



PROJECT 101055705 — DIALOG CITY

DELIVERABLE 4.1

DOCUMENTATION RESIDENCIES BOOKLETS

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## Executive Summary (EN)

Deliverable 4.1 compiles the documentation of the **DIALOG CITY Art for Public Residency Programme** through a series of curated booklet publications produced in the four pilot cities. These booklets capture the artistic processes, community engagement activities, and resulting works developed during the residencies, providing both documentation and dissemination of the project's cultural outputs.

The residency programme invited artists to engage with local communities and address socially relevant themes such as identity, migration, memory, ecology, and digital transformation. Each residency combined artistic research, participatory workshops, and public presentation, ensuring strong interaction between artists, citizens, and local stakeholders.

The booklets document four main artistic interventions: *News from Home* in Mondovì, a large-scale participatory photomontage reflecting community narratives; *Longings* in Graz, addressing migration through personal testimonies and artistic interpretation; *Standing in the Salt – Neo-Lattara* in Montpellier, a speculative installation exploring food, ecology, and memory; and *PapierNetz* in Aschaffenburg, reconstructing overlooked historical narratives through digital imagery.

Across all residencies, a common methodological approach emerges, linking artistic practice with participatory engagement and local context. The documentation highlights how artists acted as facilitators of dialogue, translating complex societal issues into accessible and experiential formats.

The publications also demonstrate the integration of the residencies within the broader DIALOG CITY framework, particularly in connection with Hybrid Festivals and the Citizen Archive Platform, thereby reinforcing the project's participatory and interdisciplinary approach.

Overall, Deliverable 4.1 provides a tangible and replicable model for embedding artistic residencies into urban development and civic engagement processes. It showcases how art can function as a catalyst for dialogue, reflection, and co-creation, contributing to inclusive and sustainable urban transformation.

## DIALOG CITY

### A European Project for People-Centred Digital Transformation

**DIALOG CITY** was a pioneering EU project that reimagined digital transformation as a social, rather than just a technical, process. Coordinated by the City of Aschaffenburg, it united a diverse consortium of European partners from archives, museums, cultural organizations, and training centres across five countries. The project's core mission was to shape an inclusive, humane digital future for cities through direct citizen participation and dialogue.

This vision was brought to life through several key initiatives. The project developed the innovative **Citizen Archive Platform**, a unique digital tool enabling people to contribute their personal stories and data directly to city archives, democratizing cultural heritage.

It also championed forward-thinking through the **Our Common Future** programme, which trained artists to facilitate Futures Literacy workshops, empowering communities to imagine and co-create their futures.

Furthermore, a series of **Hybrid and Future Festivals** across partner cities served as dynamic platforms for public engagement, blending art, architecture, and technology to transform urban spaces into laboratories for civic dialogue.

From its Kick-off *Un-Conference* to its Final Gathering *Where do we go from here*, **DIALOG CITY** demonstrated that a culture of dialogue is essential for building sustainable, connected, and inclusive European cities. The project's legacy - its platforms, toolkit, and network - provides a

robust and transferable framework for ensuring that digitalization truly serves and enriches the lives of all citizens.

The festivals also featured **Art for Public Residencies**, where artists collaborated with communities to create meaningful interventions that bridged local stories with global themes.

To document these exhibitions, a dedicated publication was produced for each residency. As a final summation of the project, the Coordinator City of Aschaffenburg initiated a fifth publication that captures the project's overarching achievements and results. This deliverable brings together those five individual editions.

Five hundred hard copies of each publication were distributed to project partners and artists. They are also available digitally through the DIALOG CITY website and the various online channels of the partners' network.

## **Description of the Artistic Works**

### **News From Home by Anne Fehres and Luke Conroy (2023)**

This large-scale public photomontage in Mondovì, Italy, was a celebration of community. Through workshops, photo walks, and an online platform, the artists collected thousands of images and drawings from residents.

The final 6x2 meter paste-up collage wove together these contributions—historical photos, children's art, portraits, and textures of daily life—into a vibrant, layered portrait where past, present, and future dreams of the city visually overlap.

### **LONGINGS by Lenka Holíková (2024)**

Focusing on themes of migration and borders, Lenka Holíková's project for Graz connects research with artistic production. Her work delves into the pressing issue of forced migration, exploring the complex realities in Austria as a transit hub.

By highlighting migrant narratives, Holíková's practice aims to foster a sense of shared global responsibility and empathy, addressing the tensions between humanitarian obligations and local interests in a world of ongoing displacement.

### **Standing in the salt - Neo-Lattara by Alexandre Benetas-Ottobrini (2025)**

This speculative design installation created a narrative buffet within a walk-in structure made of salt and moss. Benetas-Ottobrini, acting as an archivist for a fictional research institute, invited visitors to ponder questions about consumption and archiving.

The work sketched a future community preserving itself through ritual, using food as a medium to spark a poetic dialogue about mythology, ecology, and imagined realities in a declining world.

### **PapierNetz by Lisa Maria Baier (2025)**

Addressing the historical absence of women in Aschaffenburg's paper industry archives, Baier created AI-generated photographic artifacts. These images visually reconstruct the missing narratives of female factory workers.

The work provocatively bridges analogue history and digital innovation, forcing viewers to question why these women were overlooked and how our collective memory is shaped, especially against the emancipatory backdrop of the 1920s.

## Executive Summary (DE)

Deliverable 4.1 fasst die Dokumentation des **Art for Public Residency Programme** von DIALOG CITY in Form einer Reihe kuratierter Publikationen zusammen, die in den vier Pilotstädten entstanden sind. Diese Booklets erfassen die künstlerischen Prozesse, die partizipativen Aktivitäten sowie die daraus hervorgegangenen Werke und dienen sowohl der systematischen Dokumentation als auch der gezielten Verbreitung der kulturellen Projektergebnisse.

Das Residency-Programm lud Künstler:innen dazu ein, sich intensiv mit lokalen Gemeinschaften auseinanderzusetzen und gesellschaftlich relevante Themen wie Identität, Migration, Erinnerung, ökologische Fragestellungen und digitale Transformation zu bearbeiten. Jede Residenz verband künstlerische Forschung mit partizipativen Formaten wie Workshops und öffentlicher Präsentation und stellte so eine enge Interaktion zwischen Künstler:innen, Bürger:innen und lokalen Akteur:innen sicher.

Die Publikationen dokumentieren vier zentrale künstlerische Interventionen: *News from Home* in Mondovì als großformatige partizipative Fotomontage, die kollektive Stadtgeschichten sichtbar macht; *Longings in Graz*, das Migration anhand persönlicher Erzählungen künstlerisch reflektiert; *Standing in the Salt – Neo-Lattara* in Montpellier, eine spekulative Installation zu Ernährung, Ökologie und Erinnerung; sowie *PapierNetz* in Aschaffenburg, das durch digitale Bildproduktion marginalisierte historische Narrative rekonstruiert.

Über alle Residenzen hinweg wird ein gemeinsamer methodischer Ansatz sichtbar, der künstlerische Praxis mit lokaler Kontextualisierung und aktiver Bürgerbeteiligung verbindet. Die Dokumentation verdeutlicht die Rolle der Künstler:innen als Vermittler:innen und Moderatoren gesellschaftlicher Diskurse, indem sie komplexe Themen in erfahrbare und zugängliche Formate übersetzen.

Darüber hinaus zeigen die Publikationen die enge Verzahnung der Residenzen mit den anderen Projektkomponenten von DIALOG CITY, insbesondere den Hybrid Festivals und der Citizen Archive Plattform, wodurch der integrative und interdisziplinäre Charakter des Projekts gestärkt wird.

Insgesamt liefert Deliverable 4.1 ein konkretes und übertragbares Modell dafür, wie künstlerische Residenzen in Prozesse der Stadtentwicklung und Bürgerbeteiligung eingebettet werden können. Es zeigt eindrucksvoll, wie Kunst als Katalysator für Dialog, Reflexion und Co-Creation wirken kann und damit zu einer inklusiven und nachhaltigen urbanen Transformation beiträgt.

## DIALOG CITY - Ein europäisches Projekt für eine menschenzentrierte digitale Transformation

DIALOG CITY war ein wegweisendes EU-Projekt, das digitale Transformation neu gedacht hat – nicht nur als technischen, sondern vor allem als sozialen Prozess. Unter der Koordination der Stadt Aschaffenburg vereinte es ein vielfältiges Konsortium europäischer Partner aus Archiven, Museen, Kultureinrichtungen und Bildungsträgern in fünf Ländern. Ziel des Projekts war es, durch direkte Bürgerbeteiligung und Dialog eine inklusive und humanorientierte digitale Zukunft für Städte zu gestalten.

Diese Vision wurde mit mehreren zentralen Initiativen umgesetzt. So entwickelte das Projekt die innovative Citizen Archive Plattform – ein einzigartiges digitales Werkzeug, das es Bürger:innen ermöglicht, persönliche Geschichten und Daten direkt in städtische Archive einzubringen und damit das kulturelle Erbe zu demokratisieren.

Darüber hinaus förderte das Programm *Our Common Future* zukunftsorientiertes Denken, indem Künstler:innen zu Moderator:innen von Futures Literacy Workshops ausgebildet wurden. Dadurch wurden Gemeinschaften befähigt, ihre Zukunft aktiv zu imaginieren und mitzugestalten.

Zudem fungierten eine Reihe von Hybrid- und Future Festivals in den Partnerstädten als dynamische Plattformen für öffentliche Beteiligung, indem sie Kunst, Architektur und Technologie verbanden und urbane Räume in Labore für gesellschaftlichen Dialog verwandelten.

