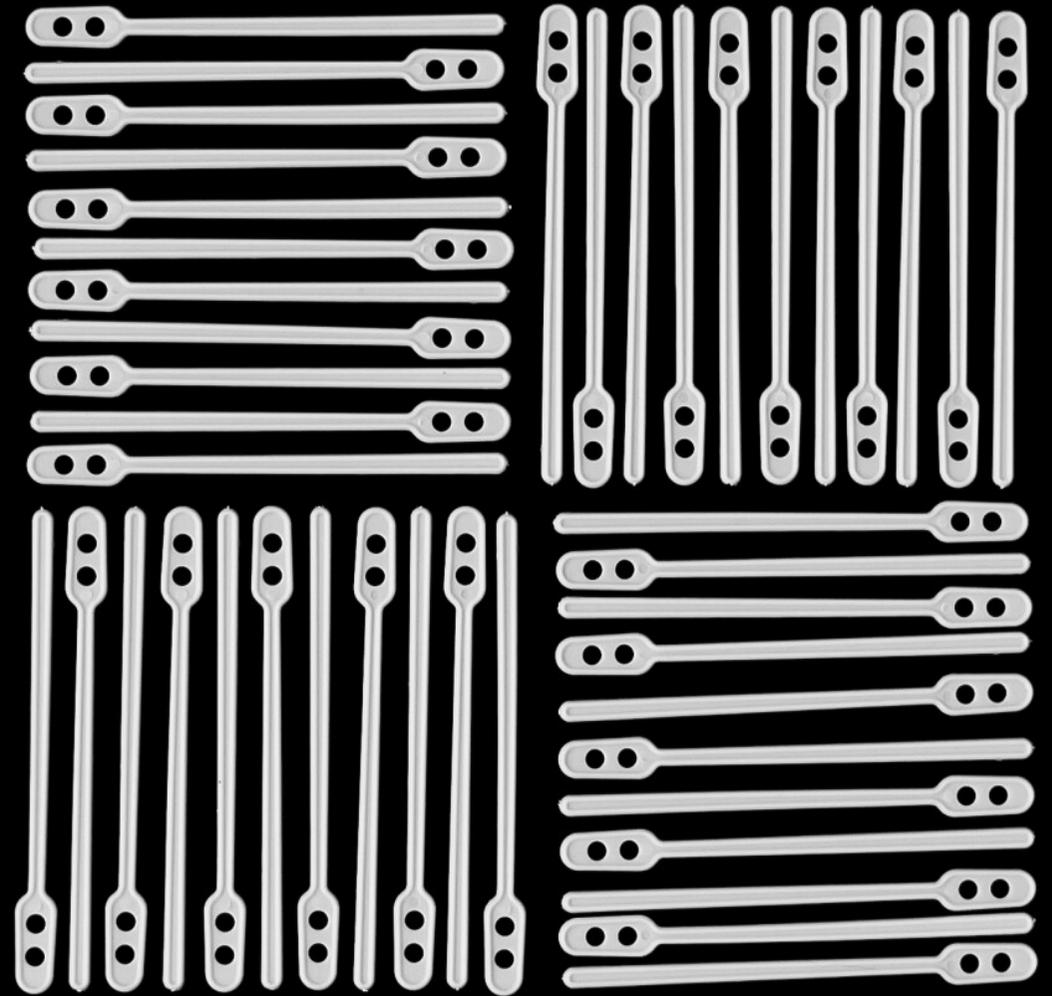


*TOWARDS
SUSTAINABLE
ARTS*

EUROPEAN BEST
PRACTICES AND POLICIES



Boekman Foundation
Institute for arts, culture
and related policy

TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE ARTS

EUROPEAN BEST PRACTICES AND POLICIES

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Edited by Jan Jaap Knol, Janina Pigaht and Bjorn Schrijen



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*‘What can I tell my son
to help him sleep?’*

From: ‘Unripe’ by Jemma Borg / In: *Out of time. Poetry from the climate emergency*

INTRODUCTION

*Authors: Jan Jaap Knol, Janina Pigaht
and Bjorn Schrijen*

Sculpture garden *Een Zee van Staal* ('A sea of steel') / Photo by Lisa Maatjens



INTRODUCTION

In the collection of poems titled *Out of time. Poetry from the climate emergency* (Kate Simpson ed.), the poem *Unripe* by Jemma Borg opens with the line: “*What can I tell my son to help him sleep?*” The sentence not only conveys the urgency of our climate crises, but also asks how we relate to one another and what stories we tell. Arts and culture play a major part in relaying stories on the climate emergency to the general public. But no story is better told than by the environment itself. In 2021, forest fires, drought and floods communicated one clear and resounding message: the future is now!

Arts and culture have always been a mirror of their time and their current reflection is both grim and hopeful. Globally, more and more artists and cultural organisations are engaging with the climate crisis, their works shifting between the fear of living on a planet on the brink of extinction and the faith that we can still halt global warming with creative new ideas and solutions. And while the number of books, films, video games, songs and other works of art engaging with the climate crisis grows, so too does the awareness that arts and culture can play an important role in the

transformation towards a more sustainable society. A recent study by Julie’s Bicycle shows that around the world “there is an emerging consensus among government ministries and national arts bodies that culture policy must be linked to environment policy”.¹ Initiatives like the “New European Bauhaus” and “A Cultural Deal for Europe” highlight the role culture can play in designing a greener future.

This role is manifold. By reducing its own ecological footprint, the cultural sector can set an inspiring example for the millions of people it reaches every year. Art can turn climate change from something abstract and far away into something tangible and close by. The creativity and innovation of artists are essential for the change and new ideas we need to design more sustainable ways of living.

In 2019, the Boekman Foundation investigated to what extent and in what ways the Dutch cultural sector is involved in the climate crisis. The results confirmed that motivation to engage with sustainability is generally high among artists and organisations, but also showed a need for knowledge, inspiration and policy. While

many organisations want to reduce their ecological footprint and (local) government bodies would like to help in this process, it can be difficult deciding where to start. We decided to follow-up this research by looking across borders and approaching these themes from an international perspective. We approached researchers and knowledge centres in the Czech Republic, Finland, Flanders, Germany, the Netherlands, Scotland and Spain, in order to gain insight into the state of affairs in policy, practice and research when it comes to the interaction between arts, culture and environmental sustainability. It also enables us to learn from one another in a European context, see similarities in approaches and differences in policy making. What role can and should arts and culture play when it comes to generating awareness and a sense of urgency? What cultural policies are in place or needed to make this happen? Where do responsibilities lie?

What is clear from all the contributions is that culture plays an important role in making an impact in relation to societal sustainability. The urgency to politically anchor and address

¹ Julie’s Bicycle. (2021). *Culture: the missing link to climate action*. Julie’s Bicycle. <https://juliesbicycle.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Climate-Connection-Report.pdf>

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sustainable development within countries varies. Understanding the cultural dimension of sustainability, however, is relatively new for all and the authors emphasise the need for policies that support much needed change.

In Flanders, for instance, “artists, volunteers and management [are] making major steps towards a more sustainable arts practice”. Networks like Pulse and Greentrack Gent connect “some one thousand individuals and organisations that are working on a socially just and sustainable society in the areas of the arts, cultural heritage, socio-cultural adult work, youth work and the media”. However, sustainability is largely missing in cultural policy, and funding is often uncertain or temporary.

In the Czech Republic, social, environmental and economic pillars of society are seen as interlinked: “neither of them can be given priority to the detriment of the others”.

In Finland this awareness is echoed, where sustainability has been the focus of several government programmes for many years. Still, culture is not mentioned in relation to sustainability or sustainable

development in the major policy documents. This necessary shift towards recognising culture as an important pillar in environmental policymaking is more often seen at a local rather than a national level.

As is the case for Catalonia, where for several years, an environmental label has been allocated by the regional government, through the ministry in charge of environmental sustainability, to performing arts and music venues, visual arts galleries, cultural centres, libraries and museums which fulfil minimum environmental standards. The authors give examples of initiatives such as “Cornellà Natura” where cities are integrating cultural elements in strategies towards urban “rewilding”. Or the “BiblioLab” programme of the Provincial Council of Barcelona where libraries and community centres are engaging in citizen science projects which connect creativity and explorations of environmental sustainability.

All the authors that contributed towards this publication emphasise the importance of research, collaboration and knowledge exchange when it comes to informing policies on culture and sustainability. Networks like the Spanish *El Cubo Verde* (“The Green Cube”) for

instance, gathers art spaces, residencies and projects linked to the rural environment.² By fostering encounters between artists and cultural managers, it brings to the forefront current challenges related to sustainability, the climate emergency and our rural environment. The network also emphasises the need for artistic mediation as a key element in developing cultural policies.

In the Netherlands, collaboration and knowledge exchange between cultural organisations in bottom-up initiatives like “Green Film Making”, “Haarlem Plastic Vrij”, “Green Stages” and “Duurzame Plantage” have led to promising results over the past few years. An inspiring example here is the exchange between the botanical garden *Hortus Botanicus* and the Hermitage Museum in Amsterdam. The *Hortus* uses excess heat from the Hermitage to warm its greenhouses, while the Hermitage uses excess cold from the *Hortus* to cool its halls – saving them both gas and electricity.

In Scotland, this work is led by Creative Carbon Scotland (CCS), a charity formed in 2011. Through their efforts, they have forged collaborations and brought policymakers on board to actively participate in climate change conversations. Following

2 El Cubo Verde / The Green Cube: <https://www.elcuboverde.org>.

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Scotland's declaration of a climate emergency in 2019 and setting net-zero targets, CCS was recently engaged by central funding body Creative Scotland to develop a Climate Emergency and Sustainability Plan for the cultural sector. The City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) recently joined Creative Scotland in requiring the cultural organisations it supports to report, manage and reduce their carbon emissions. The article from Scotland ends with the encouraging conclusion that “cultural and climate policy may soon be becoming much more closely aligned”.

With contributions from the Czech Republic, Finland, Flanders, Germany, the Netherlands, Scotland and Spain, this publication shows the vibrant and essential impact of the arts and culture sector on environmental change. It is important to recognise the responsibility that lies not only with general climate policy, but cultural policy, cultural institutions and interdisciplinary work. All should play a much desired part in an interconnected supportive policy framework. There is an important role that research institutes can play in collecting data and translating this knowledge into better policies and bigger ideas. We will continue to explore this transversal subject and look forward to

expanding collaboration with partners in Europe in the future.

We would like to express our deepest thanks and appreciation to all the authors for their work and contribution: Pavla Petrová, Maria Hirvi-Ijäs, Anna Kanerva, Marjo Mäenpää, Nikol Wellens, Marje Brütt, Sofie Krop, Mareile Zuber, Ben Twist, Katherine Denney, Jordi Baltà Portolés and Herman Bashiron Mendolicchio.

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Culture at a crossroads

Author: Pavla Petrová

PQ 2019 for Plaza Records / Photo by Jan Hromádko



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The general public in the Czech Republic have been supporting the protection of nature and the environment since the 1970s with the emergence of civic activities in this area as the Hnutí Brontosaurus.³

This can be illustrated on the basis of the last complex survey performed by Masaryk University in 2018. Out of all media topics, people in the Czech Republic are most interested in nature (80%) and the environment (68%). The Czechs are somewhat detached from involvement in nature and environmental protection. Most of them separate waste (91% of them say they separate waste often or always), prefer tap water to buying bottled water (79%) or say they reduce the consumption of water (81%) and energy (77%). They are less likely to reduce travelling by car (56%) or buying ecologically friendly products (30%) (Krajhanzl et al., 2018).

Sustainable development is based on the understanding that social, environmental and economic pillars of society are closely connected and neither of them can be given priority to the detriment of the others. It is historically based on the need to protect

nature and the environment better, yet it also applies to good and efficient government and public administration nowadays.

In 2015, the United Nations adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals that followed the Millennium Development Goals focused on issues of the developing countries (United Nations, 2015). The Czech response to the adoption of the global development agenda is the *Strategic Framework Czech Republic 2030*, which was adopted by the Czech government in 2017 (Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic, 2017b). The strategic document replaced the previous Strategic Framework for Sustainable Development issued in 2010. The Strategy is a key document of public administration for sustainable development and improvement of the quality of life. The fulfilment is assigned to individual ministries. Apart from the three traditional development pillars (social, environmental and economic), the key areas also feature life in regions and municipalities, Czech contribution to the development at the global level, and good governance.

The Strategy is further discussed in the Implementation Plan issued in 2018,

which should ensure the interconnection with other strategic and concept materials and present the set of measures and recommendations used to implement the vision practically (Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic, 2018). Culture in this document is seen as “a crucial part of national identity, whose key part is social cohesion and sustainable development” (Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic, 2017a).

The prime body that supervises sustainable development is the Czech Government Council for Sustainable Development that was established as early as 2003 (Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic, 2021d). It includes representatives of the ministries, the Office of the Government, Parliament of the Czech Republic, social partners and non-governmental non-profit organisations, and universities. The Council currently consists of 39 members. Its main goals are to find agreement on long-term priorities and assess key trends in sustainable development at national and global levels. The Council also guarantees the making of key strategic

3 The establishment of Hnutí Brontosaurus dates back to 1974, which was announced the World Environment Year at the UN conference in Stockholm. The first conference of Hnutí Brontosaurus was organised after the Velvet Revolution and the first independent organisation was established. Hnutí Brontosaurus is the oldest continuously operating ecological organisation in the Czech Republic. See also: <https://brontosaurus.cz/english/>.

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documents concerning sustainable development for the Czech Republic.

The Council also aims at popularising and communicating sustainable development. Thus, the *Sustainable Development Forum* (Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic, 2021c) and *European Sustainable Development Week in the Czech Republic* (Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic, 2021b) are organised yearly. Council initiatives also include *voluntary commitments* (Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic, 2021a). Companies, non-profit organisations and individuals can register online and share their commitment to sustainable development. Using data and indications linked to it, it can be monitored how successful it is (Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic, 2021a). The important step in legislation that has impacted public culture was the adoption of the Act. No. 134/2016 Coll., on Public Procurement, as amended. According to the amendment dated 1 January 2021, “the contracting authority shall keep the principles of socially responsible contracting, environmentally responsible contracting and innovations” (The Act No. 134/2016, Coll., 2020).

Emphasising responsibility or sustainability, in public purchases has been heard across cultural organisations in public administration. The adoption of new legislation has supported the effort. Some ministries even call for responsible public tenders, such as the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, which regularly publishes methodological recommendations and examples of good practice in public tenders.

SITUATION UNTIL 2019

Since the Velvet Revolution in 1989, the cultural environment in the Czech Republic has been rather underfunded. Cultural actors have learned to work economically under restricted conditions, and they have tended to search for economical solutions themselves rather than being pushed to do so due to a public strategy. This is also associated with events after 2000, when the topics of artistic projects began to cover ecology. Yet the main topic of the project at that time is cost efficiency. The philosophy of sustainability and environmental protection works rather as an accompanying element, which emerges naturally.

After 2000, ecological sustainability as an artistic topic could be seen in the repertoire of several theatres, for instance in

about 2007, the artistic productions of the A.I.D.S. Company that associated amateur actors, scientists and ecological enthusiasts. The Comedy Theatre in Prague presented the theatre performance *Ecological Fairy Tale* in 2009. The other productions include *Chupacabra* by Masopust Theatre in 2013, *Blackout* at the South Bohemian Theatre in 2014 and *Smetišťák Tom* by the SemTamFór Company (2015).

The interest in ecology and sustainable development is visible in various site-specific events, such as *Kladno+-záporno* (the journey among lit and audible objects in the disappearing industrial zone in the city Kladno, mamapapa association, 2005 and 2009), *Kultivar* (international performance organised by the Dutch company Silo for the National Museum of Agriculture and its neighbourhood in Prague, 2007), [Offcity](#) (artistic, sociological and community plan that works with the topic of the city of Pardubice as a structure and live organism, companies Offcity and Terra Madoda, since 2008) and projects at the [International festival 4 + 4 Days in Motion](#).

