooling resources and expertise, collaborative partnerships can flourish, and new innovative projects can take shape. The *Current* project is an excellent example of such a partnership.

Relationships with external organisations that have expertise in technical support and skills are also developed. Such networks offer support regarding technical requirements of collections care and management and installation (Scoping Report 2009: 12). One key example is preservation of new media. The Matters in Media Art collaborative project sets out guidelines for the care of time-based artworks (Tate 2014). Such guidelines assist museum professionals in handling the 'more complex nature of new media installation and the need for new skills' (Scoping Report 2009: 8). The Tate has an extensive list of resources which include templates for pre-acquisition, accessioning and post-acquisition.

The Moving Image Touring and Exhibition Service (MITES) - based at FACT, Liverpool - provides technical support on all aspects of exhibition installation. The Harris Museum and MITES are considering ways to preserve new media artworks in line with museum standards (ibid.: 10). The Harris Museum is aware of possible avenues of technical expertise both in the UK and beyond. Indeed, one of the strategic priorities outlined in the Collections Development Policy is to 'contribute to and draw on research resources of regional, national and international organisations such as Tate, FACT, MITES, Pompidou and ZKM' (CDP 2011-2014: 66).

Allied to the technical expertise for new media art is the need to consider what constitutes best practice. Whilst the *Current* project emphasised the importance

of collecting new media art at the Harris Museum, it suggested that more museums need to collect such art (*Harris Museum Minutes*: 3). The public debate signalled that there is an opportunity for institutions to share experience and best policy. The network of organisations associated with new media art can facilitate continuing professional development through creative and technical research (*ibid.*: 63). The Harris Museum has an ongoing commitment to collecting new media and continues to develop best practice (S Fletcher 2013).

The Harris Museum has a commitment to continuing professional development for staff. The Contemporary Art Society (CAS) is of particular relevance to professional development for the Harris Museum. The museum sits within a cluster of ten member museums which took part in the CAS Acquisitions Scheme. This scheme generates networks and partnerships across the museum sector, as well as the development of a programme of research for museum professionals (Scoping Report 2009: 13).

The Harris Museum was successful in securing a partnership through the *Testing Media Project* (2012-2014) with the Peter Scott Gallery in Lancaster to continue to develop the Collecting New Media Policy (S Fletcher 2013). This project is designed to support the acquisition of significant contemporary works presenting particular challenges around display and conservation (CAS 2014). The Art Fund is providing £50,000 to the scheme for the acquisition of artworks and £10,000 for research and knowledge sharing (*ibid.*). In addition, the CAS is offering £10,000 towards acquisitions. The Director of CAS, Hobson, said:

contemporary artists are increasingly working with materials that present issues for museums who would wish to acquire their works. If museums are unable to collect this work due to a lack of curatorial and conservational knowledge, increasingly large gaps will open up in our public collections ... this initiative ... will not only assist museums to acquire challenging contemporary work, but, crucially, to enable us to share learning and best practice with the sector more widely (CAS 2014).

This project is ongoing and thus, two successful projects will each receive £30,000 to add artworks in 'challenging media' to their collections. In addition, £10,000 will be given by the Art Fund to research, production of case studies and knowledge exchange (ibid.).

CAS offers museum members the opportunity to apply for curatorial development through fellowships, residencies and placements. The National Network is the Subject Specialist Network (SSN) for contemporary art and the webpage has an extensive array of information including partnerships, events, workshops and case study examples. Such information can, I suggest, enhance skills development, networking and knowledge exchange (ibid.).

A seminar organised by CAS considered 'access to specialists and what standards we work to and how we manage our collections with regard to documentation' (Anonymous A 2012). The benefit and advantage of SSN's is clear. The Museums Association states 'Subject Specialist Networks (SSNs) provide a forum for practitioners in the field to share knowledge ... the outward looking, supportive role of SSNs is fundamental as fewer museums have subject-specialist curatorial staff' (MA Working Wonders Action Plan for the Museum Workforce 2013: 23).

This section has examined the Harris Museum case study and two key aspects were found. Firstly, the *Current* project illustrated a strong collaborative approach within and across the museum. This collaborative practice was key to installing the Thomson and Craighead artwork along with other works for the temporary exhibition. Furthermore, the practice of collaboration extended to documentation, acquisition and preservation.

Second, the most interesting finding was the extent to which new media art exploited an extensive network of organisations. Collaborative practice outside the museum was significant and collaboration with other organisations across the UK and beyond was substantial. Collecting new media art has enabled the Harris Museum to cement formal and informal relationships with external organisations. The relationships and networks build knowledge exchange,

promote best practice, exploit technical expertise and engage with academic research.

A proactive approach to building relationships and partnerships was accomplished throughout the *Current* project. Fruitful partnerships with UCLaN were achieved to co-host and collaborate on a new media art exhibition, conference and website. Academic research links have also been made with the University of Sunderland to disseminate knowledge on the project as a useful case study for other academics, theorists and museum practitioners. A network of organisations provides technical research and expertise for the care of new media art, preservation, documentation, storage and installation of such works. These include Tate's Matters in Media Art, FACT, MITES and ZKM.

Finally, models of best practice and continuing professional development are closely allied to technical expertise. Best practice guidelines exist through Matters in Media Art, the Museums Association, the Arts Council and MODES User Association. Continuing professional development is an opportunity to enhance skills and share knowledge. Chief amongst the opportunities is CAS and the SSNs which exist across the UK. Such networks open the channels to share expertise through workshops and seminars, secure resources and apply for funding to acquire challenging artworks.

The Congruence Model asks whether people/human resources are congruent with the critical tasks to be accomplished. Four key questions which were raised in this chapter (see page 154) suggest that the staff recognise the gaps in their skills sets. New media art presents unforeseen difficulties and, as a result, the necessary skills and expertise had to be brought in from outside the museum. The difficulties which the Harris Museum encountered were beyond the scope of one institution. As a regional and medium-sized museum, the Harris Museum sought collaborations with external organisations to share knowledge, gain technical support and work with academic institutions. Such collaborations and networks are, I suggest, valuable for smaller organisations.

Taken together, these difficulties could, on the one hand, be considered as a gap in human resources. Staff do not possess all the necessary competencies to undertake the critical tasks. On the other hand, I suggest this recognition could also be viewed as a strength and an opportunity. This opportunity is illustrated in the extensive network of organisations that the Harris Museum collaborates and partners with. There is an emphasis on sharing knowledge and learning from one another. Staff are continually updating and upgrading their skills base to build new media art collections. A key finding points out that the Harris Museum has a broad overview of the necessary expertise required for new media art, and, this entails getting the right people involved at the right time.

In summary, these results show that important insights can be drawn from the data. Purposely building strong networks and creating relationships externally is crucial to securing new media art for a museum collection.

Assessment of Congruence – Van Abbemuseum (The Netherlands)

This research suggests that staff who feel that they have particular weaknesses in relation to new media art are upfront and honest about the gaps in skills and expertise (Berndes 2013). As a result, there is an openness and readiness to seek solutions; to embrace knowledge and learn from others so that collecting new media art is effective. New media art opens up new terrain which is still being traversed and mapped. Such terrain has a high degree of ambiguity and fluidity which, turn, requires staff to be highly adaptable and proactive. Answers and solutions to new media art are not fixed or permanent, but, rather ever-changing and responsive to the demands of each work. Such diversity brings challenges of course, but, likewise, it brings tremendous avenues of exploration and opportunities for collaboration. Readiness to seek solutions and embrace knowledge regarding collecting new media art is, I suggest, a key factor in creating effective collaborations. The ways in which collaboration can be nurtured and grown will enable museums to confidently collect new media art. A collaborative approach to knowledge, skills and abilities means that such factors are constantly evolving and being strengthened by collaborative practice inside the museum and outside.

Collaborative practice inside the Van Abbemuseum

The Director commented that there is an effort to 'create an atmosphere where people feel they can bring in their skills and their knowledge and their expertise and they feel they can freely exchange things' (Esche 2013). He admits that building such an atmosphere has taken time, but, staff now actively works across boundaries and share knowledge.

The Curator of Exhibitions, Annie Fletcher, adds that before she started at the Van Abbemuseum her position entailed bringing in ideas, curating contemporary art and organising seminars and research. Her background and experience of biennales was experimental and dynamic. Likewise, the Director had similar experiences and together they were keen to challenge the museum and are interested in 'institutional experimentalism' (2013).

This space for experimenting has brought with it creativity, freedom and informed risk-taking. This space also opened up the possibility of working cross-functionally. Efforts to shift the organisational structure and culture have been central to facilitating this cross-over approach. As a consequence, greater importance on collaborative practice has been at the forefront of what staff do. Fletcher remarks that the curators in the museum are more akin to a newspaper 'editorial team' where ideas and skills come together rather than distinct, specialist curators (2013). A shared office for curators emphasises a creative environment where sharing ideas, questioning assumptions and taking risks is nurtured.

Collaborative practice inside the museum takes in the experience and background of staff, thus, collecting new media art involves bringing together roles and disciplines such as curator, technician, registrar, conservator and artist to ensure that the work is acquired, displayed, documented and preserved effectively. As problems arise, solutions are sought from across the museum. Berndes points out that, acquiring new media art, necessitates that the technician be involved at the outset because he can advise on what will be necessary for the installation of a work (2013). For example, Hannah Hurtzig's *Flight Case Archive of Mobile Academy* (2003/2010) – a continuous and growing mobile audio-visual archive – required the skills and expertise of the technicians to ensure that the two transport cases in which visitors sit in would operate the videos as well as run online content streamed live from the internet (Conference Notes 2012). The work comprises of a computer programme and access to the internet, which, at some point in the future will require upgrading. Hence, many questions arose which required the expertise of the technicians in order to install it safely and securely in the museum's library. Staff across the museum collaborates as soon as the work comes into the collection. So, information is shared, a framework for the artworks is formulated, and, a process of sharing knowledge is accomplished through project based teams (Berndes 2013).

Demonstrably, collaborative practice within the museum is paramount to successfully fulfilling the complex information needs of new media art. An

inter-disciplinary approach with many perspectives and skills sets is critical to manage the bespoke challenges that each work presents. Indeed, the present study found that the challenges and questions which arise for each new media artwork demands a collaborative approach. Standard templates are not yet available for the information needs of this art. For this reason, museum professionals have to find solutions to each specific work as issues arise (Sterrett and White 2012).

Collaborative practice outside the Van Abbemuseum

The most interesting finding was that collaborative practice outside the museum was noticeably greater than that inside the museum concerning new media art. This was also the case with the Harris Museum. Thus, the distinctive characteristics and needs of new media art make it a demanding work to acquire for a museum collection. New media art is fluid and often intangible thus requiring particular skills sets and expertise which may not always reside within the museum. Therefore, a considerable network of expertise resides outside the museum. This section sets out the approaches to collaboration outside the Van Abbemuseum.

The museum states that 'international collaboration and exchange have made the Van Abbemuseum a place for creative cross-fertilisation and a source of surprise, inspiration and imagination for its visitors and participants' (Van Abbemuseum 2014). It may also be the case that such collaboration and exchange has had an impact on staff and the museum collection. This section will illustrate how such exchange networks, knowledge sharing and cross-fertilisation are having a bearing on new media art. But, also how new media art is influencing international collaboration and knowledge exchange. This reciprocal relationship, I suggest, is intricately bound.

Collaborative practice outside the museum will be examined under four main areas: 1) artists; 2) external networks; 3) research centres and laboratories; and 4) conferences and workshops. All themes are interconnected and the accent

on building, exploiting and sharing such collaborative practice is noticeable with new media art.

New media artists collaborate extensively and some have a 'community' around them who share in the decisions being made (Esche 2013). This view is shared by the Curator of Exhibitions. Fletcher remarks that 'artists are becoming much more sophisticated about bringing other professionals in and not owning the entire process themselves' (2013). In 2013 the Van Abbemuseum was working on a project with artist Jonas Staal (his work has since been acquired by the museum). In order to produce the work or 'encounter' a whole team of experts were involved – this included an editor, a copy-writer and a designer (ibid.). Critically, however, the Curator of Exhibitions points out that these complex relationships need to be thought through very carefully in order to determine how many might be needed in the future (ibid.). The artist's intention and information needs become a key driver of how the work is exhibited, documented, upgraded (if at all), preserved and stored. The Van Abbemuseum is acutely aware of thinking through questions, experimenting and finding solutions about any new media art object in the future; this, in turn, can be used as for other works which requires such an approach (Esche 2013).

The many networks which exist are established for museum professionals across disciplines, yet, there is also a drive to share knowledge and best practice across various networks. A Europe-wide initiative funded by the European Union's *Culture Programme* (€2.5m) has been set up to develop a model for collaboration. Esche is part of a Directors Group and he stresses the need to secure deep collaboration between the institutions (2013). The five year European project, 'L'Internationale', is a network within the museum field to develop 'as a new form of cultural confederation where collections, artistic research, technology and public access can be shared across member institutions' (Van Abbemuseum 2014). This network will deliberate on 'everything from ICT and collection to exhibitions and projects and research' (ibid.). The six members are: Moderna Galerija (Slovenia); Museo nacional Centro de arte Reina Sofia (Spain); Museu d'art Contemporani de Barcelona

(Spain); Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerpen (Belgium); SALT (Turkey) and the Van Abbemuseum.

L'Internationale is also supported by partner organisations from the academic and artistic fields (for example John Moores University, UK and University College Ghent, Belgium). The network has a Facebook page where uploads include philosophical essays, interviews with artists, exhibition reviews, curator's comments, videos, manifestos, community projects and much more. Social media is opening up the space to share, collaborate and learn.

Collaborative practice with art labs and Universities is also evident. For example, Berndes is part of a research group in the Netherlands and sits on a Steering Group/Advisory Committee to consider problems and challenges around new media art. The research group, International Network for the Conservation of Contemporary Art (INCCA), is funded by Dutch museums to research and collaborate on projects (INCCA 2014). In 2012 a two year project undertook both quantitative and qualitative research on a number of Dutch museums and organisations on born-digital art to set up a network to consider case studies and collaborative models. The publication 'Born-Digital Artworks in the Netherlands' was created as part of a research project 'Conservation of Media Art Collections Netherlands'. The research was carried out by Annet Dekker (PhD student at Goldsmiths University), on behalf of the Foundation for the Conservation of Contemporary Art (SBMK/Stichting Behoud Moderne Kunst), Virtueel Platform, the Netherlands Media Art Institute (NIMk) and Digital Heritage Netherlands (DEN). The research shows that museums face similar problems and artists and organisations are working on creating solutions (Born Digital Artworks in the Netherlands 2012: 68). The report puts forward ideas to try out new methods and strategies in practice to generate 'best solutions' (ibid: 68). One of the solutions to the problems new media art presents is to develop 'collaborative knowledge frameworks' rather than silos of information (Sterrett in Born Digital Artworks in the Netherlands 2012: 69). Therefore, a focus on knowledge exchange through effective internal communication across the organisation, but, also a willingness to collaborate outside the museum to handle the complex challenges this work presents (ibid.: 69).

