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# Value Co-Creation in a Social Purpose Institution: The Case of the Dynamo Camp Art Factory—Between Art Therapy and Artification

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## ABSTRACT

This study explores artification in nonprofit organizations, specifically focusing on the use of the arts to enhance the well-being of users. By examining how nonprofit institutions integrate artistic practices into their programs, the research highlights the potential for art to serve as a tool for promoting emotional, mental, and social well-being among diverse populations. Moreover, the impact of art therapy on various stakeholders (e.g., artists and/or art dealers) within nonprofit health and social service organizations and the art market in general remains understudied. Therefore, this study examines the case of the Dynamo Camp Art Factory and the complex system of relationships between the various stakeholders to understand the benefits of art therapy and the related artification process. Our findings show that through the involvement of artists in art therapy, value co-creation activities have a cultural and economic impact far beyond the therapeutic effect.

## 1 | Introduction

From individual artists and small art businesses to large cultural organizations operating in both the commercial and nonprofit sectors, the art industry encompasses a wide variety of creative and cultural entities and enterprises (Gupta and Joshi 2023).

Among traditional cultural institutions, such as theaters and museums, there are some “newcomers” that focus on recreation and art therapies. These institutions use the arts to support patient care involving, among others, physicians, patients, artists, volunteers, and managers.

While these institutions play a relevant role in supporting the traditional care provided to various categories of patients, such as children (Case 1990; Kramer 1993; Rubin 2005), youths (McIntyre 1990), and adolescents (Riley 1999), there is a lack

of consideration of the impact of the artification process, which can have relevant implications for the various stakeholders (e.g., artists and/or art dealers) and for the art market in general. According to Massi and Turrini (2020), this artification process has contamination effects.

Therefore, the aim of this study is to address the research gap related to the impact of art therapy on various stakeholders (e.g., artists and/or art dealers) within nonprofit health and social service organizations and the art market in general. The paper focuses on the complex value co-creation process among different stakeholders in the context of art therapy, specifically in the case of the Dynamo Camp Art Factory. Based on the interaction between patients, artists, and the network of different actors involved, we identify the processes and ways in which value co-creation activities foster the artification process (Hollebeek, Kumar, and Srivastava 2022).

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## Summary

- The impact of art therapy on various stakeholders (e.g., artists and/or art dealers) within nonprofit health and social service organizations and the art market have not been widely studied in the literature.
- This study examines the case of the Dynamo Camp Art Factory and the complex system of relationships between the various stakeholders to understand the benefits of art therapy and the related artification process.
- Our findings show that through the involvement of artists in art therapy, value co-creation activities have a cultural and economic impact far beyond the medical and therapeutic outcomes of art therapy for patients.

## 2 | Value Co-Creation in Art Therapy: Beyond Therapeutic Effects

The cultural industry involves many groups of stakeholders, such as artists, commercial galleries, and art dealers in the case of visual arts sector, as well as public and private museums, consumers, suppliers, government, and third sector organizations (Throsby 2004). The relationships between the different stakeholder groups vary in nature and include *economic* (i.e., artists buying equipment from suppliers, commercial galleries selling art to the public, etc.) and *cultural* transactions, with both individual and social, short- and long-term effects (Brown 2006). However, art therapy research has focused primarily on the medical effects, neglecting these economic and cultural transactions.

In particular, most research on the value of art therapy considers the therapeutic effects on patients (Aguilar 2017; Visser and Op'T Hoog 2008; Shella 2018), namely good mental health or engaging in “mentally healthy” activities (Donovan and Egger 2008; Vickhoff 2023), a state of well-being in which the individuals can contribute to their communities, cope with the stresses of daily life, realize their potential, and work productively. In addition, good mental health has been identified as essential to individual and community well-being (Parr 2006), especially as art therapy has developed along “two parallel strands: art as therapy and art psychotherapy” (Waller 2003, 8). According to Edwards (2005, 4), “The essence of art therapy lies in the relationship between art and therapy” because the former emphasizes the healing potential of art, while the latter stresses the importance of therapy and the relationship between the art therapist, the patient, and the artwork.

However, given that art in health and art therapy also involve other parties (artists, children, volunteers, and stakeholders in general) and that value is created in different areas beyond the medical field, it is crucial to understand art therapy as it is practiced today and how the specific activities are reflected in the collective realization of artworks as a result of cooperation between multiple parties, with different effects on the context and society. To the extent that artists take an active role in art therapy, this cooperation is at the origin of the artification

process based on value co-production and co-creation involving many different stakeholders (Vargo and Lusch 2004, 2017; Etgar 2008).

## 3 | Art Therapy, Recreational Therapy, and Art in Health

For more than three decades, the role of art therapy has been studied and recognized as an essential aspect of recreational activities and/or recreational therapy. The emphasis on the latter is closely related to the notion that recreation, whether through play or work activities, is an integral part of an individual's life, from early childhood—when unstructured activities are essential for social and cognitive development (Sylvia and Lunt 1982)—through adulthood. Recreational therapy goes beyond fun and games, and has been shown to be effective for individuals coping with illness or disability. Positive outcomes of fulfilling recreational experiences include reducing the effects of disability, increasing self-confidence and self-esteem (Coyle et al. 1991; Bullock and Luken 1994), improving self-determination, friendships, social support, and reducing dependence on the healthcare system (Coyle et al. 1991). In addition, the skills learned and strengthened through recreational activities can have a ripple effect, positively impacting other domains such as school, work, and social networks (Hodges, Luken, and Zook 2001).

