Art, Nature and the City

A creative European benchmark

MASTER Governing Ecological Transitions in European Cities

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PREFACE

The Institute for the Arts and Creation is a unique initiative born from Sciences Po's historic commitment to integrating the arts within a curriculum focused on the humanities and social sciences, fostering dialogue among these disciplines. Established in March 2023, the Institute believes that sensory experiences can inspire bold thinking and novel perspectives on the challenges faced by contemporary societies. Our mission is to strengthen the connections between the arts, humanities, and social sciences through courses, artist residencies, and collaborations with various programs at Sciences Po.

This team project, led by four first-year Master's students at the Urban School, is part of the "Nature in the City" project, funded by the Gerard B. Lambert Foundation. The project aims to create space for interdisciplinary and cooperative initiatives focused on urban landscapes. It embarks on a visionary exploration of the intricate relationship between urban environments and the natural world, seeking to unravel the complex interactions between human societies, urban development, and biodiversity preservation.

At the Institute for the Arts and Creation, we are particularly interested in understanding how the concept of landscape, approached through artistic and sensory lenses, can transform urban environments into livable cities. We explore how local public policies can leverage the arts to address ecological and social transitions.

Through a qualitative and quantitative study, including a common analysis framework and standardised questionnaires across cities, and comparative fieldwork in Copenhagen, Berlin, and Bristol, the students developed enriched insights into urban life. They produced recommendations for enhancing the impact of artists on urban settings and environmental transitions.

This project is significant for the inaugural year of the Institute for the Arts and Creation. It underscores our interest in fostering links between artists, cities, and nature, and understanding their interactions. We also emphasise active pedagogy, central to team projects, encouraging students to develop skills such as critical thinking, collaborative discussion, and creativity. This initiative has helped us imagine new urban forms where nature and art coexist harmoniously.

Esther Rogan, on the behalf of the Institute for the Arts and Creation

THE PARTNER

This project was supervised by the Institute for the Arts and Creation of Sciences Po Paris, which aims to facilitate bridges between arts and social sciences through a wager on "the experience of the senses to (...) rethink solutions to the challenges facing our contemporary societies"[1].

It was accompanied by a conference cycle "Dessiner la ville" ("Draw the City"), organised by the Urban School and the Institute for the Arts and Creation, designed and hosted by Jeanne Varaldi, our tutor, artist and urban planner, graduate of the Urban School. The cycle was composed of three round tables and a site visit to understand the role of the arts and the artists in the urban factory.

Together with the work of the post-doctoral researcher Francesca Ferlicca, the project was part of the program "the Nature in the City project", generously funded by the Gerard B. Lambert Foundation and made possible by the Urban School and the Institute for the Arts and Creation.

METHODOLOGY

We dedicated the first phase of our project to delve into the concepts and potential tensions underlying the triptych "city, arts, ecology". To build a theoretical framework, we focused our research on exploring the existing literature, going to conferences, exhibitions and theatre plays. We also conducted interviews with theatre author and director Samuel Valensi, responsible for the cultural sector in The Shift Project, as well as with professor Lucie Marinier, holder of the cultural engineering chair at the CNAM in Paris.

We then were drawn to investigate projects that embody the perspectives discovered in our theoretical exploration, which is why we selected Bristol, Copenhagen and Berlin as complementary fields. Studying these nebulas of initiatives required a deeper understanding of the specificities of cultural and political contexts, acquired by reviewing official documentation and conducting preliminary interviews on Zoom with stakeholders (Jesper Koefed-Melson from Vida Local, and Garance Maurer from The Floating University), as informants of the each city's scene. On-site visits were pursued to understand the cities' atmospheres, complemented by a total of 78 surveys to inhabitants and on-site interviews with 15 stakeholders, followed by several other interviews post-field

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[1]Sciences Po. (2023). *Maison des Arts et de la Création*. Retrieved May 29, 2024, from https://www.sciencespo.fr/fr/vie-a-sciences-po/maison-des-arts-et-de-la-creation/

work on Zoom. The material gathered was first analysed for each city, and then in a comparative perspective to reach conclusions through a meta-analysis of all fields.

In parallel, we were building the blocks for our research to land in Aubervilliers, where culture and arts play a crucial role in ongoing territorial transformations. We conducted interviews with Zakia Bouzidi, elected official at the town hall in charge of Culture and Environment, and associative actors that act at the intersection of environmental, artistic and social issues, following a similar interview guideline as the one used in our case studies. They went from national music scenes to artists collectives: Le Point Fort, Les Poussières, POUSH and Les Laboratoires d'Aubervilliers.

