Could design help promote and build empathic processes in prison? Understanding the role of empathy and design in catalysing social change and transformation

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Introduction

The art of being able to imagine stepping into the shoes of another person, understanding their feelings and perspectives and using that understanding to guide thought and action is not a social skill that is evenly distributed in the general population, let alone in the prison population. Many experts and writers assure that for the majority of people, including the majority of criminals who are not psychopaths, empathy can be developed primarily by engaging with experiences that promote or are designed to build it (Baron-Cohen 2011, Krznaric 2014). Despite evidence from restorative justice practitioners that empathetic engagement can lead to transformation[1], as well as improve life for victims of crime, the need to create empathetic experiences in prison and outside is not adequately understood or valued by the criminal justice system. This paper is written in three sections that make arguments about why this situation needs to change, and why design might have a role in making that change happen. The first section reviews why empathy is not promoted in the prison context because of emotional suppression that is implicit in prison culture. The second section reviews evidence provided by the UK's National Alliance for Arts in Criminal Justice that explores how and why creative practice already facilitates some experiences of empathy that have had a positive effect on inmate experience and has led to personal revelations and transformations in the form of 'desistance' – the process where offenders stop reoffending (National Alliance for Arts in Criminal Justice, 2013). The final section reflects upon the prison experience itself, and the serious difficulties it creates for many inmates (linked to what Wortley (2002) describes as 'situational precipitators'), and suggests, in this context, design could make a difference to the sort of transformation that occurs. In particular, that design tools and processes could improve provision and impact upon inmate learning in how to relate to and care for others in pro-social ways.

1. Empathy - obscured through the prison mask?

The issue of empathy is of heightened significance in the prison context because so many prisoners suppress emotions. The sociologist Berger (1963) pointed out that when people go to prison it has a significant impact on identity management – the younger the offender the greater the impact – because a prison sentence constitutes a 'massive assault' on the senses. The fact that deprivation and frustration contribute to

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[1] Transformation is defined by dictionaries as 'thorough or dramatic change in form or appearance'; in this context we are referring to transformation to cultural values, linked to the understanding of 'culture as a whole way of life' (Hoggart 1957, Williams 1958, Hall 1968 & 1980) rather than with the sublime e.g. with art or going to the opera, or even with wearing 'sunday best' (Willis 1983).

the psychological impact of incarceration has been documented by many criminologists, and warrants greater consideration and management. For example, Irwin (1970) identifies the many ways prison negatively contributes to emotional development, including empathetic development. Consequently most first time prisoners, in seeking to preserve their previous understanding of being 'oneself', appear to engage in the suppression of emotion to try and hang on to who they were. He also points out, that as part of this process inmates feel the need to develop a prison 'persona', a 'front' that is often different from the previous outside-world persona or pre-prison identity, aimed at helping the inmate adapt and avoid trauma and the painful institutional contingencies of prison life. Travis and Waul (2003) write about the impact of incarceration on children, families and communities and observe that families report that "many [inmates] who become institutionalized are unaware that any transformation has occurred. Few consciously decided to allow such a transformation to take place …".

Ethnographic works from Schmid and Jones (1991) who interviewed first time maximum-security inmates found the creation of prison personas also contains implicit survival tactics in terms of psychological adaptation. Schmid and Jones (1991) and McCorkle (1992) discuss the dilemmas that inspire prisoners to 'turn off' capacity for some types of empathetic identification, by becoming hyper-vigilant, always alert for signs of threat or risks to personal safety, exhibiting suspicion. In harsh prison regimes, distrust and caution, almost become reflexive processes. Fear is of course experienced differently depending on the age and cultural experiences of the inmate, and may eventually be superseded by experiences of boredom, which also characterize the reality of prison life. Yet fear has a different emotional impact. Many inmates at the outset of the prison journey, women as well as men, say they feel the need to hide feelings of vulnerability, and discontinuity; and try to differentiate themselves from other inmates – just as we do in the outside world – in order to cope with difficult situations. Schmid and Jones (1991) argue the main difference is that "'impression management' in prison differs, because of the totality with which it governs interactions. Also because the perceived costs of failure are humiliation, assault and death. Consequently, the entire impression management process in prison becomes a highly conscious endeavour…". For most inmates who can manage it the presentation of a 'prison mask' is a continuous performance, but of course not all can manage to hold the mask in place, whilst others cannot remove it on release.