Vom *Kick-off Un-Conference* bis zur Abschlussveranstaltung *Where do we go from here* hat DIALOG CITY gezeigt, dass eine Kultur des Dialogs entscheidend für nachhaltige, vernetzte und inklusive

europäische Städte ist. Das Vermächtnis des Projekts – seine Plattformen, Werkzeuge und Netzwerke – bietet einen belastbaren und übertragbaren Rahmen, um sicherzustellen, dass Digitalisierung tatsächlich dem Gemeinwohl dient und das Leben der Bürger:innen bereichert.

Die Festivals beinhalteten zudem *Art for Public Residencies*, bei denen Künstler:innen gemeinsam mit lokalen Gemeinschaften Interventionen entwickelten, die lokale Geschichten mit globalen Themen verbinden.

Zur Dokumentation dieser Projekte wurde für jede Residenz eine eigene Publikation erstellt. Darüber hinaus initiierte die Stadt Aschaffenburg als Projektkoordination eine fünfte Publikation, die die Gesamtergebnisse des Projekts zusammenfasst. Dieses Deliverable vereint diese fünf Ausgaben.

Jeweils 500 gedruckte Exemplare wurden an Partner und Künstler:innen verteilt und sind zusätzlich digital über die DIALOG CITY Website sowie die Kommunikationskanäle des Netzwerks verfügbar.

### **Kurzbeschreibungen der Kunstwerke**

#### **News From Home** von Anne Fehres und Luke Conroy (2023)

Diese großformatige öffentliche Fotomontage in Mondovì (Italien) war eine Feier der Gemeinschaft. Durch Workshops, Foto-Spaziergänge und eine Online-Plattform sammelten die Künstler tausende Bilder und Zeichnungen von Bewohner:innen.

Die finale, 6 x 2 Meter große Collage vereint historische Fotografien, Kinderzeichnungen, Porträts und Alltagsstrukturen zu einem vielschichtigen Stadtporträt, in dem Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunftsvisionen visuell ineinander übergehen.

#### **LONGINGS** von Lenka Holíková (2024)

Das Projekt in Graz beschäftigt sich mit Migration und Grenzen und verbindet Recherche mit künstlerischer Produktion.

Holíková untersucht die Realität von Zwangsmigration und die Rolle Österreichs als Transitland. Durch die Sichtbarmachung migrantischer Perspektiven fördert ihre Arbeit Empathie und ein globales Verantwortungsbewusstsein und thematisiert Spannungen zwischen humanitären Verpflichtungen und lokalen Interessen.

#### **Standing in the Salt – Neo-Lattara** von Alexandre Benetas-Ottobrini (2025)

Diese spekulative Installation schafft ein „narratives Buffet“ in einer begehbaren Struktur aus Salz und Moos. Als fiktiver Archivar eines imaginären Forschungsinstituts lädt der Künstler Besucher:innen ein, über Konsum und Archivierung nachzudenken. Das Werk entwirft eine Zukunftsgemeinschaft, die sich durch Rituale erhält und Nahrung als Medium nutzt, um einen poetischen Dialog über Mythologie, Ökologie und mögliche Zukünfte zu eröffnen.

#### **PapierNetz** von Lisa Maria Baier (2025)

Ausgehend von der Abwesenheit von Frauen in den Archiven der Aschaffener Papierindustrie entwickelte Baier KI-generierte fotografische Artefakte. Sie rekonstruieren so visuell und künstlich die fehlenden Geschichten weiblicher Fabrikarbeiterinnen. Das Werk verbindet analoge Geschichte mit digitaler Technologie und regt dazu an, über Erinnerungskultur, Sichtbarkeit und historische Auslassungen nachzudenken.

## Executive Summary (FR)

Le livrable 4.1 rassemble la documentation du programme de résidences artistiques **Art for Public Residency du projet DIALOG CITY** sous la forme d'une série de publications éditoriales réalisées dans les quatre villes pilotes. Ces livrets documentent les processus artistiques, les activités participatives ainsi que les œuvres produites, et constituent à la fois un outil de capitalisation et de diffusion des résultats culturels du projet .

Le programme de résidences a invité des artistes à s'engager avec les communautés locales et à explorer des thématiques sociétales majeures telles que l'identité, la migration, la mémoire, l'écologie et la transformation numérique. Chaque résidence a combiné recherche artistique, ateliers participatifs et présentations publiques, favorisant une interaction étroite entre artistes, citoyens et acteurs locaux.

Les publications documentent quatre interventions artistiques principales : News from Home à Mondovì, une photomontage participatif à grande échelle reflétant les récits de la communauté ; Longings à Graz, qui aborde la migration à travers des témoignages personnels et une interprétation artistique ; Standing in the Salt – Neo-Lattara à Montpellier, une installation spéculative explorant les liens entre alimentation, écologie et mémoire ; et PapierNetz à Aschaffenburg, qui reconstitue des récits historiques invisibilisés à travers des images générées numériquement.

À travers l'ensemble des résidences, une approche méthodologique commune se dégage, articulant pratique artistique, engagement participatif et ancrage dans le contexte local. La documentation met en évidence le rôle des artistes en tant que facilitateurs de dialogue, capables de traduire des enjeux sociétaux complexes en formats accessibles et expérientiels.

Les publications démontrent également l'intégration des résidences dans l'écosystème global de DIALOG CITY, notamment en lien avec les Hybrid Festivals et la Citizen Archive Platform, renforçant ainsi l'approche interdisciplinaire et participative du projet.

Dans son ensemble, le livrable 4.1 propose un modèle concret et reproductible pour intégrer des résidences artistiques dans les processus de développement urbain et d'engagement citoyen. Il illustre comment l'art peut agir comme un catalyseur de dialogue, de réflexion et de co-création, contribuant à une transformation urbaine inclusive et durable.

## DIALOG CITY - Un projet européen pour une transformation numérique centrée sur l'humain

**DIALOG CITY** est un projet européen pionnier qui a repensé la transformation numérique comme un processus social, et non uniquement technique. Coordonné par la Ville d'Aschaffenburg, il a réuni un consortium diversifié de partenaires européens issus des archives, des musées, des organisations culturelles et des centres de formation dans cinq pays. La mission principale du projet était de façonner un avenir numérique inclusif et humain pour les villes grâce à la participation directe des citoyens et au dialogue.

Cette vision s'est concrétisée à travers plusieurs initiatives clés. Le projet a développé la Citizen Archive Platform, un outil numérique innovant permettant aux citoyens de contribuer directement avec leurs récits personnels et leurs données aux archives urbaines, démocratisant ainsi le patrimoine culturel.

Il a également promu une réflexion tournée vers l'avenir à travers le programme *Our Common Future*, qui a formé des artistes à animer des ateliers de Futures Literacy, permettant aux communautés d'imaginer et de co-créer leur avenir.

Par ailleurs, une série de festivals hybrides et de festivals du futur organisés dans les villes partenaires a servi de plateforme dynamique pour l'engagement du public, combinant art, architecture et technologie afin de transformer les espaces urbains en laboratoires de dialogue citoyen.

Depuis sa conférence inaugurale (*Kick-off Un-Conference*) jusqu'à son événement final *Where do we go from here*, DIALOG CITY a démontré qu'une culture du dialogue est essentielle pour construire des villes européennes durables, connectées et inclusives. L'héritage du projet – ses plateformes, ses outils méthodologiques et son réseau – constitue un cadre solide et transférable garantissant que la numérisation serve réellement et enrichisse la vie de tous les citoyens.

Les festivals comprenaient également des *Art for Public Residencies*, dans le cadre desquelles des artistes ont collaboré avec les communautés locales afin de créer des interventions significatives reliant des récits locaux à des thématiques globales.

Afin de documenter ces expositions, une publication dédiée a été produite pour chaque résidence. En tant que synthèse finale du projet, la Ville d'Aschaffenburg, en tant que coordinateur, a initié une cinquième publication qui présente les réalisations et les résultats globaux du projet. Le présent livrable rassemble ces cinq éditions individuelles.

Cinq cents exemplaires imprimés de chaque publication ont été distribués aux partenaires du projet et aux artistes. Ils sont également disponibles sous format numérique sur le site web de DIALOG CITY ainsi que via les différents canaux en ligne du réseau de partenaires.

## **Œuvres artistiques**

### **News From Home** par Anne Fehres et Luke Conroy (2023)

Cette photomontage public de grande envergure, réalisé à Mondovì (Italie), constitue une véritable célébration de la communauté locale. À travers des ateliers participatifs, des promenades photographiques et une plateforme en ligne, les artistes ont collecté des milliers d'images, de dessins et de contributions visuelles provenant des habitants.

L'œuvre finale, une composition monumentale de 6 x 2 mètres, assemble photographies historiques, dessins d'enfants, portraits et textures de la vie quotidienne. Elle donne naissance à un portrait collectif, riche et stratifié, dans lequel passé, présent et imaginaires futurs se superposent visuellement, créant une narration partagée et évolutive de la ville.

### **LONGINGS** par Lenka Holíková (2024)

Ce projet, développé à Graz, aborde les thématiques de la migration et des frontières en articulant recherche et création artistique. L'artiste explore les réalités complexes de la migration forcée et le rôle de l'Autriche en tant que pays de transit, en mettant en lumière les dimensions sociales, politiques et humaines de ces dynamiques.

À travers la collecte de témoignages et de récits individuels, Holíková donne voix aux expériences des personnes migrantes et crée un espace de réflexion et d'écoute. Son travail vise à susciter empathie et responsabilité collective, tout en mettant en évidence les tensions entre obligations humanitaires et intérêts locaux dans un monde marqué par des déplacements constants.

