

SUSTAINABLE ART PRACTICES HANDBOOK



2024

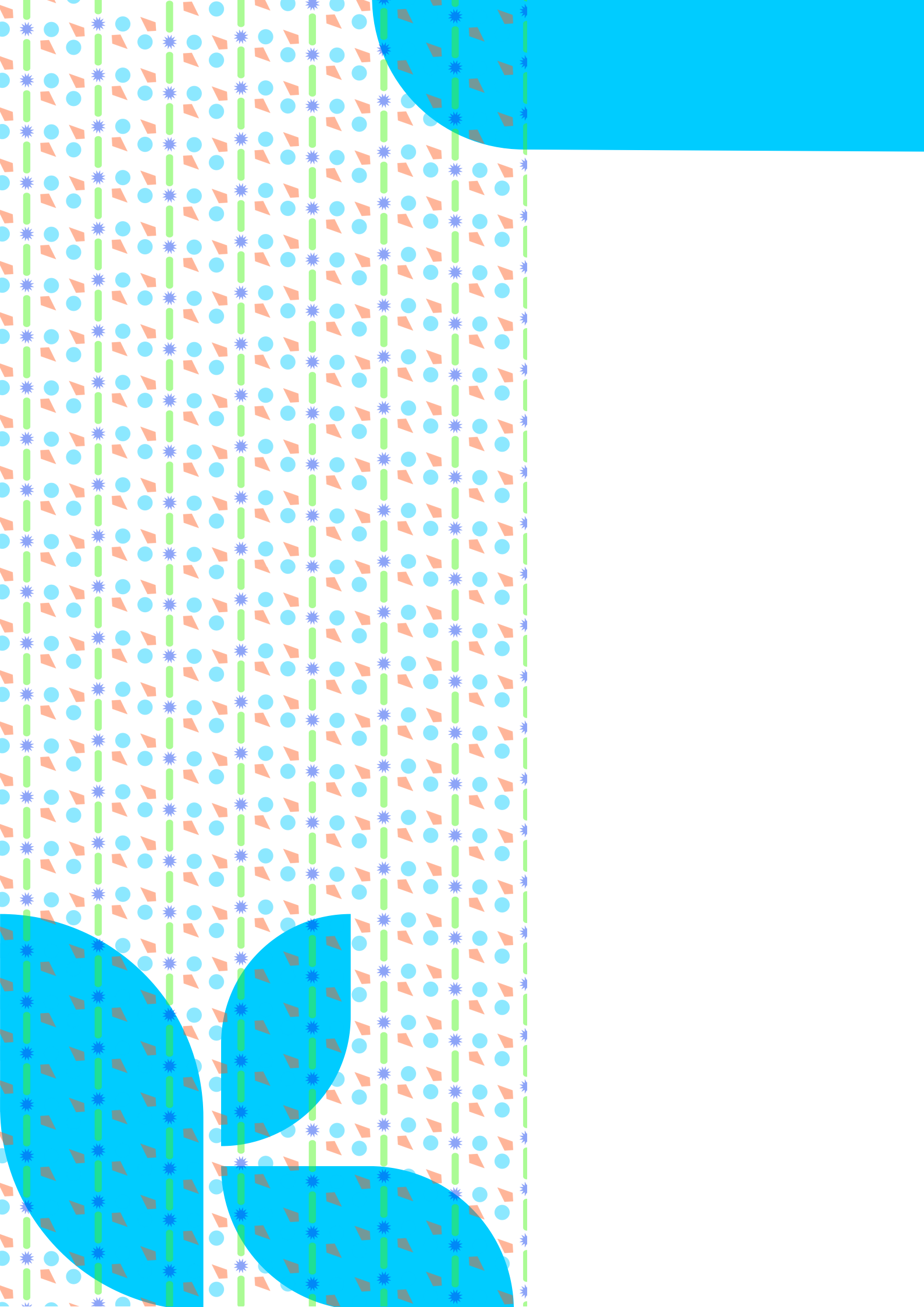


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I. WHAT IS THIS HANDBOOK ABOUT?

During the fall of 2023 the partners of the sustainability project E-ART have conducted desk research to find out the needs, challenges and best practices for sustainable artistic work on a national and European level. This Handbook is the result of that research, gathering innovative ways of incorporating environmental, financial, and social sustainability in the creative process from all corners of the European Union.

This Handbook is educational in nature, and it forms the basis for a greater Curriculum of Sustainable Art. Here you will find examples of art exhibitions, festivals, traditional crafts, organisations and individuals who all share a common framework of sustainability.



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2. E-ART: AN INTRODUCTION

The mission

To combat the dangers of climate change and environmental exploitation, our society must transition to a more sustainable way of life. This will involve transitioning to a circular economy and raising awareness of how things are manufactured, used, and discarded. The arts can frequently communicate ideas of sustainability in a more straightforward and persuasive manner than political speech or scientific reports. In order to do this, the artists and other stakeholders in the art world must first be aware of sustainability themselves, how it can be implemented in their work and how it reflects the needs of wider society.

E-ART - Artists Influence-Support the co-creation, circulation and promotion of sustainability and climate change in Europe is a project on sustainability in art within the framework of Erasmus+ Cooperation Partnerships.

Our is to support the professional and personal development of artists, to help them become more sustainable and acquire new skills, to give them the opportunity to expand their audiences and to become “Green Mind” role models to the wider public through the artistic creations that will be developed during the project.



The goal of E-ART is to highlight the need for more sustainable materials in the context of art, to raise awareness in both the art sector and public sector about the importance of social and climate sustainability and protection, and to upskill and reskill professionals in art, helping them acquire new knowledge and learning new, innovative and sustainable techniques.

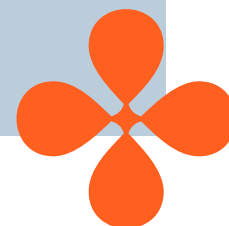
During the course of the project, these goals are realised through a variety of means. A curriculum of innovative, sustainable art practices will be developed and used as a basis for mentor training. These mentors go on to lead art labs and digital residencies in various EU member states. The artistic creations of these labs and residencies are then exhibited locally and digitally, through the development of an online platform, material library, and repository which will give a free space to all sustainable artists and sustainable pieces of art to be hosted. Throughout all of this, the project partners are conducting campaigns to raise awareness about sustainability issues in the art world among the public.

E-ART is supported by Erasmus + Cooperation partnerships through the national agency Universitets- och Högskolerådet UHR / Swedish Council for Higher Education.



Leading

E-ART is organised by six partner organisations from six member states of the European Union.



