

# SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH ART

## The Role of Art In and Towards Sustainable Changes

*24-25 September 2020, Online & University of Geneva/Les Saules*

*International conference organized by the Research Committee of Sociology of Arts and Culture (CR-SAC, Swiss Sociological Association) & the Universities of Geneva, Lausanne and Lucerne*

*With the support of the Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences*



Banksy, "I don't believe in global warming", graffiti: [www.banksy.co.uk/out.asp](http://www.banksy.co.uk/out.asp)

## Program & Book of Abstracts

# SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH ART

## The Role of Art In and Towards Sustainable Changes

We gratefully recognize the Swiss Academies and the Swiss Sociological Association for supporting this event.

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## Online Participation & Venue Address

The conference “Sustainability through Art” will take place in a semi-virtual format. All participants will join online via the video platform ZOOM (details below). In addition, Swiss scholars will be meeting at Les Saules in Geneva, 3 Sentier des Saules, 1205 Genève (see: <http://ressources-urbaines.ch/les-saules/>).

## Contact

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## Conference Program

Thursday, 24.09.2020

09:15	09:45	Welcome Address
09:45	11:15	<i>Keynote 1</i> <b>Karin M. Ekström:</b> Tensions Between Marketization and the Value of Art: Looking Beyond the Figures
11:15	11:45	Coffee Break
11:45	12:45	<i>Session 1: The Role of Art in Taking Up Environmental Sustainability</i> <b>Michel Massmünster &amp; Judith Tonner:</b> Creating Futures – Opportunities Through Extra-Curricular Art Education <b>Robin Casse &amp; Carole Christe:</b> “Saving the Planet” while “Making Art”? How the Environmental Crisis Influences Contemporary Performing Arts Production
12:45	14:15	Lunch Break
14:15	16:15	<i>Session 2: The Sustainability of Art</i> <b>Montserrat Filella:</b> Music Listening in the Anthropocene <b>Chien Lee:</b> Seeing Art Through Photographic Mediation – Re-considering Visitor Photography, Virtual Museum, and Sustainability of Exhibition <b>Filip Vermeylen &amp; Ulrike Hahn:</b> High Profile Artists, Museums and Exhibitions and their Ecological Messages <b>Loïc Riom:</b> Concert Atmosphere: Live Music Venues and the Anthropocene
16:15	16:45	Coffee Break
16:45	18:15	<i>Session 3: Art and Social Sustainability in Local Action</i> <b>Jenny Maggi &amp; Fiorenza Gamba:</b> The Guediawaye Hip Hop Centre in Dakar – Articulation between Artistic Production, Political Awareness, and Activism for Sustainable Change <b>Melissa Moralli, Pierluigi Musarò, Paola Parmiggiani, &amp; Roberta Paltrinieri:</b> On Social Sustainability – the Role of Performing Arts in Valorizing Cultural Diversity <b>Sophie Vögele:</b> Teaching and Learning Sustainability? Lessons Learned from Diversity and Anti-Discrimination in Higher Art Education
From 18:15		Informal Discussion & Online Drinks

Friday, 25.09.2020

09:15	11:15	<i>World Café</i>  Parallel Group Discussions lead by <b>Federico Andreotti &amp; Amalia Sacchi, Guy Schwegler, Loïc Riom, and Michel Massmünster &amp; Sophie Vögele</b>
11:15	11:45	Coffee Break
11:45	12:45	<i>Session 4: Policy Change With, Through, and Alongside Art</i>  <b>Bettina Brohmann, Uwe R. Fritsche, &amp; Sina Ribak:</b> How can Art as a “Model of Change” Support Sustainable Transformation Processes – Experiences and Lessons from the Energy Transition in Germany  <b>Harald Heinrichs &amp; Daniel Hoernemann :</b> Arts-based Scientific Policy Advice
12:45	14:15	Lunch Break
14:15	15:45	<i>Session 5: Illustrating Environmental Sustainability</i>  <b>David Maggs:</b> A Theory of Art for its Transdisciplinary Destiny?  <b>Federico Andreotti &amp; Amalia Sacchi:</b> Scientists Take Action – Communication Processes and Methods for Narrating the Sustainable Development Goals to Citizens  <b>Núria Bonet:</b> Sonification and “Climate Fatigue”
15:45	16:15	Coffee Break
16:15	17:45	<i>Keynote 2</i>  <b>Nicolas Nova &amp; François Ribac :</b> Arts and Sustainability
From 17:45		Concluding Remarks & Informal Discussion