The onset of the new millennium also saw “centres for sustainable creativity” in the countryside, such as [ArtMill](#) in Horažďovice, Theatre Continuo’s [Plum Yard](#), and [Krávín Rural Arts](#). All these projects have been

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somehow engaged in the principle of sustainability and responsibility towards the environment.

Czech culture also features the phenomenon of temporary “pop-up” theatres or architectonic “recycling” of decaying factories, the revival of brownfields, and recycling the means of transport, such as the artistic project of the veteran [Mystery Boat by the Forman Brothers](#) for ECOC Prague 2000 or *Cultural Bus* by visual artist and performer Petr Nikl (Martinová, 2015).

The literature documents examples of temporary theatre architecture, such as simple prefabricated theatres that were part of the *Bouda* project of the National Theatre in Prague in 2003, 2004, 2006, 2007 and 2018. Another example may be the cooperation of the [Mjölkk](#) architect Daniel Baudis and the [Street for Art](#) festival. In 2003, there were negotiations about a simple adaptation of an army tent for the Vosto5 Theatre called *Theatre Stand'art*. In 2011, Mjölkk created *Ideal Zone* for Street for Art, revitalisation of the abandoned spaces close to the metro station and then *Snail Theatre* in 2012 (Poláček & Pokorný, 2014).

A good example of the economical approach to the environment is the [National](#)

[Theatre in Prague](#) NT, the biggest state-supported organisation. In 2006, it tendered [ENESA](#) company which prepared a project with economic measures and use of renewable sources of energy and provided the funding. NT also used the EPC (Energy Performance Contracting) method, when ENESA guaranteed minimum savings and reimbursement of the potential difference (Rýgrová, 2009). One of the measures NT has performed is the reconstruction of the central furnace room and the installation of the photovoltaic power plant (one of the biggest ones in Prague) on the roof of the Operations Building and the New Stage of the NT. The new system of energy included more economical use of energy, heat and water (the stage hydraulic device was cooled by drinking water, which was substituted by service water, and the heat is now used to heat water for the showers) (Rýgrová, 2009). NT also prepared an energetic proposal for interior lights that won the [E.On Energy Globe Award](#) 2010.

The above examples illustrate there were numerous individual activities, more or less fragmented and not steered by any policy.

THE GROUND-BREAKING 2019

The last year before the onset of the pandemic crisis was full of frantic changes associated with sustainability. The worldwide movement, which was framed by Greta Thundberg’s activities and her speech at the UN,⁴ had an essential impact on the boom of activities of the Czech artistic sector.

The crucial impulse for the cultural sector was the declaration issued in early 2019 by the [Arts for Climate](#) platform called *Manifesto of Prague Cultural Institutions Concerning the Announcement of the Climatic Emergency in Prague* and signed by 80 cultural organisations in Prague (Arts for Climate, 2019). There was a parallel initiative in Brno, the second biggest city in the Czech Republic, where 48 cultural organisations signed the manifesto (Centre of Experimental Theatre, 2019).

The music sector has examples of festivals that were interested in the topic before 2019. One of them is the [International Music Festival Rock for People](#), which monitors the trends in sustainability at festivals and was the first Czech festival to introduce the sorting line or returnable cups (Svorová, 2021). There is the initiative [Clean](#)

4 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZMUANJ8_W7c

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[Festival](#) that was founded in 2008 and there are currently 29 Czech music festivals involved, such as Colours of Ostrava, Mighty Sounds, Metronome Prague or Rock for People, where more than 200,000 people separate waste (Samosebou.cz, 2021).

In 2019, many cultural organisations that had been waiting mobilised and registered for keeping sustainable rules or focused on this topic in their arts programme. This is the case of [Ji.Hlava International Documentary Film Festival 2019](#) which had one topic: ecology. It meant an appreciation of public transport for the audience, zero disposable plastic and spreading information about ecology through an “ecological ombudsman” and inspiration forum (Kopáčová, 2019).

This also applies to the international design showcase [Designblok](#). The 21st edition was called *The Future* and presented the installations of 348 designers, fashion designers, producers and schools. The motives of the discussions were questions *whether design can contribute to the solution of the climate crisis or set the barrier for consumerism* (Profil Media, 2019).

The state-supported Arts and Theatre Institute [ATI](#) along with the Centre for Architecture and Metropolitan Planning [CAMP](#) organised the seminar *Culture of*

Mobility in the Time of Climate Change, 25 April 2019, on the occasion of the plenary meeting of the On the Move network in Prague. The participants asked questions, such as *What Is the Impact of the International Cooperation in Culture on the Environment?* (ATI, 2019b). The ATI also approached other cultural organisations to call for the support of student events in the Czech Republic that were part of Fridays for Future and Extinction Rebellion in autumn 2019. The first of them was the strike on 20 September 2019 with many participants and speakers from the cultural sector such as the National Theatre in Prague, Olomouc Museum of Art, National Film Archive and public art universities (Fridays for Future the Czech Republic, 2019).

The joint meeting of cultural organisations also presented the existing examples of good practice in Czech cultural organisations. Experience of present cultural institutions included upcycling of material after big exhibitions, community swap events, merchandise responding to the sustainable policy, zero-waste and vegan caterings, minimisation of food waste or print, sustainable touring in the sector of performing arts, a solution for digital smog in the film industry and links to organisations like [Save Food](#).

In the same year, the criteria of sustainability in the call for grants were presented for the first time. The applicant under the ATI programme to support mobility [Go and See](#) for journeys between 100 and 700 km must use a train or bus (ATI, 2021). The new criterion was initiated by the state-funded organisation of ATI. The rule was adopted as an inspiration of the European Cultural Foundation mobility programme.

In autumn 2019, a conference was organised by the biggest international exhibition of performance design and space [Prague Quadrennial](#) called [Ecological Sustainability High and Low](#), which reflected the general excitement for sustainability in culture. It focused on possibilities and limits of responsibility towards the environment when organising international festivals. Apart from the Prague Quadrennial (ATI, 2019a), there were representatives of other festivals, such as [Signal festival](#), 4+4 Days in Motion, or [Circular Economy Institute](#) or [Augean Stables Company](#), which deals with cleaning and green recycling at big cultural events (Prague Quadrennial, 2019). This conference, with three blocks, opened the (self) critical discussion about the role of art at a time of the ecological crisis. It proved that organising an eco-friendly event is

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simpler for bigger cultural events. Participants also spoke about the broader strategic engagement of municipalities. Prague 7, for instance, introduced a ban on disposable cups at events supported by municipal grants (Konrádová, 2020).

The [Jindřich Chalupecký Award](#) of 2019 is noteworthy. The annual award for outstanding artistic production in visual arts (Jindřich Chalupecký Society, 2021) was supposed to be exhibited along with works by all the laureates in the Moravian Gallery in Brno. One of the artists, Marie Lukáčová, asked whether her installation could be powered by alternative sources of energy. The organisers eventually decided to apply the idea for the whole exhibition. The [FitCraft Energy Company](#), which deals with the production and development of battery modules with a large capacity to accumulate electric energy, provided the gallery with everything free of charge (Creative Czechia, 2019).

The evaluation of the exhibition took place in January 2020 and focused on *how cultural institutions can change their activities to remain sustainable in the long run as well as to initiate changes in society*. It was the first exhibition project in the Czech Republic, which employed renewable sources, thus it was an experiment or test. Four fully charged

batteries could provide energy for the exhibition for five days with no additional charging. However, no energy was left for heating, so the exhibition was monitored by cameras with no custodians in the winter months (Jindřich Chalupecký Society, 2020a and 2020b).

PANDEMIC AND SUSTAINABILITY

The start of the pandemic in 2020 steered the cultural arena into rescue and survival mode. Yet the topic of sustainability has remained and even grown stronger. Cultural events and festivals that could take place between lockdowns took environmental considerations into account. For instance, one of the largest events for the general public coordinated by ATI, [Theatre Night](#), focused on sustainability in 2020. Participating theatres were to focus on climate change, sustainability or overproduction. The event also featured the [webinar *How to be sustainable in the theatre and not go crazy*](#), which focused on the topic of what cultural organisations can do for themselves in the field of ecology and sustainability.

The project continued in 2021 with the series of online educational webinars *Green Thursdays* focused on examples of good

sustainability practice in theatre operations (ATI, 2020b).

In 2020, the conference [Culture in New Reality](#) took place and welcomed sociologists, philosophers, cultural professionals and artists, who asked questions like *what will the role of art and culture be in a world that has been undertaking such a dynamic transformation?* (ATI, 2020a).

Other cultural events continue to take place in 2020 and 2021 and they try to bring up new content and production topics for sustainability (Signal Festival, 2020a, 2020b and 2021; Studio Hrdinů, 2020).

One of the last noticeable examples of cultural engagement is the notice of the [Czech Chamber of Architects](#) related to the October election to the Chamber of Deputies. The Chamber wants to draw attention to the importance of the quality of the environment in which we live and the importance of sustainable development. It brings cardinal topics that are important for the responsible state administration with the appeal to the parties and groups to include them in their political programmes and documents of the new Czech government (CCA, 2021).

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WHAT NEXT?

The above examples show that the cultural and creative sector has been sensitive about the enforcement of sustainable solutions in cultural operations and activities, including international mobility. What is still missing in the Czech Republic is the insufficiently proactive and motivational support of the state. However, the Ministry of Culture mentions the importance of sustainable culture in its new State Cultural Policy. We just need to find and support suitable and sustainable mechanisms for the further operation of Czech culture agreed by the public administration and cultural sector. It is important to unite the now fragmented projects and initiatives in the art practice. The discussion across the cultural spectrum needs to find agreement on financial and legislative measures at the level of public administration, including the adjustment of criteria in competitive grant schemes.

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Towards sustainable arts in Finland

International best practices
and policies

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Mustarinda House / Photo by Tiina Arjukka Hirvonen



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In the international comparison of the 2021 SDG Index, Finland tops the list. Despite this, among the 17 sustainable development goals, two goals concerning overconsumption (nos. 12 and 13) are identified to be major challenges in Finland, while significant challenges are found in four goals, two of which concern ecological sustainability (nos. 2, 14, 15 and 17).⁵

Awareness of this acute situation has been visible in high-level policy documents in Finland for many years. Sustainability has been the focus of several government programmes. There is an active working group led by the Prime Minister with a panel of experts, and all actors in the official networks are encouraged to make a commitment to sustainable ways of operation.

Still, it seems that the cultural dimensions of sustainability are yet to be identified in Finland. Culture is not mentioned in relation to sustainability or sustainable development in any of the major policy documents. In the cultural field, many actors have reacted to the SDG goals on both a strategic level and by recognising their own role in this critical situation. However, the

question of how to transform the ambitions and intentions into concrete actions remains.

This article consists of three sections. In the first section, we examine the policies aimed specially at the cultural sector from a sustainability angle. The second section takes a closer look at two Finnish cities, Espoo and Oulu, to see how the sustainability goals are met within the local cultural sector and governance. The last section examines three cases where cultural organisations are aiming to shift from just decreasing their carbon footprints to actively increasing a green handprint.

In conclusion, we discuss the possibilities of actors in the Finnish cultural sector to push society to see sustainability as not only an idea of transition to a more ecological lifestyle, but to work for a deep and actual transformation of our common values.

SUSTAINABILITY IN CULTURAL POLICY

The current Prime Minister Sanna Marin's (2019) Government Programme called *An inclusive and competent Finland* sets the agenda for the Finnish government and

guides the activities of its different administrative sectors. The objective of the programme is to make Finland a society based on socially, economically and ecologically sustainable development by 2030. According to the Government Programme, Finland assumes global responsibility and works actively as a pioneer in achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda. Cultural sustainability or sustainability from the viewpoint of arts and culture or cultural policy is not once mentioned in the programme (Finnish Government, 2019).

The ministerial Strategy 2030 (published in 2019) by the administrative branch of the Ministry of Education and Culture, promises to strengthen its international impact and global responsibility and commit to sustainable development (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2019). The ministry has made its own commitment under the framework of Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development, meaning that it has promised to take into consideration the goals and principles of sustainable development in its operations and when steering and financing the agencies and institutes operating under it. According to the ministry, it also encourages actors in its

5 No. 12 Responsible Consumption and Production, no. 13 Climate Action, no. 2 Zero Hunger, no. 14 Life Below Water, no. 15 Life on Land and no. 17 Partnership for the Goals.

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administrative branch to actively promote and implement Sustainable Development Goals or SDGs (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2020).

In 2020, the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture published a sustainable development policy for the ministry and its administrative branch. The report was drafted by a working group set up by the ministry in 2017 to promote the SDGs and their implementation. In the strategy, the ministry states as its special responsibility the promotion of goals related to *social sustainability*. However, the strategy does point out that the goals of ecological, economic, social and cultural sustainability as a whole support and complement one another, and measures taken in the administrative branch can promote a cultural change, which is seen as a requirement for a change towards comprehensive sustainable development. Creativity, arts and culture are seen strengthening the foundation of sustainable development. According to the strategy, promoting participation and access to arts and culture as the basis for social cohesion, is a prerequisite for building sustainability (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2020).

The national strategy for cultural policy 2025 (drafted in 2017) names

improving the conditions for creative work and production, increased inclusion and participation in arts and culture and strong cultural basis and continuity as the objectives of Finnish cultural policy. Sustainability is only visible in the strategy in the description of the operational environment. The same is also the case for most current sector-specific policies and programmes in the field of arts and culture. According to the cultural policy strategy, there will be more demands for ecologically, economically, socially and culturally sustainable development in the future, and when sustainable development becomes the guiding principle also in the cultural sector, the way in which the sector functions and is organised can be substantially overhauled (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2017). In the sustainable development strategy noted above, the Ministry of Education and Culture acknowledges that the strategic basis for promoting activities in line with sustainability needs to be strengthened in its own work and in its administrative branch (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2020).

At a local level, the Municipal Cultural Activities Act (166/2019) sets the legislative basis for the statutory service arranging responsibility of Finnish municipalities, including ensuring the

availability and promotion of general cultural activities. The basis of the legislation is to ensure equal access to cultural services. The law was revised in 2019 to better support the prerequisites for municipal cultural activities, citizen democracy and cultural rights in a changing operational environment. In the revised law, sustainable development is named as one of the starting points for reaching its objectives. How it is implemented in the municipal framework varies significantly.

LOCAL POLICIES OF SUSTAINABILITY IN CULTURE – OULU2026 CULTURAL CLIMATE CHANGE

Oulu is one of the six most populous cities in Finland. The city of over 200,000 inhabitants is called the Capital of Northern Finland. Oulu will be the European Capital of Culture in 2026. The Oulu2026 - programme leans on the theme of Cultural Climate Change. The concept – according to the bid book – “Cultural Climate Change is about reconnecting with the world around us and creating new sense of togetherness” (Rantala-Korhonen et al., 2021, 4). By the Cultural Climate Change theme Oulu2026 seems to invest in social sustainability by emphasising community and cohesion. Oulu

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is known for its technology industry and research in the field. Engineering has given the city a hard and effective image. “Climate Change means that we need to reshape the way we interact with the planet. Cultural Climate Change means that we must reshape the way how we interact with each other – on the social, cultural, artistic, political, spatial and virtual levels” (ibid. 6). In the plans of the Oulu2026 project, this means concretely investing in carbon-neutral cultural activities but also to increase cohesion, well-being, and awareness of sustainable development.

It is still more than five years until the City of Oulu’s Capital of Culture year. The planning of carbon-neutral cultural events is in its infancy. The Bid Book sheds some light on the content and goals of upcoming events. One Flagship project is *Climate Clock*, a curated art project in which artists and scholars from different countries become familiar with local stories and descriptions of the progress of climate change and its effects. Sustainable cultural production is presented, for example, by the Tomorrow’s Wardrobe exhibition and advice on how to recycle and save resources. The most important engine for promoting sustainable development is education. “True and sustainable cultural climate change begins with children and young people” (ibid. 32). The plan is that

schools and cultural services collaborate to seek solutions to future challenges at the crossroads of art, science and technology.

