

ECOMUSEUMS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

EDITORS

NUNZIA BORRELLI, PETER DAVIS AND RAUL DAL SANTO

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Ecomuseums and Climate Change

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info@ledizioni.it

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Ginevra Addis

Introduction

In the face of the climate crisis, sustainability has been questioned at multiple levels in the field of art, from contemporary art to arts education and arts management (Person *et al.* 2022: 75-98; Turan and Cetynkaya 2022: 83-95; Möller *et al.* 2022: 125-139; D'Ambrosio and Dominici 2019: 521-531; Addis 2018). In art institutions, curators began to explore how aesthetics could respond to the theme of sustainability, and more specifically to that of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The increasing convergence between aesthetics and sustainability over the last decade demonstrates that this is a growing field of research that has seen the responses of artists, art institutions, curators and ecomuseums take centre stage (Brown 2019: 1-13; Rota 2022; Addis and Vest Hansen 2022; Addis 2017: 3-16). This chapter aims to investigate how contemporary art is used as a vehicle for sustainability in Italian ecomuseums, but also explores other European ecomuseums. The study is based on the approach of ecomuseums to contemporary art - especially after the adoption of the 2030 SDGs agenda by the United Nations in 2016 - which showed two different ways of approaching contemporary art aesthetics: 1) From a conceptual point of view, focusing the artistic operation on different goals of the SDGs, in particular on climate change, responsible consumption, reducing inequalities, living off the land, diversity, peace and migration; and 2) From the aesthetic beauty of art itself, as beauty has an impact on the sense of place, participatory heritage inventory, improvement

of suburbs and participation of citizens, especially youth groups. This approach shows how beauty produces impacts outside the cultural institution and can lead to the achievement of integrated development on a local scale, which contributes to saving the planet on a global scale¹.

This chapter is based on a literature review and a case study approach. The literature review section will examine: firstly, how in the last decade there has been a rethinking of international contemporary art practices towards sustainability, at multiple levels, as individual artworks (e.g. *Berl Berl* by Jakob Kudsk Steensen, 2021), as exhibitions (e.g. *SOSustainability*, Museo della Permanente, 2022, Milan) and within museums (e.g. the National Museum of Singapore with works by DASSAD, Robert Zhao and Ong Wei Ting, 2022). These creative endeavours have seen artists direct their choices towards sustainable materials or the creative use of cutting-edge sustainable technologies, such as the use of wind turbines and photovoltaic panels. Furthermore, curators and artists themselves have begun to question the aesthetics of art itself, trying to understand how aesthetics can be a constructive vehicle for sustainability (e.g. Sarah Hall; Lyman Whitaker). Field initiatives such as the one in Italy (especially in the city of Milan), promoted at regional government level, have invited artists, curators and cultural associations to rethink sustainable energy in a creative way, especially after Expo 2015 (e.g. the exhibit *Creative Energy: Art for renewable sources*, 2016, following a contest promoted by the Lombardy region) and in the wake of Expo Astana 2017. Academic departments at the same time have

¹ The development of projects where ecomuseums used aesthetics in a broader sense, is more related to the concept of beauty to strengthen several of their principles; numerous Italian ecomuseums use art as a main vehicle, through textiles, ceramics, illustration of stories, photo portraits and artworks for social inclusion. They include: Ecomuseo Alta Val Sangone and Ecomuseo Concarena, Lombardy. They both used textiles and the latter in 2021 promoted the lab *Infeltriamo e creiamo con la lana*, focused on wool that was coloured with natural pigments from dyeing plants, for the creation of decorative and useful objects. Ecomuseo della Montagna Pistoiese, Tuscany, through its Didactic Centre of Sacred Art and Popular Religiousness POPIGLIO - promoted practical activities to approach the ancient art of weaving. Ecomuseo del Tevere, Umbria, organized the Textile Lab, "Weaving the threads". Ecomuseo Urbano Mare Memoria Viva, Sicily, for the theme immaterial heritage and storytelling, illustrated stories with recycled fabrics with Angela Di Blasi and her weaving art, *CUCIARTE*. Ecomuseo di Venere, Puglia, promoted meetings on the art of the ropemaker; Ecomuseo Iblei, Sicily, promoted a *Dyeing and weaving course*, a practice that dates back to ancient times, and in Sicily there are records of it since the Middle Ages.

