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Introduction: Sustainability through Art, and vice-versa. Reflections on the Conference

Olivier Eric Moeschler, Nune Nikoghosyan, Loïc Riom, Marlyne Sahakian,
Guy Schwegler

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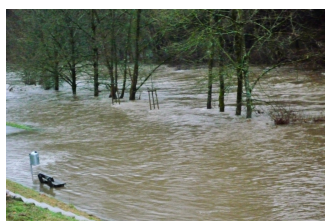
Sustainability through Art: The Role of Art In and Towards Sustainable Changes

SCORAI Europe Workshop

September 24-25, 2020, Geneva, Switzerland



A 1-year-old graffiti near the Port of London in London, UK. (Source: P. J. Kavanagh)



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.

In collaboration with:

Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences

Swiss Sociological Association

SCORAI Europe

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The conference “Sustainability through Art” took place in a semi-virtual format. All participants joined online via the video platform ZOOM. In addition, Swiss scholars met at Les Saules in Geneva.

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Introduction: Sustainability through Art, and vice-versa. Reflections on the Conference

*Olivier Moeschler**, *Nuné Nikoghosyan***, *Loïc Riom****,
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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), labor and working conditions (SDG 8) as well as gender and social inequalities (SDG 5, 10). 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. 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. But while the sociology of arts and culture has long dealt with classical sociological questions of artistic production, distribution and reception, the concern for ecological and social issues has only recently been taken up¹.

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’.

In September 2020, 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 organized the conference “Sustainability through Art.” The main purpose of the event was 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. Two main themes or questions guided the conference:

¹ For a reading list on arts and sustainability in the academic literature, see this resource compiled by Sacha Kagan and kindly transmitted to the conference organizers available [here](#).

1) What is the environmental and social impact of art? The impact of artistic production, distribution, and reception on ecology and environmental issues, but also on the world of work, gender, and other social dimensions of sustainability, needs further and thorough examination. How can art be sustainable, both ecologically and socially through time? What can we make of the sustainability of art that is made to last long – such as sculptures, paintings, prints or recorded productions – as well as of the required preservations techniques and places? And, on the other hand, what is the place of ephemeral art when considering sustainability (in all its aspects): street art, graffiti, art installations, live music and theatre? Until recently, online streaming of music and films, for example, was believed to be ecologically friendly compared to producing and storing recorded material. But figures are now emerging that show the significant impact of such numerical data storage on the environment. Alongside questions of production and consumption, there is the issue of mobility and the impact of art’s increasing cosmopolitan and globalized way of functioning of artists as well as of audiences. Furthermore, the increased marketization of art in a neoliberal perspective merits reflection in relation to sustainability. This has led to collective efforts to further understand the impact of culture on climate change, including a recent charter by artists in Western Switzerland.

2) How can art support transformations towards more sustainable societies?

A change in individual and collective practices is needed to achieve the SDGs. What role can or do artists play in these transformations? Can artists contribute to shaping alternative paths? Artistic and cultural practices are deeply linked with social norms and values, and with social classes and individual acts, as many sociologists have argued. Studies linked to the political paradigm of “cultural democratization” have, notably in France, put forward what could be seen today as the “social sustainability” of arts and culture, though without explicit mention of it. The dimension of ecological sustainability, however, has hardly been brought out. Have militant or socially engaged arts - with artworks created, collected and presented by such associations as Utopiana, Art Works for Change or Art for the World - accomplished their goal of raising awareness and possibly changing individual and collective actions towards more sustainable pathways? These questions seem especially relevant as the United Nations itself is promoting the SDGs through culture, such as art exhibitions and children’s literature (the SDG book club), while social scientists such as Bruno Latour are, in the same light, curating art exhibitions like Reset Modernity and Critical Zones: Observatories for Earthly Politics. In Geneva, Utopiana curated a one-year program around the theme of “1,000 Ecologies,” to reflect on how ecologies of the mind can be further developed, in relation to notions of power, desire, and creativity, among other factors. If culture is used as a means of achieving the SDGs, what role do art education and access to art play in implementing sustainability? How do culture, education and international cooperation come together, as in the example of the future Cité de la musique in Geneva, in achieving these and other socially responsible goals?

The conference “Sustainability through Art” took place in Geneva and online on September 24-25 2020, the week after the 8th World Sustainability Forum, with the support of the SAGW-ASSH through its “Sustainable Development Goals” Seed Money Funding 2020. The conference brought together some fifty participants, both researchers and practitioners, from around the world to discuss issues related to art

and sustainability in all its forms. Over thirty scholars from France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, UK, Japan, and Switzerland gave fourteen presentations. They reflected 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 were supplemented in two different ways: first, a world café format on the second day of the conference offered the possibility to discuss issues in a more open format, with four group discussions. Second, the conference started and ended with two 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).