Recreational activities often include expressive arts therapy, which “uses the expressive arts—movement, art, music, writing, sound, and improvisation—in a supportive setting to experience and express feelings” (Roger 1993, 115), with therapeutic goals, individually or in groups of varying sizes, depending on the activity.

The term “art therapy” has been applied to a wide variety of therapeutic art activities (Richardson 2015) and is often considered a skill or technique, rather than a distinct therapeutic modality. Many professional groups use art for recreational, diagnostic, or therapeutic purposes (Gilroy 2006), including community- and hospital-based artists, psychiatrists, occupational therapists, nurses, social workers, and camp staff, among others.

As the field of art therapy has become more established, various definitions have emerged from professional and disciplinary organizations around the world, such as the British Association of Art Therapists, the American Art Therapy Association, the Canadian Art Therapy Association, and the Australian National Art Therapy Association. In particular, the American Art Therapy Association (AATA 1996) defines art therapy as “... the therapeutic use of art making, within a professional relationship, by people who experience illness, trauma, or challenges in living, and by people who seek personal development....”

The range of settings in which art therapy is used is extensive and evolving: hospitals, schools, community-based centers, therapeutic communities, prisons, and camps (Edwards 2005). Art therapy is also often included as part of the services provided to specific client groups, such as children, adolescents, families, older adults, and individuals with special needs, illnesses, and learning disabilities, on an individual or group

basis. Art therapy is also used in specialized areas in both the private and public sectors, such as working with offenders, patients with autism, eating disorders, addictions, physical or sexual abuse, psychosis, and physical illness. In addition, a growing body of literature has examined the use of various art forms in cancer care (Geue et al. 2010; Hertrampf and Wärja 2017; Hu, Zhang, and Xu 2021), such as music therapy and art therapy (Forzoni et al. 2010; Ando et al. 2013; Wood et al. 2013).

Therefore, art therapy—by definition part of recreational therapy—is a form of psychotherapy that combines visual art making and psychotherapy to promote many different goals, including self-exploration and understanding, conflict and problem solving, developing interpersonal skills, managing behavior, reducing stress, increasing self-esteem and self-awareness, and achieving insight and engagement (Bradt, Shim, and Goodill 2015; Parr 2006; Kagan et al. 2005). With regard to the value of art therapy in terms of the therapeutic effects on patients, the literature highlights the positive associations between engaging in art therapy and improving the mental health and well-being of cancer patients (Geue et al. 2010; Hertrampf and Wärja 2017; Hu, Zhang, and Xu 2021). Regarding the effects of therapy in camps, studies show that children benefit in many areas, including the psychosocial domain, by learning to interact with volunteers and peers (Jay, Moxham, and Patterson 2021). Most studies on art therapy have focused on the medical effects, with more recent studies reporting on the psychological and/or social effects (Puetz, Morley, and Herring 2013; Geue et al. 2010), sometimes considering camp activities and programs (Davies et al. 2012). Although the therapeutic effects and benefits of art therapy have long been studied and described, it is only in recent years that studies have examined the effects of art and healing, the so-called “arts in health” (Staricoff 2004, 2006; Stuckey and Nobel 2010; Fancourt 2017).

To some extent, arts in health differs from arts therapies in that the individuals engaging in artistic activities are not necessarily trained therapists. Unlike art therapists, who typically do not assert their identity as artists while practicing therapy, direct engagement in arts in health may require the artist to maintain their artistic identity while assuming a therapeutic role in a healthcare setting (Macnaughton, White, and Stacy 2005). In this context, the role of the artist is inherently intertwined with that of the therapist. While physicians or nurses bring specific skills and knowledge to their interactions with patients, artists offer a unique perspective rooted in their artistic sensibility that recognizes the creative potential of individuals and the environment, both for themselves and others. While a physician may perceive a patient as a puzzle to be solved, the artist sees the patient as a source of inspiration for new artistic endeavors. As a result, the relationship between the artist and patient begins with a positive appreciation that evokes a warm emotional response.

#### 4 | The Case of Dynamo Camp

Dynamo Camp is a recreational therapy camp, the first of its kind in Italy, specifically designed to provide free vacations and

recreation for children and adolescents aged 6 to 17 with serious and chronic illnesses, whether they are undergoing therapy or are in post-hospitalization. Dynamo is one of 30 camps in the “SeriousFun Children’s Network.”<sup>1</sup>

The camp experience designed for these children is much more than just a vacation. In fact, the program is carefully structured according to the principles of therapeutic recreation and includes the activities of traditional summer camps, but adapted to the specific needs of each participant, under the direction and constant supervision of qualified staff. Inaugurated in 2009, it has hosted over 75,000 children and their families (Dynamo Camp 2021), and developed nearly 3000 recreational therapy initiatives.