ESPOO IS NETWORKING WITH SUSTAINABLE CITIES

Espoo is a city of almost 300,000 inhabitants in southern Finland, next to Helsinki. Espoo belongs to the large Helsinki metropolitan area of 1.5 million inhabitants. Espoo has extensive areas of detached houses, the largest wilderness areas in Southern Finland and populous city centres. The city strives to be an innovative forerunner in sustainable development. In cultural policy, the activities of sustainable development are reflected in active international networks.

The City of Espoo is committed to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) by 2025. In setting goals, priority in the city is given to mobility, energy and construction. In statements, the role of culture is to strengthen citizen well-being (Espoo.fi, 2021). According to a study carried out by Cupore, Espoo is indeed investing heavily in sustainable development. The city’s strategic vision is to develop the city with four dimensions of sustainable development (Hirvi-Ijäs et al., 2020, 10). The challenge, however, is to understand

that culture is important for urban development and an integral part of sustainable development.

“The city and the community are thus created, not simply with, but through culture. This gives culture a uniquely important role in SDG11, in helping build, develop and sustain cities and communities, and make them inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” (Tommila, 2021, 56).

Activities in line with the sustainable development goals of the cultural and creative sector are often dependent on public funding, says Susanna Tommila, Espoo’s Director of Culture, in a European publication of Voices of Culture network. “... the funding instruments for culture appear to focus on goal-oriented and results-driven approaches, failing to recognise the creative interventions as a process and a journey, which is just as important and meaningful as the end goal or output” (Tommila, 2021, 59).

CultureEspoo 2030 strategy presents a plan to be a sustainable and innovative city. “In 2030, Espoo will be a creative and bold cultural city that supports a sustainable way of life. There will be good cooperation between different sectors and the city will prosper through an experimental and curious approach. Culture and art will be present in

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the spirit of the city, the daily lives of the residents, the physical urban environment, and the Espoo identity. CultureEspoo 2030 views culture and art as an integral part of the future of the city and states that they should have a more visible role in city planning, construction, learning, social services and health care. Its core belief is that culture can transcend the barriers in society both socially and economically” (*Voices of Cultures*, 2021, 63).

DECREASING THE CARBON FOOTPRINT AND INCREASING THE GREEN HANDPRINT IN FINNISH ARTS ORGANISATIONS

Despite a lack of clear policies or action plans concerning sustainable development in the cultural sector, actors in the cultural field have integrated levels of sustainability both in their thinking and in their practice in several ways. Through a few cases, we can see how artists and organisations have proceeded from only acting on decreasing the size of their carbon footprint to developing ways of actively transforming practices in the field.

The first case is the Kone Foundation, which has taken a strong position as forerunner of articulating sustainability as a core question of the

cultural field and using its own resources to emphasise explicitly responsible actions. As one of the major funders of contemporary art production, the impact of the Kone Foundation cannot be underestimated. The sustainability aspect is particularly expressed through the activities of the foundation’s residency centre Saari Manor. This international residency programme is multidisciplinary and is situated in the countryside on the western coast of Finland, about an hour north of the city of Turku. All activities in the Saari Residence are guided by ecological sustainability, which also encompasses social and psychological sustainability.

By social sustainability, the foundation refers to actively dismantling eurocentricity, inequality and unsustainability in the art sector, as well as increasing inclusivity. In Saari Manor this concerns not only the residents but everyone in the vicinity of the Saari Residence and in cooperation with the local **municipality**.

Ecological sustainability is strived for in the activities of the residency and not as the focus of selection criteria or in the intentions of the visiting artists. The ecological approach includes for example preference of longer residency periods, slow travelling, fossil-free transportation, organic

food and use of local products, awareness of food waste and consumption habits, recycling both in waste and the materials used, and geothermal heating and wind power for energy production.

The second case is a collaboration between four small art organisations – Frame Finland, HIAP, IHME and Mustarinda – working on the cutting edge of international multidisciplinary contemporary art practices. Their common goal has been to find ways to raise awareness, find sustainable practices and to push policy makers to see cultural actors as relevant players in the sustainability discourse. One way has been to increase discussion on the topic, through seminars, blogs and by including the ecological aspect in day-to-day communication. Another concrete action has been decisions to use slow travelling as much as possible and completely cease flying within Finland and the neighbouring countries. In the organisations, the ecological aspect of sustainability is closely linked to and impossible to separate from social responsibility as part of sustainability.

One of the main obstacles has been to find a balance between being able to work internationally and at the same time to take responsibility for decreasing the carbon footprint. In 2019, the organisations hired a

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shared eco-coordinator for a year to build common ground for planning. The aim was to work in dialogue to find best practices within the international activities and to overcome barriers in dialogue with public funders. One result of the efforts is that the travelling regulations for publicly funded activities are to be changed from being based on lowest expenses only, to also take the ecological aspect into consideration.

The challenge for the organisations is not a lack of willingness to move towards new modes of working sustainably. Rather it is a question of finding enough resources to be able to gather necessary data, and to follow up on ongoing changes to reach a thorough transformation of current cultural practices.

The third case is the curatorial collective Contemporary Art Archipelago that support site-sensitive artistic work at the intersection of ecological, feminist and decolonial enquiries. CAA has been initiating and leading long-term multidisciplinary collaborations in the Turku Archipelago in the Baltic Sea since 2009.

Through their projects, CAA is encouraging re-educational processes and openness for different disciplines in combining art and science. In the current long-term project *Spectres in Change*

contemporary artists work in collaboration with a multidisciplinary research institute focused on environmental changes in the Turku Archipelago. In the island of Seili, artists work together with scientists from the University of Turku, following changes in the environment as well as reflecting on the institutional structures of otherness connected to the island's history as a mental asylum.

Departing from different, but intertwined registers of ecology, as theorised by Felix Guattari, the artistic explorations connect the environment with society and the subject. Following spectres – in the shadows and between disciplinary boundaries – the project sets out to draw light to a multiplicity of entangled environmental and societal transformations that call and allow for modes of active participation rather than mere implication.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

On the one hand, there is an obvious need in Finland to articulate the cultural dimensions of sustainability. Many cases and intentions remain at an abstract level, and it seems to be difficult to agree on basic understanding and definitions even in smaller structures.

On the other hand, among cultural organisations ecological sustainability is connected to a broader context of social responsibility. The actors are seeing art practices as a way to raise awareness of cultural values and disciplines, as a tool for deep analyses and understanding of change.

The idea of cultural sustainability might still be vague, but it seems clear that it is not a question of a *transition* from one behaviour to another, but of a deeper *transformation*, that needs openness for different understandings, epistemologies and practices.

This transformation would need to be rooted in cultural governance and cultural policies, but in close dialogue with local practices.

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- [Espoo.fi](#)
- [Frame Finland](#)
- [Helsinki International Artist Programme](#)
- [IHME Helsinki](#)
- [Kone Foundation](#)
- [Mustarinde](#)

FLANDERS

Climate Regulation

Perspective on climate change and sustainability in the arts sector and policy in Flanders and Brussels

Author: Nikol Wellens

Reconciliation (2018) Otobong Nkanga (acrylic and crayon on paper 29,7 x 42 cm, private collection) on the affiche for the event Ecopolis (design Pjotr.be). Belgian and international authors are invited by a platform of partners to debate the transition towards a socio-ecological society in Brussels.

<https://ecopolis.be/en/home-en/>

The poster features a central illustration of a stylized figure with a tree for a head and roots extending to a globe. The figure is wearing a blue vest and a red glove. The background is a light orange color. The text 'ECOPOLIS' is in a green box at the top right, and 'DARE TO CARE' is in a white box with a green border. The date '24.10.21' and the website 'ECOPOLIS.BE' are prominently displayed at the bottom. A list of speakers is provided below the website. The bottom of the poster features logos of various partners and sponsors.

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KAAITHEATER BRUSSEL BUDA KORTRIJK LABIOMISTA GENK ETOPIA LUIK

De Standaard FMDO GCF KAMAL KUNSTENPUNT Oikos

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Torrential rains, heat waves, storms; the world felt the effects of global warming in the summer of 2021. In the meantime, it has been six years since the international leaders made a legally binding commitment in Paris to jointly limit global warming to 1.5° Celsius.⁶ The EU is even aiming for Europe to be the first continent to be climate neutral by 2050, and is drawing up a schedule for reducing greenhouse gas emissions with interim targets to be achieved in 2020 and 2030.⁷ When editing the Landscape Sketch of the Arts – a strengths-weakness analysis of the arts sector that Flanders Arts Institute publishes every five years at the start of a new policy period – we found it self-evident to include a chapter on climate-conscious action in future plans during the period between these two milestones (Kunstenpunt, 2019).

It was unclear at the time whether a climate policy tailored to the arts practice would be developed. In this contribution, we draw up a new state of affairs regarding the attention that policy and the arts sector in Flanders and Brussels pay to this pressing social theme.

SUSTAINABILITY: WHAT'S IN A NAME?

In his 2020 Strategic Vision Statement for the Arts, the Flemish Minister of Culture established the policy framework for the arts on the basis of the 2019-2024 Culture Policy Memorandum, the Flemish Government coalition agreement and the Landscape Sketch of the Arts. The impact of climate change on the arts is not discussed anywhere in this Vision Statement (Jambon, 2020); keywords such as “climate”, “energy” or “transition” are not to be found. In the text, the minister usually uses the adjective “sustainable” as a synonym for “continuous”, “ongoing” or “permanent”.

However, the word is used three times in a context in which we can understand (albeit implicitly) a reference to growing climate awareness, especially in paragraphs about design, infrastructure and internationalisation. The encouragement of sustainable (cross-sectoral) collaboration through the subsidy line of Innovative Partner Projects is also hopeful, since it creates opportunities for collaborations between artists or arts organisations and

partners from the environmental sector or the circular economy.

Another positive note is that Pulse (the Transition Network for culture, youth and media of which Flanders Arts Institute is an active partner) is mentioned by name as a knowledge network. This bottom-up network, co-founded in 2010 by the arts sector, connects some one thousand individuals and organisations that are working on a socially just and sustainable society in the areas of the arts, cultural heritage, socio-cultural adult work, youth work and the media.⁸ However, the reality is that since 2013, this network has been running on uncertain annual and project resources, and requires long-term financial stability. For two legislatures now, cultural policy has been looking for a suitable framework for this cross-domain operation.

In the area of infrastructure, the Cultural Infrastructure Fund (FoCI) provides partial assistance with additional resources available from the Flemish Climate

6 COP21 (2015) <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement>

7 European Green Deal (2019) https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en

8 <https://www.pulsenetwerk.be/english>

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Fund.⁹ The Ghent theatre, dance and music venue for children and youth Kopergieterij, for example, was able to make their theatre and rehearsal space more energy efficient. But this temporary regulation will expire in 2021, while financial support for these renovations will continue to be needed in the future. The fact that infrastructure is an attention point in the Strategic Vision Statement for the Arts provides the opportunity to develop a broad and long-term vision of sustainability for this aspect.

Proof that a sustainable policy does have an impact can be found in the Flemish Audiovisual Fund as an external subsidy provider for the Flemish Community. Production support for a feature film or TV series via the Flemish Audiovisual Fund is accompanied by coaching and tools to work as sustainably as possible. While the average CO₂ emissions of a film production in the baseline measurement was still set at 83 tonnes in 2013, it had already fallen to 73 tonnes in 2016.¹⁰

Unfortunately, it must be repeated that the arts sector rarely comes into the picture when climate policy is on the agenda at other levels¹¹ and domains of competence (mobility, energy, water...). In the development of measures to reduce emissions from transport, economic but not cultural stakeholders are involved. Even though there is indeed a link between cultural activities and the theme of transport. We know from public surveys, for example, that the proportion of the public that travels to a cultural activity in a sustainable manner depends on the facilities available (Wellens, 2017b). There is therefore a need for a wider and better coordinated offer of public transport during leisure time, more public bicycle parking areas and safer cycle paths. How can this knowledge from the cultural sector be used in this change process if there is no room for it at the discussion table?

ART AND CLIMATE POLICY: GLOBAL, LOCAL, INTEGRAL?

Culture and nature have always been closely linked: nature has long been a source of inspiration for artists and art organisations. This is also the case for Musica's *Klankenbos* (sound forest) in Pelt, a unique open air museum where visitors can discover among the trees installations by eighteen sound artists. This artistic experience of nature raises questions such as: "What does it sound like when the wind blows on a blade of grass? Can a pine cone be a musical instrument?"¹² A number of artists focus not only on nature in their work, but also touch on aspects of climate change and sustainability. Visual artist Koen Vanmechelen, for example, has been asking questions about biodiversity since 1999 in his *Cosmopolitan Chicken Project*.¹³ In 2014, together with musician Stijn Meuris and filmmaker Nic Balthazar, he was one of the eleven founders of *Klimaatzaak* (Climate Case), a citizens'

9 Since 1998, the Flemish government has provided a supra-local investment subsidy (FoCI) for the construction, expansion, renovation or acquisition of infrastructure of exceptional size in which a cultural operation is realised. For the period 2017-2021, making cultural infrastructure more energy-efficient is one of the three priorities. <https://www.vlaanderen.be/cjm/nl/cultuur-en-jeugdinfrastructuur/fonds-culturele-infrastructuur>

10 <https://www.vaf.be/duurzaam-filmen/e-mission-english>

11 Belgium is a federal country with communities, regions, provinces and municipalities. <https://www.culturalpolicies.net/database/search-by-country/country-profile/?id=5>

12 <https://www.klankenbos.be/en/about-klankenbos>

13 The artist cross-breeds chicken breeds from different countries. The exhibitions and installations of his artwork shed light on crossbreeding and the diversity that results from it. <https://www.labiomista.be/en/ccp>

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movement using court litigation to demand better climate policy. Later, ten more artists joined this campaign as ambassadors.¹⁴

Architects and designers also contribute to the spatial and ecological dimensions of social transformations and give an impulse to the development of the circular economy. Art organisations such as 4AD, Ancienne Belgique, Kaaithheater... and networks such as Pulse and Greentrack Gent share their artistic vision and practical experiences with sustainable solutions (Wellens, 2016; Greentrack Gent, 2017).¹⁵ But finding financing for the required knowledge and investments is a challenge (Wellens, 2017a).

When it comes to art and sustainability, the argument is often made that sustainability would mean an external limitation of artistic freedom, but not everyone in the arts field agrees with this appraisal. After all, the relationship between art and sustainability is not just about limiting the negative impact. A positive impact is also possible, which starts from a

certain conception of the autonomy of artistic practice that contributes to social development (Elfving, 2017). The potential for social innovation in the arts does not consist of conclusive answers or concrete solutions, but of food for thought and imagination.

Within transition processes, artistic practices and methods are highly valued, because they create the necessary space for imagination and experiment.¹⁶ Artists have a lot of experience with intuitive, process-oriented work, and can deal with unpredictability and setbacks.

Ecological challenges are particularly acute at an international level; travelling differently and travelling less is quickly seen as a loss in other areas (De Moor, 2019). Such paradoxes and big questions in the arts sector are no longer hidden away, which creates space to think about answers. There are opportunities to share this social contribution more widely through research and inspiring practical (visual) stories (Swillens, 2021).

A Flanders Arts Institute project illustrates this: in the context of the development project *(Re)framing the International*, we commissioned a text by writer, dramaturge and performer Jeroen Peeters about greater sustainability in international mobility (Peeters, 2017). At sector meetings, we then collected travel experiences with a low ecological footprint.¹⁷ This material was visualised in our *Start to train* map: a map with destinations that can be reached by train from Brussels in less than 6.5 hours. 1,000 copies of the map were distributed free of charge within the arts sector via a network of partners in early 2020, and the map was shared far beyond by many thousands online.¹⁸

Art can also play a valuable role in the policy-making of cities and municipalities. In the context of the United Nations' Agenda 2030 for sustainable development, cities and municipalities are working on shaping new policy on the basis of the seventeen

14 The lawsuit started in 2014 with a formal notice. In March 2021, the judges ruled in their verdict that Belgian climate policy is so substandard that it violates the legal duty of care and human rights. <https://www.klimaatzaak.eu>

15 Started in 2012 with four members, Greentrack has grown into a network of 56, representing all the major and smaller cultural organisations in Ghent. The initiative is working closely together with the City of Ghent in reducing CO2 emissions and in looking at climate adaptation. <https://greentrack.be/gent/pages/fr-en>

16 <https://www.pulsenetwerk.be/sdg>

17 <https://www.kunsten.be/en/now-in-the-arts/personal-statement-on-the-international-8-train-time-quality-time/>

18 <https://www.kunsten.be/en/now-in-the-arts/duurzaam-internationaal-reizen-in-de-kunstensector-kunstenpunt-wijst-de-weg-met-een-nieuwe-kaart/>

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Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).¹⁹ Cultural and artistic partners can contribute to this in a critical and creative way and also take action locally.