Fig 1

Travis and Waul (2003, p.52) point out "at least twenty per cent of the current prison population suffer from some sort of significant mental or psychological disorder or developmental disability" (with some estimates suggesting this figure is even higher)[2]. For example, the prison reform trust identify a range of mental health issues[3] that may mean many inmates are likely to have difficulties managing multiple identities implicit in the creation and maintenance of a prison mask.

Unlike roles in the outside world, those in prison are not trans-situational. Here, Travis and Waul (2003, p. 42) identify that inmates "constantly hide their feeling from others … leading to some prisoners forgetting that they have any feelings at all". Of course we are not saying that inmates do not understand what other inmates,

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[2] Some studies suggest that this figure is higher than '31% of adult prisoners are found to have emotional well-being issues linked to their offending behaviour' See http://www.emcett.com/Offender_Learning/list/the_seven_pathways_to_reducing_re_offending
[3] http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/projectsresearch/mentalhealth

victims of crime or officers in the system 'feel'. Most inmates who do not have severe mental health problems can recognise the perspective of others (cognitive empathy) but may 'turn off' an entwined perspective e.g. 'affective empathy' to get by. There are numerous accounts of the ubiquity of the prison mask (Cogan & Paulson 1998), and whilst it is true that some criminologists dispute whether or not this mask metaphor is always appropriate (Cheliotis 2012), we feel it is worth consideration here given that it often describes a chronic emotional flatness that debilitates inmates' social interactions and intimate relationships. This inability to connect with others makes rehabilitation even harder than it already is. Many inmates may feel they must remain in character to survive in a context where there is little room for self-mockery or other forms of role distance. Of course there may be a strong self-dialogue going on between what the inmate understands as his/her 'suspended identity' and the newly created prison persona, which is further compounded by other factors that affect prison life such as boredom, lack of privacy, overcrowding, stressful and dehumanising living conditions, as well as depressing architectural monotony, all of which have negative impacts. Social alienation and distancing, as a defence against exploitation in prison, then leads to disinclination for engagement in open communication. It is not surprising that so many prisoners who learn to hide behind a mask withdraw from authentic social interaction, becoming 'switched off' and isolated, and are often unable to 'switch on' again. Jose-Kampfner (1990) has compared the plight of long-term women prisoners to that of the terminally ill, who also emotionally 'withdraw' and who do not allow themselves to experience much affective empathetic identification. Of course, just like in the outside world, each inmate confronts identity questions in his/her own way and each arrives at his/her own understanding of who he/she is, based on the unfinished, unresolved self-dialogue. But the prison experience itself seems to create serious difficulties for inmates, because Wortley's (2002) 'situational precipitators' seem to do further harm e.g. compromise inmate learning about how to relate to and care for others in pro-social ways, and consequently limit rehabilitation. This may be why so many inmates go on to reoffend; in the UK, like many other places in the world, prison has a poor record for reducing reoffending – 47% of adults are reconvicted within one year of release. For those serving sentences of less than 12 months this increases to 58%. Nearly three quarters (73%) of under-18 year olds in the UK are reconvicted within a year of release (Ministry of Justice 2013).

In most instances Schmid and Jones (1991) suggest that inmates ultimately take some aspect of this suppression and new prison identity into other areas of life which impacts on their role repertoire, which is where future problems might lie. This account of identity suppression suggests to us a role for creative practice within prison populations. Firstly to consider whether engagement in creative (art and design) practice might help prisoners to (re-) develop empathy for him/herself and reconnect inmates with their pre-prison identity through a process of 'introspection'. Secondly, whether engagement in such creative processes might offer opportunities for (re-) development of empathy for others? Krznaric (2014) suggests that too much introspection of consumer society has led to the ME generation and that now a cultural paradigm shift is needed to produce pro-social behaviour linked to a model of 'outrospection' – a method in which you get to know yourself by developing relationships and empathetic thinking with others.

There is already some experimental work from criminology (Kilgore 2001) that suggests that finding ways to build empathy in prison can deliver positive outcomes,

but there is little distinction or understanding as to the nature of the empathy fostered and/or the nature of the creative processes contributing to this transformation. In fact, Krznaric (2014) identifies that the link between engaging with empathy tools or "playing an empathy game and taking empathetic action in the real world has not yet been the subject of serious research…" Much of the evaluated work from prison does not directly focus on empathy but is linked to the theory of 'desistance' and reviews mainly situational factors, i.e. understanding the institutional and structural pathways (employment, marriage, etc.) which help inmates keep out of prison (see the 7 NOMS pathways presented below, table 1).

