

**TRANSFORMATIVE
TERRITORIES
METHODOLOGICAL SHEETS**

¿cómo podrían las ovejas

INLAND MALLORCA



**TRANSFORMATIVE
TERRITORIES
METHODOLOGICAL SHEETS**

INTRODUCTION

The Transformative Territories team is developing a methodology to support artists' involvement in the socio-ecological transformation of territories. How can art generate shared experiences capable of acting as vectors of transformation at this scale? What are the modalities, strengths and limits of such committed artistic practices? And how can their territorial effects be sustained over time?

THE TERRITORY AS A MATRIX FOR SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION

We understand the territory as a living construction – at once social, ecological and political – where the material world, human organisations (whether traditional or institutional), experiential knowledge, and shared imaginaries all intertwine.

A territory is a complex entity in constant transformation. It is woven through relationships of interdependence between living environments, networks of human and other-than-human actors, sometimes competing uses of resources, as well as memories and identities inscribed within it.

Thus, a territory is at once a physical space, a field of social and political dynamics, and a place inhabited by narratives and visions. The initiatives that take shape within it redraw its habitability, continually revealing new ways of living together.

ARTISTIC ANCHORING AS A MODE OF ACTION

In this context, the capacity of artists to act is rooted in their relationship with the territory: attentive observation of environments, an open and hospitable approach, and a patient way of composing with diverse forms of knowledge – whether stemming from the life sciences, the social sciences, territorial professions, or vernacular and situated practices.

Three dimensions of this anchoring appear decisive:

- **An ecosystemic and sensorial dimension**, combining insights from the life sciences and scientific ecology.
- **A spatial and political dimension**, attentive to scales of action, networks of actors, and ways of inhabiting places.
- **A social and solidaristic dimension**, oriented towards conviviality and the experimentation of new forms of cooperation.

TRANSFORMATIVE ARTISTIC PRACTICES

Transformative Artistic Practices unfold as forms of intervention aimed at renewing our ways of inhabiting the world, while taking into account planetary limits and the new risks generated by environmental upheavals.

Art is not limited to the production of works: it creates events, shifts perceptions and opens up new possibilities. By unsettling routines and reframing how we see, the artist invents new forms of the commons.

Their action unfolds across three closely interrelated levels:

- **Representations** – transforming how we see and name: narrating, mapping, making the invisible visible;
- **Practices** – experimenting with gestures rooted in place – walking, playing, planting, inventing rituals – and making them shareable;
- **Structures** – influencing modes of collective action – public commissioning, local governance, institutional frameworks – through the creation of lasting alliances.

THREE WAYS TO UNDERSTAND TERRITORIAL EFFECTS

Socio-ecological transformation relies on collective movements that redefine how we inhabit the world and live together. Transformative Artistic Practices contribute to these shifts when they are embedded in the long temporalities of territorial dynamics.

Three perspectives help illuminate their significance:

1. The territory as a horizon for civic action

A territory is at once a living environment, a space of imagination, and a site of action. It links our everyday experiences to wider horizons, from the local to the global. Even the most modest initiatives have their place, as they join broader networks of interdependence. The territory inspires upstream transformations and materialises them downstream, through engaged collectives of actors.

2. The territory as a lever for emancipation

Any transformation, however modest, carried out by citizens in a particular place can become a source of inspiration for others. When these gestures resonate with ecological and political dynamics, they foster shared know-how, strengthen the legitimacy of civic action, and support long-term engagement with socio-ecological challenges (Blanc et al., 2023).

3. The territory as a space of shared experimentation

To experiment through a territory is not to create reproducible models, but to welcome the diversity of situations and trajectories. Inhabitants, artists, institutions, researchers and non-human beings learn together – not to apply ready-made solutions, but to invent, step by step, responses adapted to the uncertainties of our time. The territory thus becomes a site of mutual learning, a living laboratory where more just and sustainable ways of life are imagined and built (Cayre, Patrice; Degeorges, Patrick; Fourt, Xavier; Landivar, Diego (eds.), *Territoires, écoles de la Terre*, Dijon: Éditions Utopia, 2023).

RECOGNISING THE RELATIONAL VALUE OF ARTISTIC PRACTICES

Transformative Artistic Practices rely on an ethic that rejects all forms of cultural extractivism. They prioritise reciprocity, solidarity, attentiveness to the living, and the conviviality of relationships.

In doing so, they shift how we understand value in art: the aim is no longer solely to celebrate the “rare” work or artistic exception, but to recognise the

concrete effects produced on territories – in terms of ecological health, social and environmental justice, hospitality, relationships, and care for local memories.

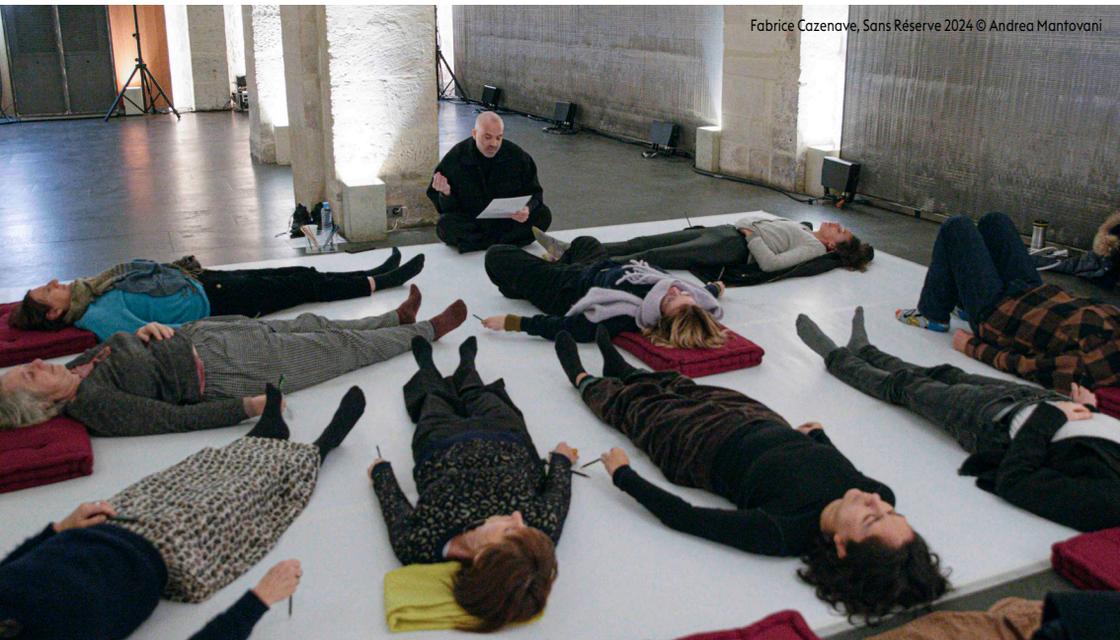
These new forms of value are not predefined. They emerge gradually through encounters with territories, collective dialogue, and sensorial experience.

Supporting them requires imagining appropriate frameworks: open commissions, research-creation budgets, multi-year agreements, stronger links between culture, ecology, health and education, territorial philanthropy, European cooperation, and the recognition of co-authors – whether inhabitants, collectives or natural entities.

METHODOLOGICAL SHEETS

The following sheets, designed within the European Transformative Territories programme, offer tools, reference points and examples to support cultural project leaders, local authorities, institutions, mediators, artists and collectives in their initiatives.

Drawing on the shared experiences of all programme partners, they are conceived as open, adaptable resources suitable for a wide diversity of contexts.



CONTENTS

PART A.

WHAT CAN ART DO FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF TERRITORIES? EXPLORING AND LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS

Methodological sheet 1 - Mapping needs – producing an assessment that is both sensitive and engaged, taking into account the human, social and ecological realities of the territory.

Methodological sheet 2 - Formulating a transformative intention – acting on representations, practices and structures (R/P/S) to embed change over time.

PART B.

ENGAGING PUBLICS, BUILDING SHARED CULTURE AND FORMING ALLIANCES TO SUSTAIN PRACTICES AND THEIR TRANSFORMATIVE EFFECTS

Methodological sheet 3 - Building an engaged public – developing methods, intermediaries and forms of participation suited to each context.

Methodological sheet 4 - Strengthening alliances – building shared culture, developing common languages and establishing care agreements between territorial actors.

PART C.