I & F Education



I & F Education is an Irish-based organisation working in and from Dublin for the educational development of people of all ages, especially in the areas of entrepreneurship, arts and personal development, VET, language acquisition, inclusion and diversity and rural development. Their programmes offer a variety of workshops and training in the Cultural and Creative sector. I & F organises exhibitions, workshops for arts and crafts, visual arts, festivals and theatre performances. <https://instructionandformation.ie/>

OECON Group Bulgaria



OECON is a company oriented to various fields of entrepreneurship, specialising in management consulting and support of vulnerable groups. They have extensive experience in the field of VET; writing high quality curricula, organising art projects and workshops for local communities. Their focus is on supporting individuals and companies for life-long learning, as well as sustainable development of the economy. <https://oecongroup.com/>



CUBE is a private non-governmental organisation established in 2020 and based in Thessaloniki, Greece. They organise speeches, exhibitions, seminars and conferences with educational and social character covering entrepreneurial, environmental and social topics. CUBE specifically aims to promote entrepreneurship and social inclusion of vulnerable groups in society, including migrants, roma, refugees and women in rural areas. <https://www.cube.org.gr/en/>

ESPRONCEDA - Institute of Art & Culture



Espronceda, powered by Lemongrass Communication SL, is a platform for artistic and cultural research that could produce social impact and social change based in Spain. They promote international dialogue between artists, curators, critics, gallerists, collectors, culture managers, scientists, diplomats and academics across Europe and the world. Espronceda creates art prizes, art exhibitions and residency programs for artists. <https://www.espronceda.net/>

Consorzio Materahub



Materahub is a strategic design hub working to foster local development by promoting entrepreneurship, innovation, networking and cross-fertilisation based in Italy. Materahub manages international pilot projects to support cultural and creative industries, encouraging innovation and inclusion processes. They work on fostering innovation in education, coaching and tutoring for artists in the creative industries, and support creative and cultural operators in transforming their projects into sustainable economic activities. <https://www.materahub.com/>

Intercult

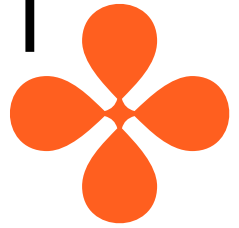


Intercult is an independent production and resource unit based in Stockholm, Sweden. It has been an initiator and leader of collaborative culture projects, networks and intercultural and international project competence since 1996. They implement both small and large-scale capacity building projects, bringing together artists, culture operators, educators and audiences, creating meetings, educational opportunities and artistic encounters. <https://www.intercult.se/>

I & F Education

3. EUROPEAN SUSTAINABILITY IN ART

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What is the general situation for sustainability in the field of arts and culture around the EU?

Greece

In Greece, the intersection of sustainability and the arts presents unique challenges and opportunities. The rich cultural heritage of Greece offers a vibrant platform for artists, but there are gaps in heritage preservation. The government's cultural policies have faced criticism, indicating a need for more supportive frameworks for sustainable artistic practices. Environmental protection is embedded in the constitution, reflecting the country's commitment to sustainable development. However, the impact of climate change poses significant challenges. Sustainable growth is crucial for creating opportunities for artists and contributing to the prosperity of the Greek people.

Sweden

Many artists are already living in sustainable ways due to limited financial resources, re-using materials and seeing value in what others may discard. At the same time, many artists do not know how to process hazardous waste materials, which materials are harmful from an environmental perspective and what alternatives exist. Artists often work alone and perceived time limits, ignorance and habits can cause environmentally harmful choices. However, there is a demand among artists, crafters and artisans for concrete tips and advice for their practices. One of the most important roads to a sustainable society is cooperation, which can mean sharing tools and machines and to circulate leftover materials to others who need it. To increase knowledge of environmental impacts in the art field we need to share information, but common tools, goals and plans of action for the various branches of arts and culture are currently missing in Sweden.

Bulgaria

Sustainable development is an important priority for Bulgaria. The country is working towards optimizing the use of sustainable practices in arts that take a caring stance towards nature overall, and effectively incorporates the concept of sustainability into artistic practices and production. The population is building recycling habits and focus on nature preservation, as Bulgaria is rich with plenty of green areas, mountains, lakes and rivers. By combining art and sustainability, Bulgaria strives to create a cultural landscape that not only reflects its commitment to environmental progress but also inspires a collective responsibility for the well-being of the planet. This is mostly done by incorporating sustainability in artistic practices, educational initiatives, building recycling habits and organizing cultural festivals and events.



Ireland

The Irish arts and culture sector is a significant contributor to the national economy, generating €5.4 billion in economic activity in 2020. The sector employs over 110.000 people and is responsible for the creation of a wide range of goods and services, from visual arts and literature to performance and music. The Irish arts and culture sector is facing a number of challenges in transitioning to a more sustainable model of operation. One of the biggest challenges is the high cost of materials and resources. Artists often need to use expensive materials, such as paints, canvases, and musical instruments, and they may also need to pay for studio space, equipment rental, and travel. Another challenge is the lack of awareness and knowledge about sustainable practices in the arts. Many artists and arts organisations are not aware of the environmental impact of their work, or they may not know how to make their practices more sustainable. The financial incentives for sustainability in the arts are often limited. There are few funding opportunities specifically for sustainable arts projects, and artists may not see the return on investment of investing in sustainable practices.

Italy

In Italy, the cultural sector is increasingly recognizing the imperative of sustainability, reflecting a nuanced evolution in its practices. The Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development (ASviS) reported in October 2022 that Italy faces challenges in achieving sustainable development, exacerbated by the lingering effects of the pandemic. While strides aligning with the 2030 Agenda have been made in areas like education and innovation, there is a concerning decline in goals related to poverty, clean water, terrestrial ecosystem protection, sound institutions, and global partnerships.

Despite these challenges, the Cultural and Creative sector, a vital contributor to Italy's economy, is actively engaging in an ecological transition. Initiatives such as the 'Made Green in Italy' scheme and the VIVA Programme in viticulture underscore the sector's commitment to environmental responsibility. Moreover, new funding opportunities in 2023 signal an intensified focus on sustainability within the Cultural and Creative sector. The Foundation Symbola emphasizes the sector's pivotal role, serving not only as an economic powerhouse but also as a catalyst for cultural transformation, innovation, and sustainable practices. The sector's evolving commitment to sustainability marks a positive trajectory toward a more environmentally conscious and culturally enriched future.

Spain

Increasingly, the arts and culture sector in Spain is embracing sustainable practices, mirroring a global trend towards heightened environmental awareness in artistic pursuits. The transformation towards a more sustainable model and discourse is evident in the evolving landscape of arts organizations and projects. Numerous initiatives actively incorporate sustainability and ecological awareness into their mission, while others are progressively integrating these concerns into their day-to-day operations.

One area that may need to be further explored, especially from a policy standpoint, is the unique role culture can play in fostering adaptive and resilient lifestyles. This exploration is closely tied to the imperative of scrutinizing the intersections between the environmental, social, economic, and cultural dimensions of sustainability.