A recent example: artist Anyuta Wiazemsky Snauwaert worked as an “embedded artist” at the Environment and Climate Department of the City of Ghent at the request of and at the expense of Greentrack Gent. The intention was to investigate how she could influence their approach based on her expertise, background and way of thinking as an artist. After an exploratory phase, it was decided that she would participate in an ongoing project, one of the 23 “testing grounds” for de-paving in Flanders.

A park, consisting of three green zones separated by paved intersections, will be redeveloped. Local residents are concerned about the historic value of the neighbourhood or the disappearance of parking spaces. According to Anyuta, the city of the future will be built not only by

specialists. She brought together residents, officials, planners and contractors to share scientific, technical and practical knowledge of the site. As embedded artist she was given the space to question routine procedures and technical jargon (Stynen, 2020). In 2021, she will complete her participation in this project in the form of an artistic project with local residents of the park.²⁰

This project, with the title Cultural Adaptations, was part of an international collaboration with partners in Glasgow, Göteborg and Dublin and was realised with a Creative Europe subsidy.²¹ Various collaborations on sustainable themes have taken place and are ongoing under this programme with Flemish and Brussels partners: RESHAPE²², Art Climate Transition²³, SHIFT.²⁴ Via Interreg, among others DEMO²⁵ and Green Screen²⁶ receive European support.

RE/SET

And then suddenly there was the corona virus. The measures to protect public health against the threat are having a major impact on the arts sector. In general you can say that the ban on or limited access to cultural activities and other gatherings since March 2020 has made two things more difficult for the arts sector: the relationship with the audience, and the relationship with partners within and outside the arts sector.

Numerous aspects are cause for reflection on the part of all actors: the stagnation of a significant part of artistic production, presentation and distribution, a complex tangle of financial repercussions, and a possible reshaping of the arts landscape (Leenknecht, 2020).

Corona is not the great equaliser that people sometimes make of it. The pandemic brings the greatest problems of our time into sharp focus. This is not just a health crisis: the virus is linked to the impact of our

19 <https://www.sdgs.be/en>

20 <https://vimeo.com/507555271>

21 Project lead: Creative Carbon Scotland <https://www.culturaladaptations.com/>

22 A three-year research process that has developed alternative organisational models, structures and practices in the arts, in direct relation to society and its evolutions. <https://reshape.network/>

23 ACT is a project initiated by ten cultural operators from ten European countries, working in the field of performing and visual arts. <https://artclimatetransition.eu/>

24 Shared Initiatives For Training is initiated by nine cultural networks and co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. <https://shift-culture.eu/>

25 Cross-border cooperation between France and Belgium on sustainable development in the contemporary music sector. <https://demo-europe.eu/nl/homepage/>

26 Green Screen’s mission is to inspire and educate the nomadic world of filming by creating sustainable working practices. <https://www.interregeurope.eu/greenscreen/>

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behaviour on the environment, which in turn is linked to our mobility, linked to the search for fame, influence, and the way in which art builds symbolic value.²⁷

When our mobility is restricted, digital applications take flight, creating opportunities for greater inclusion. At the same time, technology can be coercive and is founded on questionable values. In the project *A Fair New World?!*, Flanders Arts Institute bundles and connects today's major challenges with research into the impact of the corona crisis.²⁸

The consequences are not only negative: we see numerous bottom-up initiatives emerging that keep the bond between artists, art organisations, social partners and the public enthusiastic even in times of physical distance. This resilience gives hope: there are voices in the arts sector calling for an *open up* strategy instead of an exit strategy (Quackels & Van Lindt., 2021). Momentum is gaining for questioning the major systemic relationships and dynamics, and to fully set in motion sustainable transformations.

ART AS A COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SPACE

Extreme weather events resulted in floods, forest fires and droughts in the summer of 2021. Just like the pandemic, the most vulnerable were affected first and worst. In Belgium, 41 people died in the flood following heavy rainfall on 14 July 2021 and thousands of families lost their homes. In the same week, Fit for 55, the European Climate Plan and part of the Green Deal, was published.²⁹ Shortly thereafter, the IPCC's sixth climate report appeared: global warming is happening faster than expected and is undeniably man-made.³⁰

In addition to drastically reducing greenhouse gases, we also need adaptation strategies. Economics professor Mariana Mazzucato proposes using the seventeen SDGs as targets for all policy making.³¹ This vision changes all existing paradigms: policy can no longer pursue the status quo, and growth can only be achieved if it is sustainable and inclusive (Mazzucato, 2021). She argues for new institutions that citizens

and government should develop together. The cultural world and the humanities play a major role for her in restoring mutual trust. Culture is a social space where people dream, push boundaries and can disagree. Until now, however, the debates in parliament and in the media have been polarising, and thus no consensus exists on what to do.

Sometimes approaches that seem contradictory at first can still be combined. It is not necessary for all the interests and ideas of the various actors to coincide completely. A diversified strategy takes into account shared interests, establishes links between diverse practices through experiments and networks, and is tolerant of tensions (Paredis, 2014).

We see artists, staff, volunteers and management taking major steps towards a more sustainable arts practice. There is no shortage of private initiatives and voluntary projects from diverse corners of the arts sector that contribute to the social transition process, in many cases without extra support. At the same time, they prevent art from being reduced to a "future factory". For years,

27 <https://www.kunsten.be/en/research/a-fair-new-world/>

28 <https://afairnewidea.be/en/thema-2>

29 https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_21_3541

30 <https://www.ipcc.ch/assessment-report/ar6/>

31 <https://mediafastforward.be/en/session/moonshot-ambitions-with-mariana-mazzucato/>

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climate policy support measures have been directed either at citizens or companies. The social potential of the arts and culture organisations is missing from the radar. In the quest to make real work of system change, a supportive policy framework is not an extravagant luxury.

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GERMANY

From Tutzing to Paris

Cultural approaches to reduce Germany's ecological footprint

Author: Marje Brütt

Summer academy for climate-friendly cultural policy in September 2020 / Photo by Ralf Silberkuhl



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At first glance, 1.5 degrees seems marginal, yet it still requires worldwide efforts and urgent political, economic, societal and cultural changes to reach the climate goals that 196 countries agreed on when signing the UN climate agreement in Paris in 2015 (United Nations, 2015). There are nine years left for Germany to reach its goal of reducing greenhouse gases by 55% in comparison to 1990 and the need for joint action has never been more urgent. Lately, after tremendous floods in the west of Germany in the summer of 2021, former German Chancellor Angela Merkel admitted serious omissions related to protecting the climate (Zeit Online, 2021). And this is just one of countless examples illustrating the unimaginable extent and harsh impact of the climate crisis, while also highlighting the striking lack of political responses and future-oriented solutions. It is therefore hardly surprising that the “Friday’s for future” movement is accusing current governments of insufficient engagement and the Global Sustainable Development Report 2019 argues for more drastic policies and incentives as only little progress has been

booked so far (United Nations, 2019). Besides, it also points out that “culture has received insufficient attention as an intrinsic component of sustainable development and must be translated and embedded in national and local development” (United Nations, 2019). After being contested and even overlooked for a long time in the international debate on sustainable development, it is highly welcomed that the role of culture for the latter has at least been given some attention, yet it remains debatable to what extent this push is satisfactory.³² Consequently, the mutual interplay between culture and sustainability lies at the core of this article, thereby providing a brief overview of culture and cultural policy becoming more environment-friendly in Germany. Because the topic of sustainability is a broad field – as is also the case for culture – the underlying approach here is to concentrate on the environmental dimension of sustainable development and to explore where the German cultural sector currently stands in that regard.

LOOKING BACK AT TUTZING: WHERE THE CULTURAL DIMENSION OF SUSTAINABILITY FIRST GAINED A FOOTHOLD

The beginning of the last century marked a turning point regarding the German discourse of culture in the context of sustainability. Hence, this discussion has significantly increased since 2002 due to the *Tutzingener Manifest* (Manifesto of Tutzing),³³ which called for equally integrating culture as a fourth dimension into the concept of sustainable development which is typically composed of social, economic and ecological pillars (Kulturpolitische Gesellschaft, 2001). While this approach was quite groundbreaking and still continues to be debated, the declaration – significantly supported by the *Kulturpolitische Gesellschaft* (German Association for cultural policy) – caused a certain impetus at that time, both at a

32 Although it was partially overlooked for a long time, the relationship between culture and sustainable development has caught more attention in the recent years, academically, politically and societally. Different concepts of those terms and models of their interplay have emerged, e.g. the differentiation of culture for, in and as sustainable development. However, this article will not provide an overview of this debate.

33 It resulted from the *Ästhetik der Nachhaltigkeit* (Aesthetics of sustainability) conference in Tutzing where different actors from cultural, environmental and scientific backgrounds elaborated the joint declaration.

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national and an international level,³⁴ as it directly addressed the deficit of culture in common concepts (Mohr et al., 2020). However, at first, this topic was mostly a matter for civil society actors and it took quite a while until political attention in Germany was finally drawn towards climate change and its need for action. Against this backdrop, it is scarcely surprising that general interest grew considerably after signing and committing to the Paris Agreement in 2015. In order to align with the 17 SDGs, the *Deutsche Nachhaltigkeitsstrategie* (German strategy for sustainability) was updated in 2016 as well (Die Bundesregierung, 2021a). In fact, this was also the first time for cultural policy being incorporated into this national strategy, which was further reinforced in the newest edition adopted in summer 2021 (Die Bundesregierung, 2021a). More than ever, it highlights the pressing urge towards more

climate-friendly measures – as also underlined once more by the ongoing pandemic – and declares that sustainability is a cross-cutting issue which all policy areas need to consider and tackle. By calling for a more holistic and systematic approach, the current strategy also points out that culture plays an important role for the societal transformation towards greater sustainability (Die Bundesregierung, 2021a). Two different relations and capacities of culture in the context of sustainability can be identified and observed here: on one hand, the sustainability of cultural activities and institutions themselves meaning their examination and implementation of more environment-friendly practices and infrastructures for their daily business. On the other hand, there is the role of culture in a broader sense that brings together different societal areas and ideas and, therefore, provides fertile ground for a cultural

transformation towards a new and sustainable future (Weiß, 2021a).

CULTURAL POLICY SLOWLY TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Against this backdrop, it is evident that the *Bundesbeauftragte für Kultur und Medien*³⁵ (BKM, Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media) is also obliged and asked to contribute to sustainable development.³⁶ Publishing its first *Nachhaltigkeitsbericht* (sustainability report) in 2020 shows that the BKM is gradually evolving more awareness for the importance of culture for sustainable development and provides first incentives for culture, developing and sharing more climate-friendly practices. The report distinguishes between three central dimensions where culture matters significantly: inspiration, innovation

34 The *Tutzinger Manifest* was even taken to the UN summit on sustainable development in Johannesburg in 2002 in order to call for a stronger cultural dimension regarding the further development of the Agenda 21.

35 At the time of writing this article, Germany does not have a national ministry for culture, instead the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media is in charge of setting the political agenda for culture and the media. Due to cultural federalism, each of the 16 German federal states has an individual ministry for culture (and education or science) in place. As a result, it is also up to them to set political agendas for culture and to provide favourable conditions for culture to become more climate-friendly itself, but also to act as an inspiring role model and driver for change. Given the limited scope of this article, the brief political background provided here focuses on national cultural policies only and does not look further into the individual federal states. Yet, the national, state and local levels are asked equally to implement more environmentally-friendly cultural policies.

36 This request was also brought forward in autumn 2019 by a German group of cultural institutions and artists who approached Prof. Dr Monika Grütters, the German State Minister for Culture and the Media from 2013–2021, with an open letter calling for a “green new deal for the arts”. They thus underlined the potential of culture serving as a role model for climate protection. However, this requires better institutional support and ground-breaking help for cultural institutions to develop and implement measures for operating in a more environmentally-friendly manner (Völzke, 2021).

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and the so-called operational ecology³⁷ (BKM, 2020).

While it is nothing new that culture and the arts bring forward new ideas and concepts for future ways of living (inspiration) and act as a driver for creative and innovative solutions (innovation), it is still relatively recent in Germany to also draw attention to the ecological footprint³⁸ of the cultural and creative sector. In fact, cultural productions and institutions do use resources, generate emissions and often require travelling. Yet, there is still a lack of valid data and methods to measure to what extent cultural organisations and activities influence climate change (Schütz & Jakob, 2021). In order to shed more light on this, BKM strives to embed more climate-friendly management structures in cultural organisations, including the reduction of waste and emissions, and stimulation of energy efficiency (BKM, 2020).³⁹ But how

does BKM support and encourage the German cultural sector in adapting to and dealing with the climate crisis and environmental issues?

On one hand, starting from 2021 onwards, projects and institutions receiving BKM funding have been obliged to define measurable sustainability aims. Hence, taking concrete action against climate change has become a crucial funding criterion (BKM, 2020). In this respect, BKM also tries to encourage cultural organisations to apply for the EMAS certification.⁴⁰ On the other hand, BKM supports projects that deliberately stimulate the German debate about the role of culture for sustainability, inspiring other actors to move towards more sustainable practices (BKM, 2020).

CULTURAL (POLICY) INITIATIVES MOVING FORWARD

Due to this, but also over and above national funding, numerous initiatives have emerged in recent years and contributed noticeably to diversifying and intensifying this discussion, especially in order to leave behind the widespread perception that sustainability automatically means reduction, sacrifice or even the end of certain cultural productions. To overcome this rather reluctant attitude, culture and the arts play a pivotal role, having the power and potential to inspire and allow for new experiences and future-oriented narratives to emerge in a way that broader society takes part in understanding the climate crisis and shaping new directions (Bilabel, 2021a). This article highlights several German efforts and approaches that have chosen new paths – both deriving from cultural policy and based directly in the

37 Operational ecology describes key areas that are important for more ecological and climate-friendly ways of managing cultural activities or institutions. This includes mobility and transportation (of artists, staff, artistic works and audiences), use of resources, waste management, recycling and catering (Bilabel, 2021).

38 In this context, it is important to be aware of the differences between the ecological footprint and the carbon footprint, which are often used as synonyms. The carbon footprint only measures emissions whereas the ecological footprint is a broader concept that includes the carbon footprint and further aspects, as Annette Baumast points out (Baumast, 2021).

39 This is especially relevant for addressing SDG 12, which aims at changing lifestyles and economic activities towards more sustainable ways of consumption and production. Needless to say, culture as a cross-cutting topic/dimension contributes to all of the 17 sustainable development goals. Yet, as this article focuses on environmental sustainability, it will not examine German projects and initiatives that mainly address some of the other goals.

40 EMAS is the European Eco-Management and Audit Scheme which serves to assess and improve the environmental management of organisations. By voluntarily applying for this certificate, organisations are obliged to gradually enhance their environmental performance. In Germany, several major cultural institutions funded by BKM have already been validated by EMAS, amongst others *Kulturveranstaltungen des Bundes* since 2013, which is e.g. in charge of the Berlin film festival (BKM, 2020).

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cultural sector. This selection of projects is exemplary and not exhaustive.