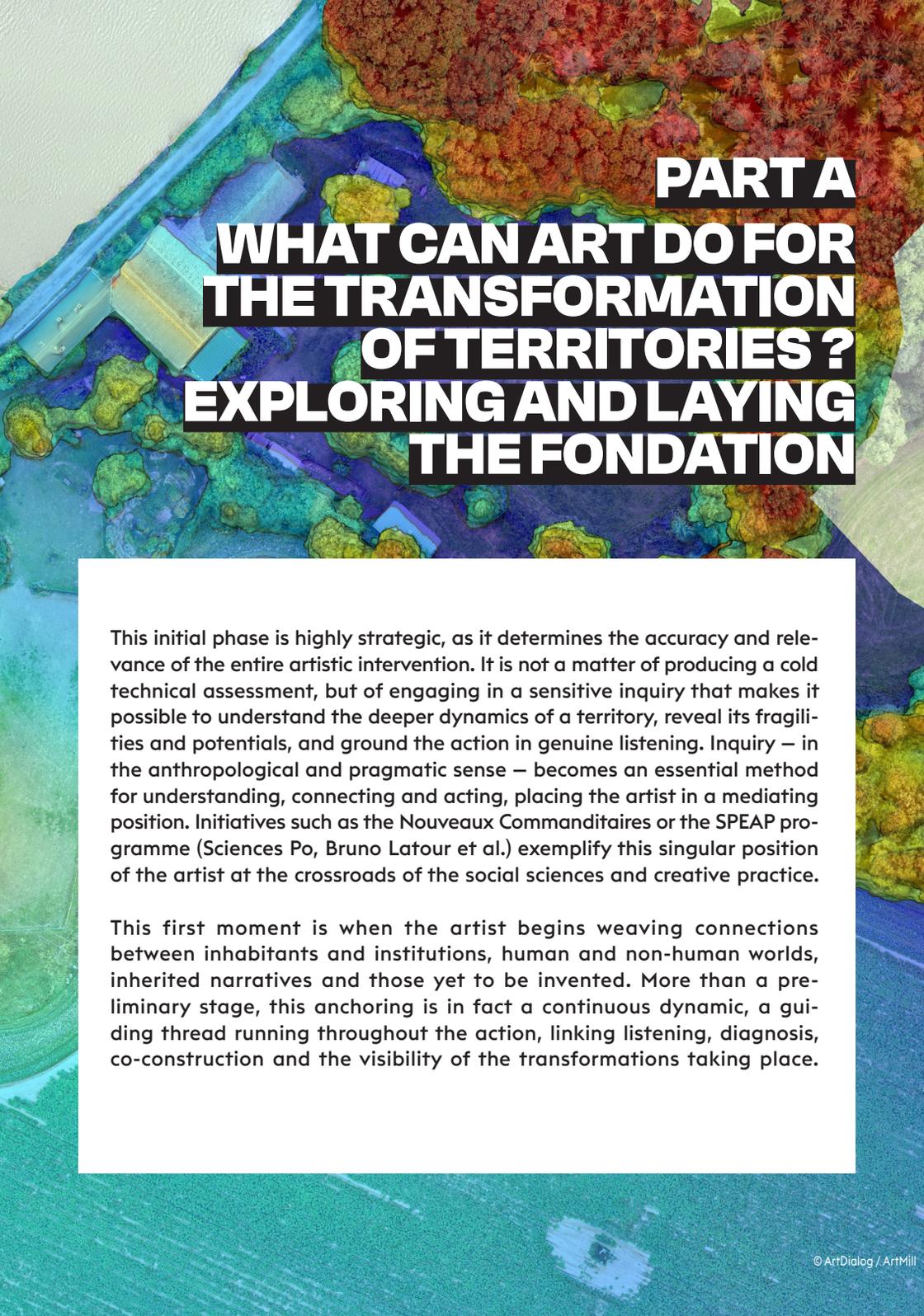
ASSESSING THE EFFECTS

Methodological sheet 5 - Assessing the Effects of Transformative Practices Along the Way

PART D.

NEW COMMISSIONING AND ECONOMIC MODEL

Methodological sheet 6 - reinventing commissioning and its economic model



PART A **WHAT CAN ART DO FOR** **THE TRANSFORMATION** **OF TERRITORIES ?** **EXPLORING AND LAYING** **THE FONDATION**

This initial phase is highly strategic, as it determines the accuracy and relevance of the entire artistic intervention. It is not a matter of producing a cold technical assessment, but of engaging in a sensitive inquiry that makes it possible to understand the deeper dynamics of a territory, reveal its fragilities and potentials, and ground the action in genuine listening. Inquiry – in the anthropological and pragmatic sense – becomes an essential method for understanding, connecting and acting, placing the artist in a mediating position. Initiatives such as the Nouveaux Commanditaires or the SPEAP programme (Sciences Po, Bruno Latour et al.) exemplify this singular position of the artist at the crossroads of the social sciences and creative practice.

This first moment is when the artist begins weaving connections between inhabitants and institutions, human and non-human worlds, inherited narratives and those yet to be invented. More than a preliminary stage, this anchoring is in fact a continuous dynamic, a guiding thread running throughout the action, linking listening, diagnosis, co-construction and the visibility of the transformations taking place.



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METHODOLOGICAL SHEET 1: MAPPING THE NEED OF A TERRITORY

The aim of this sheet is to guide the production of a sensitive assessment that goes beyond a standard expert diagnosis, in order to identify the real needs, challenges and potentials of a territory. This situated practice, shaped by listening, walking and the collection of stories, allows the artist to delineate their field of action and refine their method by engaging with other disciplines (urban planning, ecology, social sciences) without replacing them.

Five key gestures structure this sensitive diagnosis: **Understanding, identifying, meeting, inhabiting, naming.**

ARTIST PROJECT'S FOCUS

MITR Collective – *Made in the River*: long-term residency in a working-class district

mitrcollective.com

The collective MITR has developed a long-term residency in the Aygalades area, a historically working-class neighbourhood shaped by industrial heritage, migratory histories and ecological fragilities. Their approach has unfolded over several years through continuous collaboration with local associations, inhabitants, community organisers and schools.

Here, artistic anchoring is at once social, ecological and political. Social, because the work is grounded in long-term relationships of trust, attentive to everyday life and to the needs expressed by residents. Ecological, because the collective engages with the local watershed, the pollution of the Aygalades river, and the fragile ecological continuities that run through the neighbourhood. Political, because the project contributes to revealing structural inequalities, amplifying local voices and opening spaces where inhabitants can reimagine their environment and their agency within it.

Through workshops, collective walks, and shared investigations of the river and its histories, MITR's approach shows how patient presence within a territory can transform the ways people perceive and inhabit their surroundings, while strengthening local alliances.

The collective is composed of Charlie Fox, Chloé Mazzani and Bulat Sharipov.



ARTIST PROJECT'S FOCUS

The Al-Wah'at collective - *Wild Hedges*

[instagram.com/alwahat.collective](https://www.instagram.com/alwahat.collective)

The Al-Wah'at collective began its Wild Hedges project by delving into the history of the prickly pear cactus in Palestine. By tracing the trajectory of this plant—introduced in the sixteenth century for the production of cochineal dye, later becoming a cultural emblem across the Mediterranean while being considered invasive elsewhere—the artists brought to light a complex network of colonial and ecological meanings. This fieldwork, conducted in collaboration with local inhabitants and researchers, revealed both the plant's vulnerabilities (biological invasions, pests) and its hidden resources (fibres suitable for weaving, natural pigments, and forgotten culinary uses). Through this living mapping of the territory, the collective questioned the notion of invasive species and identified practical levers for caring for the local ecosystem, such as reactivating agricultural know-how and collecting parasitic insects in order to save the cacti.

Al-Wah'at is an artist research collective formed by Ailo Ribas, Gabriella Demczuk and Areej Ashhab. The collective is committed to growing communal practices in ecologies typically regarded as hostile and lifeless, and to countering anthropocentric and colonial narratives around arid lands and futures.



© Al-Wah'at (2023)

1. UNDERSTANDING: ENTERING INTO RELATIONSHIP AND LISTENING TO THE TERRITORY

This means learning to read the territory as a living whole, woven from relationships. This gesture of attentive listening seeks to identify what constitutes the territory through its materials, uses and vulnerabilities. It reveals tensions – pollution, transformations, development projects – while offering sensitive entry points for exploring the memory and imaginaries of the place.

Identifying environments, uses, vulnerabilities and attachments:

- Observing soils, waterways, ecological continuities, infrastructures;
- Identifying everyday uses: how inhabitants move, cultivate, play, gather, work;
- Detecting thresholds of vulnerability and zones of ecological tension (pollution, heat islands, flood risks) or social tension (precarity, isolation);
- Identifying places of attachment – spaces that concentrate shared memories and emotions (a tree, a square, a river).

Consulting traces and data:

- Technical documents: urban planning documents (PLU), ecological inventories (ZNIEFF, Natura 2000), impact studies;
- Public data: IGN maps, INSEE statistics, air and water quality datasets;
- Citizen cartographies: outputs of participatory workshops, citizen science programmes (e.g. Vigie-Nature);
- Archives and stories: photographic collections, oral testimonies, memory of past events or disasters.

2. IDENTIFYING: BRINGING ISSUES AND POSSIBILITIES TO THE SURFACE

This step reveals tensions and opportunities that may become levers for artistic and collective action. It is a matter of making visible what often lies beneath the surface.

- **Explicit and implicit demands:** Distinguishing between clearly stated expectations by inhabitants, associations or institutions (preserving a green space, enhancing a site, inventing a new service) and unspoken but perceptible needs (a sense of abandonment, conflicts of use). (e.g. Vigie-Nature);

- **Archives and stories:** photographic collections, oral testimonies, memory of past events or disasters.
- **Dormant potentials:** Identifying resources that can be activated (local knowledge, intangible heritage, forgotten commons), shared memories and emotions (a tree, a square, a river).
- **Zones of friction:** Identifying sites where different visions of the territory collide – for instance around an urban development project, a road, or water management.

