Chapter 5
Liveliness with artworks

While the caregivers and teens made the material spaces vary over time, one particular way of doing these variations turned especially problematic with the transition to the new building: that of "putting stuff on walls". Although there was a consensus that rooms had to remain open to rearrangement, the display of artworks fueled tensions. When I brought up the issue of exhibits in a staff meeting, I did not expect to stumble on a great topic of disagreement. The neat white walls of the new building opened a debate on the right aesthetic style that would build up on them. The medical director (Dr B.) made immediately clear to the team that she had already envisioned this style together with the architects:

> Dr B.: Yes, this had been decided. … It is clear that we won't stick stuff on walls, or nail stuff in walls, or repaint a wall or a door, not for a while. At least, not until I'll be there.
> We turned our heads, looking at the walls of the old townhouse where we still found ourselves at that time. Several posters were pinned here and there along the walls, and a few handmade collages announced the next radio program led by a group of teenagers for a workshop.
> Ingrid: Like this, those posters, to stick stuff on walls – or graffiti?
> Dr B.: No.
> Ingrid: What!? No decoration?
> Dr B.: It will be necessary to hang one billposting board, somewhere. We've asked for picture rails on all continuing walls, in the aim of hang-

> ing up some frames. … This is for when we want to organize an exhibition. … And not for having stuff like this [she pointed the collages], stuff of all sorts, of all forms, and here I think that Hugo [the artist-sociotherapist] won't contradict me.
> Voices stormed the room in a fierce brouhaha. Hugo kept quiet. The doctor continued:
> The proposition would also be, at least for some spots – for example, the corridors – to have some frames of the same dimension. A beautiful frame. And with the possibility of change with each exhibition. But with something that serves as a constraint. … And the constraint will be the same frame size, and another one will be to assort colors. […] Everybody is not allowed to do any fancy things they want in the building. Otherwise, in six months, it won't look like anything. This can be discussed, but I think that things must be uniform.
> Following this, the brouhaha resumed with greater intensity.

I better understood afterward what prompted the clash and the team's fervent response. The aesthetic style that the medical director wanted to implement, one that was uniform in format, assorted in color, and followed scheduled exhibitions, threatened another style that caregivers held to. To them, these artworks imparted a sort of 'liveliness' that permeated the material space. Caregivers often repeated that "it [the place] has to remain lively". The opposing aesthetic styles promoted different relationships with the place and its inhabitants, and fostered different situations in the everyday practice. The medical doctor argued that uniformity and temporal organization would promote a professional environment and, accordingly, professional ways of relating with each other. That argument was not just her fancy. It can be understood from her external position, necessary for guiding the team. In contrast to the caregivers, who remained in the daily practice with its many affects and concerns, she came only a few hours a week for staff meetings. She was thus far less aware of every development of the temporary waves passing through the group, and of the small everyday occurrences that caregivers related. He role was rather to give a fresh perspective, and to analyze the adolescents' conditions from her biomedical knowledge

background. On the other hand, the caregivers argued that the artworks should generate "something lively" within the place, in line with the liveliness occurring with the things, teens, and caregivers who spent their days there. The move brought the risk of not reproducing this liveliness in the new building. And this, for the team, was unacceptable. The clash between the two aesthetic styles interrogated the possibility to relay the place's specificities, in two ways: the medical director's ability to be sensitive to caregivers' everyday concerns for teens' slightest and growing attachments and, in turn, their ability to convey to her, as a more external worker, these issues from their daily practice.

The clash led me to examine different artworks, like drawings, paintings, sculptures, frames, posters, mosaic tiles, and expression boards. Along this chapter, I scrutinize whether their aesthetic style would impart 'liveliness', and whether they would lose it when translated into uniformed, assorted, and organized exhibits. I am equally interested in the caregivers' ability to distinguish that some things were 'livelier' than others, and the differences these special things made in their care practice. How was "putting stuff on walls" creating "something lively"? And how did it relate to care concerns? Although the term first remained a bit vague, I came to understand that the plea for 'liveliness' related to an aesthetic style that was contingent on the formation of attachments among adolescents, whether as familiar bonds, momentous involvements or longer-lasting interests. This liveliness was threatened by a scheduled temporality, as exhibitions organized in structured periods of time would thwart it. While the previous chapter ended by pointing to the importance of making the place specific to its dwellers, the following stories will call attention to the temporalities of attachments, instilled with the materiality of artworks. But before turning to art exhibits, I first want to better circumscribe how liveliness is realized, or not, within different traits of the material environment, and its implications for care.