With a clear focus on fostering environmental sustainability within the cultural sector, the so-called *Aktionsnetzwerk Nachhaltigkeit in Kultur und Medien* (ANKM, Action Network Sustainability in Culture and the Media) was launched in autumn 2020. Supported by BKM, the network calls for concrete action and a stronger “hands on” mentality, to tackle the lack of relevant know-how and experience, which often hinders the cultural sector to put more sustainable practices in place. By bringing pilot projects, pioneers and interested professionals and organisations together, ANKM tries to facilitate exchange and build a bridge between theory and practice (Bilabel, 2021a). For exploring new insights into reducing the ecological footprint of the cultural sector, the network has initiated a training programme called “transformation management for sustainable culture”. Arguing that the transformation towards a sustainable society and cultural sphere needs more experts that can accompany and advise cultural organisations in this way, the

programme will provide cultural professionals who possess the relevant theoretical and practical knowledge (Aktionsnetzwerk Nachhaltigkeit in Kultur und Medien, 2021a). Furthermore, this network is currently developing a carbon calculator that will provide the German cultural sector with data on its greenhouse gases, helping to identify the origins of its emissions and understand where it should start (re)acting (and reducing) (Aktionsnetzwerk Nachhaltigkeit in Kultur und Medien, 2021b).

On a similar note, the *Kulturstiftung des Bundes* (German Federal Cultural Foundation) has brought together 19 cultural organisations from all over Germany representing different cultural sectors, local conditions, sizes and experiences with sustainable practices to shed light on their climate balance and carbon footprint (Kulturstiftung des Bundes, 2021). Their pilot project serves to reveal not only the extent of their carbon footprint but also how it is spread over different activities and, most importantly, where substantial improvements are feasible.⁴¹

Besides these rather recent initiatives, the recognition of sustainability issues in the field of culture has significantly increased over the past 20 years due to the efforts of the *Kulturpolitische Gesellschaft*. Within the framework of their newest project *Digitalität als neuer Treiber einer Kultur der Nachhaltigkeit* (digitisation as a new driver for a culture of sustainability),⁴² they move beyond merely focusing on sustainable transformation and take a further, yet strongly connected, challenge into account, namely the digital transformation and explore how the cultural sector is handling both (Kulturpolitische Gesellschaft, 2021). Interestingly enough, this project is promoted by two German authorities in charge of environmental issues, the Bundesumweltministerium (Federal Ministry for Environment) and the Umweltbundesamt (Federal Environment Agency), which represents the growing interest and acknowledgement of this topic across different domains and ministries and might lead to further linkage between

41 While the results will help the participants to develop and implement more climate-friendly practices, this project also gives rise to discussing how ecological sustainability should be incorporated into future funding schemes provided by the German Federal Cultural Foundation (Kulturstiftung des Bundes, 2021).

42 As part of this project, the *Kulturpolitische Gesellschaft* has launched the podcast *#Klimadialoge* (#climate dialogues) and the blog *Kultur Agenda 2030* (Cultural Agenda 2030) in order to follow up on and create more space for these discussions.

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environmental and culture-related approaches of sustainability.⁴³

A similar paradigm shift can be observed in several German cities where the local governments have fundamentally incorporated cultural aspects in their urban development and sustainability strategies or at least provided occasions to further discuss future cultural approaches. According to the motto “culture for future”, the cultural department of Dresden has defined a vision for 2030 which calls for all local cultural organisations to implement sustainable practices – both with a view to climate change and social and economic structures (Moschell, 2021).⁴⁴

Apart from the joint efforts of the cultural networks and associations highlighted above, further concrete impulses and initiatives dealing with the climate crisis are emerging in the cultural field, not to mention the various cultural productions that pick up the topic and raise awareness for sustainable development. These activities

cover a wide range of cultural fields and include examples like sustainable music festivals, museums working towards climate neutrality or the “libraries4future” initiative that calls libraries to actively engage in climate protection (Weiß, 2021a). Furthermore, galleries and art organisations in Berlin are following the British example and forming a Gallery Climate Coalition “to find sustainable solutions for the art world in order to facilitate a reduction of the sector’s carbon emissions by at least 50% by 2030 across the sector” (Monopol, 2021). Similarly, yet on a larger scale, the film and television industry has brought up several initiatives and guiding principles to make their productions greener such as “filmmakers for future” or “100 green productions” (Gutsche, 2021). Their focus lies on increasing the use of environmentally-friendly technologies, materials and vehicles and decreasing the volume of waste produced by the catering service, but also in terms of costumes and equipment (Gutsche, 2021). Another pioneer is the *Theater Bonn*, which,

since 2014, has cooperated with the UN and different NGOs and research organisations for developing innovative formats and methods of knowledge transfer. According to the “Save the world” motto, global challenges such as climate change are at the core of this project. On an annual basis, they organise an interdisciplinary festival to discuss and mediate matters of sustainability, thereby trying to make these complex issues more tangible and perceptible. For example, by means of an online game, a climate course or through composing and presenting a climate song (Weiß, 2021b). The project has turned into an own organisation that operates at the interface of performing arts, science and politics and is therefore able to bring up new methods and perspectives for working with current societal topics.

This is just a small glimpse into some cultural projects in Germany dealing with the environmental crisis and climate change, showing that ideas and questions of sustainability are deeply rooted in the cultural sector. Taking this into account, it is

43 Additionally, other ministries can also be useful for the cultural sector such as the *Bundeswirtschaftsministerium* (Federal Ministry for Economy) which offers support and funding for energy-efficient constructions (Bilabel, 2021b). Considering that building costs are mostly too high or not eligible when it comes to public funding for culture, this could be highly relevant for cultural institutions that plan to renovate their buildings with environmentally-friendly methods and results. In fact, building and operating costs have apparently proven to be the areas in the cultural sector with the highest potential for saving emissions and resources, apart from carrying out cultural events (BKM, 2020). But so far, these programmes are little known in the cultural sector and unfortunately barely made use of (Bilabel, 2021b).

44 Moreover, Düsseldorf, Wuppertal, Witten and Augsburg are further examples of cities that try to incorporate and use culture as a catalyst for sustainable transformation. The latter is especially known for having introduced culture as a fourth dimension into the guiding principles for Augsburg’s sustainable development (Leipprand, 2021).

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rather absurd, though, that the significance of culture for sustainable development has been neglected and contested for such a long time.

WHAT LIES AHEAD FOR CULTURE REDUCING ITS ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT?

The fact that culture and the arts have to adapt to climate change and act in more environmentally-friendly ways is undeniable. What's more, political and cultural actors have recognised the potential and responsibility of culture to act as a role model and trigger transformation towards sustainability in Germany. Yet, raising awareness is no longer sufficient, considering there are less than nine years until the SDGs are due.

Without a doubt, sustainable development has never been addressed and anchored as broadly and deeply in Germany as is currently the case given that all the ministries have started implementing relevant measures, increasingly taking culture into account (Die Bundesregierung, 2021b). Yet, there is reason to presume that this is insufficient. But what does it need for them to fully utilise their potential to establish a new, more positively connoted sustainable

narrative, to facilitate transformation and fulfil their task of turning more climate friendly themselves? And what can German cultural organisations and political institutions do to help along the way? Among others, these questions lie at the heart of the next *Kulturpolitische Forum* (Forum for cultural policy) set to take place in Tutzing in November 2021. Going back where this discussion once accelerated aims to reinvent and proclaim a new manifesto that paves the way for “sustainable cultural policy in the digital age”, thereby also considering the European Green Deal and the New European Bauhaus.

Focusing on the environmental dimension of sustainability, attempts to measure the ecological footprint of cultural activities are an important step to first understand where the cultural sector currently stands and from where it has to start acting (Bilabel, 2021b). Additionally, providing occasions for peer-to-peer learning and exchanging good practices seems to be valuable as cultural organisations need further insights and guidance to be able to become more sustainable, given that this is not usually their core business. However, most of the approaches to facilitate reducing the ecological footprint of cultural activities are still in their infancy. Therefore, the

position of existing networks like ANKM should be strengthened, while further additional offerings for guidance, support and education in this field should be developed and stronger scientific collection and systematic evaluation of data and methods has to be carried out (Weiß, 2021c).

While the topic of sustainable development itself is continuously discussed, greater attention needs to be drawn to debating and negotiating the relevant framework conditions and support mechanisms for culture. As the cultural sector in Germany strongly depends on public funding, it is up to the different federal, state and local authorities to further re-evaluate their scope and criteria for funding as partially already initiated by BKM and the *Kulturstiftung des Bundes*. However, another concern in this regard is emphasised by Mohr and Vogel referring to structural deficits, inflexibility and lack of adaption when it comes to public management and governance systems, which often prevent cultural organisations from using their transformative power (Mohr & Vogel, 2021). Due to the strong connection with other political areas, this also includes further cooperation with other ministries and their funding institutions as well as the development of entirely new concepts and

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funding schemes that take the new dynamics, relationships and high relevance of culture for sustainability into account (Weiß, 2021c).

Despite the power of provoking societal and sustainable transformation and the efforts and inspiring examples brought forward, culture alone cannot bring us closer to achieving the climate goals. While the capacity and accountability of the cultural sector should not be underestimated in this regard, it is a shared responsibility that calls for all policy areas to take action and collaborate. Bearing in mind the national elections in autumn 2021, the new German Government is ever since composed by a coalition of social democrats (SPD), greens (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen) and the liberal party (FDP). This gives at least room and hope for a greener political agenda especially considering that Claudia Roth from the Greens has become the new Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media. Thus, it remains to be seen how the new political setting will respond to the major challenge of implementing concrete and consistent measures for keeping up with the ambitious 2030 Agenda and, moreover, what kind of implications will follow for cultural policy and the cultural sector in Germany. Although, regardless of the outcome of the elections, the cultural sector

will hopefully use the disruptive power of the pandemic and continue being innovative, critical and creative to move beyond previous patterns and structures. It is time to finally open up the doors and lay the foundation for a new culture of sustainability where it rather becomes a norm than the exception that cultural institutions take care of their climate impact.

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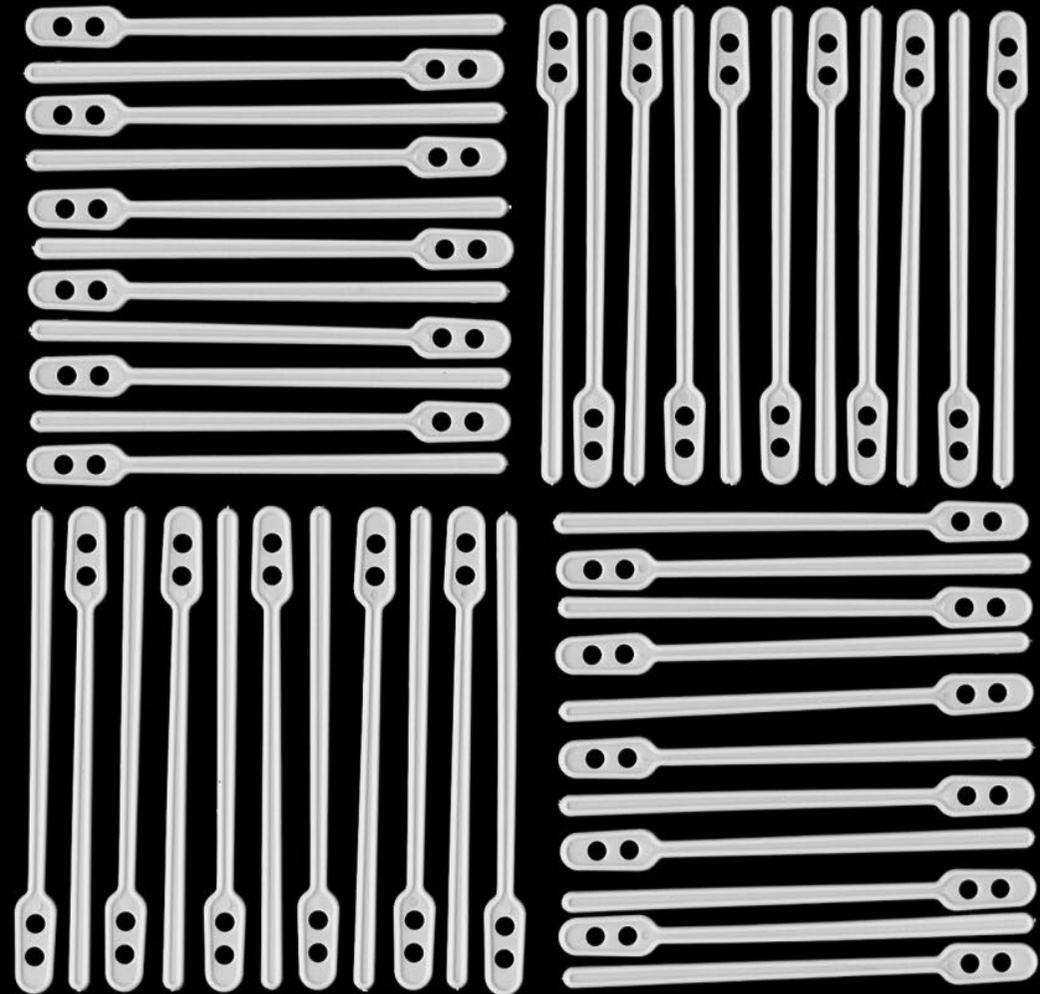
THE NETHERLANDS

Sustainability in the arts and culture in the Netherlands

Authors: Sofie Krop and Mareile Zuber

Picture from the exposition *Single Use Plastic* by Johanna Minnaard. The exposition tries to let the viewer think about the way we use plastic, and shows plastic objects that were made for single use only and that are forbidden since July 2021. The exhibition can be rented via

<https://www.johannaminnaard.nl/single-use-plastic>.



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Environmental sustainability is no longer an unknown domain for a large part of the cultural sector in the Netherlands. Especially after the summer of 2021 with forest fires, floods and an alarming IPCC report, we see a growing community of artists, musicians, designers and theatre makers responding to these developments with an urgent and varied programming (We Are Warming Up, 2021). In the last couple of years, the cultural sector has found many creative ways to engage and prove its meaningful contribution to the sustainability transition. In 2015, the Dutch city Leeuwarden became the Cultural Capital of Europe, with a bid book that put culture and sustainability at its core. It was still a rather surprising connection then, but the success of the concept impressed many and got great attention in the Netherlands and abroad.

Inspired and convinced by the power of culture in the sustainability transition we, Mareile Zuber and Sofie Krop, started to collaborate in *Het Groene Cultuur Bureau*, founded in 2015, with the aim to accompany and facilitate cultural organisations and cities to realise, harness and scale their green ambitions. In this article we share some insights and examples of how arts and

culture, cultural policy and environmental sustainability are reinforcing one another in the Netherlands.

CARBON FOOTPRINT

Evidence of the impact and potential reduction of the carbon footprint in the arts and cultural sector is an important incentive for policymakers and cultural organisations to work on sustainability. Data is not yet available on a large scale, but in recent years important steps have been taken to measure and report on environmental impact. The Boekman Foundation (the Dutch institute for arts, culture and related policy) and Bureau 8080 (an advice and project management company in the field of sustainability) have been driving forces in the collection of data and insights in the state of sustainability of the cultural sector in the Netherlands with multiple publications and the annual event My State Of Sustainability.⁴⁵ The latest estimations conclude the emissions of the Dutch cultural sector to be around 174,350 tonnes of CO₂ (Brom 2020). This is about 0.1% of total Dutch CO₂ emissions (CBS, 2019).

The estimated emissions are mainly based on the amount of energy and materials needed for the production and presentation of arts and culture, but have yet to include the overall impact of transport and (international) mobility of public and artists. The 1,200 museums and theatres alone attract more than 50 million visitors annually (CBS, 2020). Moreover, the Dutch arts and cultural sector is very active on the international stage. Before the Corona crisis, in 2019, Dutch artists and organisations took part in cultural activities in 112 countries and in more than 3,000 different cities (Chang, 2020). Considering these figures, mobility is quite an impactful aspect of the CO₂ emissions in the sector.

Overall, we see that the insights of the carbon footprint have helped to generate increasing attention for sustainability at policy level and awareness within the cultural sector. In an enquiry in 2019, 80% of cultural organisations responded that they aim to become more sustainable. In the annual reports of national funded cultural organisations, sustainability is becoming increasingly visible (Schrijen, 2019; Schrijen 2020). The corona crisis challenged these ambitions, but multiple informal inquiries

⁴⁵ <https://mystateofsustainability.nl/>

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showed the sector still prioritises sustainability and considers sustainability as part of the recovery. There is an intrinsic motivation to be active in the climate debate, but the actions to take vary greatly. A lack of money, time and knowledge are often mentioned as bottlenecks (Schrijen, 2019).