3. MEETING: WEAVING A COMMUNITY OF ATTENTION

The diagnosis comes alive through encounters and dialogue. The goal is to build a relational cartography – a community of attention able to accompany the project and ensure its relevance.

Mapping actors:

- Inhabitants of all generations and backgrounds
- Local associations (environmental, cultural, neighbourhood-based)
- Schools and educational structures
- Municipal technicians, social workers and other key observers of vulnerabilities
- Economic actors (farmers, craftspeople, shopkeepers)
- Researchers, naturalists, ecologists, scientists
- Local authorities and public institutions.

4. INHABITING: EXPLORING ENVIRONMENTS THROUGH SENSORIAL EXPERIENCE

Anchoring takes place in the field, in direct contact with environments. Modest gestures – walking, observing, sensing, drawing – open up another form of knowledge and help weave links between humans and non-humans. Observing ecological continuities, water pathways or living soils teaches us to perceive the territory as a network of relations.

A few pathways for sensorial explorations:

- Producing sound, smell, shadow and light maps
- Identifying informal uses (fishing, gardening, play, bivouacking) and everyday circulations
- Observing ecological continuities (wetlands, hedgerows, biodiversity corridors)
- Organising cross-observations: guided walks, shared field notebooks, sketches, light sampling.

5. NAMING: FORMULATING SHARED MEANING AND A MOBILISING QUESTION

The final step consists in transforming the observed complexity into a clear and shareable direction. Naming what one seeks to transform is already to begin acting.

Formulating a mobilising question with partners – for example: “How can we reconnect with the river in everyday life?” or “How can we inhabit a wasteland threatened by urbanisation together?”.

This question becomes a compass for the artistic intention.



METHODS AND TOOLS FOR A SENSITIVE DIAGNOSIS

To put these five gestures into practice, the artist-as-inquirer may draw on a range of methods and tools that support the emergence of a collective intelligence of the territory.

Exploring with others

- **Guided walks:** in-situ dialogues with inhabitants, technicians, children
- **Sensitive maps:** workshops for subjective cartography (smells, sounds, shadows)
- **In-situ interviews and participant observation:** understanding everyday life from within (markets, celebrations, construction sites).

Observing differently

- **Naturalist surveys:** observing birds, lichens, flora as indicators of environmental quality
- **Time-lapse documentation:** capturing site evolutions through photo series

- **Shared notebooks and micro-stories:** collectively recording sensations, memories and narratives of place

Connecting knowledge

- **Hybrid workshops:** confronting regulatory maps with lived maps, expert knowledge with situated knowledge, to produce collective intelligence.

Cultivating hospitality

- **Informal reception spaces:** mobile kiosks, open tables in passing places to foster trust and proximity.



CONCLUSION

Territorial anchoring is an art of relationship. Through observation, encounter and sensorial experience, the artist becomes both witness and mediator, experimenter and facilitator. Their action does not impose itself from the outside but seeks to reveal the depth and vitality of the territory itself.



Beauté Paris

TERRE AMOVREVSE

Carpe diem

Billet doux

LA VIE

BÉTON

LA BOURSE DU LA VIE

Securité Sociale de L'Assurance

LA BOURSE DU LA VIE

Beauté Jour

Generosité



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METHODOLOGICAL SHEET 2: BUILDING A TRANSFORMATIVE ARTISTIC INTENTION

An artistic intention bridges sensory diagnosis with concrete action, aesthetics with politics. It draws on a careful reading of the site (see Sheet 1.1) and on local alliances (see Sheet 2.2) to generate tangible bifurcations—at the scale of a site, a neighbourhood, or a watershed.

More compass than blueprint, it articulates a promise of displacement and adjusts progressively as the process unfolds. To be genuinely transformative, the intention must operate simultaneously across three levels: **Representations, Practices, and Structures.**

1. FORMULATING THE INTENTION: WHAT YOU AIM TO TRANSFORM

Every intention begins with a promise—the promise to shift something, whether in representations, everyday gestures, or collective systems of organisation.

Transforming Representations: Shifting Perception

This involves altering images, narratives, and frames of reference. For instance, creating a map of sound quietude through shared listening sessions can open public debate on the territory's sonic qualities and reveal "refuge zones".

Transforming Practices: Anchoring New Gestures

The aim is to nurture shared forms of care for the living world. For example, creating a small collective nursery or a planting ritual can reinforce local knowledge and foster new routines of care.

Transforming Structures: Installing Change Over Time

This requires transforming governance and organisational rules. For example, drafting a usage pact between residents and municipal services can ensure continuity and embed the project into local operational frameworks.

Identifying Priority Levers

ARTIST PROJECT'S FOCUS

Caroline le Méhauté - Tellus Project

<https://www.carolinelemehaute.com/tellus-project-2>

Caroline Le Méhauté's Tellus Project centres on the extraction of urban soil, the experimentation of raw earth materials, collective construction, and ecological activation through depolluting plants. The artist devises an integrated process of circularity that weaves together artistic practice, urban ecology, and forms of popular pedagogy. Through this cycle – from soil to material, from making to ecological care – the project becomes both a practical and symbolic demonstration of how urban environments can be regenerated through shared knowledge and collective engagement.

Behind Caroline Le Méhauté's approach and way of working lies a constant process of selfquestioning about how we are in the world: how we place ourselves, the position we take, and the subsequent impact that can have, including in it this permanent state of "negotiation" and adaptability.



ARTIST PROJECT'S FOCUS

Nuno da Luz's - *Feral Songbook*

https://www.instagram.com/n_n_d_l_z/

Nuno da Luz's *Feral Songbook* proposes a form of interspecies relation that is not metaphorical but profoundly sensory. By learning to imitate the calls of green parakeets, residents gradually relearn how to coexist acoustically with a wild otherness. This shared sonic practice becomes a kind of neighbourhood diplomacy with the living world, cultivating attentiveness, reciprocity, and a renewed capacity to inhabit the territory alongside non-human species.

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ARTIST PROJECT'S FOCUS

C.Δ.R – Cellule d'Action Rituelle

labo.zone/index.php/car-cellule-dactions-rituelles-in-collaboration-with-h-artlab/?lang=fr

C.Δ.R – Cellule d'Action Rituelle (ZAD of Notre-Dame-des-Landes) explores forms of community life in the aftermath of conflict. Seasonal rituals are used to rebuild the relationship between inhabitants and their territory following a traumatic struggle. It is an ecology of collective affect – a process through which both place and self are repaired. The seasonal cycle becomes a framework for social self-regeneration, allowing the community to recompose its bonds through shared gestures, temporal rhythms, and renewed attention to the land.

C.Δ.R brings together the Laboratory of Insurrectional Imagination and the collective -h-. The former, founded by Isa Frémeaux and Jay Jordan, is renowned for its actions at the intersection of art and activism, such as the mass bicycle disobedience during COP15. The latter, comprising Nathalie Gélard and Thibaud Guichard, focuses on knowledge and narratives—both in their history and practice—through a variety of mediums, including installation and publishing.



2. IDENTIFYING PRIORITY LEVELS

A project cannot transform everything at once; it must choose its main points of leverage. For example, one might focus on creating a **Living Neighbourhood Glossary** (Representations), installing a weekly **mobile kiosk** (Practices), or developing a **shared sensitive maintenance budget** (Structures).

3. WORKING WITH THE SITE

An intention only takes shape if it is anchored in the lived reality of the territory—acting with it, not on it.

- Connect the intention to the needs and resources identified during diagnosis.
- Build a clear coalition in which each person knows their role (resident representative, technician, teacher, etc.)
- Rely on existing assets: narratives, tacit knowledges, relay-places and local collectives.
- Anticipate regulatory, material and seasonal constraints from the outset.
- Produce a first visible and concrete gesture within the first 30 days (informal welcoming devices, a simple signpost) to prepare the ground for deeper actions.

4. CHOOSING THE RIGHT SCALE AND TEMPO

The relevance of the action depends on choosing an appropriate scale and rhythm.

- **Scale:** Opt for a pilot site (accessible, visible, safe) or a network of micro-sites connected by a shared logic (e.g. a schoolyard + a bus stop + a square = a coolness network).
- **Tempo:** Align with the rhythms of the territory (seasons, school calendars, institutional cycles). Cultural or political milestones (Heritage Days, local urban plan revisions) are key opportunities for presenting and negotiating the work.

5. SHARING AND MAKING THE INTENTION VISIBLE

A transformative intention becomes collective only when it is shared, narrated and materialised through forms that circulate within the territory. Posters, maps, protocol

kits, usage pacts and sensory mediations (soundwalks, smell tables, micro-installations) help residents understand, discuss and appropriate the intention. These forms must be simple, open, adaptable and located in everyday places, enabling the intention to become a public matter and to gather a community of care around it.

