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# **Mapping trends and best practice in climate action and sustainability in the arts**

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University of the Arts London — March 2023

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# Foreword

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The climate emergency is the most urgent threat currently facing humanity. The impacts of its constituent problems – global warming, pollution, and the despoliation of natural habitats – are already being endured across the planet and addressing them is nothing less than the condition of possibility of our survival as a species.

Yet the presence and leadership role of culture and the arts in high-level, policy-dominated conversations are far from satisfactory. This is a mistake: the reach and power of culture to engage audiences and support behavioural change on a grand scale, as well as to question and subvert false narratives, make it an important tool for humanity at this critical point. In the words of Greta Thunberg, “the only way we will be able to avoid the worst consequences of this emerging existential crisis is if we create a critical mass of people who demand the changes required.” The arts are an important means of creating that critical mass.

In the UK, we’re witnessing exciting and important activity both at the level of new content/programming that expresses symptoms and consequences and identifies possible solutions whilst remaining deeply personal and emotional, as well as at the level of operational change (for example in improving carbon measurement, achieving net zero targets and developing new skillsets).

This report, developed by the researchers at the University of the Arts London (UAL), seeks to map out what’s happening in this space across the British arts and cultural sectors. Thematically structured, it includes suggestions of best practice and links to practical resources for cultural organisations and activists across the world. It will be a key resource for us at the British Council as we consolidate and expand our arts and climate portfolio, and we also hope that the report will be more widely useful – in igniting conversations, questioning paradigms, and pointing to new ways of working. It is time for the arts to step up and contribute to this much-needed change.

—Pablo Rosselló,  
Director Culture Responds Global Programme (Diversity, Sustainability, Heritage)  
British Council

# Introduction

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The imperative of climate, environmental and social justice is giving the arts a distinctive purpose. Intentions to contribute to thriving ecosystems and communities are changing the operations, production and content of programmes. This research identifies evidence of exemplary work taking place at both operational and artistic programming levels that can act as exemplars to the sector and beyond. The existential reckoning that this crisis evokes is also bringing about fundamental and radical changes to arts and culture. In some cases, this includes reconsidering the premise of organisations and everything they do as part of wider living and planetary systems.

Throughout the research process, in discovery sessions and interviews, participants reflected on 'Why we make art in a climate crisis?' - articulating what they are best placed to be doing to contribute to climate, environmental and social justice. These discussions also asked 'How we make art in a climate crisis?' - where operational and production considerations are informing what art is being made, where and who is involved. Our findings suggest that the two questions co-inform actions. Efforts to operate more sustainably encourage a criticality within artistic programming that can expand creativity. While making work in response to climate crisis comes with an imperative to produce it in a way that aligns with the values of environmental and social justice.

This flips the question of how the arts can respond to climate emergency, to ask how the situation of environmental crisis changes the arts. As UAL professor Jeremy Till and his research collective MOULD argue:

**We need a reversal of the normal question. Rather than asking “What is the arts doing to respond to climate emergency?”, ask instead “What does climate emergency do to art or to cultural production?”**

—Jeremy Till, Professor of Architecture Central Saint Martins

Through thematic analysis of the findings, this report identifies eight trends in climate action, sustainability and the arts. The thematic descriptions reference activities taking place at local, regional and national levels. We offer opportunities emanating from the findings, barriers to success and recommendations outlining how these gaps can be crossed.

These findings offer the British Council insight on the relevance and complementarity of initiatives to support their response to the global challenge of climate and environmental crisis through arts and culture.

# Context of research

The British Council's Arts business area delivers its mission through four global programmes. Culture Responds to Global Challenges (CRGC) is one of these, and it works developing new partnerships and building connections with the UK's cultural sector through programmes that address areas of global social and environmental concern. Cultural Responds to Global Challenges has three strands of work: heritage, sustainability, and inclusion and cultural diversity.

Work in the sustainability and climate strand currently includes:

- Creative Commissions which supports new artistic work to raise awareness and call to action around the climate emergency
- Capacity building to improve sustainability practice in cultural organisations and festivals
- Policy and advocacy work
- Making Matters: R&D scheme to support collaborations that explore eco-friendly materials and patterns of consumption in architecture, design, fashion and crafts

Across these different strands the British Council run a research and advocacy programme, The Missing Pillar, which focuses on raising awareness of culture's contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, in particular the need for:

- More access to information on sustainable development and a shared language for the cultural sector
- More evidence of the impact and value of cultural initiatives, particularly in communities
- More awareness of the value of culture for sustainable development at a local and global level

The British Council has commissioned this scoping research to shape and inform its longer-term Culture Responds to Global Challenges programme responding to climate action and sustainability in the arts. In addition, it supports the British Council's active role as a knowledgeable contributor who create opportunities for international cultural relations around the climate crisis which is one of the most urgent issues we face globally.

# About the Research

This scoping research report presents a landscape mapping of climate action and sustainability in UK arts and culture, conducted between December 2022 - March 2023. The findings offer an indicative snapshot of the UK landscape with the aim of offering initial insights and intelligence. The objective of the research is to shape and inform the British Council's long-term approach to the sustainability and climate action strand of their Culture Responds to Global Challenges programme. It also demonstrates examples of the interdependencies between the three strands of the British Council's work on sustainability, inclusion and cultural diversity and heritage.

The research was conducted by a research team based at University of the Arts London, in five phases:

1. Desk-based review
2. Discovery sessions with UAL sector experts
3. Collation and analysis of mapping database
4. Policy mapping convergence
5. Case Study interviews with ten initiatives

See Scope and Methodology section (p.42) for further information.

# Summary of Findings

## Mapping Database

One of the key outputs of this landscape mapping is a comprehensive mapping database that identifies over 350 classified entries.

The mapping database is thematically structured to represent disciplines within the ecosystem and coded to enable users to filter and group according to:

- **Areas:** England (London, Midlands, North, South East, South West), Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales; UK wide - based on Arts Council/s areas
- **Typology:** Organisations/institutions; Initiatives; Resources (courses, workshops, toolkits); Conferences and events; Cultural festivals; Networks - based on the scope of this research.
- **Collaboration:** across art forms; with climate action and campaigning; with science and technology; with education; capacity to work internationally - based on the scope of this research.
- **Art form:** Design; Performing Arts; Screen Arts; Visual Arts; Literature and Publishing; Creative Economy. With further sub-categories based on British Council art form categories.
- **Interdisciplinary collaboration:** across art forms, with climate action and campaigning, with science and technology and with education
- **Capacity to work internationally:** evidence of existing international work based on the scope of the research
- **Aspects of sustainability:** Environmental, Social, Cultural and Economic (see Methodology section for definitions)

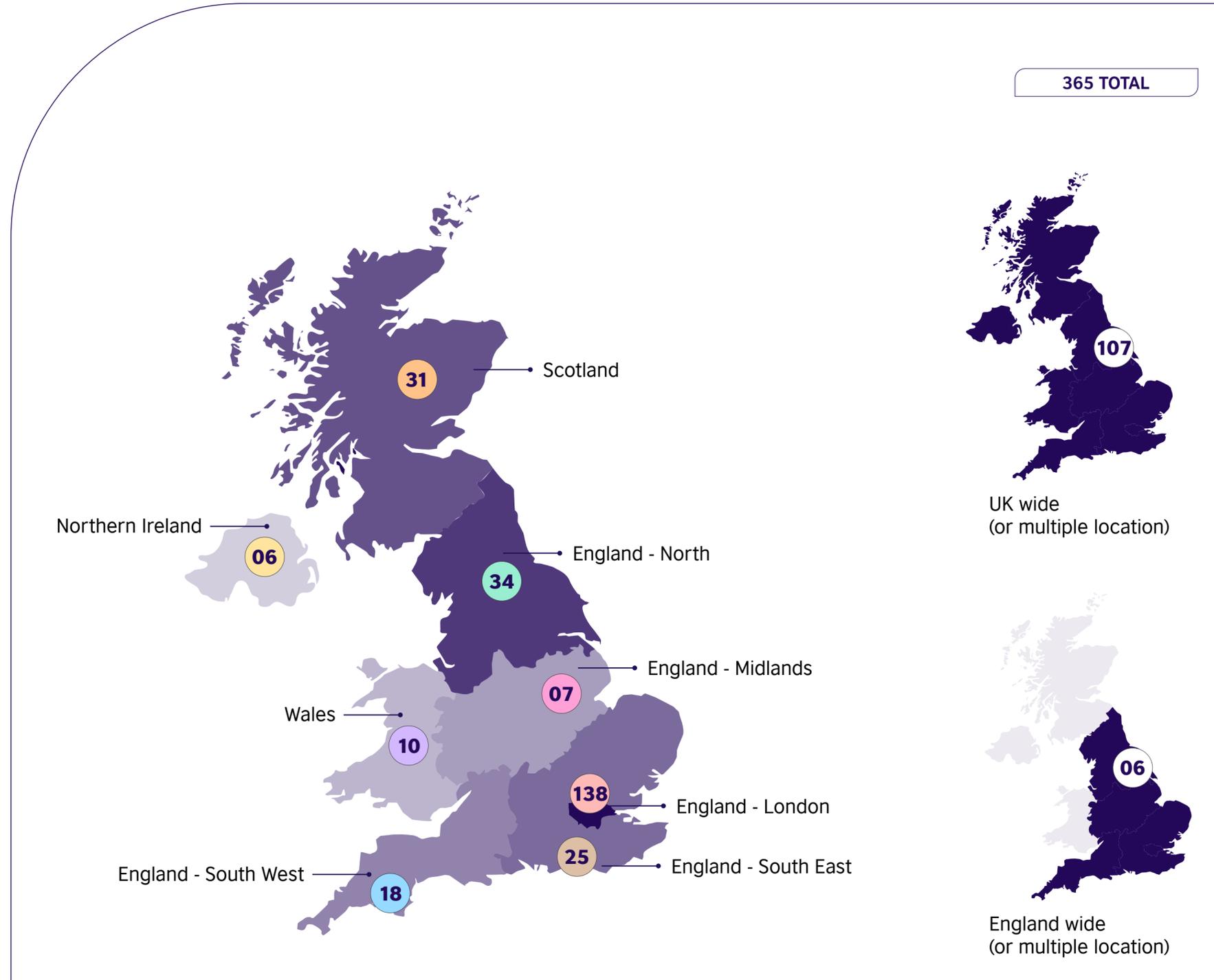
The online tool includes subsections for:

- 23 sector research reports
- 50 courses and initiatives in art and design education (including 24 UAL courses and initiatives)
- 41 policy and funding instruments
- 34 funders i.e. trusts, foundations

# Mapping Overview

## Location

This diagram shows the geographical location of the entries in the main mapping database. Some initiatives work in multiple areas and some are England or UK wide. Locations are based on Arts Council areas (Arts Council England regions, Creative Scotland, Arts Council Wales and Arts Council Northern Ireland). There is potential for further areas mapping to address geographic gaps, particularly in under-represented regions such as Wales and Northern Ireland.



### Typology

This diagram shows the type of organisations and initiatives represented in the main mapping database as defined within the scope of the research. There is significant cross-over between types, for example an organisation may have a specific climate focused initiative or conference or a network might produce specific resources.