NIMk is one of the initiators of national and international research projects focussing on conservation of born-digital art and would like to play a leading role in setting up an expertise centre (ibid.: 69). Moreover, a variety of institutions are working on 'recipes' in relation to the preservation and documentation of born-digital artworks (ibid.: 69). Research on born-digital art challenges for preservation and documentation were discussed at an international expert meeting in Amsterdam in 2011. Three working groups were set up with the aim of considering: a) preserving digital components; b) exhibition and presentation of new media art components and useful strategies for museums, and; c) documentation tools to build a complete picture of the artwork, and, as a resource for future preservation. This platform brought together participants whose skills and expertise encompasses fine arts, applied arts, games and design disciplines. The three groups focused on knowledge exchange and highlighted the need to coordinate international collaborative initiatives.

Thus, the 'Born-Digital Artworks in the Netherlands' Report sets out the aim of SBMK, NIMk and Digitaal Erfgoed Nederland (DEN: Digital Heritage Netherlands) working together to develop a series of workshops for museums and related organisations so that ad hoc solutions can lead to standardisation (ibid.: 70). One of the report's recommendations called for the establishment of a collaborative knowledge centre where information from various partners can be shared, problems solved and advice sought regarding documentation and preservation of new media art. Collaboration with research bodies adds to the growing need for, and awareness of, the diverse range of networks, expertise and knowledge sharing.

A working conference in 2012 entitled 'Collecting and Presenting Born-Digital Art' was organised by Baltan Labs in collaboration with the Van Abbemuseum. The concept of this conference was as a platform for museum professionals, academics, artists, theorists, curators, historians, gallerists, arts organisations and research centres to explore and exploit knowledge exchange and critical thinking on new media art and to enhance inter-disciplinary dialogue (Baltan 2012). The conference, considered and explored issues around 'writing

histories', 'aesthetics', 'exhibiting', 'collecting' and 'advancing collaboration'. This conference generated discussions and an opportunity to share knowledge, learn from one another and to build networks and awareness of the implications of new media art collections.

One of the conference sessions explored the idea of 'Advancing Collaboration, or developing organisational structures'. This session explored the 'expanding spheres of people involved in producing, studying, collecting, and presenting born-digital art' and how openness and knowledge exchange can be drawn up to foster a collaborative approach amongst people and organisations (Conference Notes 2012.). The moderators from SFMOMA, Jill Sterrett and Layna White, argue that 'working collaboratively is required when collecting new media art' (ibid.). Indeed, they suggest that new media art 'perforates the boundaries' within the museum and this perforation should encourage 'new people to fill the gaps' (ibid.). As a result, the museum can learn and share knowledge with those people outside the museum. Within the museum new media art creates 'gaps in the system'. In order for the museum to adjust to these gaps inter-disciplinary collaboration is needed to acquire, exhibit and preserve new media art. White suggests that this 'increases the need for people (artist, museum staff) inside and outside to *Find, Collect, Share and Contribute*' (ibid.).

The Curator of Collections notes that building networks and sharing knowledge and expertise enables the Van Abbemuseum to constantly learn and build knowledge to bridge gaps which may present itself in relation to documentation, exhibition, collection and preservation of new media art (Berndes 2013). The museum adds to this body of knowledge by organising a diverse range of lectures, talks, presentations and a curator's programme. The Van Abbemuseum develops projects in collaboration with partners both in the Netherlands and beyond with the aim of 'collective collaboration' and the 'interchange of knowledge' (Van Abbemuseum 2014). All projects seek to strengthen knowledge exchange and collaboration with partners in contemporary art and specifically new media art.

In looking at these two regional case studies it is clear that they both build networks of knowledge and expertise in order to better deal with the demands of new media art. A collaborative approach to knowledge sharing is achieved through connections and relationships with universities and research labs as well as technical expertise through specialist bodies. Moreover, the Harris Museum and the Van Abbemuseum actively share knowledge and are keen to learn from others via conferences and workshops. Disseminating knowledge is also a finding which both museums encourage. Each has written about how new media art presented interesting and unforeseen challenges and how they were overcome.

Assessing congruence between critical tasks and human resources acknowledges there are potential gaps in skills sets and expertise at the Van Abbemuseum. However, it is also recognised that challenges that new media art presents is seen as an opportunity rather than a drawback or limitation by interviewees. Whilst the Congruence Model would suggest that there may be incongruence between critical tasks and human resources, the research provides evidence that the shortfall in skills and expertise presents long-term opportunities and advantages. Chief amongst these is the opportunity to build a storehouse of knowledge and best practice so that new media art can be acquired.

A collaborative approach both internally (across units and disciplines) and externally (outside bodies and museums) can advance opportunities which can be exploited. Such relationships can enhance knowledge sharing and skills and expertise development. Thus, new media art has the ability to create gaps and perforate boundaries, but, through collaborative practice, it also stimulates a constant chain of new ideas and perspectives which can add to the growing body of knowledge regarding the myriad challenges such art presents.

In sum, museum professionals are willing to admit their shortfalls in terms of expertise and skills sets concerning collecting new media art. There is recognition and acknowledgement that many of the answers can be captured inside the institution and outside the museum. Therefore, a deliberate and

proactive approach to building and sustaining networks and interinstitutional dialogue is paramount. I wish to make a case that seeking expertise, sharing knowledge and learning from one another is an opportunity which can be fully exploited. Developing a storehouse of knowledge and expertise could, in turn, build new media art collections with a lasting legacy.

Implications of new media art on collaborative practice

The discussion in this chapter has argued that new media art is an active shaper of collaborative practice and promotes agile curation. New media art presents collecting museums with questions, issues and challenges which needs 'multi-directional dialogues' internally and externally (Baltan 2012).

Internally, the Harris Museum, for example, brought together many skills sets and perspectives to ensure that new media art could be exhibited, collected and preserved. Museum staff working across boundaries consisted of health and safety personnel dealing with safety concerns of artworks for exhibition. Similarly, IT technicians at the City Council offices had to relax secure firewalls for live data streaming of the Thomson and Craighead artwork. As mentioned earlier 'feedback loops' are essential to generating information which helps to collect and document new media art. A continuous cycle of information creates feedback loops which can be used when further artworks enter a collection.

Collaborative practice both inside and outside the organisation strengthens learning and professional development for museum professionals. Staff in both regional case studies commented that the opportunity to learn about new media art from other people, either inside or outside the museum, was a key motivator for them personally and professionally. The Curator of Collections at the Van Abbemuseum suggested that staff are interested in the discourse between artworks and what they can learn from that (Berndes 2013). Such an understanding of this discourse informs their practice and strategy for exhibiting and collecting new media art.

Collaborative practice externally has been shown to be extensive and far-reaching. This finding was surprising, but, nevertheless suggests that new media art is a distinctive genre of art which requires a diverse range of knowledge and skills in order for it to be collected for a museum's permanent collection. In both case studies the size of external networks and relationships was considerable. Such networks include universities, research labs, arts organisations and museum confederations. New media art does not have many

precedents and many interviewees commented that getting to grips with this art was a 'steep learning curve' (Laurenson in Noordegraaf et al. 2013: 290). Nevertheless, reciprocal relationships and partnerships outside the museum fostered learning and support. The Harris Museum attended a Subject Specialist Network meeting to consider issues related to documentation and preservation of new media art. Equally, the Van Abbemuseum has sat on advisory boards and partnered with research labs to produce case studies and strategise about best practice. The Tate 'grew a new department' to deal with new media art and has an international reputation for its depth of expertise in Matters in Media Art. The Tate have been involved in building 'regional areas of expertise' and learning from museums such as the Harris in order to develop their own bank of expertise and knowledge (Morris 2012). In addition, they work closely with other museums throughout the world and continuously build on their expertise. Likewise, the network for curators is considerable and information sharing, conferences and collaboration on exhibitions is active (Gallagher 2012).

Professor of Heritage and Digital Culture at the University of Amsterdam suggests that, whilst new media art does challenge existing theories and practices, it also presents new opportunities (Noordegraaf et al. 2013: 18). She points out that new media art 'calls for a fresh perspective on institutionally grown ideas and practices, and invites creative solutions and extra-institutional and cross-disciplinary collaborations' (ibid.: 18). In short, the case studies have clearly shown how they are coming up with creative solutions in their attempts to collect new media art. Collaboration with staff inside the museum across disciplines and partners outside the museum is compelling and commanding.

Conclusion

It is interesting to note that in both case studies a consistent theme emerged – new media art requires a broad overview about what expertise is needed; that is, knowing who to call in and when (Taylor 2012) – I term ‘agile curation’. Knowing who to call and what skills are needed is a key feature of new media art. Furthermore, bringing together those people with the right skills for the job enable staff to learn from one another. Hence, sharing knowledge across units and outside the museum is a key factor in collecting new media art. The speed and pace at which artists employ technology to create new media art suggests that museum professionals are playing ‘catch up’ and are constantly having to learn and adapt in order to successfully collect and preserve new media art. Such a task demands the input of many skills of many professionals. Thus, the concept of being ‘an expert’, able to address all aspects of collecting new media art, is unrealistic and outdated. Instead, having substantive skills in one specific area of new media art, and, being a team player who collaborates effectively with other practitioners having complementary skills, is, I argue, representative of successful collecting projects in new media art.

This chapter reveals that staff are overcoming boundaries that new media art creates. Overcoming challenges is achieved through collaboration across the museum and with other organisations outside the museum (such as universities, research labs, arts organisations, technical bodies). The gaps in expertise are acknowledged by staff. Yet, It is seen as a strength and an opportunity to ask the right questions and to seek the knowledge and expertise of others; either across the organisation or beyond. Issues and challenges which may arise are dealt with on a case-by-case basis. There is an acceptance of ambiguity and open-endedness of the process of acquiring new media art for the permanent collection. Each regional case study museum has carefully considered collecting new media art, but, also distinguished that not all knowledge or expertise resides within the institution. Collaborative practice outside the museum is advantageous and creates ‘feedback loops’ and knowledge exchange and learning. The museums consider these potential gaps

in skills and challenges with new media art as an opportunity rather than a drawback or limitation.

New media art, one might assume, would have an impact on the museum yet, the research has provided important insights into understanding how the museum can have an impact on new media art. This reciprocal relationship means that new media art reveals its enigmas to staff through cross-disciplinary and external collaborative practice. As a result, the museum is in a stronger position to deliberately and diligently acquire, document, exhibit and preserve new media art. The artist's intentions are central to the work and museums can understand how to tackle challenges about migration, coding, contracts, loans and installation with the artist being an active partner. The fiefdoms of knowledge silos and expert curators are giving way to open dialogue and knowledge sharing amongst partners from all disciplines and organisations.

This chapter has explored the central factor within organisations – its staff. The congruence assessment has exposed a gap in the museum's organisational performance between critical tasks and human resources/people. This perceived gap in skills sets and expertise can be mitigated by building networks and partnering with organisations; fostering collaboration within the museum and beyond. In the next chapter, I will assess the alignment between critical tasks and culture (informal organisational arrangements) looking at norms and values, communication networks and power.

CHAPTER 7 – Findings: staff agency and leadership – agile organisational culture and informal leadership

Introduction

We have got a very opinionated and talented and clever group of staff working here. I think we must be one of the liveliest sections in the Council. (Walker 2012)

This quote by Alex Walker, Head of the Harris Museum, states that museum staff (across all disciplines and collections) is highly talented professionals, very passionate about their job and the museum, and, not afraid to voice their opinion and challenge authority. This lively section of the Council is, I suggest, conducive to collecting new media art because the culture is one which embraces ambiguity and change. Hence, the two case studies demonstrate an agile organisational culture and leadership approach.

The informal structure, or organisational culture, is an incredibly subtle force yet it has a profound influence on how an organisation functions and performs. This chapter will set out what organisation culture is and how important it is in achieving the organisation's vision and strategy. I will examine the two regional case study museums, and, through the Congruence Model, I will determine to what extent the organisational culture aligns with the critical tasks and to assess the extent to which collecting new media art impacts on the organisational culture and vice versa. Within the Congruence Model the organisational culture examines the norms and values of the organisation, the communication networks and informal power which is embedded within the institution. What emerged from the congruence analysis is a clear sense that organisational culture fosters a climate of staff agency and informal leadership.

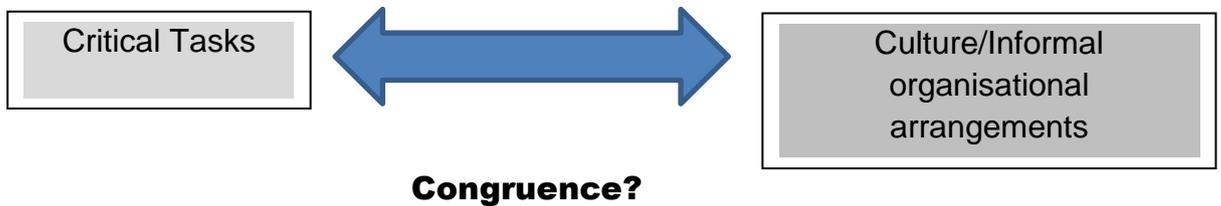
In both the Harris Museum and the Van Abbemuseum, it was shown that the culture is strong, open and coherent. Staff shares the vision and mission of the

museum and are passionate about what they do. There is a culture of experimentation, empowered decision-making, staff ownership and responsibility. In addition, museum professionals are encouraged to take informed risks, challenge orthodoxy and be proactive.

Closely allied to the organisational culture is, I argue, the role of leadership. Leaders have power to shape an organisation, determine the direction of a museum and, control how work is achieved (Fopp 1997, Handy 1993, Morgan 1988, Brown 1998). There are many ways to lead and the situational leadership model suggests that leadership is contingent on the led, the task and the context. In the case studies it was discovered that leadership at the top is primarily participative or consensual in nature. As a result, staff are given latitude to work in new ways, make decisions and shape the organisation. Staff agency and informal leadership are evident in both museums. The strong association between culture and leadership, I assert, opens up the museum to consider a broader range of art for acquisition which includes new media art.

This chapter will first outline what organisational culture is and the differing types that can exist in an organisation. The organisational culture at the Harris Museum and the Van Abbemuseum will be discussed. Next, I will discuss leadership theory and examine situational leadership in particular. Through this concept we can see how the two regional case study museums are governed in a participatory style of leadership. Then, I will assess the degree to which the critical tasks are aligned with the culture of each museum taking into account the importance of leadership, and, in particular staff agency and informal leadership. Finally, I will set out some opportunities for contemporary art museums in terms of leadership across the organisation.