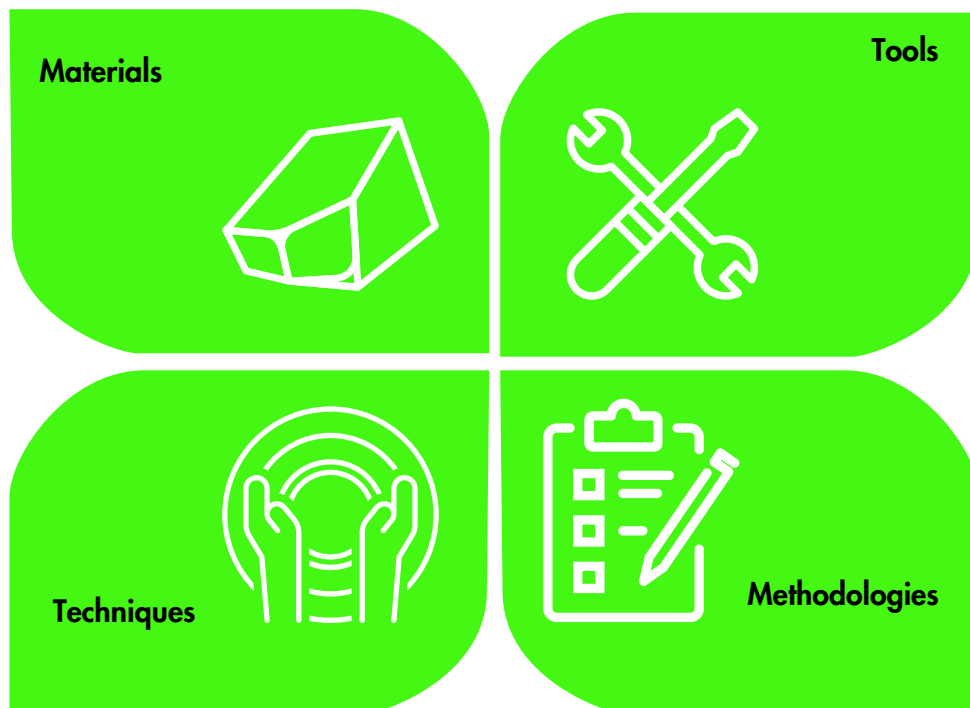
4. A COLLECTION OF SUSTAINABLE ART PRACTICES

DEFINITIONS AND CATEGORIES

What is sustainable art? In this Handbook, one or several of the following criteria must be fulfilled:

- Art linked to environmental concepts or art that addresses environmental issues of any kind.
- Art that prioritises environmental and social responsibility, helping to bridge socioeconomic gaps.
- Art that is created locally.
- Art existing in a circular economy.
- Art that minimises material and energy demands through innovations in its production and circulation, through upcycling, recycling or use of eco-friendly materials and processes.

Sustainable art practices cover both the production, display, management and disposal of art. To create a structure the selected good practices have been sorted into four categories, based on the focus of the innovation:



Explanation of the categories

Materials are the physical components used to produce or make up works of art. Innovations in sustainability concern the choice, usage, circulation and disposal of materials, as well as new ways of engaging with the material for an intended purpose. Good practices also concern education and knowledge sharing about the physical properties of different materials, their effect on humans and the environment.

Tools aid or facilitate the production of artistic works. Artists are currently developing new or improved tools for their craft that have beneficial effects on the environment, and innovative ways of using existing tools can minimise the material and resource demands. Depending on the practice, it can alter or improve the artwork.

Techniques are skills, guidelines, traditions and styles used for the production of artistic works. Promoting and spreading sustainable arts and crafts techniques can help preserve cultural heritage and community identity, as well as strengthening the local economy. The sharing of skills is an important form of social connection and can strengthen community solidarity. New sustainable techniques can also be implemented on large-scale production chains and companies.

Methodologies are sets of methods, rules and assumptions for doing, teaching, or studying a subject. Innovations in sustainable methodology can establish and improve common standards and guidelines in the art sector, often focusing on large-scale artistic productions with multiple actors or networks. Innovative methodologies can gain significant influence and spread awareness to artists and the wider public who would be otherwise unconcerned about environmental issues.





Future Materials Bank

Key areas:
Sustainable visual art
and crafting,
sustainable materials

Purpose: Developing and reviving
material knowledge, offering
advice, organizing workshops,
fieldtrips, and exchanges with
other researchers and
practitioners.

Challenges: The policymaking
field in relation to the promotion
and perseverance of sustainable
practices



Future Materials is a collaboration between the Nature Research Department at the Jan van Eyck Academie in Maastricht (host) with the MA Material Futures at UAL Central Saint Martins and the Green Art Lab Alliance (GALA). The Future Materials Bank is an archive of materials that supports and promotes the transition towards ecologically conscious art and design practices. By collecting information and samples from makers around the world, the archive aims to inspire research and disseminate knowledge about sustainable materials.

The issue facing Greece is how to transform its current cultural management policy from a static to a progressive approach through new legislative initiatives. This practice pro-actively supports this need and challenges, not by reforming the policy itself, but by serving as an innovative initiative that could influence future relevant policymaking in the field of preserving and promoting sustainable art materials and practices.

<https://www.janvaneyck.nl/postacademy/future-materials>

Eco Art Festival

Key areas: Crafts,
performing arts

Purpose: Promoting
site-specific
environmental
preservation.

Challenges: Lack of initiative
by the local artists, lack of
interest in society, and
insufficient human and
financial recourses.



The Eco Art Festival is an annual event that takes place in Kazanluk, Bulgaria. It showcases artworks by local and international artists that use natural or recycled materials and address environmental issues. The festival also organizes workshops, lectures, and performances to educate and inspire the public about being more eco-friendly. It addresses the local and national need for nature preservation as the area is famous for its Valley of Roses. By educating the youth through eco-themed festivals it's expected that they cut down on waste production and pick up recycling.

<https://theyouth.info/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Green-Europe-The-Eco-festival-2.pdf>



Laura Conneely & Irish Interiors business

Key areas: Eco citizen science, community engagement, environmental advocacy through art, intergenerational dialogue, action-based research.

Purpose: discarded materials – or waste, in many people's opinions – can still be valuable in creating art and beauty.

Challenges: The perceived need/desire among artists to use new materials.



Laura Conneely is a textile artist and landscape designer who runs a small business in Dublin called Irish Interiors. Laura wants to contribute to bringing 'our culture, heritage and diversity together in all my art forms'. Laura gets most of her inspiration from walking the beaches and hills of her native Connemara on the West Coast of Ireland.

All her textiles and needle felted designed art pieces are handmade in Ireland. Laura uses everything she finds out in the open, particularly the countryside, so nothing that can be used in an artistic sense goes to waste. The issue here is about reusing materials and recognising that they can be used constructively even if they are old or unwanted. <https://lauraconneelyart.ie/>



LITHIC WORKS

Key areas: Public art, eco citizen science, community engagement, environmental advocacy through sculpting.

Purpose: Encourage the use of natural materials.

Challenges: attracting community support and desire for local development, representing community desires.



Martin Lytle is an Irish Stone Sculptor. He Was Born in Kenya and lived in Ethiopia as a child before coming to Co. Carlow, Ireland at the age of nine.

He enjoys undertaking both small and large-scale sculpture commissions. His background in geotechnical engineering means he has an in-depth knowledge of geology and skills to site and install large works safely and securely. In 2016, he completed an eight feet high granite stone commission for BlackStairs Ecotrails, also known as an Ogham Tree – Teaching Stone.