FIELDS STUDIED

This page is taken from the exhibition made for the Urban Lab Day (11th June 2024), with graphic illustrator Mathilde Riou.

We chose cities where the ecological crisis was at the heart of the **concerns of public institutions and inhabitants**. In the face of this common challenge, artistic initiatives are **structured differently**. **Bristol**, one of the cradles of street art, sees strong community involvement in environmental activist networks. **Berlin** is known as a hub of alternative cultural practices with a strong political resonance. In **Copenhagen**, socio-environmental considerations are integrated into the urban planning process.

Superkilen Park

© Philippine Ciupek

was created in 2011 on a former wasteland in the **multicultural district** of Nørrebro, financed by the RealDania foundation and co-created by 3 architectural and artistic firms, Superflex, BIG Architects and Topotek1. The aim is to celebrate the district's **diversity** by giving residents the choice of street furniture imported from their country of origin.

Vida Local

Grønttorvet
© Christian Brems

Rooted in an **empowerment** approach, Vida Local helps communities to create, develop and implement strategies for building **links** within themselves and with the place they inhabit. **Cultural practices** are central to the approach.

BRISTOL
Art for / by local residents

COPENHAGEN
Sustainable urbanism

✎ Mathilde Riou

BERLIN
Hub of engaged alternative creations

Saint Werburgh Urban Farm

© Philippine Ciupek

In addition to feeding the animals and buying produce from the allotment gardens, children and adults enjoy **free activities** (gardening, painting…) with an emphasis on the **inclusion** of people with disabilities or social reintegration.

Floating University

© Justine Weber

is a temporary **creation** and **research** site at the former Tempelhof airport, in the heart of a rainwater retention basin. The association offers free art and learning **workshops** focusing on the site's ecosystem and ecology.

High Water Line, Eve Mosher

© Eve Mosher

was conceived by American artist Eve Mosher in 2014. In the streets of Bristol, **residents** drew a line marking the rise in sea level due to **climate change.**

Common Views

© Dan Farberoff, Common Views

is a collective of artists and researchers whose aim is to establish Berlin as a "**biosphere**", envisioning it as a unique **ecological space**. It promotes collaborative and experimental artistic creation in public space with a view to environmental reconciliation.

People's Republic of Stokes Croft

© Tom Chourreau

is an association that defends freedom in the public space by supporting **vulnerable local communities** through actions such as the distribution of basic necessities and the organization of free art workshops, exhibitions and events.

Urbane Praxis

is an association whose aim is to facilitate **exchanges between artists, administrations and public authorities** for urban art projects. Urbane Praxis has provided funding for Floating University and Common Views.

ISSUES

The ecological transition is mainly approached from scientific and political perspectives, but the technical nature of these discussions hinders a broader democratic engagement with the issue. While in 2020, 95% of French people considered that "the fight against climate change is an important issue",[2] 52% said they would be more likely to take action if they knew that this would help protect the living conditions and health of their children.[3] Tackling the subject with a new sensibility therefore appears necessary. Bruno Latour already perceived the major role played by the arts and artists in creating an ecological ideal towards which to strive, and their potential for mobilisation of civil society. In 2020, he said: "I think artists are far ahead in their perception (even scientific) of the new material situation of the world we live in".[4] But are artistic practices taking up these issues? If so, how? And to what extent can local public policies mobilise the arts and artists to help these transitions?

To what extent can local public policies mobilise the arts to answer the challenges of ecological and social transitions?

Redefining the terms of the subject

Embracing the complex and multiple interconnections between arts, city and nature, required us to broaden our definition of arts and consider the diversity of art forms in a non-exclusive way. Our research thus looked at different art media from performing arts and street arts to architecture and landscape arts. By the same token, it was important for us to not only focus on art as a finalised product but to also challenge traditional understanding of the relation between art/artists and their audience. We therefore chose to pay attention to participatory creative processes which typically blur the boundaries between artists and spectators while helping us think of ourselves as inhabitants of a small layer of our planet Earth[5].

Similarly, we decided to substitute the notion of *Nature* - as formulated in the first problematic - for that of *Environment*. The ongoing urban, social and climatic crises are degrading the environment and disconnecting us from it. Yet, as Arnold Berleant describes it: "we are inevitably in the landscape, we move in the landscape, we are actively part of it"[6]. The notion of *environment* in that lens better embraces how the human, other-than-human, built and vegetal elements of the city are actually part of the same unit. This reframing of our initial problematic helped us to move beyond the question of greening city spaces and consider issues of life quality, accessibility and inclusivity of spaces or even relation to the urban biota.