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**192**  
Organisations/Institutions

**94**  
Initiatives

**61**  
Resources

**59**  
Networks

**42**  
Cultural festivals

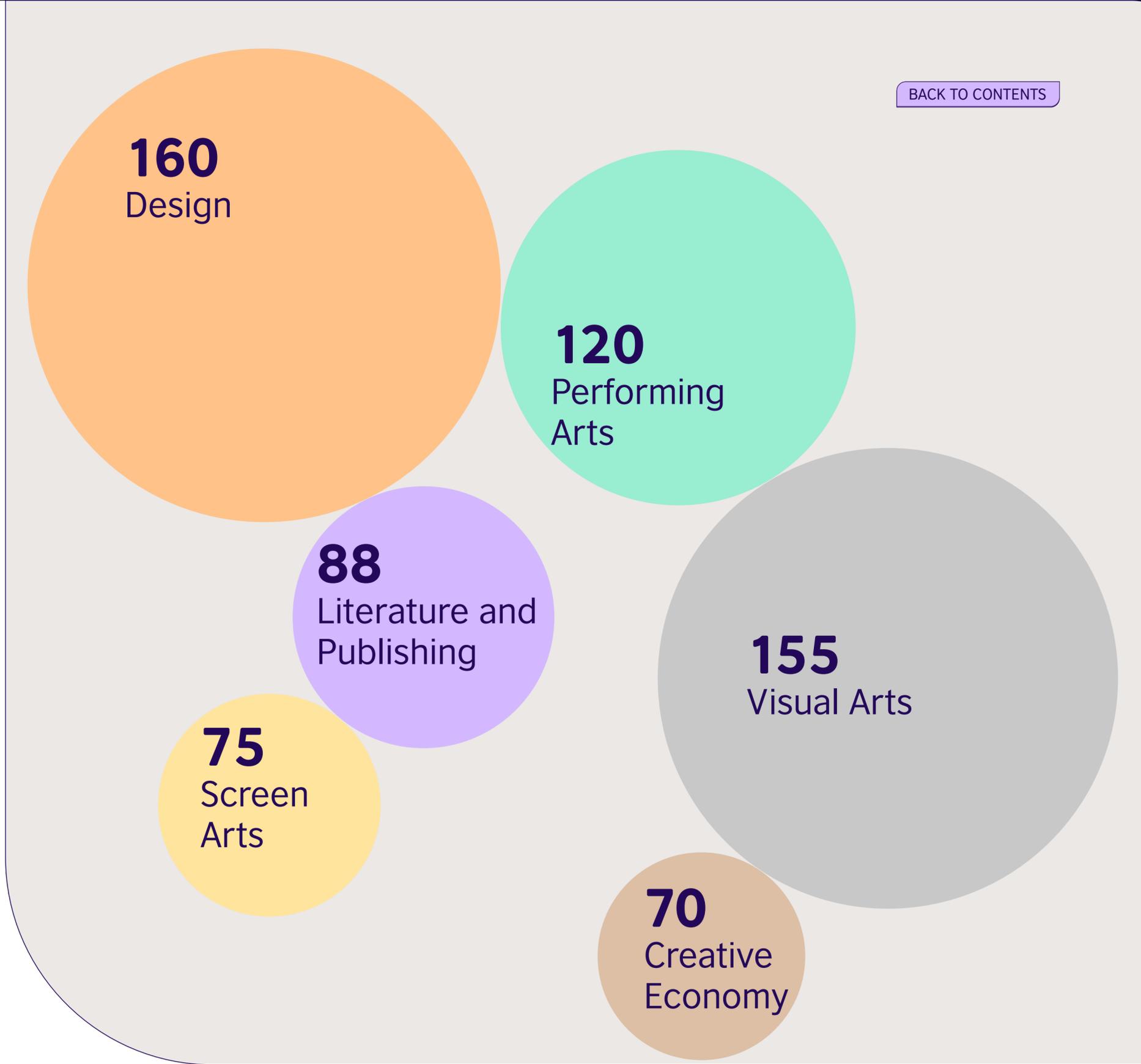
**30**  
Conferences and events

**We also mapped:**

- 50** art and design education initiatives
- 23** sector reports
- 41** policy instruments
- 34** funders

**Art form**

This diagram shows the art forms and disciplines represented in the mapping. Again, a significant number of mapped entries represent multiple artforms, for example a cultural festival that programmes performing arts and visual arts or a multidisciplinary arts centre.



### Art Form detailed breakdown

In this diagram the artforms are broken down into more detailed subcategories, based broadly on the British Council's art form classifications. The research brief emphasised four areas of design for sustainability (i. Sustainable construction ii. Bio-materials / bio-design iii. Craft and slow design, including links with indigenous traditions and materials iv. Slow and sustainable fashion), these were therefore prioritised in the desk based research.



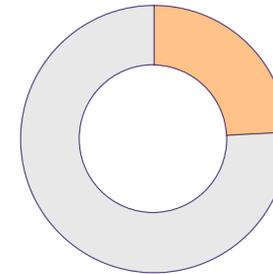
### Interdisciplinary Collaboration

The diagrams illustrate evidence of interdisciplinary collaboration identified in the research, following the research brief that focused on: 1. cross-art form collaboration and 2. collaboration with science and technology. Two further areas came across strongly in the analysis: 3. collaboration with climate action and campaigning; 4. collaboration with education. While this offers an indication of organisations and initiatives that are working collaboratively, the assessment is not exhaustive given the source of information is content available on organisations' websites.

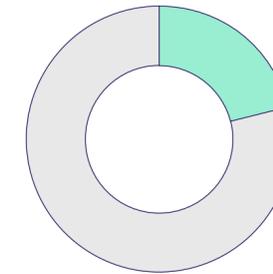
### Evidence of International Collaboration

The diagram illustrates evidence of organisations and initiatives who are already working internationally identified by the research. These are organisations who are international in their structure or already participate in international networks and collaboration projects. The intention is to guide British Council to those that have existing capacity to work internationally but is not exhaustive and does not indicate willingness or enthusiasm to work internationally. The case studies (p.29) started to surface some of the barriers and opportunities in this regard, which could be expanded through further research.

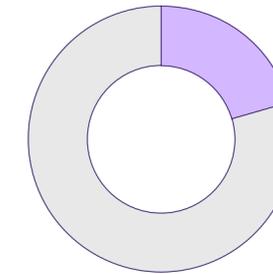
#### Interdisciplinary collaboration



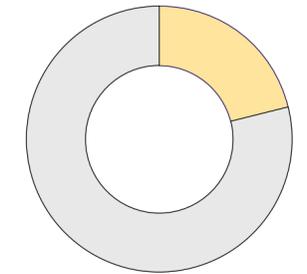
**32%**  
Collaboration across art forms



**27%**  
Collaboration with climate action and campaigning

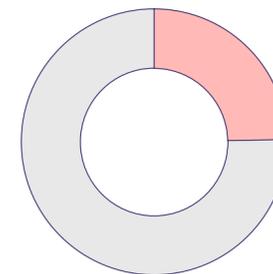


**26%**  
Collaboration with science and tech



**27%**  
Collaboration with education

#### Evidence of working internationally



**33%**

## 1. Decarbonising arts and culture

In order to respond to global emissions targets, all sectors must radically decarbonise. The arts is no exception.

Achieving measurable decarbonisation in the arts relies on calculating and quantifying emissions. Gathering and analysing baseline data is imperative to the planning of decarbonising actions and must be integral to designing interventions and wider transformation plans.

### Sector specific measurement

Several initiatives in the mapping have created sector-specific methodologies and tools to do this. These include carbon calculators, environmental impact audits and certification schemes.

For example:

**Arts Council England** commissioned **Julie's Bicycle** to develop **Creative Green tools**, a free set of carbon calculators. Since 2010, they have been used by over 5,000 organisations in 50 countries to record, measure and understand the impacts of their venues, production, events, festivals and operations.

**Galleries Climate Coalition** provide a free online carbon calculator tool designed to help estimate the carbon footprint of arts organisations. It was based on audits carried out by Thomas Dane and Kate MacGarry galleries and is based on metrics common to most art galleries.

Other examples: **albert**, **Arts Council England and Julie's Bicycle Spotlight programme**, **Publishing Declares** and **Publisher's Association carbon calculator**

### Experimental low carbon technology

A handful of arts organisations have pioneered technology to test and develop commercially viable renewable energy projects. They have used their own venues and operations to pilot and incubate these technologies.

For example:

**Arcola Energy** was initiated by **Arcola Theatre** and specialises in the integration of hydrogen and fuel cells. It was complementary to the Arcola Theatre's vision to become a carbon neutral theatre.

**BODYHEAT** was developed by **SWG3** and TownRock Energy. It uses body temperature emitted by the visitors to SWG3 at gigs and events to capture energy used to power the building. BODYHEAT has now launched as a tech start-up which can be used by other venues and organisations to heat and cool buildings through low carbon technology.

### Materiality of cultural production

Carbon and waste auditing have brought questions of the materiality of producing arts and culture to the fore. Many processes such as film production, set design, exhibition-making, touring and freighting are inherently carbon intensive and wasteful. Evidence shows that material resourcefulness and repair can reduce the impacts of production and on supply chains. These demonstrate how the arts can be pragmatically and conceptually important in achieving sustainability ambitions.

For example:

**Design Museum's Waste Age** exhibition came with an imperative to explore how to reduce waste when creating an exhibition. URGE exhibition advisors helped to reduce the environmental impact of the exhibition including conducting an audit to track its impact and make recommendations to transform exhibition practices.

**MAYK** is one of the country's leading live performance producing organisations. Habitat is a Perform Europe partnership project which will be performed in multiple locations creating a unique picture of the people residing in each location. The project will not involve freight or other carbon-intensive travel methods.

**Circular Arts Network** is a recycling and reuse online platform that helps the arts combat the climate emergency through circular economy. It provides artists and arts organisations access to materials and resources through swapping and exchange. Members include National Theatre of Scotland, National Galleries Scotland, Glasgow School of Art and Edinburgh University.

Other examples: **FUEL Theatre Green Touring**, **Barbican International Enterprises – sustainable touring exhibition guide**, **Local Works**, **Fixing Factory**

### Greenwashing in the arts

The imperative to decarbonise the arts has also drawn attention to the relationship between arts and fossil fuel funders. There is a real concern that some exhibitions and artists' ideas are distorted by funders ambitions. Alongside this there were concerns about misrepresenting or distorting factual information within artworks that claim to be presenting generalisable data and whether there is sufficient climate and environmental literacy among artists to represent these with criticality. Complicity in greenwashing and taking liberties with facts, as well as legitimising extractive practices (e.g. oil companies sponsoring cultural venues and events) damages the ambitions of art and design communities themselves as well as compromising their credibility.

For example:

**Culture Unstained** is a research, engagement and campaigning organisation which aims to end fossil fuel sponsorship of culture. They call on arts and cultural organisations to cut their ties to fossil fuels, with the aim of undermining the social legitimacy that the industry gains from these relationships.

Other examples: **Oil Sponsorship Free**, **Art Not Oil Coalition**, **Liberate Tate**

→ **Opportunities, Barriers and Recommendations for decarbonising arts and culture**

**Opportunities**

- Incubate and champion experimental low carbon technologies and other operational practices within arts venues, and ways which others can adopt and adapt them
- Increase climate and environmental literacy and criticality amongst artists and arts professionals
- Further explore, test and iterate practices of repair, resourcefulness, circularity and longevity within cultural production
- Extend mapping to uncover activities in underrepresented regions, and to better understand international and interdisciplinary partnership dynamics

**Barriers**

- Greenwashing and fossil fuel dependent funding models
- Limitations of existing tools and gaps in linking decarbonisation to regeneration in biodiversity

**Recommendations**

- Support work that is linked to specific decarbonisation ambitions and policies
- Enable fossil fuel free funding, including developing literacy around greenwashing in the arts
- Consider repair and resourcefulness as a link between practical doing and making and wider mindsets and models of arts in conceptual and practical terms



Work by Manifest Data Lab at Planetary Assemblages exhibition, Lethaby Gallery, Central Saint Martins 2022 | Photograph: Eilwen Jones

## 2. Long term mindsets and models

By its very nature sustainability requires a long term and multi-generational mindset. A transition to robust earth and equity centered models requires far, near and now oriented perceptions, behaviours and actions. This relies upon durable, future focused value frameworks, as well as governance, economic, funding and programming models that factor in success across multiple timeframes.

For example:

The **Long Time Project** is focused on finding new ways to help us care about the long-term future, so that we take responsibility for it in the short-term. It aims to galvanise public imagination and collective action to help us all be 'good ancestors'. Their **Designing for the Long Term toolkit** provides tools to cultivate long-termism in institutions.