Dynamo Camp offers free recreational therapy programs based on the Dynamo Recreational Therapy model. All activities are open to campers actively undergoing therapy or who have completed therapy within the last 4 years. The presence of a medical advisory board, which evaluates and analyzes the conditions that can be accommodated at Dynamo, ensures the camp’s strong focus on guests with special needs. In addition, Dynamo’s close collaboration with patient associations and hospitals allows the selection of guests for each session based on medical criteria and the specifics of each situation, ensuring their overall well-being. With the recent development of City Camps in Milan, Rome, and Florence, day centers that offer daily recreational therapy activities to children and teenagers with illnesses, Dynamo Camp provides recreational therapy to a growing number of beneficiaries in the pursuit of accessibility and inclusion. Horse riding, archery, climbing, aquatic recreation, pet therapy, and chalet games are just a few examples of the many sports and recreational activities that have been adapted to be accessible to all participants. These activities take place in an unspoiled nature reserve affiliated to the WWF in the Apennines. At the camp, everything is structured to allow the children to overcome cultural and physical barriers and discover their abilities as singers, dancers, stage designers, mimes, jugglers, actors, artists, and so on, depending on what they want to venture into. Areas have been set aside in the camp for artistic workshops, such as the Art Factory, where participants work in the company of established contemporary artists.

The Dynamo Camp program consists of a wide range of creative, expressive, fun and exciting activities structured around the recreational therapy model. Each activity can be interpreted as a personal challenge, as constructive and without competitive elements. Children can choose the pace at which they want to participate and the limits to which they want to push themselves, for example, whether they want to perform on stage or just help behind the scenes. Through individual effort and group collaboration, children encourage each other, work in teams, and achieve success thanks to their enthusiasm and the supervision of qualified staff. Immediately after the activity, children have the opportunity to reflect on the goals they have achieved, the method they used to achieve them, and the meaning of their success in a group discussion or more privately by writing their thoughts in a diary.

This process, at various levels, leads them to discover that they can succeed even when they thought they could not, to focus

on their abilities rather than their disabilities, and to rediscover self-respect and self-confidence.

The Dynamo Camp experience is all about fun. Through fun activities, children are more likely to try new challenges, succeed, reflect on their accomplishments, and to discover their enormous potential. Collaboration and teamwork are integral to each component of the organization, harnessing individual skills and resources toward a common goal. Therefore, access to the facilities, activities, and staff—including doctors, nurses, psychotherapists, staff, and volunteers—allows guests to have fun, socialize, and experiment in complete safety, regaining confidence in themselves and their abilities, with long-term benefits for quality of life.

There is also a fully equipped infirmary where doctors and nurses directly manage routine procedures. The philosophy is to have the necessary medical component always present and able to intervene quickly but discreetly in a lively and vibrant environment. All this allows participants to enjoy an unforgettable experience of relaxation in complete peace and safety. Today, Dynamo Camp accommodates a diverse range of pathologies, including onco-hematological, neurological, rare syndromes, spina bifida, diabetes, and metabolic disorders within the framework of different programs for unaccompanied children and families. In addition, no one outside of the medical team at Dynamo Camp is privy to the clinical conditions of participants, ensuring that their condition does not define them.

Everyone who supports and facilitates the implementation of programs at the camp is trained in the SeriousFun Children's Network protocol to promote their mutual integration and that of the recreational therapies, including art therapy, into patients' care plans and overall well-being.

#### 4.1 | The Dynamo Camp Art Factory and the Artification Process: Research Context and Methodology

The Art Factory is one of the activities offered at the Dynamo Camp (Figure 1). The children spend their afternoons creating, designing, drawing, cutting, pasting, and painting, and are exposed to art in a fun, immediate, and stimulating way. Artists, art therapists, volunteers, and children typically participate in groups of 10 to 15 children, with 5 to 7 volunteers and 2 or more staff members as art therapists, always the same for each group. The artists involved spend a week sharing the camp experience and helping to create one or more collective works of art, in which their artistic fingerprints are evident but adapted to the needs of the children.

The Art Factory is an example of artification, where artists donate their time and talent to work with each child in an activity group, helping the children produce art, and providing them with a creative outlet to express themselves. Each piece of art created is diverse and unique, reflecting the child's spontaneity and the artist's passion. During the "Open Day," the works of art created during the art therapy sessions are sold to donors, with Dynamo playing the role of "gatekeeper" and legitimizing the artworks created in its camp.

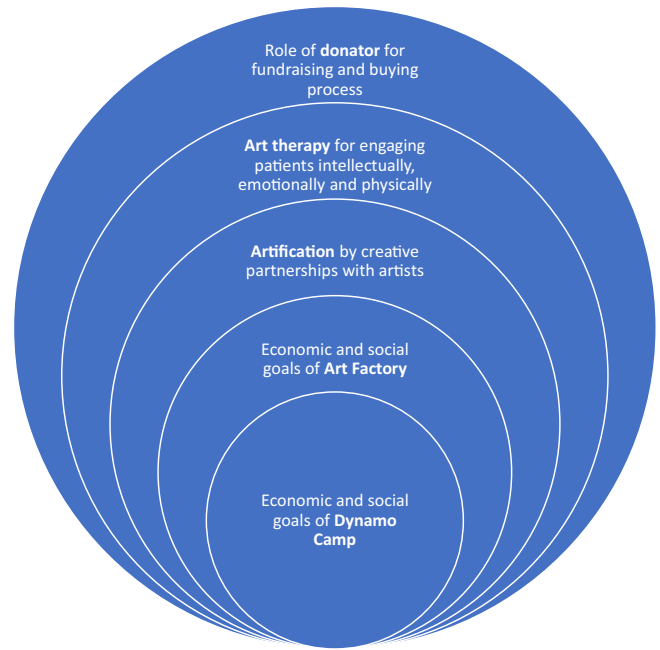


FIGURE 1 | Art Factory: Goals and actors.