Table 1: The seven NOMS pathways to reduce re-offending

1. Accommodation and support	A third of prisoners do not have settled accommodation prior to custody and it is estimated that stable accommodation can reduce the likelihood of re-offending by more than a fifth. It also provides the vital building blocks for a range of other support services and gaining employment.
2. Education, training and employment	Having a job can reduce the risk of re-offending by between a third and a half. There is a strong correlation between offending, poor literacy, language and numeracy skills and low achievement. Many offenders have a poor experience of education and no experience of stable employment.
3. Health	Offenders are disproportionately more likely to suffer from mental and physical health problems than the general population and also have high rates of alcohol misuse. Not surprisingly, 31% of adult prisoners were found to have emotional well-being issues linked to their offending behaviour.
4. Drugs and alcohol	Around two thirds of prisoners use illegal drugs in the year before imprisonment and intoxication by alcohol is linked to 30% of sexual offences, 33% of burglaries, 50% of street crime and about half of all violent crimes.
5. Finance, benefits and debt	Ensuring that ex-offenders have sufficient lawfully obtained money to live on is vital to their rehabilitation. Around 48% of prisoners report a history of debt, which gets worse for about a third of them during custody and about 81% of offenders claim benefit on release.
6. Children and families	Maintaining strong relationships with families and children can play a major role in helping prisoners to make and sustain changes that help them to avoid re-offending. This is difficult because custody places added strains on family relationships.
7. Attitudes, thinking & behaviour	Prisoners are more likely to have negative social attitudes and poor self-control. Successfully addressing their attitudes, thinking and behaviour during custody may reduce re-offending by up to 14%.

Source:
http://www.emcett.com/Offender_Learning/list/the_seven_pathways_to_reducing_re_offending

Nevertheless, in UK prisons there are some useful findings about how creativity can positively effect prisoner subjectivity, see the evidence library of the National Alliance for Arts in Criminal Justice. Of course situational issues are significant and to some extent Pathways 2 and 7, in understanding the need to build personal agency in transforming reoffending, does acknowledge the subjective as well as structural factors linked to desistance. However, the contribution of creative education in building empathy and promoting change is not always understood or valued as highly as situational factors despite its apparent contribution to inmate desistance. Consequently, the likely contribution creative education could make to individuals, in developing empathy as well as desistance, in our view, is significantly under-valued.

2. Creativity and Transformation – Arts Case Studies

The role of creative arts, which is often *process driven*, in helping inmates begin to pursue something new – ostensibly an art or design project but ultimately a non-criminal subjectivity – has a lot to contribute to desistance. The National Alliance for Arts in Criminal Justice document over 80 evaluations in their evidence library that show how the creative arts and their co-creation processes initiate the beginning of a change journey, that inmate engagement may not have foreseen, or started, with this purpose in mind[4].

These evaluations also explain how this creative engagement leads to desistance, via activities that cause interaction between 'agents' and their environments. Vygotsky's (1978) 'Activity Theory' explains why such interaction is valuable, and how mediation plays a central role. First of all, Vygotsky outlines how creative interaction through activities (symbolic systems used to communicate and analyse reality) with tools (signs, symbols, maps, plans, charts, models, pictures, and language) shape the way human beings interact with reality. According to Vygotsky the principle of internalisation / externalisation occurs through such activities and ultimately results in shaping the individual's internal world. Such activities and tools usually reflect the experiences of history of knowledge, of other people who have tried to solve similar problems at an earlier time and invented / modified the activity or tool to make it more efficient. So, the use of creative activities and tools is a means for the accumulation and transmission of social knowledge. It influences the nature, not only of external behaviour, but also of the mental functioning of individuals. Crane Williams (2012), in her account of teaching in prison settings, observes "a dialogue between the work and the artist takes place in the act of making…" [Producing] "Transformative learning that helps adults recognise their specific frames of reference, frames which are composed of collective ideas taken from culture". Through this recognition and questioning inmates develop an ability to pose new questions, reimagine solutions and work collaboratively with others (Mezirow 1997).