## Zoom Links

**Welcome Address & Keynote 1, Karin M. Ekström** (please note, the keynote will be recorded):  
<https://unige.zoom.us/j/95026341642>

**General Conference:** paper sessions and world café breakout rooms – please contact us for the zoom link ([nune.nikoghosyan@unige.ch](mailto:nune.nikoghosyan@unige.ch))

**Keynote 2, François Ribac & Nicolas Nova** (please note, the keynote will be recorded): <https://unige.zoom.us/j/92888134351>

## Conference Theme

The Research Committee of Sociology of Arts and Culture (CR-SAC) of the Swiss Sociological Association and the Universities of Geneva, Lausanne as well as Lucerne would like to welcome all participants to the conference “Sustainability through Art”. The main purpose of the event is to render visible what is being done in the field of “arts and sustainability”, engage in debates and discussions between different actors working in the field, and explore future research and research-action directions.

For more than a century, sociology has studied art and culture as being among the main pillars of society and human activity, intertwined with social norms, values, traditions, ways of being, and seeing. In 2015, the United Nations Member States adopted the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) towards attaining “a better and more sustainable future for all”. Some of the SDGs have long been the direct research subjects of the social sciences: poverty and vulnerability (SDG 1), health and wellbeing (SDG 3), labour and working conditions (SDG 8) as well as gender and social inequalities (SDG 5, 10). Since the 1970s, studies have also delved into the sociological aspects of what was left for a long time to the natural sciences: issues at the crossroads of society and biodiversity, marine and wildlife preservation, energy resources, and climate change – constituting a major part of the SDG agenda.

While the sociology of arts and culture has long dealt with classical sociological questions of artistic production, distribution and reception, the concern for ecological issues has only recently been taken up.<sup>1</sup> On the one hand, the artistic field is an economy and an industry like any other, where the use of natural and human resources leads to questions of inequality, access, and power relations. On the other hand, it represents a particular case, as intertwined with the issues of sustainability are those of artistic meaning, reception and cultural practices, and social factors different than in other fields. This calls for broader sociological analyses of the complex relationships between arts/culture and sustainable development in all its forms. The sociology of arts and culture therefore provides a special take on all areas of sustainability while contributing to bridging the gap between dualisms such as ‘nature/culture’, ‘environment/society’, and ‘art/technology’.

The initially identified two main themes – the environmental and social impact of art and art’s role in the support of the transformations towards more sustainable societies – will be discussed in various ways and approached from different angles. Over thirty scholars will give fourteen presentations, reflecting on the role of art in taking up environmental sustainability (session 1) and illustrating it (session 2), the sustainability of art itself (session 3), and its role in making change happen, both in specific contexts (session 4) and in relation to more broader issues (session 5). These presentations are supplemented in two different ways: first, a world café format on the second day of the conference offers the possibility to discuss issues in a more open format. Second, the conference will start and end with keynote presentations – the first by Karin M. Ekström (University of Borås) and the second by Nicolas Nova (HEAD Genève) and François Ribac (University of Burgundy-Franche-Comté). The virtual format represents a challenge to the informal discussions that are usually an integral part of a conference. We do hope, however, that we are also able to provide the opportunity to socialize, for example with a digital aperitif on the evening of the first day.

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<sup>1</sup> Dr Sacha Kagan kindly compiled and provided us with a reading list that gives an overview of the research that has been done in the field of arts and sustainability in the last 10-20 years. The list is available [here](#).