The research team has been following the activities of the Dynamo Camp Art Factory since its inception, participating in the activities, in seminars organized at the camp and at Bocconi University, and interviewing key figures.

The results presented in this section refer to the research conducted after the first years of the Art Factory's founding (2009–2012), examining the most recent developments, those implemented during the Covid pandemic and the crypto art approach. In particular, we examine the complex relationships between the different parties involved in a specific art therapy situation to determine the different benefits and the value created.

We used multiple data collection methods to ensure the reliability of the data through triangulation (Bryman 2004; Belk, Sherry Jr, and Wallendorf 1988). One of the two researchers participated as an observer in a camp session for approximately 10 days in July 2012, during which the children, artist, staff members, and volunteers worked together. To understand what the different stakeholders did, thought, and felt during their Art Factory experience, we conducted in-depth interviews and direct observation with:

- Six contemporary artists who had participated in the Art Factory since 2009.
- Two art gallery owners and art dealers who interacted with the artists.
- The Pecci Museum, which was primarily involved in introducing the artists to the Art Factory and whose role is to collect rather than sell the artworks.
- The founder of the Dynamo Camp, three managers, and three staff members.
- Twenty-five children who worked with the artist during the Art Factory workshop.
- Three consumers and collectors who directly purchased artworks.



- Art Factory benefactors and patrons who provide donations and financial support.

The analysis of the interview contents was based on a manual codification process with the aim to identify the most relevant themes related to the impact of art therapy on different stakeholders' experiences. The observation realized by one of the researchers facilitated the content interpretation in the light of the specific cultural research context (Table 1, Thompson 1997).

## 5 | Results: The Central Role of Artists and the Hidden Effects of Art Therapy

Our research on the Art Factory as a case of “arts in health” has highlighted some effects beyond the medical in terms of the economic and cultural value of art therapy.

A first fundamental activity of the Art Factory is the scouting of artists. The management aims to organize workshops that fit with the children/patients staying at Dynamo Camp. A manager who is an expert in contemporary art explained:

“I have a lot of relationships with museums, art galleries, and art dealers; for contemporary art I need to know “what's new” and “who's new.” I feel like a talent scout.” “... not all sessions are suitable for an artist ... it depends on the children at the Camp.” (Diva, Manager)

The artists work in different expressive arts, and it takes a great deal of experience to understand if and when each artist is aligned with the project and the Art Factory imprint.

Art Factory wants to go beyond the individual benefits, even if they are an important starting point for our project. (Diva, Manager)

It is also important that the artists and those who accompany them (partners, children, and staff) feel “at home” and are emotionally and actively involved in the life of the camp. The selection of artists is based on their dual role as artists–therapists and a thorough understanding of their ability to work with all those participating in the camp. In addition, the integration of all stakeholders in the process is fundamental to the success of the project, avoiding overlap between artists, staff, and volunteers, and ensuring collaboration.

The staff supports the artists throughout their stay and during the art sessions. After the artists explain and present their project to the staff, they study the projects and help them find the best way to present their work and for the children to perform it.

I needed to conceive the work before I came ... but the help and support of all of those who work at the Camp was critical to plan the work to be done with the children. (Angelo, Artist)

**TABLE 1** | Informants of in-depth interviews.

	Name	Role	Age	Profession
1	Paolo	Artist in the July session	40	Contemporary artist
2	Angelo	Artist in the September session	32	Contemporary artist
3	Remo	Artist	60	Contemporary artist
4	Massimo	Artist	50	Contemporary artist
5	Andrea	Artist	30	Contemporary artist
6	Gianni	Artist	33	Contemporary artist
7	Alessandro	Art gallery owner	55	Art dealer
8	Giancarlo	Art gallery owner	56	Art dealer
9	Martina	Collector	42	Dynamo Foundation manager
10	Ugo	Collector	53	Manager at M&A company
11	Tiziana	Collector	50	Administrative consultant
12	Diva	Art Factory manager	45	General manager at Intek
13	Livia	Art Factory staff member	26	Junior assistant at Dynamo Foundation
14	Roberto	Dynamo Camp manager	62	COO at Dynamo Camp
15	Marianna	Dynamo Camp staff member	24	Art Factory staff member
16	Vito	Dynamo Camp	37	Manager at Dynamo Camp
17	Serena	Dynamo Foundation manager	40	CEO at Dynamo Foundation
18	Vincenzo	Dynamo founder	54	CEO at Intek

... with Diva and Livia, we decided to paint a portrait as I usually do for my paintings ... he could have become Mr. X with certain movements ... in a sequence. As soon as I arrived, we thought about taking pictures of a Dynamo employee: Alessio. (Paolo, Artist)

The artist takes an active role in determining the themes and guidelines, designing group art activities with specific goals in mind. The format for the art group includes the opening presentation, the experiential process, and the post-experiential “game” in which the results achieved and the completed artwork are shared. Our research focused on the benefits and the value creation processes beyond the medical effects, with some quite unexpected results, such as those related to the artist’s experience and the co-creation of value, which also has implications on the art market.