[2]Caline, G., Darrigade, C. Rivière, E. (2020). La confiance des Français dans les médias. Kantar. Retrieved, May 17, 2024, from https://www.kantar.com/fr/inspirations/publicite-medias-et-rp/2020-barometre-de-la-confiance-des-francais-dans-les-media
[3]Parlons climat. (2022). Environnement, crise climatique : l'opinion des Français au-delà des clichés. Les français parlent climat.
[4]Latour, B. (2021). Comment les arts peuvent-ils nous aider à réagir à la crise politique et climatique ?. L'Observatoire, N° 57(1), 24.
[5]MSH ParisNord (2023) "Séminaires, art, cultures et création dans la fabrique des territoires".
[6]Berleant, A. (1992). The aesthetics of environment. Temple University Press.

A new lens on the socio-ecological transitions

Throughout our research, it appeared clearer to us how connecting arts and the city space could help address many of the ecological and social issues at stake in cities from social segregation and democratic participation to ecological adaptation.

Artistic production shapes our imaginaries, they are vehicles of representations, images and narratives which influence our relations to the living and other-than-human world. For instance, the current dichotomy between "nature" and "urban space" is partly inherited from a Romantic vision of "wild nature", which was widely relayed by various forms of artistic discourses throughout the 19th century[7]. Yet, as shown by the historian William Cronon, this discourse of "wilderness" has mainly contributed to keep "nature" out of the city while being used as a justification to expel indigenous people from their lands.[8] This historical perspective emphasises that the relation between arts, nature and cities is far from linear and requires us to think about the kind of narratives we need to help foster ecologically sound and socially fair transitions.

In their article,[9] artists and activists Isabelle Fremeaux and Jay Jordan show how the dominant conceptions of art continue to value productions that are divorced from the realities they are supposed to represent. On the contrary, both advocate for artistic practices centred around the notion of reciprocity, care and attachment to the "humans and other-than-humans" who inhabit the territory. Reconnecting people to the place(s) where they live, to the people with whom they live and to the consequences of their actions in their environment is essential to mobilise them to protect the planet while creating more inclusive and resilient communities. In that sense, arts can also help address democratic stakes in cities such as social cohesion and participation.

Philosophical currents like immersive environmental aesthetics - theorised by Arnold Berleant - can for instance contribute to making visible different narratives and understandings of city spaces and usages. Indeed, as argued by Nathalie Blanc, by promoting a holistic integration of people within their environment, participatory art processes and practices can nurture other forms of being in the world and being with others, centred on care and respect[10]. Creation, as a form of engagement, is therefore also empowerment as it enables people to become aware of their power to do and act with, for and within their physical and social environment[11]. Besides, focusing on the senses and the lived experience of inhabitants can also help challenge the traditional knowledge hierarchy which favours an intellectual and top-down approach to city planning[12]. Notions such as the right to the city, representativity, as well as the democratisation of both ecological debate and cultural practices were therefore key in our analysis.

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[7]Cronon, W. (1996). The trouble with wilderness : Or, getting back to the wrong nature. Environmental History, 1(1), 7-28.
[8]*Ibid*
[9]Jordan, J., & Fremeaux, I. (2020). Cultures de la rébellion. Klaxon « Agir avec le vivant », 13, 13-23.
[10]Blanc, N. (2012). Les nouvelles esthétiques urbaines, Armand Colin.
[11]Latour, B. (2021). Comment les arts peuvent-ils nous aider à réagir à la crise politique et climatique ?. L'Observatoire, N° 57(1), 24.
[12]Berleant, A. (1992) The Aesthetics of Environment. Temple University Press, Philadelphia.

Eventually, the relation between arts, nature and cities also raises the question of the politicisation of urban spaces. According to researcher and artistic director Pascal Le Brun Cordier, the arts can both be used to challenge the current organisation of urban spaces and to make visible other ways of living in them collectively[13].

Art projects in urban spaces are tools for making the city "sensitive" by stimulating the senses through smells, images and colours[14]. Seeing the city through an artistic lens therefore seems to offer the opportunity to rethink what is visible and invisible in the urban landscape. Artistic projects can for instance shed light on the individuals who take care of the city's spaces. This is the ambition of movements such as *maintenance art* by Mierle Laderman Ukeles[15]. Artistic projects can also explore the loopholes of the urban fabric under the form of temporary installations which help to question and re-politicise the space. These new ways of transforming the city through and with the arts and culture are now gathered under the umbrella of cultural urbanism which the organisation POLAU (Pôle Arts et Urbanisme) defines as follows:

"*Cultural urbanism addresses the contemporary challenges of the transitions by bringing together a range of practices that contribute to the transformation of territories to make them more liveable. Relying on site-based artistic and cultural interventions, cultural urbanism creates the conditions for all stakeholders to be able to act, and influences the operational modes of territorial construction*".[16]

Cultural urbanism was also a useful conceptual framework to give a historical perspective on the issues at stake. Indeed, the question of the role of arts in promoting more liveable and sustainable cities also mobilises key notions such as the right to the city or cultural rights. The latter is defined as: "protecting the rights for each person, individually and in community with others, as well as groups of people, to develop and express their humanity, their world view and the meanings they give to their existence and their development through, inter alia, values, beliefs, convictions, languages, knowledge and the arts, institutions and ways of life."[17] These two notions helped us to try to systematically think about who got a chance to express themselves, participate in and/or be represented in the different artistic projects we studied.

[13]Le Brun-Cordier, P. (2021). Œuvrer pour une ville sensible: L'Observatoire, N° 57(1), 99-101.
[14]*Ibid*
[15]Interview with Marinier, Lucie. CNAM, Paris, December 20, 2023.
[16]Mouvement de l'Urbanisme Culturel (Éd.). (2023). Repères de l'urbanisme culturel. POLAU.
[17]Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (n.d.). International standards, Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights. United Nations.Retrieved May 23, 2024, from https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-cultural-rights/international-standards

MAIN RESULTS

I. What is the relationship between the environmental and social vocation of projects?
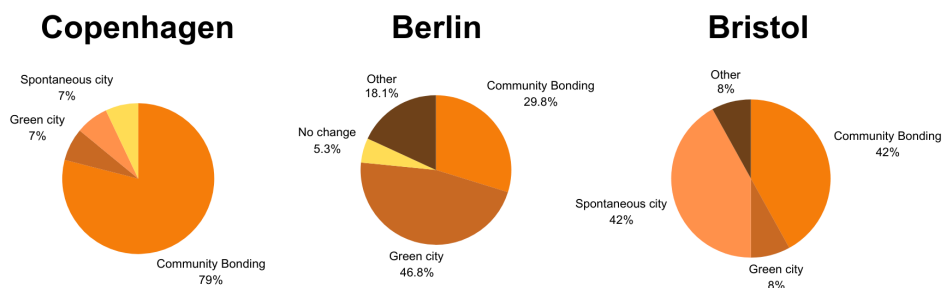
1. Sensibilizing and learning

Projects studied aim to reconnect residents with their environment; highlight the challenges of the climate crisis and/or propose alternative ways of living in urban spaces. They raise awareness of environmental issues by promoting new ways of learning, being and taking action. Some of the projects studied in Bristol, Copenhagen and Berlin, aim to expose the risks of climate disruption without conveying a sense of immobilising fear, but rather a new way of understanding and living in space. Moreover, through multi-generational and artistic workshops, communities learn by doing. The process becomes as important as the final result, without aesthetic injunction.

However, when we talked to local residents, we realised that the link with the ecological transition was not always made. Indeed, when we ask inhabitants in the street "Does the project make you think about environmental issues?", 100% in Copenhagen, 73% in Berlin and 67% in Bristol of respondents said "No".

For the people we interviewed, it was the social aspect of the projects that stood out as we can see on the polls :

How can art be useful for the community?

| Copenhagen | Berlin | Bristol |

Copenhagen:
- Spontaneous city 7%
- Green city 7%
- Community Bonding 79%

Berlin:
- Other 18.1%
- Community Bonding 29.8%
- No change 5.3%
- Green city 46.8%

Bristol:
- Other 8%
- Community Bonding 42%
- Spontaneous city 42%
- Green city 8%

2. The creation of new ways of making community

Even though we observed a limited capacity to transform territories, the projects participate in the creation and strengthening of social links between communities. Thus, they contribute to a necessary first step towards a collective mobilisation against structural climatic challenges.

First, they contribute to solving conflicts of use, improving safety in public spaces and even celebrating the diversity of the communities and attachments to the territory. This is typically the case of the Superkilen Park in Copenhagen which transformed the old rail road into a children-oriented park.

However, the study of Superkilen Park raised an important question: how can the real impacts of such a project on residents be assessed, taking into account the political issues at stake? Next to Superkilen, the Mjølnerparken building complex, 98% of whose residents are

categorised as 'non-western' by the Danish Statistical Institute, has been subject to destruction since the adoption of the "Ghetto Package"[18]. Its residents, who can be evicted on discriminatory grounds, have taken legal action against this violation of the European Convention on Human Rights, with the support of UN rapporteurs[19]. The approach of the park's designers has been criticised by researcher Burcu Yigit Turan for its "complicity in the colonial and capitalist politics of belonging and citizenship making" at work in Denmark[20]. This leads us to question the possible articulation between artistic projects and surrounding urban projects.