POLICY

The challenge of measuring the overall CO₂ impact and implementing sustainability measures by scale originates from the fact that for most cultural organisations there is no need to report on energy or waste management. Sustainability is not yet well integrated in Dutch cultural policy. The Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science has a leading role by reformulating the policy priorities every four years. In the national cultural policy agenda for the upcoming years (Rijksoverheid, 2021) and related publications of the legal advisory body to the government (Raad voor Cultuur), very little attention is paid to sustainability but mainly limited to the so-called Fair Practice Code, a set of agreements to guarantee fair working

conditions within the cultural and creative sector.⁴⁶

Only one-third of all expenses related to art and culture originate from the national government, the rest of the funding is decentralised in regional and local governments (OCW, 2021). Municipalities therefore play a much bigger role in the sustainability transition of the sector. An analysis of cultural policy reports of the 44 largest municipalities shows that the majority are working on making the cultural sector more sustainable (Schrijen, 2021). Most grants or funding schemes for cultural venues are, however, not yet linked to obligatory sustainable actions, but focus on an inventory of environmental sustainability in business operations of the cultural organisation. Recent research shows that Dutch cultural organisations would be in favour of an obligation on sustainability goals, in combination with additional support (Schrijen, 2021).

Festivals are an exception when it comes to sustainability regulations. In the last couple of years some municipalities have changed the conditions and guidelines of

their festival licenses. In 2018, the city of Amsterdam declared radical guidelines for sustainable events including banning plastic disposables and imposing a total ban of grey energy in 2020.⁴⁷ At the same time the city took its responsibility by providing multiple event locations off fixed green energy power points. The city of Leiden was the first to use an obligatory deposit system for plastic cups from 2020 onwards, also at large city-wide events.⁴⁸ In other cities, changes in policy regarding sustainable events are starting to take shape but enforcement is lagging so far.

Dedicated policy for sustainable cultural venues is also to be expected in the near future. A large part of cultural organisations are housed in real estate owned by the national government or a municipality, exact numbers are not available. Following the Paris Agreement, all Dutch municipal social real estate has to comply with a CO₂ reduction of 49% by 2030, and by 2050, CO₂ neutral (RVO, 2021). Some local governments have even higher ambitions for the coming years, relating to planning and setting milestones like becoming gas-free, climate neutral or

46 www.fairpracticecode.nl

47 Evenementenvergunning Amsterdam (https://assets.amsterdam.nl/publish/pages/913555/2020_criteria_evenementenvergunning.pdf)

48 Gemeente Leiden Statiegeldbeker (<https://gemeente.leiden.nl/inwoners-en-ondernemers/vergunningen-en-ontheffingen/evenementenvergunning/statiegeldbeker/>)

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energy neutral. The location of a building, and specifically a cultural venue, can have consequences for which sustainable measures are prioritised and which type of funding is available. Even energy experts sometimes get lost in the requirements. The online toolkit “Groene Menukaart cultuur” has been developed with the intention of providing an overview of funding opportunities and local conditions.⁴⁹ Until now, only a few cultural organisations have managed to implement strategic policy on sustainability and translate environmental road maps into long-term planning for sustainable measure to be future proof. The Dutch heritage sector has been the only sector to prepare a road map for monuments to reach a 40% CO₂ reduction by 2030 and 60% by 2040 as an average for all monuments in the Netherlands (Duurzaam Erfgoed, 2020).

SUPPORT

As the sector is so diverse in scale and organisation models, there is no one-fits-all policy and clear funding strategy. The

heritage sector is an exception with grants for restoration and sustainability provided by the Cultural Heritage Agency RCE.⁵⁰ Most cultural organisations often need to invest their savings or apply for additional funding to be able to take these impactful measures. In general, this results in limited funds or time to invest in sustainability within the usual “every day” funded business operations of cultural organisations. Some manage to realise their ambitions with support of their public: the first energy-neutral theatre in the Netherlands, Theater Ins Blau, was realised with € 70,000 through crowd funding. Dutch policy makers recently tend to create more projects in which cultural organisations receive extra support in terms of tailor-made advice and coordination of common actions. Examples of this approach are initiatives in which municipalities, and in some cases national governmental organisations together with private parties, offer energy scans, tools for waste management or sector benchmark analyses. In the last 10 years, various agreements like Memorandum of Understanding or Green Deals have been

signed which often proved to be an important milestone and incentive for further projects between local governments and cultural organisations. In general we see that these common agreements or shared ambitions lead to more funding opportunities (due to collaboration models with different stakeholders), knowledge shaping and insights in the impact and possible successful approaches for the cultural sector as a whole.

None of the great examples from the sector have so far led to structural policy and funding regarding sustainability and culture, but in recent years temporary, one-off funding opportunities and support programmes have been developed by some governmental institutions. The city of Amsterdam, for example, reserved € 500,000 for a special grant for cultural organisations to implement sustainable measures in 2017. The province of Noord Holland introduced a € 2 million fund for sustainable measures in cultural venues.⁵¹ At a national level, a care programme for social properties was introduced in 2020.⁵² With this programme the Dutch government provides € 24 million

49 De Groene Menukaart cultuur (<https://www.degroenemenukaart.nl/nl/cultuurpanden>)

50 Rijksdienst voor het cultureel Erfgoed (<https://www.cultureelerfgoed.nl/>)

51 Provincie Noord-Holland, subsidie voor verduurzaming culturele instellingen (https://www.noord-holland.nl/Actueel/Archief/2020/December_2020/Subsidie_voor_verduurzaming_culturele_instellingen)

52 RVO Ontzorgingsprogramma maatschappelijk vastgoed (<https://www.rvo.nl/subsidie-en-financieringswijzer/ontzorgingsprogramma-maatschappelijk-vastgoed>)

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to support a broad range of societal organisations to make their buildings more sustainable. A total of 2,000 small property owners, including cultural venues, can be supported.

The requirement of ownership for applicants excludes many cultural institutions from funding, since they are housed in real estate owned by others and depend on their planning for investments. Often this leads to a situation where different parties wait for others to take the first step. There is a clear challenge to overcome the split incentive as the investments for sustainable measures are not always refundable for the owner. Planning ahead and making use of financing support programmes can present an additional challenge because of the inflexible planning of municipalities and funding bodies which do not always coincide.

INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

Sustainability engagement not only depends on finances but also for a large part on the motivation of individuals within cultural organisations. There are examples of small and public funded museums, like Museum Kennemerland, that manage to achieve a huge improvement in sustainability with few resources and volunteers as their workforce.

At the same time there are examples of theatres (DeLaMar Theater), museums (Museum Singer Laren) and festivals (DGTL festival) that are (almost) subsidy independent or commercial, and are frontrunners when it comes to making their building, business operations and production more sustainable. Sustainability often occurs out of the institutions' intrinsic sense of necessity and if they are given sufficient space for implementation, they are able to take enormous steps. Non-subsidised or commercial organisations seem to have this opportunity more often.

COLLABORATION

Collaboration within the sector has proven to be a successful approach. Well organised parts of the sector, like the heritage and museum sector (with a central role of the Museum Association) and the event sector (with the Green Events platform), have achieved great results through collective projects. The willingness to work together on sustainability issues is clearly visible in the many bottom-up initiatives in the sector. Examples are: “The Green Filmmaking” initiative, which started in 2014 with support of the Dutch Film Fund, “Haarlem Plastic vrij”; an initiative of 8 major cultural

organisations and their green teams to reduce plastic waste, the initiative “Duurzame Plantage”, which is a collaboration of 14 cultural organisations working on sustainable actions in a neighbourhood of Amsterdam and “Green Stages”, a platform that supports sustainable actions within the sector in southern part of the Netherlands. In general, we see that many of these collaborations start or take place mainly around the bigger cities of Amsterdam, The Hague and Rotterdam. Around 60% of the state-subsidised cultural organisations are based in this region (Raad voor Cultuur, 2020) and the local clusters of cultural organisations find each other more easily for peer-to-peer networking and collaboration.

Various ambitious Dutch cultural organisations have joined forces and proved their green values and actions by implementing certification. Green Key and BREEAM are the main certificates used for cultural venues. Dutch museums even managed to introduce and implement specific museum criteria to the international BREEAM certification scheme (BREEAM, 2016). In 2014, the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam was the first museum worldwide to pass the BREEAM In Use assessment with a “very good” certificate, the Kröller Müller was the first to receive an “excellent”

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certificate on management and use in 2020, and the Rijksmuseum topped this in 2021 with the first 5 star “outstanding” score. These successes of a relatively large group of certified cultural organisations attract interest and attention at a national and international level (Dutch Green Building Council, 2017) and contribute to the green reputation of the city.

PIONEERING

Working on new sustainable operational and business models for the sector often requires pioneering. Festivals in the Netherlands are excellent pioneers when it comes to sustainability. Dance festival DGTL targeted to be the world’s first circular festival in 2020. Over the past years, Dutch music festivals have taken huge steps in recycling (even the urine produced at the festival), circular vegetarian food courts, CO₂ reduction and compensation of travel movements for artists and visitors, green energy and the use of fixed power networks and batteries. Almost all bigger events have sustainability targets that are managed by green teams and sometimes even a full-time sustainability coordinator.

Also, many Dutch cultural organisations are good at experimenting with innovative sustainable techniques that are ground breaking and appeal to the imagination of sustainable solutions. A well-known example is the heating-cooling exchange between the Hortus Botanicus and the Hermitage Museum in Amsterdam. There are also initiatives with the unique Dutch city infrastructure of canals. For example ARTIS, Amsterdam’s zoo, has one of the world’s most sustainable aquariums by using water from the canals for heating. Cultural organisations in the centre of Amsterdam experiment in the same way. In Rotterdam, the city’s theatre is, next to its artistic focus on sustainability, partnering in the international project “7Square endeavour” in which the square next to the theatre acts as an experimental area for innovative technologies, cyclical processes and business models to make the city climate proof.

There are also cutting-edge innovations and alternative approaches on the business operations side of cultural organisations. Amongst other initiatives, the mobility aspect has been put on the agenda by the Dutch institute for international

relations DutchCulture. They organised network meetings to address the dimension of sustainability in international cultural cooperation. An innovation on waste management is the model and collector OSCAR CIRCULAIR, which started as a pilot project at the cultural hub Westergasterrein in Amsterdam and led to a 50% reduction of waste in three months’ time. The use of tap water is unique in the Netherlands. Providing free tap water is mandatory for many open-air festivals and highly stimulated by most theatres and museums. Concerning food consumption, the Dutch cultural sector offered an early stage for daring initiatives by only serving organic, vegetarian or vegan food to visitors and performing artists, raising awareness about this theme among their visitors.

ARTISTS IN ACTION

More and more artists in the Netherlands are making sustainability and the climate issue a prominent subject in their work, for example the prize-winning theatre production “De Zaak Shell” by Anoeek Nuyens.⁵³ In 2018, the first Dutch climate museum opened as a pop-up version offering space and attention

53 De Zaak Shell (<https://www.frascatitheater.nl/voorstelling-nuyensdewit-dezaakshell2021>)

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to visual arts focused on sustainability. In 2020, despite the coronavirus crisis, the first edition of the multidisciplinary arts festival Warming Up Festival took place. There are also an increasing number of artists that express their worries about climate change “off stage”, in interviews and opinion articles in national media. There are climate ambassadors within the sector (mainly film and music) claiming the role of culture in societal transition. However, their voice is as yet not very consistently or loudly heard in societal debate.

In recent years, we see that quite some initiatives were launched in the Netherlands, all with the aim of achieving more recognition for arts and culture in societal transformation. Examples here are platforms and initiatives like “What Design Can Do”, “Turn Club”, “Social Creative Council” and “The Open Coalition”, in which a diverse group of creative industry stakeholders join forces with the aim of showcasing the role of design and creative thinking in addressing societal issues. The challenge for these initiatives is to get attention outside the creative sector in order to utilise their expertise.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

In recent years, great initiatives have been developed and sustainability within arts and culture is slowly becoming a more important subject for policy makers and cultural organisations in the Netherlands. The sector has intrinsic motivation to engage with societal issues, but the lack of consistent national cultural policy concerning sustainability and the unstable economic circumstances of the sector makes it challenging to scale the many bottom-up initiatives and successful approaches.

Collaboration within the sector, with external partners and local or national authorities, has proven to be key for success. Collectivity helps to include organisations with different size and capacities, facilitates the sharing of knowledge instead of reinventing the wheel and supports prioritising and embedding sustainability in the sector. Governmental support for individual organisations and collectives working on sustainability remains important. For the long term, it is crucial to “unblock” policy domains such as culture, nature and sustainability, real estate and economics to broaden perspectives on funding and to

realise greater impact through a collective approach. The recently developed “New European Bauhaus” initiative by the European Commission might offer opportunities to tackle this challenge in the upcoming years.⁵⁴

Commitment to sustainability seems to depend to a great extent on goodwill and the engagement of individuals and creative leadership. Regardless of policy obligations and funding, directors or managers in arts and cultural organisations in the Netherlands can take leadership and prioritise sustainability for their own organisations. Setting up a green team and formulating a long-term vision and commitment to work on a sustainable organisation truly helps in taking actions and inspiring staff, partners and the public. It is important that all stakeholders take their responsibility on the subject. Collaboration based on mutual trust is crucial for reinforcing each other in the sustainable transition.

Until now, the main focus has been on reducing carbon emissions within the Dutch cultural sector. Insufficient attention is paid to the secondary benefits of cultural organisations and arts taking the lead in engaging the public and stimulating public

54 New European Bauhaus (https://europa.eu/new-european-bauhaus/index_en)

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debate. Considering that there is a growing demand for engaging the public and inclusively involving society in the sustainable transition, this may present be a big opportunity. Creatives should not hesitate to raise their voice and share their ideas more often in societal debate. The spirit of pioneering and the capacity of creatives to use and visualise imagination and think out-of-the-box, is a great and needed asset in the sustainable transformation. Inspiring each other and exchanging knowledge beyond sectors and across borders is essential to book further success and reinforce sustainability ambitions.

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Developing culture's influencing role in addressing climate change

10 years of Creative Carbon
Scotland

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'Creative approaches to flood awareness', a project to pilot a creative engagement project in Aberdeen exploring how the arts could be used to raise levels of flood awareness and preparedness in flood risk communities.



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Scotland and England’s national cultural funding bodies have been at the forefront of practical action on climate change for more than five years, with separate mandatory carbon emissions reporting programmes for core-funded cultural organisations. In Scotland, this work is led by Creative Carbon Scotland (CCS), a charity formed in 2011 with support from the Edinburgh festivals, the Federation of Scottish Theatre and the Scottish Contemporary Art Network as well as financial support from the national funder Creative Scotland and in-kind support from the City of Edinburgh Council. CCS was born through the lucky combination of climate change policy and the personal commitment, knowledge and contacts of four individuals who leveraged that policy so that it could be applied to cultural policy.⁵⁵ More recently the balance has changed; cultural policy and policymakers are beginning to see their way to joining the climate change conversation, not as recipients of policy but as potential allies to enable the enormous societal transformation that lies ahead.

Section 1 below describes how the policy landscape empowered CCS to develop

its work, whilst Section 2 briefly describes some of what CCS does.

1. THE IMPACT OF BOTH CULTURAL AND NON-CULTURAL GOVERNMENT POLICY

In 2009, the Scottish Parliament unanimously passed the ambitious Climate Change (Scotland) Act that included the then highest carbon emissions reduction target in the world – a 42% emissions reduction against a 1990 baseline (Scottish Government, 2009, 1) – and a legal duty on the Scottish Government to report progress annually (Ibid., 18). This created an environment in which climate change action was a possibility throughout society, even in areas not apparently at the sharp end of environmental action. The act also placed a duty on “public bodies” – of which Creative Scotland is one (equivalent to the Arts Council England and similar national arts funding bodies internationally) – to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, contribute to the national plan to adapt to the impacts of climate change and, in a catch-all phrase, to act “in a way that it considers is most

sustainable” (Ibid., 24). As the development agency for the arts, screen and creative industries, with only around 100 staff, rented offices and some travel, Creative Scotland’s own emissions were relatively low, but most of its government-funded budget was used to support cultural organisations. This third duty enabled CCS to argue that Creative Scotland should support and eventually require its funding recipients to reduce their emissions and enabled Creative Scotland staff to support this approach. National climate change legislation and policy led the way, but it needed to be interpreted in the right way.