At first, having to limit the face-to-face presence to only participants from Switzerland seemed like a handicap. The online event, however, allowed many people from other countries to join the conference - people who otherwise could not have made it due to scheduling conflicts or lack of time and resources to travel. What these two days of discussion especially brought to the surface was the necessity to cover a diversity of topics, perspectives, and methodologies when trying to link art and sustainability. The starting point that led to the organization of the conference was the twofold relationship between art and sustainability: art as a means to attain more sustainability in a large palette of areas, and art in itself as an example or research subject to study sustainability. The paper presentations shed light on these issues and opened up new avenues of research. One important element to note is the extent to which all these considerations are intertwined and cannot be entangled without a holistic perspective.

The conference presentations and subsequent discussions led to key reflections on the relationship between art and sustainability. We have summarized these reflections as follows into a series of inter-related points that are by no means conclusive. We trust that these themes might open up to further discussion and debates:

- 1. Art as a means of reflection.** In its ability to capture attention, affect emotions or catalyze debates, art can be a powerful medium for reconsidering our position in the world. It thus follows that art could serve to increase our reflexivity in relation to ‘sustainability’ issues, understood as a way of living well in the world with a consideration for both social justice and environmental resilience. Art can lead directly or indirectly to becoming more aware (and raising awareness in others) of our possible role in sustainability in all its forms – ecological, social, and economic. The role of education plays a particularly crucial role here, for people of all ages and through diverse methods. Thus there is the open possibility that art can be somehow put to use in information or education campaigns, as a way to reach a broad range of people through diverse methods, and to communicate and instill a set of values that would promote sustainability. And yet, it would be limiting to understand the role of art in this way: decades of research in sustainability have demonstrated that information campaigns are insufficient, and that informing people to encourage a change in conduct is a limited understanding of how social change comes about. Art can be a means of reflection towards more sustainable practices in some instances, but something more is needed to encourage reflexivity, as we will now turn to.

- 2. Art as a collective and inclusive practice.** The process of making art and of experiencing art is a collective process. All forms of art engage multiple and diverse actors, from those that are at the origins of an idea, that produce the work, that stage it, and that participate in its delivery – whether as a spectator, or as a more active participant. Art can also be an inclusive practice, particularly in processes whereby different people come together to create art, from different backgrounds or with different competencies. An example of such a process is when artists invite members of the public to produce alongside them. The practice of ‘making art’ or ‘seeing a work of art’ can be experienced individually, but behind an individualized action or moment, there is always a collective that made that action or moment manifest. This sheds light on what is sometimes the over-individualization of the artistic process, whereby a work is assigned to one person’s name; true inclusiveness would need to take up ethical issues around who is recognized for an artwork, and in what way. Here, sociological research into these collective and inclusive practices stresses the relevance of the social aspects that could otherwise be dismissed in favor of types of aesthetic or other dominant reasoning that change over time.
- 3. Art and the art market.** Art is often perceived to be a disinterested practice, a higher form of activity that rises above capitalist interests. Yet art as a commercial activity is rooted in marketization processes, or even is itself a driving engine to create new markets and prone to the same forms of financial speculation that can be found in other sectors, such as real estate. In the same way that ecological economists have pained to place human activities firmly within biophysical processes, so too does the art market need to be considered not solely in terms of flows of capital and art stock, but also in relation to the resources (of energy and materials) that flow through the art system. While artworks can be monetized or turned into an asset, the true environmental and social cost of art in all its manifestations (from the work of art, its performance and distribution, to storage and final disposal) remains to be studied more extensively. All of these stages involve both material and human resources. Hence, more attention should be given to systems of provision in art, towards understanding how art is made, by whom, including or excluding whom, and through what process.
- 4. Reconciling consumption and production.** In sustainability studies, there is a long history of improving systems of production towards increased efficiencies, through new technologies for example. While (un)sustainable consumption is recognized as a growing concern, how to go about changing consumption practices is much less understood. One claim is that more should be done to stop the spread of consumerism, which could include the consumption of art. Another approach might be to blur the lines of the dichotomy and rather study how and in what way production and consumption can be reconciled. Art collectors can become producers, artists can become spectators, or as everyday people can become performers. Art can therefore be a fitting model for studying sustainability, as lines can be deliberately blurred between consumption and production.
- 5. Art as a tool for conviviality.** As Ivan Illich suggested, the process of industrialization and alienation from our means of production can be

thwarted through what he called “tools for conviviality.” Art, or certain forms of it, may perhaps be such a tool. Through art, public spaces can be reclaimed, trends towards commercialization and individualization can be thwarted, norms and standards can be contested – towards the normative goal of sustainability. With tools for conviviality, the craft of art-making, or (re)appropriating the means of artistic production, can be given more emphasis, as a means of production that gives value and meaning not solely to an end product for sale or display, but to the process of creating art, or the practice of art-making.