### **Standing in the Salt – Neo-Lattara** par Alexandre Benetas-Ottobrini (2025)

Cette installation de design spéculatif prend la forme d'un « buffet narratif » au sein d'une structure immersive composée de sel et de mousse. L'artiste, se présentant comme l'archiviste d'un institut de recherche fictif, invite les visiteurs à réfléchir aux notions de consommation, de mémoire et d'archivage.

L'œuvre imagine une communauté future qui se préserve à travers des rituels collectifs, en utilisant la nourriture comme médium symbolique. Elle ouvre un dialogue poétique autour de la mythologie, de l'écologie et des futurs possibles dans un monde en mutation. L'installation engage le public dans une expérience sensorielle et réflexive, encourageant de nouvelles formes de compréhension du lien entre culture, mémoire et environnement.

### **PapierNetz** par Lisa Maria Baier (2025)

Partant de l'absence quasi totale des femmes dans les archives de l'industrie du papier à Aschaffenburg, Lisa Maria Baier a créé une série d'artefacts photographiques générés par intelligence artificielle.

Ces images reconstruisent visuellement les récits manquants des ouvrières. L'œuvre établit un dialogue entre histoire analogue et innovation numérique, tout en questionnant les mécanismes de construction de la mémoire collective.

Elle invite le spectateur à réfléchir à la manière dont certaines histoires sont invisibilisées, en particulier dans le contexte des mouvements d'émancipation du début du XXe siècle, et interroge les critères selon lesquels certaines vies sont archivées et d'autres oubliées.

### **Executive Summary (IT)**

Il Deliverable 4.1 raccoglie la documentazione del programma di residenze artistiche **Art for Public Residency del progetto DIALOG CITY** attraverso una serie di pubblicazioni realizzate nelle quattro città pilota. Questi opuscoli illustrano i processi artistici, le attività partecipative delle comunità e le opere risultanti sviluppate durante le residenze, fungendo sia da strumento di documentazione sia da mezzo di divulgazione dei risultati culturali del progetto.

Il programma di residenze ha coinvolto diversi artisti, invitandoli a collaborare con le comunità locali e ad affrontare tematiche di rilevanza sociale quali identità, migrazione, memoria, sostenibilità ecologica e trasformazione digitale. Ogni residenza ha combinato ricerca artistica, workshop partecipativi e momenti di restituzione pubblica, garantendo una forte interazione tra artisti, cittadini e stakeholder locali.

Le pubblicazioni documentano quattro interventi artistici principali: News from Home a Mondovì, una fotomontaggio partecipativo su larga scala che riflette le narrazioni della comunità; Longings a Graz, che affronta il tema della migrazione attraverso le testimonianze personali e l'interpretazione artistica; Standing in the Salt – Neo-Lattara a Montpellier, un'installazione sperimentale che esplora il rapporto tra cibo, ecologia e memoria; e PapierNetz ad Aschaffenburg, che ricostruisce narrazioni storiche dimenticate, attraverso immagini generate digitalmente.

Nel complesso delle residenze emerge un approccio metodologico condiviso, che integra pratica artistica, partecipazione attiva e radicamento nel contesto locale. La documentazione evidenzia il ruolo degli artisti come facilitatori del dialogo, capaci di tradurre questioni complesse in esperienze accessibili e coinvolgenti.

Le pubblicazioni dimostrano inoltre la stretta integrazione delle residenze all'interno dell'ecosistema progettuale di DIALOG CITY, in particolare in relazione agli Hybrid Festivals e alla Citizen Archive Platform, rafforzando l'approccio interdisciplinare e partecipativo del progetto.

Nel suo insieme, il Deliverable 4.1 offre un modello concreto e replicabile per l'integrazione delle residenze artistiche nei processi di sviluppo urbano e partecipazione civica. Dimostra inoltre come l'arte possa fungere da catalizzatore per il dialogo, la riflessione e la co-creazione, contribuendo a una trasformazione urbana inclusiva e sostenibile.

### **DIALOG CITY - Un progetto europeo per una trasformazione digitale centrata sulle persone**

**DIALOG CITY** è stato un progetto europeo pionieristico che ha reinterpretato la trasformazione digitale come un processo sociale, e non soltanto tecnico. Coordinato dalla Città di Aschaffenburg, ha riunito un consorzio diversificato di partner europei provenienti da archivi, musei, organizzazioni culturali e centri di formazione in cinque paesi. La missione principale del progetto

era quella di costruire un futuro digitale inclusivo e umano per le città attraverso la partecipazione diretta dei cittadini e il dialogo.

Questa visione è stata realizzata attraverso diverse iniziative chiave. Il progetto ha sviluppato la Citizen Archive Platform, uno strumento digitale innovativo che consente alle persone di contribuire direttamente con le proprie storie e i propri dati agli archivi urbani, democratizzando il patrimonio culturale.

Ha inoltre promosso un approccio orientato al futuro attraverso il programma *Our Common Future*, che ha formato artisti a facilitare workshop di Futures Literacy, permettendo alle comunità di immaginare e co-creare il proprio futuro.

Inoltre, una serie di Hybrid e Future Festivals nelle città partner ha rappresentato una piattaforma dinamica per il coinvolgimento del pubblico, combinando arte, architettura e tecnologia per trasformare gli spazi urbani in laboratori di dialogo civico.

Dalla Kick-off Un-Conference fino all'evento finale *Where do we go from here*, DIALOG CITY ha dimostrato che una cultura del dialogo è fondamentale per costruire città europee sostenibili, connesse e inclusive. L'eredità del progetto — le sue piattaforme, il toolkit e la rete — fornisce un quadro solido e trasferibile per garantire che la digitalizzazione serva realmente e arricchisca la vita di tutti i cittadini.

I festival hanno inoltre incluso le *Art for Public Residencies*, nell'ambito delle quali gli artisti hanno collaborato con le comunità locali per creare interventi significativi capaci di collegare storie locali a tematiche globali.

Per documentare queste esposizioni, è stata realizzata una pubblicazione dedicata per ciascuna residenza. Come sintesi finale del progetto, la Città di Aschaffenburg, in qualità di coordinatore, ha inoltre avviato una quinta pubblicazione che raccoglie i risultati e gli esiti complessivi del progetto. Il presente deliverable riunisce queste cinque edizioni individuali.

Cinquecento copie cartacee di ciascuna pubblicazione sono state distribuite ai partner del progetto e agli artisti. Esse sono inoltre disponibili in formato digitale sul sito web di DIALOG CITY e attraverso i diversi canali online della rete dei partner.

## Opere artistiche

### **News From Home** di Anne Fehres e Luke Conroy (2023)

Questo fotomontaggio pubblico su larga scala realizzato a Mondovì (Italia) si configura come una vera e propria celebrazione della comunità locale. Attraverso workshop partecipativi, passeggiate fotografiche e una piattaforma digitale dedicata, gli artisti hanno raccolto migliaia di immagini, disegni e contributi visivi provenienti dai residenti.

Il risultato finale è un collage murale di dimensioni monumentali (6 x 2 metri), che intreccia fotografie storiche, disegni di bambini, ritratti e dettagli della vita quotidiana. L'opera restituisce un ritratto stratificato e dinamico della città, in cui passato, presente e immaginari futuri si sovrappongono visivamente, creando una narrazione collettiva e condivisa.

### **LONGINGS** di Lenka Holíková (2024)

Il progetto realizzato a Graz affronta il tema della migrazione e dei confini, combinando ricerca teorica e produzione artistica. L'artista indaga le complesse dinamiche della migrazione forzata, analizzando il ruolo dell'Austria come paese di transito e le implicazioni sociali, politiche e umane di questo fenomeno.

Attraverso la raccolta di testimonianze e narrazioni personali, Holíková mette in luce le esperienze vissute dai migranti, creando uno spazio di ascolto e riflessione. Il progetto intende stimolare empatia e consapevolezza collettiva, evidenziando le tensioni tra responsabilità umanitarie e interessi locali in un contesto globale segnato da mobilità e displacement continui.

**Standing in the Salt – Neo-Lattara** di Alexandre Benetas-Ottobrini (2025)

Questa installazione di design speculativo assume la forma di un “buffet narrativo” all’interno di una struttura immersiva composta da sale e muschio. L’artista, interpretando il ruolo di archivista di un immaginario istituto di ricerca, invita i visitatori a interrogarsi sui concetti di consumo, memoria e archiviazione.

L’opera costruisce la visione di una comunità futura che si preserva attraverso rituali collettivi, utilizzando il cibo come mezzo simbolico e narrativo. Attraverso questo dispositivo, viene attivato un dialogo poetico su miti, ecologia e scenari immaginati in un mondo in trasformazione o in declino. L’esperienza coinvolge il pubblico in modo sensoriale e riflessivo, stimolando nuove prospettive sul rapporto tra cultura materiale e memoria.

**PapierNetz** di Lisa Maria Baier (2025)

Partendo dalla quasi totale assenza delle donne negli archivi storici dell’industria cartaria di Aschaffenburg, Lisa Maria Baier ha sviluppato una serie di artefatti fotografici generati tramite intelligenza artificiale.

Le immagini ricostruiscono visivamente le storie dimenticate delle lavoratrici delle fabbriche. L’opera crea un ponte tra storia analogica e innovazione digitale, mettendo in discussione i meccanismi di selezione e rappresentazione della memoria collettiva.