### Value and evidence frameworks

Culture Declares and the associated movements galvanise the assertion that the arts and culture sector is a leading contributor in responding to climate crisis and in creating a regenerative future. There are some efforts to develop value and evidence frameworks to capture the impact that arts and culture makes in climate action and develop an evidence-base to support this assertion.

For example:

One of the core project strands within the **Centre for the Understanding of Sustainable Prosperity's** research is the **Role of the Arts and Culture in Delivering Sustainable Prosperity**. Through research and case studies they investigate the contribution the arts make to social, cultural, environmental and economic prosperity.

**Fostering Sustainable Practices**, an interdisciplinary research project with UAL, Middlesex and Open University, has created a **Guide for Sustainability in Action**, based on a four-fold framework of social, cultural, environmental and economic prosperity, drawn out of an evidence base of fashion design entrepreneurs' practices.

As part of their Design Economy research, the **Design Council** have developed the **Design Value Framework** for designers and commissioners to identify and assess the wider social, environmental and democratic impacts of their work.

Other examples: **Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation's Inquiry into the Civic Role of the Arts**

### Modeling good governance

Integrating the fundamental premise of climate action and sustainability into existing governance bodies and structures can be challenging in relation to an organisation's founding mission. This can result in environmental policies that sit separately to core purpose. For example, an art gallery may have adopted the UN's Sustainable Development Goals to guide their work but their founding mission which their Trustees are legally bound to uphold may be to preserve art from the a certain period for public enjoyment and understanding. This mission would still take precedence.

In response, some organisations have aligned environmental action to their foundational civic duty. Several newly founded organisations have opted for alternative governance structures like Community Interest Companies and Community Benefit Societies that better support their purpose and objectives.

For example:

**East Street Arts** was founded on the premise of securing better livelihoods for artists and their neighbours and addressing issues of economic and commercial decline in towns and cities. This mission frames their work related to climate crisis, including within the Season for Change programme.

**Architects Climate Action Network** is a network of individuals within architecture and related built environment professions taking action to address the twin crises of climate and ecological breakdown. They have chosen to adopt a Community Benefit Society structure which means they are set up with social and community objectives.

Other examples: **Climate Museum UK** (CIC structure), **LETI** (CIC structure), **New Weather Institute** (Co-operative structure)

### Earth and equity centered economic models

Whilst there is a wide-spread recognition of the need for economic models to have earth and equity at the centre, the complexities of changing financially driven accounting frameworks is challenging to the arts, as participants in wider systems. We found a few explicit references to changing economic models.

For example:

**EarthPercent** is a charity providing a simple way for the music industry to support the most impactful organisations addressing the climate emergency through inviting everyone in the music industry to commit a small percentage of their profit for the planet. Through this approach, they work with the most impactful organisations dealing with climate change to support their work financially.

**Fibershed** is a non-profit network that develops regional fibre systems to contribute to climate benefitting agriculture, rebuilding regional manufacturing, developing education and learning about the source of fibres and supporting community health. They aim to transform the economic systems behind the production of fibres in a way that mitigates climate change, improves health, and contributes to racial and economic equity. There are five Fibershed regional fibres systems in the UK: **Fibreshed South East, Fibreshed South West, Fibreshed Northwest, Fibreshed Scotland and Fibershed Wales.**

Other examples: **Something and Son, Grizedale Arts, Harewood House**

### Long term programming commitments

There are many one-off events and programmes around climate action and the arts. Cultural festivals have adopted themes of climate and environmental crisis as programming strands. This is not enough to create necessary shifts in climate action and sustainability in the arts. In fact, it risks that programming on climate is fragmented, at times tokenistic, and can lead to a false sense that change is taking place. Long-term programmes and ongoing emphasis in core artistic visions ensure that artistic programming in response to these issues is sustained and goes beyond surface engagement. It enables the knotty and difficult issues of climate and social justice to be explored and ultimately resolved.

For example:

**Back to Earth** is **Serpentine's** long-term, interdisciplinary programme addressing the ongoing climate emergency. This multi-year project invites over sixty leading artists, architects, poets, filmmakers, scientists, thinkers, and designers to respond to the environmental crisis. With the support of partner organisations and networks, these collaborators are devising artistic campaigns, protocols and initiatives that act as catalysts for change. It was born out of the Serpentine's Extinction Marathon in 2014.

The **Hay on Earth** programmes a sustainability-focused series of events throughout the 11 days of the Festival, exploring current issues, new developments and technical advances.

Other examples: **Walking Forest, Pervasive Media Studio Environmental Emergencies theme, Design Council's Design for the Planet programme, Royal Society of Arts Regenerative Futures programme**

## → Opportunities, Barriers and Recommendations for supporting long term mindsets and models

### Opportunities

- Identify and support long-term and systemic approaches to create holistic change across governance, operational and artistic visions
- Support and connect evidence of the impact of the arts in mobilising climate action
- Explore values-based frameworks that can evidence how the arts contribute to climate, environmental, social and cultural wellbeing
- Co-develop models of good governance, by bringing artists, designers, economists, lawyers, policymakers etc. together

### Barriers

- Lack of earth and equity centered funding models
- Limitations of operational change within entrenched socio-technical systems
- Existing governance structures can mean placing climate action at the heart of purpose and mission is challenging
- One-off and thematic programming that does not address wider structural and systemic issues while suggesting that enough is being done to address climate emergency

### Recommendations

- Engage in long-term thinking and systemic transformation which foster frameworks and codes of conduct for environmental and social justice
- Support and share the development of earth and equity centered models of governance, funding and programming in the arts

**One of the key things that we're trying to communicate to the wider fashion industry is that if you want something to be truly regenerative, you have to work within the farming year. You can't take more from the farm than can be produced within a season and a season runs an entire year for most plant crops or dye crops. In fact, for many plants and fibres it is a two year process.**

—Deborah Barker, South East England Fibreshed



Earth Quest takeover of Barbican Centre by UAL Climate Emergency Network, 2022 | Photograph: Hydar Dewachi

### 3. Whole systems change

A notable set of initiatives place arts and culture in the context of wider systems change, recognising themselves as part of wider problems and their causes. They acknowledge the deep entanglement between arts and the very conditions of social and environmental injustice that have led to the current crises. As a result of recognising this entanglement, they also acknowledge the potential for the arts to contribute to healthy social, cultural, economic and planetary systems.

Participants also reflected on *why we make art in climate crisis* and *how we make art in climate crisis*. These two questions inform and reinforce each other and if considered together, rather than separately, they can prompt fundamental and radical change within organisations. Some initiatives have reconsidered the premise of their existence in relation to climate action and sustainability, recognising interdependencies between human and more-than-human systems.

#### Combining operational and artistic change

Many sustainability policies, action plans and impact reports give primacy to operational concerns notable ones are beginning to include artistic programming as a specific action. Efforts to operate more sustainably can encourage a criticality within artistic programming. Commissioning and producing artistic work which raises awareness of or engages with climate and ecological emergency comes with an imperative to produce work in a way that aligns with climate and social justice values. Thereby, a mutually reinforcing loop can be created between direct change in the organisation and the change the organisation makes and influences in the world.

For example:

**Julie's Bicycle** describe their own journey as starting from carbon counting in arts and culture to expanding into artistic programming and commissioning, advocacy and policy work.

**HOME** in Manchester have reached 4 stars in Creative Green certification and as a result are recognised as leaders for their environmental and sustainability work in the arts. They also include actions within artistic programming in their sustainability plans and reports.

Manchester's **Royal Exchange Theatre** linked their announcement of policies and plans for active reduction of carbon emissions to its debut of Simon Stephens's *Light Falls* in 2019. Using this production as a pilot to implement them. Similarly, the **Royal Opera House** have used their recent production of *Rusalka* to frame discussions around creating theatre in a climate crisis and highlight the work they are doing behind-the-scenes.

**Abandon Normal Devices** are digital cultural producers who have made previously work in response to climate crisis. Their project *The Networked Condition* is an exploration of the environmental impacts of digital cultural production and the often-hidden environmental impact of the creation and delivery of artworks using digital technology.

Other examples: **Photographer's Gallery digital content on environmental impact of photography**

#### Climate action and sustainability as core vision

Some organisations and initiatives have made an explicit shift to placing climate action and sustainability at the core of their ethos and purpose. This means that they have either rearticulated their vision and mission or were founded with a specific mission of arts and climate action.

For example:

**ONCA Brighton** is a Brighton based arts charity that bridges social and environmental justice issues with creativity. Their programme crosses creative campaigns and advocacy, creative projects, exhibitions and performance. They also host regular workshops and courses.

**Shambala Festival** is a four-day contemporary performing arts festival. In addition to contemporary music, the festival hosts rock, pop, folk, world music, and other arts. Sustainable, circular, regenerative, net positive, earth and life respecting, and future thinking are embedded across the programme, operations and production of the festival.

Other examples: **Ergon Theatre, Platform London, Ground Work Gallery, Arts Catalyst, Exit Map, Fabrica Brighton, In Between Time**

### Changing systems through arts and culture

Several initiatives do connect change in arts and culture with wider socio-environmental concepts. They explicitly engage with systems change based on models such as post-growth, Doughnut Economics and design for just transition. Arts and culture is seen as a lever for change, transforming both its own structures and addressing structural barriers to systems change.

For example:

**Civic Square** are a community organisation focusing on building and investing in social and civic infrastructure for neighbourhoods of the future. Civic Square grew out of a deep, practical and experimental approach at Impact Hub Birmingham. They are working with Doughnut Economics Action Lab's approach to transformative action which is a framework that balances planetary boundaries and social needs.

**Dark Matter Labs** are a not-for-profit designing and building the underlying infrastructure to support a new civic economy. They envision this as a civic economy that is community-led, and based on many-to-many relationships, an economy that prioritises mental wellbeing and Nature-based Solutions as platforms for further change. They explore how ownership, legal systems, governance, accountancy and insurance might begin to change.

Other examples: **Earth Logic**, **Wicked Lab Ecosystem Transition Programme**

### → Opportunities, Barriers and Recommendations for supporting whole systems change

#### Opportunities

- Identify and support long-term and systemic approaches to create holistic change across governance, operational and artistic visions (see Long Term Mindsets and Models)
- Explore the role of the arts in systems change, including making sense of and socialising ideas of interdependence
- Support arts practice that helps to make sense of climate and environmental crisis and offers ways to participate in sustainable lifestyles e.g. resourcefulness, sufficiency

#### Barriers

- Engaging in an understanding of causes and symptoms of climate, environmental and social crises, can lead to or exacerbate eco-anxiety. Practices of care and support are needed to mitigate against this and related exhaustion that was also identified in the study.
- Anthropocentrism is deeply entrenched, with governments and industries based on the successes of consumer capitalism. Whole systems change requires working towards tipping points and focusing activity on the greatest leverage points.