Congruence Model – Assessment of Congruence: Critical Tasks and Culture/Informal organisational arrangements



Organisational culture comprises the norms, values, informal communication and power which play a key part in an organisation. Aligning the organisational culture is the final component of the congruence analysis. It sets out to examine whether the unit or organisation's culture is congruent with the critical tasks to be accomplished. Therefore, the assessment sets out to answer the following questions: 1) does the existing culture energise the accomplishment of the critical tasks 2) do the informal communication network and informal distribution of power help get the work done 3) are there existing aspects of the current culture that may hinder the execution of these tasks? (Tushman and O'Reilly 2002: 67).

Organisational Culture

In this section I will define organisational culture and show why it is so important in organisational performance and management, and, the impact it has on employees. Then, I will set out the type of cultures which, according to Handy, illustrate the best fit culture to each organisational structure. Finally, I will consider how leaders at the Harris Museum and the Van Abbemuseum are applying culture to encourage innovation and staff agency. Using the Congruence Model, I will assess the congruence between the organisational culture and the critical tasks in each museum.

Organisational culture: a definition

Co-existing alongside the formal organisational arrangements are the informal practices which encompasses a 'pattern of processes, practices, and political relationships that embodies the values, beliefs, and accepted behavioral norms of the individuals' (Wyman 2003: 9). This pattern can exert a powerful influence over individual and group behaviour.

Thus, organisational culture can be considered as the norms and values that characterise the organisation (Tushman and O'Reilly 2002: 102). This is most noticeable in the differing atmospheres, differing ways of doing things, of individual freedom and sets of values and beliefs which are manifested in the organisation's structures and systems (Handy 1993: 180). As a consequence, each organisation has its own culture. Handy suggests that the manager must be familiar with the culture in order to manage it; how work is organised, the way authority should be exercised and how staff are controlled or rewarded (ibid.: 181). In effect, culture plays a fundamental role in the management of an organisation. Moreover, I contend, that the leader can have a tremendous impact on the organisation's culture (Fopp 1997: 161). Hence, the 'shared agreements and social expectations constitute a powerful and pervasive social control system within groups and organizations', perhaps even more powerful than the formal control systems (discussed in Chapter 5) (Tushman and O'Reilly 2002: 104).

Organisational culture and organisational performance

The importance of culture within organisations should not be underestimated. Workers make sense of their working lives and attribute meaning to encounters and events which are meaningful and imperceptibly felt (Brown 1998: 34). Organisational culture does not remain static over time, but, is subject to a continuous process of development and change. This process of development and change is due to organisational learning where staff 'seek answers to problems of external adaptation and internal integration' (ibid.: 35).

According to Carnall (1990: 32-33), organisational effectiveness is likely to result from cultures which encourage the following: accountability, synergy, cross-cultural skills, and financial realism. Accountability involves direct and personal accountability for performance both from management and staff within units/departments where central control of finance and strategy sits alongside decentralisation of activities and resources at unit level. The capacity to secure cooperation and collaboration to get tasks done requires a synergy which enables employees to convey their opinions and question assumptions. Working alongside people from a diverse range of backgrounds means building cross-cultural skills is crucial to achieve success and effectiveness for the organisation. Management must integrate all the interfaces of staff, information, resources and technology in order to ensure that work is performed effectively (Carnall 1990).

The norms which set out acceptable organisational attitudes and behaviours are socially constructed (for example, jokes may be appropriate in some settings but not others) and staff can comprehend what is acceptable both in their unit and across the organisation. In addition, management signals to staff what is important or valued by how certain norms are rewarded or punished (Tushman and O'Reilly 2002: 102).

Understanding norms can help to shape culture to facilitate organisational performance and effectiveness. Hence, norms vary in two ways. First, they can vary in the extent of their consensus i.e. shared agreement about what values, behaviours and attitudes are important. As a result, the espoused values not only need to be widely known, but, widely practiced (ibid.: 105). Second, the intensity of certain norms needs to be strongly felt by staff so that they feel committed and motivated to accomplishing both the vision and strategy of the organisation (for example, quality, safety, customer service, inclusiveness). If both aspects of the organisation's norms are met it can be said to have a strong culture. The concept of norms including shared agreement on values, behaviours and attitudes may, perhaps, be more significant when collecting new media art. Such norms strengthen collaboration and knowledge exchange so that acquiring new media art can be made possible.

Where cultures are strong, staff feel good about what they do and where 'social information networks have generated widely shared values and beliefs about the organisation and what it does, employees come to believe that they are part of something important and they take pride in this fact' (Fopp 1997: 162). In contrast however, weak cultures will show that members do not all share in the organisation's values and beliefs. Fopp suggests that culture within organisations should have a strong impact on employees. If workers feel their work is not greatly valued, or, they are not seen as an important part of the museum, then they will be lacking in motivation, purpose and job satisfaction.

Managers should be attentive to organisational culture and especially those interested in improving the performance of the museum (Fopp 1997: 162). Directors should assess whether the organisation's social control system supports or limits the organisation from accomplishing its critical tasks. If the culture is not compatible with the task to be done, or the staff to carry out the task, then, the organisation's ability to function well and operate effectively will be impeded. Handy points out that 'organizations that are *differentiated* in their cultures and who control that differentiation by *integration* are likely to be more successful' [author's emphasis] (1993: 209). Therefore, an organisation may have more than one culture, but, if the integration of the cultures is managed successfully, then the task to be accomplished should be achievable.

Types of Cultures - The Informal Organisation

Organisational theorist and practitioner Charles Handy emphasises that each organisation and each part of the organisation 'has a culture, and a structure and systems appropriate to that culture' (1993: 209). He proposes four types of 'tribes' or organisational structures/cultures – these are Club Tribe (Power Tribe), Role Tribe, Task Tribe and Person Tribe. For the purposes of my research I will be focussing on the Role Tribe and the Task Tribe as these are most often to be found in museums. My research findings, while preliminary, suggests that these tribes/cultures are evident in the case study museums (especially as both institutions are nested within much larger public sector services and government structures). An organisation could have a combination of cultures depending on the function of the unit, the style of management in each department, and the workforce's motivation and competency. So, for example, a museum may find itself with a task tribe in terms of project working and collaboration, for example, exhibitions and collections alongside the role tribe (as often found in a bureaucracy) where units and critical tasks are routinized and formalised (such as finance and personnel).

The role culture is often seen in bureaucracies where rules, procedures and standardisation are central. Such organisations are controlled at the top by a narrow band of managers. Such institutions are slow to change and avoid risk-taking. Museums tend to fall into this category although the 'efficiency of this type of culture depends on the rationality of the allocation of work and responsibility, rather than on the individual's personality' (Fopp 1997: 164). Fopp points out that the role culture is successful in stable environments, but, changes in recent years to the environment in which museums operate has shown the insecurity of the role culture (ibid.: 164). Such institutions are fond of organisational charts, manuals, guidelines and forms because they are reliable, routine and efficient.

In contrast to the role culture is the task culture which sees more of a project-orientated approach with various people brought together to problem-solve a particular issue. Such people are 'excited by what is new' and

are team people (Handy 1990: 160). Members of the group/team will have a high degree of control and enjoy equal decision-making powers (ibid.: 165). Handy identifies this tribe with competent professionals who seek self-autonomy with an opportunity to share their skills and work on new challenges in groups (ibid.: 150). Such a culture thrives on experimentation and thinking 'outside the box'. A flat hierarchy and an informal communication network ensure that power within the group is evenly distributed and everyone has a contribution to make.

Morgan suggests that innovative organisations (and that could include museums) are ones in which members feel they can influence things (1988: 72). An innovative organisation is one in which 'value is placed on the ability to learn, to change, and generally to develop and promote new ideas' (ibid.: 70). In organisations where innovation takes place, a creative and supportive environment encourages flexibility and agility, people have the freedom to be proactive and experiment with new ways of working. Janes suggests that organisations should embolden self-questioning for staff; thus, an effective context for staff to brainstorm and think creatively is fostered. Such approaches to organising with proactive self-organised teams, have greater flexibility and autonomy. The opportunity to be innovative and creative ensures greater integration across the organisation and effective use of staff and resources (ibid.: 79). The innovative organisation, I suggest, is one which is agile, adaptive and characterises the task tribe which Handy puts forward. The two regional museums in this research, I suggest, are innovative and agile organisations which can experiment, take informed risks, think outside the box. Such characteristics enhance the museum's ability to collect new media art.

A Task Tribe is versatile and adaptable. This organisational culture encourages knowledge sharing, learning and creativity for museum professionals. Morgan points out that 'if you have very confident people, you need energetic, developing, professional leadership. You don't want a lot of rules and regulations to get in the way' (ibid.: 85).

Many museums have predominantly functioned as Role Tribes, but, a significant number are also adopting a Task Tribe for particular projects or tasks

which require a dynamic and responsive team of professionals to share skills and work together to find a solution to a problem. Such taskforces bloom 'where speed of reaction, integration, sensitivity and creativity are more important than depth of specialisation' (Fopp 1997: 165).

In light of the economic downturn, and the impact on resources, many museums have begun to find new ways of working and managing the work in innovative and creative ways. The task culture greatly enhances this new way of working. Fopp suggests that the task culture is 'most in tune with current ideologies of change, adaptation and individual freedom' and that managers must recognise that this culture will become predominant in the future museum (ibid.: 166). This thesis argues that the task culture is being assumed in the Harris Museum and the Van Abbemuseum when collecting new media art. The ability to adapt and exercise staff autonomy, shared decision-making and knowledge exchange is embraced in both museums. As a result, the task culture, I contend, plays a key role in the functioning of the museum. The museum can function with agility and responsiveness to the internal and external landscape and actively shape its own direction and collection.

Organisational Culture in Case Study Museums

It is evident from the fieldwork that the organisational culture is, to a great extent, shaped by the style of leadership in each museum. Ultimately, the interrelationship between culture and leadership is powerful in terms of how each museum operates and functions. This may include factors such as innovation, agility, staff agency and experimentation. I will consider how innovation, staff agency and experimentation can be promoted through organisational culture.

Innovation involves 'unpredictability, risk taking, and non-standard solutions' (Tushman and O'Reilly 2002: 111). Such factors are not easily managed by the formal organisation (formal structures, roles, procedures which motivate people to perform the critical tasks), hence, the informal structure/organisational culture can have a marked effect on innovation (ibid.: 87, 111). To stimulate innovation, an environment which nurtures creativity and facilitates implementation of new ideas is critical. Creativity can be developed by supporting risk-taking and tolerance of mistakes. Support for creative outputs must stem from leaders and any recognition or reward should be done sincerely.

Tushman and O'Reilly point out that implementation of new ideas must be seen to be 'actionable' (ibid.: 117). This is helpful for museums because staff may have innovative solutions or ideas which, if they are seen to be implemented, will encourage them to take ownership of new ideas. Effective teamwork and group functioning must be set in place to guarantee success and implementation of the ideas. The promotion of implementation of innovation involves a sense of personal autonomy that encourages action (ibid.: 117). For the purpose of this research personal autonomy is renamed 'staff agency' to suggest that museum staff have agency to shape what they do and can exercise autonomy in how they work. Such agency also brings with it a flexible and adaptable approach. Janes promotes the idea that staff should be curious, sceptical and inventive (2013a). Museums are in a position to empower museum workers and advance 'personal agency' – the capacity of workers at all levels to take action – and to ensure that the workplace facilitates such

creativity (ibid.). Principally, the managers' role is to nurture intelligent workers and listen to them.

A willingness to cultivate staff agency will enable museum professionals to take action and assume responsibility. The context in which museums operate today demands constant realignment and adaptation to the external environment. With staff cutbacks and funding shortfalls, there is much work to do but fewer staff to do it. Staff agency gives rise to thinking smart and working smart. Thus, museum workers can be innovative and proactive, building collections and connections, sharing expertise and resources, learning from one another and being responsive and responsible. The move towards flatter structures and a task culture builds a workforce that can adapt and shape the museum. Tushman and O'Reilly (2002: 109) point out that there is a growing acknowledgement that staff want more from work, including an opportunity to contribute and use their talents – this is reflected in this research with the two regional case study museums under investigation.

Staff agency, innovation and creativity are key drivers for a successful organisation. However, I argue that managers play an important role in the organisation. A leader who provides clear and consistent signals about what is important and reduces ambiguity about how to act will signal to staff what is valued (ibid.: 106). According to Tushman and O'Reilly managers/leaders are 'signal generators', that is, they communicate what is consistently rewarded or punished. So, the director of the Van Abbemuseum values and recognises staff that takes the lead and takes chances. Moreover, the culture of openness and fairness applies to the director as much as it does to staff – he deliberately signals that equality applies to the work space as well as the work to be done. This is signalled by the fact that he does not have a director's office rather; he shares the work space with the curators (A Fletcher 2013). The generation of signals focusses on seeing what people are good at and giving them an opportunity to develop that (Berndes 2013). The culture of the Van Abbemuseum values attitudes and behaviours such as being proactive, taking risks and being open and egalitarian towards one another; recognition is given to those who actively set out to work in this way. It is evident that 'recognition, a

sense of belonging, achievement, and self-esteem are universal reinforcers' and can be embedded into a strong culture with careful and sensitive management of staff (Tushman and O'Reilly 2002: 152). Hence, the power of leaders to act as signal generators impacts on the norms and values in the organisation. Hence, norms and values which are valued and rewarded reinforce their importance. In addition, the leader should set out a vision and mission which engages staff both emotionally and fosters employee involvement and participation (ibid.: 154).

To conclude this section on organisational culture, we see that the culture has a bearing on the attitudes, norms and behaviours on how staff work and what is valued and seen as important. In the Harris Museum and the Van Abbemuseum staff work in a culture where norms and values suggest proactivity, adaptability and innovation are central. This finding suggests that culture is a powerful driver in museums. This can be developed and researched further, however, I argue that this finding has important implications for fostering and adopting cultures which can enable museum professionals to fully embrace staff agency. Staff agency exemplifies agility, innovation, teamwork, being proactive and responsible. These findings enhance our understanding of organisational culture and leadership in museums, and, I believe, this research could serve as a base for future studies on this field of inquiry.

Leadership Theory

Leadership is much more the property of a group now than it is a person.

(Janes 2013a)

Organisational culture is, I assert, closely allied to the style of leadership adopted in an organisation. The previous section on organisational culture illustrated that both regional case study museums have a strong, open and coherent culture. The museum professionals operate in a task culture where teamwork, innovation and experimentation are exercised. These museums have a culture which has been shaped, not only by the structure, but, by the style of leadership which exists.