Martin is particularly interested organic shapes and forms. He works with local stone from local quarries or found stone. These materials can help add beauty to any local or national project or undertaking and can teach the local population about sustainability and it's impact on the area. <https://lithicworks.com/biography/>

Car Tire Painting

Key areas: Painting, re-purposing, hobby craft.

Purpose: Inventive re-using of otherwise difficult materials, i.e. car tires.

Challenges: Public attitude.



Car tire painting is an initiative by the Sustainability Club in collaboration with Xaia Hiking Club both from the American University in Bulgaria that turned old donated car tires into decorated flower pots that are placed around the university campus. The tires were donated by a local Auto Repair Shop (Auto complex Boyana). The car tire is an easily recognisable example of an object that is difficult to reuse or recycle, leading to inventive or improvised uses. The initiative seeks to address the local need to encourage upcycling and reduce non-biodegradable waste in the community.

<https://www.facebook.com/sustainableAUBG/posts/pfbid02YRDfnwWEYAkVrV5cEKXWtmFVnXW25VJGWBHHmmmEH5y2SFoBm1SF66wR71aVunVYI>



Sofia Paper Art Fest

Key areas: Materials, sculptures, paper art

Purpose: Promoting biodegradable or "temporary" art.

Challenges: Lack of initiative by local artists, lack of interest in society, and insufficient human and financial resources.



Sofia Paper Art Fest is an annual festival showcasing the best of contemporary developments in paper art. The event is the first one of its kind in Bulgaria and includes several exhibitions, workshops, paper art academy, and other related events, showcasing art installation made out of biodegradable material such as paper. It addresses the international need of encouraging artists to use more eco-friendly materials in their art installations, but also the national level needs consisted of encouraging Bulgarian artists to express themselves and participate in more national and international exhibitions.

<https://www.amateras.eu/>



Materialmagasinet repository

Key areas: Logistics, resource management, transportation and waste management, audiovisual art, art exhibitions.

Purpose: Reducing material waste for arts and culture institutions.

Challenges: Gathering administrative and financial backing for permanent establishment.



Photo: Hanna Granlund 2023

Materialmagasinet repository was a shared storehouse and renting facility for props, packing materials and technical equipment. Established by Fredrik Nyberg at Liljevalchs in 2020, museums and theaters paid a fee in return for storing and borrowing material from the repository.

Materialmagasinet sold or donated material that was too weathered to be re-used, in addition to selling and renting material to independent artists. Materialmagasinet was a good practical example of how institutions can lower their material costs, material waste and storage space through collaboration. Many institutions are prone to throwing out materials that are not currently necessary to free up space. Materialmagasinet offered a financially attractive way to counter this problem, by having the cost of storage and transportation of re-used materials be the same as or lower than discarding material. However, the city of Stockholm decommissioned the repository in early 2024.

<https://www.materialmagasinet.se/>

CRAFT! art programme

Key areas: Artist education, visual art, crafting

Purpose: Training and exploring new ways for artist crafters to engage with materials.

Challenges: Reaching wider or more diverse audiences.



CRAFT! is a 2-year master's programme at Konstfack Art Academy in Stockholm, including yearly physical and online exhibitions of finished art pieces.



The works are divided into the categories of Ceramics & Glass, Jewellery & Corpus, and Textiles. The programme collaborates with other events like Stockholm Craft Week, organising exhibitions at other venues like Kulturhuset. The students of the programme develop proposals on new ways of engaging the materials, using play and performativity to explore aspects of relationships between human and object, beyond commercially oriented notions. The programme is taught in a wide range of the school workshops, and is a good example of cross-disciplinary artistic education and cooperation.

<https://www.konstfack2023.se/en/craft/>

Photo: Hanna Granlund 2024

Blanka Byrwa

Key areas: Crafting, sculpting

Purpose: Creating locally adapted, socially engaged art that explains and concretises abstract or difficult issues to a broad audience

Challenges: Financing and administrative backup, COVID-19 delays.



Blanka Byrwa is a Polish artist and interior designer working with recycling and re-using materials in art, with a focus on land management and circular material economies. A significant part of her work involves the gathering of “trash” and disregarded materials from the beaches of the Baltic Sea. Plastic waste thrown into the sea eventually degrade into microplastics, posing hazards to the marine food chain. Byrwa collects larger pieces to be melted and re-used in crafting and sculpting. Seaweed, algae, shells and seeds also form the base of her works and exhibitions. In addition, Byrwa conducts workshops for children and youths, letting them learn about the environmental issues of the Baltic Sea from a young age through the medium of play and experimentation.

Byrwa has co-founded CUMY, which is an open workshop located on the premises of the Imperial Shipyard in Gdańsk where you can practise traditional crafts and experiment with new technologies.

<https://www.facebook.com/blaszkens>



Photo: Blanka Byrwa 2023

Materialbiblioteket material library

Key areas: Design, creativity, art and material research.

Purpose: Access to a wide array of material samples help artists make better decisions in their projects, minimising waste.

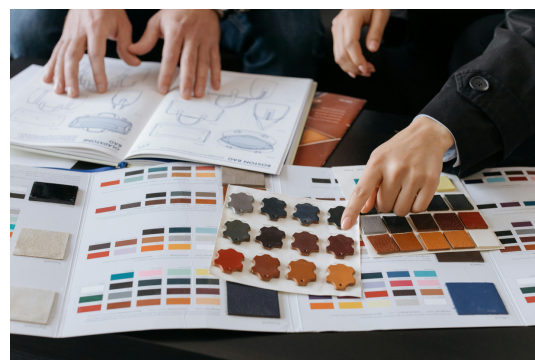
Challenges: Conflicting agendas in management and coordination, costs of operating, large physical space demands.



Materialbiblioteket is a library of material samples, coatings and displays of manufacturing methods. Its purpose is to let visitors touch and experience materials in a way that is difficult to convey through pamphlets or screens. The target groups are professional architects, industrial designers, product developers, scenographers and artists. The library works through pre-booked visits where the personnel answer questions about the materials, including questions on the sustainability of a given material in relation to its uses. The library visit is free of charge and photographs are allowed. The library collaborates with several industry- and business associations.

Materialbiblioteket is located in the municipally owned Stockholm convention center, which is being demolished during the 2020s due to urban development demands. In addition, Materialbiblioteket is unable to cover its own costs, and will therefore be decommissioned in the coming years.

<https://www.materialbiblioteket.se/>





Eco Art Exhibition

Key areas:
Sculpture, painting,
crafts.

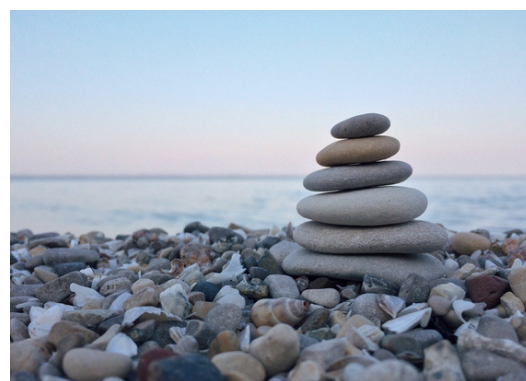
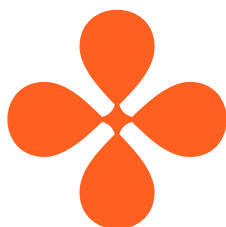
Purpose:
Eliminating waste
material from
exhibitions.