### 5.1 | The Collective Dimension of the Experience

At the Art Factory, the art experience takes place in groups, which naturally creates opportunities for communication, interaction, negotiation, and other personal exchanges.

These are planned by the management as moments for people to communicate and collaborate to increase the effectiveness of the art therapy, interactions that are encouraged and facilitated by the staff. At the same time, the group support and sharing experience is unique, spontaneously inspiring hope and providing opportunities for social interaction and support related to health and well-being.

Art-making in a group context may involve connecting group members through group projects and/or through sharing the art products created during the session. Sharing common symbols and/or experiences is an important function of group art. Finally, the group emphasizes helping each other through difficult times. This sense of altruism can be a healing factor for both the child giving and the child receiving help. (Diva, Manager)

### 5.2 | A Transformative Subjective Experience for the Artists

At the Art Factory, both the children and the artists experience transformative changes in terms of growth, critical thinking, and creative problem solving.

There were four males and two females ... we wanted to do a movie ... but it was going to be very complex ... so we changed our mind and we worked with a single group of children four times ... at first, it was a problem for the staff, they had many different groups, but in the end they were convinced and the result was unbelievable! (Andrea, Artist)

It was an incredible and unbelievable experience ... it has changed my life ... (Paolo, Artist)

The works created at Dynamo Camp become part of the artists’ production and are regularly shown in their exhibitions.

... the first ones were created at Dynamo, with some Arab children ... it was an incredible job ... it inspired me ... and now I have expressed my art in this first space ... it was a long project, it started in my mind more than 20 years ago ... (Figure 2) (Massimo, Artist)

The artists also expressed their overall personal development and the camp experience as a source of inspiration for future work.

... Never in my artistic production, until then, had I made movies ...it was the first time! ... maybe I carried it inside myself from my previous experience in the advertising industry ... I’ll see if it enters in my future works. (Paolo, Artist)

I used to have lessons or lectures with a lot of people in front of me, both at exhibitions and at art school, but what I really learnt during my workshop at the Art Factory was to work with other people, sharing our feelings, emotions, and experiences. I never used to do that before Dynamo. (Gianni, Artist)

If during a session the materials run out—which happens often—the artist invents other works to do (colored trunks, etc.) and usually he or our staff photograph the work carried out with the children. The work of a famous street artist was an enormous canvas that has been hung in our offices. (Roberto, Manager)

### 5.3 | The Co-Creation of Artwork

The children and artists are seen as critical assets to create value for each other. Co-production can take place through co-creation, co-design, or co-production of related goods, and can occur with patients in the value network during the production phase.

In each session, renowned contemporary artists are invited to the camp. They offer their time and talent to the children, focusing on a project designed to involve the young guests or a personal creative “challenge.” The result is a meeting of creative energy and the magic of this place. It is a truly incredible experience where the children get a glimpse of the artist’s world and reciprocate with inspiration and energy.

For example, one of the artists, Paolo, created a slideshow called “The Gesture,” in which he recorded Picasso painting on glass (an artistic gesture), Maradona’s “hand of God” (an athletic gesture), and Winston Churchill’s victory sign (a purely visual



**FIGURE 2** | “Save the Flowers” at Dynamo and Museo Pecci.

gesture) that changed the history of art, sports, and the world. These gestures made it possible to empathize with the children to introduce the fourth and final gesture, his “own.” The slideshow was paused and an autobiographical video began explaining the artist’s expressive art. Each child was then given a paintbrush and Paolo suggested that they make the gesture of throwing the brush, which meant that they were now technically close to the new concept of the “personal” instrument of their fingers, and ready to participate.

My artwork needed to use fingers ...not as easy as working with brushes, especially if you want to achieve certain figurative results. The colors were black and

white, my colors! The first group was a trial ... for the second group, it was a walk in the park, because I could immediately identify the leader, the strong personalities ... but I didn’t want to suppress the weaker personalities ...then I found out that those children were wonderfully talented, and they demonstrated a monstrous maturity ...at their age, I was a “hyena” ... and this maturity was also a greater than normal capacity ... in the sense that they had a vision and they were really eager to produce something ... and the magic happened during the workshop, one of them gave me a painting done by himself using my technique. (Paolo, Artist)



The artists and a specialized team accompany the children on their artistic journey, helping them to express their ideas while creating and constructing the artwork. The task of learning and having fun at the same time requires their commitment and concentration to reach that moment of normality and to co-produce truly satisfying results and works of art. The artist's role is to get the child to work creatively and participate in the creation of the artwork.

From a technical point of view, the freshness of the approach and the emotion that emanated from their eyes looking at the magic result of their fingers ... allowed me to go back and re-evaluate what I usually do as something special and absolutely magical.  
(Paolo, Artist)

At the end of the session, the artist told the children that their work would not stop there, it would become something much more beautiful. Then the children were involved in a mock auction to understand the meaning of the economic transaction and the concept of the economic value produced by their work. This value, generated by selling the artworks, would be used to pay the camperships of other kids who, like them, could attend Dynamo Camp in the future.

## 5.4 | The Relationship With the Art Market

The “Open Day” is when Dynamo Camp opens the doors to all those interested in its activities. Taking advantage of the mass participation in the event, which has become a ritual meeting for the community, Art Factory presents all the artists' works in an exhibition in a large space (Figure 3). This is an important occasion not only to sell the works of the artists invited to the sessions during the year but also to communicate what the Art Factory is, its conception, and its “special” history.