## Abstracts Keynotes

Karin M. Ekström

Thursday 09:45 11:15

### *Tensions between Marketization and the Value of Art: Looking Beyond the Figures*

The marketization of society has become prevalent during the last decades, bolstered by neoliberal ideas. This transformation has been noticeable also in the cultural sector where cultural institutions have become more adept in identifying their markets and their needs. Marketing is no longer questioned, but part of cultural institutions. A stronger focus on visitors is today manifested in the operations of museums, theatres, operas, etc. As a result of this transformation, artistic expressions are expected to be marketized to a higher degree than before. It is relevant to discuss the risk of high attendance figures overruling other values. The tensions between art and business are not new, but become evident when focus is placed on expectations on return on investments, not only among businesses, but in the cultural sector. In my talk, I will argue that there is a need to look beyond the figures and recognize other values. Three examples are given. First of all, the Swedish glass industry where artistic expression is an explanation of success. It is also interesting to reflect upon if the earlier glass industry in some ways represented a sustainable society. Second, I will discuss the trend among museums to exhibit fashion to attract new audiences. Here, I will give examples from the Röhsska museum of design and craft in Göteborg, Sweden. Finally, I will discuss how Swedish design, in particular, but not exclusively from the 1950s, has managed to survive in the long-run, both in terms of appreciation of good design and monetary value. Here, social and political values are recognized parallel to the development of a contemporary consumer culture. Throughout my talk, I will reflect upon art, design, crafts and materials and their relation to social and ecological dimensions of a sustainable consumer culture.

Karin M. Ekström, University of Borås



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Karin M. Ekström is Professor and Chair in Marketing at University of Borås, Sweden. She is initiator and former director of the Centre for Consumer Science (CFK), an interdisciplinary consumer research center. Her research area in marketing is consumer behavior, specifically consumer culture and concerns family consumption, consumer socialization, collecting, design and the meaning(s) of consumption. She has edited several books, most recently *Beyond the consumption bubble* (Routledge) and the first Nordic textbook in consumer behavior, *Consumer behaviour, A Nordic Perspective* (Studentlitteratur). Ekström is chair of the Scientific Council for Research at the Swedish Consumer Agency and a member of the Council for Research issues at the Swedish Competitive Authority, the Royal Society of Sciences and Letters in Gothenburg and the Swedish Meal Academy.

### *Arts and sustainability*

When it comes to art, ecological matter as well as the term “sustainability” take on many meanings, and artistic practices that address such issues have expanded dramatically in the past few decades. In their work – in multiple fields ranging from music to visual arts, dance, new media arts or cinema – artists may highlight problems, criticise or denounce our behaviour, engage people into debate about environmental collapse, or even aestheticize it. Some may also look for solutions while others reframe our imaginaries and explore other ways of being in the world.

In this dialogue, we will shy away from the often normative perspectives about arts and sustainability, sometimes focused on recommendations about consumption or problematic behaviour. We will instead focus on artistic practices that we find stimulating to question our relationship with their environment. While François Ribac will focus on music and theatre arts, Nicolas Nova will address new media arts and design projects at the crossroads of digital cultures and ecological issues. Based on cases that illustrate how artists deal with environmental issues, this dialogue will shed some light on how these practices correspond to various concepts such as sustainability, or the local/global tension. The dialogue will question how art worlds, in parallel to science-fiction or pop culture, may unleash new imaginaries regarding the current crisis, and the main drawbacks or limits of such perspective.

Nicolas Nova, Geneva University of Art and Design (HEAD – Genève)



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Nicolas Nova (PhD) is associate professor at the Geneva School of Art and Design (HEAD – Genève) and the co-founder of the Near Future Laboratory, a futures research agency based in Europe and California focused on design fiction. His work lies at the intersection of ethnography, interaction design and futures research, with a particular interest in ubiquitous and mobile technologies and the cultural practices surrounding new media. He is interested in observing and documenting digital and new media practices, as well as creating design fictions, i.e. speculative designed objects exploring the experiences of the near future. His latest book *Smartphones, une enquête anthropologique* has just been published by MétisPresses (2020).

François Ribac, University of Bourgogne



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François Ribac is a composer and a sociologist, lecturer at the University of Burgundy-Franche-Comté, and member of the Cimeos Laboratory. He teaches sociology of culture and the performing arts. Ribac has conducted research on popular music learning, the history of sound reproduction, music blogs, and cultural expertise. His latest work (in collaboration with Catherine Dutheil-Pessin) is entitled *La fabrique de la programmation culturelle* (La Dispute 2017). Since then, he has carried out research on how the arts face ecological challenges and is responsible for the research project ASMA (Performing Arts and Music in the Anthropocene) 2016-2019.