The Black Square in the Superkilen Park & the Mjølnerparken building complex in demolition.
(Photo by Marie Copéret-Clément)

Second, the projects allow the community to build capacity and to empower themselves. One example of this is the method developed by the association Vida Local in Copenhagen. The aim is to strengthen links inside communities through cultural and arts events and the creation of a strong sense of conviviality. The goal is to give the tools to the community to create their own events in time.

Thirdly, we saw how the projects facilitated the creation of a new narrative, more inclusive, about the city and its residents. It was vibrant how the walls of each city, especially in Bristol, tell the story of the inhabitants and their neighbourhood. In Berlin, Common Views aims to reconcile inhabitants of Berlin with their environment by sensibilising them to climate change issues through participatory workshops, for example, one children's workshop addresses the environmental history of the location.

Finally, artistic projects find one of their purposes in echoing vulnerable and invisible voices in society. Helping and shedding light on those we do not see in the public spaces is key to creating a cohesive community. The association People's Republic of Stokes Croft, in Bristol, collects basic necessities for people in difficulty. Saint Werburgh Urban Farm organises free workshops for people in social reinsertion.

[18]Clante Bendixen, M. (2021). Court upholds residents' case against Danish Ministry of Interior and Housing. European Commission.
[19]Tendayi Achiume, E., Rajagopal, B., & de Varennes, F. (2020). UN human rights experts urge Denmark to halt contentious sale of "ghetto" buildings. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.
[20]Turan, B. Y. (2021). Superkilen: Coloniality, Citizenship and Border Politics. In T. Waterman, J. Wolff, & E. Wall (Eds.), Landscape Citizenships. New York and London: Routledge.

The mural project in St Pauls' neighbourhood in Bristol, *The Seven Saints of St Pauls*, celebrates Black Bristolians known for founding St Paul's Carnival and fighting for equality[21] (Photo by Tom Chourreau) - The People's Republic of Stokes Croft storage for blanket and tent (Photo by Philippine Ciupek)

The limits we exposed about projects like the Superkilen, and questions raised during our research and at conferences we went to about gentrification processes, led us to question ourselves about who these initiatives really benefit. Amongst the 78 respondents to our survey, interviewed in targeted areas for their proximity to the initiatives, we observed a disproportionate prevalence of high cultural and economic capital profiles.

Occupation categories of respondants to our surveys

Bristol - Occupation categories	Percentages
Artists	16,67%
Coaching/consulting	5,56%
Health	5,56%
Charity	11,11%
Workers (construction, mechanics)	5,56%
Students	27,78%
Retired	5,56%
No answer	22,22%
Total	100,00%

Copenhague - Occupation categories	Percentages
Researchers, engineers, IT, energy	25,81%
Architects, Urban planners, Graphic designers	22,58%
Artists	6,45%
Finance/banking	9,68%
Coaching/consulting	6,45%
Journalists	3,23%
Workers (construction, mechanics)	3,23%
Students	9,68%
Retired	3,23%
No answer	9,68%
Total	100,00%

Berlin - Occupation categories	Percentages
Researchers, engineers, IT, energy	16,67%
Architects, Urban planners, Graphic designers	3,33%
Artists	10,00%
Finance/banking	6,67%
Coaching/consulting	10,00%
Health (therapists, doctors)	13,33%
Journalists	10,00%
Lawyer	3,33%
Workers (construction, mechanics)	6,67%
Students	10,00%
Retired	3,33%
No answer	6,67%
Total	100,00%

Scope: Bristol (United Kingdom), Copenhagen (Denmark), Berlin (Germany)
Source: in-person surveys distributed by us in march 2024
N = 78

To a more general extent, questions arise: what about the representativeness and accessibility of publicly funded cultural offerings? How can we avoid these pitfalls and ensure a real transformative role of arts in the ecological and social transition? Thus, we understood the necessity of public policy integration.

II. How can public policies play a role on these issues?

1. Facilitate institutional synergies

We saw in our field studies that municipalities do not always support transformative artistic projects in their cities. Some of the difficulties encountered by the projects might stem from the lack of institutional synergies between the cities' cultural and environmental agendas. Indeed, most of the actors we met often reported shallow support from local municipalities in

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[21]Ajala K. (n.d.). The Seven Saints of St Pauls: Memorials and Black joy in Bristol. Retrieved, June 6, 2024, from https://collections.bristolmuseums.org.uk/stories/bristols-black-history/the-seven-saints-of-st-pauls-memorials-and-black-joy-in-bristol/

their projects. In some cases, the relationship with the municipality is indirect as for Vida Local in Copenhagen. As evoked by Jesper Koefoed-Melson, director and founder of Vida Local, during our interview, the link with the town hall is limited to subvention demand through standardised form. This also implies that the need for eco-artistic projects is not formulated by city actors. This last point is important since public policies have an important role to play in making these projects more accessible and inclusive of different public and notably more marginalised urban communities.