begun to create research clusters challenging sustainability on an aesthetic level, such as the Art Department of the University of Bern with *Mediating the Ecological Imperative*, a collaborative project with Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), Mexico (SNSF Sinergia 2021-2024: n. p.)². Second, I use the literature to investigate how these practices, especially those of public art, have also interrogated ecomuseums. A recent study *Ecomusei e arte contemporanea* (Di Iorio 2022) shows how new approaches and policies can succeed in enhancing, redeveloping and evolving ecomuseums through contemporary art interventions and projects; the author examined urban contemporary art interventions in Molise. Instances are initiatives such as: VIS à VIS Fuoriluogo (Face to face out of place), an artists' residency in two villages (Lucito and Provvidenti) close to the city of Campobasso (CB); CVTà Street Fest 2022, (Civita Camporomano Street Fest), an international street art festival with artists from all over the world in the village of Civitacampomariano, close to Campobasso too; MAACK (Open Air Contemporary Art Museum Kalenarte) in the village of Kalenarte (CB); the project Casalciprano Wall Drawings presented by ARATRO-Electronic Arts Archive Workshop For Contemporary Art, in the village of Casalciprano (CB).

The case study section focuses on how ecomuseums have begun to challenge the SDGs on climate change and sustainability at an aesthetic level in educational activities or artworks. It explores which ecomuseums have addressed contemporary aesthetics as an implicit or explicit vehicle for climate change, following the ecomuseum principles of inclusiveness, community ownership and approaches, democracy, intangible heritage, place and the natural environment³. Do contemporary art initiatives of ecomuseums challenge and promote the SDGs and the theme of sustainability? A review of international ecomuseums indicates not only examples of how ecomuseums address climate change, but also how they use the aesthetic

² The new SNSF Sinergia project "Mediating the Ecological Imperative: Formats and Modes of Engagement" is a joint research project of the Institutes for Art History, American Studies and Social Anthropology at the University of Bern.

³ Parish maps and illuminated alphabets are used to as form of community-based artwork often used to get ecomuseums started. E.g. in Sussex, England, they are used as a starting point for heritage projects. Parish maps and illuminated alphabets are used to identify a place (Davis 2011, 44-45; Clifford and King 2006).

beauty of art to reinforce ecomuseum principles, thus indirectly contributing to the overall improvement of the global scale.

The International artistic responses to sustainability

The overall worldwide aesthetic response to sustainability has been addressed primarily through the use of technology. Artists such as Sarah Hall and Lyman Whitaker pioneered the use of sustainable materials in their art. The former, a Canadian architect who over the past forty years has created hundreds of large-scale artworks for public, private and institutional settings, gained international recognition for her innovative use of solar technology in architectural glass, her *Solar projects* (Figure 1, Figure 2, Figure 3) (Hall Portfolio 2022; Nathanson 2021; Mirtchev 2021). Whitaker, an American sculptor, created *Wind Sculptures*, works (Figure 4, Figure 5) that were hand-produced, demonstrated mechanical integrity and quality craftsmanship, that responded to the changing currents of the wind and were responsive to their surroundings (Wiford Gallery 2022; Lally 2019: 97). Such an artistic response to sustainability, which used technology and materials taken from nature expanded internationally, especially among young emerging contemporary artists. For example, the Icelandic-Danish artist Olafur Eliasson used technology and natural materials to raise awareness on the climate crisis. For the *Ice Watch* project, (Figure 6, Figure 7) Eliasson and geologist Minik Rosing brought free-floating icebergs from a fjord outside Nuuk, Greenland, to public squares in European cities (Copenhagen, in 2014; Paris in 2015 and London in 2018). His *Sonnenenergie 22* sculpture, realized in 2022, and today part of the permanent collection at Pinakothek der Moderne in Munich, is made of a screen which responds to light and weather conditions outside the museum; the artwork does not use electricity and creates what the artist calls “an analogue movie”⁴, in which the screen goes dark without direct sunlight (Morton 2018: 71; Heuer 2019: 182). The Italian London-based artist Maria Teresa Ortoleva, realized *Ikaros, Flight of fancy*, projections of wind turbines on photovoltaic panels at the exhibit *Creative Energy. Art for renewable sources* organized in December 2016 at Palazzo Lombardia in Milan, in the post Expo 2015 period in the wake of the Expo