## Abstracts Paper Presentations

Federico Andreotti and Amalia Sacchi

Friday 14:45 15:15

### *Scientists Take Action: Communication Processes and Methods for Narrating the Sustainable Development Goals to Citizens*

Nowadays, the global Sustainable Development Goals are strongly communicated to citizens. Although the media are using classic and/or innovative communication processes no appraisal was established on the effectiveness of these. Here for the first time, we assess the effectiveness of classic and innovative communication processes to communicate the sustainable development goals to the general public. We organized three thematic workshops addressing different global environmental crisis: (a) climate change, (b) food system, (c) water availability using and evaluating three communication processes: (i) infographic, (ii) photo storytelling and (iii) virtual reality. We found that more than 50% of the overall 73 participants highlighted virtual reality as the most effective process, while photo storytelling and infographic showed no significant difference. The specific workshop topic affected the preferences of the public: climate change workshop registered that 50% participants preferred the photo storytelling; in “food system” the infographic was preferred equally to VR with no significance difference; while during “water availability” workshop VR got 68% of appreciation. We discuss the implications of our findings analyzing also age and gender of the participants. We believe that addressing tailored communication processes can lead to a more effective communication of the Sustainable Development Goals. <https://www.centraleacquamilano.it/>

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*Sonification and “Climate Fatigue”*

This paper will discuss the role that musical sonification can have in influencing the general public to gain awareness about climate change and adopt more environmentally friendly habits. One of the barriers that environmental education faces is “perceived information overload” (Lorenzoni et al. 2007), as we feel inundated with devastating information about climate change. This information is mostly transmitted visually, for example in graphs or pictures. Music and sound can provide an “additional bandwidth” (Scaletti and Craig 1991) that allows the public to digest information differently and avoid “climate fatigue” (Kerr 2009).

Sonification is the method of translating data into sound. When designed according to musical principles and for artistic purposes, sonification can become musification (Bonet 2019): the musical interpretation of data. The paper will draw on two recent examples from my own compositional practice to discuss novel approaches to transmitting climate change data musically in order to create a renewed and different awareness to environmental issues. Blyth-Eastbourne-Wembury is a soundscape sonification charting the rise of the sea temperature on the British shores, while *Wasgiischwashäsch* is an orchestral sonification using the *William Tell Overture* to tell the rapid change in Switzerland’s meteorological data. I will draw particular attention at the advantages of relying on the listener’s existing knowledge of music (such as a famous piece) to transmit a scientific and emotional message.

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***How can Art as a “Model of Change” support Sustainable Transformation Processes: Experiences and Lessons from the Energy Transition in Germany***

The German “Energiewende” (Energy Transition) was conceptualized already in 1980 by Oeko-Institut, followed by a controversial scientific and political discussion. The Chernobyl accident in 1986 was a tipping point and provoked the first transforming impulse of the energy system at all levels - from niches, regime to landscape and into issues beyond science and politics. For the first time in this policy field, a broad societal movement, from local citizen committees to NGOs and renewable energy start-ups, took shape and spread throughout the country. In the light of today's transformation theories and current research, the multitude of actors play the role of change agents in using a broad variety of experiments to exchange views and experiences: from street action to awareness-raising and media campaigns to art exhibitions and campaigns such as “*EnergieWendeKunst*” (EnergyTransitionArt), from music performances to film clips, movies and theatre. Until today, the movement clearly benefited from many forms of art and used different cultural channels to reach out, gain sympathy and support, and to *diffuse the stark opposition* from utilities, companies, and political parties. In all that, art provides – or at least channels as a model of change – new *social routines and institutions* and supports a discourse on new ideas among actors from different arenas of the multi-level perspective.

What can be learned from Energiewende as a forerunner of societal change for the effects and impact of the SDGs towards a more sustainable future? Can art “deliver” on transformation approaches for more SDGs than 7 and 13?

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***“Saving the Planet” while “Making Art”? How the Environmental Crisis influences contemporary Performing Arts Production***

As doctoral students conducting ethnographies in the art world (Becker, 1988) of contemporary performing arts in French-speaking Switzerland, we are repeatedly confronted with the theme of ecology and "nature" on the field.

Our documentation (theatre newspapers, press articles, artistic programming) leads us to notice that the environmental crisis is being taken into account in an ever-increasing proportion of local artistic works. We also note a diversity of ecological discourses (Trom, 1990) and practices within the institutions studied - theatres and training organizations – and from the actors of this art world.

We will present our ongoing work investigating how these ecological issues are invested by the institutions and actors in the field (artists and technicians, professionals or trainees), on the one hand as creative themes and on the other hand as a lifestyle component (Grossetête, 2019).