Culture was not high on the Scottish Government’s climate change team’s agenda at the time. Their *Low Carbon Scotland Public Engagement Strategy*, published late in 2010, included one vague line mentioning the power of culture in addressing climate change: “We will also consider the role of the cultural sector which has the capacity to educate, influence and stimulate debate” (Scottish Government, 2010, 10). This was a useful line to focus on in discussions with the government and cultural actors in that it provided legitimacy for culture to get

⁵⁵ Ben Twist, now Director of Creative Carbon Scotland; the late Euan Turner, then Health and Safety Advisor at the Scottish Federation of Theatre; Ben Spencer, then interim Director of Scottish Contemporary Art Network, and Amy Saunders, then Special Projects Manager at Festivals Edinburgh.

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involved. However, its vagueness meant that its potential was limited.

Cultural policy took some time to catch up with the Scottish Government's ambitions and of course climate change is only one thing among many that cultural funders and policymakers are dealing with. It took from 2011 until 2014 for Creative Scotland to mandate carbon reporting requirements for organisations receiving regular funding (known as RFOs for "regularly funded organisations"); this began in 2015. By this time, around 90 cultural organisations, most but not all of which were RFOs, were working with CCS to *voluntarily* report their emissions. Although there was some official nervousness about placing new requirements on core-funded organisations, in fact the sector was ahead of the funder. There was very little resistance amongst the sector to act. The establishment and support of CCS by the festivals, theatre and visual arts sectors and by Creative Scotland was a powerful illustration of how the combination of bottom-up and top-down action can lead to results. It seems likely that without both – and indeed without the actor who could mobilise and use that support effectively – the project would have stalled.

Similarly at a government level it has taken some time for climate change to

become integrated into cultural policy. Climate change barely featured in cultural policy statements from the Scottish Government and there seemed to be little collaboration between its relevant divisions. However, this was not unique to culture; the difficulties of cross-silo working are a feature of governments more widely.

This lack of joined-up working has changed more recently. In 2019, Scotland was the first country in the world to declare a climate emergency and set net-zero targets. Many other countries have since echoed this declaration as have 20 of Scotland's 32 local authorities, including the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC). The CEC's culture team has now joined Creative Scotland in requiring the cultural organisations it supports to report, manage and reduce their carbon emissions. This is, in part, a result of this wider policy change and ideally, all of Scotland's local authorities – funders of much cultural work – will follow suit both in declaring a climate emergency and in mandating this work. CEC's decision is also partly due to close connections between CCS and the culture team. Since 2011, CCS has used CEC office space free of charge in return for its work with the festivals and others. Clearly, these wider policy statements help lead local government departments and

those they support to decisive and practical action. However, supporting Edinburgh's cultural organisations does take work and so the policy statements will require financial (or other) back-up if they are to be effective.

In February 2020, the Scottish Government published *A Culture Strategy for Scotland* with the welcome inclusion of an aim to "place culture as a central consideration across all policy areas including: health and well-being, economy, education, reducing inequality and realising a greener and more innovative future" (Scottish Government, 2020, 3). This is part of the strategy's "Transforming through culture" theme, which is about "demonstrating that culture is *central* (emphasis added) to Scotland's well-being and cultural, social, economic and environmental prosperity" (Ibid., 3). Around the same time, public bodies were encouraged to set a date to achieve net-zero emissions.

The increasing focus on climate change, heightened by the decision to hold COP26 in Glasgow, has galvanised action, once again demonstrating the link between non-cultural and cultural policy. In 2021, Creative Scotland engaged CCS to develop a comprehensive Climate Emergency and Sustainability Plan that will support them to

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become a cultural public body achieving the government's net-zero targets and leading by example in the process. The plan will cover not only Creative Scotland's own emissions and adaptation but also that of the wider cultural sector. A collaborative project team, including experts in carbon emissions reduction, public bodies and sustainability policy, adaptation, capacity building and cultural practice, worked with Creative Scotland board, staff members and key stakeholders. A creative practitioner exploring the intersection of climate justice, culture and society was integral to the team. Underpinning the plan's evolution was a series of workshops with Creative Scotland staff and representatives working across Scotland's arts, screen and creative industries. The plan embraces actions for mitigation and adaptation, inspiring Creative Scotland to challenge itself to do more and better as well as defining its role in not only supporting the cultural sector to achieve its climate ambitions but also to decide its own and culture's role in the climate change conversation – as a recipient of and complier with rules set elsewhere or as an agent helping to shape the new Scotland.

The discussion focused on the impact of climate change policy on cultural policy, but *A Culture Strategy for Scotland* and the

work on Creative Scotland's Climate Emergency and Sustainability Plan suggest that this could also operate the other way round. The next phase of carbon emissions reduction will involve far more changes to the lives of individuals and small organisations (the focus so far has been mostly on successfully decarbonising the electricity supply and on large-scale generators and infrastructure). This will require quite a different degree of public engagement, understanding, thinking and actions by those communities and organisations: a change in *society* rather than in the source of the electrons we use. If Creative Scotland seeks to play an active role in achieving a sustainable Scotland, as a body that supports and through its funding, policy and actions, directs cultural organisations that influence and shape society, then its funding, policy and actions may start to influence climate change policy.

In most countries cultural funders are, at most, responding to climate change policy. One exception is Creative Ireland's €2m *Creative Climate Action Fund*, where the focus encourages collaboration between cultural and climate change teams in local government as well as communities and cultural actors. CCS's Climate Beacons project, discussed below, is another less well-

funded example. A cultural policy and strategy that actively seeks to help shape a sustainable society, through the example of cultural organisations, the work they produce and the role they play in their communities, could support and encourage a stronger, more radical and more effective climate change policy landscape.

2. CREATIVE CARBON SCOTLAND'S WORK

The result of this combined climate change and cultural policy has been the work of CCS and its long-lasting strategic partnership with Creative Scotland. This falls into three main areas:

a. Making the cultural sector more sustainable

One of CCS' organisational objectives is enabling the Scottish sector to transition towards net zero and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Accordingly, they develop high-quality, responsive and bespoke tools, such as the UK-focused claimexpenses.com, a web-based tool designed to make expenses claims easier for everyone and capture the details needed to reduce the cost and carbon impact of business travel (which has potential

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for international adaptation). They provide a range of carbon management tools and resources, alongside advice and direct support to the sector's organisations and practitioners to help them improve their environmental sustainability and resilience. These tools and resources have been developed with cultural organisations' reporting needs and climate ambitions at their core (see Appendix for links to these tools).

Strong sectoral support for this work stems from CCS facilitating and managing the RFOs' carbon management planning and emissions reporting mandate on behalf of Creative Scotland. There are 121 RFOs for the current funding period so the relationship can be quite personal: people move between jobs in different cultural organisations, taking their experience with them and many staff have come to know the CCS team. A crucial move was a very strong and concentrated period of support and training just before mandatory carbon reporting was introduced in 2015, with an offer by the Carbon Reduction Project Manager to visit any RFO, wherever they were in the country – including the sparsely populated but culturally important remote islands, the distant Highlands and the Borders region as well as the densely populated Central Belt.

This not only gained support from those organisations and staff that often feel left out by a centralised sector, but it also provided CCS with detailed knowledge of the quirks and challenges, as well as the opportunities, that the RFOs' venues, companies and terrains bring. CCS's approach can be likened to providing a scaffolding, like that used for building work, meaning that no-one needs to fear falling through ignorance or lack of support as they build their new area of expertise – they are always protected.

The success of the carbon management planning work is reviewed internally each year when CCS develops the forthcoming year's programme. An overview report is delivered to Creative Scotland annually.

The team has also built sectoral support through the Green Arts Initiative (GAI), a proactive, voluntary, collaborative network of Scottish creative and cultural organisations working to reduce their impact on the climate and environment, and to be at the forefront of creating a sustainable future for their sector and beyond. Established in 2013 by CCS and Festivals Edinburgh, the network now numbers 300+ members, each with a designated Green Champion (a named contact who is working on the topic rather than any formal role), a commitment

to strive to improve their environmental efforts and to complete an annual feedback form on the environmental action they have taken. In light of the increased urgency and public focus on climate change, and the level of support and enthusiasm that exists within the sector, CCS is currently considering whether it is time to increase the commitment. Current strategic work with Creative Scotland, which is reviewing its wider funding to cultural organisations, suggests that, in the next phase, all funded organisations will have to plan their carbon reduction, although introducing this will take longer in, for example, the screen industry, which has a different structure and poses more practical challenges to measurement, reporting and carbon management planning.

GAI members share good practice and learn from each other. While there are opportunities throughout the year to meet online or in person to discuss specific themes or challenges, and organisations that are local to each other are encouraged to cooperate and collaborate where possible, there are two specific annual events for members to showcase their green achievements: a #GreenArts Day of action on Twitter, and a Green Arts Conference (and subsequent report). An annual *Green Arts Initiative Report* has been published since 2015 (see

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Appendix), based on a simple survey that seeks to understand the GAI's impact in the preceding year and the main areas of work that members are engaged in.

In 2019 Theatre Forum, the main performing arts membership body in Ireland, inspired by GAI's work established their own *Green Arts Initiative in Ireland*. This new network enjoys continuing support from CCS.

A further development in 2021 was the convening of a working group of Scottish cultural organisations and freelancers known as Culture for Climate Scotland, which aims to motivate their peers to go further: “to reach net-zero emissions in advance of the Scottish Government target of 2045, and to do so in a collaborative and inclusive way that contributes to a just and green recovery” (Culture for Climate, 2021, para. 1). In July 2021, they published *10 steps towards a just and green recovery in the cultural sector* (see Appendix).

b. Creative solutions for the climate crisis

A significant part of CCS's activities revolves around enabling the sector to fulfil its wider role in addressing climate change. CCS creates and takes opportunities to explore

collaboratively, and trial innovative approaches to cultural and sociological concepts that bring the cultural and sustainability worlds together to help develop a sustainable society. This has led to invitations to collaborate from organisations including local and national government and public bodies such as Zero Waste Scotland and NatureScot.

This work is housed within CCS's culture/*SHIFT* programme, the practical application of which is often an “embedded artist project”, a concept the organisation has developed since its director Ben Twist met American civic practice artist Frances Whitehead at the Salzburg Global Seminar in 2016. Her work in Chicago to “embed practicing artists into city government in order to bring new perspectives, mind sets and processes to planning projects that revolve around the city's future” (Isé, 2010, para. 7) was inspirational and formative for Twist. The lessons learned from embedded artists and other collaborative projects CCS has undertaken over the past five years – including the Creative Europe Small Co-operation project, *Cultural Adaptations* – resulted in the publication of a *culture/SHIFT methodology* in mid-2021 (see Appendix).

Cultural Adaptations focused on the role of cultural organisations in supporting

wider adaptation to the impacts of climate change as well as adaptation for cultural organisations themselves. With four north-west European cultural partners involved, from Dublin, Gothenburg, Ghent and CCS in Scotland, all joined with “adaptation” teams from their local governments to employ embedded artists on adaptation projects and explore how cultural organisations could develop adaptation strategies. Two academic evaluators reviewed the work throughout and have written a paper with their findings, which was published on the Cultural Adaptations website in November 2021 (see Appendix).

culture/*SHIFT* also embraces (see Appendix for links):

- the *Green Tease* programme of informal get-togethers connecting climate change and cultural professionals
- the *Library of Creative Sustainability*, a database of successful global projects where artists have contributed to environmental work, uniquely focused on and written for those environment professionals without a cultural background
- *Climate Beacons for COP26*

SCOTLAND

Climate Beacons for COP26

More than 30 environmental, cultural and heritage organisations came together in regions across Scotland to inspire public engagement and positive action in the run-up to and beyond the COP26 UN Climate Change Conference, which took place in Glasgow in November 2021.

With a total of £210,000 funding from the Scottish Government’s Climate Change and Culture Divisions, Creative Scotland and Museums Galleries Scotland, seven hubs known as “Climate Beacons” formed across Scotland (£180,000 is shared between the Beacons with £30,000 for project management, travel, etc.). Bringing together shared resources and knowledge from cultural and climate organisations, the Climate Beacons provide a welcoming physical and virtual space for the public, artists and cultural sector professionals, environmental NGOs, scientists and policymakers to discuss and debate COP26 themes and climate action specific to each local area. One metaphor used to describe the aims of the project is to strengthen the pathways between these separate organisations like the neural pathways in the brain – stronger pathways creating yet more connections over time.

CCS is overseeing the project, connecting the seven Beacons and offering support throughout, alongside coordinating partners Architecture & Design Scotland, Creative Scotland, Edinburgh Climate Change Institute, Museums Galleries Scotland, Scottish Library and Information Council, and Sustainable Scotland Network. Additionally, a doctoral research student embedded with CCS is using the Beacons project (as well as another CCS project working with NatureScot on the community management of Marine Protected Areas) to develop and test a framework for evaluation of cultural interventions in climate change project. This will result in a toolkit and approach for evaluation of future projects.

c. Changing the structures within which culture works

CCS also helps organisations that create the structures within which the cultural sector works, such as private and public funders, trade organisations and unions, to incorporate climate change into their thinking and policies – and to ensure they are doing so. CCS says that it works at three levels to bring about change: individuals can’t change if the organisations they work in or with don’t want to change; those

organisations can’t change if the individuals don’t want change, but nor can they if the structures they work in are inimical to change; and finally, those structures can’t change if the organisations won’t change. Action is needed on all three levels at once. CCS provides advice, training and support to those “structuring organisations”.

CONCLUSION

COP26 concentrated the minds of cultural policymakers in Scotland. The Scottish Government’s Culture Division now has a net-zero officer while Creative Scotland has not only commissioned the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Plan but also supported Climate Beacons and a 1.5° film-making project. Creative Scotland and other cultural public bodies joined with CCS to produce a film and run an event to make the case to climate change policymakers from the UN down for culture’s place at the climate change table. Cultural and climate policy may soon be becoming much more closely aligned.

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APPENDIX

CCS resources

- [10 steps towards a just and green recovery in the cultural sector](#)
- [Carbon management tools and resources](#)
- [Claimexpenses.com](#)
- [Climate Beacons for COP26](#)
- [Cultural Adaptations project website, which includes two free-to-use toolkits](#)
- [Culture/SHIFT methodology](#)
- [Green Arts Initiative](#)
- [Green Tease Network](#)
- [Library of Creative Sustainability](#)
- [Climate Beacons for COP26](#)

Other resources

- [Frances Whitehead's What do artists know?](#)
- [Creative Ireland's Creative Climate Action Fund](#)

SPAIN

Towards Sustainable Arts

Recent developments in Spain

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In the context of the Boekman Foundation's project *Towards sustainable arts: International best practices and policies*, this text analyses recent developments around the nexus of culture and environmental sustainability in Spain. The first section examines some trends in public policies at a national, regional and local level, and is followed by an analysis of practices within the arts and cultural sector. A short set of final observations closes the chapter.

1. POLICIES

The integration between culture and environmental sustainability in public policies in Spain has until the last few years been very limited: cultural policy has not generally integrated aspects related to the environment, and cultural aspects have not been substantially integrated into environmental sustainability policies. Recent years have, however, shown some slow progress in this respect. This trend may be especially visible at a regional and local level, something which is significant given that cultural policies in Spain are largely decentralised: in 2016, for instance, local authorities provided 64% of total public expenditure on culture in Spain, with regional authorities and the central

government contributing 22% and 14% respectively (Villarroya & Ateca-Amestoy, 2019).