6. ALIGNING RESOURCES

Transformative Artistic Practices often operate in contexts marked by scarcity, fragmentation or institutional constraints. Underestimating the resources needed – or ignoring the limits of what partners can realistically contribute – creates frustration and erodes trust. Aligning resources is therefore not a technical step, but a collective exercise of responsibility, ensuring that the project proceeds at a pace that respects both the territory and the people involved.

A transformative intention becomes operational only when the resources needed to carry it – budget, logistics, and human time – are explicitly identified and matched with the project's ambition. This requires a collective clarification of what each partner can realistically contribute, a shared negotiation of the project's scale, and the establishment of agreements ensuring continuity and fairness over time.



THE FRAMEWORK OF SHARED CARE: PACTS

A clear ethical and legal framework ensures reciprocity and long-term viability. It may take the form of reciprocity charters, occupation agreements, collaboration conventions, and usage pacts distributing tasks fairly.

The following **eight-point pact** synthesises this philosophy:

- 1. Act with the territory, not on it.**
- 2. What is collected returns to the residents.**
- 3. Anyone may withdraw at any time.**
- 4. Care for all living beings, human and more-than-human.**
- 5. Validate images and data collectively.**
- 6. Make protocols locally reusable.**
- 7. Share tasks sustainably.**
- 8. Evaluate and adjust continuously, together.**



METHODS AND TOOLS BY ACTION LEVER

Acting on Representations (seeing, knowing, thinking differently)

- Sensitive counter-maps: visual atlases, controversy maps
- Rituals of attention: dawn walks, soundwalks, ephemeral observatories
- Iconic devices: listening huts, totems, viewpoint-reversing signs
- Icono-textual programmes: fanzines, wall newspapers, podcasts
- In situ pedagogies: soil classes, stream schools

Acting on Practices (doing, behaving, interacting)

- Usage prototyping: reversible micro-installations, reused-material furniture
- Behavioural design: sensory itineraries, object lending, mobile kiosks

- Gesture workshops: composting, seedling, cooking, repairing
- Seasonal programmes: actions aligned with the site's ecological cycle

Acting on Structures (organising, regulating, governing)

- Usage contracts: light agreements for test-spaces
- Charters of attentiveness to the living: commitments on mowing, lighting, water
- Shared governance: mixed committees, targeted participatory budgets
- Integration into framework documents: notes for local urban plans, canopy plans
- Economic models: citizen-run services, "sensitive maintenance" budgets

CONCLUSION

A successful transformative artistic intention is grounded in a fine reading of the territory, acts simultaneously on representations, practices and structures, and advances at a sustainable tempo within clear alliances. Its purpose is not simply to produce artworks, but to reveal new ways of living, perceiving, and tending to our shared world. Once this intention is clearly defined and anchored, it becomes possible to mobilise a collective to bring it to life.



A group of people, mostly young adults, are sitting in a large circle on the ground in an outdoor setting with many trees. Some people are standing in the background, and there are some tables or structures on the left side. The scene appears to be a community gathering or a public art installation.

PART B ENGAGING PUBLICS AND BUILDING LASTING ALLIANCES

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This second phase forms the social and political core of Transformative Artistic Practices. The success of such practices does not lie solely in the relevance of their artistic intention, but in their capacity to bring together an active collective and to build strong, durable forms of cooperation. It is a passage from idea to shared action, transforming a plurality of heterogeneous actors into a genuine infrastructure of collaboration.

In this perspective, we draw on John Dewey's notion of the public. A public is not a passive audience or a simple aggregation of spectators to be convinced; it is a collective in the making, actively constituted around the recognition of a problematic situation and the shared will to address it. This conceptual distinction is a cornerstone of the methodology of Transformative Artistic Practices, as it shifts the role of the artist from that of a producer addressing an audience to that of a facilitator of democratic and ecological agency. The artist's task is therefore not to "attract an audience" but to create a public through collective inquiry, in which shared experience takes precedence over the object, and where ways of seeing, acting and organising can be recomposed.



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METHODOLOGICAL SHEET 3: CONSTITUTING AN ENGAGED PUBLIC

The primary objective of this methodological sheet is to transform conventional cultural mediation into a situated and transformative mode of inquiry. The aim is to create the conditions through which a collective can form, recognise itself as concerned, and equip itself to act, thereby establishing durable capacities for action within the territory.

1. IDENTIFYING AND ASSEMBLING THE PEOPLE CONCERNED

The first step is to identify those whose lives, uses or responsibilities are directly affected by the situation.

Methods:

- Map stakeholders, from the closest to the more peripheral.
- Practise going towards, being present in places of everyday circulation (market, school, bus stop).
- Send targeted invitations to form an initial minimal coalition of complementary profiles.

2. TRANSFORMING THE POSITION OF SPECTATOR INTO ACTOR

The aim is to move the public from mere observation to doing, and then towards co-responsibility.

Principles:

- Provide immediate traction through short tasks, clear roles and simple tools (e.g. a 10-minute listening ritual, a walk-workshop).
- Ensure hospitality (seating, water, shade) and guarantee the right to withdraw at any moment.

3. BUILDING A SENSE OF BELONGING

The goal is to make a situated “we” emerge around a shared reason to act.

Tools:

- Create shared places: a kiosk, an information board, a communal mapping wall.
- Establish rituals: regular gatherings, symbolic gestures.
- Develop a shared lexicon: key terms, icons and sensitive maps that name attachments.

PROJECT'S FOCUS

Les Nuits des Forêts festival

nuitsdesforets.com

Les Nuits des Forêts festival invites the wider public each year to experience artistic encounters at the heart of woodlands across different regions. For several nights, forests throughout France and Europe come alive with sensory walks, performances and workshops developed in collaboration with residents, foresters and local artists.

The festival operates as a network of propagation: it raises awareness of the current forest crisis while promoting new relationships with the living world through art, "at the scale of each territory". In this way, an idea born within a specific context – using artistic practice to renew our connection with the forest – is adapted and multiplied across other sites, creating a national dynamic of engagement and regeneration.

Founded in 2020 during the COVID lockdown, Les Nuits des Forêts is France's first national festival dedicated to forests, born out of urgency in the face of climate change. Held annually across mainland France and overseas territories, it brings together local communities, forest professionals, artists, and the living world. Through free, accessible educational and artistic programmes in over 230 forests, the festival fosters dialogue, shared knowledge, and new collective narratives.



4. ENSURING DIVERSITY OF VOICES

A robust public is a heterogeneous one. It is essential to avoid closed circles and to make diverse social, cultural and generational positions audible.

Strategies:

- Adapt formats to each person's constraints (schedules, childcare, accessibility).
- Rely on intermediaries (schools, social centres, shops) to reach those furthest away.
- Put in place discussion and mediation rules that allow controversies to be "inhabited".

5. ESTABLISHING GRADUATED FORMATS OF INVOLVEMENT

Offer a clear and reversible scale of engagement so that each person can find their place.

Information → Participation → Co-responsibility

- **Informing:** observing, receiving a local newsletter.
- **Participating:** contributing occasionally to a workshop or a collection.
- **Co-responsibility:** joining a core team with rotating roles and a share in decision-making.

ARTIST PROJECT'S FOCUS

Thierry Boutonnier - *Prenez Racines!* / *Le Verger des Maturités*

<http://www.domestication.eu>

Each of Thierry Boutonnier's projects emerges from a clearly identified territorial issue, to which the artist responds by opening up a gradual scale of engagement adapted to the specific environment.

Prenez Racines! unfolds in a densely populated priority neighbourhood, marked by a lack of green spaces, social fragility, and a need for calm, trust, and collective breathing. Here, involvement begins with very simple gestures: checking on young plants, talking with mediators, or pausing in a place where one can "finally breathe". This first layer of observation helps ease tensions and opens up the possibility of the commons. Occasional forms of participation then follow—planting a tree, mulching soil, assisting with a nature workshop. Gradually, a group of everyday caretakers—mothers, caretakers, youth workers—takes responsibility for the site and passes on these practices. The transformation sought is social and relational: the emergence of a neighbourhood lung, a space of community health.

Le Verger des Maturités addresses a very different issue: a farming territory weakened by intensive arboriculture, depleted soils, and the urgent need for an agroecological transition in the face of climate change. The entry point is a collective reading of the landscape—understanding the role of an old cherry tree, following markers that trace the evolution of agricultural practices. Participants are then invited to engage in agroecological actions: planting living hedges, carrying out participatory diagnostics, or building a rain-collecting shelter that also measures time. An agroecological core gradually takes shape, bringing together residents, farmers, and naturalists capable of imagining and supporting the transition towards a sustainable forest-orchard. Here, the transformation sought is ecological and landscape-based, rooted in a long-term perspective.

In both cases, the progression of engagement is gradual yet reversible, allowing participants the freedom to enter, leave, and return.



© Thierry Boutonnier

KEY PRINCIPLES OF RELATIONAL ANCHORING

- **Symmetrising knowledge:** renouncing any position of superiority and valuing all forms of knowledge – expert, technical, lived.

- **Working with “ordinary intermediaries”:** relying on librarians, caretakers, teachers, shopkeepers who act as essential daily mediators to reach more distant publics.