Challenges:
Institutional
inflexibility



A virtual ecological art exhibition showcasing the art installations of students, faculty, and staff of the Visual Arts Department of the Kliment Ohridski University. The artworks include land art, making it a zero waste art installation. Some of the artists were using fully natural materials, while others implemented some upcycled plastic. It addresses the need for nature preservation in Bulgaria, and raising awareness for cutting down on the use of plastic in art and everyday life.

https://fnoi.uni-sofia.bg/artprojects/?page_id=1241



Turba Tol Hol-Hol Tol

Key areas:
Environmental art,
Cultural Heritage

Purpose: shedding light on the
concerns of local communities,
preserving globally significant,
vulnerable areas.

Challenges: Balancing
between making the art
visible, being eco-friendly,
and managing the budget.



Inspired by the eco-cultural work of the nomadic research collective Ensayos, the Turba Tol Hol-Hol Tol project emerged through the collaborative efforts of a diverse team comprising artists, scientists, historians, and researchers.



"Fernanda Molina Olivares, executive director of the Selk'nam organization Hach Saye, waters the experimental peat moss field within Turba Tol Hol-Hol Tol, the Chilean Pavilion at the 2022 Venice Art Biennale", photo by Daniela Aravena (2022).

The initiative not only aims to foster dialogue concerning the conservation of the distinctive Patagonian peatland ecosystem and its Indigenous inhabitants, the Selk'nam, but in and of itself it is a conservation device. Central to the project is the exploration of humanity's carbon footprint resulting from its activities. Safeguarding natural reserves by using moss sourced from an experimental laboratory in Germany instead of from the peatland, the project advances a viable alternative to peat moss extractivism. In alignment with the eco-cultural ethos of the initiative, all aspects of the exhibition, from preparation to installation and operation, were executed using recyclable and natural materials. Other measures include adoption of ecological hosting services for the development of the project's website, the signing of the Venice Agreement, an international accord to protect global peatlands from a local perspective, and the involvement of the local population through participatory art processes such as workshops and laboratories.

<https://turbatol.org/>

ANTARCTIC RESOLUTION

Key areas: Research,
Architecture,
Science, Geopolitics

Purpose: The project catalyses the power of the arts and cultural institutions to make complex concepts accessible and easily comprehensible to the public through the strategic integration of design.

Challenges: Explaining scientific concepts to a broader audience, as well as marketing and disseminating the project.



"Antarctic Resolution," a research led by Giulia Foscari and UNLESS, features a 1000-page publication (Lars Müller Publishers, 2021) which counts contributions from over 200 world-leading experts who came together, for the first time, to construct a high-resolution image of our southernmost continent. Articulated in three main sections – focussing on geopolitics, science, and architecture – the volume presents the findings in the form of authored texts and a rich visual compendium of photographic essays, infographics, cartographies and architectural drawings as well as including the first census of Antarctic architectures.

Since its presentation at the 17th International Architecture Exhibition curated by Hashim Sarkis (La Biennale di Venezia, 2021), the research has been since been presented in academic and cultural institutions as the Thyssen Bornemisza National Museum in Madrid and the John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design at the University of Toronto (amongst others). On occasion of the exhibition in Toronto, and trusting in a process of data democratisation, UNLESS embraced a process of data democratisation to transform the award-winning publication into the "Antarctic Resolution Open Access". Beyond the space of the institution, on occasion of the XLIV Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting, UNLESS also took to the street with the urban campaign "Speak Up for Antarctica Now".

<https://antarctic-resolution.org/>



Copyright: An Antarctic Pixel.
Courtesy of UNLESS © 2020 NASA, Map data © 2020

Wild Crafted Home

Key areas:
Crafting,
woodworking
creative businesses

Purpose: To raise public interest and awareness of sustainability and alternative modes of production, building community resilience.

Challenges: Making learning and upskilling practices easier to access while operating a financially stable business.



Wild Crafted Home is a crafts duo consisting of Raleigh and Oliver Klotzek. They specialise in making and teaching others how to make practical wood- and metal-based objects, with methods ranging from high-tech to foot-powered. They host and lead crafting workshops on basketry, bowl turning, broom & brush making, hook tool forging, shrink pots and spoon carving in several European countries. Their website also contains tutorial videos, lists and explanations of the tools needed, and contacts to other experts.

Wild Crafted Home is a good model of how to distribute knowledge and practical skills in a clear, concise way, as well as helping people interested in wood-crafting connect and build networks between newcomers and professionals in different parts of the world.

<https://wildcraftedhome.com/>





Greek Traditional Woodcarving

Key areas:
Woodcarving,
crafting, cultural
heritage

Purpose: Preserving
traditional
woodcarving
practices

Challenges: High competition by
mass-production companies and
prevailing trends in the field of
furniture.



Greek traditional woodcarving, focusing on the practice of the artists Dimitris Kamaros, Lefteris Avgoklouris and Konstantinos Papadakis, uses local wood, mainly olive and walnut, to create furniture, icons, chests, and other objects with intricate designs. The woodcarvers of Agiasos and Skyros are known for their skill and style, which reflect the influences of Byzantine art and Asia Minor Hellenism. Skyrian furniture is a unique hand-crafted technique that uses wood and leather to create elegant and functional pieces. The furniture often features geometric patterns, animal figures, and floral motifs. Woodcarving is a way of preserving the cultural heritage and identity of these regions, as well as supporting the local economy and community. This practice was almost lost during interwar years, when the last craftsmen were losing space for creating and the ability to make a living through their creations, due to the impoverished state of the country, which declined the interest into furniture of high quality. <https://ecodna.art/woodcarving-traditional-craftsmanship-in-greece/>

Eco Mural

Key areas: Painting,
public art.

Purpose: Raise
awareness on nature
preservation.

Challenges: Lack of
initiative, budgeting,
and human
recourses.



Eco Mural is a large public art piece in Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria.

The project was developed by the joint efforts of the Sustainability Club of the American University in Bulgaria and the Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation, founded by the U.S. Embassy in Bulgaria. The art installation is named "It's Time", and it's meant to serve as a reminder that we are running out of time to act against climate change, and need to act quick. It addresses the local needs on cutting down on littering and the lack of recycling habits in the city. Next, it addresses the national need of Nature Preservation as Bulgaria has a diverse ecosystem including a lot of mountains, national parks, green areas, lakes, rivers, etc. Lastly, it addresses the international need on fighting climate change, since as the mural is on the walls of one of the residence halls of the American University in Bulgaria, it is visible to a lot of international students. <https://today.aubg.edu/news/its-time-new-mural-on-campus-raises-environmental-awareness/>



Photo: Tamar Chanidze, AUBG.