Williams (2012) also observes such transformation requires a good deal of patience and gentleness, especially under conditions of captivity: "When individuals initially enter prison they have a difficult time adjusting to their new surroundings, the culture,

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[4] The National Alliance for Arts in Criminal Justice Evidence Library is an online library housing the key research and evaluation documents on the impact of arts-based projects, programmes and interventions within the Criminal Justice System. It can be accessed http://www.artsevidence.org.uk

the expectation of the institution. … Exile from society to a place filtered with arbitrary, dehumanising, and oppressive rules is difficult to ensure. For many, ways in which to find meaning in their day-to-day existence are missing (Clemmer 1940, Liebling 1999). To insert purpose in their lives in prison individuals may turn to work, treatment, education or writing, or set personal goals such as reading a number of books every week, or knitting a given number of hats. Others find purpose in interpersonal relationships. …Whilst making art is not a panacea for difficult transition, it can create a space for reflection and helps 'makers' understand and see the extraordinary in their day-to-day life. Finding the extra-ordinary, is in turn, a way to discover purpose".

Finding purpose through activities that utilise the iterative nature of creative learning is extremely significant because it has implications for understanding how desistance might occur. The criminologists Giordano, Cernkovich & Rudolph (2002) have described a four-stage process to desistance e.g. the process by which people who have offended stop offending, and begin to articulate a different subjectivity and consciousness.   These stages where change, not just to psychology but cultural values, takes place and can be measured, include:

1. An openness to change.

2. Exposure and reaction to hooks for change.

3. The imagination and belief that the offender could be different, the possibility of what is called a 'replacement self'.

4. Also changed perceptions of offending. The way that offenders, who engage with arts, start to perceive differently their offending and the deviant behaviour of others, and to talk about this differently in order to change the old criminal self into a new non criminal self.

Creative processes seem to provoke such changes as described above – as many accounts from those who teach creative courses in prison from radio, drama, music, writing, art and design, testify. Whilst better quality evaluation is always needed by government, who particularly value control studies and evidence[5], an increasing number of projects have delivered some level of evaluated evidence that demonstrates the precise ways that creative education impacts on desistance, by creating hooks for change, new ideas about identity as well as greater empathy[6]. Desistance, as we have heard from many, is not just about the absence of crime, but the maintenance of crime-free behaviour, which is a continual and active process of transformation.

Restorative justice has made a strong case for empathy too. Seeing the victim's point of view and understanding what was going on in the perpetrator's mind seems to do two positive things: it appears to reduce the victim's on-going fear of crime and contributes significantly to reducing reoffending. This is why bringing offenders and victims together in restorative encounters is regarded as important. But, as Sherman & Strang (2007) observe, to get offenders to want to engage is problematic as some are reluctant, and the system tends to be offender focused in terms of why such restorative 'conferences' are set up in the first place[7]. Both victim and offender reluctance to engage may change over time. Individual's subjectivity is not fixed but

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[5] There is some criticism of evidence from arts education in prison. For example, RAND Europe, Arcs Ltd and University of Glamorgan (2012), suggest 'there is a lack of good quality research evidence that explores the impact of arts projects with offenders. Currently, there is insufficient evidence to conclude whether or not arts projects have a measureable impact on re-offending'.
[6] http://www.artsevidence.org.uk
[7] There are other criticisms of the Restorative Process too – see papers written by Gavrielides (2015).

always in the 'process of becoming', even if some offenders may mistake the transient subjectivity of self-identity for a fixed state, or a fixed self[8] (as we described earlier). Creative education can help the individual to (re-) discover him or herself and to build empathy that may make a real difference to the desire to engage and change. This transformation involves developing many sensibilities including empathy and also figuring out how to help negotiate social and cultural values which impact on aspects of well being (not just emotional and psychological aspects, but the cultural tenets too[9]).

The fact that creative education is taught very differently to the three 'R's (reading, writing, arithmetic), or the teaching and learning approaches offenders may have failed at[10], is strategically important given that many inmates have learning difficulties or are dyslexic, and school didn't work for them (Barton, Ivanic, Appelby, Hodge & Tusting 2007). Here, the operational characteristics of creative processes, the introduction of ambiguous meanings and diverse mechanisms of self-directed learning (often through doing and making, which is the subject of many iterations) avoids engagement with any model of authority and offers a spring board for self discovery that can lead to changing negative cultural values and/or psychological self definitions of offenders into new positive ones.

Given the impact of prison on the empathy of inmates, empathy experiments, such as Kilgore's (2001) 'Explorations' project which used creative education to offer opportunities for different types of group learning that foster empathy are significant. Here the creative or collective education provides a 'de-risked' environment that enables significant group experimentation. Alternative ways of being and doing are enabled so that inmates feel safe enough to see themselves differently allowing empathy to develop and change to take place. As one inmate (Gina) commented in Kilgore's (2001, p. 160) study: "You can fall and there is someone there to hold you."