METHODS AND TOOLS FOR MOBILISATION

Activating Encounter (going towards)

- **Mobile micro-situations:** engaging people where they pass, lowering the threshold of entry.
- **Targeted invitations:** combining door-to-door, hyperlocal signage and digital channels.
- **Entry rituals:** establishing tangible hospitality (coffee, soup, structured turn-taking).

Experiencing Concern (sensitive approaches)

- **Walkshops / situated walks:** routes with thematic pauses to shift from opinion to situated perception.
- **Attention workshops:** stabilising observation through reusable methods (photo-points, sound-walks, urban herbariums).

- **Reversible micro-prototyping:** testing small, useful gestures at low cost (poetic signage, listening stations).

Structuring Involvement (participation ladder)

- **Inform:** local newsletter, progress boards.
- **Contribute:** workshops, collections, use-testing.
- **Co-responsibility:** a core committee with rotating responsibilities.

Equipping Continuity

- **Provide practical kits** (facilitation, documentation) and shared resources to ensure the durability and reproducibility of practices.





Julie Navarro Performance in Maçao, Portugal © ITM

METHODOLOGICAL SHEET 4: STRENGTHENING TERRITORIAL ALLIANCES

Creating a territorial alliance around a transformative artistic project involves learning to act together, building bridges where there were boundaries, and imagining a shared culture that speaks as much to institutions as to local residents. Such projects require careful attention to relationships, rhythms, and resources – the following methodological guidance can help navigate this stage.

ARTIST PROJECT'S FOCUS

Margherite Pevere – Lament

margheritapevere.com

Margherita Pevere describes alliances as the living heart of her practice. For her, a work such as Lament – a performative installation developed in response to the 2017 wildfires in Portugal – exists only because a network of multiple alliances formed around the ecological catastrophe.

In Santa Comba Dão, the artist begins by engaging with what is already present: the burnt traces in the landscape, the mosses recolonising the ground, residents still processing the shock, firefighters, psychologists, and forestry researchers. She then allies with Céline Charveriat (Prototopia) to co-design a process of collective mourning that weaves together art, ecology, and psychology. Together, they develop a community programme: sensitive discussions, guided walks through the burnt zones, collection of personal narratives, and the creation of a large communal textile on which each participant deposits a gesture of grief.

The alliance is procedural. Scientists, psychologists, residents, firefighters, artists, and local officials become co-authors of the same space of repair. Researchers analyse the scorched soils, foresters explain natural regeneration, residents recount their losses, while the artist weaves a form in which these diverse knowledges coexist without competing. These partners are not simply “supporting a work”; they are actively participating in the transformation of the territory.

The alliance is simultaneously scientific, artistic, psychosocial, civic, and even more-than-human: mosses, charred trees, and the forest itself are treated as sensitive partners. It is the alliances themselves that constitute the work.



© Margherita Pevere

1. OBJECTIVES

AVOID ACTOR ISOLATION

From the outset, it is essential to clarify roles and share information in a common space (online or offline). This creates a collective memory of the project, where everyone can access its history, decisions, and key documents.

POOL RESOURCES

A territorial alliance is not simply the sum of individual strengths; it is about sharing them. Premises, budgets, skills, tools – everything that can be shared should be documented in a collective register, making visible the resources each participant brings.

ESTABLISH ROUTINES

For an alliance to remain active, it needs regular rhythms: steering meetings, public events, documentation sessions. This shared cadence prevents fatigue and anchors the project in the everyday life of its participants.

ENSURE SUSTAINABLE ENGAGEMENT

For a project to outlast its initiators, it must rely on formal agreements (usage pacts, conventions, financial commitments) and be embedded within durable frameworks such as municipal agendas, school timetables, or cultural programming.

PREVENT IMBALANCES

Any collaboration involves asymmetries – of power, time, and resources. Acknowledging these explicitly allows all parties to respond. Hospitality rules, listening sessions, and mediation processes are valuable tools for balancing power and preventing tension. Special attention should be given to accessibility (timing, language, mobility needs) and urban/rural differences.

2. LOCALLY ANCHORED ALLIANCES

A territorial alliance is woven as closely as possible to the local context. Its relevance depends on observation and mapping (see Sheet 1.1): who is already active? Which places are symbolic, functional, or invisible? Where are decisions made?

- **Map the worlds:** from elected officials to farmers, from children to informal collectives.
- **Identify decision-making arenas:** spaces where politics really happens (municipal commissions, school boards) and plan a calendar to insert proposals.
- **Cross temporalities:** school schedules, ecological cycles, budgets.
- **Choose nodal sites:** already lively spaces where people pass, remember, and work.
- **Anticipate constraints:** administrative, regulatory, logistical.
- **Activate local resources:** landmarks, facilities, and under-used skills.

3. A TOOLKIT FOR ACTING TOGETHER

Building a durable alliance between heterogeneous actors is itself a Transformative Artistic Practice. Certain methods are particularly effective in materialising and sustaining an alliance:

- **Boundary objects:** aesthetic supports such as sensitive maps, atlases, or lexicons. These can circulate (in schools, libraries, technical meetings) while enabling dialogue even when participants do not share the same language.
- **Rituals:** walks, listening workshops, collective gestures. These give rhythm and a sensory dimension to the project. Easily repeatable and transmissible, they transform engagement from spectacle into shared habit.
- **Demonstration micro-sites:** small spaces transformed by the project (orchard-observatories, listening stations), acting as tangible markers of the alliance.
- **Usage pacts:** short “aesthetic-legal” conventions linking hospitality, care, the right to withdraw, and GDPR clauses, reassuring participants while strengthening the durability of a space or commitment.
- **Activation licences and open kits:** to transmit, reproduce, and document what has been done, enabling others to take it up. The value of the work shifts toward replicability and its capacity to create the common (protocols, templates, Creative Commons resources).

ARTIST PROJECT'S FOCUS

Yan Tomaszewski - *Sequana*

yantomaszewski.com/sequana#index

Yan Tomaszewski reimagines the relationship with the river as that of a living, sacred entity. By invoking the Celtic goddess Sequana, he reactivates a mythological memory, giving the river a symbolic – and therefore political – presence. The performative ritual, which includes processions, immersions, and purification through burning and activated charcoal, functions both aesthetically and chemically, purifying the river symbolically and physically.

The sculpture serves as a vehicle for ecological action, enabling alliances between the artist, water chemistry researchers, citizen collectives (such as the Gardiens de la Seine), and environmental activists (Soulèvements de la Terre). These alliances operate on three interconnected levels: the sensory (ritual), the scientific (pollution analysis), and the political (advocacy for the river's rights).



PROJECT'S FOCUS

Parti Poétique - Zone Sensible

parti-poetique.org/les-lieux/zone-sensible/

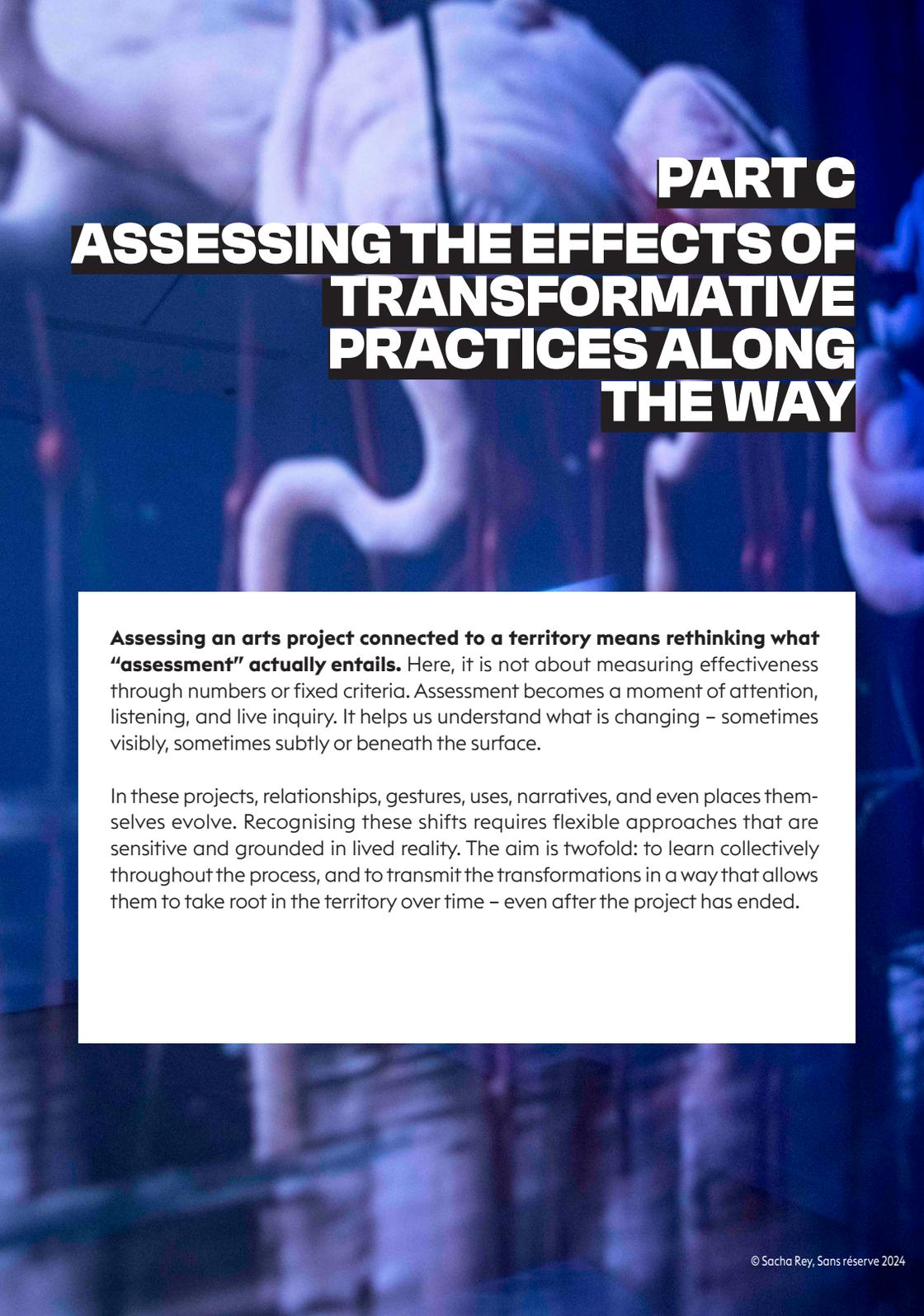
The challenge lies in moving from a temporary experiment to a new reference state for the territory. A striking example is the urban farm Zone Sensible in Saint-Denis. Initially an artistic initiative by the collective Parti Poétique, this permaculture garden has, over the years, become a durable cultural and ecological asset in the heart of the Parisian suburbs.