Environmental Art Park

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Key areas: Urban art, educational activities, re-creation, installations

Purpose: Combining artistic practices with a natural space for re-creation and education

Challenges: Mainly lack of funding and engagement of stakeholders



A project by the artist Kostas Ioannidis that aims to create a park in the island of Paros that will host artworks made from natural or recycled materials. The park will also serve as a place for environmental education, research, and recreation. The project is currently in the fundraising stage and the artist is hoping to start construction soon. The initiative that this project aims to implement is unprecedented in Greece. No relevant initiatives have been implemented, aiming to combine artistic practices with a natural space for re-creation and education.

The place will serve as a natural space, where sustainably made artworks will be hosted, and relevant activities for creation and education will be implemented. The Greek urban environments are in need of such innovative spaces. <https://education.christies.com/news/2019/may/what-is-environmental-and-green-art>



Material Matters

Key areas: Artistic projects, making and execution of physical and sustainable art

Purpose: Offering new perspectives, discussing and finding material options, and taking off-site excursions.

Challenges: Covering needs for know-how on curating and executing artistic projects with mainstreaming physical resources.



The Material Matters Lab offers experience and guidance in the conceptualization and physical execution of artistic projects. The lab's wood and metal workshops and expert approach to problem solving make it the perfect workspace for experimentation, conception and materialization of objects, sculptures, installations, film sets, and exhibition scenography. The added value of Material Matters lies in offering new perspectives, discussing and finding material options, and taking off-site excursions.

The lab maintains partner relationships to other institutions, initiatives and studios such as FLACC in Genk (BE) and the ceramics workshop of the Maastricht Academy of Fine Arts & Design amongst others in order to expand its abilities and resources.



This practice address especially the need to transfer further knowledge and know-how in the field of sustainable and physical art making, especially through the provision of knowledge (via workshops and labs) on visualizing and executing artistic projects <https://www.janvaneyck.nl/postacademy/material-matters>

Ashleigh Downey

Key areas: Eco citizen science, design and creativity, community engagement, Action-based research

Purpose: Promoting the use of discarded materials that are found in everyday life, making the most of raw and sustainable materials.

Challenges: promotion and adaption by the general public of the concept of mindful interaction.



Ecological artist Ashleigh's work explores interconnections between humans and the natural environment. She has a particular interest in cross-disciplinary processes, which provides research for sustainable socio-environmental systems. Ashleigh considers concepts of presence and perception as fundamental to the redevelopment of our connectivity with nature, and believes that active participation and action research is key to building strong human-nature interconnections: fundamentally reconnecting humanity to the natural world.

Ashleigh is interested in whole system development and believes in creating an alternative space for dialogue, knowledge share, and peer-to-peer learning. Through action-based research she provides a platform for environmental and social exchange through a combination of art, ecology and mindful meanders. Central to this philosophy is experience-based Learning, as it offers the potential to deepen our connections, develop commitment, and establish lasting behavioural change. <https://www.ashleighdowney.com/>

IMMA OUTDOORS

Key areas: interdisciplinary collaboration, community engagement, environmental advocacy through art, and fostering intergenerational dialogue.

Purpose: integrating art with the environment, promoting awareness, and making art accessible to a wider audience

Challenges: balancing diverse perspectives and expertise, ensuring the accessibility of eco-cultural initiatives, and maintaining sustained engagement



IMMA (the Irish Museum of Modern Art) OUTDOORS is a weekend of eco-related programming showcasing innovators in the field of eco citizen science, design, and creativity, enabling intergenerational dialogue and empowering audiences to become agents of change. By fusing artistic expressions with workshops, discussions, and events, the festival demonstrates how small community-driven initiatives can yield significant impacts. IMMA OUTDOORS seeks to address the need for inclusive and impactful engagement with art and culture in the context of environmental sustainability.

<https://imma.ie/whats-on/open-call-eco-festival/>



Lottozero

Key areas: Textile design

Purpose: Promoting and teaching a variety of sustainable techniques for textile work

Challenges: Traditional Industry Perceptions, Resource Constraints, Cultural Barriers, Financial Sustainability, Balancing Tradition and Innovation, Competition for Talent.



Lottozero, located in Prato, Italy, serves as a hub for textile design, art, and culture with a strong emphasis on sustainability. They offer facilities for textile research, experimentation, and support emerging talents. Additionally, they promote eco-friendly practices, connecting local textile companies with sustainable-minded creatives from around the world to foster a global exchange in the textile sector. Their space is open to everyone, emphasizing inclusivity and a sustainable approach to textile innovation. Prato is known as one of the main textile districts in Europe. Lottozero's presence in Prato contributes to the local economy by fostering collaboration between emerging talents and local textile production companies. Through scouting and targeted residencies, the organization provides opportunities for young artists to explore and experiment with textile production.

<https://www.lottozero.org/>



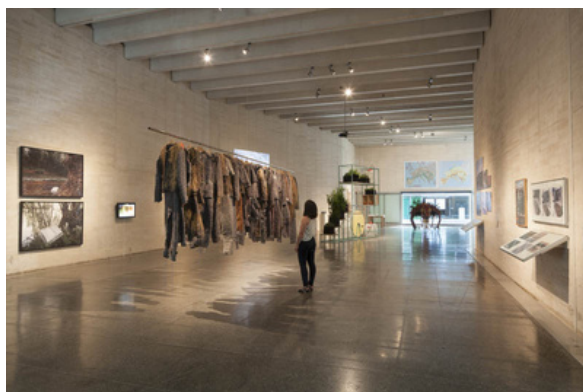
"Hybris" exhibition

Key areas: Curatorial selection methodology, environmental art.

Purpose: Challenging greenwashing, exploring sustainable alternatives for the future and ethically sound consumption methods

Challenges: Communication effectiveness, political Sensitivities, financial Constraints,

"Hybris" exhibition curated by Blanca de la Torre is a 2017-2018 exhibition at the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León, exploring art's role in addressing current ecological issues. With contributions from forty artists, the exhibition delves into political, economic, and social ecology. Artists symbolically engage with nature or seek tangible impacts, contributing to the discourse on ecological balance. Various principles were established, including considerations for proximity in selection, assessing the ecological impact of artwork transportation, employing environmentally friendly materials and processes, recycling exhibition materials and mechanisms, and rejecting the construction of walls.



Exhibition guide:

[https://musac.es/FOTOS/VISITAS_GUIADAS/Gu%C3%ADa%20de%20sala%20HYBRIS%20\(ENG\).pdf](https://musac.es/FOTOS/VISITAS_GUIADAS/Gu%C3%ADa%20de%20sala%20HYBRIS%20(ENG).pdf)

Photo: Courtesy of MUSAC, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León



Cuccù Project

Key areas:
Crafting.

Purpose: Local Cultural
Heritage Preservation
and crafting
sustainability.

Challenges: Limited Access to
Resources, Preservation of Craft
Skills, Balancing Tradition and
Innovation, Market Acceptance,
Cultural Sensitivity and
Collaboration.