Andy Watson of Geese Theatre Company, at an Expert Workshop held at Central Saint Martins in 2014, described research delivered by the Geese Theatre Company. He observed: "Perpetrators of domestic abuse watched a piece of theatre created specifically for domestic abuse perpetrator treatment programmes. Audiences of approximately 8-10 men were arranged half on one side of the stage and half on the other (so they could see the performance in the middle, but also see each other): what came out of the research is that the aesthetic distance of them seeing versions of themselves, being portrayed in terms of seeing themselves as perpetrator, victim and child was an important element. But actually a bigger element was seeing their peers observing the performance. It resonated as much as watching the art itself. Which to my mind is fascinating and tells us quite a lot about where we should be heading[11]." Watson further clarified his point by discussing how inmate audiences understand each other experiencing the same thing: "The inmates report: I saw what the 'actor' was doing in character and I didn't like it. I also saw another group member, someone who has been in the group longer than me, and he was really upset – he was looking at the floor and I think he might have been crying. That tells me my feelings about

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[8] See discussion of Shirley Pitts by Lorraine Gamman in afterword to *Gone Shopping – the Story of Shirley Pitts, Queen of Thieves* (2012).

[9] http://www.designagainstcrime.com/files/publications/ExpertWorkshopReport.pdf

[10] A significant number of prisoners are resistant to education which is too much like school, where some have already experienced failure and a lack of engagement (Canton, Hine & Welford 2011, Barton, Ivanic, Appleby, Hodge *et al.* 2007) quoted in The National Alliance for Arts in Criminal Justice's *Write to be Heard: Supporting Offender Learning Through Creative Writing* (2014).

[11] http://www.designagainstcrime.com/files/publications/ExpertWorkshopReport.pdf

what I am watching are correct – the other guy's response confirms that it is ok for me to have this response too[12]."

Here, de-risked environments provided by creative education offer crucial opportunities in prison to build trust to engage with the gentle questioning described by Williams (2012) earlier. Also for inmates to open up themselves to affective as well as cognitive empathetic forms of identification, which will be of great significance to those inmates as returning citizens. Yet there are real problems regarding provision of creative education in prison, despite the growing number of evaluated arts projects that testify to the value of it. Many critics, such as Cheliotis (2012), argue that "there is no intrinsic worth to the arts" and point out that in some prison contexts the arts have been "subjugated to malign ends" with prisoners forced to sing or dance or listen to loud rock music for hours against their will. Cheliotis' account suggests that we should be careful in making claims for the over-riding transformative nature of the creative arts, because as Cohen (1985) has identified stories of the arts as the human face of prison often obscures prison control regimes or practices that are unacceptable, for which prisoners, rather than those managing such regimes and practices, are blamed for subsequent failure. Whilst we don't disagree with much of Cheliotis' (2012, p. 11) well-observed narrative about the contradictions of the prison system, "where rehabilitation programmes make good stories. … [and] partake in the political art of lending the inherently harsh prison system with appearances of open heartedness and care", we think he overstates his case about the lack of real value produced by arts education (Cheliotis 2012, p. 13): "arts and related schemes are said to be tools for liberation of the mind and creative exploration, [but] they form part of the effort to hold prisoners in close check". Whilst we agree that without the prisoner choice as to whether they participate (or not) in arts practice any potential benefit is lost, we feel he also overstates "the limits and possibilities of individual agency", because resistance takes many forms in prison, and no matter how the arts is politically repositioned they nevertheless offer radical and alternative ways of learning that cannot be completely contained by the prison authorities. Certainly, given that the annual overall cost of a prison place in England and Wales for the financial year 2011-12 was estimated by the Ministry of Justice in 2013 as £37,648, with high recidivism, we feel design of prison services so far is not working effectively for the spend, and that creative education could be given a greater opportunity than it has been so far to prove its value, whilst being careful in "not promising too much"[13].

Despite the opportunities for benefit there are challenges to such proposals from those that regard arts in prison is as being soft on prisoners, who in the UK are regularly reported by the Daily Mail *et al.* to have too many privileges such as access to gym facilities or TVs and phones in cells, and so require instead punishing inhuman prisons to deliver justice. The fact that such regimes appear, based on evidence, to exacerbate problems is ignored in such debate. In this context, whilst we are keen to see arts provision in terms of prison education services continue and expand, and to be better regarded – for all the reasons we have outlined and in particular the role of cultivating self directed learning and empathy – we believe there are other approaches that need to be acknowledged and explored too. The roles of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, Yoga and Meditation need to be assessed. Also the potential contribution of

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[12] ibid.