And here again, we return to our first points to close the circle: art becomes a sustainable practice, when it encourages reflexivity, when it fosters inclusiveness, when the social and environmental impacts are accounted for, above and beyond market value, and when it allows for a better recognition for the practice, rather than the product. And then, perhaps, sustainability becomes an art form: the ability to reflect and act upon the world, for a good life for all.

Following the enthusiasm around this conference, a platform was launched to continue the discussion and exchanges. An informal network around this topic was launched – the Sustainability to Art Network (STAN). To start with, the structure of the network revolves around a [mailing list](#) and a [Twitter account](#). Anyone interested in the topic is welcome to join to continue the discussions.

Abstracts Keynotes

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

Karin M. Ekström

University of Borås

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.

The presentation was recorded and is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s1FOU5jMMK8>

Arts and Sustainability

Nicolas Nova and François Ribac***

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

***University of Bourgogne*

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.

The presentation was recorded and is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w3dOOPo5kbA>

Abstracts of the Paper Presentations

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

Federico Andreotti and Amalia Sacchi***

**Wageningen University and Università degli Studi di Milano, **Università degli Studi di Milano*

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/>

The authors made the presentation’s slides available. These materials (amongst others) can be downloaded here:

<https://drive.switch.ch/index.php/s/O1Gyb99so3HWZhP>

Sonification and “Climate Fatigue”

Núria Bonet

University of Plymouth

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 over-load” (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.

The author made the presentation’s slides available. These materials (amongst others) can be downloaded here:

<https://drive.switch.ch/index.php/s/O1Gyb99so3HWZhP>

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

Bettina Brohmann, Uwe R. Fritsche** and Sina Ribak****

Öko-Institut, Freiburg i.B., ** International Institute for Sustainability Analysis and Strategy (IINAS), Darmstadt, * Researcher for ecologies & the arts*

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?

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

Robin Casse and Carole Christe***

**University of Lausanne, **University of Lausanne*

The theme of sustainability has been progressively invested in the performing arts world. The rising awareness of Anthropocene from all participants of these art worlds has played a role in the constitution of various territories' performing arts institutions' programmes.

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 but our documentation (theatre newspapers, press articles, artistic programming) leads us to notice 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.

The aim of this presentation is to show how the ecological professional practices are influenced by the position in the work collective but also by the more general position in the social space. We thus present our ongoing work investigating how these ecological issues are invested by artists and technicians, on the one hand as professional practices and on the other hand as a lifestyle component (Grossetête, 2019).

The first results of our study show that our respondents are not equally able to choose by themselves the operating methods that correspond to their ecological consciousness. Furthermore, our inquiry illustrates varying degrees of adherence to the "eco-citizen norm" (Ginsburger, 2020) in our respondents sample, which is correlated to their "professional culture" (Perrenoud & Sainselieu, 2018). Such results suggest on the one hand that, concerning sustainable practices in art worlds, the power of decision rests primarily on gate-keepers (Dutheil-Pessin & Ribac, 2017) and, on the other hand, the interest of the tools of the sociology of work for the analysis of sustainability in art worlds.

Music Listening in the Antropocene

Montserrat Filella

University of Geneva

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 perfect examples of it. Plastics 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 require the extraction of technology-critical elements with a high environmental and human impact. The transition from plastic-based supports to the current dematerialized music is a text-book example of our era, the Anthropocene. It is important to realise that listening music in the Anthropocene, because of its extractive nature, has become undistinguishable from any other consumer activity such as using a robot vacuum cleaner; it has definitively lost its possible uniqueness.

Arts-based Scientific Policy advice

Harald Heinrichs and Daniel Hoernemann**

**Leuphana University Lüneburg, ** CommunityArtWorks*

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.

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

Chien Lee

Goldsmiths University of London

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.

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

Jenny Maggi and Fiorenza Gamba***

**University of Geneva, **University of Geneva*

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.

<https://vimeo.com/469804993>

The authors have made presentation slides available. These materials (amongst others) can be downloaded here:

<https://drive.switch.ch/index.php/s/bIByvjV79gByYqm>

A Theory of Art for its Transdisciplinary Destiny?

David Maggs

Institute for Advanced Studies in Sustainability, Tokyo

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.