There is a need to build a stronger framework for transformative art projects by creating synergies between the cities' ecological and artistic agendas. Our encounter with Elise Hurcombe from Bristol Cultural Board informed us that this institutional transformation might however be resource-intensive. In her words, creating a cross-cutting agenda requires time and human resources that are hard to gather even when there is willingness. The pending question is therefore how to enable this process of cross-cutting agenda creation which appeared necessary to support eco-artistic initiatives, particularly in financial terms.

In the absence of concrete support from the municipalities, efforts to link culture and the environment across the board are shouldered by third parties such as Urbane Praxis or the RealDania Foundation. Urbane Praxis for instance sets up its own ecological and social criteria to allocate funds to artistic projects. While these criteria might be positive in absolute terms, this situation still poses a number of democratic issues of which the over-representation and weight of certain interests and esthetics in shaping public spaces. This was clearer to us in the case of the RealDania Foundation, a private philanthropic institution. Realdania is a mortgage-credit institution created over 150 years ago. Since 2000, Realdania has allocated 3.1 billion euros to philanthropic projects, drawing from the returns on its non-philanthropic investments (Realdania, 2024[22]). During our interviews, it was explained to us that the project could not have succeeded without money from the RealDania Foundation as the latter was not "taxpayer money"[23]. This discussion made us realise that mobilising private money for projects in urban spaces can lead to defining other priorities than those of public policies, such as targeting a diversity of audiences and making sure such projects have an impact on the territory. Third-party organisations have their own agendas and it is therefore important for public policy to ensure that their projects do benefit the entire population of the city.

2. Create an enabling framework to support eco-artistic projects

Furthermore, public policies have the power to create a framework to unleash the potential of artistic projects in the ecological and social transition.

In this framework, public policies could seek to guarantee that an eco-design process is applied in each project, with a low-carbon and low-material approach. As mentioned earlier, the artistic and cultural sectors have a strong negative impact on the environment due to their high carbon footprint. According to the Shift Project, the environmental impact of the cultural sector in France is hard to measure due to the lack of knowledge of actors in the sector on climate change, and the limited number of carbon footprints of public establishments (only

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[22]Realdania (2024). *A Corporate Presentation of Realdania.* Retrieved June 6, 2024, from
https://www.realdania.org/publications/in-english/realdania---in-english
[23]Interview with an architect from Topotek1. Zoom, 22 of March 2024.

26% of carbon footprint report fit the standards, according to ADEME in 2018[24]). To give an order of magnitude, it is estimated that the production of a film in the French industry emits 750 tons of CO2, according to the Shift Project.[25] Therefore, adopting environmental art as an ethos is vital for the transition just as much symbolically as effectively.

Secondly, the framework must reflect on the goal of encouraging such a policy: enable the entire civil society, regardless of age, gender, class, race, nationality, religion, to engage in the social and ecological transformation of the society through artistic practices. Each artistic practice has a symbolic socio-economic value attached to it, hence gaining the interest of a limited pool of population. More than building bridges between communities through artistic projects, public policies should promote a diversity of forms of artistic expression and creation to broaden the audiences involved in the transition leading to a societal change.

Thirdly, this framework could encourage participatory and empowering approaches to the projects supported. Thinking about the transformative potential of artistic projects implies an active redefinition of the notion of audience since including participants at every stage of an artistic project (conception, realisation, performance) is often synonymous with a more profound impact, rather than a passive spectator stand. Indeed, the aim is that citizens engage actively in the transition, through participatory and empowering approaches in order to trigger a stronger transformative effect on the population as mentioned previously.

Finally, this framework could benefit from including the design and implementation of tools to measure the impact on the participants and spectators for each project, to adapt the projects in the future. This framework is destined to be adapted in the future, with the emergence of new practices and movements; its biggest strength must be its malleability in guiding the projects desired by public institutions while leaving them the freedom to experiment.

3. Support artistic eco-systems in the long run

If arts are to be mobilised to engage in the ecological and social transition, an artistic ecosystem must be strengthened on the territory in the long run. The sustainability of these ecosystems depends on different factors.