The "Cuccù" project promotes sustainability, social inclusion and local heritage. It is part of the Craft Hub project, an initiative co-funded by the Creative Europe Program focusing on craft in the context of cultural heritage and its continued relevance in contemporary practice. The project's activities include the investigation and documentation of craft skills and processes, their diverse application in creative practice in Europe, and issues related to cultural specificity and individual motivations of practitioners. All this will be addressed through a comprehensive and exciting program that will enable the creation of new experimental investigations of processes and materials. Giorgia Garofalo, a local artisan, created a product inspired by the "cuccù" whistle, thanks to access to industrial sewing machines and leather scraps donated during a Materahub residency. Egoltaliano adopted "Cuccù" as a commercial product, emphasizing responsible waste management and social inclusion. Materahub and Made in Carcere collaborated on the final prototype, promoting partnerships and opportunities.

<https://www.crafthub.eu/activity/cuccu/>



Creative Waves project

Key areas: Digitalisation,
intangible cultural heritage,
pandemic recovery,
network building.

Purpose: Alleviating negative
side effects of Covid-19
restrictions in vulnerable
demographics by helping
artists gain digital competence.

Challenges: Tracking the
long-term effects, financial
support, regional political
unrest.



"Creative Waves - Baltic Sisterhood for change" is a project with the goal to build partnerships between women in traditional practices like embroidery, weaving, herb gathering, singing and playing music, to get more confidence, show their achievements and learn about the digital world and tools. Creative Waves implemented good methods of introducing women who would otherwise have little use of the internet to maintaining online presences and making friendly physical and digital spaces with other women. Additionally, the project helps learn about and implement EU key policies like EU Green Deal, European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The pandemic caused many artists, activists and creatives to feel isolated, depressed and at a loss as the result of the COVID-19 restrictions on physical meetings and travels, and the rapid push of the world moving more and more towards digital relations. The effect was particularly severe for demographics like older women, immigrant women and low-income groups with limited access to digital tools.



<https://www.intercult.se/en/creative-waves-toolkit/>

The Green Project

Key areas: Sculpture, public installations, light art

Purpose: Revitalizing neglected areas and fostering social interaction among the residents.

Challenges: Lack of funds and political encouragement to revitalize the Greek urban environments.



A series of installations by the artist group Beforelight that use recycled materials and solar energy to create colorful light sculptures in public spaces. Some of the locations where the Green Project has been implemented are Athens, Thessaloniki, Patras, and Kalamata.

The project aims to revitalize neglected areas and foster social interaction among the residents. Many public areas have been left neglected in Greece, resulting in unhealthy and unattractive images of the public urban environment. This also results into reduced interaction among citizens, affecting social circumstances and relationships, which will be reinvigorated through the project.

<https://artplay.gr/theatro/beforelight-to-elliniko-light-art-story>

Down to Earth: Climate, Art, Discourse Unplugged

Key areas: Curatorial strategy, environmental art, sustainable exhibition

Purpose: The methodology aimed to minimise the carbon footprint by eschewing electricity - a concept termed "art unplugged."

Challenges: Logistical intricacies, budget constraints, limited infrastructure, educating stakeholders, engaging vendors



"Down to Earth", a Berliner Festspiele project hosted at Gropius Bau, Berlin, in 2020, transcended the boundaries of traditional exhibitions by converging artists and sustainability experts. Beyond visual art, the project featured live performances, talks, and workshops, embodying a multidisciplinary approach. With the active participation of over 100 artists, "Down to Earth" evolved into a dynamic discourse rather than a conventional exhibition. The project embraced eco-friendly measures, using natural ventilation over air conditioning and eliminating spotlights, microphones, speakers, and screens.

<https://www.berlinerfestspiele.de/en/programm/archiv/immersion/2020/down-to-earth>



Photo: Jared Gradinger und Angela Schubot
© Berliner Festspiele / Eike Walkenhorst

Julie's Bicycle

Key areas: Carbon Footprint Reduction, Nature Restoration, Public Engagement, Environmental Justice and Fairness.

Purpose: Addressing the global challenges related to climate change, nature conservation, and social justice within the field of arts and culture.

Challenges: Awareness and Engagement, Resource Constraints, Balancing Artistic Expression and Sustainability, Policy and Regulation, Global Collaboration.



In collaboration with cultural and environmental partners, Julie's Bicycle delivers learning programmes, tools, resources and leadership initiatives which respond to the demands of the climate crisis.



Locally, nationally, and internationally, the organization aims to mobilize the arts and culture sector to take action in response to the climate, nature, and justice crisis. This involves encouraging cultural institutions and organizations to become net zero carbon, restore nature, inspire public action on climate and ecology, and champion environmental justice and fairness. Julie's Bicycle collaborates with over 2000 organizations in the UK and internationally to implement high-impact programs and advocate for policy changes, demonstrating a commitment to addressing the pressing environmental and social issues on a broad scale within the arts and culture community.

<https://juliesbicycle.com/>

Ardú Cork

Key areas: Eco citizen science, design and creativity, community engagement, intergenerational dialogue.

Purpose: to establish a sustainable model open to development in years to come with knock-on benefits for arts, tourism, culture and heritage

Challenges: Building it into a common occurrence, fostering community engagement



Ardú - Corks Contemporary Street Art Project has the goal of bringing the community of Cork, Ireland together through art that can be enjoyed by everyone and which can instill a local sense of pride. Comprising of murals on city centre walls by prominent artists living and working in the urban context of Cork, the Ardú Cork initiative aims to maintain public access to the arts, link to heritage, promote cultural tourism and support employment with the arts sector during a challenging time. The initiative may culminate in an online Artists' Talk with those involved and other supporting programming elements. Ardú is supported by the Cork City Council and the Creative Ireland Jobs Stimulus Package, an all-of-government five-year initiative, from 2017 to 2022.

<http://arducork.ie/about/>





Talamh Land Art festival

Key areas: Eco citizen science, design and creativity, community engagement

Purpose: Ongoing initiative to foster greater regional environmental awareness.

Challenges: Securing ongoing support, fostering long-term behavioural change toward environmental stewardship.



The TALAMH festival takes place in the Southeast of Ireland on the Copper Coast. It is facilitated by The Art Hand and Viking Promotions. There are few annual events around the world that specifically showcase environmental art, which makes Talamh well positioned to be a key component on the international stage.

Talamh aims to create land art that showcases the beauty of The Copper Coast, but also to show how the process of making land art can inspire creativity, wellness and environmental awareness. It seeks to give members of the public opportunities to meet the artists and participate in art making, public gatherings, talks and a film night.

<http://www.talamh.org/>

Theatre Green Book

Key areas: Theatre - Performance Art

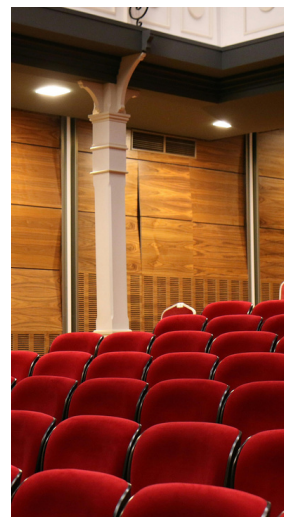
Purpose: Setting common sustainability standards within the field of performance art.