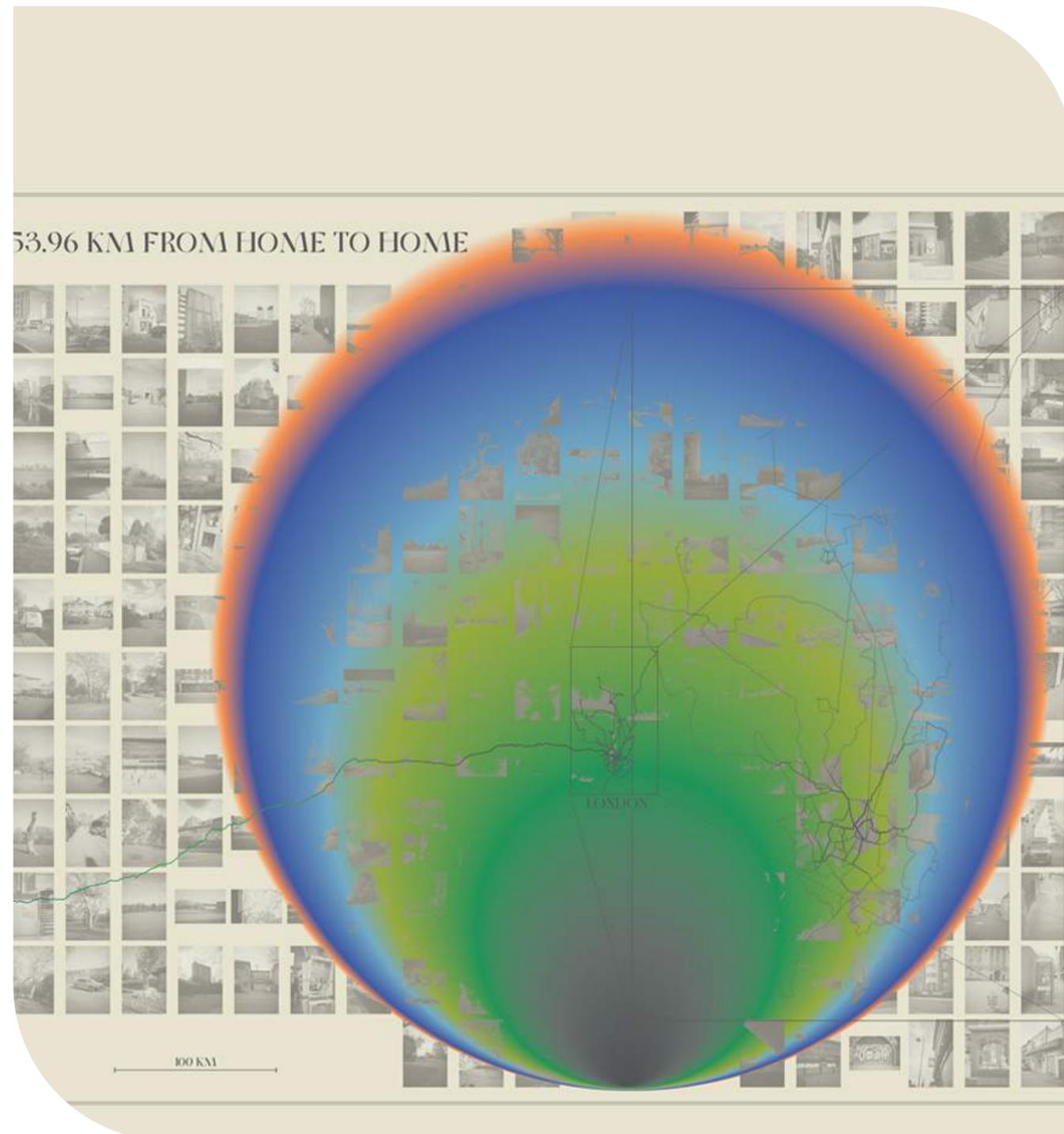
#### Recommendations

- Recognise interdependencies between operational and content related action
- Investigate ways to dissolve silos within the arts and in relation to societal and planetary systems
- Support the arts as convenors of a range of perspectives, which can dissolve echo chambers and polarisation, creating mutual recognition and respect through participatory events, public exhibitions and place-based community projects.

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**[As Thich Nhat Hanh says] We're here to awaken from the illusion of our separateness, if institutions could awaken from that, it might be helpful.**

—Alan Boldon, Dartington Trust



Claudia Lehmann, 2021 BA Fine Art, Camberwell College of Arts, UAL

## 4. Intersectional approaches

The research identified organisations and initiatives explicitly recognising that the climate and biodiversity emergencies are intertwined with social, racial, gender, class, disability and other injustices.

Climate justice compels arts and culture organisations to consider how their own histories, collections and practices are linked to colonialism and extraction. This includes considering how they commission work relating to climate crisis, and from whom and how histories, peoples and places are depicted.

Questioning agency and power requires decentred and decentralised approaches to knowledge and leadership. However, too often there is an assumption that collaboration is the same as agency for those most affected by climate and environmental injustices. The parameters of the study in mapping UK-based organisations and initiatives, suggests that there is a clear need to understand the agency of participants and to employ methodologies that recognise the intersectionality of climate and social justice.

For example:

The **Horniman Museum's Decolonising Natural History residency** and artist commission asked artists to consider the legacies of colonial collecting, the modern-day purpose of natural history collections and the links with the climate and ecological crisis.

As an Artist-in Residence at the **Royal Philharmonia**, musician Love Ssega developed *Airs of the South Circular*, which highlighted the impact of air on the Black community in South London. The subsequent **LIVE + BREATHE** was a campaign for better air quality in Lambeth and Southwark in partnership with Impact on Urban Health, Purpose. The campaign saw him collaborate with local community groups in the two boroughs and also record a new piece "Capes For Blue Skies" with the Philharmonia Orchestra.

Other examples: **Season for Change, Complicite and Fehinti Balogun's Can I Live?, Queer Botany, Live Art Development Agency Emergent Ties, Forensic Architecture**

The mapping has also identified an emerging range of examples of the role that arts and culture sector plays in interventions around climate related migration.

For example:

**Counterpoints Arts** is a national organisation in the field of arts, migration and cultural change. They work in partnership with artists, arts, cultural and educational organisations, and civil society activists. Their mission to support and produce the arts by and about migrants and refugees, seeking to ensure that their contributions are recognised and welcomed within British arts, history and culture. They have increasingly made explicit links to forced climate migration and climate justice.

Other examples: **BALTIC**, **Lewisham Borough of Sanctuary**

→ **Opportunities, Barriers and Recommendations for supporting intersectional approaches**

**Opportunities**

- Diversify the voices and lived experience at the heart of arts and environment work
- Make explicit connections between the arts in climate, environmental, racial, class and LGBTIQ+ justice
- Support initiatives that take a de-centred approach in their work

**Barriers**

- Structural lack of equality and diversity in the arts
- Existing hierarchies of power in arts, culture and wider society
- Mistaking collaboration for agency in design of initiatives

**Recommendations**

- Foreground the knowledge and agency of those most affected by climate injustice, both geographically and socially
- Connect this mapping with similar work



Hana Minowa, 2021 BA Fashion, Central Saint Martins, UAL | Photograph: Hana Minowa

## 5. Climate action in the arts as ‘situated practice’

The creative sector can prototype and socialise sustainable lifestyles by being situated within sectors that are experiencing or dealing with climate change and social concerns first-hand. ‘Situated practice’ can here be understood as creative response to immersion in specific geographical or professional setting. This approach is evident in multiple contexts where arts and artists act as participants, observers, co-creators, mentors, ideators, provocateurs or critical friends.

### Nature-based and rural arts

Nature-based organisations are uniquely positioned to bring arts and climate action together in a situated practice. Their remit to conserve nature and protect and restore biodiversity provides a context for artists to work in this manner.

Rural arts initiatives and organisations have a distinctive body of knowledge and experience when it comes to instigating environmentally responsive work. Their proximity to nature provokes creative interaction between artists and the land.

For example:

**Forestry England’s art programme** has been a leading initiative. Through the programme, the nation’s forests have played host to a wide range of artworks and art forms. Their programme supports artists, architects and designers to develop innovative ideas across installations, trails, exhibitions and live performances. As well as the major live music series Forest Live.

**Phytology** is a cultural institute based at the Bethnal Green Nature Reserve. They host an annual residency for researchers working across the arts, architecture, science and humanities. Their public programme actively engages with the environmental and social complexities of the surrounding urban landscape.

Other examples: **Allenheads Contemporary Arts, Cove Park, Outlandia, National Trust, London Wildlife Trust, RHS Ignition Project, Eden Project Arts Programme**

Outdoor cultural festivals are also well-positioned to respond to natural environments and interact with landscapes. The site-specific model of commissioning and programming draws out environmental issues and are often connected with a wider sense of place and community. When participatory methodologies are engaged, people contribute to outcomes at a tangible level.

For example:

### Estuary Festival

Presented by Cement Fields, **Metal Southend** and **Creative Estuary**. Artworks explore the estuary through the lens of historical and contemporary concerns, including climate justice, protest and rebellion, imperial legacy and the rich, often overlooked stories of its diverse communities, bringing new audiences to a deeper understanding of the estuary.

Other examples: **Creative Folkestone: SALT + EARTH: Festival of Landscape, Seascape & The Environment, Homegrown/Homespun at British Textiles Biennial, Inside Out Dorset**

### Arts as place-based climate action

Arts and culture organisations are playing a demonstrable role in shaping and responding to place-based climate action. This is a vital intersection between public policy, community action and the arts. They are actively involved in shaping and delivering climate action plans at borough, city and regional level. These hyperlocal innovations can make complex change tangible.

For example:

**GMAST** was established by a group of Manchester-based arts and culture organisations to begin to understand how they could contribute to the delivery of Manchester’s climate action plan.

### Architecture and Design Scotland:

**Climate Action Towns** are working with local communities to support place-based climate action in a network of small Scottish towns.

Other examples: **UAL Climate Studio, Lyric Hammersmith as convenor in Hammersmith and Fulham’s Climate and Ecological Emergency Commission, Ecological Citizens, Sounds Like Chaos Climate Home, GLA Future Neighbourhoods 2030**

### Situated practice in industry and business

Embedding creatives into other industry and business organisations opens opportunities for mutual learning and benefits drawn from a range of skillsets and professional backgrounds. Artists and designers can learn how to work inside problems and experiences of climate and social injustice, as well as with industries that shape cultural and economic development. (See also: Collaboration between arts and science).

For example:

**Sustainability First** is a charity and think tank who aim to advance knowledge and understanding of the environmental, social and economic aspects of sustainability as well as undertake research, promote ideas, actions and changes to further integration of quality of life with environmental protection, including combating climate change, at a community, regional, national and international levels. They have an **artist- in-residence programme** exploring a range of topics including UK power networks, hydroelectrics and renewable energy.

Other examples: **Future Observatory**, **Art on the Tideway**, **Hubbub**

### → Opportunities, Barriers and Recommendations for supporting climate action in the arts as ‘situated practice’

#### Opportunities

- Respond to specific conditions within landscapes, locations or environments through nature-based and outdoor arts
- Find ways of scaling small, niche and hyperlocal interventions as flexible models that can be adapted to a range of conditions
- Situate creatives beyond the creative sectors for creative sense-making, storytelling and developing collaborative knowledge and tangible application of initiatives

#### Barriers

- Silos between the arts and between arts and other sectors, which can be enforced by design of funding schemes
- Lack of understanding between arts and public policy
- Time is needed to develop trust in relationships

### Recommendations

- Create opportunities for situated practice beyond the arts by embedding artists and designers in non-arts sectors such as local government, industry and campaigning organisations
- Develop place-based and nature-based programmes to build knowledge that can also be applied beyond the programming itself
- Foster opportunities to connect action taking place at a range of scales from hyperlocal to global

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**It’s not about doing to somebody or to a place, it’s doing with. We’re working slower, deeper and longer, and in a much more sustainable way moving forward. Our work is grown up from a place and its people rather than delivered to a place.**

—Helen Cole and Helen Davies, *In Between Time*



Angela Mathis, 2017 MA Material Futures, Central Saint Martins, UAL | Photograph: John Sturrock

## 6. Creative sense-making for present and future

A wide range of the mapped initiatives assert the role of the arts in shifting cultural narratives around climate. This includes conveying information and interpreting scientific facts through artistic expression, creating emotional and imaginative responses to shift perspectives and inspire action. Artists and designers can help reframe the narrative of climate change from risk-reduction to imaginative exploration of new ways of being, encouraging hope, agency and action in individuals and communities.

### Storytelling and narrative change

Several initiatives position arts and culture as critical to emotional and imaginative engagement with the climate crisis. This can include translating factual evidence and complex information which is difficult to relate to, interpreting scientific information through artistic expression or creating narratives that inspire engagement and impetus to act.

For example:

**Doc Society's** Climate Story Unit is dedicated to supporting transformative storytelling to advance a climate just and biodiverse future. Across the Unit's programs, artists, impact producers, and movement builders come together to catalyse stories and their impact campaigns.