Beyond the question of more funding for the cultural sector, the management of its long-term distribution is essential. The project-call economy for projects is labour-intensive and administratively constraining for arts associations. It is also very short-term in regards to the length of projects, hence impacting the quality of depth projects can engage in. Yet the question of territorial anchoring - which we have seen is essential to the artistic ecological and social transition to involve local populations in their transition by recreating social links in the city and reinforcing the imperative of prioritising local scale in all situations due to its lighter carbon footprint - and the complex treatment of the climate crisis implies a progressive and long-term vision in order to have a concrete impact. Lighting the administrative workload for artistic administrations, reducing the conditioning of allocation of financial resources and enabling them to be used for longer periods could be solutions to explore.

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[24]Shift Project (2021) *Décarbonons la culture*, Retrieved June 7, 2024, from
https://theshiftproject.org/article/decarboner-culture-rapport-2021/
[25]*Ibid*

Secondly, it seems primordial for us to recognize the role of artistic and social associations as pioneers of new lifestyles and innovative approaches to climate and social challenges, which can be taken in charge by public actors. Public institutions should hence support them and allow them to thrive, while also gradually taking over some weight. This support can be guided by the development of a prior impact measurement of these various initiatives, in order to select those that contribute most concretely to the ecological and social transition, based on the criteria evaluated due to prior experiences.

Thirdly, access to space is crucial for artistic ecosystems to establish themselves on a territory. Artists and artistic citizen associations need to be able to find accommodation and a studio to work in if public policies want to work hand in hand with them. Through our case studies in Bristol and Berlin where housing crises are affecting the local population, artists and members of the "creative class" we met shared the argument that it was getting harder and harder for artists and artistic organisations to maintain their activities in a city with an increasing housing expense.[26] Artistic and cultural organisations already suffer from the reduction of cultural budgets due to the economic recession, and little purchasing power due to the instability of their professional activity.

The Art City Lab book, initiated by the architect collective raumlabor, to answer the art studio space crisis in Berlin, was a transversal process in collaboration with the Senate Departments for Urban Development and the Environment and the Senate Departments for Culture (Photo by raumlaborberlin)

In both cities, the artistic community is leaving the city centre to live in the peripheries where rents are cheaper, and in extreme cases move to new cities with more discreet and underground artistic communities and scenes, but with affordable rents. This element seems interesting to notice for us, especially in the case of Bristol and Berlin which's international reputation since the 80s-90s has partly been developed on the image of being a city for artists with a vibrant scene and low rents, serving as a magnet to attract many other artists to the cities. But since the 2010s this magnet effect has started to generate a gentrification process in both cities due to the arrival of richer national and international residents and real estate investors. We are witnessing a crucial point in the modern socio-artistic history of these cities since they seem at a tipping point: public actors can either solve the housing crisis or (among other vulnerable social groups being impacted by the housing crisis) the artistic community will continue to flee to other cities with more affordable housing and redevelop there, impacting the reputation of the city.

This tension between the will to maintain the image of a creative city but also the will to regulate, control and make a profit out of it is put in light in "Le Paradoxe de la Ville Créative"

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[26] Vivant, E. (2009). Le paradoxe de la ville créative. Dans : , E. Vivant, *Qu'est-ce que la ville créative* (pp. 77-84). Paris cedex 14: Presses Universitaires de France.

by Elsa Vivant (2009)[27]. She concludes that the creative city cannot be artificially built by urban planners, but on the contrary constructs itself on the notion of serendipity, from itself, by the creativity of its inhabitants. Nevertheless, primary conditions for the existence of serendipity such as access to housing are vital. Therefore, it is essential to set rent ceilings or make unoccupied buildings available to these actors to ensure their long-term presence in a given area.

Finally, envisioning the public space of cities as a space for the development of artistic practices is primordial. Public spaces are constrained by numerous norms. For instance, when urban furniture has a common identity across an entire city, they are labelled as "*invariant urbain*"[28]. They are defined by laws, and insurance contracts, and sometimes divided between multiple public actors themselves according to the administrative level. Encouraging experimentation in the public space by lightning the rules and constraints that apply to projects such as the nature of the occupation of the space, safety standards and insurance would enable to increase the number of artistic projects and the audience reached.

Bench installed by the Copenhagen City Council to raise awareness about rising sea levels (Photo by Philippine Ciupek) & In Berlin, a creative and participatory approach to noise reduction through the self-construction by inhabitants of a public phone cabin (Photo of the Freundschaftzplatz from ag-urban.de)

LEARNINGS

1. Main learning points :

The main takeaway of our work is the power of art and its ability to build up narratives and transform the way people think, perceive and act on their environment. Both from our academic research and in our fieldwork, we saw the influence of cultural practices on people's perceptions and actions within their city or neighbourhood.