[13] We think Cheliotos has a point when he says arts programmes "have taken upon themselves a heavy load of undeserved blame (see further McAvinchey 2011, p.78-79, Fraden 2001 and McNeill *et al.* 2012)".

design practice linked to prison industries (which are currently run in out-dated ways in providing work experience). We believe prison industries need reinvention to become more 'fit for purpose' (at present they often teach building skills that have little currency for inmates in the outside world, given current unemployment rates in the industry) and additionally could contribute to, or build on some of the creative work similar to the design-led prison enterprises shown in the below table:

Table 2: Table of design labels that have emerged from enterprise in prison

	Origin/ Date	Overview (product/ service)	Details	Retail Price	Additional value
Heavy Eco	Tallin, Estonia 2010	Bags from discarded billboards, made by prisoners	PVC – not so easy to recycle, so making it into a bag -> sustainable, T-shirts from organic cotton -> India, fair trade	T-shirt £33.27, bag £41.70	50% of profits go to homeless and orphaned children
Marni Chairs	Columbia/Milan 2012	Outdoor furniture	Production in Colombia – part of a rehabilitation program in a studio where former inmates work with craftsmen, displayed and sold in Milan Design Week 2012, on photoshoot by Francesco Jodice (with Marni staff)	£150 – 400	Proceeds from sales go to ICAM, an organisation which enables the children of imprisoned mothers to spend their first years in a family environment more fitting for their growth
Fine Cell UK	HMP Holloway, UK 1960s	Quilts, cushions, rugs	Needlepoint as a form of therapy – patience and concentration required -> provides a means of relaxation and calm	£50 each	Prisoners receive money – gaining means of support for when they are outside and skills that can lead to employment
Jailbirds UK	Peterborough Prison, UK	Greeting cards	Products initially sold inside the prison and became popular outside (over 200 designs)	n/a	Funds gained from the sale of products is split three ways with equal thirds going to charity, the prisoners fund and re-invested into materials
Made in Carcere	Italy 2007	Bags, handbags, scarves, bracelets	Products made by a group of 20 women from the margins of society	£5-£20	Philosophy of a second chance for the inmates
Stripes Clothing	Rotterdam, Netherlands	T-shirts, hoodies	Designs presenting prisoners thoughts	£25-60	Profits from the prison-line donated to re-integration and victim support projects
Prison Blues – Prsn Blu	Oregon, USA 1989	Durable work jeans and denim apparel	Gives inmates the ability to earn a prevailing industry wage while paying for their own incarceration costs and other payments	£25 – jeans	Inmates earn a prevailing industry wage, they keep around 20% of what they earn which equals to about $120 - $150 a month after paying taxes, with bonus incentives for quality and productivity
PRIDE Florida	Florida 1981	More than 3000 products and services (furniture, digital services, sanitary maintenance, graphics, paint, optical, dental, sewn products	Training programs/ transition services for inmates.	£10 - polo shirts	Lower recidivism rates for ex-offenders that participated
UNICOR, USA	USA 1934	7 groups of products/services – ranging from clothing & textiles, electronic, fleet & training,	A correctional program and inmate release preparation, helping offenders to	Has the effect on post-release	In 2012, inmates contributed almost $1.2 million of their earnings towards their

		industrial products, office furniture, recycling	acquire skills	employment – for up to 12 years following release	financial obligations – many also contributed to the support of their families
Made for Change	HMP Holloway, UK June 2014	Set up by London College of Fashion, the unit trains women in prison with production manufacture sewing skills and provides commercial service to the fashion industry to manufacture high quality fashion products. The USP is the provision of small production runs for local designers as well as the support for the Made in the UK fashion industry	The products vary according to the customer request: t-shirts, simple dresses. The focus is on woven products initially with a view to diversify into jersey production	Production costs vary according to the customer order	The overall aim is to support the women prisoners re-entry into employment

Design could and should have a strong role in building empathy and the 'soft' or 'life' skills that contribute to employability and entrepreneurship and may reduce recidivism rates. Teaching design skills and creative thinking via prison industries could certainly build on learning about how ex offenders' reform (Maruna 2001) and involve prisoners in developing their own empathetic understandings whilst reflecting and drawing upon previous experiences.