⁴ <https://olafureliasson.net/archive/artwork/WEK111024/sonnenenergie-22-solar-energy-22#slideshow>

Astana on Green Energy. On the same occasion, the artist Raffaella Formenti produced a site-specific installation from a chain made of recyclable material such as waste paper, reflecting on the significance of recycling and saving materials (Di Raddo and Addis, 2016: 14, 33).



Fig. 1. Sarah Hall, Solar project - Hall, Leaves of Light, painted facade, York University, 2013 (courtesy of the artist).



Fig. 2. Sarah Hall, Solar project - Hall, Leaves of Light, site & solar facade, 2013 (courtesy of the artist).

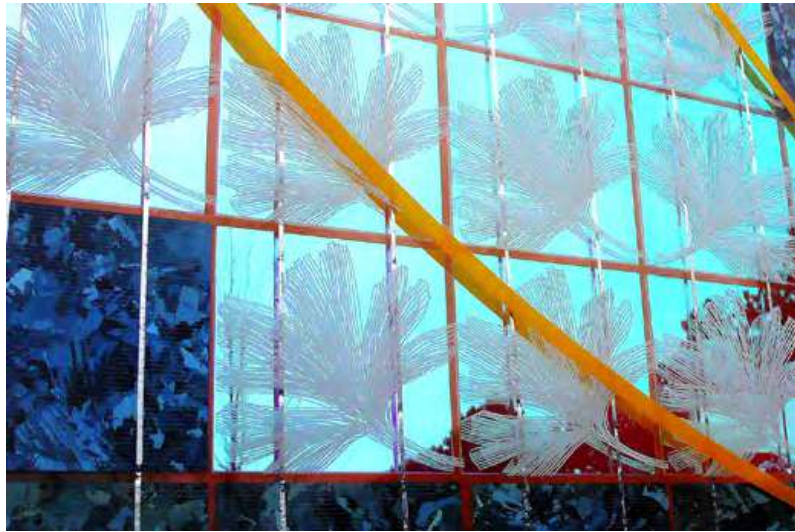


Fig. 3. Sarah Hall, Solar project - Hall, Leaves of Light, York University, Solar Detail, 2013 (courtesy of the artist).



Fig. 4. Lyman Whitaker, Wind Sculptures - Surgaland Airport, Texas, 2016 (courtesy of the artist).



Fig. 5. Lyman Whitaker, Silent Symphony Sculpture – Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 2014-2015 (courtesy of the artist).



Fig. 6. Olafur Eliasson and Minik Rosing, Ice Watch, 2014, Place du Panthéon, Paris, 2015. Photo: Martin Argyoglo (courtesy of the artist; neugerriemschneider, Berlin; Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York/Los Angeles, © 2014 Olafur Eliasson).



Fig. 7. Olafur Eliasson and Minik Rosing, Ice Watch, 2014, Supported by Bloomberg, Installation view: Bankside, outside Tate Modern, 2018. Photo: Justin Sutcliffe (courtesy of the artist; neugerriemschneider, Berlin; Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York/Los Angeles, © 2014 Olafur Eliasson).

Following the initial artistic response to sustainability using technology and natural materials artists began to question how even aesthetics could answer the issues of sustainability and climate change. For example, some artworks showed at the National Museum of Singapore for the exhibit *Rooting for Change: Artistic Responses to Climate Change and Sustainability*, April-July 2022, addressed them. The following artworks of some prominent Chinese artists were at display: Dave Lim, Adar Ng and Woong Soak (an artist collective whose acronym is DASSAD) with *Indefinite Waters*, a video installation which collapses the past, present and future onto a dystopian landscape of consumer products; Robert Zhao with the video installation *Second Chance*, reflecting on how the secondary Singapore forests that have sprung up over waste land help with climate change in the long run; Ong Wei Ting's video art *Choosing Today for our Tomorrows* used animation inspired by a 1990s cartoon style in hopes to encourage visitors young and old to commit to building a more sustainable future⁵ (National