... we wanted to go beyond the protocols and procedures typical of art and craft laboratories ... which were sad, with little creativity and emotion ... for Dynamo in Italy we had to change them and make them different ... The central idea was to work with the artists so the kids could really live a creative and emotional experience ... but to do this it was necessary to convince the artists to work with our children.  
(Diva, Manager)

It is also an opportunity for collectors to view the works and choose their favorite artists.

I associate Dynamo with an important event of my life, a sad event but an important one! ... I go there to share my emotions and buy new artworks. I choose the works that best fit my home and my style  
(Martina, Collector)

We can't miss the Open Day ... and choose the best artwork of the summer sessions. We love these works,

we hang the paintings everywhere in our house  
(Tiziana and Ugo, Collectors)

## 5.5 | The Creation of Market Value

The economic impact of recreational therapy is significant for both Dynamo Camp and the artists.

There are many ways to contribute to Dynamo Camp's fundraising efforts and the Art Factory is just one of them. The sale of artworks account for less than 10% of our fundraising, but it's interesting to see that almost all the donors are consumers, and they are loyal. The sales pay for a portion of our children's campership each year. (Diva, Manager)

The artists are not paid, neither are their assistants.  
(Livia, Manager)

The artist determines the value of the work, taking into account the fundraising purposes.

Usually the price is lower than the market price of the artist's work ... we decide the price of the works together ... so we follow the artist's instructions.  
(Diva, Manager)

... it is right to set the price with the artists, they are their own boss ... and know their work better than anyone and what they have done with the children!  
(Alessandro and Giancarlo, Art dealers)

Art Factory works with Artnetworth, an art services, analysis, and certification company, to help evaluate the art work created during the workshops (the front or back of the canvases usually state “Created with the children of Dynamo Camp”).

The artistic work must be unique and in limited numbers or copies. If some copies of the artistic works are made or photographed, they are always in limited numbers. The works shouldn't be inflated. (Diva, Manager)

I made a film, then five copies were sold, the price was fixed with my dealer, according to the parameters of video art ... I have never made video art. On my return home, I made five small paintings showing a big hand so that I could put the movie in the palm ... It was a different output from my usual work! (Paolo, Artist)

Art Factory was launched with the strong support of the Pecci Museum in Prato, Tuscany, where the level of contemporary artists is high, whose aim is to increase the visibility of the Art Factory and, at the same time, promote word of mouth among the artists themselves. The management's competencies include





**FIGURE 3** | Art Factory exhibition (Dynamo Camp Open Day).

the search for new contemporary artists, as well as knowledge of the expressive language used and the places where the different creative works are exhibited. The relationships with museums, galleries, and art dealers are also very important for the growth of Art Factory.

... we need to share knowledge and experience with galleries ... and with their artists ... some of them are afraid to soil their artists' works ... not many of them want to work with us! (Diva, Manager)

This evidence underscores that the reputation acquired through the activities of Dynamo Camp has become relevant for the institutions involved, as well as for the artists and art dealers.

“We are very happy to show in our gallery the works of artists who Art Factory invited to Dynamo Camp. A lot of our artists have been to Dynamo before ... and they told us “...I could never forget the experience with these children!” ... The artist's reputation must grow with this experience” “... we'd like to help Dynamo and increase awareness, trust, and understanding of this incredible place!” (Alessandro and Giancarlo, Art dealers)

... and all the artists thank us at the end of their experience. (Livia, Manager)

## 6 | The Evolution of the Art Factory and the Artification and Value Co-Creation Challenges

Since the first works, and thanks to the success achieved, the Art Factory project has been consolidated over the years and has evolved significantly, while continuing to represent an important asset within the Dynamo Camp activities and providing new stimuli.

First, it has become more and more attractive for artists. Since the first edition in which 7 artists participated, over 130 artists have contributed to this project, resulting in over 2000 works of art.

In March 2023, the 15th anniversary of the Art Factory (Figure 4) was celebrated with the exhibition “L'arte è wow!” (Art is wow!) at the Milan Triennale, featuring a selection of the works. The event was opened and introduced by the President of the Triennale and the Councilor for Culture of Milan.

Dynamo Camp's reputation has been built over the years. Initially, as the research shows, the biggest challenge was

convincing artists to participate in the project. The strength of the Dynamo Camp mission has succeeded in attracting renowned artists, and the Art Factory has gradually established itself within the community of artists who are increasingly eager to participate.

Over the years, the Art Factory project has evolved considerably, both internally and externally, expanding its social impact. Initially designed for children, it soon showed strong potential for family involvement. A first transformation was to redesign the Art Factory by creating sessions dedicated to family involvement, thereby creating the opportunity for unique interactions between the children, their families, and the artists.

In 2017, a survey was conducted to assess the impact of the Art Factory sessions on the children, which clearly showed that art was valued not only by the children but also by their families, leading to an expansion of the activities. In particular, art was perceived as an expression of personal creativity in which everyone can be an artist. However, as the survey also showed that museums were perceived as distant, unattractive, and somewhat boring, Dynamo Camp decided to push the boundaries by reaching out to children who had participated in the past and inviting them to museums. This led to the creation of day camps in nine museums, taking children and their families to places they had often never visited. Particularly successful was the Milan Triennale, where thanks to the support of some sponsors, Dynamo created a space in which children and families could meet the artists.