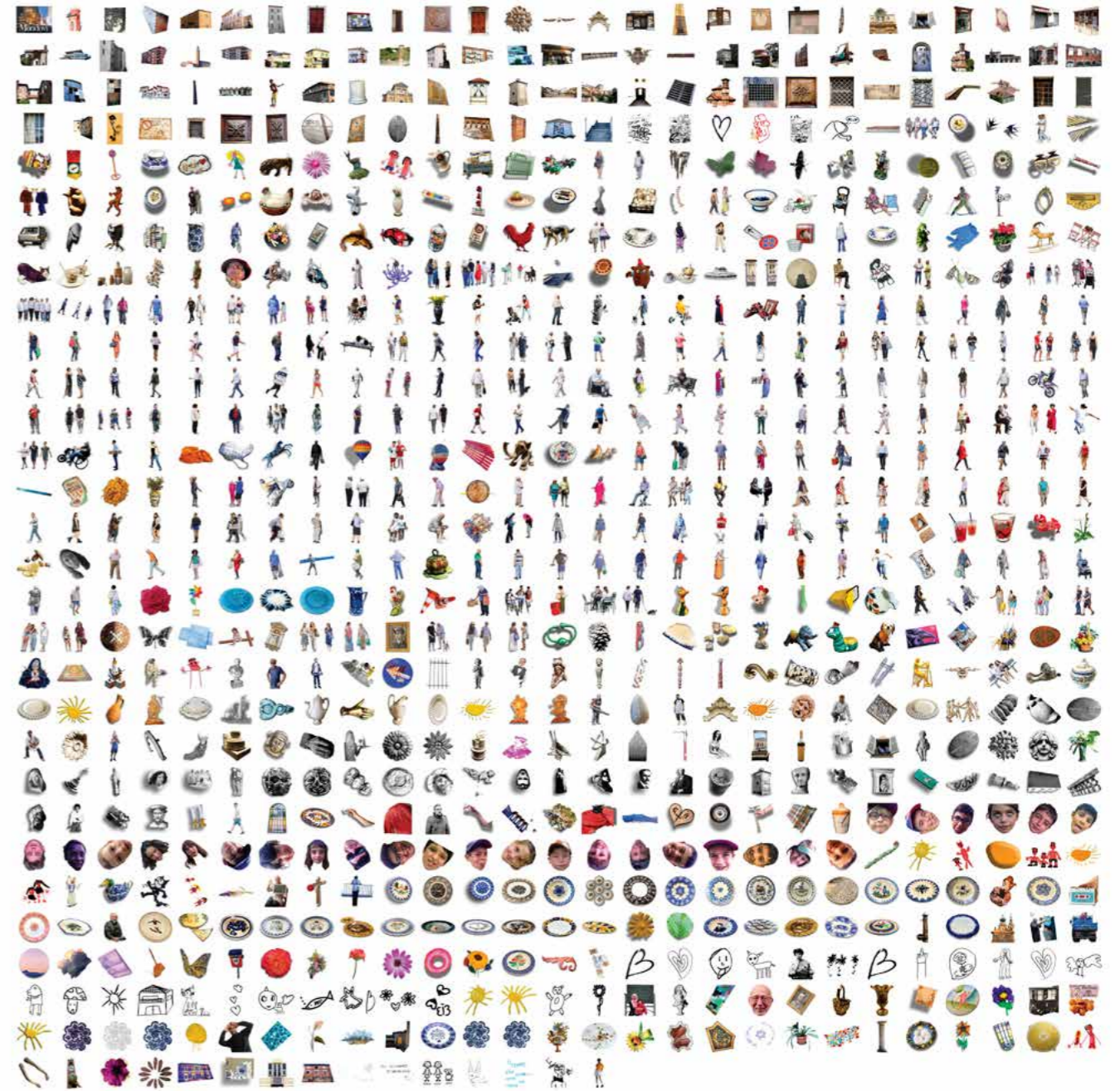
Attraverso questa operazione, Baier invita il pubblico a interrogarsi criticamente su chi viene ricordato e chi viene escluso dalla narrazione storica, collocando il lavoro nel contesto più ampio dei movimenti emancipatori del XX secolo, in particolare degli anni Venti.

A tall brick clock tower with two large circular clock faces and an Italian flag on top, next to a wall covered in colorful graffiti.

# NEWS FROM HOME

ANNE FEHRES  
& LUKE CONROY

# NEWS FROM HOME





# dialog city

## DIALOG CITY

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Digital transformation is more of a mindset than a purely technical innovation. Hence the overall goal of this project proposal is to create a socially inclusive, environmentally friendly, and economically sustainable urban digital environment.

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# IMAGINE OUR COMMON FUTURE!

DIALOG CITY ART FOR PUBLIC RESIDENCY PROGRAM invites professional artists to develop ideas for urban interventions addressing local or global issues of significance to the respective urban society through a participatory approach. The participating European cities are Mondoví (IT) in 2023, Graz (AT) in 2024, Aschaffenburg (DE), and Montpellier (FR) in 2025.

The project NEWS FROM HOME by Anne Fehres and Luke Conroy, an artist duo specializing in socially engaged art practice, was selected for the first residency in Mondoví, Italy. During their four-week stay, they immersed themselves in the community, conducting research, collaborating with locals, and observing diverse community stories. Their focus was on capturing both objective and subjective narratives that blend global and local perspectives.

The culmination of their residency was a mural depicting these stories, created using large format photographic composition on billboard paper affixed to an old wall in Mondoví's medieval centre. The artwork was unveiled on July 20, 2023, as part of the HYBRID FESTIVAL and will remain in public space until time naturally fades it away.

The project consortium of DIALOG CITY received an overwhelming response of 78 fully-fledged applications for the first residency, showcasing high-quality projects that were evaluated based on their participatory and dialogical approach. Feasibility within the residency timeframe considering language barriers and cultural translations was also crucial. Sustainability and ecological considerations were factored in during project evaluation.

Anne and Luke's proposal aligned well with the call requirements, particularly emphasizing strong participation, artwork visibility, and seamless integration with the DIALOG CITY HYBRID FESTIVAL. Their collaborative approach facilitated effective communication and exchange with Mondoví citizens during residency workshops due to their experience in participatory art projects and exceptional communication skills. Overall, their project exemplified a successful blend of artistic vision with community engagement, contributing significantly to the cultural landscape of Mondoví while fostering dialogue and participation among its residents.



# DIALOG CITY HYBRID FESTIVAL #1

## MONDOVÍ, ITALY

The inaugural Hybrid Festival in Mondoví was organized by Fondazione Cirko Vertigo in collaboration with all European consortium partners of the DIALOG CITY project, notably the Italian partners Municipality of Mondoví, CFP CEMON, and CIAC FORMAZIONE. The festival was linked to the Piazza di Circo event hosted by the L'Albero del Macramè Association and further enriched by the 24 Hours x 24 Minutes® format presented by Associazione Culturale Supernova and Museo della Ceramica of Mondoví. This vibrant format served as a diverse artistic and cultural ecosystem, offering not just a spectacle but an immersive experience for artists and audiences to engage in creative dialogue on pressing future topics.

Over a thousand attendees gathered for the festival's grand finale at Piazza Maggiore, experiencing live performances and engaging in workshops. The highlight was a new performance concept created by choreographer Raffaele Irace called 24 Hours x 24 Minutes, featuring dancers Marco Volta and Rosalie Wanka sharing stage spaces across Mondoví for a continuous 24-hour period before presenting a minimum 24-minute performance. The entire performance was broadcasted live on the DIALOG CITY website.

In addition to this innovative performance, three dance and performance workshops were conducted as „experiences,“ each lasting two hours and involving local residents of Mondoví. These workshops, led by professional dancers and choreographers Daniela Paci, Cecilia Castellari, and Davide Degano, focused on themes of discovery, creation, and composition.

Furthermore, a participatory Game Jam was held simultaneously in Mondoví and Aschaffenburg, Germany. Citizens, students, and activists collaborated to develop game ideas addressing urgent global issues such as climate change, economic crises, and interdependencies. The Game Jam provided a platform to explore these complex topics creatively while generating innovative solutions in an engaging manner.



**News From Home - Mondoví**

2023

Digital Photomontage, Print on Blueback Paper, 600cm x 200cm  
Displayed in Public Space, Giardini del Belvedere, Mondoví, Italy



# NEWS FROM HOME

BY ANNE FEHRES AND LUKE CONROY

News From Home is an ongoing project first started in 2019, capturing the often-overlooked stories within communities worldwide. During the project, we embed ourselves within a specific locale for between 1-3 months, involving ourselves in research, documentation, and the eventual creation of an artistic intervention inspired by the community.

The 10th edition of this project took place over 1 month in Mondovì, Italy, with the end result being a large-scale 6 x 2 metre photomontage work exhibited in public space.

At its core, in News From Home we are interested in engaging with and valuing the 'everyday' aspects of a community. It is these aspects of a place that we find fascinating and vital, as they speak to the struggles, triumphs, attitudes, and dreams of a place. By engaging locally, we believe there is a potential to find commonalities globally, making the local, universal.

During the residency, our intention was to experience and photograph Mondoví in its many layers. This involved hours of exploring the streets, recording with our camera our visual observations inspired by the smells, textures, tastes, sounds, colors, movements, objects, stories, animals, and people. This exploration led us to historical sites such as the abandoned ceramic factories as well as more personal sites, invited into the homes of local residents.

Alongside personal observation, a key intention of the project was to welcome collaboration and co-creation in the visual outcome. This involved us undertaking workshops with local school children, where each contributed photographs, drawings, and ideas related to Mondoví in the past, present, and future. The local photography club also contributed, during a 'photo walk' through the city that involved the sharing of important community ideas, locations, and history.