⁵ <https://www.littledayout.com/rooting-for-change-artistic-responses-to-climate-change/>

Museum Singapore 2022). Further instances of international artists who challenged the 2030 SDGs include the Danish artist Jacob Kudsk Steensen, who worked in the vanguard of art and technology, presenting in 2021 the site-specific installation *Berl Berl*, in 2021 at the Halle am Berhain contemporary art space in Berlin. This immersive installation took visitors back to Berlin's origins as a swamp formed by a glacial valley over 10,000 years old (Enderby 2021). The American artist Wu Tsang, a filmmaker, artist and performer based in New York and Berlin, since 2012 began to investigate the SDG issue of gender equality (SDG no. 5), in her videos such as *Wildness*, 2012, a documentary which aims to represent a number of people who are often stereotyped such as trans people and queer communities (Jushasz and Lebow 2020: 270; Harbison 2019: 159). Additionally, she reflected upon the Life below water SDG (no. 14) producing the video art *Of Whales*, presented at the Venice Biennale in 2022. *Of Whales*, using the film adaptation of Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, mixed together with psychedelic ocean environments generated from XR (extended reality) technologies, reflected from the perspective of the whale, of her life below water, in the context of mid-19th century maritime history, the transatlantic birth of modern capitalism, and mass civil unrest.

There has been a widespread artistic response to sustainability conducted by non-profit organisations and art institutions, which have actively promoted the work of artists in relation to the 2030 SDGs. A pioneering instance is ART 2030, a non-profit organisation based in Copenhagen, which has been working with contemporary art as the key to achieve the UN Global Goals by opening people's hearts, minds and imagination, to inspire action for a healthy and sustainable future. The Japanese naturalized American artist Yoko Ono, for ART 2030, has created *YES*, 2017, an artwork which invited people to commit to achieving the Global Goals by writing yes in their own language. It was premiered in the UN city Copenhagen in February 2018 to audiences of all ages and backgrounds. Over the four day exhibition, the artwork saw over 500 participants pledge their "yes" to the Global Goals languages from Danish, the Indian Kannada, Japanese, Urdu, Finnish, and Chinese among many others. Besides Yoko Ono, ART 2030 worked with several other artists challenging aesthetics in relation to 2030 SDGs. Bosco Sodi, a Mexican

artist, known for his use of raw, natural materials to create large-scale textured paintings and sculpture, creating a dialogue with nature and landscape, challenged the Life on Land SDG, with the work *A Thousand Li of Rivers and Mountains*, exhibited at Axel Vervoordt Gallery, Hong Kong in 2020. Cecilia Vicuña, a Chilean artist whose work has been deeply engaged with contemporary conversations around ecology, challenged the same SDG with the work *Seehearing the Enlightened Failure*, installed at Museo Universitario de Arte Contemporáneo (MUAC), Mexico City, in 2020. Alicja Kwade, a Polish-German artist, investigated the Climate Change SDGs, examining the phenomenon of ice melt in the work *ParaPivot (sempiternal clouds)*, 2020, made of interlocked frames supporting large blocks of white marble that appeared as ice calved from a distant glacier. Viewers were encouraged to move in and out of the installation and observe how the marble appeared to shift from certain angles. This massive, yet fragile universe was Kwade's comment on the instability of perception and the state of the environment (ART 2030 2022).