At a **national level**, the inclusion of measures towards an enhanced sustainability of the cultural and creative industries in Spain's Recovery, Transformation and Resilience Plan, prepared in the context of the post-Covid Next Generation EU initiative, should be noted. In particular, the scheme dedicated to the cultural industries foresees measures aimed at enhancing the sustainability of performing arts and music infrastructures (Spanish Government, 2021). At the time of writing this article, it is too early to determine the effects of these measures, which could however provide some necessary funding to enable cultural organisations to adapt to sustainability needs.

Meanwhile, some initial measures with regard to the cultural and creative sectors have been adopted by public authorities, as described in the Progress Report 2021 which is annexed to the recently-adopted National Sustainable Development Strategy 2030 (Secretaría de Estado para la Agenda 2030, 2021). In particular, the Ministry of Culture and Sports has integrated the consideration of environmental aspects when contracting services related to the production and

transport of exhibitions and has included environmental criteria in the assessment of funding calls in the field of film, including the production of films and the organisation of film festivals. In the mid to long term, the Sustainable Development Strategy 2030 plans to foster sustainable and cultural tourism through, among others, the safeguarding and promotion of cultural heritage in non-urban areas – something which, as shall be seen below, can be connected with pre-existing initiatives to strengthen the role of cultural assets as a development factor in rural areas.

Finally, existing legislation in areas related to environmental sustainability includes few references to cultural aspects. The recently adopted Law 7/2021 on Climate Change and the Renewable Energy Transition, for instance, does not refer to culture, although some of its engagements, including in terms of enhancing energy efficiency in public buildings, may have an impact on cultural infrastructures.

Some **regional governments** have adopted measures connecting culture and environmental sustainability. While a comprehensive analysis for all regions is beyond the scope of this text, the case of Catalonia will be mentioned. An early initiative was the inclusion of an

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environmental impact assessment in the Plan on Cultural Facilities 2010–2020, which also established objectives and qualitative guidelines related to the consumption of energy, water and materials, the promotion of sustainable mobility and an integrated view of cultural facilities within the broader local landscape (Martínez Illa, 2010). These were presented as general orientations, which would then need to be adapted according to the type and size of each cultural facility. For several years, an environmental label has been allocated by the regional government, via the ministry in charge of environmental sustainability, to performing arts and music venues, visual arts galleries, cultural centres, libraries and museums which fulfil minimum environmental standards. A number of good practice guides in areas including the environmental management of cultural facilities and sustainable publications have been published in recent years (see e.g. Departament de Cultura, 2015).

The Catalan Institute of the Cultural Industries (ICEC), an autonomous body within Catalonia's Ministry of Culture, has been particularly active in connecting its mandate with environmental sustainability. Since 2015, financial support is available for organisations interested in receiving consultancy support to develop an

environmental sustainability plan. Approximately € 35,000 has been allocated to this end, in total, between 2015 and 2030. This has enabled some festivals and venues to improve their energy efficiency and adopt other measures contributing to sustainability. Several training activities in areas related to environmental sustainability have also been organised. Selection criteria related to environmental sustainability have been integrated in several funding calls, in areas including the support to bookshops (e.g. for the use of paper or biodegradable bags, as well as low-consumption lighting), publishing houses (use of paper with eco-labels and responsible forest management), film festivals (use of sustainable transportation, catering services, social inclusion, local providers, etc.), and the renovation of theatres (investment in more efficient energy and water systems). At the time of writing, ICEC is drafting its Environmental Sustainability Strategy, which should have a broader impact on its policies.

Finally, at a **local level**, the adoption of Climate Emergency Declarations by some local governments since 2019 has aimed to make climate change adaptation and mitigation a central, cross-cutting aspect in local policies. However, the specific implications of this step are different in each

town or city, and only a handful have integrated commitments related to cultural aspects. Furthermore, the spread of Covid-19 has generally slowed down the effective implementation of the measures planned in those declarations.

Two particularly significant cases are those of Barcelona and El Prat de Llobregat, both of which included a chapter on culture in their respective declarations. In Barcelona, the declaration argues that a change in culture and lifestyles is needed, and provides for measures including fostering awareness-raising around the climate emergency in cultural activities, enhancing collaboration with cultural agents, and improving the environmental performance in public cultural venues (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2020). Measures in this area, with a view particularly to fostering awareness-raising (e.g. environmental education in community cultural centres) and creative productions related to the environment in public space (e.g. through restricting car mobility and fostering pedestrianisation, in areas which are then also used for cultural activities), have been integrated in the new Cultural Rights Strategy adopted by the City Council in 2021 (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2021). El Prat de Llobregat's declaration plans to foster community and participatory cultural

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projects around climate change, promote information and debates on climate change in cultural programming, and integrating “environmental responsibility” in funding calls (Ajuntament d’El Prat de Llobregat, 2020). A working group involving staff from the local departments of culture and the environment has also been established.

Elsewhere, some cities are integrating cultural elements in strategies towards urban “rewilding” which involve making city centres more attractive (see e.g. Cornellà Natura), whereas some libraries and community centres are engaging in citizen science projects which connect creativity and explorations of environmental sustainability (see e.g. the BiblioLab programme of the Provincial Council of Barcelona).

More broadly, it is important to note that a reflection on culture and sustainability going beyond environmental aspects has been central to the work of local governments that have adhered to the Agenda 21 for culture, an international document adopted in 2004 and promoted by United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG).⁵⁶ This was complemented in 2015

by Culture 21: Actions, a toolkit that identifies 100 specific actions that cities may adopt to connect culture and sustainable development.⁵⁷ Both documents are based on a broad understanding of sustainability, which combines the environmental, social, economic and cultural pillar. In particular, Culture 21: Actions provides detailed guidance on how local cultural and environmental policies may be connected in practice. While these are global documents, several local governments in Spain, including Barcelona, Bilbao and Terrassa, have been strong advocates, at a domestic and international level, of the principles and goals of the Agenda 21 for culture.

2. CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS AND ARTISTIC INITIATIVES

The discourse around sustainability and the climate emergency clearly goes beyond the policy sphere and also concerns the activities of cultural organisations, as well as the development of artistic initiatives. Experiences and projects working towards sustainable practices and with ecological

awareness have somehow popped up in different areas of Spain in the last 25 years, but a more structured discourse, with clear aims and practical objectives, only emerged a few years ago and has been accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

In the *2019 Report on the State of Culture in Spain*,⁵⁸ Blanca de la Torre stated that: “On one hand, it is felt that the visual arts have begun to be interested in including ecological issues in their discourses, but a rigorous approach to these issues is however missing. Nor do artistic institutions seem to take responsibility for the moment of *ecocide* in which we find ourselves, and for the high degree of consumption and the carbon footprint emitted as a result of their operations and activities” (De la Torre, 2019, 143-144; our translation). According to this statement, we might say that we have a two-speed process: cultural and artistic institutions, as well as the professionals working in the field, are becoming more and more concerned about the ecological emergency and the need to make culture more environmentally sustainable, but the practical achievement of that complex

56 See <https://www.agenda21culture.net/documents/agenda-21-for-culture>

57 See <https://www.agenda21culture.net/documents/culture-21-actions>

58 The Report on the State of Culture in Spain is a publication by the Culture and Communication Observatory of the Fundación Alternativas, an independent organisation that systematically monitors Spain’s cultural reality.

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process is not that fast. Raising awareness – as certainly one of the main inputs coming from the art and cultural field – is pushing and spreading with great force, while implementation, transition and change of habits require time.

Cultural institutions, and the cultural sector at large, are nevertheless actively engaged in the discourse about sustainability. One important example is given by the great increase in the reflection and the production of documents, meetings, guides and reports with recommendations in the field.

One of the most relevant perspectives that we could highlight is that **focused on the rural environment**. According to a recent study made by the Ministry of Agriculture, almost 85% of the Spanish territory is rural and is inhabited only by 16% of the national population, with an unceasing flow of people moving to the urban centres. This constant process of “emptying” rural Spain demands a

response and innovative proposals also from the cultural sector. The Ministry of Culture has launched some important initiatives in that direction: the annual forum *Culture and Ruralities*,⁵⁹ aiming at exploring the meaning and role of art and culture in the rural area; or the project *Rural Experimenta*,⁶⁰ developed in collaboration with MediaLab Prado, that supports experimental and innovative projects in rural areas. Both initiatives have at their core the reflection about the current ecological and climate crisis and an important output of this process is the publication *Pensar y hacer en el medio rural. Prácticas culturales en contexto* (Thinking and Making in the Rural Environment. Cultural Practices in Context) (Ministerio de Cultura y Deporte, 2020). Several cross-sectoral projects and examples – in-between art, culture and sustainability in the rural space – have emerged as a result of these programmes and encounters. Among the

ones that were recently supported, we could mention *Mi cole rural*,⁶¹ *¡Parabla!*,⁶² or a project focused on fostering food sustainability and innovation in the local food system through participatory processes.⁶³

In the same line we could mention the work developed by the Museu de la Vida Rural in l’Espluga de Francolí (la Conca de Barberà, Tarragona, Catalonia), or the Fundación Cerezales Antonino y Cinia (FCAYC), in the province of León (Castilla León). Both are private institutions the mission of which involves exploring and understanding rural development through the contribution of art and culture. With a special sensitiveness towards the singularity of the Spanish territory and its environmental and social challenges, museums, cultural institutions, centres and foundations are playing an increasingly central role in sustainability education. On one hand, because of the direct connection they can

59 Cultura y Ruralidades: <https://culturayciudadania.culturaydeporte.gob.es/cultura-medio-rural.html>

60 Rural Experimenta: <https://www.medialab-matadero.es/programas/rural-experimenta>

61 “My rural school” aims at creating a programme of coexistence and education in rural areas, an integrated programme within the school year in which students from different places can attend class for a specified time in a rural classroom and experience what is it like to live in a rural town after school (From *Rural Experimenta III*, <https://culturayciudadania.culturaydeporte.gob.es/cultura-medio-rural/rural-experimenta-3.html> our translation).

62 The project *¡Parabla!* It is an exercise of imagination that aims to rethink and build a new imaginary around rural areas. It is a performative workshop for the construction of words, meanings and signifiers, which allow us to attend to both the needs and desires of that territory so complex to define. The objective will be the reflection on this reality and the construction of a first prototype of a glossary of possible word-concepts around the rural and the non-rural (From *Rural Experimenta III*, <https://culturayciudadania.culturaydeporte.gob.es/cultura-medio-rural/rural-experimenta-3.html> our translation).

63 The rural R&D centre as a catalyst space for innovations in the local food system for sustainable territorial development (From *Rural Experimenta III*, <https://culturayciudadania.culturaydeporte.gob.es/cultura-medio-rural/rural-experimenta-3.html> our translation).

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develop with local communities, and on the other, because their role is key to fostering artistic and cultural management practices with a sustainable approach and environmental respect.

From a more artistic perspective, it is important to mention the work made by **collectives and networks operating at the intersection between art, ecology and rural environment**.

El Cubo Verde (The Green Cube)⁶⁴ is the main Spanish network that gathers art spaces, residencies and projects linked to the rural environment. The network promotes encounters and exchanges between artists and cultural managers in order to generate synergies and discuss the current challenges related to sustainability, climate emergency and rural environment. Through the project *Culturarios* (*Humus de iniciativas culturales en el campo*) or their 15-point Manifesto, the network aims at establishing new models of management and creation, based on artistic mediation as a key piece of cultural policies, programmes and projects that are developed in the rural environment. Among the several projects and initiatives working in that

direction, we could also mention *Inland/Campo Adentro – art, ecology and territory*, a collective that started its broad and transversal activities in Spain in 2009, and that operates now at an international level. Their creative work revolves around the concept of environmental collapse and “builds on the premise that the rural offers a physical and cultural space for the generation of diverse ways of life that differ from the hegemonic model”.⁶⁵

Other recently published documents that give a pulse of the context of art, culture and sustainability in Spain, are the work developed by REDS⁶⁶ (the Spanish Network for Sustainable Development, whose mission includes exploring and making visible the relationship between culture and the SDGs), and two reports focused on environmental awareness and cultural sector in Catalonia. The report *Environmental Leadership in the Catalan Cultural and Creative Sector* (2020), authored by the British organisation Julie’s Bicycle on behalf of Catalonia’s Arts Council and Ministry of Culture, is based on a survey with several cultural organisations and includes an analysis of the concrete actions

they have taken in order to address their ecological impact. Among the data that the report provides, we could highlight that “67% of the organisations surveyed believe that environmental sustainability is relevant to the goals of the organisation they represent and 87% believe that their organisation can have a positive impact on environmental sustainability”. Other interesting figures show that: “36% of the answers indicate that their organisation has an environmental action plan, but only 14% of them admit to having it updated” (Pando Martínez, L., 2020, 12-13; our translation). The authors of this article have recently completed a report on local cultural policies, the environment and the climate emergency on behalf of the Provincial Council of Barcelona (Baltà Portolés & Bashiron Mendolicchio, 2021, forthcoming), from which we can extract some of the most relevant approaches that are being developed in the artistic and cultural sector: the function of art as a tool for enhancing the landscape and the cultural and natural heritage; artistic practices deployed as instruments of citizen participation; and a reflection on the use of

64 El Cubo Verde / The Green Cube: <https://www.elcuboverde.org>

65 Inland / Campo Adentro: <https://inland.org/about/what-is-it/>

66 For further information, see Martinell (2020)

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materials and on mobility practices, are some of the current approaches and critical views that artistic practices can contribute to the current climate and environmental challenges.

3. CLOSING OBSERVATIONS

The cultural and creative landscape of organisations and artistic projects that are “transitioning” towards a more ecologically sustainable model and discourse is clearly on the rise across Spain. Several initiatives have sustainability and ecological awareness at the core of their actions as part of their own missions,⁶⁷ while others are gradually introducing these topics in their ways of operating.

As stated above, we can find different speeds and layers: there are some leading organisations that are reaching high standards in becoming more sustainable, and a large number of smaller organisations that still do not consider this in depth or, mostly, do not know where and how to start and have not made much progress on the path to sustainability. A major responsibility from the cultural policy sector is therefore needed in

order to raise awareness and provide support dynamics.

One area that may need to be further explored, particularly from a policy perspective, is the distinctive contribution that culture may make to more adaptive and resilient lifestyles. That is, further to making buildings more efficient and integrating sustainability criteria in funding calls, there is a wealth of artistic initiatives that are reflecting on values, behaviours and relations with the planet. These should increasingly affect public policy, something that is starting to emerge particularly at a local level.

Connected to this is the need to examine the connections between the environmental, social, economic and cultural aspects of sustainability. Increasing attention is being paid to the social economy, for instance, which may offer some pathways towards more sustainable and inclusive economic opportunities, including in cultural areas (e.g. cooperatives providing cultural services, crafts, etc.). The aforementioned initiatives exploring the cultural dimension of rural development may also provide interesting insights in this respect.

While the impact of Covid-19 has generated many pressing needs in the

cultural and creative sectors, and may have diverted the attention of some from environmental sustainability, it also seems that the EU recovery funds could provide some space for progress in the coming years. In particular, mobilising the energies and knowledge existing within local governments and cultural sectors at a local level could enable experimentation and a stronger integration of cultural aspects in approaches to sustainability.

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⁶⁷ For further information, see Martinell (2020)

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Following a career in the performing arts **Katherine Denney (KD)** switched to copywriting working in a variety of sectors including wine, construction, healthcare and the arts expanding her kitbag of communications skills along the way. KD's focus since joining CCS in mid-2019 has been to raise the organisation's visibility and standing across the arts, culture and sustainability sectors.



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COLOPHON

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Taalbureau IJ

Cover image

Picture from the exposition *Single Use Plastic* by Johanna Minnaard. The exposition tries to let the viewer think about the way we use plastic, and shows plastic objects that were made for single use only and that are forbidden since July 2021. The exhibition can be rented via <https://www.johannaminnaard.nl/single-use-plastic>.

About the Boekman Foundation

www.boekman.nl (Dutch) or www.boekman.nl/en/ (English)

The Boekman Foundation is the Dutch Institute for arts, culture and related policy. It collects and disseminates knowledge and information about the arts and culture in both policy and practice. It stimulates research and the development of opinion on the production, distribution and take-up of the arts and on national and international policy on the arts and culture.



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