The co-creation extended virtually, where we established an online platform where the community could submit their personal photographs to the project. On this page, over 100 contributors submitted their personal photos and stories that they felt reflected Mondoví's past, present, and future.

These thousands of collected images contributed to the final large-scale photomontage, installed using 'paste-up'. Containing over 1000 layers, the work included elements such as children's drawings from the workshops, historical images, photography of daily life, graffiti scratched into city walls, and spontaneous portraits. Exhibited publicly in the work is a collision of diverse layers celebrating this community as a place where elements of the past, modern reality, and future dreams constantly overlap.





**Anne Fehres and Luke Conroy**

# THE ARTISTS

Anne Fehres (The Netherlands) and Luke Conroy (Australia), are an interdisciplinary, research-oriented artist duo based in The Netherlands. Their practice engages with socio-cultural topics in meaningful yet playful ways, utilising humour and irony as essential tools for critical reflection and expression.

The outcome of their work utilises an ever-evolving multimedia and audio-visual practice which includes photography, digital-art, video, sound, VR, textile, text and installation. Their interest in socio-cultural topics is informed by Anne's background in documentary film and audio-visual design (Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Ghent, Belgium, 2013) and Luke's background in sociology, visual-art and education (University of Tasmania, Australia, 2013).

In their work, they are especially interested to engage with projects where broader socio-cultural events, processes and systems at a macro level can shape and be shaped by personal experiences at a micro level.

More information on the News From Home Instagram page [www.instagram.com/news\\_from\\_home](https://www.instagram.com/news_from_home) and on the artists websites [www.luke-conroy.com](http://www.luke-conroy.com) & [www.annefehres.com](http://www.annefehres.com)

# dialog city

## IMPRINT

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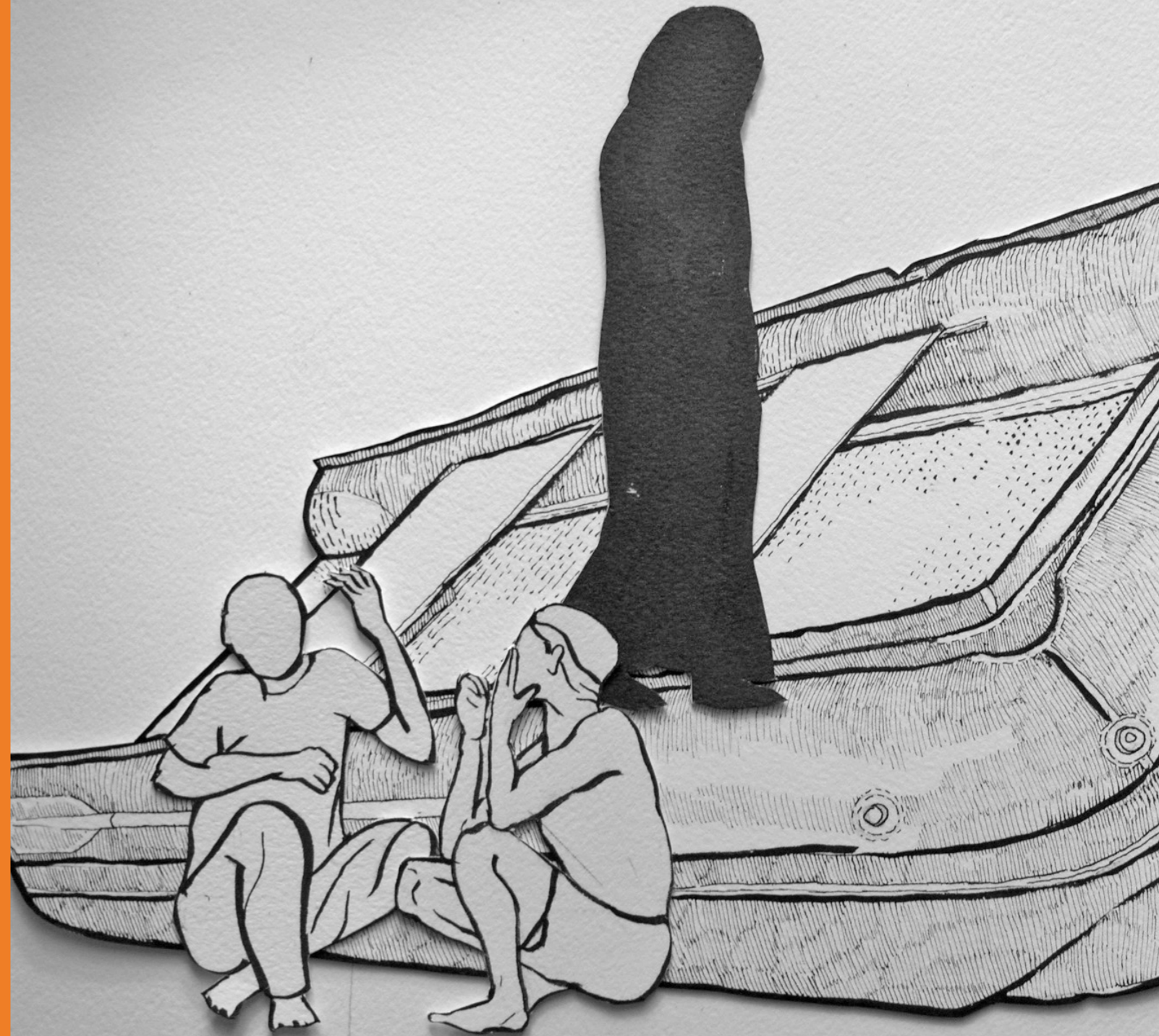


# LONGINGS



LENKA HOLÍKOVÁ

# LONGINGS





# dialog city

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# LONGINGS

This is the title of the second DIALOG CITY ART FOR PUBLIC RESIDENCY, featuring visual artist Lenka Holíková. Her artistic practice primarily delves into themes of migration and borders, which resonate deeply with her personal background; she grew up in a border region during the era of East-West division.

In recent years, her focus has broadened to encompass migration as a more expansive subject. Holíková's work connects research with artistic production, now focusing on migrant narratives closely tied to the City of Graz.

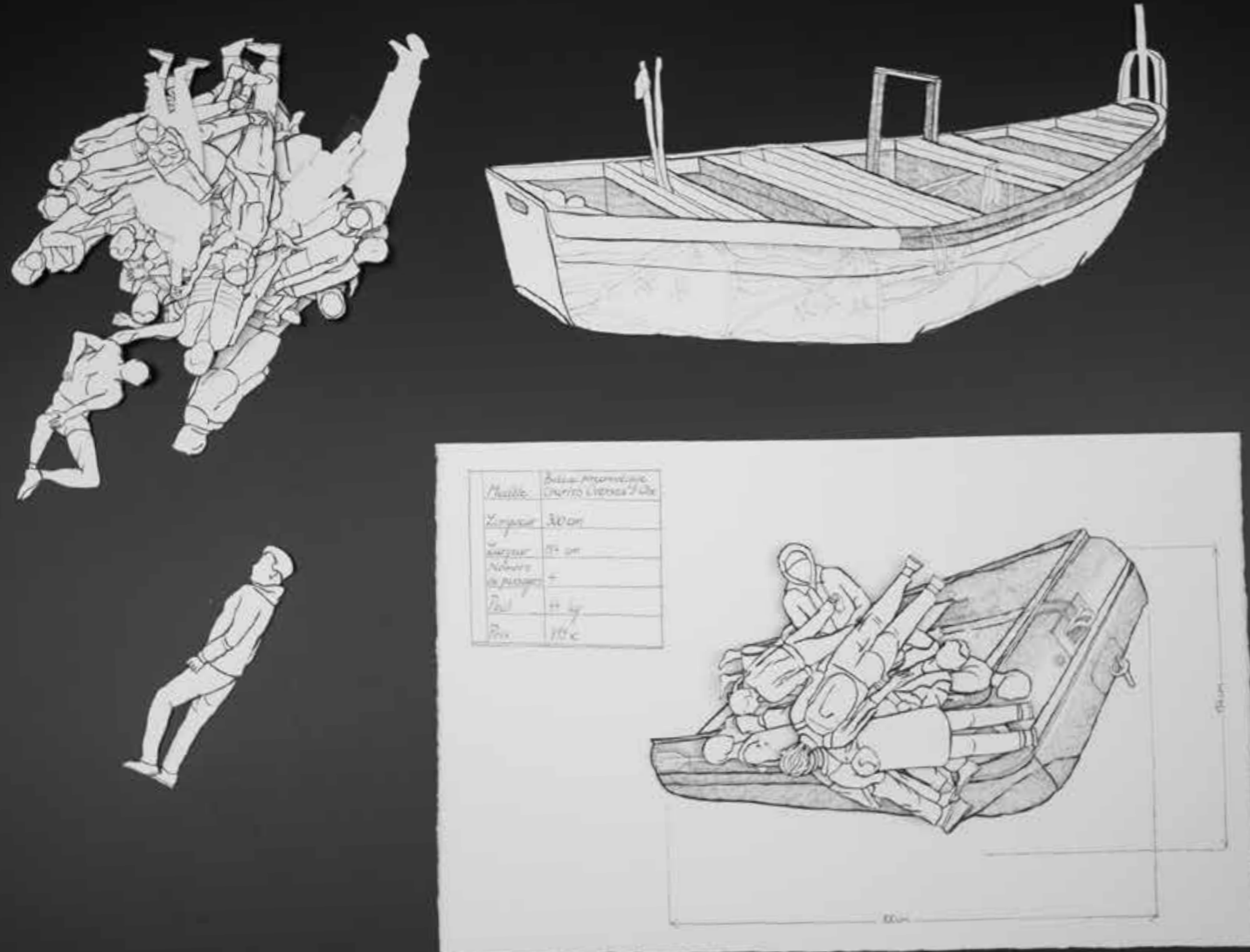
The issue of forced migration remains a pressing concern in Central Europe, particularly in Austria, which serves as a key transit hub for migrants and refugees fleeing conflict, persecution, or economic hardship. Austria's complex historical relationship with migration - shaped by its past during the Austro-Hungarian Empire and more recent experiences during the Balkan conflicts of the 1990s - continues to influence current attitudes and policies regarding migrants.