**Creative UEA's** Climate Narratives work brings researchers in environmental sciences together with storytellers, particularly creative writing and drama, to create new stories which help us to imagine possible futures shaped by climate change and our reactions to it.

Other examples: **Playing for the Planet**, **The Liminal Space**, **Climate Visuals**, **Reset Narratives**

### Collaboration between arts and science

Several organisations have pioneered collaboration between artists and climate scientists. By entwining scientific experiment with creative exploration they develop new knowledge and collaborative practice.

For example:

**Cape Farewell** brings international artists, visionaries, scientists and educators together to research, interrogate, discuss and create climate action. They bring creatives and climate scientists together through scientific expeditions to create collaborative work. Their low carbon HQ hosts climate-focused artist residencies.

*How We Save The World* is a story-game devised by **Coney** in collaboration with environmental scientists and the Natural Environment Research Council, first presented at the Natural History Museum in 2018.

Other examples: **Invisible Dust, Unboxed 2022**

### Culture as ally in activism

While environmental campaigns have previously collaborated with artists and creatives, there is now a shift in the arts as activism, recognisable through the visual language of campaigning groups like Extinction Rebellion. Specific groupings of artists and creatives have produced graphic design, installations and performances as distinctive visual explainers of their actions. This shift involves the arts in allyship between campaigners in different organisations and between campaigners and policy makers to better negotiate climate action at public and policy levels.

For example:

**ClientEarth** is an environmental charity with an approach of using the law to protect life on Earth. They focus on high-impact legal action. They regularly collaborate with the creative industries to bring the voices of artists, performers and creators to the climate fight. Using the arts to change perceptions and advocating for the planet alongside legal arguments.

Other examples: **Extinction Rebellion's Art Group and Earth Ensemble, Greenpeace, WWF Art for Your World, Fashion Revolution, Architects Climate Action Network, Culture Declares Emergency** and associated movements **Built Environment Declares, Fashion Declares, Music Declares**.

### Experiments in futures

Through an interdisciplinary approach, cross-generational enquiry and the unique capabilities of artists and designers to link head, hand and heart, the arts can encourage people to bring their whole selves to imagining alternative futures. This can include identifying examples of environmental and social wellbeing that are under recognised in currently leading narratives.

For example:

The **New Real Observatory** is a hub for AI, creativity and futures research. It is a partnership between the University of Edinburgh, Alan Turing Institute, and Edinburgh's Festivals. A founding principle is the belief that art and creativity can help to radically change how we think about AI design. Their work at the intersection between art and climate is informed by the relationship of machine learning and AI to climate data.

**Superflux** is a design and experiential futures company, as well as a research and art practice. From climate change to algorithmic autonomy, future of work to more-than-human politics, their work aims to confront diverse audiences with the complex and deeply interconnected nature of the challenges we face today. Recently launched a new climate initiative called **CASCADE INQUIRY** in partnership with Kings Cultural Institute.

## → Opportunities, Barriers and Recommendations for supporting creative sense-making for present and future

### Opportunities

- Harness the influence of the arts to convene policymakers and campaigners to agree on ambitions and actions
- Create more conditions for experiments in sense-making, storytelling and developing co-informed knowledge (see also Climate Action in the Arts as Situated Practice)
- Recognise the value of artists and designers in scenario planning and piloting strategies, such as net zero, with a range of audiences.

### Barriers

- Climate change messaging can appear overwhelming or disempowering, this can have a detrimental effect on public engagement. A challenge for the arts is to change this around, to inspire action and inspire agency
- The perception of the arts as knowledge sharing, rather than knowledge creating

### Recommendations

- Develop programme and funding models which bring scientists and artists together as co-inquirers
- Foster dialogue between campaigning organisations, government and industry to create open-armed allyship
- Form projects that are based on needs identified in communities through sense-making workshops, then linked to wider climate goals

**Culture can help us explore our shared values and collective imagination. This can better connect us to our natural world and move us beyond the conventional models of extraction, consumption and economic growth that deliver for so few of the planets inhabitants.**

—Simon Curtis, GMAST



Carnival of Crisis basecamp, 2021 | Photograph: Kat Smith

## 7. Shifts in arts education, capabilities, roles and skills

We are currently facing a three-fold misalignment between the purpose of arts education and climate related skills, capabilities and roles within the arts sector. On one hand, some curricula are equipping students with new skillsets required in response to the combined climate and social crisis. At the same time, the formal provision and recruitment for such roles is lagging behind the sector needs. At a wider scale, while there is evidence of change in curricula, there is scant evidence of whole systems change in the university education sector (see also Whole Systems Change), with notable exceptions, as outlined below.

### Repurposing arts education

The UK arts education system is globally recognised with many courses and universities playing a leading role in the climate action narrative. However, the current lag between what students are preparing to do in relation to climate and social change and what the leading industry and higher education narratives recognise as valuable can potentially lead to a loss of value and talent if graduates cannot find livelihood opportunities that match their skillsets and values.

For example:

**Black Mountains College** was founded as a response to the climate and ecological emergency. They offer courses and degree programmes in Arts, Ecology and Systems Change, as well as a public programme of short courses and events. Their model is designed to work with the local community to prepare the Brecon Beacons to respond to climate change and grow the green economy.

Other examples: **Dartington Trust, Dartington Art School and Schumacher College, Centre for Alternative Technologies, albert Educational Partnership**

### Emergence of new roles

We are beginning to see new types of roles across the creative sector, however these seem mainly focused on technical and production skills rather than programming or curation. Less formal 'sustainability champion' roles and 'green teams' are embedded in existing roles. Several sector-specific consultancies are supplementing the gaps in formal provision.

**Metta Green** is a consultancy bringing the power of their creative approach for positive environmental change within other organisations. It was founded out of the work of Metta, a London and Somerset-based theatre company with programming around social justice and climate crisis to build on the knowledge and expertise acquired in their own work.

**The Sainsbury Centre** is a university art gallery associated with UEA. In 2023 they announced that John Kenneth Paranada, has been appointed in a new role as **Curator of Art and Climate Change** which the centre considers an 'actionable commitment to addressing the climate crisis through art and culture.'

Other examples: **BECTU Vision Screen Sustainability Manager, Julie's Bicycle Climate Leadership Training, Root and Branches Carbon Literacy Training, A Greener Festival, Greenshoot, Green Man Trust**

### Dramatic shift in the role of the artist

The climate and biodiversity emergencies demand a dramatic shift in the role of the artist and designer. In this mapping, we see this in a range of capabilities including socially-engaged practice, situated practice, interdisciplinary practice and systems thinking as well as shifts in technical and production capabilities.

We found a limited number of dedicated opportunities for artists to develop their practice explicitly in relation to climate action and sustainable practice. In particular, for graduates to apply what they have learnt about design for sustainability to roles in industry. There are a number of awards, particularly in relation to materials innovation and technology, but the appetite for applying learning and criticality into industry practice is very limited. Artists, creatives and graduates need models to support adoption and scaling of innovative ideas that bridge study with making change in the world.

For example:

**Green Man Trust** was formed out of the **Green Man Festival** to give opportunities for supporting emerging artists, offering real-world professional training, getting people engaged with science and inspiring positive change in their communities in Wales all year round. Their **arts development programme** crosses visual art, performance and music to give artists longer term opportunities to develop new work in response to the context of and communities related to the festival.

**The Mills Fabrica** is an accelerator for fashion and textiles, and agrifood innovations for sustainability and social impact. They focus on incubating and investing in sustainable innovations, building an international community of sustainability, innovators, entrepreneurs and visionaries, and sharing this within their physical spaces.

Other examples: **Artsadmin 2 degrees festival**, **London Theatre Consortium Artist Climate Lab**, **Open Cell**, **Maison/0 at UAL**

→ **Opportunities, Barriers and Recommendations for supporting creative sense-making for present and future**

**Opportunities**

- Extending the value of arts education into value for society, including in employment opportunities
- Supporting systems change in higher and further education by connecting initiatives across universities

**Barriers**

- Lack of support for early career artists and creative start-ups to bridge the gap with industry or sector. Graduates can have capabilities that are not yet recognised
- A limited number of artist development opportunities specific to climate action
- Funding models hamper partnerships between universities, setting them up as competitors

**Recommendations**

- Expand the description of what artists and designers do, their roles and capabilities
- Bridge the gap between earth and equity centered education and sector practices
- Support adoption models rather than incubation, to scale ideas coming through from recent graduates
- Support UK wide network of arts universities for climate action (building on existing networks)



Green Roof Society at Central Saint Martins, UAL

## 8. Networked, open and distributive knowledge

Consortium approaches and networks have been vital to providing support and exchange, sharing best practice, and replicating approaches across multiple organisations. Many of these networks have co-authored tools and guidebooks for their members and the wider sector.

### Collective knowledge and action

Networks have formed from grassroots groups of artists and art professionals. This networked approach borrows from community organising and participatory movements using more distributive structures. Several grassroots groups have formalised into consortia and organisations with dedicated teams. They are typically organised by sector or place. There are some replicable models for example **GMAST** in Manchester inspired **SAIL** in Leeds and movements like Repair Café have a ‘social franchising’ model.

**SHIFT Liverpool** is the sustainability network for the Liverpool City Region’s cultural sector. It is a membership network that brings cultural organisations across Liverpool together to make a stand against climate change.

**Repair Cafés** are a social franchise providing free meeting places to repair things together. Repair Cafés offer tools and materials to help make any repairs whether on clothes, furniture, electrical appliances, bicycles, crockery, appliances, toys, et cetera. They have expert volunteers, with repair skills in all kinds of fields. Repair Café is an international network with 2500 cafes worldwide and 259 venues in the UK.

Other examples: **Creative Carbon Scotland**, **Design for Social Innovation and Sustainability Network**, **Vision 2025**

### Open-source accessible toolkits and guides

The development of toolkits and guides is prevalent in the mapping. The open sourcing of knowledge is recognised as vital to accelerating change and key funders such as the Greater London Authority, Arts Council England and AHRC have commissioned tools and guidebooks to make this knowledge accessible to all organisations.

The **Theatre Green Book** has brought together theatre-makers and sustainability experts to create a common standard for making theatre sustainably. It is offered as a free resource for everyone in the UK theatre sector.

**Fashion as Sustainability in Action** is a guidebook which contains key tips, methods and practical examples for those who support fashion micro and small enterprises (MSEs), to help them identify and promote businesses that can flourish and evidence long-term prosperity in and through fashion. It was authored by **The Centre for Sustainable Fashion**, in partnership with The Open University and Middlesex University’s Centre for Enterprise and Economic Development Research.

Other examples: **GLA Green Guides**, **The Green Cinema Toolkit**, **Ecostage**, **Museum’s Association Climate Resources Bank**, **UKIE Green Games Guide**

### → Opportunities, Barriers and Recommendations for supporting networked, open and distributive knowledge

#### Opportunities

- Learn from existing network models, there is a potential for signposting and replicating such models
- Extending the use of relevant existing resources in international contexts, both from and into the UK

#### Barriers

- Lack of resources, funding and support to sustain grassroots and self-forming networks
- Lack of visibility of existing resources
- Duplication of efforts in producing toolkits

#### Recommendations

- Signpost existing resources in accessible ways
- Consider funding models for systemic local approaches, which encourage collaboration and knowledge sharing



Nexus Architecture by Lucy Orta at Parade for Climate Justice, Carnival of Crisis 2021 | Photograph: Lori Demata

## Case Studies

## Case Study 1: albert

**WEBSITE:** [www.wearealbert.org](http://www.wearealbert.org)

**TYPE:** Organisations/institutions

**SECTOR:** Film and TV

**DATE ESTABLISHED:** 2012

**AREA/LOCATION:** Based in England - London, work UK wide

**CAPACITY FOR INTERNATIONAL WORK:** Yes



A Green Voltage generator on set, image courtesy of Green Voltage

### Key Messages

- albert's mission is to reduce the environmental impacts of TV and film production and to empower creative producers to use their platforms to inspire audiences. It is associated with BAFTA (British Academy of Film and Television Arts).
- It started as a simple carbon calculator that has since gone through numerous iterations and was developed into a toolkit translated into 11 languages. Currently the only global carbon calculator for TV and film production that is bespoke to the industry and includes not only UK-based, but also global emission factors.
- albert plays a key role in educating the industry and then the audiences to enable non-polarising conversations on climate related issues.
- Their vision is for the sector to maximise its potential to play a key role in driving change and accelerating climate action, drawing on its storytelling capabilities, economic power, connection to different supply chains and its mobile nature that can influence sustainable choices in many territories.
- albert convened the Climate Content Pledge that was released at COP 26 and signed by 12 key broadcasters in the UK and Ireland, committing to better climate storytelling, measuring their climate storytelling output and to reflect this commitment in their commissioning processes.