Did you say 'something lively'?

Caregivers' use of the word 'liveliness' was more often intuitive than explicit,[1] and they did not only attribute it to artworks within their material environment. They also pointed to liveliness when a spot was momentarily animated with many movements and interactions, what I previously called 'hotspots' (chapter two). The erosions of waves were other kinds of informal variations over time, yet leaving material traces, that contributed to liveliness as well (chapter four). The names of the center's different rooms also played their part. In the old house, these names did not strictly indicate the function of a room, nor did they allude to therapy. Instead they were brought in by the teens. They often remained within the oral culture of the day center, like with 'La Porte Bleue' (the Blue Door) or 'L'Annexe'. Though no one remembered exactly who had nicknamed these rooms nor how, these appellations were familiar to everyone in the group. Most of these nicknames disappeared with the transition to new building. Some caregivers contested the plaques that had been affixed next to doors, which indicated the room's function: however imprecise and thereby open to changing activities (chapter four), the names were too impersonal to make the place lively. Only La Porte Bleue survived in the new building, because its appellation came to designate not only the spot but the singular pedagogic project itself. The name, the room and the project could not be disentangled. Its new door was painted blue, too.

Also, a little disorder did a great deal to generate liveliness. Caregivers described the unruly objects that permeated the old house as "traces of life, of passages", that were significant "even if it is a little messy". They contrasted such disorder, however small, with places that

1 In French, the team used the word '*vivant*' to say 'it is something lively' (*'c'est quelque chose de vivant'*). This word twins both English meanings of 'alive' and 'lively'. I have chosen to translate '*vivant*' into 'lively' because 'lively' sounds close to what I heard in caregivers' concerns: that is, living in the sense of being animated, filled with activity, interest, and excitement.

looked like a good representation of a nice, clean, and aseptic rehabilitation center. They often talked about their own houses to convey to me this sense of liveliness, whether they introduced themselves as messy people or not.[2] Indeed, when the bright new building loomed, the team challenged the assumption that a clean and aseptic environment would be an improvement.[3] This critique closely resonates with Barrett's (1996: 22–37) description of such an environment in a psychiatric facility. He links its details of clean and beautifully assorted arrangements to the idea of "progress". In contrast, other buildings situated further back on the same institutional site which were run down, or older wards dedicated to confinement or to chronic patients, were intended for people less eligible for prestigious clinical work, and symbolized regression. Goffman (1961) already recognized this spatial organization of progress and regression as structuring "patients' careers". The temporal and moral dimension of 'progress' that these authors see in the material details of well-ordered and shiny facilities echoes the caregivers' call for a lively aesthetic style in the day center. This style would avoid making their place convey this idea of progress within a very modern

2 The caregivers' comparison with their own houses recalls the blurred boundaries between domestic habitats and institutions (chapter two), now in how matters of hygiene and messiness are similar or differ in the very details of their arrangements. This is reminiscent of Guedez (2004) who shows how the link between messiness and aesthetic style is deposited differently in homes' arrangements. The location of a veranda is a good example of that. She notes that, in farmers' houses, order and cleanness matter a lot for aesthetics, so verandas at the entrance enable undressing without dirtying the interior spaces. In contrast, in second residences of the same rural region, verandas open on a view that appeals for contemplation, and disorder is seen positively as a lively thing.

3 As Laws (2009) reports from a self-help group in England, this critique also animates the alternative project pointing out the pitfalls of institutional facilities. They denounce the mismatch between caregivers' and patients' aesthetic sense: the group rejects the institutional spaces with the "niceties of the therapy room", as the "misjudged offer of comfort (the 'hideous flowery furnishings' in the hospital dayroom, perhaps) trivializes the injury" (1832). The group rather defends an aesthetic that "suits the mood" of patients (ibid).

and professional environment, not to mention the connotations about hospitals it carries. This chapter will provide evidence for this research track: it will become clear that the liveliness embedded in artworks does not correspond to the linear improvement that the notion of 'progress' entails.[4] Instead, a lively aesthetic style opens onto more diverse ways to enact time. In this way, it counteracts the so-called exemplarity of modern facilities.