The challenge posed by the Covid pandemic, which abruptly hampered face-to-face activities, prompted Dynamo to redesign its form. The determination not to stop the activities led to the development of online initiatives, involving artists who were

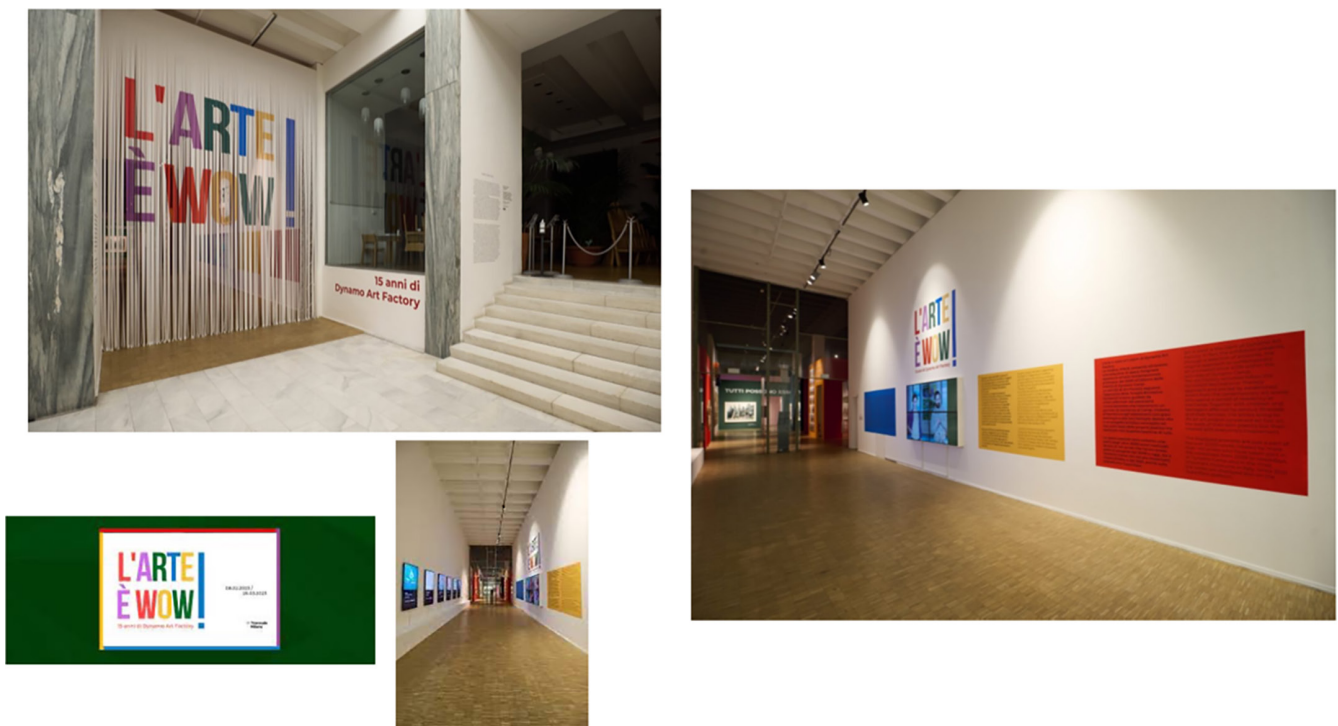
already familiar with the institution and the Art Factory. The shift of activities to the online mode also led to an innovation in the co-creation of artworks. In particular, Dynamo created a platform where children and artists could interact, an experiment in creativity that was also transformed into material works.

They also invited artists to create works on-site that transformed some areas of the camp, creating wonderful installations. Interestingly, the artists they contacted wanted to take part in sessions dedicated to families, spontaneously embracing the Art Factory spirit. They collaborated with the Pistoletto Foundation to create the magnificent Terzo Paradiso (Third Paradise) station, composed of benches, each bearing the name of a child and the family members who participated.

The 2022 Art Factory activities involved 16 artists, family sessions, and city camps, including a site-specific intervention by David Tremlett, the British sculptor and installation artist, who created a work inspired by Dynamo and the surrounding nature. Among the major achievements, Art Factory became a digital gallery on the SuperRare platform, a space to exhibit and sell works created in collaboration with crypto artists (Dynamo Camp 2022).

In this evolving value co-creation process, the pricing policy for co-created artworks is a major challenge, especially in light of the ever-growing success of the Art Factory.

In particular, participation in the Art Factory can enhance the image and value of the work of the artists, who benefit from the experience in terms of personal reputation, as do the art galleries or dealers promoting them. Embracing the institution's purpose and mission, the artists collaborate for free and are proud to be part of the project. Dynamo uses their works



**FIGURE 4** | Exhibition L'arte è now!

in charity events to raise funds. Income from the artistic activities increased from €70,000 in 2009 to €200,000 in 2022, which has also led to a debate about the price and distribution of the value created.

Fundraising has its rules and must take into account how much supporters are willing to give, as the artworks will be sold at a lower price than they normally command. Although the works created at Dynamo Camp are unique, the artists are concerned that discounting them could devalue their other works. In some cases, they have been discounted by 30%, and in others, they have sold for as little as a tenth of their market value.