Creating Futures: Opportunities through extra-curricular Art Education

Michel Massmünster and Judith Tonner***

**Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK), ** Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK)*

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.

On social Sustainability: the Role of Performing Arts in Valorizing cultural Diversity

Melissa Moralli, Pierluigi Musarò**, Paola Parmiggiani***, and Roberta Paltrinieri*****

University of Bologna, **University of Bologna, *University of Bologna, ****University of Bologna*

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.

Concert Atmosphere: Live Music Venues and the Anthropocene

Loïc Riom

CSI Mines-Paristech and University of Geneva

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.

Climate-Related Art Exhibitions in News Media: Artivism or Inconclusive, Open-Ended Art?

Filip Vermeylen and Ulrike Hahn***

**Erasmus University Rotterdam, **Erasmus University Rotterdam*

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 elite news media because they can be agenda setters and reflect public concern regarding climate change. 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. This research could reveal a dominance of either artivism or aesthetic, sensory oriented art in news media coverage.

Research Questions: (How) is exhibited, climate-related art covered in US and European news media between 2015 and 2020, focusing on activist and non-activist art?

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

Results: Answering this question will allow asserting if exhibited, climate-related art receives a stage in news media. It will also allow identifying key artists, museums and exhibitions addressing climate related topics. Moreover, it could reveal if there exists a dominance of either artivism or non-activist art in news media coverage, and how such art is being covered/what characteristics it has with regards to aesthetics, artistic qualities and emerging themes.

The present research is part of the PhD research project “Imagining the Climate – The Visual Arts to the Rescue?”. Subsequent studies will investigate artist statements, artwork’s imagination of climate change, and art’s impact.

Website about PhD research:

www.imaginehumannature.art/phd-research-overview/

vermeylen@eshcc.eur.nl

hahn@eshcc.eur.nl

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

Sophie Vögele

Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK) and Academy of Fine Arts Vienna

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.

Abstracts World Café

World Café

Parallel Group Discussions

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

Achieving social and environmental sustainability through Art Education?

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?

Annex

Conference Program

Thursday, 24.09.2020

- 09:15 09:45 Welcome Address
- 09:45 11:15 *Keynote 1*
Karin M. Ekström: Tensions Between Marketization and the Value of Art: Looking Beyond the Figures
- 11:15 11:45 Coffee Break
- 11:45 12:45 *Session 1: The Role of Art in Taking Up Environmental Sustainability*
Michel Massmünster & Judith Tonner: Creating Futures – Opportunities Through Extra-Curricular Art Education
Robin Casse & Carole Christe: “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 *Session 2: The Sustainability of Art*
Montserrat Filella: Music Listening in the Anthropocene
Chien Lee: Seeing Art Through Photographic Mediation – Re-considering Visitor Photography, Virtual Museum, and Sustainability of Exhibition
Filip Vermeulen & Ulrike Hahn: High Profile Artists, Museums and Exhibitions and their Ecological Messages
Loïc Riom: Concert Atmosphere: Live Music Venues and the Anthropocene
- 16:15 16:45 Coffee Break
- 16:45 18:15 *Session 3: Art and Social Sustainability in Local Action*
Jenny Maggi & Fiorenza Gamba: The Guediawaye Hip Hop Centre in Dakar – Articulation between Artistic Production, Political Awareness, and Activism for Sustainable Change
Melissa Moralli, Pierluigi Musarò, Paola Parmiggiani, & Roberta Paltrinieri: On Social Sustainability – the Role of Performing Arts in Valorizing Cultural Diversity
Sophie Vögele: 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 Federico Andreotti & Amalia Sacchi, Guy Schwegler, Loïc Riom, and Michel Massmünster & Sophie Vögele
11:15	11:45	Coffee Break
11:45	12:45	<i>Session 4: Policy Change With, Through, and Alongside Art</i> Bettina Brohmann, Uwe R. Fritsche, & Sina Ribak: How can Art as a “Model of Change” Support Sustainable Transformation Processes – Experiences and Lessons from the Energy Transition in Germany Harald Heinrichs & Daniel Hoernemann : Arts-based Scientific Policy Advice
12:45	14:15	Lunch Break
14:15	15:45	<i>Session 5: Illustrating Environmental Sustainability</i> David Maggs: A Theory of Art for its Transdisciplinary Destiny? Federico Andreotti & Amalia Sacchi: Scientists Take Action – Communication Processes and Methods for Narrating the Sustainable Development Goals to Citizens Núria Bonet: Sonification and “Climate Fatigue”
15:45	16:15	Coffee Break
16:15	17:45	<i>Keynote 2</i> Nicolas Nova & François Ribac : Arts and Sustainability
From 17:45		Concluding Remarks & Informal Discussion