We will first propose a brief overview of the programs related to ecological issues in order to show how the environmental themes are treated. We will then discuss how the life courses of our respondents helped us understand the influence of their ecological practices on their aesthetic practices. We will conclude by showing how institutions, the selections they make as gate-keepers, contribute to making environmental themes part of the art world (Dutheil-Pessin & Ribac, 2018).

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*Music Listening in the Anthropocene*

The separation of the music from the performer, with the corresponding portability and repeatability of recorded sound, deeply changed the consumption and production of music along the 20th century. (Mark, "Capturing sound: how technology has changed music", 1970). As written in the presentation of this workshop, Kyle Devine, in his book "Decomposed. The Political Ecology of Music" (2019), studies "the exploitation by the record industry of natural and human resources". In the case of natural resources, however, his analysis falls short because he misses one of the key aspects of the Anthropocene: the chemical composition complexity of our daily objects and its environmental implications (Eggert, Nat. Chem. 3, 688, 2011). It is not just, as Devine mentions, a question of the record industry being based on plastics and the 'nasty' petrochemical industry behind. The problem is deeper: we are now using nearly all the periodic table in most of our objects. The music records of the 20th century (i.e., vinyl, tapes, and CDs) and the 21st century theoretically dematerialized music are both nice examples of it. Plastic in the 20th century records required many additives to fulfil its functions. Recording and reproduction, even in analog times, needed "magnets, gears, motors, electricity" (Krukowski, "Ways of Hearing", 2019). Now, our dematerialized music heavily relies on high-tech materials that requires the extraction of technology-critical elements with a high environmental and human impact. We will explore all these subjects on the base of chemical analysis obtained as follows. First, in the path of Ursus Wehrli, we deconstruct music records (vinyl discs, cassettes, CDs and their casings) and the apparatus needed to listen to them. Then, we analyze the materials obtained with a non-perturbing analytical technique (portable XRF).

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*Arts-based Scientific Policy advice*

The more recent discourses and practices at the intersection of sustainability and (visual) arts have its roots in artistic subfields emerged in the second half of the 20th century. Particularly landscape art and ecological art as well as interventionist, performative art forms are influential in that regard. Connecting to these artistic practices the role of art for sustainable development has been discussed in the scientific community over the past decade in the context of cultural sustainability. Therein the aesthetic and imaginative power of artistic creativity for reflecting and intervening into (un)sustainability has been explored. Next to this understanding of sustainability and arts the approach of arts-based research for sustainable development has emerged. This perspective is about employing artistic practices and strategies in scientific inquiries in order to generate aesthetic- sensory insights. In this context of sustainability, arts and arts-based sustainability science, we – a sociologist and a visual artist – are interested in exploring arts-based scientific inquiry and intervention in policy contexts. Within an experimental case study within a rural county in Lower- Saxony in Germany we aim at investigating the requirements, potentials and limits of arts-based scientific policy advice. In close collaboration with the mayor and the county administration, the project combines quantitative and qualitative scientific studies with artistic research and interventions. We pursue two aims: On the one hand the exemplarily co-creation of arts-based scientific knowledge for policy-making in the county; on the other hand a systematic evaluation and reflection of the process in order to gain generalizable conclusions.

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***Seeing Art through Photographic Mediation: Re-considering Visitor Photography, Virtual Museum, and Sustainability of Exhibition***

With the prevalence of smartphone and social media, seeing art through the mediation of photography has been commonly practiced inside art museums in the form of picture-taking. On the one hand, this leads to possibility of democratized perception of art, as opposed to institutionally privileged or promoted manners. On the other hand, it paradoxically encourages the desire to see the original and thus travel. Two issues of sustainability occur: firstly, individual art museums often are challenged with gallery rooms whose crowdedness and busyness are intensified by the performance of visitor photography; secondly, collectively, art museums, by attracting an increasing size of visitors, inevitably contribute to the carbon footprint of tourism. The outbreak of Covid-19, however, has seen a sudden drop of museum-going and a differently processed photography-mediated seeing, i.e., virtual visit. While the virtual museum is still often in its developing stage and not necessarily perceived by museum professionals as more than merely short-term solution, it should be asked if it can serve as a sustainable form of seeing which helps to reduce tourist travel. It is purposed by this research to, by learning from the affordance of visitor photography, consider the advantage of photography mediated perception. Discussion of visitor photography is based on the researcher's qualitative PhD project (2015-2019) while exploration of virtual museum is and will be conducted during the current closure of a range of art museums. The study serves as a foundation for future museum planning to reach a balance between physical and virtual display of artworks, between access and sustainability.