Janes' comment above reflects a shift from organisations which worshipped the 'lone CEO model' and hierarchy to new ways of organising; less rigidity and greater agility, informal leaders taking ownership and exercising innovation and exploiting opportunities (2013c). The two case studies illustrate that collaboration, knowledge exchange and building networks with partners are pivotal to achieving organisational success. Janes comments that such an approach characterises good leadership:

Leaders that encourage this kind of thing, they are not threatened by it. Conversations are unfolding all the time. When you get that kind of enlightened, confident, non-threatened director (male or female) who comes in and encourages this sort of thing – they see the value of it (2013c).

Both museums are more agile with fewer lines of authority. In addition, a confident and enlightened director (or dual leadership in the case of the Van Abbemuseum) who is willing to share power and responsibility amongst staff enables the organisation to experiment, be proactive and foster innovation.

This section will examine what makes a leader and the varying styles that might be adopted. I will evaluate the usefulness of situational leadership as a means

of investigating the leadership style in the two case study regional museums. The thesis makes a case that a participative and consultative style of leadership is favoured as a dominant force in both the Harris Museum and the Van Abbemuseum. Directors in each case study museum, I argue, nurture an atmosphere where staff agency pervades. Staff agency gives museum professionals latitude to work with greater autonomy, flexibility to work in project teams and share decision-making. This is particularly evident when the museum collects new media art.

What is a leader?

One of the 'clearest marks of a true leader is the ability to identify, nurture and develop people's skills' whereby staff are able to grow, take on responsibility, gain recognition for a job well done and play to their strengths (Fleming in Moore 1999: 98). Moreover, the leader should foster staff commitment, respect for colleagues, a positive and creative environment whereby informed risk-taking and innovation can thrive (ibid.: 99).

Business and management writer Gareth Morgan sets out key competencies and abilities which mark out a leader. A leader must develop skills to read the environment to identify any necessary changes required within the organisation; the leader should be proactive and future-oriented seeking new opportunities for the organisation. Human resources are a key resource within the organisation and the culture should foster creativity, innovation and learning (Morgan 1988: 168-169). These competencies are more likely to occur in a matrix structure - decentralised with self-organising groups in which inter-organisational networking and collaboration can be promoted. Crucially, I argue, leaders should recognise the importance of leadership and vision at all levels of the organisation.

Situational Leadership Model – a contingent approach

Underlying the contingency approach is the notion that ‘leadership is all about being able to adapt and be flexible to ever-changing situations and contexts’ (Clegg, Kornberger and Pitsis 2009: 136-137). There are two main contingency leadership theories: path-goal theory by House and situational leadership model by Hersey et al.. For the purposes of this research I have used the situational leadership model to describe how leadership in each case study museum has adopted an appropriate style to suit the need for direction and support as well as the levels of skill and motivation of those being managed. The model is a useful way of visually seeing the amount of direction and control the leader gives staff (horizontal axis), and, the level of support the leader provides staff (taking into account skills, competencies and motivation) (vertical axis) (see page 208). Therefore, the leader will adapt their style depending on the situation and the people involved as well as the task to be accomplished. As a result, an effective leader is one who adjusts his/her style as needed.

The situational leadership model is helpful in identifying the style which the director or head of an organisation adopts depending on the competency of employees. Furthermore, it is also helpful in showing that the two regional case study museums have leaders which prefer to manage with a participatory and/or delegating style. These styles provide an opportunity for staff to become informal leaders where they take ownership of decisions and collaborate across the organisation. Leadership is, I contend, distributed across the organisation, in large part, because the leadership style of the directors - Walker at the Harris Museum, and Esche and Erbslöh at the Van Abbemuseum – cultivate personal agency of museum professionals to take action and assume responsibility (Janes 2013a).

A contingent approach needs to consider four variables: the leader (their personality and preferred style of leadership), the led (the needs, and skills and competencies of workers), the task (the job to be accomplished) and the context (the organisation, its values and prejudices) (Fopp 1997: 90). The next section will outline these four variables in more detail.

The Leader

A leader has to be directive at one time and consultative at another

(Fopp 1997: 96).

The situational leadership model identifies four leadership styles: S1 Directing/Telling, S2 Coaching/Selling, S3 Supporting/Participating and S4 Delegating (Hersey and Blanchard 1996). The first style - S1 Directing/Telling – consists of the leader giving specific instructions to staff and overseeing the work to be carried out. This approach is telling and guiding the followers. The second style – S2 Coaching/Selling – adopts an approach where the leader is selling or explaining and persuading staff to carry out tasks. The third style – S3 Supporting/Participating – encourages staff and supports them to share in the decision-making process and carry out problem-solving. The final style – S4 Delegating – consists mostly of observing and monitoring staff where responsibility of decisions is delegated to staff (Clegg, Kornberger and Pitsis 2009).

Each style can be used depending on the situation and context in which the organisation operates. The Directing and Coaching styles could be viewed as paternalistic as staff require more support and guidance to accomplish tasks. This style is often to be found in hierarchical and bureaucratic organisations such as a functional bureaucracy or manufacturing or production line. The directing style sees the leader providing specific instructions and closely supervises staff, whereas, the coaching style is more consultative and supportive – they explain decisions and encourage suggestions from their staff but still direct firmly. The Supporting and Delegating style is a lot more consultative and participative in nature. This approach is often to be found in task cultures where staff are competent and skilled at problem-solving, working in teams and being proactive and adaptive. The leader, in the supporting style, shares decisions with staff and provides support in achieving the task. The delegating role is characterised by low support and low direction. The leader is confident and secure that staff can handle responsibility for decisions and can implement those decisions.

The approach adopted by the leader depends on the level of competence and commitment of the workers (the maturity of the followers). For example, the more competent and committed a member of staff is, the more responsibility they can take for directing their own behaviour; a highly skilled and experienced worker will, therefore, need a less directive approach. Notably, as the worker develops they can move along the development curve and the leadership style can be modified accordingly.

The leader can manage staff in four ways. The first is M1 low competence and high commitment – this is perhaps best seen with new staff, interns or trainees who need substantial guidance and support to build skills and motivation in the job. Thus, untrained groups need directive leadership until they grown more mature and more confident (Fopp 1997: 97). The second is M2 where there is some competence and low commitment; workers are skilled but are not given much motivation to progress or grow in the job (this could include a line job in a factory where the worker is skilled at a particular task). Third, M3 high competence and variable commitment (most likely a skilled worker but not motivated by the organisation, leader or colleagues to commit fully). Finally, M4 high competence and high commitment; staff are highly skilled and clearly driven by the work and the organisation. As a result, they are capable of taking on responsibility and are able to direct their own work; hence they will work best with a less directive leadership style.

The leader can determine what skills and competencies workers have, and, whether it is necessary to be more directive in style or more participatory and consultative in nature. As a result, the most appropriate leadership style depends ‘on the amount of emotional support followers require in conjunction with the amount of guidance that they require to do their jobs’ (Clegg, Kornberger and Pitsis 2009: 139). Leaders must therefore consider if the staff can handle responsibility and autonomy. If so, a participative style is more effective. If, on the other hand, the workers are untrained or immature, then a more directive style is needed until they grow more mature and confident. Obviously, the open participative or consultative style of leadership means that control is handed over to others so confidence in the ability of staff is vital.

However, leaders who fear uncertainty and lack of control will cling on to the directive style of leadership (Fopp 1997: 97).

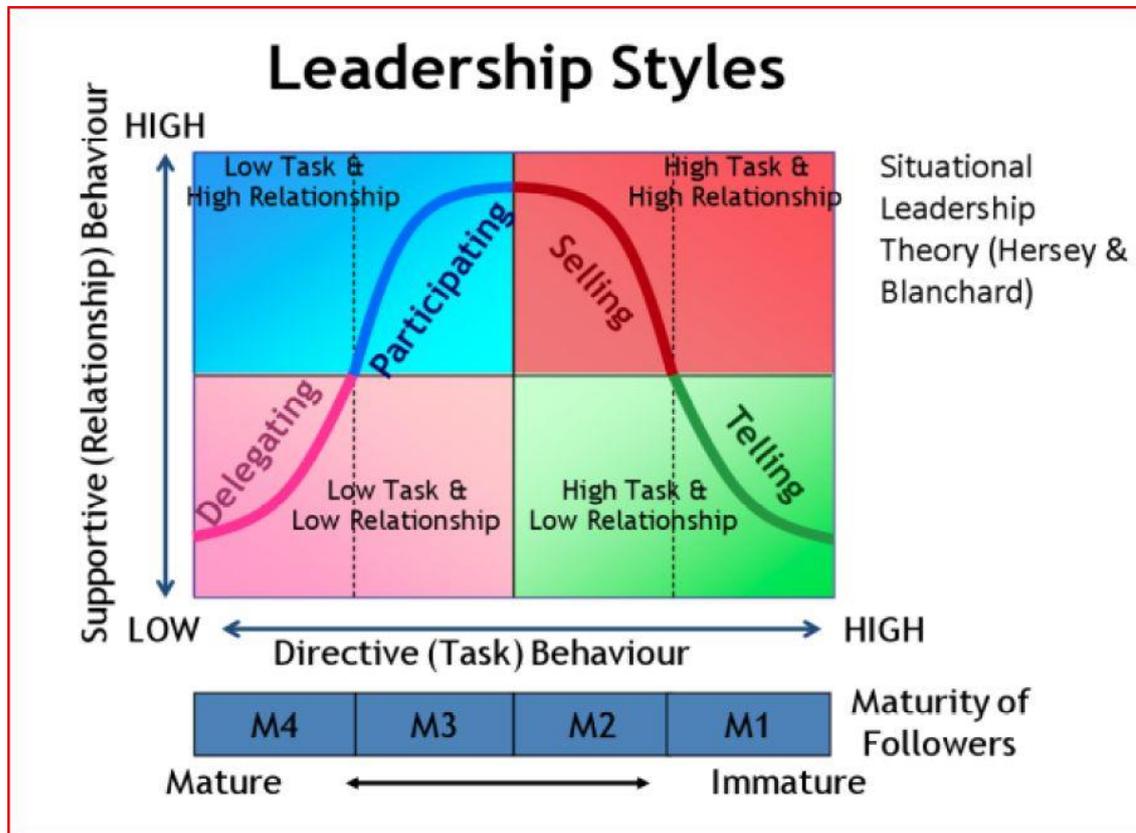


Figure 7.1 Situational Leadership – Leadership Styles (Hersey et al. (1996) in Clegg et al. 2009: 139))

Explanation of leadership roles:

S1 – Directive/Telling	} Paternalistic/Autocratic/Directive
(Guiding and Directing: specific instructions)	
S2 – Coaching/Selling.....	} Paternalistic
(Explaining and Persuading: coaching staff)	
S3 – Supporting/Participating	} Consultative/Participative
(Encouraging and Problem-Solving: shares decision-making and supports)	
S4 – Delegating	} Consultative/Participative
(Delegates responsibility of decisions to staff: Staff Agency and autonomy)	

Figure 7.2 Leadership Roles – detail (Hersey et al. (1996) in Clegg et al. 2009: 139))

Sherene Suchy has researched change management in the 21st century museum and concludes that museum directors identify the creation of more collaborative contexts which challenges the traditional way staff work (2004: 73). Moreover, research revealed that directors described and 'predicted how old work practices gave way to a more participative leadership style with cross-functional teams' (ibid.: 86). The directors revealed that, 70% of them, described their leadership style as 'participative'; the leader actively seeks and encourages the input and involvement of staff in decision-making (ibid.: 227). This is most apparent with the Van Abbemuseum where staff is encouraged to be active participants in the organisation and its decision-making.

Janes argues strongly that the staff and 'informal leaders' are the real experts and that a bottom-up approach to consensual decision-making and innovation should be consolidated. In the two museums investigated the leadership styles do correspond with research carried out by Suchy. The directors remarked that they felt the museum professionals both in the Harris Museum and Van Abbemuseum were highly competent and skilled workers and, as a result, the leadership style was more a blend of participative and consultative rather than directive or paternalistic. On the other hand, there were some situations where a more directive style was evident. For example, the Harris Museum had to lose ten jobs in a short period of time. The Head of the Harris Museum had to meet with the management team (Programmes Manager, Fundraising Manager and Operations Manager) to discuss and formalise staff reductions. Clearly, this style of leadership could not be participative (Walker 2012). In contrast to the directive style, Walker employed a consultative approach when compiling the five year Strategic Plan; 'taking everybody's input we had a number of working groups and whittled it down to five strategic aims' (ibid.). In relation to the *Current* project, the approach shifted to a delegating style whereby the Exhibitions Officer was given responsibility, autonomy and staff agency for the project to shape it and lead it to its successful completion.

The leadership styles at the Van Abbemuseum mirror that of the Harris to a large extent. The director was quick to state that his leadership style varied between 'inactive' and 'chaotic' to 'the centre of attention' to 'delegating'

(Esche 2013). Such a wide spectrum of styles can be confusing for staff, but, he hopes that 'Christiane [Berndes, Curator Collections] would feel that she can make those decisions without having to check back with me because she has the competence and has the capacity to do that' (Esche 2013). The director states unequivocally that he has 'problems with authority', so, his style leans heavily to delegating where he is more removed from the decision-making and instead observes and monitors staff. He has confidence in the ability and competencies of museum staff. His leadership skill is visionary and strategic which is heightened by his need to socialise (Erbslöh 2013). Next to Esche we have Ulrike Erbslöh who has a dual leadership role to fulfil. She describes her style as very 'cooperative' and more 'coaching' (ibid. 2013). She comments that she is more of a 'supervisor' and guides and explains. Furthermore, she states that 'I try to coach their decisions with the knowledge I have of the house' (ibid.).

Like the Harris Museum, the Van Abbemuseum had to make some tough decisions and had major cuts to their city council budget. Dealing with major cuts is not through consensual decision-making. The deputy director commented that:

I, and Charles, and the city, have to think about what has to be done and then we decide on it. On the other hand, how to implement the whole thing and deal with the cuts on a long-term basis is again something that is consensual. I integrate the whole team in thinking about it and how can they carry the burden with us? (Erbslöh 2013).

This keeping in place two different styles with two different directors is not without issue. If we look at the model it can be argued that Esche is S4 – the Delegating style of leadership, whereas, Erbslöh tends to function as S2 – a selling or coaching style of leadership which has directive elements in it. This combination means there is a culture of inclusiveness, responsibility and empowered decision-making yet 'it asks a lot of the people' (Erbslöh 2013) as it has to integrate contrasting styles of leadership. Moreover, if a worker has a need for strong leadership (i.e. a directive or paternalistic 'telling' style) then they 'will not feel at home in this house' (ibid.). Consequently, from 2004 to

2012 ten staff left the museum due to change, disruption and uncertainty. Nevertheless, it is evident that, over time, the culture has grown and become strong where it has fostered leadership from all staff. There are nimble teams with bottom-up decision-making and reciprocal interdependence of work flow and critical tasks where working across boundaries is actively advanced and endorsed.

