



If I tell you about INSPIRATIONS LABORATORIUM 2, I might start by describing the “tangible” outcomes: we came together, we were given creative challenges, we worked together in pursuit of goals, and so on. With guidance, we created a process of exploration, and it culminated when we created a moment about the process that we shared with an audience.

Those are the things that happened, like rooms that we visited in the mansion of our time together, or towns that our train of discovery traveled through on its way to wherever it is now.

If I do a good job at telling you the things that happened, you begin to see the next layer of “things that happened,” which are



the interactions and the moments that are not so easily described. When I talk about tangible outcomes, I use language that seems useful to someone who is attempting to understand the process, to re-create it or to build on it, for example. But the next layer are the ephemeral and particular moments and interactions, the ones that will never be re-created, which are the outcomes that affected me. Deeply.

If I talk about “creating a space” I am getting closer to this layer – I can say “we created a space of trust” that encouraged experimentation and led to inspiration through discovery, or I can say “by selecting an item each from the prop house, we created a space of converging disparate elements” that led to inspiration





by conjoining the unexpected.

Again, this is useful if we intend to understand our time together, and perhaps to re-create it in some way. Someone could set out to create a space that is similar to the ones we inhabited. This is why we call it a “space” – we have the idea that it is something that can exist apart from the people that were in it.

For me to make sense of my experience in the Lab, however, I have to acknowledge this idea and then move past it. I think the train of our collective discovery sped through many of these “spaces” late at night, without stopping. For others of these spaces, some in our group stopped while others sped through. In our particular



Lab, I was struck many times by the parallel with the Tibetan monks go through making a mandala of sand – the point being to seek the pure and enduring creative moment when creation and destruction are the same indistinguishable thing.

To say we “created a space” is a useful fiction, similar I suppose to the idea that in my own work I have “created a game.” A thing has happened, we can see that – but ideally, what has really happened is that people have moved through it without stopping and the train of their discovery is now well beyond.

A science fiction writer I met told me his practice is to “feed the swamp” – by which he meant his subconscious, the part of his mind that accepts the moments of our



experience that resist description or characterization, the ones that exist apart from a descriptive language. To “throw things into the swamp” is to accept them as is, and “it crawled out of the swamp” is for them to emerge again, perhaps as inspiration.

For me, the days at INSPIRATIONS LAB 2 were filled with shoveling things into the swamp – not just the moments that can be labeled, such as Christian’s curiosity or Aiva’s lovely foot, but the moments between labels, the pauses, the inchoate and true.



Thank you for this valuable exploration.

– Ken Eklund