Additionally, the rise of populist and nationalist movements has fuelled anti-immigrant sentiment, resulting in stricter immigration policies and heightened social tensions surrounding integration efforts. Media portrayals often emphasize negative aspects of migration, shaping public perception and instilling fear among local populations.

Ongoing conflicts in regions such as the Middle East, Afghanistan, and Africa are driving waves of forced migration, highlighting that this phenomenon is not an exception but a global and ongoing reality. These crises place significant pressure on European countries to respond effectively, underscoring the urgent need for comprehensive strategies to address the influx of migrants.

Economic disparities between nations further exacerbate these migration flows, fuelling debates about labour market impacts and resource allocation within Europe. It is essential to recognize the moral imperative to address the needs of those fleeing violence, hunger, lack of prospects, or persecution.

This challenge complicates the balance between humanitarian obligations and national or local interests, emphasizing that migration is a shared global responsibility that requires collective action. And empathy!





# LOCAL ASPECTS OF MIGRATION

## GRAZ, AUSTRIA

Lenka Holíková addresses forced migration through her art. Selected for the Artist Residency in Graz 2024 in March 2024 from 31 fully-fledged applications, Holíková's concept resonated with us due to her commitment to engaging in open dialogue with individuals to retell their personal stories through her artwork and create visibility around their experiences.

Migration has significantly shaped Graz throughout its history; since industrialization began in the mid-19th century, immigration has contributed to population growth in the city. Since the 1960s, people from Southeast Europe and Turkey have settled in Graz, followed by migrants from Asia, Africa, and America since the 1990s. Recent conflicts in the Balkans, Middle East, and Ukraine have also brought refugees to Graz.

From May to mid-June 2024, Lenka Holíková served as Dialog City Artist in Residence in Graz. During this six-week period, she worked intensively on her exhibition „Longings,” which opened as part of the Hybrid Festival on June 8. Collaborating with local associations JUKUS, Chiala, and Ridna Domivka allowed her to connect with refugees residing in Graz who were willing to share their migration stories.

Through several interviews, she collected deeply emotional narratives that informed her artistic creations. The three associations represent Graz's diversity and commitment: JUKUS promotes exchange and social participation; Chiala fosters connections between individuals with and without migration experience, while Ridna Domivka supports Ukrainian refugees.

At the exhibition opening on June 8, Lenka presented her artworks alongside insights into the stories she had gathered and her creative process. The exhibition was displayed at the Graz Museum until early September 2024 and attracted over 480 visitors. The objects showcased will become part of the museum's collection.





# A TERRITORIAL POLITICS OF AFFECTION

**ULISES MATAMOROS ASCENCIÓN, ARTIST AND CURATOR**

Lenka Holíková was born in Cheb, a small border town in former Czechoslovakia located just seven kilometres from Germany. Although she was only five years old during the Velvet Revolution, echoes of communism and the Iron Curtain continue to resonate throughout her life and work;

history does not fragment into a 'before' and 'after.' Its effects are both proactive and retroactive; they persist within human psyches across generations, shaping behaviours and emotions alike.

The border landscapes and dense forests imprinted in her earliest memories evoke a constant unease, a weight she has never been able to leave behind. This restlessness prompted her voluntary nomadic exile as she sought new cultures that would challenge her thinking and transform her creative process. Paradoxically, physical distance brought her closer to her Czech roots; despite attempts to escape existential angst, it reappears within her artistic work as an unavoidable echo.

What began as an investigation into communist-era repercussions soon expanded into contemporary migrations' complexities. Her artistic practice draws from a personal archive built through research transformed into visual dialogues about historical crises interconnecting past with present - microhistory with macrohistory - and intertwining personal narratives with political contexts.

Using travel as a tool for displacement has allowed Lenka to forge deep connections with communities encountered along her journey, creating networks of affection reflected within her work.

Through drawing, installation, photography, and video art forms, Holíková explores themes of belonging while inviting reflection upon physical barriers dividing us all; she first addresses migratory phenomena through individual microhistories before challenging metanarratives that define border discourses—creating spaces that suspend these barriers while advocating for a territorial politics rooted firmly within affection itself.

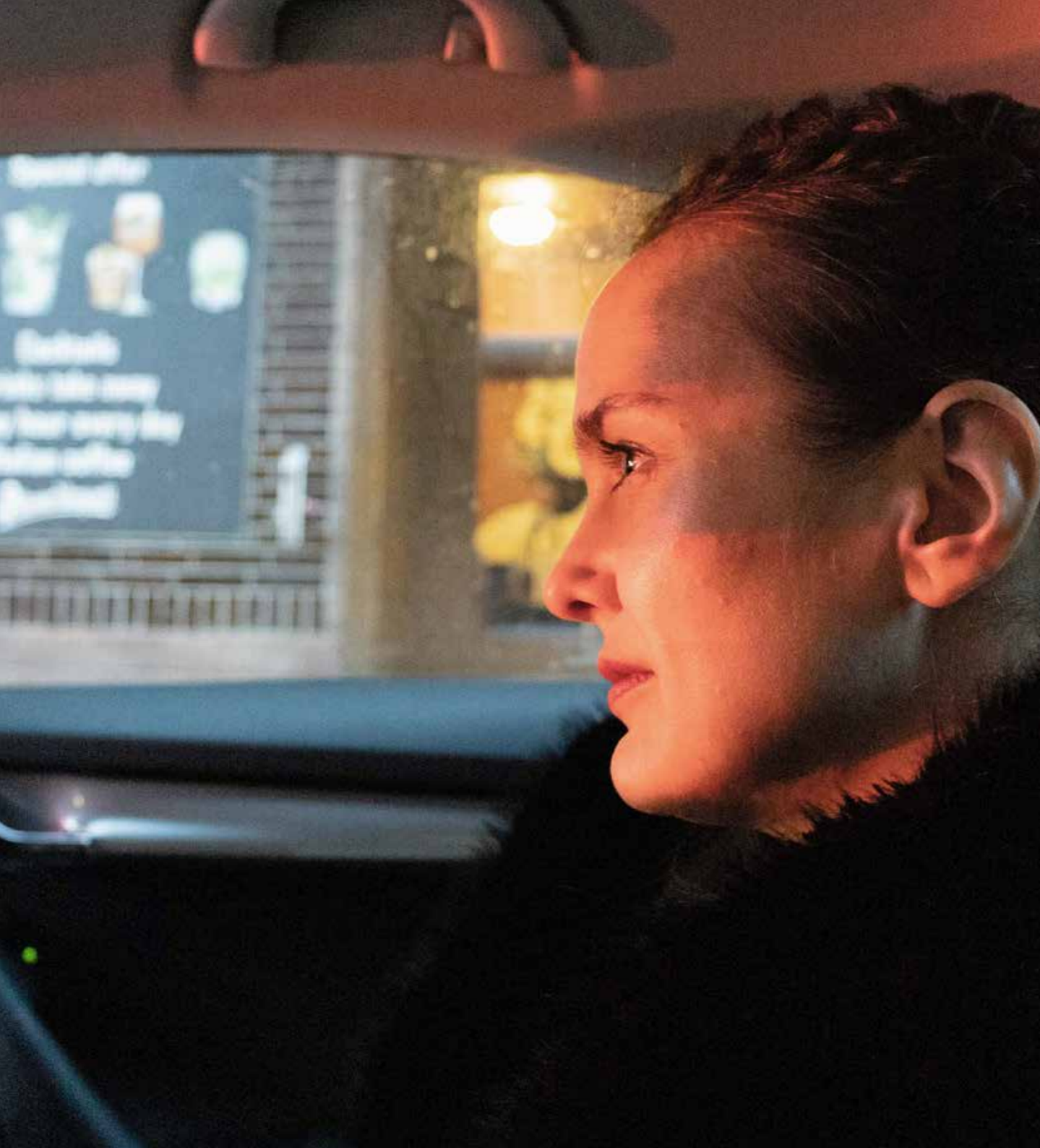
Her project LONGINGS, developed collaboratively alongside Graz Museum staff members exemplifies this philosophy permeating every aspect found throughout Holíková's oeuvre: connecting research directly back towards artistic production via testimonies shared by migrants arriving at Graz due solely because forced displacement necessitated such journeys

undertaken away from home seeking safety instead, a reminder underscoring how 'no one leaves home unless it's necessary'. Transforming these testimonies into visual metaphors invites viewers alike into participating actively within creation processes themselves, a deeply human endeavor striving towards transcending borders through empathy coupled alongside artistic reflection alike.

Through this body-of-work created thus far, Holíková seeks unification between local and global realms whilst bridging intimate and collective experiences together connecting official histories alongside subaltern voices alike: every space worked becomes part-of-home; every person shared time becomes family within artistry itself!

By challenging notions surrounding borders and the binaries that define identity versus otherness, as well as belonging versus exclusion, her practice transforms itself. It becomes a bridge that spans worlds separated both geographically and culturally. Yet, despite these separations, it emphasizes our shared common humanity.