Hence, the more tell-and-sell approach of the directive leader (S1 Telling/Directive and S2 Selling/Coaching), where they govern in a paternalistic manner, is giving way to a participative style which is more open and consultative (Moore 1997: 11). Furthermore, this new approach to leading encourages an organisational culture which values 'cooperation, communication, collaboration, and teamwork' (Suchy 2004: 87).

There is no single way of leading or managing, but, what is important in leading is 'creativity, including imagination, intelligence, judgement and common sense' (Janes and Sandell 2007: 11). Janes argues that informal leaders exist throughout the museum and are essential in facilitating self-organisation and fostering 'interaction and interdependence' across units (Janes 2009: 75). He suggests that directors should cultivate museum 'visionaries' and motivate staff to manage work 'holistically' (Janes 2013a, 2013b).

The balance to have a leader who recognises the need to foster cross-disciplinary ways of working within a museum and for staff to welcome the opportunity to take responsibility and become informal leaders is one which requires negotiation and nurturing. Managing participation is a balancing act between 'management control and team opportunity; between getting the work done quickly and giving people a chance to learn' (Moss Kanter 1983: 275).

The Led

The header 'the led' may seem an outmoded term given that my research demonstrates that museum professionals are asserting staff autonomy and informal leadership. Nevertheless, staff will have a preferred style either to a directive style to managing or a more open and participative approach; thus 'it is usually evident whether people expect to be told or asked' (Fopp 1997: 98). This thesis highlights that staff interviewed prefer to be asked and expect to be able to input their opinion and take ownership of decisions. Museum staff, have a high level of expertise and knowledge, and, therefore, their level of competency and experience would be more inclined to respond to a participative approach.

In the case of both the Harris Museum's *Current* project and the Van Abbemuseum, there is an emphasis on staff participating in making suggestions as well as proactively making decisions. The culture in both museums actively assists professionals to take informed risks and share the burden of responsibility. Contemporary museum management, Janes and Sandell argues, is one where staff are given autonomy to make decisions at the local level in the organisation where they can be made well. They point out that:

This requires that managers respect and nurture the so-called informal leaders – those individuals who exercise influence and authority by virtue of their competence and commitment, and not because of any formal position in the hierarchy (2007: 5).

Informal leaders exist at all levels in all museums and the challenge for the 21st century museum is to nurture and develop such leaders. Situational leadership illustrates that the lines of distinction between leadership can become hazy. Thus, shared leadership or, as Clegg et al call it 'dispersed leadership', shows a move away from an individual leader to more of a process of leadership where the boundaries between leader and follower are becoming blurred (Clegg, Kornberger and Pitsis 2009: 146). A symbiotic relationship between museum professionals and the director/head of museums, I contend,

safeguards long-term effectiveness for the museum. Moore suggests that museums, like other organisations, are 'beginning to move away from more authoritarian styles of management towards more open, participatory approaches' (1997: 11). Thus, the leader's role is more that of an enabler and team-builder rather than power-broker or controller (ibid.: 11).

It is important to bear in mind that if staff are asked to devote time and energy to a participative approach which does not result in actionable and solid outputs, then, they will naturally resist this style. Leaders need to 'signal' that such input is valued and rewarded in the organisation and that it is important. Like the leader, staff will have a certain tolerance for risk or uncertainty and the responsibility that goes with that (Fopp 1997: 98). For those averse to risk or ambiguity a more directive leadership style is supported. On the other hand, staff who thrive in environments which are complex, uncertain or involve risk have confidence to be more autonomous and self-organised hence maintaining a more participative style of leadership. Fopp points out that leaders and staff should have realistic expectations of each other. Expectations of how staff will be led and their roles of responsibility and participation should be clearly set out as well as the role the leader will promote in the organisation (ibid.: 98).

As mentioned earlier, the organisational culture plays a pivotal role within an organisation and is shaped, I argue, by the style of leadership. Different cultures allow different degrees of discretion to leaders. In both the Harris Museum and the Van Abbemuseum it is apparent that the style of leadership is participatory in nature. This approach encourages project working where staff can work flexibly and creatively. Fopp suggests that it is difficult for leaders to 'go against the prevailing trend within the organisation' (ibid.: 102). This thesis illustrates that the style of leadership which Esche introduced in the Van Abbemuseum was difficult for many staff to accept. His approach – opening the museum for uncertainty, experimentation and informed risk-taking - alongside that of the Deputy Director (Erbslöh), was slowly negotiated. Staff, in time, adopted the participatory style and their input or decision-making was valued and rewarded. Nonetheless, it is acknowledged that this style of working and leadership took time to build.

The Task

The four variables for managing and leading have, so far, outlined the leader and the led. The task and the context must also be taken into account. Fopp suggests that the nature or detail of the task can alter the choice of leadership style (1997: 99). The nature of the task for example will have a bearing on whether a directive style or consultative approach is required. In the case of routinized or predictable work the nature of the work does not necessitate a participative approach (i.e. the solutions to those tasks are already known). However, where the task is open-ended and problems are novel, then, it requires solutions from a talented and diverse mix of workers. Solutions stem from participation and working together. Moreover, the greater the complexity and unique nature of the task, the more readily a consultative approach will work. The leader then has choice in how the task is accomplished.

The *Current* project involved an exhibition, acquisition, debate and evaluation of new media art. At all stages of this process many styles were adopted. At the beginning a participative approach was utilised to secure a broad range of opinion and expertise to shape the Open Call for artists. The next stage, installing the exhibition, required a more consultative style as artists, technicians and museum staff worked together to find solutions to problems as they arose. There was a great deal of autonomy and staff agency for those involved in the project and the director's role was one of observing and monitoring the process and assisting the Exhibitions Officer as required. Similarly, the acquisition of new media art necessitated a consultative style so that staff across the museum could work collaboratively to ensure the work could be successfully collected.

Likewise, the Van Abbemuseum has a diverse range of tasks. It also seeks out challenges and uncertainty. Thus, teams are formed to handle complex situations; a teamwork approach facilitates in an inventive and creative way to troubleshoot any problems. The leadership style encourages autonomy and staff agency with informal leadership being advocated from the bottom-up. This is evident when collecting new media art; teams work together to solve problems, build networks and share knowledge.

The Context

The context in which a museum functions is greatly impacted by the environment in which it operates. Furthermore, the way work is done is shaped by the culture of an organisation. Such factors will have a bearing on the kind of leadership adopted (Fopp 1997: 100).

The organisation's culture and context (including its structure, technology, and environment) are important factors in how much flexibility and control the leader has and the style of leadership that should be employed. If a structure is highly bureaucratic then individuals will often be closely supervised. In contrast, if the structure is more decentralised and 'built around product or project groups' then individuals will have more autonomy in the way they do things (ibid.: 101). The organisational structure for the Harris Museum and the Van Abbemuseum exhibits a matrix structure where project teams function alongside a functional bureaucracy. The culture of an organisation will facilitate different degrees of discretion to individual leaders (ibid.: 102). In both case study museums, the leadership style, I assert, assumes a mix of participative and consultative styles. This is in parallel with a culture which promotes experimentation, creativity and proactivity. However, when tough decisions are needed for job cuts and budget cuts a more directive style is needed (Walker 2012 and Erbslöh 2013).

Assessment of Congruence

Within the Congruence Model the organisational culture is assessed to determine whether it is appropriate and if it is in alignment with the critical tasks/the work to be done. Hence, the following questions need to be answered to determine if both the organisational culture and the critical tasks are congruent: does the existing culture energise the accomplishment of the tasks? Does the informal communication networks and informal power help get the work done? (Tushman and O'Reilly 1997: 67) Such informal systems, or, organisational culture, are paramount to understanding how things are done and why they are done in particular ways. It is evident that the two case study museums display an agile organisational culture and leadership approach which promotes the museum to actively acquire new media art.

The organisational culture within the Harris Museum and the *Current* project in particular, will be outlined and the organisational culture will be assessed to determine whether it is congruent with the critical tasks (collecting new media art). Similarly, the organisational culture within the Van Abbemuseum will be outlined and assessed to determine whether the culture is congruent with the critical tasks. I contend that organisational culture cannot be divorced from the leadership style exhibited within each museum. A participative/consultative style has enabled the culture to foster informal leaders where collecting new media art has been acquired for the permanent collection.

Harris Museum (UK)

The Harris Museum is funded by Preston City Council and resides within a functional bureaucracy. I have attempted to show that the Harris Museum functions as a Task Tribe within a Role Culture. The task tribe is most evident in the *Current* project where members within the museum and outside joined forces to exhibit new media art and then to acquire one artwork from that exhibition. Extensive reciprocal relationships were exhibited, and, which, in turn,

demanded open communication, shared decision-making, autonomy and informed risk-taking.

The museum displays versatility and flexibility in the way it organises itself. This is evident with the *Current Project - An Experiment in Collecting Digital Art*. From the outset the project was formed of museum staff across units as well as employing a *Digital Aesthetic Project Assistant* who worked for both *folly* (an external arts organisation) and the Harris Museum. This experiment was, at its core, project oriented and brought together many talents to actively acquire a new media artwork for the permanent art collection – a first for the museum.

The team was not formalised, but, changed according to the needs of the project. At the start of the project there was broad discussion with the Exhibitions Officer and the Director/Head to embark on this challenge as a way of raising the profile of the museum, but, also to consciously strive to collect new media art. As the project progressed to the Open Call for Artists, to selection, the dynamic changed. The judges on the judging panels came from academia, museum management and arts organisations. The panel was selected to ensure both expertise and experience were sourced (Taylor in Graham 2014: 119). Choosing a shortlist of five artworks stimulated a 'healthy and lively debate' amongst the panel (ibid.: 120). The exhibition took place in 2011 and the Exhibitions Officer mediated between the museum, the artists and the partners (*folly*). Following the successful exhibition, a second panel was made up of directors of museums, arts organisations, research centres, academics to debate which artwork would be acquired for the museum's permanent collection. After extensive discussion, the decision to acquire Thomson and Craighead's new media artwork '*The distance travelled through our solar system this year and all the barrels of oil remaining*' (an internet work with live data stream), was taken.

As pointed out in Chapter 5, the Harris Museum has a reputation as a progressive and contemporary space and the staff goes beyond what is expected because they want to bring the 'best to Preston' (Walker 2012). This is facilitated by the organisational culture of the museum. The Exhibitions

Officer states: 'we are all passionate about what we do and about doing new things' (Taylor 2012). In tandem with that passion, the museum and its staff strive to think about the long-term public benefit of what they display, collect and preserve (across all the collections of local history, costume and textile, fine art and decorative arts). Building the profile of the Harris Museum is important as well as engaging the local community and building audiences. The Director of the museum points out that the staff is a 'brilliantly talented group of people' who care both about what they do and the museum, but, equally, they will question the system and authority (Walker 2012). In fact, Walker comments that she doesn't 'hear in other [Council] departments the kind of debates and discussions going on' (ibid.).

The nature of the *Current* project illustrates that it functioned as a task tribe where many different parties were involved, sharing knowledge and expertise, and deliberately pushing the museum in an innovative and exciting way. The drive from the Exhibitions Officer to promote this experiment in collecting new media art was uncharted territory and many actors, both inside and outside the museum, were instrumental in exhibiting and collecting new media art and debating and evaluating the need to collect new media art in the future. The museum also functions as a role tribe, where key functions which are predictable, standard and routine (such as finance, marketing, personnel and security) are undertaken. The interdependent reciprocal relationships demanded a task tribe where teamwork, shared decision-making and informal communication networks played an integral part in the success of the project. The different backgrounds, knowledge and expertise required for this project necessitated group decisions to be taken (S Fletcher 2012).

I assert that the organisational culture within the Harris Museum's *Current* project, reinforces the norms and values – widely shared and strongly held social expectations about appropriate attitudes and behaviour - staff feel strongly and passionately about the vision and ambition of the museum (to extend the reputation of the museum as an outstanding institution that is ambitious, open to change and distinctive). Staff feel that their efforts contribute

to a higher good and make a difference both to the museum but also their community (Tushman and O'Reilly 2002: 100).

It is acknowledged, however, that it is difficult to gather reliable data on organisational culture compared to other building blocks (such as people, structure, tasks), but, I believe that the data gathered as part of my research makes a case for a task tribe culture within the *Current* project. This tribe thrives on ambiguity, demands flexibility and problem-solving and shared, egalitarian decision-making. I argue, therefore, that the museum's organisational culture is aligned and congruent with the task to be accomplished; the informal organisation facilitates achievement of the tasks (to exhibit, collect, debate and evaluate new media art).

The task tribe facilitated the acquisition of a new media artwork and involved working across the museum, building on reciprocity and sharing skills and knowledge inside the museum and outside. The task tribe encourages a high degree of control, autonomy and problem-solving to accomplish the vision (Fopp 1997, Handy 1990). It is accepted that such a strong and open culture has been created and fostered to allow staff to 'contribute and use their talents' (Tushman and O'Reilly 2002: 109). The opportunity for staff to grow and develop in their job was, partly due to the matrix structure, but, also due to the independence afforded by the Director to be ambitious and innovative in how work is done. Within the Council museum structure – which is role tribe/culture in nature – there are designated tasks for staff, but, embedded within the role culture there are some tasks – specifically collecting new media art - which is task tribe in nature; work is undertaken within a project approach (Taylor 2012).

Staff are passionate about what they do and want to do new things that push themselves and the museum but also to build up the profile of the Harris – this is most evident through the *Current* project which collected new media art (Walker, Taylor 2012). The organisational culture could accommodate creative and challenging ways of doing things and the opportunity to raise the profile of the Harris was enhanced as a result. The task tribe of creativity and innovation is, to a certain extent, shaped by the strategic context in which the Harris

operates. The museum has a certain scope for projects, but, also has to take into consideration the Arts Council Strategic Framework, the Council's policies and requirements from funder's policies (Walker 2012). Walker points out that she is often the 'intermediary between all those external forces and seeing where they are going, and, then the creative work that people in the organisation want to do' (2012). Thus, there is a tension between the role tribe which demands bureaucracy, formalisation and predictability, and the task tribe which seeks ambiguity, innovation and exploration. I suggest that the *Current* project specifically was able to accommodate a task culture where the approach embraced flexibility, knowledge sharing, problem-solving and reciprocity across the organisation but also beyond. Moreover, the model for collecting new media art was different in the way that it actively brought together a group of external advisers – 'that tends not to happen so much with the other artworks where we are continuing an established area of collecting' (ibid.).