The hotspots, waves, nicknames, and relative disorder of the old house provided the place with interpersonal tones that were quite novel to strangers, since they were specific to the teens' and caregivers' familiarity and current interests. As such, these characteristics shifted their relationship to the building away from a sense of place that was impersonal and exclusively professional, away from a showcase of a modern facility devoted to progressive clinical work. Back to the caregivers' critique of the exemplar and fake aspect of the new building they'd soon move to Maud distinguished different periods in order to ease her colleagues' worries. "It will be first a space of representation", she said, underlining the new, shiny arrangement of the very new building, "but then it will come back to life".

For years, the display of artworks had been pivotal for cultivating the place's lively style. I first considered those creations in terms of temporality when reading a trace of a conversation about them in a meeting report, dating from a year before my fieldwork. The secretary had noted,

4 A number of scholars have doubted the Modern assumption about linear time in past decades. They question its assertion of a march forward, going from an archaic past towards future improvement, that belongs the tale of 'progress'. In this chapter I will refer to Serres and Latour (1995), as well as to Rose's (2004) decolonial reading of the implementation of progress, with its linear time and its dynamic of replacement and exclusion. See also Tsing (2015) who calls us to investigate, inside "capitalist ruins", the diverse rhythms of lifeways that have been ignored because they do not fit into the pulse of progress, like those relying on salvage. For a historical study about non-linear representations of time, defying our imagination to span beyond the all too conventional 'timeline', see Rosenberg & Grafton (2010).

"An exhibition is limited in time, so that it doesn't become trivial. […] Exhibitions need to keep turning, removing works and hanging up others." This note indicated that variations of artworks over time were important to prevent the space from falling into mundanity. So the liveliness enacted with artworks could also be a matter of temporality. In other words, the liveliness of that materiality related to a form of thrill that very likely faded over time; some things were related to current concerns, whereas others no longer did. Such distinction recalls the conceptual difference between 'things' and 'objects' (Latour 2004): a 'thing' is created by participants who bring it into existence, and maintain it by incorporating matters of concerns, meanings, stories, and requests for care. An 'object', in contrast, is matter without values embedded in it. Van Hout, Pols and Willems (2015: 1208) propose to transport this distinction in order to look at everyday objects and things according to the concerns at stake in practices of care. Likewise, these artworks required a description of their materiality as 'things', because their liveliness hinged on their relations to caregivers' and teens' concerns, as long as these concerns remained at stake. Losing those concerns, they might easily become 'objects' deprived of value. The length of time needed was not stipulated in the meeting report, nor in any meeting I attended. This temporal indeterminacy, one might easily suppose, put the organization of exhibitions envisioned by the medical director on a knife's edge. Let us look to how this occurred: how artworks gained or lost their lively character, both during the transition period and while progressively decorating the white walls of the new building for about a year. Let us examine how these things generated liveliness as different temporalities unfolded through them, due to the making of attachments in the care work.

Folding moments of workshops

It was late afternoon and we had not yet moved into the new building. While leaving, I passed by L'Annexe, near the old townhouse, peered through the open door into the creation room, and saw Hugo who was still packing up stuff in the middle of a mess. He was preparing

artworks to hang on the naked white walls of the new building. He had already refused my offer to help him, because he said he knew what was what, and what must remain or not, or go with what, and I did not. The stuff in the room was objects to me and things to him. But it was late, and he needed assistance with technical tasks, as he was not used to assembling frames. So he accepted my help and we ended up preparing the artworks, mostly drawings and paintings, that fit in the new frames. This was how I learned more about the concerns and stories that made these artworks worthy of being displayed, and in what sense these values would infuse their liveliness.

The first topic we discussed was the pace at which an exhibition varies. Hugo was an artist hired as a sociotherapist, so he was the main caregiver in charge of the Creation workshop. With that workshop, he told me, he tried to do a new exhibition on average every four months. But in reality, he said, 'trying' meant that he succeeded in holding at least one exhibition a year. So the pace varied from, say, every four months to once a year. That varying pace depended on how the workshop went, and this remained completely unpredictable to him. Four months was too short to produce good enough paintings, but a year was long enough to put teens' sustained interest at risk. This is why the display of artworks could hardly fit in the stiff planning of a calendar: their creation relied on the adolescents' involvement, and thus on the unknown period of time during which their interest for a same activity would be sustained, especially given the strategies of enrollment that could produce variations (chapter four). In other words, the pace of an exhibition was unpredictable because it depended on a collection of short moments when the teens engaged in creating artworks. That collection became possible when enough pieces were achieved, yet before boredom settled.