**LENKA HOLÍKOVÁ**

# THE ARTIST

Born in Czechia in 1984, Lenka is a visual artist, illustrator, and university educator. She earned her master's degree in Fine Arts from Hradec Králové University in 2011. In 2024, she was selected for prestigious artist residencies, including the Schiesslhaus AiR programm in Germany and Dialog City in Austria.

In 2023, Lenka participated in notable residencies such as The Other Edges of the World at MeetFactory in Prague, Hablarenarte in Madrid, Ukraine's Artistic Response to the Russian Invasion in Lviv, and Ateljé Stundars in Finland. She was also chosen for the National Fund for Culture and Arts' Program for the Promotion of Cultural Projects and Co-investments in Mexico as part of the working group "Limit of What Belongs."

Lenka has received awards for her work, including recognition from the Ministry of Culture in Puebla for her project „Sin sYembra.“ Her exhibitions in 2024 include „The Borders Burn“ at Zwitschermaschine in Berlin, „Limit of What Belongs,“ curated by Michel Blancsubé in Santa Inés Ahuatempan, Mexico, and „Über die Grenzen“ in Segovia, Spain. She has participated in various group exhibitions such as „Graphic Popular and Contemporary“ at Espacio 14 and „1989“ at MPAC MinEastry of Postcollapse Art (Oregon, USA). Her solo exhibitions include „Frontiers: Methods of Escape“ at Arte Mare (Finland) and „In the Realm of Memory“ at Galería Garco.

In 2023, Lenka conducted an art workshop at Norra Korsholms skola with support from Korsholms kommun. She has attended several seminars and workshops focused on critical studies and artistic techniques. Additionally, Lenka illustrated Jiří Orten's poems for Piacca Salgari Milano and collaborates with Mexican artist Ulises Matamoros. She is actively involved in the Chasen Thajni community space project located in Mixteca Poblana.

[www.lenkaholikova.com](http://www.lenkaholikova.com)

# dialog city

## IMPRINT

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A close-up photograph of a hand holding a small, clear glass petri dish containing a single, light-colored egg with dark brown spots. The egg is held over a dense carpet of vibrant green moss. In the background, another petri dish with a similar egg is visible, resting on the moss. The scene is set in a natural, outdoor environment, likely a forest floor, with some dry twigs and a piece of bark visible. The overall lighting is natural, highlighting the textures of the moss and the egg.

# STANDING IN THE SALT

ALEXANDRE BENETAS-OTTOBRINI

# STANDING IN THE SALT



Lattara II

Mer Sidérale  
*Sideral Sea*

NEO-LATTARA



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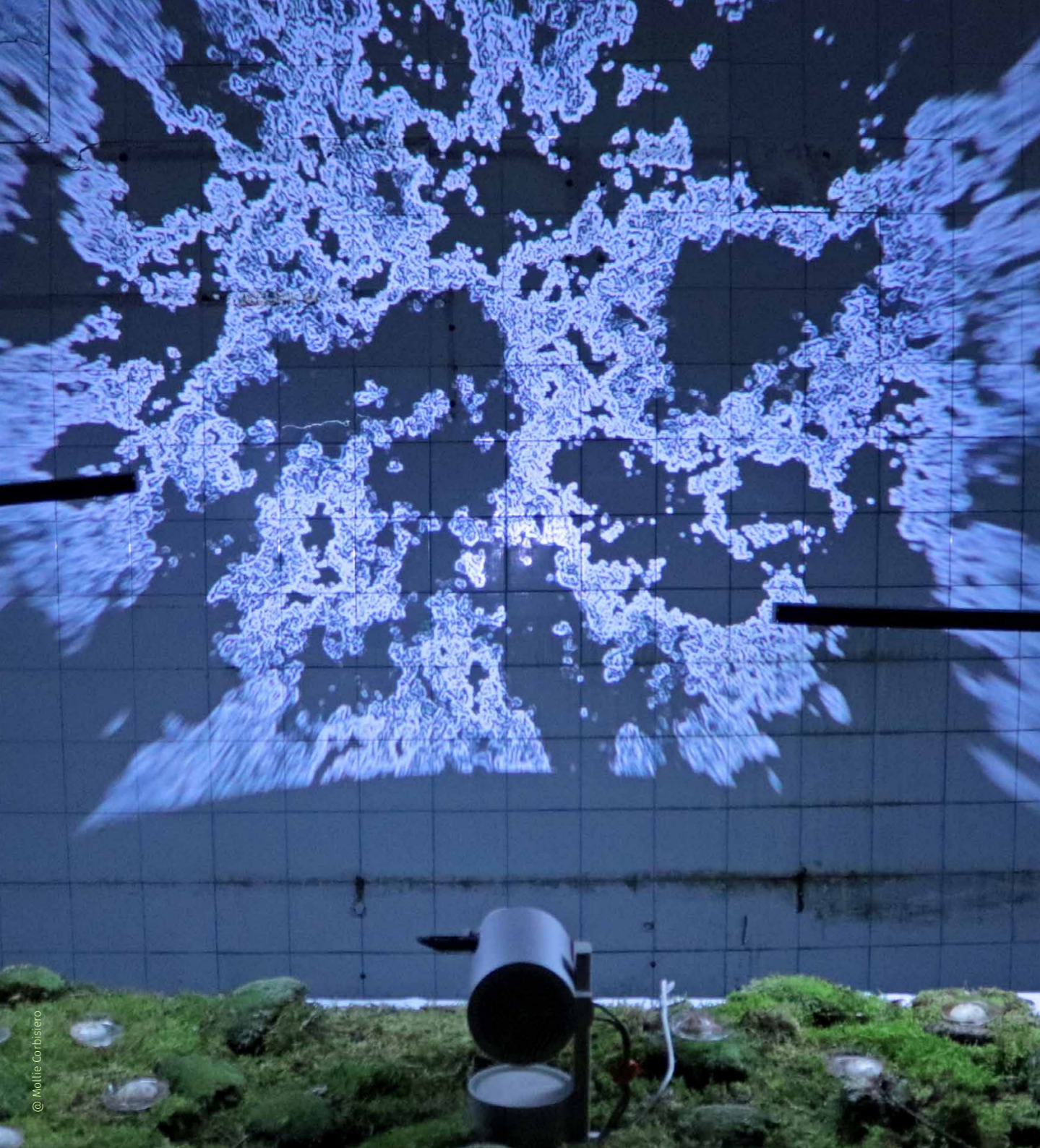
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# STANDING IN THE SALT

## NEO-LATTARA

Speculative Design explores potential future scenarios, often through critical and imaginative design proposals. It's a way to examine the social, ethical, and political implications of emerging technologies and societal changes by creating future artifacts, narratives, and prototypes.

Alexandre Benetas-Ottobrini is a Paris-based food artist with a master's degree in design and culinary arts from the École Supérieure d'Art et de Design in Reims. In his practice, he uses speculative design to stage knowledge creation around food. In his work, food becomes data processed by bodies, turning into a living archive that forges social bonds and sparks debate. With this aim, he opens a poetic dialogue about who we are and who we might be in imagined realities.

The DIALOG CITY FUTURE FESTIVAL in Montpellier was realized in collaboration with and under the umbrella of the Festival of Living Architecture (FAV), which in 2025 took place under the theme of *La Gourmandise*. For two decades, FAV has invited architects, urban and landscape planners each summer to explore the connection between architecture and an annual theme, transforming the courtyards of Montpellier's townhouses with installations.

During his residency, Benetas-Ottobrini created a narrative buffet in the form of a walk-in installation made of salt, moss, projection, and an old refrigerator found in the former youth hostel that hosted the FUTURE FESTIVAL. Inspired by the Archaeological Museum of Lattara south of Montpellier and the nearby saltworks of Aigues-Mortes, he devised the "Institute for Post-Sidereal Research," an entity dedicated to studying altered or dissolved societies.

Before entering the installation, the artist, in his fictional role as an archivist, asked visitors a few fundamental questions: What was last eaten? What is archived? How is overall well-being? What is the personal acceptance of change between ingestion and subsequent excretion? The survey turned the work into a living performance about leaving traces.

Benetas-Ottobrini's work sketches a declining community seeking to preserve itself through a ritual of mushroom-shooting-star consumption. The audience is invited to taste a fragment as an act of archiving or remembrance—interweaving mythology, inner ecology, and food fiction.



## ASSOCIATION QUATORZE IN MONTPELLIER

In the heart of Montpellier's old town, Quatorze is investing in a 17th-century building that is part of the historical heritage of the old city. Nestled at the crossroads of typical sloping streets of the old town centre - not visible from the street as it overlooks it, the three-storey L-shaped building encompasses a 188m<sup>2</sup> raised courtyard. In it, is an unoccupied youth hostel that has been vacant for several years, which Quatorze, associates and institutional partners propose to renovate for the implementation of a temporary housing program for 3 years, responding to the Montpellier Zero Slums initiative.

On the upper floors, the aim is to provide dignified housing for families currently living in slums. The ground floor houses associative offices and a communal space open to the neighbourhood with, in time, activities and openings to the wider public of Montpellier.

The renovation, both technical and participatory, involved specialized companies and volunteers supervised by Quatorze. From February to June 2025, the site progressively and punctually opened to the public, hosting community architectural drop-in sessions.

Within this dynamic of opening the doors of the Auberge to the public and as part of the Dialog City consortium, Quatorze went on to partner with the Festival des Architectures Vives (FAV) and organise an artist residency and a Future Festival on site of the Auberge and its courtyard. This year's theme of the FAV was la Gourmandise - a typical French term which could be translated as the refined pleasure of savouring food with delight and curiosity.