As a result of the artistic response to sustainability and the active promotion of artists challenging the SDGs by non-profit art organisations, numerous contemporary art exhibitions have been organised with the word sustainability in the title or with words related to the themes of the SDGs (Meireis, Rippl 2019). Examples include SOSustainability, at the Museo della Permanente in Milan 2022, with over 140 works of art reflecting on sustainability (La Permanente 2022); *Naturally*, at the Arken's museum, Copenhagen, 2014, displaying works of artists such as Superflex, Tony Matelly, FOS, Qiu Anxiong, Per Bak Jensen, Torbjørn Rødland, in 2014; the exhibit *Love me gender*, with Jesper Just, Mona Hatoum, Noble& Webster, Peter Land and Elmgreen&Dragset; the *Qiu Anxiong: the new Book of Mountains and Seas II* exhibit at Arken in 2013 (Arken 2014; Arken 2013); *Iamsterdam: Sustainability Art 4*, a travelling exhibition in Amsterdam, 2020, focused on the consequences of global warming and climate change, where a group of 16 artists presented their visions of our planet (Luxiders 2020); *Changing climate*, 2022, in the Australia Museum, Sydney on the effects of global warming (Australia Museum 2022); *Countryside, the future* at Guggenheim, New York, addressing the environmental, political and socio-economic issues through the eyes of architect Rem Koolhaas and architect and curator Samir Bantal, an exhibition exploring the ever changing natural and social landscapes due to climate change, migration, ecosystems and co-existence (Guggenheim 2021).

Italian ecomuseums and contemporary art

Recognising the artistic response to climate change by artists, art institutions and non-profit organisations, ecomuseums have begun to challenge aesthetics both in relation to SDG 2030 and in relation to people's response to the aesthetic beauty of art. Art was seen as a means to promote their activities and events to strengthen the relationship with their principles of democracy, community and sense of place. In the European context, data on ecomuseum activities show how Italian ecomuseums engaged with contemporary art to challenge the SDGs 2030. Most of the ecomuseums that have oriented their activities towards contemporary art are located in the Italian regions of Lombardy, Piedmont, Tuscany, Lazio and Sicily, where art is well established and an active protagonist in the cultural life of the main regional cities. Despite a greater concentration of contemporary art engagement in relation to SDG 2030 by some Italian regions, it seems that almost all regions have ecomuseums that are committed to sustainability issues in general. Many ecomuseums are focused on SDG No. 15, Life on Land, promoting initiatives that establish a relationship with nature, biodiversity and Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG No. 12), while singular cases offer instances on the other SDGs, e.g. on Reducing Inequalities (SDG No. 10), Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG No. 11) and Peace and Justice (SDG No. 16). The Ecomuseo della Pastorizia, in Piedmont, reflected on Life on Land (SDG No. 15), the importance of the relationship with nature, Responsible Consumption (SDG No. 12) and Production, paying attention to recycling through the *Transhumanance* project. Four contemporary artists, Andrea Rinaudo, Daniele Balangero, Federico Aimar and Annika Pettini, carried out a residency in 2021 in different locations in Piedmont such as Pontebernardo, Demonte, Sambuco and Argentera. Rinaudo chose raw wool as the material on which to focus his work, reflecting on the sustainability of this material, which is often a problem for its disposal or reuse. Balangero worked with chestnut wood, with which he made special shepherd's sticks, partly produced together with the community. Aimar documented the life of some of Pontebernardo's shepherds at pasture and during transhumance: his photographs, exhibited at the Ecomuseum, were accompanied by the poems that writer Annika Pettini composed after her stay and her dialogues with the valley's shepherds (Ecomuseum of Shepherding