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***The Guediawaye Hip Hop Centre in Dakar: Articulation between Artistic Production, Political Awareness and Activism for Sustainable change***

In Senegal, hip-hop culture has been spreading since the end of the 1980s, in a context of socio-economic crisis, structural adjustment policies, and the emergence of riots by urban youth, who emancipated themselves from their subordinate role in society by speaking out publicly (Diop and Diouf 1990). Hip hop is the vehicle through which urban youth express their protest against political elites and unequal power relations in society. In Senegal, it accompanies the emergence of political awareness and citizen engagement from below (Aterianous-Owanga and Moulard 2016), which is particularly evident among young people in the less privileged suburbs of Dakar, characterized by the diversity of their origins. In our paper, we analyse the case of Guediawaye Hip Hop, a centre for culture and training in urban culture created in 2013 in the suburbs of Dakar and coordinated by Fou Malade, a rapper and member of the Senegalese citizen movement Y en a Marre (Fouquet 2016). We aim to discuss the links observed in the Dakar hip hop movement between artistic production, political and civic mobilization, and activism in favor of sustainable change. In accordance with the principles promoted by the Y en a Marre movement, Guediawaye Hip Hop acts in favor of the promotion of urban culture among young people in the neighborhood, their political and civic awareness, environmental sensitization, the conversion of abandoned urban spaces into urban agricultural spaces, as well as in the reintegration of young people in prison.

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*A Theory of Art for its Transdisciplinary Destiny?*

From the perspective of a practicing artist and arts researcher focusing on the relationship between the arts and sustainability, it is heartening to see an ever-blossoming interest in the relationship between our expressive, aesthetic, sense-making capacities and the crises of sustainability. However, what is equally intriguing is how little of this transdisciplinary engagement proceeds with either an explicit theory of art or much in the way of historical perspective anchoring its explorations. In our enthusiasm for innovative approaches to stubborn problems, transdisciplinary work with arts practices has spent too little time considering a pair of essential questions: First, why do we think art has agency, and where does the genesis of this instinct typically lead? And second, what do we think we are working with when we are working with the agency of art?

In trying to formulate explicit answers to these questions, the goal is not to argue for an autonomy of art and refuse its growing social obligations. Instead, the hope is to ground our transdisciplinary adventures with the arts in an explicit theoretical framework that generates concrete methodological implications that a field of practice can actually use. Without a clear sense of art's deeper value propositions and the procedural dimensions necessary to preserve them within transdisciplinary work, we risk turning art into a magic bullet of social change destined for a brief methodological fad.

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***Creating Futures: Opportunities through extra-curricular Art Education***

Extra-curricular projects engaged in artistic education create aesthetic experiences. However, in our research we are finding that they also bear opportunities for negotiating personal and collective futures and for making these tangible. Such an experiencing of futures through arts and aesthetics offers new perspectives on how the apparent dissociation of SDGs and motivation for sustainable behavior can be implemented in everyday life. It moreover allows shedding new lights on debates about whether and how the concept of (sustainable) development and the consideration of the needs of future generations take into account the diversity of possible ways of living. So far, strategies in social planning have often been criticized for limiting our future. At the same time anticipatory negotiations are crucial for opening up possibilities. In our contribution we would like to contend that Art Education projects inscribe themselves into those negotiations and into imaginations of futures by, on one hand, addressing the already mentioned (ecologically) sustainable handling of the design material. On the other hand, they are concerned with social change by enabling participation, creating moments of empowerment, and experiences of agency. Finally, arts-based extra-curricular projects are often involved in larger urban neighborhood development plans or in inclusion strategies targeting specific social groups and performing imaginations of a future society. This is how Art Education intervenes with unequal distribution of “the capacity to aspire” (Appadurai) and is itself linked to different power relations and inequalities.

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*On social sustainability: the role of performing arts in valorizing cultural diversity*

Drawing upon the concept of social sustainability, the paper reflects on the double role of performing arts in producing critical representations of migrants and “otherness” and in creating physical and symbolic places of participation and inclusion. In fact, on the one hand, arts can challenge stigmatizing emergency frames fueled by media and political rhetoric; on the other, they can promote inclusive and collaborative spaces of expression and artistic creation, resistance and negotiation. Arts can therefore tackle new forms of exclusion and social inequalities related to migration, through innovative and critical instruments.