Olivier Darné, the artist behind the project, transformed a neglected plot into a fertile space, engaging residents, farmers, and researchers to “re-enchant the disfigured landscapes of the suburbs and reveal their hidden richness.” Today, Zone Sensible is firmly established as a living and teaching space: vegetable production, educational workshops, and artist residencies coexist, while the farm even shapes local policies on food and urban biodiversity.

This territorial embedding demonstrates that the initiative has moved beyond the stage of a project to become an integral part of the local fabric.



© Valerie Frossart / Zone Sensible



PART C

ASSESSING THE EFFECTS OF TRANSFORMATIVE PRACTICES ALONG THE WAY

Assessing an arts project connected to a territory means rethinking what “assessment” actually entails. Here, it is not about measuring effectiveness through numbers or fixed criteria. Assessment becomes a moment of attention, listening, and live inquiry. It helps us understand what is changing – sometimes visibly, sometimes subtly or beneath the surface.

In these projects, relationships, gestures, uses, narratives, and even places themselves evolve. Recognising these shifts requires flexible approaches that are sensitive and grounded in lived reality. The aim is twofold: to learn collectively throughout the process, and to transmit the transformations in a way that allows them to take root in the territory over time – even after the project has ended.



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METHODOLOGICAL SHEET 5 : ASSESSING THE EFFECTS OF TRANSFORMATIVE PRACTICES ALONG THE WAY

Assessing an arts project connected to a territory means rethinking what “assessment” actually entails. Here, it is not about measuring effectiveness through numbers or fixed criteria. Assessment becomes a moment of attention, listening, and live inquiry. It helps us understand what is changing – sometimes visibly, sometimes subtly or beneath the surface.

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1. ASSESSMENT AS A TRANSFORMATIVE PRACTICE

In Transformative Artistic Practices, assessment is not an external form of control or a final verdict. It is an integral part of the action, conceived as a situated and collective inquiry. Its purpose? To learn, adjust, and decide together – not to produce incriminating evidence.

TAPs generate effects that are not easily measurable with conventional tools (such as audience numbers or sales). They often reveal the need for territorial repair (ecology, conviviality, safety).

Their effects are often:

- **Intangible** (changes in perception, building of relationships...)
- **Diffuse** (distributed among various actors or places)
- **Gradual** (sometimes emerging long after the intervention)

To assess them, these effects need to be made visible and discussable by documenting sensitive, collective transformations. As in ecology, the artistic intervention is seen as a hypothesis to be tested, and assessment as a feedback loop that allows decisions to evolve as we observe what unfolds, what resists, what surprises – enabling the process to be renewed or corrected.

Five stages illustrate this circular dynamic:

1. **Formulating** a transformation hypothesis within a specific context
2. **Testing** it (through prototypes, workshops, rituals, experiments)
3. **Observing** the effects (using simple, shared tools such as stories, photos, notebooks, drawings)
4. Collectively **interpreting** traces, feedback, and points of friction
5. **Readjusting**, documenting, and transmitting the learning and key gestures to support continuity, with or without the initial initiators

2. EVALUATION INDICATORS ACROSS THE STAGES OF THE PROJECT

Assessment of a Transformative Artistic Practice draws on complementary dimensions – symbolic, relational, organisational, material, and ecological – which correspond to the role of the artist within the territory.

Rather than seeking a universal indicator, we look at a range of signs that depend on the stage the project has reached. Over time, the impact can be examined on:

- **Representations** (what people see, narrate, imagine)
- **Practices** (what people do, and how)
- **Structures** (what becomes institutionalised, organised, lasting)

Below are a few indicators to follow from one phase to another.

Anchoring Phase: when the project begins to take root

Here we observe the first concrete signs that a process is emerging, without expecting strong results yet.

Dimensions → Observable signs

Symbolic -> What new narratives, languages or representations are emerging in and about the territory? *Example: a shared vocabulary appears; stories circulate; a sensitive map is co-created.*

Relational -> Is the TAP changing the way people and institutions interact? *Example: the formation of a core group; novel collaborations (e.g. school + local artisans).*

Material -> How does the TAP reshape the physical environment or practices of caring for it? *Examples: emergence of visible gestures or objects – installation of benches, composting areas, nesting boxes, collective repair...*

Systemic -> Easier access to public resources or data; a first shared agenda among partners; early exchanges with municipal services...

Transformative Phase: when the artistic intention becomes concrete action

At this stage, we verify that the project is truly activating and can take shape without relying entirely on the artist's presence.

Dimensions → Observable signs

Symbolic -> The project's intention is understood by others; a clear pitch circulates; a shared lexicon is reused.

Relational -> Practices become routine; roles are clarified; a sponsor or institutional relay steps in; simple formal agreements are made. Relationships deepen, opening pathways for new collaborations. Assessment may look at the number of decisions informed by project tools or agreements, or at new collaborations between previously disconnected services.

Material -> Prototypes are activated (pathways, nurseries, open workshops); usage kits circulate.

Systemic -> *Procedural integration*: durable frameworks emerge – first authorisations (even modest), establishment of sustainable means (financial or material), official entry into an administrative process (e.g. PLUi commission). *Transmission*: partners are able to reactivate the approach independently after the initiators leave.

3. EXAMPLES OF UNCONVENTIONAL ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Shared logbook

A paper or digital folder gathering observations, photos, emotions, incidents... It builds a collective memory of the project.

Regular pathway reviews and adjustment loops

Moments dedicated to reflecting together on what happened, what worked, what raised questions, and what is decided next. It is essential to involve participants in these assessment moments.

Log of renunciations

Recording what stops happening (e.g. systematic mowing, late-night lighting) to value doing less as a positive ecological impact.

Clinic of controversies

Short anonymised public consultations on points of tension (noise, cleanliness) to assess transformation through reduced time spent managing conflict.

Care accounting

Tracking "care hours" (watering, mulching, mediation) to make the real economy of transformation and distribution of contributions visible.

Transmission register

Mapping who passes on which gesture or knowledge to whom (a teacher to another class, a resident to a neighbourhood committee) to visualise the diffusion of practices.

What matters here is not the volume of data produced, but:

- **the diversity of contributions**
- **the quality of exchanges**
- **the collective capacity to adjust**

4. PRECAUTIONS AND POINTS OF ATTENTION

- **Consider** imbalances in roles and power within the project
- **Ensure** the right to withdraw at every stage
- **Avoid** reducing the artist to a purely operational or technical function. Uphold their specific role: opening imaginaries, proposing new gestures, enabling new forms of listening
- **Anticipate** uncertainties linked to the territory, such as political changes or staff turnover
- **Always** obtain explicit consent before sharing photos, stories, or testimonies, and guarantee anonymity when requested
- **Ensure** that collected stories, images, or knowledge are returned to the territory in a useful form (booklet, exhibition, workshop, etc.)
- **Include** people who are usually less visible (young people, precarious groups, discreet workers...)

ARTIST PROJECT'S FOCUS

Thierry Boutonnier's work— When Artistic Intention Becomes Sustainable Action

Several projects developed within Transformative Artistic Practices illustrate how an initial artistic intention can evolve into concrete, autonomous and durable action, without relying entirely on the continued presence of the artist. Et in Arcadia ego, initially conceived in Lausanne as a temporary intervention within an international garden festival, introduced urban eco-grazing as an artistic and ecological gesture. Very quickly, municipal technical services appropriated the practice, ensured its continuity and integrated it into long-term green space management policies. Today, urban eco-grazing has become a widely recognised and standard practice in many European cities.