Van Abbemuseum (The Netherlands)

In the same way that the Harris Museum has a combination of role and task culture, the Van Abbemuseum shares this organisational culture. However, it differs in significant ways. The museum is radical and outspoken and has taken enormous risks 'in terms of ... programming because we are interested in flaunting that power or using it' (A Fletcher 2013). The museum seeks to exploit its position and to be a 'democratic tool' (Esche 2013). The Van Abbemuseum actively acquires work that is different and perhaps difficult to conserve and re-install. Yet, they do it because 1) the work is important and 2) to have the opportunity to learn in practice how to deal with the artwork (Berndes 2013).

The style of leadership has radically transformed the culture of the Van Abbemuseum. Before the present director arrived in 2004, the culture which existed by the then director meant that it was predominately a role tribe. Staff were situated in units based on job function and the informal networks were narrow and protected. The environment was stable and 'parochial' (A Fletcher 2013) and power was positioned at the top of the museum.

The organisational structure had shifted creating new ways of working which brought great upheaval and some conflict. Much work was undertaken to resolve the issues so, the staff could express their concerns openly in order for solutions to be adopted (Esche, Erbslöh 2013). The greatest difference arose in the approach to working – a move from individual working to teamwork where people worked together in projects. Staff had to learn to adapt, challenge authority and be proactive about their position, the collection and the museum. This has taken time but interviewees agree that the new structure, organisational culture and ways of working brings opportunities to experiment and push boundaries.

Interviewees remarked that the organisational culture had dramatically changed once Esche took over as director (Berndes, Erbslöh 2013). Indeed, some felt the pace, time and ambition of change was too much, too soon (A Fletcher 2013). For some, the changes were not compatible and they

subsequently left the museum. Esche maintains that the museum is unafraid of ambiguity and thrives on change, creativity, risk-taking and experimentation (2013). Whilst the Director may advocate such an approach, staff interviewed commented that this outlook took some time to adopt (Berndes, Erbslöh 2013).

The vision and objective of the museum is ambitious and radical. It has an 'experimental approach towards art's role in society' (Van Abbemuseum 2014). The museum sets out to collect within research questions in four art fields: art and art history, art and economics, art and social change/society, and, art and autonomy rather than specific media. New media art may be acquired for the collection but it is not defined as 'media art'. Rather, the work is collected because it is interesting for the museum and the collection (Berndes 2013). This new strategy took time to formulate and contrasted noticeably from the former Strategic and Collections Plan. Before Esche took over the Van Abbemuseum, the museum collected contemporary art and 'artists we thought were important – quality, importance, subjectivity was key' (Berndes 2013), but, since 2004 a new acquisitions strategy has focussed on specific topics, regardless of medium or artists' prominence or status.

The consensus of the organisational culture, therefore, has taken time to build, with norms, values and attitudes being shaped by the director. Staff were seeking stability and reassurance so that they could feel strongly enough about the culture. The intensity of the norms is, I believe, felt widely by museum professionals, but, it has been a bumpy road to secure support. The culture of openness, creativity, the freedom to try new things and challenge authority has been a 'culture shock' to many staff. As a result, the task tribe culture necessitated some degree of formalisation and stability to combine a role and task culture in the museum. The museum has a rather unique solution to nurturing creativity, artistic vision and experimentation with stability, procedures and pragmatism. The director navigates the artistic unit with curators and guest curators to build a cohesive and creative force which is 'fluid and dynamic' (Esche 2013). Alongside the director, the Deputy Director brings order, bureaucratic readiness and a pragmatic way of managing the museum which brings security and long-term strategy for both the organisation and its staff.

Hence, there is a need for a mixture of a task tribe which responds to projects and cross-over through team working in tandem with a role culture where routinized tasks can be accomplished by staff (for example, technical matters, finance, personnel, the shop and café, and marketing). The museum has matrix structure with a task tribe culture.

National culture within the Netherlands stresses a climate of equality and consensus (Erbslöh 2013). Thus, the culture of the Van Abbemuseum needs to be seen within the context of national culture (Tushman and O'Reilly 2002: 110). These two cultures (organisational and national), operate simultaneously, and, it is necessary for the manager(s) to take into account the national culture so that it works in conjunction with the organisation's culture. The Deputy Director points out that 'the cultural difference in the Netherlands reveals that the hierarchical system with an autocratic management style does not function at all here. You need to find consensus in the Netherlands to get anywhere' (Erbslöh 2013).

This German deputy director brought with her a pragmatic way of managing, but, the culture of the Netherlands and the museum demanded a participative approach, with transparency and consensual decision-making. Similarly, the approach adopted by the director emphasised an autonomous, flexible and participatory style for museum professionals. The Curator of Collections notes that:

before Charles [Esche] came along, we came from a totally different culture, with a director who was really 'the boss' of everything. Charles' management style is totally different and also his goals are different. It took a while before we adjusted to the new situation (Berndes 2013).

Hence, before Esche took up his post, staff worked in a culture where the director was patriarchal in his approach and the museum structure was predominantly a role culture. Therefore, the national culture which reinforces a participatory and egalitarian approach was not reflected in the museum. Staff who had worked in the museum for a considerable period were unperturbed by

the role culture where tasks were delineated and routinized. However, when Esche took up his position and introduced a more task culture approach – flexible, open-ended and teamworking – the established staff members had to readjust their approach and adopt to the task tribe. On the one hand, the long-term staff had the institution's memory and certain ways of doing things whereas the 'anarchic, biennale type people' were perhaps more interested in pushing the museum and its slow and deliberate approach (A Fletcher 2013). This example epitomises how cemented culture can become over time. Thus, it brings with it many challenges and opposition, particularly if it is imposed by a new director.

The Van Abbemuseum is made up of a broad demographic - staff who recently joined the museum to those who have worked there 25 years. The cultures and nationalities of the staff are diverse and include English (Esche), German (Erbslöh), Dutch (Berndes), Irish (A Fletcher), Turkish and Israeli (visiting guest curators) amongst others. The demographic and national cultures reveal a need to delicately manage all these competent professionals in such a way that it brings out their best but also challenges them.

Many of the interviewees talked about the museum as a kind of kinship (the 'house') (Berndes, A Fletcher, Erbslöh 2013). The formal hierarchies were flattened and the 'eye-level' approach (Erbslöh 2013) emphasises working at an equal level across the organisation, that is, no-one is higher or lower than any other person, hence, there is respect and trust throughout the museum. Staff are encouraged to talk to any other worker and actively attend and participate many meetings which are held (for example, the Strategic meeting, Tactical meeting and the Collections meeting). However, the diverse nature of nationalities within the museum created some difficulties, not least when the director insisted that the working language should be English to reflect an international outlook (A Fletcher 2013). This led to some 'cultural clashes'. Intriguingly, the organisation's documentation such as the Collections Plan and the strategic documents are in Dutch. Language plays a major role in how things are done and who speaks to whom. The cultural clashes mentioned above were expressed by those who had been ordinarily working in Dutch, but,

due to the culture embracing an international outlook, the need to communicate in English was given precedence over Dutch, and, such a development was not embraced by some staff members.

In 2009 Eindhoven City Council brought in a new consultancy tool for all civil servants including museum staff (Berndes 2013). Council management introduced this tool to enable organisations to become more effective. The *Management Drives* consultancy approach assesses staff to build up a professional work profile - what drives them and how they can adapt and respond to other colleagues whose profile may be dissimilar. The six profiles are people (green), vision (yellow), strategy (orange), structure (blue), focus (red) and mission (purple). The Deputy Director explains that certain colours represent particular motivators or drivers; she has a profile which encompasses ambition, power and vision (Erbslöh 2013). In contrast, however, the director's profile is mainly vision and social so 'he communicates his visionary ideas while socialising with people' (ibid.). As a consequence, a mix of profiles and talents is required for building teams and completing projects. Berndes needed structure in her profile and Esche 'couldn't reach her because he never talked about structure ideas' (ibid.). But, since compiling these profiles, he can now communicate with Berndes so that they can reach agreement on, not only the artistic vision, but, how to structurally implement it. This approach has been employed across the museum and new staff are encouraged to find their profile. Such an approach, I would suggest, helps an organisational culture be coherent and strong. As a result, staff are able to communicate more effectively, build consensus in decision-making and accomplishing the organisation's vision.

When the Director joined the museum in 2004 he tried to create an atmosphere where people could bring their skills, knowledge and expertise to the discussion, to exchange ideas and challenge authority. He comments 'that has taken time - when I first came here that was absolutely not the case' (Esche 2013). There is room for the creative process 'which makes it the museum we are' (Erbslöh 2013). Workers are pushed to try new ways of doing things, working in projects and to experiment and be proactive rather than passive actors in the organisation (Berndes 2013). The Deputy Director points

out that there is an inclusive environment where everyone is encouraged to take part in decision-making:

If I talk to my senior staff members, then, I encourage them to not forget to give room for their team to give feedback, not only in their unit meetings and department meetings, but, also that there is this constant flow between the different levels of the organisation (Erbslöh 2013).

However, inviting people to be involved in such a process can be difficult. Erbslöh comments 'it asks a lot of the people – they have to be very independent in their decision in this task and that is what we ask from them' (2013). This has been a turbulent journey for some, but, the organisational culture ties in strongly with the vision and ambition of the Van Abbemuseum to be proactive, radical, and, at the forefront of contemporary art practice in the Netherlands and beyond.

These findings suggest that the informal organisational culture is congruent with the critical tasks to be performed. It is not possible to show whether the presence of, or collecting of, new media art is in some way changing the culture. Perhaps new media art and organisational culture are mutually enhancing; each in their own way impacts the other. The Van Abbemuseum has a dynamic, proactive and political perspective which advances the organisational culture to be experimental, inventive and risk inclined. Staff are motivated to shape how things are done and they actively participate in the functioning of the museum. And, these findings support the idea that such a culture will embrace new media art because it adds quality and value to the collection.

The task culture facilitates a teamwork approach where a mix of talents come together to work on a project. The project style fosters an egalitarian approach where all members are able to participate, informal communication is employed and flexibility is built into the nature of the work. The organisational culture is, to a large extent, I suggest, shaped by the director and the deputy director, where transparency and being proactive is valued and recognised. In addition, the

international outlook of the museum encourages a climate of knowledge exchange, project working and experimentation. Thus, there is a strong interrelationship between the organisation's culture and its leadership. The culture adopted within the Van Abbemuseum is a task tribe but it sits within a role tribe (Council bureaucracy). As a result, staff are encouraged to be active contributors within the museum; they are afforded staff agency and informal leaders can actively shape the creative process. Such a matrix organisation brings with it a certain degree of formality but with a high degree of flexibility and freedom to chart its own path.

Conclusion

This chapter set out to investigate organisational culture in the Harris Museum and the Van Abbemuseum, and, using the Congruence Model assess the degree to which the culture facilitates task performance and accomplishment. In both cases, it was shown that the culture is strong, open and coherent. Staff shares the vision and mission of the museum and are passionate about what they do.

However, it is apparent that both museums display an agile organisational culture and leadership style. Museum professionals are assuming the role of informal leaders and being proactive agents within the museum to actively acquire work such as new media art which is unorthodox and challenging in myriad ways. Staff are supported to take informed risks and to engage with museum collections in inventive and creative ways. There is a culture of experimentation, empowered decision-making, staff ownership and responsibility. Furthermore, museum professionals are encouraged to take informed risks, challenge orthodoxy and be proactive. Therefore, I conclude that the organisational culture within the Harris Museum and the Van Abbemuseum is aligned with the critical tasks.

Even so, discussion of organisational culture cannot be seen divorced from leadership style. Organisational culture is established by the leadership style and how and why things are done in certain ways. There are many ways to lead, but, the situational leadership model highlights that there is no one best way to lead. Instead, leadership is contingent on the led, the task and the context. In the case studies under investigation, it was clearly established that leadership at the top of each museum, is primarily participative or consensual in nature.

Yet, a significant finding of this research suggests that, in line with literature from Suchy, Janes and Fopp, staff agency and autonomy are being advocated and fostered in both the Harris Museum and the Van Abbemuseum. This approach suggests that the maturity of the followers (M1 to M4 in the situational

leadership model) demonstrates that staff are highly competent professionals who need little guidance or direction (hence M4 on the scale). Staff are given latitude to work in new ways, make decisions and shape the organisation. Staff agency and informal leadership are evident in both museums. The room for innovation, change and agility, I argue, is a big opportunity for the future of museums, especially in terms of staff motivation, commitment and the long-term benefit of the museum.

A strong open culture where consensus and intensity are intimately interconnected with a leadership approach which fosters informal leadership and power, to the workers, will commingle to secure a future for both the Harris Museum and the Van Abbemuseum. New media art has not had a marked impact on the organisational culture or leadership style, but, it is clear that the strong association between organisational culture and leadership opens up the museum to consider a broader range of art for acquisition which includes new media art.

In the next chapter I will synthesise and summarise the main research findings from the analysis. I will also discuss the limitations of the research project and outline the significance of the findings of this research. Finally, I will make some recommendations for future research including implications for museum practice.

CHAPTER 8 – Conclusion

Introduction

In this thesis the aim of the research was to investigate whether collecting new media art creates organisational change, and, if so, in what ways. The purpose of the project was to understand how the process of collecting new media art within two regional case study museums is changing how they operate and function. The research set out to answer the following questions: 1) how does collecting new media art change the organisational shape/structure of the museum?; 2) what is collecting new media art doing to the organisation in terms of: (a) workflow, (b) skills sets/expertise, (c) decision-making process, (d) organisational culture and (e) overall impact on the museum (including leadership)? and 3) why do these changes take place?

Three broad themes emerged from the research. First, new ways of organising (agility of organisation) – agile teams with a project-based ethos were apparent. Second, collaboration inside and outside the organisation (agility of curation) – working across units and disciplines inside the museum and building networks outside the museum and promoting knowledge exchange, learning and collaborative practice were visible. Finally, staff agency and leadership (agility of organisational culture/leadership) revealed that the organisational culture supports autonomy for staff where informed risk-taking and proactivity flourish. These research findings will be discussed further in this chapter.

The evidence from this research suggests that the impact of collecting new media art on the case study museums' structure, culture, skills sets and expertise is subtle and nuanced. Whilst the Congruence Model helped to identify some areas of weakness it also revealed opportunities which lie ahead both for staff and the museum. This thesis contributes to existing knowledge on leadership theory by providing evidence which shows the interrelationship between leadership and organisational culture.

Research Findings

The research has shown that collecting new media art is subtly changing how both the Harris Museum and the Van Abbemuseum are operating and functioning. The results of this study indicate that the way the museums operate and function as agile organisations in three ways.

The themes show a good example of agility in three significant ways. First, agility of the organisation is expressed in a move to project-based ways of working where structures and hierarchies are flatter; new media art collections are instituted by informal ground-up teams of museum professionals responding to the needs of the artwork. A flatter organisational structure and less formality foster cross-disciplinary ways of working; staff across the museum and from various disciplines work as a cohesive unit to collect new media art for the permanent collection. An emphasis on agility, self-organisation and teamwork promotes responsiveness, new approaches to working and an awareness that working in silos is no longer favourable to the museum or the collection.