2021). Another instance of the focus on the Life on Land SDG is the Ecomuseo Valsugana, Trentino, which in 2020, organized *Pietre d'acqua* (Stones of Water); this granite sculpture symposium, 2022, in its sixth edition, aimed to reknit the thread of a lost sculpture tradition by recovering ancient knowledge and restoring it through the language of art. The exhibition title recalled the power of water, which is a distinctive trait of the Ecomuseum; water is both a source of wealth, and a generating force that shapes stone and the territory. For this symposium five sculptors (Paolo Apolloni, Luca Molinari, Paolo Dolzan, Andrea Voltolini and Julian Soardi) worked the stones of the Chieppena location. Their works remained along the banks of the torrent, blending into the landscape and constituting a route that can be followed as far as the Brenta river, creating a small open-air museum (Valsugana Tesino 2020). In 2022 the Ecomuseo Lis Aganis, Friuli Venezia Giulia, offered a workshop on nature and color, *Natura&Colore: new perspectives of the Art of Dyeing* with artist Ennia Visentin, (Ecomuseo Natura e colore 2022). The Ecomuseo Val Resia, organized in 2021 the online exhibit *Natura io sogno con colori e pennelli*, by Morena Lettig, with paintings of sea, paths, and wilderness (Ecomuseo Val Resia 2021: The Ecomuseo della Valsamoggia, Emilia Romagna, during 2016-2017, organized the Eco-Art lab with the key words sustainability, outdoor, creative spirit, cooperation, discovering nature through the magnifying glass of art, a journey to understand the bond that united the natural environment (Ecomuseo della Valsamoggia 2016-2017). The Ecomuseo Urbano di Botrugno, Puglia, promoted a museal laboratory for landscape in 2022, the *Laboratorio Museale per il Paesaggio*, with the aim of acting as the municipal museum antenna where an experimental process of education about cultural heritage for the Botrugno community has been launched. The Laboratory will host temporary exhibitions, meetings, promote itineraries in the area; schools will be able to develop special projects, environmental research, and associations will contribute to exhibitions (Ecomuseo Urbano di Botrugno 2022). The Ecomuseo della Montagna sarda e del Gennargentu, Sardinia, in 2019, organized the workshop *Dipinti Aritzo*, a public display of contemporary painting aimed to valorize the local places of nature (Ecomuseo della Montagna sarda e del Gennargentu, 2019). The Ecomuseo del Paesaggio di Parabiago, Lombardy, in 2022, promoted a street art initiative *Tracce d'infanzia* (Figure 8, Figure 9) that was used to engage the community with the

surrounding landscape (Ecomuseo del Paesaggio di Parabiago 2022). The Ecomuseo Lagorai, Trentino, in 2021, held an artistic laboratory with families, on listening to nature and painting it (Ecomuseo del Vanoi 2021). Referring to Life on Land (SDG No. 15) the Ecomuseo Alta Via Oglio, Lombardy, organised an autumn event in 2019 on painting the animals of the mountain (Ecomuseo Alta Via Oglio 2019).



Fig. 8. Street Art workshop - Tracce d'infanzia at Ecomuseo of Parabiago, Lombardy, Italy (courtesy of Ecomuseo of Parabiago).



Fig. 9. Street Art workshop - Tracce d'infanzia at Ecomuseo of Parabiago, Lombardy, Italy (courtesy of Ecomuseo of Parabiago).

There are several examples of ecomuseums developing art projects in relation to Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG No. 12). They include the Ecomuseo del Freidano, Piemonte, which in 2019-2020 promoted the project *Eco of art for schools*, guided tours of several temporary exhibitions on ecology art (Ecomuseo del Freidano 2019-2020). The Ecomuseo Simeto, Sicily, in 2020, promoted *#Students4Simeto*, a laboratory of creative recycling, with the objective to encourage students to be protagonists for recycling, to improve their living environment, and to raise community awareness of the importance of waste prevention and the need to change their lifestyle. Through peer education activities, the children became environmental ambassadors to teach the rest of the community how to prevent waste. Specifically, the project consisted of 4 workshops (30 hours each) on: good practices for a sustainable lifestyle; creative recycling, photography and videomaking, graphic design and journalism. Through the co-design and implementation of an awareness-raising campaign on social media, starting from the material produced during the workshops, the young people promoted good daily practices to reduce waste, spreading the culture of a healthy and sustainable lifestyle. They organised public events to involve the community and share objectives, actions and results (Ecomuseo Simeto 2020). The Valle delle Cartiere Ecomuseum in Toscolano Maderno, Lombardy, in 2022 promoted 'RiciclARTE', a creative recycling workshop for children from 6 to 11 years old in collaboration with the Paper Museum (Ecomuseo Valle delle Cartiere di Toscolano Maderno 2022).