The importance of the teenagers' involvement appeared with even more nuance when Hugo started selecting certain paintings and drawings out of a heap of different works, and made me aware of other values that were embedded in these artworks. When the time of an exhibition came, he told me, he discussed the choice of artworks to be exhibited with the group of teenagers who produced them. Together they looked for compromises between different concerns. First, Hugo valued

the teens' presence: each one who attended the workshop deserved to see their work displayed. Second, he weighed the degree of involvement of each participant when crafting the artwork. As he showed me the paintings, he recounted anecdotes from these moments. Like this flower that fascinated Karina when she painted it. Or all these small dots that had asked so much patience of Eduardo. Or this stain that Joachim finally found a way to integrate into the composition of his image. And, do you recognize which famous picture inspired Kais' drawing? And so forth. One anecdote after another, I came to see how each artwork related to finer nuances and moments, encompassing when a youth chose materials, used tools, took a chance to express ideas or feelings, discussed these with other participants, and was involved in the gestures of making the object. Those very involvements in the practice of crafting things during the workshop particularized the objects that Hugo selected as artworks. After that, he evaluated the visual appearance of the pictures, considering what was good looking and well crafted. The final decision involved trying to find a balance between different techniques, styles, and tints, and between sober and busy pictures.

When Hugo and his participants evaluated which artworks were worth becoming exhibits, the nuances of their involvement when crafting them first mattered, whereas the 'beauty' of their visual appearance and the diversity in their assortment came after. In his study of a Parisian reinsertion facility, Troisoeufs (2009: 107) notices those values in a similar order except that, in his case, bad-looking artworks were displayed as well, but more discreetly. Ugly stuff could earn its place for the moral motive of not excluding the workshop participants who had tried. This detail adds a layer to tinkering with the constraint of a good visual appearance. It insists on the recognition of patients' personal involvement, which is definitely deemed more worthy by caregivers, compared to the artistic mastery of their creation. As to Hugo's selection, his compromise was pressured by frictions about aesthetic style due to the move, where uniformity should reign. Even so, he kept the value of personal involvement in the crafting process at the fore, not in

opposition to visual beauty and diversity, but in interdependence with these other values.[5]

What does the story of Hugo preparing the artworks say about the 'liveliness' they entail? The artworks first relate to the experience of creating and the involvement that teens put into making them. In this way, they render the pace of new exhibitions unpredictable, and they require a compromise with other values, like visual beauty. Most of all, Hugo's selection shows that these things remain lively as long as they carry anecdotes about those workshop moments with them, often visible in their appearance (like the dots, or the inspirational picture). The participants who were present at that time would see the anecdotes in the pictures more than their aesthetic aspects. While these pictures are particularized because they incorporate moments in the workshops, these things 'fold' time. That is, they carry past stories with them, gathering places and temporalities that remain visible in their materiality. Anthropologist of science Amade M'Charek (2014) argues, in her historical analysis of a DNA reference sequence, that certain objects deserve consideration for the way they index and enact time. From these 'folded objects' (ibid), she writes, quoting Serres and Latour (1995), traces of previous moments and places cannot be erased:

> In contrast to linear time, which is related to geometry, topological time is crumpled and folded in multiple ways. Time is gathered together and folded in objects (Serres & Latour 1995). 'An object, a circumstance, is thus polychronic, multi-temporal, and reveals a time that is gathered together, with multiple pleats' (1995: 60). […] Time materializes in spatially foldable objects. Folded objects are not political because of what is put into them, but because of how they are folded. (M'Charek 2014: 31; 50, original emphasis)

5 The idea that good care requires seeking compromise between several values belongs to many other kinds of care work. For this argument about food in nursing homes, see Mol (2010), and about 'dignity' in relation to dirtiness in a long-term psychiatric setting, or to end of life care, see Pols (unpublished manuscript).

Reading these lines, it becomes clear that the folding of particular moments of workshops in the artworks did matter, as long as these moments enlivened these things with concerns for the teenagers who made them, and for the caregivers who shared the workshops with them. Those who weren't aware of these special moments would notice the content of the picture, its subject, form and style, but not the stories of its creation. Hugo' selections leave no doubt: the liveliness of these artworks first relies on these particular craft experiences, whose moments are enfolded in the artworks displayed.