In Lyon, Prenez racines! follows a similar trajectory. Launched as a participatory urban nursery within the framework of urban policy, the project gradually evolved into a shared orchard co-managed by local residents and formally recognised by public authorities. The initiative led to lasting planning decisions, the mobilisation of hybrid funding schemes and the emergence of a territorial common capable of enduring and being transmitted. Its unexpected continuation, Eau de rose, demonstrates how practices generated by an initial project can spread across a metropolitan area, be carried by local collectives, structure an associative economy and be integrated into cultural and scientific programmes, without depending on a single formal commission.

Other projects, such as Gratte Terre in Villeurbanne or Suite de Pan in the Gers region, further exemplify this transformative phase, in which artistic dispositifs become shared platforms for action. In these cases, urban nurseries, arboreal observatories or agroforestry works progressively evolved into spaces for research, education and ecological restoration, embedded within existing institutional frameworks. These projects resulted in durable authorisations, the creation of associations, long-term funding commitments and the capacity for local partners to reactivate the approaches independently. Taken together, these trajectories show that the transformative phase can be identified when the artistic intention circulates, stabilises and is transmitted; when practices become routine; when organisational and institutional frameworks emerge; and when the project continues to generate tangible effects on environments, uses and public decision-making well beyond the initial timeframe of the commission.



PontVer(t)s © EvaHabasque



Prenez racines! © Thierry Boutonnier

ARTIST PROJECT'S FOCUS

Thierry Boutonnier's work— When Artistic Intention Becomes Sustainable Action

Several Transformative Artistic Practices show that their effects only become visible when assessment follows the trajectory of a project over time, rather than isolating a moment of production.

Projects such as Et in Arcadia ego (Lausanne) or Prenez racines! (Lyon) were initially commissioned as temporary interventions. Their early effects were subtle: shifts in perception, emerging alliances, new gestures of care. Assessment during these phases focused on relational and symbolic signals rather than measurable outputs. Over time, these projects generated durable transformations: eco-grazing became a normalised urban practice; participatory nurseries evolved into permanent orchards and shared commons.

Other projects, including Eau de rose, Appel d'air or Gratte Terre, illustrate how assessment can accompany unexpected continuities. What began as limited artistic commissions extended into long-term processes involving scientific research, citizen participation, associative governance and hybrid economic models. Here, assessment tracked the capacity of practices to persist, to be taken up by new actors, and to reshape institutional frameworks.

Across these cases, assessment does not ask whether an artwork "succeeded", but how a territory's capacity to care, cooperate and decide has evolved. The value of the practice lies in its ability to remain active beyond the artist's presence, and to contribute to the habitability of the territory through lasting relations, uses and commons.



© Blandine Soulage- Rocca - Veduta / Biennale d'Art Contemporain 2017

A photograph of a wooden chest on a green mossy surface. The chest is dark brown and has a metal handle. The moss is covered with many colorful paper leaves in various shapes and colors, including pink, yellow, blue, and orange. A small black sign with white text is visible in the upper left corner, which reads 'AUXILIAR' and 'AUXILIAR' in reverse. The text 'PART D REINVENTING COMMISSIONING AND ITS ECONOMIC MODEL' is overlaid in large, bold, white letters on a black background in the upper right quadrant.

PART D REINVENTING COMMISSIONING AND ITS ECONOMIC MODEL

Transformative Artistic Practices are rooted in the care of living environments and human relationships within a given territory. Their primary aim is not the production of artworks or events, but the activation of long-term processes embedded locally within ecological, social and institutional dynamics. Supporting these practices requires a profound transformation of commissioning and funding logics, moving away from an event-based economy towards an economy capable of accounting for what strengthens the habitability of a territory.



© Zone Sensible

METHODOLOGICAL SHEET 6 : REINVENTING COMMISSIONING AND ITS ECONOMIC MODEL

Transformative Artistic Practices are rooted in the care of living environments and human relationships within a given territory. Their primary aim is not the production of artworks or events, but the activation of long-term processes embedded locally within ecological, social and institutional dynamics. Supporting these practices requires a profound transformation of commissioning and funding logics, moving away from an event-based economy towards an economy capable of accounting for what strengthens the habitability of a territory.

1. FROM DIRECTIVE COMMISSIONING TO CATALYTIC COMMISSIONING

Conventional artistic commissioning is based on an architecture that is now ill-suited to the ecological and political challenges of habitability: a problem to be solved, an expected deliverable, a controlled timetable and tightly managed resources. This model freezes roles between commissioner and executor, fails to recognise the agency of living milieu, and prevents the emergence of sensitive, relational and institutional transformations.

By contrast, catalytic commissioning does not define a predetermined objective. It opens up a field of relations and allows for multiple, evolving trajectories. It does not prescribe, but configures a situation of shared inquiry and action in which gestures, narratives, uses and alliances can be recomposed. Commissioning thus becomes a mediating framework in which a shared language is constructed from the interdependencies already present within a territory, and where the initial intention accepts being reformulated through contact with the living world.

2. REDEFINING THE NOTION OF VALUE

Reinventing commissioning also entails redefining what constitutes value. From a habitability perspective, the success of a project is no longer measured primarily by its visibility, audience numbers or economic return, but by its capacity to generate public benefit in the broadest sense: improving relationships between uses, repairing fragile environments, activating commons, and developing collective capacities for attention, governance and care.

The artist no longer produces merely an artwork, but a relational and sensitive infrastructure that helps make a territory more liveable and more shareable. This value, often invisible within conventional accounting frameworks, calls for a new regime of public recognition capable of rendering ecological, social and political effects legible.

This kind of value can be observed through a set of qualitative indicators, such as:

- Services rendered to the territory: reduction of nuisances, easing of conflicting uses, creation of third spaces, climatic or sonic hospitality...
- Commons activated or strengthened: usage agreements, charters, open tools, shared rules, transferable dispositifs...

- Ecological value produced: cool zones, welcomed biodiversity, restored soils, collective gardens, living continuities...
- Capabilities developed: mediation, shared attention, light governance, inter-generational cooperation...

3. COMMISSIONING AS A PRACTICE OF SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL MEDIATION

Within the framework of transformative artistic practices, commissioning ceases to be an administrative act aimed at producing a predefined result. It becomes a framework that enables active relationships between living environments, inhabitants, institutions and artistic practices. It does not prescribe a solution; it organises a situation of inquiry, attention and action from which responses can emerge.

- **The initial intention of the commission is no longer imposed upon the territory.**

It accepts being reformulated through a feedback loop in which the artistic process acts within a biotope and a biocenosis, then returns to transform needs, priorities and modes of action. This process requires active listening to environments, to their vulnerabilities as well as their capacities, and assumes that decision-making frameworks can evolve in response to what is revealed along the way.

- **In this perspective, commissioning does not aim at the execution of a programme, but at the opening of a field of relations.**

It brings into dialogue situated knowledges (inhabitants, public agents, artists, scientists, practitioners, human and more-than-human beings) and resonates heterogeneous temporalities: those of living systems, everyday uses, artistic processes and public action. The forms of action that emerge are not planned in advance; they become necessary insofar as they make perceptible what an environment needs in order to remain habitable.

- **The primary audience of the commission is the institution itself.**

Called upon to enter this process, the institution finds itself affected, displaced, and sometimes transformed in its ways of framing problems, defining priorities and organising action. Commissioning thus acts as a space of collective learning, in which cultural, symbolic and operational frameworks that exert pressure on environments are reconfigured.

Reconceived in this way, commissioning becomes an operator of habitability.

It creates the conditions for sensitive and relational engagement, organises regimes of shared attention, enables the hybridisation of knowledge, and supports the emergence of decisions attuned to the ecological and social realities of a territory. It opens a process through which a community gradually learns to compose with its environments and to sustainably transform its ways of sensing, understanding and deciding together.

4. ACTIVATING INSTITUTIONAL LEVERS

For a Transformative Artistic Practice to take root over time, it must engage in dialogue with existing administrative frameworks without dissolving into them.

This involves synchronising projects with decision-making windows (budget votes, revisions of planning documents, thematic committees), and producing translational documents (opportunity notes, action sheets, standard clauses, protocols) capable of entering procedural circuits. Artists and project teams thus become sensitive translators between uses, narratives and normative frameworks, transforming poetic effects into operational political levers.

5. BUILDING HYBRID AND REGENERATIVE ECONOMIC MODELS

Transformative Artistic Practices require economic models capable of sustaining long-term engagement, the maintenance of relationships and the transmission of uses. They cannot rely solely on event-based funding designed for rapid, visible outcomes, but must be supported by financial architectures capable of accompanying evolving, often unpredictable processes that contribute to strengthening the habitability of a territory. From this perspective, the challenge is not only to finance an initial activation, but to make possible the lasting continuation of gestures, places and collectives that emerge throughout the project. This involves combining different resources (public, civic, solidarity-based and private) and articulating start-up investments, operational budgets, intersectoral funding and use-related income. Economic value is no longer limited to the production of an artwork, but extends to the lasting effects produced on environments, practices and institutional frameworks.