On the Transformation of Society (SDG No. 10) several ecomuseums have initiated art projects, including the Ecomuseo del Biellese, Piemonte, which in 2022 developed an exhibit on the social and transformative role of art at the Fondazione Pistoletto, Biella⁶ (Ecomuseo del Biellese 2022). The Ecomuseo dell'Argilla, Piemonte, in 2022, with the MUNLAB project, and inspired by the artist Bruno Munari, focused on the promotion of Sustainable cities (SDG No. 11). The ecomuseum organized a workshop with the ceramic artists Andrea Caretto and Raffaella Spagna, on the occasion of the TELLUS Project⁷, aimed

⁶ <https://www.cittadellarte.it/attivita/arte-al-centro-2022>

⁷ TELL_US (in Italian RACCONTA_CI; TELLUS/TELLURIS from the Latin TERRA) is among the 37 projects selected by the foundation *Fondazione Compagnia of San Paolo* for the call *Luoghi della Cultura* (Places of Culture) 2020. The project is aimed at enhancing the architectural heritage of the Torri

at stimulating the local economy by promoting cultural and eco-sustainable tourism in ancient village in Liguria, through the scheduling of intensive ceramics courses combined with a stay in the eco-village, designed and taught by the ceramics artists (Ecomuseo dell'Argilla 2022).

On Reduced Inequality (SDG No. 10) examples are the Ecomuseo di Rimini, Emilia Romagna, which in 2022 launched the call for artists' residencies *Public Art Social Portraits*. This was addressed to young contemporary artists (such as draftsmen, illustrators and painters) between 18 and 35 years old, from the vast territory of Romagna or with a connection to the City of Rimini. They were asked to create portraits of the elderly population living in, or enjoying the proximity of the AUSA Park area. The project sought to stimulate transgenerational and transcultural artistic and narrative discussion between people of different ages about their Heritage (tangible/intangible) in the City of Rimini's AUSA urban park area (Ecomuseo di Rimini 2022). The Ecomuseo di Tito, Abruzzo, in 2017, organized the *Children's art* workshop, with questions about the land and culinary tradition being discussed between young and old people (Ecomuseo di Tito 2017). The Ecomuseo del Casentino, Tuscany, from 2016 to 2020, not only worked on the Reduced Inequality SDG (No. 10), but also on and Peace and Justice SDG (No. 16) organizing multiple editions of the project *Stand Up for Africa: Contemporary Art for Human Rights*. This multi-year project used contemporary art, in its various expressions, as an instrument of social action, a universal means to raise awareness, promote and educate the territory on the themes of human rights, welcome and coexistence, as well as knowledge and valorisation of the local cultural heritage. Other specific objectives of the project were: to promote and develop the creativity of young people (student-artists) by asking them to confront

Superiore Ecovillage, an ancient medieval village in the Ligurian hinterland located a few kilometers from Ventimiglia, through the redevelopment of the ceramics workshop and the scheduling of residencies for artists-ceramists who, during their stay in the ecovillage, will create works and permanent installations, working directly in the area with the aim of enhancing its intrinsic resources and establishing a direct dialogue between the culture of ceramics, history and the architectural elements of the medieval village. An integral part of the project is to stimulate the local economy by promoting cultural and eco-sustainable tourism through the scheduling of intensive ceramics courses combined with the stay in the eco-village, designed and held by the ceramics artists selected for the residency.

themes of particular socio-cultural value (human rights) set in the context of Casentino. The project stimulated awareness of its territory, contemporary art languages and human rights issues. Different modes of intervention were used, including residential workshops, exhibitions, performances, meetings with schools, round tables and social events. In 2016, curator Giandomenico Semeraro organised a residential workshop and exhibition of works by 10 students from the Accademia di Belle Arti in Florence with the direct involvement of a group of migrants from the area. In 2017, curators Serena Becagli and Rita Duina selected the young artists Giuseppe Di Carlo, Alice Ferretti, Leonardo Moretti, Guerrilla SPAM and Gianluca Tramonti to work side by side with some young people and families of refugees and indigenous inhabitants, giving rise to an entertaining and instructive reflection on the territory and the relationships that the language of art can trigger, overcoming linguistic and ideological barriers. The products of the various workshops were the focus of a collective exhibition at the Hymmo Art Lab in Pratovecchio (Ecomuseo del Casentino 2020-2016). Finally, the Ecomuseo Casilino, Lazio, in 2022, organized several editions of the *Ecomuseo Public Art Fest* (E.P.ART), a project format that reached its completion with the creation of M.A.U.Mi. the first Urban Art Museum on Migration. The Museum will be located in the inner garden of the Casa Scalabrini 634 complex, a project of the ASCS - Scalabriniana Agency for Development Cooperation, through 10 works of art that will tell the story of migrations in Rome, with a focus on the territory of East Rome. With this edition, E.P.ART fulfils the promise that has accompanied these years of experimentation: to trigger museums to create social harmony in their territories (Ecomuseo Casilino 2022).