Things that bring up stories

During the months following the move, artworks were indeed displayed in frames next to the uniform assortment of furniture. To caregivers and teens, the twenty or so frames hanging on picture rails did not strongly enough counterbalance the evocation of a hospital that was produced by the white walls (figure 19). Yet, the team did not want to solve it in one go. It was a matter of time, but not of a formally organized time; artworks should slowly permeate back into the space here and there, at the irregular pace of turning exhibitions. When I came back six months later, small variations had occurred at several locations. Some of the framed pictures had been replaced. Posters relating to activities had been hung. Some stone tiles of a terrace had been replaced by mosaic squares (figure 20). And so on. At that time, teens who had not known the former old townhouse told me in interviews that the new place did not make them think of a hospital. The artworks were major contributors to these impressions, they added, and it helped some of them keep coming back during the early weeks of their stay.

Figure 19: The frames on the walls of the corridor, after moving into the new building.
Figure 20: The mosaics permeated a side terrace, six months after moving in.

When I asked Baptiste, the coordinator, about these things that slowly permeated the place, he answered that it would have been inappropriate to uproot and 'transplant' all artworks from the former old townhouse to the new building. All of them did not make sense anymore in the flow of interests that were occurring during that time. Indeed, the pieces that Hugo first transported from the old townhouse were freshly crafted, carrying recent moments of workshops. The artworks that made the move, and also the ones that began to permeate the new place over time, all related to current interests and relationships between teenagers and caregivers.

Other artworks, though, were much more vulnerable candidates for moving, and some of them never reached the new building. The transition was a radical checkpoint for turning certain things into mere objects. These futile artworks indicated another feature of lively style, this time, because they'd lost it. This stood out during the selection (or rather, rejection) process, just before the move. In a corner of the old townhouse, two caregivers had gathered artworks from here and there, so that everyone who passed by could check if one of them was worth being saved from the trash. The ensemble of sculptures, paintings, stained glass and collages was colorful. The objects were well fashioned. Some even presented vivid details that caught observers' attention. But the problem was, they lacked the stories. When team members or teens contemplated them, unanswered questions lingered: who was involved in crafting them, when, and how? No one could tell from looking at these obsolete objects. No one remembered exactly which stories were connected to them. In contrast to Hugo's anecdotes, here the pieces did not divulge the faintest reminiscence. These objects faced oblivion since their creators had left the center and, after a while, narratives about them had stopped circulating within the group. In short, these objects were no longer lively because they didn't bring up any more stories to tell.

Then how would 'successful' pieces of artwork do so? And what of the stories that enlivened them? Why did they matter? A photo album made of plastic pouches that hung on the wall worked very well for recalling anecdotes, perhaps because it made directly visible the moments hav-

ing marked the participants, who thereafter narrated them. The photographs not only showed teens and caregivers posing in diverse attitudes, but they also involved sites, things, and animals that they appreciated, and whose traces they retained and exhibited. It was striking, when some teens told me the stories I could glimpse on the pictures, how much their narrative kept track of the ever-changing members of the group. They always delivered with precision, not only moments they had shared with others, but whether those persons still came to the center or not. The storytellers often repeated that this or that person was not present anymore, but that other one was, or they would ask: were you already there at that time? Were you there where we went on that outing? Did you know Dorian? The stories recorded the reshaping of the group and the temporary interpersonal affinities that resulted from it.

More importantly, some displayed things carried liveliness because the stories they sparked brought back past occurrences or interests, for some of them were still manifest among the group members. Baptiste was serious about this, as the tension in his voice signaled when he told me about a poster of a video game stuck on the wall of the room for media workshops:

> It makes sense when teenagers and caregivers dwell in this place and so bring materials. […] Etienne and Sylvie [both caregivers] have taken this initiative [to pin the poster] because they involve themselves, because they do this workshop here, and the poster is linked to that workshop. So it's not for the appearance, but it makes sense. In contrast, Dr B. is less often here. Maybe her concern for 'beauty' takes the upper hand over this meaning that the thing carries. When she comes in the room and sees the poster, she probably won't think that it occurred during that workshop, that Etienne proposed it, that Gregory [teenager] brought it, and so it matters for Gregory, and for Etienne, and for the workshop. She'll probably only see that this poster is ugly. If I'll recount it to her, she will understand. But she only comes here for the [weekly] staff meetings. Then she sees the building, without living in it.