### Overview

The work of albert includes off screen and on-screen activity. The original aims were focused on off screen activity through carbon calculation for productions, but the consideration of on-screen climate storytelling was later added to help creatives understand how their overall carbon footprint is framed through different narratives and creative decisions. The three current aims are:

- Educate
- Enable
- Celebrate

The organisation has education partnership with 40 universities across the UK, providing a module that offers a test ground to film and TV undergraduates so that they are familiar with carbon impacts when they come into the workforce. They also deliver bespoke training to production companies and are currently working on an e-learning module. Their carbon calculator toolkit includes calculator, carbon action plan and links to an offsetting scheme which enables albert to provide carbon certification for productions as well as annual standards for physical studios. In addition, they offer a creative energy scheme and suppliers directory on-line, host a range of events, collate case studies of best practice and is now also involved in research on climate storytelling. albert also convenes the industry for regular consortium meetings and are increasingly involved in advising and advocacy within awards bodies, including BAFTA.

### References and resources

[Free training by albert ↗](#)

[albert Toolkit Resources ↗](#)

[albert Case Studies ↗](#)

### Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Carys Taylor, the Director of albert, for her time and valuable insights.

**Not every production will have an equal opportunity to drive progress in climate action through storytelling and nor should they try as in some cases, it would feel forced. But I think every production has some opportunity, and definitely has a responsibility, to think about any signals that that are being sent that normalize unsustainable behaviours.**

## Case Study 2: Creative Carbon Scotland

**WEBSITE:** [www.creativecarbonscotland.com](http://www.creativecarbonscotland.com)

**TYPE:** Organisation/institution

**SECTOR:** Cross art form

**DATE ESTABLISHED:** 2011

**AREA/LOCATION:** Scotland

**CAPACITY FOR INTERNATIONAL WORK:** Yes



Climate Beacon in Midlothian at the National Mining Museum.  
Image courtesy of National Mining Museum Scotland and British Geological Survey

### Key Messages

- Creative Carbon Scotland offers carbon management resources, tools, consultancy, and strategic expertise to support the cultural sector in reaching net zero.
- One of their core missions is to help cultural actors and climate change actors recognise the essential role that the cultural sector has to play in addressing climate change. Art and culture are seen as powerful tools to think through things collectively and change the stories we tell about who we want to be and how we achieve change in society.
- Their work is focused around four key areas:
  - Supporting cultural organisations in reducing their carbon emissions and adapting to the impacts of climate change. (Inject climate into culture)
  - Put cultural practices, cultural practitioners, and their ways of working into climate change projects, through collaborations, residencies and embedded artist projects. (Inject culture into climate)
  - Creating informal networks that connect creatives with climate change specialists and initiatives
  - Advocacy with strategic organizations to set up parameters that are conducive to change across the sector.

### Overview

The core area of Creative Carbon Scotland's work is focused on offering guidance and training on carbon measurement, reporting and reduction within the cultural sector. The organisation was also instrumental in strategic consultancy for the climate emergency and sustainability plan of Creative Scotland – the main funder for arts, screen and creative industries across all parts of Scotland. They also convene Springboard – an online assembly that brings together cultural, environmental and community organisations and individual practitioners, local authorities, businesses, charities, government and public organisations to work together on scenarios for net-zero Scotland by 2045.

The organisation puts emphasis on the importance of collective thinking and systemic solutions to climate change. For example, an individual theatre company cannot change the touring system on its own. This requires working with funders, other theatre companies, promoters, audiences, working on multiple levels within and outside the sector. In the process, art practitioners can draw on unique skillsets that include managing complexity as well as very diverse teams of people. In addition, artists are good at breaking the rules and thinking beyond what is currently possible - original thinking and thinking the unthinkable are the tools of the trade. Moving from the currently known scenarios is critical in response to climate emergency and artists can help people imagine other ways of living that are better aligned with low carbon lifestyles.

### References

[Springboard Assembly for Creative Climate Action ↗](#)

[Creative Scotland Climate Emergency and Sustainability Plan ↗](#)

[Climate Beacons project evaluation report – COP 26 ↗](#)

### Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Ben Twist, the director of Creative Carbon Scotland for his time and valuable insights.

**Collective thinking is very important in addressing climate change because it's not going to be solved by individual action.**

## Case Study 3: Culture Unstained

**WEBSITE:** [www.cultureunstained.org](http://www.cultureunstained.org)

**TYPE:** Organisations/institutions; Networks

**SECTOR:** Cross art form

**DATE ESTABLISHED:** 2016

**AREA/LOCATION:** UK wide

**CAPACITY FOR INTERNATIONAL WORK:** Yes

### Key Messages

- Culture Unstained fills the gap between creative activism and the specific issue of fossil fuel funding of the arts. They do this by mobilising networks of people through creative acts, research, advocacy and investigatory work.
- A strength of Culture Unstained is the creative thinking that they bring to the issue and their ability to create networks of a whole range of organisations that will collaborate and work together.
- Challenges include internal policy issues often being siloed when it comes to climate change. Resulting in a disconnect between funding, finances and senior management and programming.

### Overview

Culture Unstained was established through recognition that fossil fuel sponsorship was prevalent across large, highly visible cultural institutions. By sponsoring galleries and museums, fossil fuel companies appear socially acceptable, which normalises extractive practices. These cultural institutions often have a personal resonance with people, from their visits over their lifetimes which can be a powerful mediating tool to otherwise impersonal issues of policy relating to climate change.

Culture Unstained's ambition is to end fossil fuel partnerships and sponsorships of arts and culture, exposing and undermining the political and cultural power of this industry.

They do this by:

- working with museums and galleries on their governance and climate policies
- building coalitions and relationships with workers in cultural spaces, artists and arts workers to address power imbalances between those on the ground and big organisations who fund the arts
- acting as mediators and connectors.

They also support frontline organisations campaigning against extractive practice by asking what they can do to support their campaigns or struggles. This work may involve reparation, returning pieces to their original locations, through to writing press releases for campaigning organisations. This requires a high level of sensitivity, to ensure that they are not perpetuating colonial mindsets.

A strength of Culture Unstained is their ability to translate complex and dense information e.g. from carbon trackers and make it meaningful to people, primarily working in the arts. Their strong value-based position and openness to critique mean they are equipped for the difficult conversations involved in this work.

One of the most exciting things they have contributed to is the Royal Shakespeare Company ending its BP sponsorship, making a specific statement about not wanting there to be a barrier between themselves and young people who had raised concerns. They also published an ethical funding and sponsorship policy on their website, accessible across every page.

### References and Resources

[RSC Fossil Free Tickets campaign ↗](#)

[Toolkits and Resources on ethical funding and sponsorship ↗](#)

### Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the Co-Directors of Culture Unstained, Chris Garrard and Juliette Daigre for their time and valuable insights.

**For us, art and culture is something that's active, and in some cases activist. It has the potential to create change and challenge power.**

## Case Study 4: Dartington Trust including Dartington School of Arts and Schumacher College

**WEBSITE:** [www.dartington.org](http://www.dartington.org)

**TYPE:** Organisation/Institution

**SECTOR:** Education, Cross art form

**DATE ESTABLISHED:** 1925

**AREA/LOCATION:** England - South West

**CAPACITY FOR INTERNATIONAL WORK:** Yes

**I'm really interested in the oblique view, holding intention lightly and see what else comes along. I think artists are generally really quite excellent at that, a wandering curiosity that isn't necessarily pegged down to some tightly framed research question.**



Aerial view of Dartington campus. Image courtesy of Dartington Trust.

### Key Messages

- Based on the principal of learning by doing, developed by Dorothy Whitney and others, Dartington Trust engages in multiple ways to contribute to making the shift from an extractive to a regenerative culture.
- Through immersive experiences, people explore ways to learn with and from each other, based on the principal of inhabiting each other's way of knowing through extended enquiry without barriers between experts and new learners.
- They believe that the arts and culture can help us to loosen up thinking and through this, develop strategy that can become policy. Through co-created, carefully curated experiential programmes, with people from very different worlds, an amazing portfolio of changemaker experiences can be formed.

### Overview

The trust's mission, since the 1970's, has been to support sustainability through the ways in which artists and creative people find meaning and purpose in the everyday and through experiments in education.

This involves:

- courses for UG and PG students
- programmes for frontline workers and leaders and most local authorities in the country.
- building exemplar low impact, high performing homes
- the practical dimensions of a 1200 acre estate with 140 commercial tenants, 14 retail units hospitality, bars and restaurants, where

- food miles are usually under one
- research in practice, compiling and commissioning research

They observe that when you bring artists together with scientists, engineers, philosophers, economists, and businesspeople, it helps to reveal habits of thinking, knowing and being. The arts present these habits back to us, so that we can ask whether they are good habits or not. This is not the same as artists being put into the service of production or selling a message. It is about looking, together, at the fundamental underlying causes of challenges.

Experiments include a 30 acre plot, using ancient wisdom and modern science and knowledge, to establish a microclimate and resilient crops, harvested to make food and drinks. A forthcoming summit, will engage with complexity by looking at soil health and using different ways of knowing. This will necessarily touch on biodiversity, food futures, human health, diet, human culture, water issues, air quality and carbon sinking.

Their challenges include institutional boundaries, where proprietorial thinking and internal tensions mean partnerships don't get the full attention they need. More could be achieved by pooling resources and expertise.

### Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Alan Boldon, the CEO of Dartington Trust, for his time and valuable insights.

## Case Study 5: South East England Fibreshed

**WEBSITE:** [www.southeastenglandfibreshed.org](http://www.southeastenglandfibreshed.org)  
**TYPE:** Organisation/institution; Network  
**SECTOR:** Design (iv. Slow and sustainable fashion)  
**DATE ESTABLISHED:** 2019  
**AREA/LOCATION:** Southeast England and London  
**CAPACITY FOR INTERNATIONAL WORK:** Yes (within remit of its current priorities)

**For us, those longer-term investments in research is what would really make a difference. Many grants don't take account for the fact that farmers are already working in a climate crisis. The last three or four years there's been a real crisis.**

### Key Messages

- South East England Fibreshed (SEE Fibreshed) are an official affiliate of Fibreshed USA, a non-profit organization with a global network working towards developing regional fiber systems that build ecosystem and community health. The SE England Fibreshed partner with other UK Fibreshed branches, especially with the South West England Fibreshed.
- SEE Fibreshed are on a mission to regenerate regional textile and fashion system within the South East of England, including London. They are creating a network of designers, processors, and farmers, who are interested in textiles made without any synthetic chemical inputs, which means they can be safely returned to soil at the end of their lives (soil to soil textiles).
- London was specifically added to the scope of SEE Fibreshed work to bridge the rural-urban divide and to help London-based designers understand the possibilities and the limitations of their immediate bioregion.
- SEE Fibreshed vision is to move away from long supply chains towards small scale supply networks that draw on long-term partnerships and enable scaling through replication.
- The organisation's current priority is to work with farmers and raise awareness with designers. This includes improving the availability and quality of locally produced wool and natural dyes. They are also developing a tool that will enable better mutual understanding between farmers and designers of contexts in which raw materials are grown and in which clothes are made.