The economic models of Transformative Artistic Practices are neither linear nor pre-defined. They are built through successive adjustments, alliances and translations between artistic, institutional, scientific and civic worlds. In this sense, reinventing the



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ARTIST PROJECT'S FOCUS

Pascal Ferren - La mission relation

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/pascal-ferren-61a273282/?originalSubdomain=fr>

The project La Mission Relations provides a particularly illuminating example of how a Transformative Artistic Practice can operate at the very heart of institutional frameworks, without being confined to a critical or symbolic role. Conceived as a transformative fiction, La Mission Relations posits the existence of a potential public service—a public service of relations to living environments—and explores concretely its forms, tools and modes of action through real-life experiments conducted with local authorities, river basin unions, regional nature parks and state services.

What is decisive here is that fiction is not a merely speculative narrative. It acts as an operational institutional lever. By mimicking existing administrative formats—public service brochures, calls for projects, programme sheets, opinions, recommendation reports, launch conferences—the project becomes immediately insertable into public procedures. It speaks the language of administration while displacing it, injecting a relational ecology grounded in affects, attachments and attention to living environments.

La Mission Relations thus works through synchronisation with decision-making temporalities. Experiments carried out along the Lez and Mosson rivers, in Camargue or in the Bauges Massif are articulated with key moments of public action: revisions of planning documents, renaturation projects, park programmes, watershed schemes, consultation or development dispositifs. The sensitive effects produced by the work—hearings of the living, nature interpreters, opinions of natural entities, fictive trials, relational planning—are translated into documents, recommendations and tools capable of entering existing administrative circuits.

In this context, the artist and production team position themselves neither above nor outside criticality. They assume the role of sensitive translators between heterogeneous registers: inhabitants' uses and narratives, scientific knowledge, bodily perceptions, legal constraints and administrative norms. The power of the approach lies precisely in this capacity to transform poetic and relational effects into concrete political levers, without reducing their sensitive scope.

La Mission Relations thus demonstrates how a commission can become an operator of institutional transformation. By working with the very forms of public action—its tools, rhythms and languages—TAP does not merely accompany existing policies: it reconfigures their imaginaries, regimes of attention and modes of decision-making. It opens the possibility of a sensitive administration, capable of integrating relations to living environments as a legitimate and structuring dimension of the public interest.

economic model of cultural commissioning does not mean stabilising a single format, but creating favourable conditions for the emergence of economic trajectories capable of supporting territorial habitability, by recognising the value of relationships, uses and care for living environments.

Possible funding levers

- **Hybrid public funding:** investment grants (activation), operational budgets (mediation, sensitive maintenance), multi-year and intersectoral agreements (culture, ecology, health, social, urban planning), transversal service contracts.
- **Social and solidarity economy (SSE):** cooperatives (SCIC), associations, foundations, shared governance, territorial anchoring, local reinvestment of resources.
- **Circular and regenerative economy:** pooling of tools and materials, eco-design, reuse, low-impact scenography.
- **Citizen and participatory patronage:** direct involvement of inhabitants, strengthening attachment and sense of belonging.
- **Hybrid venues and artistic third places:** spaces for creation, training and encounter, mixed revenues (memberships, workshops, rentals, ethical catering, subsidies).
- **Knowledge economy:** training, support, consultancy, recognition of artistic and ecological expertise.
- **Regenerative public-private partnerships:** alliances with companies engaged in ecological or social repair.

6. ETHICAL POINTS OF ATTENTION

Reinventing cultural commissioning and its economic models requires particular attention to the ethical conditions under which transformative artistic practices unfold. Operating at the interface of art, ecology and public action, these practices are exposed to specific risks that must be anticipated and named.

• Avoid instrumentalising artists and practices.

When an institution mobilises an artistic project to showcase an ecological transition without questioning its own practices, art risks becoming an alibi—a communication operation or a form of “cultural greenwashing”. This can be observed, for instance, when vegetated or participatory works are commissioned to accompany highly impactful

development projects, without any real transformation of design, maintenance or governance logics. Catalytic commissioning, by contrast, requires institutions to accept being transformed themselves: changes in internal practices, involvement of technical services, adjustment of temporalities and recognition of ecological limits. Without such reciprocity, TAP loses its transformative capacity.

- ***Recognise values that cannot be fully measured or translated into quantitative indicators.***

Transformative artistic practices mobilise dimensions such as attention, care, memory, conviviality or the accompaniment of ecological and social grief, whose value cannot be reduced to economic equivalents or measurable outputs.

For example, in projects involving urban orchards, shared gardens or foraging sites, the primary value often lies in the quality of relationships forged, intergenerational transmission or the recognition of affective attachments to a territory. Reducing these dimensions to “cost savings” or measurable gains (reduced incivilities, improved neighbourhood image) can impoverish the project’s meaning. Evaluation tools must therefore remain aids to understanding, not instruments of normalisation or exclusive justification.

- ***Ensure continuity despite changes in personnel.***

TAP often rely on fragile alliances carried by a few key individuals (artists, local authority staff, association leaders), whose departure can destabilise the entire process. Experience shows that even well-anchored projects can fade following a change of municipal team, administrative reorganisation or the withdrawal of the artist.

Anticipating this fragility implies putting in place light but effective transmission dispositifs: accessible documentation (protocols, narratives, maps), paired or trio-based work between artists and public agents, handover rituals between outgoing and incoming actors. In certain participatory arboricultural projects, for example, the creation of resident reference collectives or the inscription of practices within usage charters has enabled care and governance gestures to be maintained well beyond the artist’s initial presence.

These points of attention are not intended to constrain transformative artistic practices, but to protect their capacity to act. They remind us that ecological and social transformation cannot be decreed; it is cultivated over time, through fair relationships, explicit ethical frameworks and sustained attention to the effects produced.

ARTIST PROJECT'S FOCUS

Thierry Bouffonier's work

The trajectories of numerous arboricultural and ecological artistic projects show how an initially circumscribed commission can evolve towards a hybrid and regenerative economic model. Et in Arcadia ego, conceived in Lausanne as a temporary intervention within a garden festival, introduced urban eco-grazing as an artistic and ecological gesture. What was intended to be time-limited became, through the gradual involvement of technical services and the reuse of existing resources, a lasting practice now widely normalised in many European cities. The project's value lies not in the initial event, but in the durable transformation of uses and green space management policies.

Similarly, Prenez racines! initiated in the Mermoz district of Lyon within the framework of urban policy, progressively shifted the commission towards a long-term process. The participatory urban nursery evolved into a common orchard, co-managed by residents, through a hybrid funding model combining public schemes, foundations, urban renewal programmes and youth work sites. The project led the local authority to permanently reclassify land initially intended for construction, revealing how a process-based artwork can influence planning decisions and produce a territorial commons. This logic of extension and continuity is also found in Eau de rose, born from the unexpected continuation of Prenez racines!. The project brought together artistic practices, urban foraging, festive distillation and scientific partnerships, eventually forming an associative economy around the production of hydrolats. The initial commission thus gave rise to a lasting activity carried by resident collectives and integrated into several territories of the Lyon metropolitan area.

Other projects demonstrate how regenerative public-private partnerships can support large-scale process-based works. Appel d'air, developed with the Société du Grand Paris, evolved from a tree sponsorship scheme into an urban nursery integrated into a major ancillary infrastructure. Successive funding supported not only the production of the artwork, but also research, the transformation of planting practices and the integration of new knowledge on root systems and tree succession in urban environments.

In more rural contexts, Suite de Pan or Le Verger des maturités show how public procurement can serve as an entry point into broader processes of ecological restoration, education and co-evolution with local actors. Initial commissions formulated as heritage or landscape works progressively integrated educational, scientific and agricultural dimensions, supported by complementary funding (LEADER, Green Fund, Arts and Cultural Education) and by the sustained involvement of local authorities and schools.

Finally, projects such as Gratte Terre or Pont ver(t)s illustrate the capacity of TAP to articulate public funding, citizen participation, scientific research and the production of commons. In Villeurbanne or Fos-sur-Mer, the works gave rise to associations, participatory funding circuits, collaborations with research laboratories and local economic activities (oil production, nurseries, training), while remaining deeply rooted in the ecological and social challenges of the territories concerned.



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THE TRANSFORMATIVE TERRITORIES PROGRAM

Transformative territories: Performing Transition through the Arts is a European laboratory uniting a network of actors and artists who work to promote new ways of inhabiting the Earth. Throughout the duration of the program, over a dozen field experiments combining arts, sciences, and citizen participation, collective experiences, artistic performances, exhibitions, educational actions, training sessions, and meetings will bring together artists, thinkers, farmers, scientists, political actors, cultural project leaders, and local and European citizens to demonstrate the potential of culture-based solutions in transforming territories.

Transformative Territories is a project co-funded by the European Union within Creative Europe program.

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CRÉDITS

These methodological factsheets are based on a collective process of exchange, reflection and dialogue developed as part of the Transformative Territories project.

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With the participation of Thierry Boutonnier and Anaïs Roesch.**

We would like to thank all the artists and partners who took part in the exchanges, shared their practices, questions and experiences, and made an essential contribution to the richness of the reflections developed in these factsheets.

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