The story of the poster is a tiny one, but it is the story of an irreplaceable specificity for these caregivers, this teenager, and that workshop. The poster wasn't part of an exhibition that workshop participants prepared for months. Instead, it had a special mode of presence for Etienne, Sylvie and Gregory since it carried an interest that had emerged between them and a video game. The thing was of concern for Baptiste, too. As a member of the group, he'd been told about the anecdote and knew the story folded in it. In other words, when telling a story, caregivers and teens unfolded the moments the thing contained. They transmitted the importance of these moments to interlocutors who then became aware of these concerns. This meant that caregivers' daily exchanges didn't only bear consequence for their informal knowledge of the teens (chapters two and three), and for possible variations of interest between them (chapter four), but these exchanges resulted, too, in producing concern for the things that surrounded their working place in a lively manner.

However, that mode of presence was not perceivable by someone who did not 'live' there, who did not know all the anecdotes of what happened in the daily practice, such as the medical director. Here the story can do something that the thing cannot: it can reach an external interlocutor and convey to them how meaningful this apparently ugly poster is. This is a precious attribute when the external interlocutor is in a position of topmost authority, like psychiatrists. The poster is pinned to the wall, but the story can travel and can possibly convince the unfamiliar people to whom it is addressed. So things that led to anecdotes did not only reiterate the importance of an interest that settled in the group. The stories also enabled that importance to be conveyed to those who didn't share the everyday care concerns embedded in these things, and who risked considering them as objects or reducing them to their visual appearance.

With the unwanted artworks, the photo album, and the poster, I saw a second way that displayed things generated liveliness or did not. They did so when they triggered a sort of ordinary storytelling, which appeared as a practice of expanding the present time. In other words, the displayed things that were good at making people tell stories reconnected other moments to the present one and expanded it. These stories kept alive concerns that were important for present and former

'dwellers', while reconnecting them through narrative webs. Thus, these things do not belong to a single linear temporality. They are caught in the different connections relating previous moments, prompting people to tell narratives, to unfold moments. This was how these things maintained their worth and existence in the center, as they kept track of ever-varying interests. In doing so, they carried liveliness, since they marked which concerns remained important in the flow of the ever-changing group of 'dwellers'.

Traces of fleeting gestures

Other exhibits also proved vulnerable to the new aesthetic requirements of uniformity and time organization, but not because concerns about them had vanished and they lacked stories – quite the reverse. In the old townhouse, a chalkboard covered part of the wall of the entrance hall. Teens could write whatever they wanted on that board. The thing varied intensively in the inscriptions that the adolescents and sometimes caregivers traced on it. Since that thing mediated frequent interactions and offered lots of variations of its visual appearance, it should surprise nobody that the team saw it as extremely lively. Yet its reproduction in the new building was not obvious to all. The brief, casual, fleeting involvements that the chalkboard appealed to were, and remain, under debate.

Here is how it happened. Two years before the move, the caregivers and adolescents had decided to cover an area of wall with blackboard paint, in order to make a free expression board for the teens, some of whom painted it. Each time I came back to the field, I noticed new chalk inscriptions, which offered clues to the usages of that board. Once, it was full of small drawings and writing, all slanting in different directions. When looking at them, I discerned that they were from different hands. The subjects of the pictures and notes responded to each other by association of ideas or by making jokes. Another time, a line in the middle of the board divided its surface into two parts. On each side, a big character had been drawn, partly human, partly not. On the left, the mysterious character had a human body with peculiar long arms, and something hardly

identifiable across his mouth. The character on the right was about the same size. It was a genie out of the lamp, with quite well-trained pectoral and arm muscles, and with boxing gloves on. It was signed on the side with a nickname. At other times, seeing new sketches on the board, again I recorded that earlier inscriptions suggested the making of later ones. The visual appearance of the board indicated that teens had been caught up in brief involvements, writing on the board when passing by, in the same move responding to previous inscriptions. The blackboard was a mediator of sociability (inscriptions were responding each other) and of interactional creativity (most of the ideas, visible in the drawings and notes, were inspired by each other), while this thing engaged us in very brief, casual involvements. Writing with chalk demanded simple, ephemeral gestures, quick ideas, often inspired by what was there in the moment, and inscriptions were quickly erasable as well.