### Overview

One of the key roles of SEE Fibreshed is to make introductions and connect the currently disconnected farmer and designer communities. The organisation functions as a central hub for information and contacts for those interested or those who are already working in provision for localised fibre and textiles systems. Their philosophy builds on deep understanding of farmers' needs, putting farmers at the centre of the debate on fibre as an agricultural product. This is achieved through experiential learning that brings designers and farmers together in actually 'walking the land' and seeing what is happening.

The wider aim of SEE Fibreshed is to create a rural economy that provides decent livelihoods and at the same time contributes to soil restoration, carbon sequestration and ecosystem regeneration. This requires a considerable mindset change that recognises the long-term nature of regenerative processes and reflects the fact that the minimum timescale for collaboration and finance is a farming year. The interest in local fibre supply is rapidly growing, but investment in local processing infrastructure is critical to enable long-term viability of regional fibre systems. This often requires a relatively low investment in comparison to other large scale innovation initiatives.

### References

- [Fibreshed – Global community ↗](#)
- [Farming Fashion – part 1 – Farmerama radio ↗](#)
- [Farming Fashion – part 2 – Farmerama radio ↗](#)
- [Farming Fashion – part 3 – Farmerama radio ↗](#)

### Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Deborah Barker, co-founder and director of South East England Fibreshed, for her time and valuable insights.



Plant dyed wool from Plaw Hatch Flock. Photograph by Taya Badgley.

## Case Study 6: GMAST

**WEBSITE:** [www.g-mast.org](http://www.g-mast.org)  
**TYPE:** Organisation/institution  
**SECTOR:** Cross art form  
**DATE ESTABLISHED:** 2011  
**AREA/LOCATION:** England - North  
**CAPACITY FOR INTERNATIONAL WORK:** Yes

**Everyone's journey can benefit by embracing the learning from all kinds of cultural activities that explore our environment.**

### Key Messages

- GMAST is a network of over 70 cultural organisations that work together across the Greater Manchester city region. The network was born out of a project led by Julie's Bicycle 12 years ago which formed Manchester Arts Sustainability Team and has since developed with a regional focus. It brings together the leaders of some of the most significant cultural organisations in the area.
- The aim of the network is to bring the local cultural sector together to explore and better understand how it can reduce its impact.
- By sharing practice within the network, smaller organisations can benefit from mutual learning with larger organisations, who often have more resource. GMAST are linked to two other Northern networks – SAIL in Leeds and SHIFT in Liverpool.
- GMAST are particularly interested in the power of the sector to publicly advocate and create a space around the climate debate and give local



Members of the C-Change project. Image courtesy of GMAST.

communities the opportunity to embrace their feelings around climate, so that people's lives are reflected in the debate. They believe culture can often do this more effectively than local authority and government by exploring our shared values.

- Their mission is to encourage the sector to play to its strengths by helping to counter the tendency to evade and feel disempowered by the climate debate. Instead, GMAST aim to promote narratives of hope and change and equip people with the courage to go forward.

### Overview

GMAST are based around open sharing of information and updates through a bi-monthly network bulletin. They are involved in a range of projects on local level, including involvement in local policy development through the Manchester Climate Change Partnership and the Manchester Climate Change Agency. Currently, they are about to launch a cultural sector version of carbon literacy training as part of the wider strategy of the 2038 Zero carbon target for Greater Manchester. At the same time, they highlight that climate action must go beyond carbon lens, acknowledging the interconnection between climate crisis, social and economic inequality, health and wellbeing. This includes disparity between nations but also manifests itself on local levels, in the case of GMAST in different parts of the city and the region and across different communities.

GMAST organise a range of events to inspire leaders in key local organisations to act, help them understand the local climate picture and

how to plan and build strategies for the future. They are also involved in collaboration with other city-level organisations about driving better change in cities. One of their key achievements was a mutual learning exchange between six European cities as part of the European URBACT initiative. GMAST open-source Guide to taking action focuses on 6 key strengths of the sector that they identified to help cultural organisations identify area of focus and intervention across all levels of their work.

### References and resources

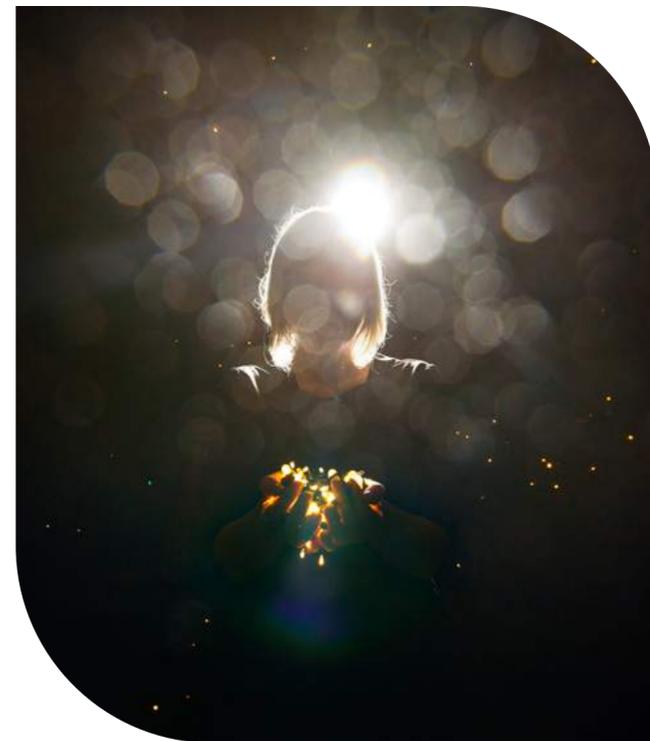
- [GMAST C-Change framework animation ↗](#)
- [The GMAST Guide to Taking Action ↗](#)

### Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Simon Curtis, the Convenor of GMAST, for his time and valuable insights.

## Case Study 7: In Between Time

**WEBSITE:** [www.inbetweentime.co.uk](http://www.inbetweentime.co.uk)  
**TYPE:** Organisation/institution; Cultural festival  
**SECTOR:** Cross art form  
**DATE ESTABLISHED:** 2001  
**AREA/LOCATION:** England - South West  
**CAPACITY FOR INTERNATIONAL WORK:** Yes



We Are Warriors by Helen Cole and 130 Bristolian Women and Girls, for IBT19 | Photograph: Manuel Vason

### Key Messages

- IBT describe themselves as an international home for live art, a leader in sustainable production and exchange and a creator of transformative experiences for the future we need and desire.
- Female-led organisation with flat, democratic structure led by two co-CEOs, one a founder in the role of artistic director and the other in the role of executive director in charge of engagement and audiences.
- For the last five years, In Between Time have been thinking really seriously about how to change within the space of climate action, rethinking almost everything they do, how they do it and why, one example being radically rethinking the old festival model built on international travel and competition.
- Vision: Powerfully imagining the world as it could be
- Mission: We are pioneers, disrupting perceptions, lifting expectation, championing change
- Values: Free thinking – believing in the power of art and artists. Fearless – creating new paradigms. Fair – caring about our world and its future

### Overview

In Between Time commission a lot of site-responsive work, co-created with a group of people, community, a site or a place. They also work in arts spaces.

Their work is clustered around three main areas:

- Artist development
- Civic engagement
- Public artworks

Their model is based around live art, which they see as very mobile and able to take on radical and challenging questions. The mainstream often follows where live arts starts, they say. In Between Time have a long track record of organising international festivals. However, lately they have been questioning the old model of festival making and showcasing which they feel is outmoded and not responding to the need to create more caring, more sustainable, and more just places that are more open to people. New ways of exploring how they can retain their internationalism and the vitality of international exchange while working with more sustainable models of touring are currently under way. One example is touring ideas and activating them in different localities, at the same time contributing to local economies.

Many In Between Time projects include close collaborations between artists and scientists, often fundamentally changing the practice of both. The public are later also facilitated around these collaborations. The aim is to bring in environmental messaging without being overt about it and contributing to the emotional overload that can sometimes make people feel disempowered. The ultimate goal is to inspire people to take further action.

### Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the co-CEOs of In Between Time, Helen Cole and Helen Davies for their time and valuable insights.

## Case Study 8: Local Works Studio

**WEBSITE:** [www.localworksstudio.com](http://www.localworksstudio.com)

**TYPE:** Organisation/institution

**SECTOR:** Design (i. Sustainable construction, ii. Biodesign and biomaterials)

**DATE ESTABLISHED:** 2017

**AREA/LOCATION:** Based in England - South East, work UK wide

**CAPACITY FOR INTERNATIONAL WORK:** Yes

**What we do well is bringing people into the process. This can be in the way we tell the story of materials, or in the way a place is transformed, not just physically or visually, but also through the systems that we use or invent for a project.**

### Key Messages

- Local Works brings an innovative approach to the design of landscapes, buildings and materials, through creative exploration based on the sustainable use of resources present within a landscape.
- The practice was formed as a partnership between a landscape architect and a building craftsman. They are makers and thinkers who design places with people through optimism, collaboration, creativity and inquiry.
- They provide the variety of tools needed to make any site a more environmentally sustainable, equitable, interesting and joyful place to be.
- A strength of Local Works is that their design practice seeks to make connections between people and resources, through decision-making that eliminates bad choices and develops good ones particularly regenerative practices and materials.
- Challenges include the established commercial infrastructure on sites that make it difficult to access materials for re-direction and the normalisation of materials that are not bio-based or regenerative.

### Overview

Local Works draws on skillsets, resources and materials from as close to the site they are working as possible to reduce movement of materials and carbon, and to enrich the project as well. This approach to the hyperlocal, throwing a tight radius around a project is both place-based and more broadly situated, with projects in the UK, Europe and assignments in the US and elsewhere.

Their design ethos is plan, make, repair. They work across building projects, education, exhibition work, public realm and landscape design. Their thinking across timescales crosses short, medium and long term ambitions and across impact. This involves creating demonstrator projects that can be scaled and communicated in order to apply new methodologies in sustainable design.

Examples of their work include:

- a low carbon brick, a commission from a Design Museum Gent which is now being used in a project in Gent
- working with a London Borough, to apply circular economy and localism principles to the design of one of their parks

In the medium term, they hope that these demonstrator projects can prove to be viable and preferred approaches, to become normalised practice. This would include a shift in procurement practices to focus on investing in people and resources so that buildings and sites can be maintained, repaired, replenished, rather than built over. The long term legacy would be a care, maintenance, repair approach to all places and resources, eliminating waste and toxicity.

They are aware of the tensions between taking on an interesting project and being brought in late, where there is a danger of greenwashing. However, when all is aligned, the power of design to tell the story of materials and how you can transform a place, develop skills and design systems, shows an expanded role for the designer and their influence. Incentives to work in regenerative ways could lift the current

barriers to make normalised, wasteful practices the harder, rather than the easier option.

### References

[Low carbon brick prototype for Design Museum Gent ↗](#)

[Material reuse and localised production for refurbishment of Bramcote Park, London Borough of Southwark ↗](#)

### Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Ben and Loretta Bosence, the Co-Directors of Local Works Studio, for their time and valuable insights.



Furniture designed for Maggie's Centre garden in Southampton. Image courtesy of Local Works Studio

## Case Study 9: Super Slow Way including British Textile Biennial

**WEBSITE:** [www.superslowway.org.uk](http://www.superslowway.org.uk) and [www.britishtextilebiennial.co.uk](http://www.britishtextilebiennial.co.uk)  
**TYPE:** Organisation/institution; Cultural festival  
**SECTOR:** Cross arts  
**DATE ESTABLISHED:** 2015  
**AREA/LOCATION:** England - North  
**CAPACITY FOR INTERNATIONAL WORK:** Yes



### Key Messages

- Super Slow Way was set up to deliver cultural opportunities in areas highlighted as low cultural engagement areas, with high and multiple deprivation, particularly in the geography of East Lancashire, along the Leeds and Liverpool canal corridor.
- Super Slow Way is funded as an Arts Council England Creative People and Places programme and the British Textile Biennial has grown out of this initiative as a separate but intertwined cultural festival
- The geographical location means that work is aligned with the canal as a physical asset and the derelict buildings and degraded land as a potential to become positive community assets. There is also an opportunity to create natural environments that people can spend time in.
- As a deprived area, they are seeing an increased interest in their work in relation to the levelling up agenda. They have been able to secure some funding from the National Lottery Community Climate Action Fund.