Fieldwork allowed us to understand the importance of an in situ approach to the urban fabric: which aims at taking into account human and more-than-human inhabitants of an environment with a strong emphasis on site-specificity.

Public space, its appropriation by inhabitants and its increasing commodification, also appeared as key stakes. It requires analysing who occupies the space and who is absent from it, which constitutes a key learning to study and act in the urban fabric for ecological and social justice.

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[27] *Ibid*
[28] Interview with Marinier, Lucie. CNAM, Paris, December 20, 2023.

A broader concern stood out as crucial in our research: the need to support the artistic ecosystem in general, with a sensitivity to the differential symbolic values of artistic forms in public fund allocation, to avoid reinforcing inequalities. We found out that a long-term view of projects is the most successful response to this potential pitfall.

Thus, our work highlights the key role of public policy to ensure the production and diffusion of narratives for the common good in a city built for and by everyone, human and non-human. Public policies are essential to support the artistic ecosystem and reduce inequalities of access both for artists and the public. More broadly, a public policy aware of the importance of both cultural practices and environmental concerns is necessary to mobilise people on the stakes of the ecological transitions, showing them the benefits and the urgency to act. The arts are crucial for transforming the perception of environmental norms, not as restrictions or sources of fear, but as essential elements to be integrated into the urban fabric.

2. Difficulties encountered

During our project, we encountered several obstacles. First of all, defining terms as broad as "nature" and "art" was a difficult first step that required a lot of reading and discussion with our tutor and Esther Rogan, academic counsellor of the Institute of Art and Creation. Difficulties were found due to the recent emergence of the question of art in urban spaces and its link to ecological issues.

We also find it difficult to find the legitimacy to pursue our work to some extent. We are aware of the bias of our position as students of Sciences Po and of the limitations of the in-person surveys conducted in each city. Conducting additional research on the projects and the cities was necessary to be aware of our *situated knowledges,* as expressed by Donna Haraway (1988)[29].

3. A professionalising experience.

Despite these difficulties, the project was truly a professionalising experience. Meeting with numerous stakeholders made us understand the need to adapt our ways of listening and our speech to the people we meet. We had to compare and take account of all points of view to achieve a more objective understanding of situations. Finally, we learned and saw a multitude of information, the work of synthesising and transmitting knowledge was demanding but rewarding.

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[29]Haraway, D. (1988). Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective. *Feminist Studies*, *14*(3), 575–599. https://doi.org/10.2307/3178066

FIND OUT MORE

Bibliographical references

★ Berleant, A. (1992) The Aesthetics of Environment. *Temple University Press*, Philadelphia.
★ Blanc, N. (2012). Les nouvelles esthétiques urbaines (Armand Colin).

Exhibitions, roundtables and festivals

★ Natures urbaines, Une histoire technique et sociale 1600-2030. Presented by Antoine Picon,from April 24 to September 29, 2024, Pavillon de l'Arsenal
★ MSH ParisNord, "Séminaires, art, cultures et création dans la fabrique des territoires", 21/11/23 ([Séminaires, Art, culture et création dans la fabrique des territoires 2021-2022 - Maison des Sciences de l'Homme Paris Nord (mshparisnord.fr)](https://mshparisnord.fr))
★ *Festival close up*. An annual cinema festival in Paris proposing to think about cities, architecture and urban landscapes through different artistic lenses. Several projections, debates and encounters with both filmmakers and academics were organised across Greater Paris during the 2023 edition. https://festivalcloseup.com/fr/accueil/la-genese

The Capstone project: an original educational tool

Thanks to this original tool, students are placed in a work situation on a real problem posed by a public, private, or associative organisation. For all the Masters of the Urban School, the structure and management are identical: the project is jointly monitored by the the Urban School and the partners, at all phases of the project, and regular methodological supervision is provided by a professional or academic tutor specialised in the issue. The Capstone projects allow the partners to take advantage of the research and training acquired within the Urban School, to benefit from the production of studies and quality work, and to have a capacity for innovation.

Capstone projects are a great tool to study, diagnose, forecast, lead a comparative analysis, even to prepare for evaluation, and more generally to deal with any problem that can enlighten the organisation concerned in a logic of "R&D ". Each project mobilises a group of first-year students from one of the Urban School's Master's. Students work between 1.5 days and 2 days per week on dedicated time slots, for a period of 6 to 9 months (depending on the Master's concerned). In Executive education, collective projects concern the Executive Master "Territorial governance and urban development" and mobilize professionals for a period of 4 months.