3. How design methods and empathy tools can make a difference to prison experience?

In earlier writing (Gamman & Raein 2010) we have sought to understand the *similarities* between 'criminals', (those who perform criminal acts to 'make' a living) and those Florida (2002) describes as the 'creative class' (those who perform creative acts to 'make' a living[14]) in relation to specific skills, competencies and characteristics. We have discussed the 'dark side of creativity' and how criminals – like creatives – get up each day and 'make' a living in creative, opportunistic and often entrepreneurial ways (Gamman & Thorpe 2011). Obviously, creatives rarely break the law through their actions but we feel there are many shared traits[15] that suggest some of those that end up in prison may have an aptitude for *design*.

We believe that *design* could make a contribution in ways that may avoid some of the issues Cheliotis (2012) raises about overstating the intrinsic value of art. That *design*, as *applied* creativity, might prove attractive to those who feel that 'arts' practice is too far away from vocational values to merit investment. That *design* might offer an alternative route to learning through *reflective practice* (Schön 1983) of benefit to those inmates failed by teaching focused on 'key' or 'functional' skills or literacy, numeracy and ICT. That *design* might develop 'soft', 'life' and 'community' skills that are of greater value on the pathway to employability or enterprise than vocational training targeted to competitive employment opportunities that raise unwarranted expectations of employment and contribute to disaffection on release (Canton, Hine & Welford 2011).

Whilst we refute Cheliotis' dismissal of the learning opportunities creative education provides, we would restate such opportunities in new ways in light of the understanding described earlier, linking arts practice to desistance via empathic reconnection with a former or core self beyond or before the socially toxic identity of 'criminal'. Whilst engagement with arts practice appears to develop empathy for the 'self', connecting or re-connecting an ex-offender with a non-criminal version of themselves as part of a pathway towards desistance, via design 'things'[16] and design

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[14] Florida says that the Creative Class is a class of workers whose job is to create meaningful new forms. It is composed of scientists and engineers, university professors, poets and architects, and also includes "people in design, education, arts, music and entertainment, whose economic function is to create new ideas, new technology and/or creative content" (Florida 2002, p. 8).
[15] What criminals and creatives have in common:
- Embrace or exploit change
- Wonky / divergent thinking
- Flexibility
- Transferable thinking and skills
- Risk-inclined / May enjoy rule-breaking
- Inspirational Crime in it's audacity. Creative industries in delivery the 'wow' factor.
- Dyslexia
- Anarchic / Freedom / Outsider position
[16] "Things are … socio-material assembl[ies] that deal with events and other matters of concern", as described by the A.Telier Project (2011). Pelle Ehn (2014) has also described such 'things' as 'flickering' where they appear to move from being an object to facilitating an assembly.

practice as described earlier, has the capacity to help them develop or re-find empathy for others.

A staged process of creative engagement *by design* for those inmates that choose to engage, we believe would make a positive contribution. Whereas arts engagement may contribute to the transformation of the self via (re-) development of empathy for the self, and (re-) definition of self identity, design engagement may contribute to further pro-social *transformation* of the self in relation to (re-) development of empathy for others.

A comparison of the respective frameworks for development of desistance via arts practices and development of empathy via design methods illustrates the similarities and differences between the two processes that are likely to contribute to the outcomes described above (see table 3 below).

Table 3: Comparing development of desistance via arts practice with development of empathy via design methods

Desistance (Giordano, Cernkovich & Rudolph 2002)	Empathy (Kouprie & Sleeswijk Visser 2009)
1. An openness to change.	1. Discovery: Entering the user's world and achieving willingness. The process starts with the designer approaching the user. He makes a first contact with the user, either in person or by studying provoking material from user studies. The designer's curiosity is raised, resulting in his/her willingness to explore and discover the user, his/her situation and experience
2. Exposure and reaction to hooks for change.	2. Immersion: Wandering around in the user's world. Taking user's point of reference. After the first encounter with the user's experience, the designer takes an active role by leaving the design office and wandering around in the user's world (data from qualitative user research). The designer expands his knowledge about the user and is surprised by various aspects that influence the user's experience. The designer is open-minded, interested in the user's point of reference. He is being pulled into the user's world, and absorbs without judging
3. The imagination and belief that the offender could be different, the possibility of what is called a 'replacement self'.	3. Connection: Resonating with the user Achieve emotional resonance and find meaning. In this phase, the designer connects with the user by recalling explicitly upon his own memories and experiences in order to reflect and be able to create an understanding. He makes a connection on an emotional level with the user by recalling his own feelings and resonates with the user's experience. At this phase both affective and cognitive components are important; the affective to *understand feelings*, the