Conference Participants

(By first name)

Amalia Sacchi, Università degli Studi di Milano
Bettina Brohmann, Öko-Institut, Freiburg i.B.
Carole Christe, University of Lausanne
Chien Lee, Goldsmiths University of London
Daniel Hoernemann, CommunityArtWorks
David Maggs, Institute for Advanced Studies in Sustainability, Tokyo
Federico Andreotti, Wageningen University and Università degli Studi di Milano
Filip Vermeulen, Erasmus University Rotterdam
Fiorenza Gamba, University of Geneva
François Ribac, University of Burgundy-Franche-Comté
Guy Schwegler, University of Lucerne
Harald Heinrichs, Leuphana University Lüneburg
Jenny Maggi, University of Geneva
Judith Tonner, Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK)
Karin M. Ekström, University of Borås
Loïc Riom, CSI Mines-Paristech and University of Geneva
Marlyne Sahakian, University of Geneva
Melissa Moralli, University of Bologna
Michel Massmünster, Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK)
Montserrat Filella, University of Geneva
Nicolas Nova, Geneva University of Art and Design (HEAD – Genève)
Nuné Nikoghosyan, University of Geneva
Núria Bonet, University of Plymouth
Olivier Moeschler, University of Lausanne
Paola Parmiggiani, University of Bologna
Pierluigi Musarò, University of Bologna
Roberta Paltrinieri, University of Bologna
Robin Casse, University of Lausanne
Sina Ribak, Researcher for ecologies & the arts
Sophie Vögele, Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK) and Academy of Fine Arts Vienna
Ulrike Hahn, Erasmus University Rotterdam
Uwe R. Fritsche, International Institute for Sustainability Analysis and Strategy (IINAS),
Darmstadt

About SCORAI Europe

Founded in North America and inspired by the European SCORE! Network (2005-2008), SCORAI is an international network of professionals working to address challenges at the interface of material consumption, human fulfilment, lifestyle satisfaction, and technological change. SCORAI Europe was founded in the context of the European Roundtable for Sustainable Consumption and Production conference in Bregenz 2012. In that session, participants unanimously agreed that creating a SCORAI Europe network would help strengthen the sustainable consumption community in Europe, both in terms of research and practice. Shortly afterwards, SCORAI Europe was launched. Its goal is to support a community that contributes forward-thinking, innovative research in the area of sustainable consumption, while also bridging academic research with mainstream thinking and policy-making. Since then, SCORAI Europe closely works with the Society of the European Roundtable for Sustainable Consumption and Production (ERSCP) and our sister SCORAI organization in North America, as well as other research networks that are focused on the challenges of addressing the society-environment nexus from a consumption perspective like the Degrowth community.

Since its inception, SCORAI Europe has organised and run a number of workshops and conferences with the aim of bringing together practitioners and researchers to enhance understanding and find innovative approaches toward sustainable consumption. For more information, please click on the links below.

- Geneva (2019) [*Sustainable Consumption Transition Series Issue 7*](#)
Consumption corridors: exploring concepts and implications
- Budapest (2016) [*Sustainable Consumption Transition Series Issue 6*](#)
Sustainable Consumption and Social Justice in a Constrained World
- Vienna (2015) [*Sustainable Consumption Transition Series Issue 5*](#)
“Beyond” Transition? Understanding and Achieving Sustainable Consumption through Social Innovation
- Leipzig (2014) [*Sustainable Consumption Transitions Series Issue 4*](#)
Degrowth and Sustainable Consumption – Inspiration for mutual learning
- London (2014) [*Workshop Report*](#)
Sustainable Consumption Workshop
- Rotterdam (2013) [*Sustainable Consumption Transitions Series Issue 3*](#)
Pathways, scenarios and back casting for sustainable and low-carbon lifestyles: Comparing methods, cases and results
- Istanbul (2013) [*Sustainable Consumption Transitions Series Issue 2*](#)
Bridging Across Communities and Cultures Towards Sustainable Consumption
- Muenster (2013) [*Workshop Results*](#)
Challenges to Sustainable Development
- Bregenz (2012) [*Sustainable Consumption Transitions Series Issue 1*](#)
Sustainable Consumption During Times of Crisis

To learn more about SCORAI, please visit: <https://scorai.net/europe/>, where you will find a dedicated web page for SCORAI Europe activities.

To join the SCORAI EUR listserv please [open this page](#)

For more information on SCORAI Europe, please contact: scoraieurope@gmail.com.

SCORAI Europe supporting community

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