The paper opens with a theoretical reflection on how performing arts are related to the concept of social sustainability, which calls into question the reduction of social inequalities, social cohesion and inclusion. These considerations are particularly important in the field of migration, where exclusion, stigmatization and injustice are experienced daily by vulnerable groups. In the second part of the paper, we present some of the results of a European project, “Atlas of Transitions- New Geographies for a Cross-Cultural Europe” (2017-2020), which aims at developing complex social imaginaries through art. The project promotes the use of different artistic languages and instruments to develop new communicative spaces and alternative perspectives, sustaining social inclusion and (inter)cultural participation in seven European countries.

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***Concert Atmosphere: Live Music Venues and the Anthropocene***

Unlike recorded music, live music is often considered to be devoid of any technical mediation (Auslander, 2008). It is therefore not very surprising that the first authors addressing the links between music and the Anthropocene looked at recorded music (Smith, 2015; Devine, 2019). Vinyls, CDs or streams seem much more obvious to catch the ecological consequences of music consumption. However, concert is closely linked to architectural (Forsyth, 1985; Kronenburg, 2019), scientific (Thompson, 2004) or technical (Vinck, 2019; Pisfil, 2020) innovations too. Such an observation should invite us to examine in further details the interplay between live music and the « ecological crisis ».

This paper aims to examine to what extent concert venues can be considered, not simply as empty shells, but as listening devices. For this purpose, I draw on Peter Sloterdijk's (2005) invitation to pay attention to the way humans create atmospheres to live in. Such a perspective helps us to consider music venues as spaces in which music is, at the same time, thought, crafted and experienced. Thus, they are spaces in which humans take control over their environment and shape their world. I will argue that such an approach provides a means of exploring the interplay between live music and the Anthropocene as well as explore the live music world that we can afford.

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***High Profile Artists, Museums and Exhibitions and their Ecological***

*Relevance:* Since the beginning of the 21st century, an increasing number of artists have addressed climate related topics in their works. It is particularly important to understand art covered in mass media because mass media's wide reach can be considered a proxy for art's societal impact. Recent climate-related art is relevant to study, particularly since the adoption of the universal Sustainable Development Goals and the high profile of Greta Thunberg, Friday for Future and Extinction Rebellion activism. Our research could reveal a shift to more activism or from activism to more aesthetic, sensory oriented art.

*Research Questions:* (Why) do particular artists, museums and exhibitions receive widespread coverage in mass media since 2015 in two of the highest carbon dioxide emitting regions (European Union and USA)? What are the main ecological messages of highly covered artists?

*Method:* Analysis of articles covering climate-related art in highly circulated newspapers in Europe and USA (e.g. *Guardian*, *New York Times*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*).

*Results:* The results of this study are threefold: (1) Identifying key artists, museums and exhibitions addressing climate related topics; (2) Explaining the reasons for widespread mass coverage of such key actors; (3) Shedding light on main ecological messages of key artists. The present research forms the basis for a study investigating art's impact. These are part of the PhD research project "Imagining the Climate – The Visual Arts to the Rescue?"

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***Teaching and Learning sustainability? Lessons learned from Diversity and Anti-Discrimination in Higher Art Education***

In my research, I am concerned with the thorny question around the necessary framework to achieve diversity within higher art education. Recently, my efforts led me to push further a core interest for ways in which processes of exclusion affect our very understanding and practices of art or music education and its conveying. In my contribution, I would like to build on these questionings about teaching and learning. Lessons learned on the multiple implications a thorough interrogation of diversity and discrimination has in and among higher art education institutions serves as a helpful backdrop. Thereby, I will especially address SDG 4 concerned with education and consider the role and accountability of art education for sustainable development. By referring to research studies conducted at the ZHdK, I would like to look into how efforts to address sustainability not only alter institutional structures or curriculums but the very practices of art, theatre and music education taught. Sustainable development in education not only asks for fewer air miles or less material waste but also asks for conveying a specific expertise as much as it asks for an altered practice: the accountability of art education lies in an apprehension of SDGs and the urgency of their claims, and – as a consequence – in how the art field (sustainably) develops beyond the higher art education institution. Moreover, the accountability also lies in addressing critical and anti-discriminating standpoints looking into established power relations to better determine a necessary (altered) practice of art education towards sustainable development.