Second, agility of curation was one of the more significant findings to emerge from the research illustrating that both case study museums exploited collaborative practice both inside the museum and outside the organisation. Collecting new media art brings many questions and challenges which, I argue, demands a collaborative approach to find solutions to novel problems; it creates 'gaps in the system' (Sterrett and White 2012) which encourages staff to collaborate across the museum to find solutions to issues which are novel. In many instances, the issues which arise when collecting new media art are so unique that, knowledge exchange across the museum and beyond through partnerships and networks are vital. This practice enabled the museum to promote cooperation with partners and to share expertise and develop best practice. Furthermore, there is an active collaborative approach beyond the museum. Museum professionals are keen to learn from others, build networks, promote knowledge exchange and share best practice. There is a culture of openness and learning where museum professionals build partnerships to problem-solve and collaborate outside the museum.

Finally, the agility of organisational culture and leadership was manifest through a culture of openness and experimentation; self-agency and autonomy were deepened supporting museum professionals to be active instruments in the museum in order to build a collection of new media art. Acquiring new media art, I suggest, is progressive and challenging for the museum and its staff. The Harris Museum and the Van Abbemuseum have, I contend, a culture of autonomy, shared decision-making, informed risk-taking and provide opportunities for informal leaders to be proactive and experiment. Chiefly, the directors of both museums have confidence in those staff tasked with building new media art collections. As a result, power is shared and authority conferred to competent staff. Staff agency promotes creativity and innovation, but, also responsibility for building new media art collections for the permanent collection. Significantly, the directors within each case study museum promoted a culture where staff could challenge orthodoxy, take informed risks and be agile. Such agility enabled the Harris Museum and the Van Abbemuseum to actively acquire new media art.

Thesis conclusion through Congruence Model

This section will synthesise the findings from the findings chapters (5-7) to illustrate the impact collecting new media art has on the museum from an organisational point of view. The findings will be examined through the theoretical approach of the *Congruence Model of Organizational Behavior*. This model proposes that all organisations seek congruence or alignment of four major components: task, people, organisational culture and organisational structure. This research project has sought to uncover how congruent these four major components are as a result of acquiring new media art for the permanent collection of two regional museums.

Agile organisation

The regional museums, I argue, have the ingenuity and flexibility to shape their collections. A sense of being adaptive and responsive to change is evident and working in a cross-disciplinary style is paramount. Hence, the analysis from the case studies indicate that staff are no longer working in silos, protective of territorial boundaries, but, instead, are agile and willing to share skills and knowledge and work across units to build new media art collections. In the Harris Museum for example there are three managers, Programme, Fundraising and Operations and there is an opportunity to work sideways across disciplines on projects. As a result, there is a great deal of cross-over and multi-disciplinary ways of working. The Exhibitions Officer notes that there is a lot of crossover with marketing, audience development, front of house, fundraising. The economic climate has necessitated substantial cutbacks both to resources and staffing. Informal leaders are finding solutions to problems with partners and networks, decision-making is consensual and staff autonomy enables staff to come up with inventive and creative projects. Staff are finding ways of building new media art collections which brings together many actors, institutions and theorists.

In the two case study museums it is evident that the structure is less formal, that is, there is a flatter structure with fewer lines of authority. Flatter hierarchies make for more agile and responsive organisations. The two museums welcome

a structure which supports a self-organised and ground-up approach. Staff can actively shape their roles and are no longer in their discipline or unit working in isolation. In both case studies it was argued that congruence between critical tasks and formal organisation (structure) are aligned and effective in enabling acquisition of new media art. Despite that, it is not possible to categorically state that the collecting of new media art substantially impacts on the organisational shape or structure. Yet, the nature of this art is well suited to an organisation which forms project teams as needed, bringing together a team of diverse expertise and background in order to work across disciplines in order to acquire the artwork.

Agile curation

The agile museum is one which, I suggest, strengthens creativity, flexibility, curiosity, tolerance of ambiguity and resilience; such agility and ability to adapt supports the organisation to collect new media art and underlines agile curation. More importantly, new media art appears to facilitate a progressive style of working, which incorporates a cross-disciplinary approach, staff agency and empowered decision-making (alongside informed risk-taking and experimentation), and collaborative practice both inside the museum and outside.

For example, the Harris Museum in Preston decided to collect new media art for the permanent collection (the first new media artwork to be collected) but encountered numerous challenges. As a result, staff had to collaborate in order to acquire Thomson and Craighead's artwork *The distance travelled through our solar system this year and all the barrels of oil remaining* (2011). Collaboration was required through the exhibition, collection, documentation and preservation stages. Many staff across various disciplines were brought together to find solutions to surprising issues. The Council's IT department had to disable specific firewalls so that the live data feed from the internet could run on the artwork. The technician was tasked with assisting the Exhibitions Officer in the installation process. The Front of House team volunteers were briefed about new media artworks in the exhibition by the Exhibitions Officer so that they could confidently engage with visitors.

Similarly, the process of acquiring new media art brought together experts beyond the museum. For example, an expert panel shortlisted five artworks for the exhibition in 2011. A separate second panel comprising different members met after the exhibition to consider which work should be collected by the Harris for its permanent fine art collection. The members of the two panels included academics, members from arts organisations, museum practitioners and research organisations. Once the artwork was collected a network of external partners were approached to share expertise on how to document the work (MODES, Tate), how to store and preserve the work (MITES, Variable Media Network) and extend best practice (working conferences, seminars and publications).

Whilst it could be argued that contemporary art in a range of media creates significant challenges and issues which exercise collaborative practice, I argue that new media art demands heightened collaboration at all stages of its life. This collaboration consists of many layers entwined in its production (see Chapter 2 for a description of how the director of the Van Abbemuseum, Esche, was involved in the production of a video dialogue as part of the *Flight Case Archive* work by Hurtzig), display, collection, documentation and preservation.

Collecting new media art does not have past templates and best practice established that stable art media do. Rather, its peculiar issues require inventive approaches to finding solutions, working collaboratively to collect new media art and setting the foundations for best practice on a case-by-case basis. These museums are at the vanguard of collecting – seeking new ways of working, being proactive and forward-looking but mindful of the concerns of new media art and engaging with questions and working with partners to find solutions and sharing knowledge and expertise in-house and beyond. An example includes global networks that share findings, case studies and resources online as well as co-producing conferences, art fair events and seminars and museum publications.

New media art presents great opportunities for these museums, but, it also claims a series of demands which staff cannot always anticipate. Therefore,

new media art encourages staff to work in cross-disciplinary ways to handle such works. A collaborative approach outside the museum is extensive and highly networked and informal. There is a mutually respectful character to the new media art world which accepts limitations in skills and knowledge and actively seeks to address those limitations. This refreshing outlook is significant in two ways.

First, the new media art world is ever-changing, where technology is constantly being upgraded or becoming defunct. Hence, there is a need to be engaged with a network of expertise to guide and advise museum staff on the necessary requirements for new media art. Second, the shape of museums is becoming flatter, staff cutbacks are ever-present and staff work collaboratively to ensure that the collection is cared for appropriately. More importantly, however, new media art specialisms in museums are not yet established. Museum staff are collecting new media art but they might not have all the necessary skills or expertise to acquire it. Therefore, a supportive, extensive network of experts outside the museums is essential.

The two museums under investigation promote knowledge sharing and are honest about the skills gap which exists in relation to collecting new media art. Staff are, therefore, in a position to reach out to those who have the requisite expertise in order to secure new media art for the museum collection. This position, I argue, is one which reveals remarkable openness of shortfalls but also a strength. Staff are engaged with networks, partners and knowledge exchange platforms so that they can acquire new media art with all the necessary input from those who have depth of expertise in this area. This active and collaborative approach ensures that new media art is acquired, documented, exhibited and preserved in line with best practice at present.

It could also be argued that the case study examples illustrate that the collecting of new media art for the permanent collections also contributes to best practice. It is acknowledged that as situations change, for example, technological developments and preservation practice, staff are poised and ready to enable any updates or modifications to be made in tandem with developments in the

field. Significantly, museum staff are in a unique position to be able to engage with the artist(s) to ascertain their intentions about possible changes to the work throughout its life. This opportunity to work with the artist(s) has significance and importance for the collection. The body of documentation which is amassed builds a substantial archive for the museum. This will inform future scholarship and facilitate exchange with other museums on the artist's oeuvre. From a museological perspective, the Harris Museum and the Van Abbemuseum, I contend, advances best practice.

Pragmatically, new media art fosters a climate whereby staff can admit any shortfalls because it is only gradually being actively collected, and, the field is fresh with new insights and knowledge. Disciplines which have been well established may perhaps lack such self-scrutiny and therefore become more easily fixed and secure in the knowledge which has been built up over an extensive period of time. New media art, on the other hand, is fluid, dynamic and ephemeral which encourages staff to be open, experimental and welcoming of change and to build new skills and expertise. This open approach promotes nimble teams, responsiveness to the environment and agility. The agile museum, thus, is one in which expertise is shared within the organisation and beyond building best practice.

The congruence between critical tasks and people (human resources) was weak in areas related to skills and expertise in relation to collecting new media art and, it can be argued, therefore that new media art has a principal impact on the museum. Indeed, the impact on museum professionals' skills sets and expertise as well as the task to be accomplished requires reconfiguration and redefinition; this includes knowledge exchange across the organisation and beyond to build best practice.

Agile organisational culture and informal leadership

The drive to collect new media art in the Harris Museum and the Van Abbemuseum is, I argue, in no small part due to the structure and culture of each organisation. The research attempted to show a strong link between the culture of the organisation and the structure of the museum. The principal architect of such environments is, I suggest, the leader or director of the museum. The director has a considerable role in shaping how things are done and why. This research has demonstrated the impact leadership plays in both museums. The leaders crafted an environment and a space for staff to push themselves in terms of personal and professional development, to be proactive, experiment and challenge orthodoxy.

The organisational culture has a direct impact on how things are done, but the culture is shaped by many factors not least the approach adopted by the director. Interestingly, the Van Abbemuseum adopted a novel approach to leadership. They separated the artistic unit and the production and presentation unit. Hence, the director (Esche) was responsible for the artistic vision and strategic direction of the museum, but, the deputy director (Erbslöh) took over the running of the 'house' in a pragmatic and routinized way.

The director of the Van Abbemuseum pointed out that his leadership style was 'chaotic' and 'inactive' (Esche 2013). Esche remarks:

I do believe the best directors are 'inactive'. In order to get to where we would like to take the museum you need to be active at times. The best thing is that everybody does exactly what is necessary, and, we do it as a group (2013).

His role is thinking a couple of steps ahead and letting the staff get on with the task at hand. Yet, Esche promoted an environment in which all staff had a crucial part to play, not least in exploiting the museum as a democratic tool to accomplish the artistic vision. He emphasised a proactive approach where staff are encouraged to experiment and take risks. This, for many, was unsettling and unnerving. Nevertheless, staff who adopted this innovative approach were

recognised and praised. Some staff could not adapt or accept such a style and subsequently left. The deputy director has brought a form of functional bureaucracy to the house where decisions need to be made. Nevertheless, there is an ethos in the Van Abbemuseum that fosters participation at all levels of the organisation. Staff are actively encouraged to attend meetings, participate and question authority. There is an environment where staff can challenge assumptions and work in new ways (ibid. 2013).

An innovative atmosphere allows the staff an opportunity to explore new ideas and to take informed risks. This is, I assert, recognised in both case study museums. Both museums nurture an active and creative environment where staff can experiment and be inventive. The Exhibitions Officer at the Harris Museum commented that she had grown over time in confidence and in her ability to perform her role. She approached the director about the idea of collecting new media art for the permanent collection and her director was hugely supportive of the project and the experiment brought together a diverse group of talents and organisations on the acquisition of the artwork. Likewise, the Van Abbemuseum fosters a creative environment where staff are emboldened to work on projects which they would not have ordinarily have had the chance to work on.

The culture of openness, participation and equality shapes the aspirations of staff. Encouraged to try new things, they have successfully built new media art collections. The findings from the case studies suggest that the congruence between critical tasks and the organisational culture was strongly aligned. The culture in both museums was strong and open which promoted a climate of experimentation and an acceptance of ambiguity and open-endedness. Furthermore, I argue that the acquisition of new media art in discrete ways, redefined the organisational culture in subtle ways. For instance, uncertainties and challenges of collecting new media art necessitated an honesty of skills sets (or lack of) and seeking expertise from others within the museum or beyond. Also, the fluidity of such art encouraged museum professionals to be accepting of change and ambiguity.

However, the most significant finding, I assert, rests on the notion of agile organisational culture and leadership. Museum professionals are assuming the role of informal leaders and being proactive agents within the museum to actively acquire work such as new media art which is unorthodox and challenging in myriad ways. Staff are supported to take informed risks and to engage with museum collections in inventive and creative ways.

This thesis contributes to existing knowledge on leadership theory by providing evidence that shows the correlation between leadership and organisational culture. This, I assert, has been overlooked in the literature. The research, I suggest, shows that informal leaders are significant actors in the museum. Granted staff agency and autonomy by the director(s) promotes a dynamic and adaptive environment. Staff can be creative and work in innovative projects, work across the organisation, learn new skills, share knowledge and judiciously use resources in a climate of austerity. Therefore, new media art is collected, in part, because the combination of leadership style and organisational culture facilitates staff agency and autonomy where staff can take responsibility and ownership of their work. This evidence shows how the style of leadership adopted can affect the culture of a museum. Such a leadership style can stimulate or starve staff agency and autonomy. Therefore, future research in museums on this link between leadership and culture would be worth exploring further.

Summary

This thesis contends that museums which are acquiring new media artworks for their permanent art collection are, to some extent, being redefined. The two regional museums in this research, I suggest, are innovative and agile organisations where expertise is shared within the organisation and beyond building best practice. The three main themes suggest that collecting new media art impacts on the skills, workflow, culture, structure and people of the museums in question. The research brought up a cluster of words highlighting the impact of collecting new media art: agility and adaptability of museum professionals, the museum and staff taking informed risks and experimenting with new ways of working, adoption of informal leadership which brings with it staff agency and autonomy.

The organisational change which occurs is subtle and nuanced but impacts on skills sets, expertise, decision-making, organisational culture and leadership. Moreover, these symptoms of organisational change enable us to appreciate collecting new media art with its complex and often unique challenges which demands a flexible, agile and problem-solving approach. Collecting new media art is a new area of museum practice, which presents many exciting opportunities for museums and audiences, but, it also raises many questions for which no templates or other works can serve as models. New media art requires input from staff across the organisation in the form of reciprocal interdependence. Reciprocal relationships help to document, exhibit and preserve new media art. The link between collecting new media art on the museum and the relationships amongst staff suggests that the relationship is cyclical and fluid, always shifting and adapting.