**I think one of the measures of success is about whether a community then takes something on themselves and it is perpetuated by that community directly.**

### Overview

Super Slow Way works with communities along a canal corridor in Pennine Lancashire, to increase cultural activity, in support of people in these places. They commission artists to explore this context, build relationships and form stories. Alongside these artists they create physical spaces representing what is of interest to the communities there.

They explore ways of transforming people's relationship with the canal by enlivening spaces along it. They seek ways for people to have access to green natural space and wildlife, so that they can develop a relationship with the land. For example:

- a project in Pendle called The Ripple Effect, where community members are working together on a range of activities including canoeing, growing projects, pop-up spaces to run a community café and skills sharing.
- Homegrown/Homespun in Blackburn. They have grown two crops of flax and ultimately aim to make jeans.

The geographical location is a post-industrial area, indelibly shaped by the textile industry. Some members of the community migrated here many generations ago, to work in the mills. Others more recently, from textile producing countries including India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The British Textile Biennial was formed out of this shared relationship to textiles. It links local and global conversations about the positive and negative impact of textiles on the environment and livelihoods.

People are not necessarily interested in the projects as a response to climate change or considerations around fast fashion, but often for other reasons. However, all of the local authorities they engage with have declared a Climate Emergency, so Super Slow Way endeavour to understand how to align with these plans from a cultural perspective. As an organisation they report on environmental responsibility across all their projects.

Challenges include the way in which minimal funding is 'dangled like carrots' and everyone is asked to compete for it. Trying to get different local authorities to work together is difficult, as they can be in competition with each other.

### References and Resources

[The Ripple Effect ↗](#)

[Homegrown/Homespun ↗](#)

### Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Jenny Rutter, Co-Director Super Slow Way for her time and valuable insights.

## Case Study 10: The Sustainable Angle including Future Fabrics Expo

**WEBSITE:** [www.thesustainableangle.org](http://www.thesustainableangle.org)

**TYPE:** Organisation/institution

**SECTOR:** Design (ii. Bio-materials/Bio-design, iv. Slow and sustainable fashion)

**DATE ESTABLISHED:** 2011

**AREA/LOCATION:** England - London

**CAPACITY FOR INTERNATIONAL WORK:** Yes

**Given the complexities and the myriad of actors throughout the supply chain, the only way sustainability can happen is if all actors work together.**

### Key Messages

- The Sustainable Angle provides resources to enable the fashion industry to move towards positive practices and provide education, knowledge, tools and material resources.
- They have seen a demonstrable upturn in interest, through the Future Fabrics Expo, however some of this is lip service rather than actual change.
- A barrier to change is a lack of long-term commitment by brands, and by the investment community. Another barrier is greenwashing, a marketing ploy without substance where businesses are engaging in the conversation but not making actual change.
- There is a concern about finding ways to expand who is in the room in this work. It's easy for some people to show up, but not easy for others, for all kinds of reasons.
- There is a need to be joyful and creative in acts of making that are connected to a sense of time, place and action. This is happening in pockets in the arts; by mapping this and connecting it together, a crucible can be formed to create new ways of living.

### Overview

The Sustainable Angle seeks to speak to everyone in the fashion sector through materials. They have a huge materials resource of their own and more through 250 global suppliers and innovators they work with. They want to be relevant across the market; from farmers to those making products, across fibre and material categories. Their activities include:

- Future Fabrics Expo held annually in London and as curated editions in other international locations
- Future Fabrics Expo permanent showroom
- An innovation hub at Future Fabrics Expo that presents positive material futures through speculative work
- Advisory work and workshops for designers and brands

When they set out, they imagined that it would take five years for the sector to shift, they learnt that they were over-estimating the speed at which change could happen in complex supply chains. Their ambition is for best practice to pervade the sector, including respecting biodiversity, cleaning up the pollution the sector has created, respecting nature's balance and people as custodians of nature.

The ethos of the Sustainable Angle is ground up, seeded out of an agricultural vision, and tackling environmental and social issues, as intertwined in the responsible balance between food and fibre. They draw on frameworks and philosophies of respect and responsibility for the land, such as The Fibreshed movement.

The measuring of impacts is complex and very difficult to track. They are working towards a mix of quantitative and qualitative measures relating to the impacts of their work, using feedback, case studies and understanding the complexities of certifications.

Success is in the simple act of connecting diverse organisations to join together, stripping away old-fashioned ideas of competition through unexpected partnerships. For example, between a fabric company and UNESCO or convening conversations between brands.

The June 2023 expo included thousands of commercially available materials, curated partner areas, a seminar programme, and innovation and knowledge hub. It seeks to inspire visitors with carefully selected materials, information and ideas that can be implemented from the here and now to support longer, deeper changemaking.

### References and Resources

[Future Fabrics Virtual Expo ↗](#)

[Fashion and the climate crisis FutureLearn course ↗](#)

### Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Amanda Johnston, Curator and Educational Consultant at The Sustainable Angle, for her time and valuable insights.

## Scope and Methodology

This non-exhaustive, snapshot study, involving empirical research and landscape mapping was focused into a twelve week period, between December 2022 and March 2023. It was carried out by researchers from University of the Arts London, the University had recently published their Climate Action Plan and have committed to become a social purpose university. The primary purpose of this work was to offer ways for British Council to gain useful initial insights and intelligence that can shape its strategies towards their CRGC programming objectives and inform the design and implementation of their programming. By making this report public, the authors and British Council seek to support change across the sector and the sector's role in practices of climate, environmental and social justice.

This report offers a review of climate action through culture and arts in:

- organisations/institutions, actors
- resources (courses, workshops, toolkits)
- relevant conferences and events
- cultural festivals
- initiatives
- networks

The scope is across the UK (England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland) and across the art forms represented in the British Council Arts programme:

- Design (Architecture, Craft, Design, Fashion)
- Performing Arts (Music, Theatre, Dance)
- Screen Arts (Film and Television, Digital Art, Video Games)
- Visual Arts (Fine and Contemporary Arts, Museums and Galleries, Heritage)
- Literature and Publishing
- Creative Economy

The report and accompanying mapping database provides a better understanding of climate action and sustainability in UK arts and culture by identifying:

- Key organisations, and actors including initiatives, events, cultural festivals, networks and resources, with overview of focus and scope of work
- Collaborations between arts and other sectors, particularly science and technology
- Capacity for international collaborations
- A snapshot of policies and funding mechanisms at a local, regional and/or national level that address climate challenges through arts and culture

To inform the design and implementation of British Council's Arts programming in this area by identifying:

- Key trends, opportunities and challenges in relation to climate action and sustainability through arts and culture
- Innovative work which celebrates and champions practice in arts and climate action
- 10 best practice case studies

Due to time constraints of the 3-month period, this research was on some occasions restrained by pragmatic constraints such as availability of contributors to discovery sessions and case study interviews. While the research does not claim to be exhaustive, the results presented in this report have been comprehensively analysed within the time capacity of the study. The findings offer an indicative snapshot of the UK landscape of climate action activity in the arts. Contextual elements drawn from desk research, discovery sessions and case study interviews have also informed the findings.

#### Summary of study limitations

- Scope, timescale and research time allocation did not allow for a detailed and fully comprehensive mapping
- Value assessments were limited to the timescale, thus lacking in any longitudinal element
- Discovery sessions took place online, but as the study is based at UAL, there is a high proportion of London-based respondents (50 of 120 entries from the Discovery Sessions are London based)
- Policy mapping relies on secondary sources, due to time restrictions
- Study limited in places by the availability of people to participate, due to time and other commitments



Wrok by Hannah Scott, 2017, MA Art and Science, Central Saint Martins, UAL | Photograph: John Sturrock

To address the research brief and scope, the research involved five key stages that enabled to build knowledge base cumulatively and iteratively.

### **1. Desk-based review**

A desk-based contextual review identified previous sector research and reports related to climate and sustainability in the arts in the UK. From this existing body of research we mapped organisations and institutions; resources; conferences and events; cultural festivals and networks, building also on the research team's knowledge and experience in the area. The initial mapping identified further key networks and collaborators to develop a wider mapping of initiatives across the UK arts and culture sector.

### **2. Discovery sessions**

Drawing on UAL expert networks, early stages of the research involved 35 members of UAL research and teaching community. In facilitated on-line sessions, these experts came together to reflect on their combined experience in this area as well as to gather and refine a map of key organisations and initiatives.

### **3. Mapping database**

The mapping findings from the desk-based review, discovery sessions, and policy mapping were collated in a comprehensive database. The database is thematically structured to represent disciplines within the ecosystem and coded according to: Location, Typology, Source, Art Form, Interdisciplinary collaboration and Evidence of working internationally. In addition, the breadth of climate action and sustainability focus in each of the mapped organisations and initiatives entries has been further analysed across environmental; social; cultural and economic aspects of sustainability.<sup>1</sup>

### **4. Policy Mapping Convergence**

Policy and funding instruments were identified in relation to the entries captured through the contextual review, desk-research of organisations and initiatives and discovery sessions. This documented the local, national and regional policy instruments, policy research and funding mechanisms documented in existing sector research and reports and related to the mapping database. Case Study Interviews offered further input and corroboration of this compilation.

### **5. Case study interviews**

Our assessment of mapped initiatives was guided by cross-corroboration of the research team knowledge and expertise, recommendations and referrals of UAL experts and reference to the framework of sustainable prosperity that draws on holistic understanding of sustainability across its environmental, social, cultural and economic aspects (see above). The organisations and frameworks that we long-listed for best practice case studies were additionally assessed against the CSF Scales of Transformation framework<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Williams, D., Burcikova, M. and Buchan-Ng, M. (2021) Fashion as Sustainability in Action: A Guide for Fostering Sustainable Prosperity in Micro and Small Fashion Businesses. UAL: Centre for Sustainable Fashion.

<sup>2</sup> Williams, D. and Toth-Fejöl, K. (2017) The Will and the Skill in Education for Sustainability. In: Handbook of Theory and Practice of Sustainable Development in Higher Education. Springer, pp. 79-94. ISBN 978-3-319-47876-0

## Research team

This research was conducted by researchers from University of the Arts London (UAL).

- **Centre for Sustainable Fashion, UAL;** team led by Director Professor Dilys Williams alongside the lead researcher - Dr. Mila Burcikova, Postdoctoral Research Fellow.
- Climate and environment expert input coordinated by Niamh Tuft, UAL Climate Action Manager and overseen by Professor Dilys Williams.
- Contribution of 35 experts from UAL were invited to Discovery Sessions to share their sector specific knowledge.
- Desk-research and mapping database coding supported by Megan Murray and Andreea Diana-Stan.
- Contribution of 10+ organisations who were invited for case study interviews to reflect on their first-hand experience of climate action in and through the arts (see Acknowledgments).

With support on graphic design across the project by Francesca Ceconi.

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following external experts for their time and valuable insights in Case Study Interviews:

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 Deborah Barker, Co-Founder and Director South East England Fibreshed  
 Simon Curtis, Convenor GMAST  
 Helen Cole and Helen Davies, Co-founders and Co-CEOs In Between Time  
 Ben Bosence and Loretta Bosence, Co-Directors Local Works  
 Jenny Rutter, Co-Director Super Slow Way and British Textile Biennial  
 Amanda Johnston, Curator and Educational Consultant The Sustainable Angle

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## About UAL

University of the Arts London offers an extensive range of courses in art, design, fashion, communication and performing arts. UAL is ranked second in the world for Art and Design in the 2022 QS World University Rankings®. The University is made up of 6 renowned Colleges: Camberwell College of Arts, Central Saint Martins, Chelsea College of Arts, London College of Communication, London College of Fashion and Wimbledon College of Arts.

[www.arts.ac.uk](http://www.arts.ac.uk)

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