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## Abstracts World Café

Friday 09:15 11:15

During the world café, the conference participants will split up into four groups (four parallel breakout rooms in ZOOM). A moderator (see below) will be in each group and share a preliminary research idea or a theme to form the basis for a discussion. Each group will have the opportunity to switch to another moderator and theme at least once.

### ***Moderators & subject 1: Federico Andreotti & Amalia Sacchi***

For the first world café subject, the French association “Non Conference” forms the starting point. The Montpellier based association is specialized in participatory events connecting art and science, and aims to open up science to citizens. Together with the group, the moderators would like to discuss this work through a sustainability lens.

### ***Moderator & subject 2: Guy Schwegler***

In this session, sustainability and its implications are considered as one of many “conventions”, i.e. ways of justifying and valuing actions, goods, and people and their respective qualities (Boltanski & Thévenot 2006). By taking up this idea of quality conventions, the moderator would like to discuss how sustainability in the sense of the “green” convention can be both in conflict and used in combination with other conventions (with the “market convention”, “industrial convention”, “civic convention”, “domestic convention”, ...). The session’s participants are invited to share their research experience with regard to such conflicts and combinations in justifying artistic production.

### ***Moderator & subject 3: Loïc Riom***

This world café subject aims to reflect on the role of theaters and music venues in the sustainability of the arts. On the one hand, the moderator would like to map the existing works, the possible approaches, but also the projects under development with the groups. On the other hand, the session’s participants will reflect on the questions and issues involved in building, restoring and maintaining places for music and performance in the Anthropocene.

### ***Moderators & subject 4: Michel Massmünster & Sophie Vögele***

The moderators of this session are particularly interested in the analysis of extracurricular formats of art education focusing on social as well as environmental aspects of sustainability. Various findings show that a change in individual and collective behavior is needed to achieve the SDGs. They are currently looking into how art education catalyzes such transformations and represents a turning point to the interplay between current local and global social and environmental challenges, and creative activity. Art education is crucial for allowing the negotiation of personal and collective perspectives. In this way, art education can potentially play a major role in contributing to a sustainable development. Therefore, they are interested in opening up a discussion to not only illuminate the complex relationships between art education and sustainable development, but also to try to bridge the gap between the dualism of society and environment: Are social and environmental sustainability compatible goals of extracurricular art education projects? Does one of them presuppose the other? Under which conditions are they mutually exclusive? Do they overlap? Can we produce synergies?

# SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH ART

## The Role of Art In and Towards Sustainable Changes

### Participants

1. Amalia Sacchi, Università degli Studi di Milano
2. Bettina Brohmann, Öko-Institut, Freiburg i.B.
3. Carole Christe, University of Lausanne
4. Chien Lee, Goldsmiths University of London
5. Daniel Hoernemann, CommunityArtWorks
6. David Maggs, Institute for Advanced Studies in Sustainability, Tokyo
7. Federico Andreotti, Wageningen University and Università degli Studi di Milano
8. Filip Vermeylen, Erasmus University Rotterdam
9. Fiorenza Gamba, University of Geneva
10. François Ribac, University of Burgundy-Franche-Comté
11. Guy Schwegler, University of Lucerne
12. Harald Heinrichs, Leuphana University Lüneburg
13. Jenny Maggi, University of Geneva
14. Judith Tonner, Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK)
15. Karin M. Ekström, University of Borås
16. Loïc Riom, CSI Mines-Paristech and University of Geneva
17. Marlyne Sahakian, University of Geneva
18. Melissa Moralli, University of Bologna
19. Michel Massmünster, Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK)
20. Montserrat Filella, University of Geneva
21. Nicolas Nova, Geneva University of Art and Design (HEAD – Genève)
22. Nuné Nikoghosyan, University of Geneva
23. Núria Bonet, University of Plymouth
24. Olivier Moeschler, University of Lausanne
25. Paola Parmiggiani, University of Bologna
26. Pierluigi Musarò, University of Bologna
27. Roberta Paltrinieri, University of Bologna
28. Robin Casse, University of Lausanne
29. Sina Ribak, Researcher for ecologies & the arts
30. Sophie Vögele, Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK) and Academy of Fine Arts Vienna
31. Ulrike Hahn, Erasmus University Rotterdam
32. Uwe R. Fritsche, International Institute for Sustainability Analysis and Strategy (IINAS), Darmstadt