The chalkboard's materiality was indispensable to these spontaneous and quick gestures. It was not quite the same thing, to say the least, as another expression board made of cork. Caregivers had hung the corkboard in the former dining room, with a note pinned next to it: "Billposting permitted. This is a space of free expression, for individual posting, and for at least two weeks." Half of the available area was empty. And I barely noticed a change in the three drawings that covered the other half of the board. The cork panel appeared as an object that had been largely forgotten by all. In comparison, the materiality of the painted chalkboard made a great difference to its popularity. To write a note or draw with chalk on the wall appealed to spontaneous and brief gestures, possibly responding to previous inscriptions, whereas the cork panel, the pushpins, and the note stating the conditions for individual postings surely had no chance to do so. The cork panel could not lure casual and fleeting gestures of writing and ephemeral inscriptions as responses to previous ones. As such, it didn't generate liveliness as the chalkboard did.

But that way of enacting liveliness was very fragile. During a meeting before the move, the chalkboard raised a fierce debate. The doctors had decided to remove it from the architects' plans. They argued that the board had been used randomly, without being framed as a 'therapeutic

mediation'. This rendered it wholly inadequate for the new building. They named the thing a "call for discharge". According to a dictionary of psychology, this expression points to a liberation, an emotional explosion, that occurs when a phase of psychological tension ends (Richelle 2007 [1991]). By resorting to that expert term, the doctors asserted their position of authority.[6] To them, the thing dirtied the beautiful new place while triggering irrelevant attitudes among the adolescents. Part of the team tried to plead for its relevance. One of them raised the argument that "the teens also put interesting things on it", without digging into what was interesting in those things. The caregiver had only furtive moments at hand, not enough to form a good anecdote. Another one pointed out that, even if writing on walls was not allowed, teenagers would do it anyway, so why not to set up a spot for it? These arguments were made in vain. Though the team didn't convince the psychiatrists, they didn't want to prevent the chalkboard from demonstrating its worth. They finally decided to leave the question open for later: if the teenagers asked for an expression board again, the question would be reconsidered.

I kept coming back to the center for a year and a half after the move and never saw the chalkboard reproduced in the new building. The board only came back as a concern when the team discovered a small doodle on a corner of wall or on the door of a toilet, which caused them to resume the debate. Or occasionally, during Christmas time, ideas of what the board encouraged teens to do (casual involvement in writing or drawing inscriptions that remained easily erasable) came back with liquid chalk pens that they used on window panels. However, to my knowledge, the team never recreated a wall covered with chalkboard paint.

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6 Studies that expose how psychiatrists establish their superior position vis-à-vis care teams are too numerous to be encapsulated in a note. Close to my observation, Brodwin (2013) points that psychiatrists' verbal performance, often resorting to biomedical knowledge, prompts case managers to accept that they know less, although their own knowledge is just of different kind. More broadly, Carr (2010) offers a review of anthropological works that unravels how expertise is something that is performed, in the medical field and elsewhere.

The chalkboard was fragile because it did not offer a guarantee of an aesthetic style that would showcase a professional facility. At any moment, a teen could trace an unsettling joke or a crappy word, and this would, according to the medical directors, dirty the modern building. Above all, the chalkboard was fragile because the brief gestures to which it appealed were vulnerable in the face of therapeutic arguments. These casual involvements in writing inscriptions (often unpredictable because of responding to others) were not easy to translate into coherent arguments that would match therapeutic formulations. In contrast with planned workshops, the fleeting gestures and traces on the board were occurrences that did not happen in situations set up on purpose, with minimal framing (chapter three). So far, these occurrences have always existed outside any discursive or argumentative register. The debate about that board brings back a problematic issue of care work: when daily occurrences that happen in the margins of planned activities are deemed unworthy of considering because they are not translated into a discourse, therapeutic or other.[7]

But however arduous the translation of brief and casual involvements into convincing words during debate, it was precisely the board's appeal to these gestures that effected its liveliness. Its materiality mattered: writing with chalk seized people passing by much more spontaneously than pinning a piece of paper onto cork. The chalkboard had a very lively effect in yet another way than by unfolding moments of workshops or prompting storytelling. The board's style relied exclusively

7 This is a topical issue among care practices and theorists. Nowhere have I found a more profound insight about it than in the experimentation of Fernand Deligny with autistic children in the 1970s. With his companions, they mapped the children's movements and doings within the surroundings, which made visible the 'act' ('agir', gestures or movements that have no purpose at all) as much as the 'doing' ('faire', gestures or movements with purpose, or whose intentionality is presumed). Such mapping was a way to render visible and important children's attachments in the margins, without interpreting such a non-verbal language with theoretical preconception. See Deligny, Lin & Duran (2013) for the collection of maps, and Miguel (2014) for a concise analysis of that experiment.