Dynamo is considering moving away from the relationship between artwork and fundraising. Plans are underway to establish a foundation that will retain ownership of the works and create a collection that will represent Dynamo Camp's endowment.

A key question is how the involvement of different stakeholders in the co-creation of value (Hollebeek, Kumar, and Srivastava 2022) can be linked to the dissemination of that value, balancing participation in a social project with market rules. Indeed, the redistribution of value among stakeholders is an important issue for nonprofits.

## 7 | Conclusions

Artification is one of the Art Factory's main pillars. Considered as a process constructed by Dynamo Camp's social mission, Art Factory changes the status of the artifacts, transforms them into socially accepted "art" and plays the role of "gatekeeper," gaining legitimacy from the artification itself.

The "creative partnerships" developed by Art Factory incorporate art into the life of the organization (Antal, Debucquet, and Frémeaux 2018; Lewandowska 2015), using art to develop the children's potential through art therapy. In this way, Art Factory engages participants intellectually, emotionally, and physically, reflecting Dynamo's values and commitment to society. Art Factory also benefits from artistic support and interventions, selling art to donors in its various forms: paintings, videos, NFTs, and so forth. The Art Factory creates value not only from an internal business perspective through the value derived from the sale of artworks to donors but also through external actors and the integration and exchange of resources (e.g., knowledge, skills, and financial). In addition, as a social purpose organization, Dynamo Camp's dual economic and social goals impacts its brand (Baumgarth 2018), and value is both co-created and shared across a broad network of many different actors.

The co-creation of the art produced in the Art Factory workshops provides significant benefits not only to the children but also to the artists and their creativity, influencing their overall production. Moreover, the co-production of art and the focus on the art market trigger a complex system of value co-creation (Hollebeek, Kumar, and Srivastava 2022), with implications in terms of economic and cultural value (Throsby 2004). The three key components of this artification process are as follows:

- Dynamo Camp/Art Factory is a "closed" market composed of staff members and managers, children, adolescents, and their families, all of whom play a central and direct role in the art experience.
- The artists' experience at Dynamo is full of deep emotions and feelings, as well as productive in terms of the art co-created with the children and their families. It is also an opportunity for creative stimulation and learning new creative ways of working with others. In fact, the creativity of the artists is greatly influenced by the interaction between the different people involved in the experience, often leading to new types of work and approaches.
- The value of artistic work of the artists involved in Art Factory is recognized by the artists themselves, as well as by their art dealers, customers, and collectors, providing benefits for Dynamo, its employees, and managers.

The complex relationships among the various parties involved in the Art Factory enable the value creation process and generate value beyond the co-produced art. Part of the co-creation value relates to the image of Dynamo Camp as a source of recreational therapy and the revenue generated from the sale of the artwork.

The pricing policy for the co-created artwork is a particularly relevant issue, especially in light of the Art Factory's growing success, and as highlighted above, gives rise to a complex debate about how to distribute the co-created value.

From a management perspective, the Dynamo experience may be relevant to other institutions offering art therapy. Conceived and designed not only as a means of providing therapeutic support but also as a form of artification based on the co-creation of economic and cultural value among different actors (Hollebeek, Kumar, and Srivastava 2022), the collaborative work of physicians, artists, and management offers the opportunity realize a potential far greater than that of medical care alone. The most difficult aspect to replicate, also in light of some attempts to disseminate the Dynamo experience to other centers associated with the Dynamo network in the United States, is to find a balance between gratuity and pride of belonging.<sup>2</sup>

This study has some limitations that provide opportunities for future research. One such limitation is that the analysis is based on a single case study and was conducted at the beginning of the project. Although we have continued to follow the development of Dynamo Camp, a longitudinal analysis of the co-creation processes at the Art Factory and the impact on different stakeholders is an interesting future research opportunity.

Future research could also explore art therapy approaches in a comparative analysis of different recreational camps and other contexts, such as hospitals and retirement homes, to understand the mechanisms by which art therapy facilitates healing and well-being, and promotes value co-creation among different stakeholders. This would also allow for the development of more comprehensive art therapy programs that are more accessible and inclusive.



## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

## Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available in [https://www.dynamocamp.org/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMikfap06CRgQMV1pNoCR2xcQvbEAAAYASAAEgKuRfD\\_BwE](https://www.dynamocamp.org/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMikfap06CRgQMV1pNoCR2xcQvbEAAAYASAAEgKuRfD_BwE) at [https://www.dynamocamp.org/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMikfap06CRgQMV1pNoCR2xcQvbEAAAYASAAEgKuRfD\\_BwE](https://www.dynamocamp.org/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMikfap06CRgQMV1pNoCR2xcQvbEAAAYASAAEgKuRfD_BwE). These data were derived from the following resources available in the public domain: Dynamo Camp website, [https://www.dynamocamp.org/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMikfap06CRgQMV1pNoCR2xcQvbEAAAYASAAEgKuRfD\\_BwE](https://www.dynamocamp.org/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMikfap06CRgQMV1pNoCR2xcQvbEAAAYASAAEgKuRfD_BwE).

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.seriousfunnetwork.org>.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Diva Moirani, member of the Dynamo Camp Board, November 8, 2022.

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