European Ecomuseums

European ecomuseums (Davis 2011) show how several of them promoted SDGs in relations to art and addressed aesthetics in a broader sense. With regard to the Life on Land SDG (No. 15), an instance is the North Pennines AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) in England, where in September 2022, *The Great Outdoors*, an exhibition of landscapes painted in traditional oil paint on canvas was exhibit by Tonya Mitchell at the Bowlees Visitor Centre Gallery. Alongside the

paintings there is information about their geological and historical context, reflecting Tonya's research into the traditions, folk songs, history, and geography connected to each of the places she paints. Bowlees Visitor Centre is run by the North Pennines AONB Partnership (which is not an ecomuseum but follows many of its principles) and is the perfect place to start exploring the walks, waterfalls and wildlife in the local area, or to inspire discovery of the AONB (North Pennines AONB 2022). The Samsoemuseum in Denmark, worked similarly on the Life on Land SDG (No. 15), promoting in 2021 the *Earth fast. Jordfast* is a photographic portrait exhibit depicting Samsø's population, architecture and cultural landscapes. The exhibition was created as a collaboration between the Italian art photographer Luca Berti and Samsø Museum. In the photographs, special attention was paid to the traces of the historical rural culture on Samsø, a culture which is a central part of the Samsingers' identity, but which is also challenged by the efficiency of modern agriculture and the rapid growth of the tourism industry. The exhibition's title, *Jordfast*, is a term known in archeology that refers to ancient monuments that are anchored in the ground or that lie in an untouched layer of soil. The title is a reference to the many physical traces that the Sami farmers have left in the landscape over thousands of years. But the title can also be understood in a figurative sense; as a reflection on the life that is lived on the island today (Samsoemuseum 2021).

Examples of how ecomuseums have addressed the issue of sustainability through the aesthetic beauty of art and contributed on a local scale to the global effort to combat climate change showed how the activities promoted used different types of art and materials. The Ekomuzeum Beskidzkie Wędrowanie, in Poland, is an example of how a European ecomuseum focused on handicraft art through its connection with the Artistic Crafts Gallery, a unique place for its atmosphere and collection of objects created by local craftsmen. The gallery presents products and souvenirs of local handicrafts that enrich the tourist offer, promote culture and, above all, maintain handicraft traditions. The gallery is maintained by the 'INITIATYWA' Association, which supports the development of local culture and art by organising artistic events, disseminating the artistic achievements of artists, promoting popular culture and protecting the local tangible and intangible cultural heritage. The permanent exhibition of the gallery includes works by local, art-loving

artists specialising in cross-stitch, icon writing, wickerwork, painting, sculpture, felt, weaving, lace and others (Ekomuzeum Beskidzkie Wędrowanie 2022). Figure 10.



Fig. 10. Map of Italian and European Ecomuseums that dealt with contemporary art for climate change SDGs. Source: author's own elaboration.

Conclusion

In relation to the expanded international response of contemporary art to sustainability, ecomuseums have revealed to be an important player by engaging contemporary artists and by addressing aesthetics to engage communities through different activities from art labs to art exhibits, in order to strengthen ecomuseum's principles and promote sustainability and actions to prevent climate change. Although ecomuseums rarely explicitly address the issue of climate change, they have addressed the main SDGs that contribute to the challenge of the worldwide Sustainable Development agenda. The data on Italian ecomuseums provide a strong example of how many ecomuseums have focused on the connections between sustainability and aesthetics. Furthermore, the examples of other European ecomuseums show a similar response to such entanglements, en-

lightening the role of aesthetics as a fundamental vehicle to help the development of the 2030 Sustainable Agenda.

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