on gestures and inscriptions that were ephemeral: writing with chalk is about the moment and quickly erasable. Its ephemerality made it much more vulnerable than other exhibits. But it was exactly because of that ephemerality – because of the brief, evanescent involvements, and the unpredictable traces they left – that the caregivers valued the board as something lively. The subject remained a source of tension, and left the debate among caregivers unresolved.[8]

Overlapping temporalities

As months and then years passed, artworks slowly permeated the walls, and sometimes the floors or doors, of the new building. Together with hotspots, waves, nicknames and a little disorder, the artworks instilled the place with a lively aesthetic style. Their presence, visual appearance, material characteristics, and the stories and doings they prompted, intimately related to the adolescents' attachments, modest as they were. But I need to emphasize this: to say that the artworks 'slowly' permeated the walls is too simple a phrasing to describe how time was involved in that recreation of liveliness.

Indeed, exhibitions never turned according to a schedule, but each of them followed the pace of a workshop. What was 'slow' or 'fast' could no longer be counted on the basis of a stable reference such as a calendar. This pace could hardly be organized in advance, since it remained unpredictable: it depended on the teens' involvement in a particular workshop, and on the sustainment of their interest over time. Forcing these paces into calendars would have thwarted the care work because, as I described in the earlier chapters of this book, this work could hardly do without weaving those teens' attachments. The variations of exhibitions,

8 At the other extremity, teens' inscriptions on the building elements that were to stay for an undetermined, long-lasting period, also raised debate among caregivers. They wondered how long traces of an adolescent should remain in the center if the latter had been gone for a while. For the case of a controversy about a painted door, see d'Hoop (2021a).

or of single exhibits, only left a vague impression of linear time passing in the building. According to Latour (1991), when a systematic cohesion of elements of our everyday life replaces others, and forms a new cohesion, things give the impression that time is linear. I see a good example of these systematic cohesions in the ways smartphones quickly made mobile phones and landlines obsolete. As for the changing exhibitions in the day center, although they marked that some periods occurred one after another, each display of an exhibition or of a single piece followed such singular paces that it simply blurred any systematic cohesion among them. These exhibitions just never held the promise of a uniform style in the building. Rather, their respective temporalities overlapped.

In this way, the artworks carrying liveliness enacted time in another manner. Latour (ibid) also argues that, despite the impression of passing time, the brewing of many temporalities instills material things and the actions done with them. The exhibits of the day center incorporated this idea in a specific manner: these things were deemed lively when they unfolded workshop moments, and when they inspired the telling of stories that expanded the present time to other moments and places. These temporalities belonging to the thing and to its narratives added still another sort of temporal overlap to the variations of exhibitions. Not only did these overlaps blur the impression of passing time through systematic cohesion, but they fully dispelled it, and rather provided a liveliness relying on the much more enfolded and unfolding times that those things carried. Thus, it seemed to me that the 'something lively' that caregivers sought to recreate in the new building thanks to artworks wasn't only enacted through the unpredictable paces of renewed exhibitions, but also through their overlaps with the many different temporalities that these things carried.

Finally, let us pinpoint how these overlapping temporalities, and the lively aesthetic style they lend the building, relate to care concerns. The temporal overlaps obfuscated a linear time that would imply an idea of progress. It cracked the linear notion of improvement, which would have manifested in the neat, uniform, modern and apparently immutable style of a facility arranged as an exclusively professional environment. The artworks and their multiple temporalities instead

cultivated a lively style by establishing intimate connections between the material environment and the interpersonal affinities temporarily at stake with its dwellers. One of the difficulties, though, was to convey to external interlocutors how important those attachments were to the care work. This difficulty caused serious concerns when medical directors too easily reduced their view of an exhibit to its visual appearance. The telling of anecdotes was a good trick to unfold the concerns recorded in a thing and to create awareness among outsiders. Yet this did not always work. The chalkboard and its traces were perceived as quite lively by the team, but their temporality showed a limit: the fleeting gestures were too brief, too ephemeral, for them to be argued as worthy occurrences in regard to therapeutic discourses. Yet, even if no practical or argumentative framework had been granted to the erasable inscriptions on the chalkboard, for the caregivers who shared that place with teens on an everyday basis, the enactment of such ephemeral affinities did matter. The smallest of those brief appreciations was precisely what enlivened the team' workplace and the teens' existence there.