	cognitive to *understand meanings*
4. Also changed perceptions of offending. The way that offenders, who engage with arts, start to perceive differently their offending and the deviant behaviour of others, and to talk about this differently in order to change the old criminal self into a new non criminal self.	4. Detachment: Leaving the user's world Design with user perspective. The designer detaches from his emotional connection in order to become 'in the helpful mode' with increased understanding. The designer steps back into the role of designer and makes sense of the user's world. By stepping back out to reflect, he can deploy the new insights for ideation

Referring to the process frameworks above it is apparent that both processes share an initial step that involves the actor (ex-offender) in demonstrating an 'openness' or 'willingness' to change or discover alternative possibilities. This suggests that it is essential that inmates' enrolment in any programme that applies this dual methodology should be based on self-selection in the first instance.

Similarly, both processes involve the actor in a second phase that requires them to be 'exposed' and receptive to alternative possibilities (ways of being). It is this stage that in both instances seeds the development of cognitive and affective empathy, either toward a 'restored' or 'renewed' self (in the instance of 'desistance') or toward an empathic understanding of another (in the instance of empathic development).

It is in the third phase that the distinction described above, between development of empathy for the self or for another marks a difference. Whilst both frameworks refer to a process of connection through resonation with 'another' through a reflection on experience, in the case of desistance this resonance is with the replacement self whilst in the case of empathic design process it is resonance with another individual.

Paradoxically, in both instances it is a connection with another that is actually a connection with the self. In the case of desistance, a connection with the *replacement self,* and in the case of design for empathy a connection with the *self that is in the shoes of the other.*

In the final stage of both processes the identification of and with the other self (in the case of desistance the *replacement self* and in the case of empathic design the *self in the shoes of the other* leads to transformation. The actor (ex-offender) that engages with arts practice "starts to perceive differently their offending and the deviant behaviour of others" applies this to the *action* of transformation "to talk about this differently in order to change the old criminal self into a new non criminal self".

The actor (ex-offender) that engages with empathic design "leaves the user's world with the user's perspective" and applies this empathic insight for others to the generation of new ideas that might serve them better.

Whilst 'arts' education is valuable in ways we have already explained, we believe that understanding how to foster and apply creativity should not be confined to self directed studio practice or 'art education' but could also be introduced to group learning, in the context of vocational activities as part of design & prison industries.

Conclusion

We are currently developing projects in 2015[17] where we will collaborate and co-design anti-theft bags, like the series of Karrysafe bags the Design Against Crime Research Centre has already delivered (Fig 2) with prisoners within prison workshops. Our colleagues at London College of Fashion are already working with prisoners via their *Made for Change* label, which aims to teach technical fashion skills. Our approach will differ only in as much as our emphasis will be on involving inmates in exploring first how their knowledge of crime may be applied to protect rather than exploit others, before focusing on teaching design understanding and technical skill building. Given the circumstances of incarceration it will be necessary to develop empathic 'things' that can support the empathic design process described. This is because inmates will not have the opportunity to "wander around in the users world" in a literal sense, and may need some help in imagining what it is like to walk in the shoes of the victims of bag theft and pickpocketing.

Fig 2

Through this process we hope to transform some of the previous negative uses of inmate creativity into more positive outputs and hopefully begin a new journey with inmates; one where it may be possible to introduce new cultural values that will build inmate entrepreneurial capacity and employability through development of 'soft' and 'life' skills focused on empathic understanding, as well as what we are calling 'restorative enterprise'.

Despite the arguments above for the contribution of creative practices to transformation in the context of reducing reoffending we are keen to acknowledge the role of situational factors (from table 1) in contributing to desistance. We recognise very much that there will be limitations to what creative processes can contribute as part of prison industries. But we believe design can deliver an integrative approach that might bring together subjective and situational influences relevant to prisoner transformation towards developing resilience as returning citizens.

List of Figures

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[17] We have recently obtained in September 2014 funding four our Design Against Crime Research Centre to work with HMP Wandsworth Prison in the UK and with National Institute of Design and Sabarmati Jail in Ahmedabad, India to make new products.

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