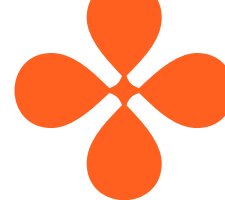
Challenges: Awareness and Adoption, Resource Constraints, Industry Tradition and Practices, Education and Training, Regulatory and Policy Environment, Collaboration and Networking.

The Green Book is an initiative by the whole of theatre – working with sustainability experts Buro Happold – to work more sustainably. In three volumes it sets standards for making productions sustainably, for making theatre buildings sustainable, and for improving operations like catering and front of house. The Theatre Green Book addresses the urgent need for sustainability in the field of art and culture, particularly in the context of the climate crisis. It recognizes that the theatre industry, like many other sectors, contributes to environmental issues. The Theatre Green Book seeks to transform the theatre sector into a more environmentally responsible and sustainable industry.

If theatre is to remain relevant and engaged in the most critical discussions facing humanity, it must adapt its practices to align with ecological and sustainable principles. The Theatre Green Book, therefore, serves as a common standard and a free resource for the UK theatre sector to promote and implement sustainable practices across various facets of its operations.

<https://theatregreenbook.com/>





5. NEXT STEP

Sustainable Art Curriculum

This Handbook forms the basis for a greater Curriculum of Sustainable Art Practices. This curriculum will consist of 100 pages and contain 20 modules written in English, covering both practical and theoretical aspects of sustainability in art. The curriculum will cover a diverse range of artistic fields, focusing on visual arts, sculpting, crafts, scene and stage production and art exhibitions. The curriculum will include innovative techniques for energy efficiency, techniques for sustainable creations, methodologies and a catalogue of sustainable materials. The Curriculum will be developed during the spring of 2024.

Curriculum objectives

- To promote awareness and understanding of sustainability issues through artistic expression.
- To encourage the use of eco-friendly materials and techniques in art-making.
- To promote collaboration and community engagement.
- To develop critical thinking skills.

Curriculum development

1

Brainstorming session and Art Roundtables

- During 2 brainstorming sessions, the E-ART coordination group will review the contents of the Handbook and propose a structure for the Curriculum.
- Each partner conducts 2 roundtables with local stakeholders and experts for external feedback on the local needs. The experts advice on the structure and content of the Curriculum.

2

Elaboration of the Curriculum modules

- Coordinated by Intercult, each partner member will elaborate on 3-4 Curriculum modules with the support of experts. These experts will have experience in teaching art, and be active in the field of the visual arts, conceptualize art, installation art, or craft art.

3

Finalisation of the Curriculum

- Intercult will be responsible for the proofreading and the final version of the Curriculum.
- The Curriculum will be hosted on the E-ART digital platform.

4

Sum-up of the curriculum

- Each partner will create a sum up of their modules.
- CUBE will then create the **Sum up Sustain Art Handbook** of 30 pages.



6. CONCLUSIONS

Here follows a review of the highlights from the desk research and selected examples, to keep at the forefront during the E-ART activities of 2024 and 2025.

Key artistic areas

- Public art, street art and art festivals.
- Art labs, hubs, cooperatives and networks.
- Material repositories and libraries.
- Independent artists and artist businesses.

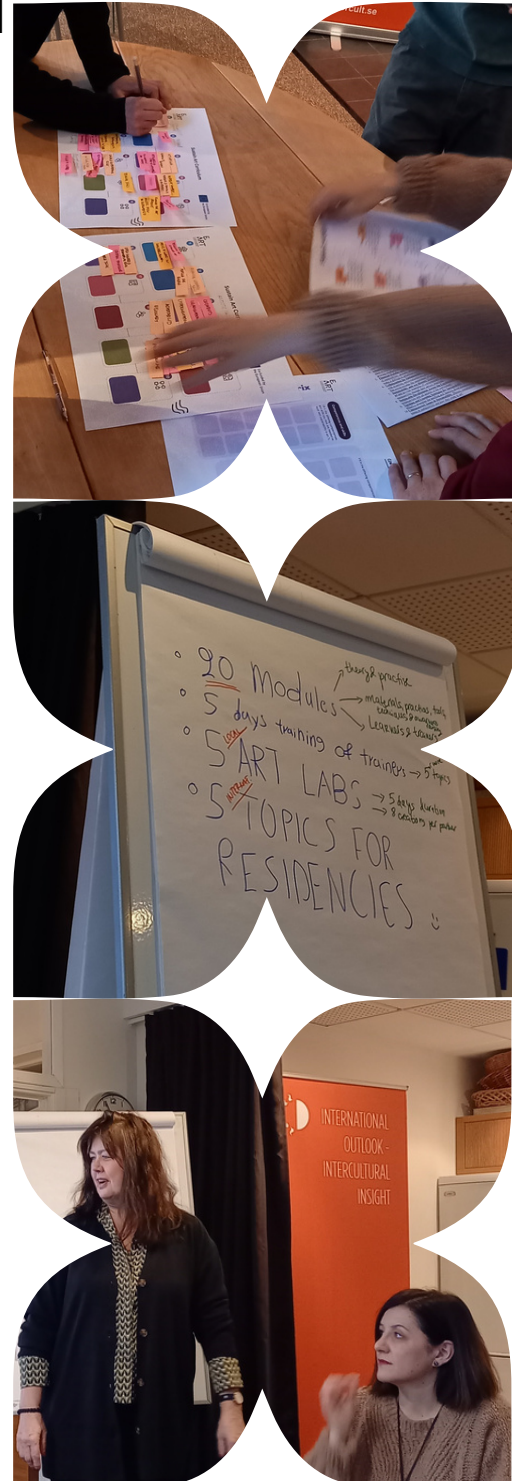
Key innovations

- New eco-friendly materials, material use and re-using methods.
- Local and international collaborations for addressing environmental problems at different levels.
- Methods for easier access to information and implementation of sustainable practices.

Main challenges

- Difficulty in funding and achieving economic viability.
- Lack of institutional support and public interest in long-term viability.
- A need for greater understanding about being eco-friendly in the artistic community.

Arts and culture have unique possibilities to influence the hearts and minds of people in ways that may be difficult to achieve through conventional means. We are determined to help re-skill and uplift all artists in the EU to work within a sustainability framework.



7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The members of the E-ART coordination group are working tirelessly and with great commitment on the project. Below you will find the main contributors to the Handbook.

Intercult

Hanna Granlund (research, writing, coordination)

CUBE AMKE

Elena Kopanarova (research, coordination, Handbook structure), Kiriaki Touska (research)

Consorzio Materahub

Giulia Fornari, Becky Riches (research, visual identity)

Oecon Group Bulgaria

Bojana Petrova, Lily Boyadzheva (research)

Espronceda - Lemongrass Communications

Alessia Gervasone, Liza Adamchuk (research)

I & F Education

Paula Pain Alba, Joe Cabello (research)

Contact

Intercult Economic Productions

Nytorgsgatan 15A, 116 22

Stockholm

+468 644 10 23

<https://www.intercult.se/en/>

homepage/

info@intercult.se

Visit the E-ART
digital platform!



We thank you for your
continued support. Together,
we are one step closer to
sustainability in European art

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