I would suggest, therefore, that collecting new media art implies a continuous cycle between the collecting museum and new media art. Each impacts on the other in ways which could not be foreseen. It is not a case of cause and effect, new media art directly impacting the museum, but, rather, a more nuanced and subtle influence between the two. Thus, the phenomenon of collaborative practice inside and outside the museum is an example of how new media art redefines how the museum works. I argue that leadership mutually informs both

the culture and structure of the museum. This mutually informing system can be understood pictorially as the 'loop of significance':



Figure 8.1 Leadership 'Loop of Significance'

In this image we see that the museum comprises leadership (both formal and informal) which shapes organisational culture. The two factors, that is, leadership and organisational culture, I argue, directly influence the museum in its capacity to collect new media art. This process, whilst revealing some potential skills gaps, suggests that there is an opportunity to actively collaborate inside and outside the organisation; to build partnerships and share knowledge. In addition, we see that new ways of working include a flatter organisational structure where museum professionals are most often working in teams. Decision-making is consensual and a climate of experimentation and being proactive is promoted.

These findings enhance our understanding of the mutually reinforcing relationship between collecting new media art and the museum. In each way they subtly shape each other. Yet, it is clear that the biggest impact of collecting new media art is the collaborative approach which is adopted. In order for the museum to be in a position to collect new media art, the existing leadership, culture and structure were in place to advance the museum in acquiring such art. The Van Abbemuseum for example had a culture and structure which was agile, dynamic and responsive. This climate enabled the museum to actively collect new media art for the permanent collection. The Harris Museum had a culture which was inventive and experimental whereas the structure was primarily a functional bureaucracy. Nevertheless, collecting new media art was instrumental in staff actively working in a project team style with collaboration and knowledge sharing knowledge. The structure, in turn, was able to accommodate the project style of working particularly in light of the demands that collecting new media art presented.

New media art, I argue, has an impact on the work to be done and the skills sets and expertise required. In addition, new media art subtly redefines structure and culture. However, culture and leadership styles are, I argue, the real drivers for how the museum operates and functions. This signifies an opportunity for staff to be empowered agents, to challenge themselves and the organisation and to actively acquire new media art.

Critical reflection on whether the findings from the two case studies are isolated incidents of change or whether there is something more fundamental happening are worth tendering. Can we argue that collecting new media art is a catalyst of change or, rather, is the museum already agile? The findings suggest that acquiring new media art characterises a symbiotic relationship. As we have seen in the analysis chapters, the acquisition of such artwork subtly redefines agile curation where the staff and task to be done are affected. The characteristics of new media art (computable, networked, immaterial, replicable, interactive and variable) impinge on the skills sets and expertise of the museum professional to further knowledge exchange and to promote best practice. The characteristics raise particular challenges and questions which demand agility

and creative solutions in relation to documentation strategies for new media art as well as preservation matters and standards of best practice. The input of other professionals is welcomed such as technicians, programmers, academics and arts organisations to facilitate knowledge exchange.

In contrast, I argue that the two regional museums exemplify agile organisations. Whilst they reside within a bureaucratic council structure they have certain hierarchies in place for standardised procedures and processes (e.g. finance, personnel, legal, press) but also embedded within the organisational structure is an ad hoc preparedness which can be formed of project teams such as the Harris Museum in order to actively acquire new media art. Hence, it would appear that the museums are agile and this is perhaps shaped as a result of the context (council cutbacks and staff shortages require working in new ways) and the development of organisations over the last 20-30 years have shifted from being predominantly bureaucratic organisations with many levels of management and rules and procedures to a flatter organisation with less levels of hierarchy and greater flexibility and manoeuvrability.

The symbiotic relationship, I argue, rests with the nature of collecting new media art and the organisational culture and leadership. I contend that the two museums had an organisational culture which was already agile and open. Such conditions facilitated a climate where experimentation and creativity could be utilised. The museums showed resilience, tolerance of ambiguity and adaptability. Furthermore, the style of leadership in both museums exemplified participative management. Greater autonomy was afforded to museum professionals to be proactive agents within the organisation, to challenge orthodoxy and to increase egalitarian decision-making. Consequently, the promotion of informal leaders - curators, collections officers, project assistants and conservationists – allowed them to work together to build a collection of new media art. Thus, the museums were already agile in terms of its culture and leadership approach but the acquisition of new media art enhanced these factors further.

Significance of the Findings and Research Contribution

This thesis demonstrates the first time that a business theory, specifically the Congruence Model of Organizational Behavior by Nadler and Tushman (1977; 1979), has been used to explore the impact of collecting new media art on museums, precisely the four major components: critical tasks, people (human resources), informal organisation (culture) and formal organisation (structure). The Congruence Model sets out to assess the congruence or alignment between the organisation's strategy and the four major components (Tushman and O'Reilly 2002: 58). Nadler and Tushman formulated the model so that a congruence analysis could be carried out by a unit's manager or organisation's director. The congruence analysis attempts to determine if there are any potential gaps in performance which need to be resolved or opportunities which need to be explored and exploited.

This research has adopted the Congruence Model to examine congruence between the four major components and how new media art is impacting, if at all, on these components. It is noteworthy that the Congruence Model does not examine the role leadership style plays on key factors such as the organisational culture and structure of an organisation. As mentioned earlier, I assert that the interrelationship between these factors has a direct bearing on the climate within the case study museums so that new media art can be acquired.

In both case studies it was argued that congruence between critical tasks and formal organisation (structure) are aligned and effective in enabling acquisition of new media art. The flatter structure fosters staff agency and informal leadership which encourages cross-disciplinary ways of working and consensual decision-making. A participatory and open environment exists which promotes teamwork and experimentation.

The congruence between critical tasks and organisational culture was strongly aligned. The culture in both museums was strong and open. Strong and open cultures signify that staff feel good about what they do and share values and

beliefs about the organisation and what it does. Employees believe that they are part of something important and they take pride in this fact (Fopp 1997). A climate of mutual respect, flexibility and ownership was apparent. Staff exhibited great adaptability and teamwork alongside trust and a collaborative approach.

The congruence between critical tasks and people (human resources) was weak in areas related to skills and expertise in relation to collecting new media art. Whilst the Congruence Model would maintain that this is a performance gap, I suggest, however, that this presents exciting opportunities for both museums. The extensive networks which exist outside the museums support knowledge exchange, building skills, expertise and best practice. Interviewees stated that they do not hold all the necessary expertise in-house and, as a result, readily seek expertise outside when appropriate. There are many platforms where expertise can be sought. Best practice is being built on the growing number of case study examples (one of which is the Harris Museum) which are shared online, through working conferences or in academic publications. This research has illustrated the opportunities of collecting new media art for the Harris Museum and the Van Abbemuseum. The impact collecting new media art has on both organisations presents challenges in terms of the skills sets and expertise required for museum professionals. Nevertheless, it has been shown that staff overcame such challenges by seeking opportunities to collaborate across the organisation and to build and exploit collaborative networks outside the museum.

The assessment of congruence between the critical tasks and people (human resources) could be considered to be out of alignment and thus require corrective action. Yet, at the same time, it is acknowledged that an opportunity presents itself for staff. This opportunity to exploit collaborative practice across the museum is hugely beneficial in terms of effective use of in-house skills and expertise across units; working in partnership to find solutions to collecting new media art. Likewise, the use of collaborative practice outside the museum is extensive and advantageous. The benefits, I argue, are greater than the possible shortfalls evident in the research.

The Congruence Model comprises five steps to organisational analysis and the analysis chapters (5-7) have set out the assessment of congruence of critical tasks with people, structure and culture (Step Three). Step Four sets out to develop solutions and take corrective action following the assessment. Any inconsistencies should be identified and action taken to bring the incongruence into alignment with the critical tasks and strategy (Tushman and O'Reilly 2002: 68). Step five of the Congruence Model proposes that the unit manager and their teams can observe the response and learn from the consequences. As a researcher, I am not in a position to continually refine and readjust the congruence of the unit or museum under examination. However, this thesis has shown how the model can be used as a tool to reveal any opportunities and overcome obstacles to organisational effectiveness. A congruence analysis is one which can be reinitiated to enable a continuous process of adjustment and alignment of the organisation.

I argue that the use of the Congruence Model is a useful analytical tool for museums (of any size or any collection) to assess their effectiveness. The tool can identify areas which need addressing so that all four building blocks are working effectively and efficiently. This instrument could be a useful addition to the toolkit for managers. Finding where the museum can improve helps to effectively use resources including financial, human resources and assets. Encompassing staff perspectives can also bring new solutions to improve areas which are inefficient.

A major limitation of the Congruence Model lies in the fact that it does not address the key role leadership plays in shaping the four major components (critical tasks, people, culture and structure). I have attempted to show that situational leadership is a useful tool to examine the appropriate style aligned to the culture and competencies and motivations of staff. In both regional case study museums it was evident that directors employed a participative or consultative style of leadership. This is consistent with management theory which highlights a move away from a paternalistic or directive style of leadership to a more participative approach (Fopp 1997, Moore 1997; 1999, Janes 2007; 2009). Museum professionals are granted mutual respect and

autonomy to take ownership of their work and be proactive and adaptive. There is a delicate interplay between the leader, the work to be done, how it is done and by whom. The dividing lines are no longer as fixed as they once were. In its place, the style of leadership adapts and responds to the internal and external environment. However, in situations where the directors have to make tough and difficult decisions regarding cutbacks and staff redundancies, the decision-making and leadership is, by necessity, more directive.

A more participative style encourages museum staff to take ownership but also to be creative, flexible and work with colleagues in teams. Taking informed risks and experimenting by working in new ways helps to build new media art collections. Museum professionals are active shapers in the organisation and the director's cultivate this environment. Such an atmosphere elevates staff to give their best. The two museums are in a position to anticipate change and to actively respond. They both emphasise a collaborative ethos and new ways of working.

The interplay between structure, culture, people and task is one which is constantly evolving. Tushman and O'Reilly emphasise that there is not one single 'right' answer but there is a continuous process of evaluation, assessment and action (2002: 73). They suggest too that organisational learning is about finding 'good-enough solutions' to potential problems or opportunities and aiming to get better and better (ibid.: 74).

The Congruence Model is undertaken by a manager of a unit or the director of an organisation. However, it fails to consider the style of leadership and the impact that will have on the culture, structure and people. I suggest that the model could be improved by building into it an assessment of the leadership style. This will give a better picture of how all the elements are impacting on each other so that a comprehensive analysis can be carried out. This holistic approach strengthens any suggested changes because all necessary components have been carefully considered. This research, I contend, will serve as a foundation for future studies and the model can be adapted to suit the needs of any museum.

Recommendations for Further Research and Implications for Practice

Further research might investigate the processes of collecting challenging work, or any other novel project, in other museums using the Congruence Model with the added proviso mentioned above (to assess leadership style). This model provides a useful lens in which to examine the four major components at work and to consider where potential problems or opportunities lie. It is also important to explore leadership to gain a full picture of how all these factors blend and shape one another to determine how effective the museum is. This Congruence Model could be a useful tool for any museum hoping to evaluate their human resources, structure, culture, collection and leadership to set out actions to build new opportunities and to bridge any gaps which could make the museum less effective both in terms of resources but also ambition.

The field of management in museums, I assert, is one which could be expanded to incorporate the Congruence Model. This model neatly identifies all four major components which all museums have: organisational structure, organisational culture, people/human resources and critical tasks to be accomplished. These four building blocks need to work in harmony to accomplish the vision and strategy of the museum. The literature has considered issues such as organisational structure, organisational culture and leadership to some extent, but it has not critically shown how to use these relationships to exploit organisational performance and effectiveness in museums. Museums are under pressure to do more with less. As a consequence, if they could determine where the organisation is not performing to its greatest potential, then, I argue, this Congruence Model might be advantageous. The findings in this thesis demonstrate that the museum's organisational culture is, to a large extent, shaped by the style of leadership. I have learned that leadership is a strong force within any organisation and particularly museums which have a workforce of museum professionals or knowledge workers which are highly skilled and seek autonomy and staff agency to be inventive and creative in their job. The move towards a more participative and consensual style of leadership engages museum professionals so that they can assume greater responsibility, take informed risks and shape the museum's collection. Further and detailed

research on the important role that leadership plays in museums is strongly suggested as a result of this research project. Furthermore, a greater understanding of the complexity of organisational culture could be furthered by research and how it is subtly shaped over time via numerous modifications as a consequence of changing directors, leadership styles, mission, vision and strategy. Research and literature on the strong relationship between museum management and organisational culture is to be welcomed.

Evidence indicates that the Congruence Model could be a helpful tool for museums. Any tool which can make museums more resourceful, resilient, adaptive and effective will be in a stronger position long-term. Therefore, directors might welcome and embrace such a theory. The model can be utilised at intervals to assess alignment and effectiveness within the units and the museum overall. Any improvements can be made incrementally to steer the museum towards success and opportunity rather than stagnating and creating gaps and problems which, in the future, may create major organisational change and restructuring (such as Glasgow Life).

The Congruence Model could be employed by museums as a means of constantly updating and refining practice and operations. Such evaluation and assessment can help ensure that the museum is effective and using all its assets: people, budget, resources and collections to its fullest potential. This is especially beneficial in light of the economic downturn.

The findings of this research have a number of important implications for future practice. First, future study using the Congruence Model to examine national museums who are collecting new media art would be worthy of research. The findings between the national museums and the two regional case study museums could reveal similarities. Or, more interestingly, the research could uncover variances or new challenges and opportunities from which these museums can share and learn. Broadly speaking, it is suggested that collecting new media art can help the museum be more agile and resilient. Agile museums are those which can adapt and respond to challenges and continuous change. Agile museums have flexibility and innovation embedded and staff can

work in new ways with staff across the organisation and with organisations outside.

Second, future study could be broadened out to other collections across museums, or the role new directors have on the structure and culture of a museum. The practicability of the model, I argue, is diverse and expansive.

Finally, the teaching modules for museum studies could include an extended look at the strong, and often underrated, impact and interplay of museum management, context and resources, structure and culture on organisational performance and effectiveness. The leaders of tomorrow, and, I contend, includes informal leaders in museums, will benefit from an understanding of organisational theory and the role they can play in shaping organisations and redefining the role and function of museums. This often neglected area of study, will, I argue, become more important to the long-term viability and effectiveness of museums. Future studies on the current topic are therefore recommended for both scholars of museology but also museum management in general.

By looking at the arrival of new media art, we have glimpsed, perhaps, a model of agile management that may come to characterise the sector more widely. It is by looking at the collecting of the unorthodox that we have seen the agility and appetite for risk, the collaboration and project-based work that, perhaps, are soon to become the orthodoxy.

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