## A PAVILION FOR THE FUTURE

Our 15 m<sup>2</sup> Pavilion of the Future, designed according to a parametric and evolutionary logic, embodies solidarity and interdependence through a reciprocal framework.

Here, architecture and gastronomy come together in common gestures: assembling, sharing, offering. The pavilion hosts an assembly where words and food circulate. Built in Montpellier and Aschaffenburg, the pavilion is to outlive the temporary nature of the events as it is designed to form a sound yet easy to disassemble and reassemble structure.

In time, its half-portals reassembled in a wooden truss structure may even become a greenhouse: a gourmet extension where links, ideas and harvests germinate. In the design, much attention was also paid to the economy of resources to build such a shape, which unfolds like a wooden nest, open yet embracing and protective.





# STANDING IN THE SALT

**STEFAN HORN, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF  
DIALOG CITY IN CONVERSATION WITH  
ALEXANDRE BENETAS-OTTOBRINI**

**How do you define speculative design in your practice, and what makes food a uniquely effective medium for it?**

For me, speculative design is a way of staging possible futures through objects, rituals, and narratives. Food is a particularly effective medium because it engages the body: it is ingested, transformed, and circulated through the metabolism. It therefore very directly materializes fiction, moving from narrative to physiology.

**How do you balance criticality and poetics when designing food-driven “future artifacts”?**

I always try to maintain tensions: on the one hand, a sensitive, poetic, almost mythological narrative that stimulates the imagination; on the other, a critical reflection on political, ecological, or identity issues. In *Standing in the salt - Neo-Lattara*, the poetics come from the invention of an astral lichen and its rituals, while the critique is embedded in references to rising sea levels, climate issues, and contemporary desideration.

**What role do audience surveys play as design tools, not just documentation?**

Feedback from the public via the survey is essential because the project lives in their bodies: they are the ones who ingest, accept or reject, and project their own narratives. The survey allows me to integrate these imaginaries not as simple feedback, but as design material for future iterations.

**Where do you draw ethical lines when staging ingestion as part of a speculative ritual?**

I draw the line at the point where the experience could become coercive or dangerous. Ingestion remains symbolic and voluntary: each person chooses whether to participate in the ritual. I also ensure the quality and food safety of the preparations, so that critical fiction never undermines confidence in the act of eating.

**How does taste function as a knowledge system in your work?**

Taste is a language. It can be considered the first universal language that ever existed. It conveys not only flavours but also stories: saltiness, bitterness, fermentation, recipes—these are vectors of memory and history. Tasting becomes a way of understanding the world beyond text or images.

**Can culinary invention be a form of civic imagination?**

Yes, because inventing a dish or a food ritual proposes a way of living and creating together. The invention of the ritual lichen imagines a post-catastrophe community that gathers around a survival food that has become sacred.



### Can eating be a method of archiving—turning memory into physiology?

Eating records memories, stories, and even gestures in the body. The archive does not remain at a distance but becomes physiology—embodied memory, nourishing body and mind.

### In what ways can salt erode, corrupt, or subvert—materially or metaphorically—within your piece?

Salt corrodes metal, dries out the earth, and burns wounds. In my piece, it also symbolizes the corrosion of narratives, like the disappearance of oral and/or written accounts by our elders, the distortion of discourse and stories by current politics, the fragility of memory, or the possibility of subverting dominant discourse through erosion.

### How do you choreograph multisensory cues—taste, smell, touch, sound, light—to shape cognition?

I think of each sense as a narrative vector: taste crystallizes myth, smell recalls mutation, light evokes the stars, and sound accompanies rising waters. Together, they produce sensory cognition—thinking through the body.

### Where do you see the line between sensory seduction and critical reflection for audiences?

In balance! You must seduce enough for the audience to immerse themselves, but not so much that they lose critical



@ Mathilde Giron

distance. I often introduce breaks—unexpected flavors, unsettling textures, or recitations/experiences depicting dystopias—to interrupt simple seduction.

### What trace should visitors leave behind—data, memory, or metabolic change?

Ideally, a metabolic trace: that taste, ingestion, and bodily memory linger longer than a mere visual memory. By “metabolic trace,” I mean the project seeks not only to produce an image or an intellectual memory, but a physical imprint.

By ingesting the lichen salt, visitors transform the work into themselves: the taste lingers on the tongue, the salt circulates in the blood, and digestion inscribes the ritual in the body.

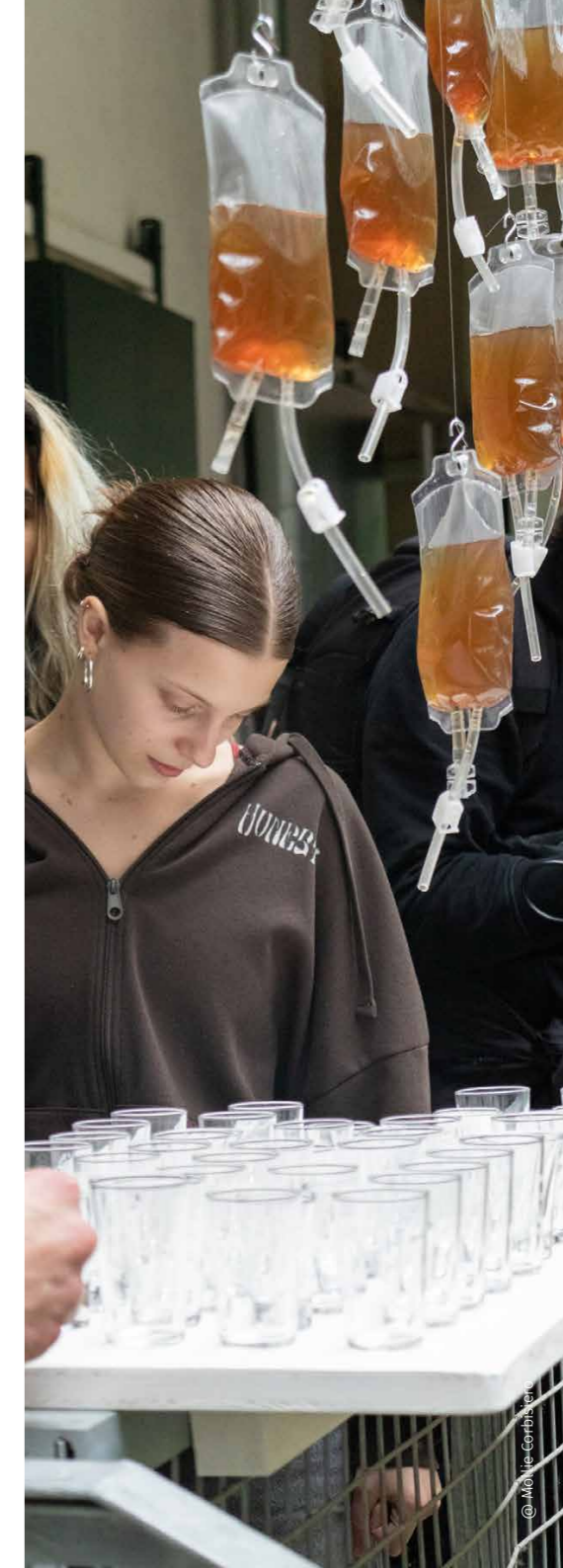
It is an intimate, invisible, physiological archive—a memory that cannot be placed on a shelf but persists in each person through sensory and chemical experience.

The idea is that the piece continues to exist afterward in a metabolic form, rather than as a photograph or text.

### How do local resources and minimal ecological impact guide your material choices?

I try to work with simple, minimally processed materials that are often found locally.

Ecological constraints feed the aesthetic, and they are especially important when working with food and perishable items.



@ Mollie Corbisiero



**Alexandre Benetas-Ottobrini**

# THE ARTIST

Alexandre Benetas-Ottobrini (born 1996) is an artist and culinary designer based in France, whose practice unfolds between gastronomy, installation, performance, and speculative design. He holds a diploma from the École Supérieure d'Art et de Design de Reims, he has been working independently for the past five years, creating edible narratives that blur the boundaries between art, design, and cuisine.

At the core of his work lies the concept of the “tiers-instant,” a notion inspired by Gilles Clément’s “tiers-paysage,” which proposes ephemeral, shared spaces where food becomes a medium for collective imagination. His projects often take the form of banquets, immersive dinners, and scenographic installations where recipes, objects, and storytelling converge into multi-sensory rituals. Benetas-Ottobrini’s practice intertwines speculative research and material experimentation. He explores food as both substance and symbol: salt crystallizations as future fossils, fermented broths as vessels of memory, or lyophilized soups as carriers of forgotten harvests. His narratives draw from archaeology, cosmology, and ecology, inviting audiences to question the ways in which taste embodies memory, identity, and belonging.

Recent works include Neo-Lattara, a fictional archaeology imagining Montpellier as a submerged lagoon city haunted by a comestible lichen born from an astral collision; and Champagne: Micro-Cosmogonies (2025–ongoing), an immersive sound-culinary experience for Champagne houses, staging the drink as a cosmic phenomenon unfolding in four acts.

His projects have been presented in contexts ranging from art centers to festivals, nightclubs, and culinary institutions, reflecting a desire to move fluidly between disciplines and audiences. As a queer artist, he grounds his speculative narratives in personal reflections on displacement, fragmented memory, and the politics of ritual.

Through each project, Benetas-Ottobrini positions food as a critical tool for storytelling: an edible archive, a metaphor of transformation, and a performative gesture of gathering that simultaneously preserves, disrupts, and reimagines our relation to the world.

[www.bonjourbjrstudio.com](http://www.bonjourbjrstudio.com)

# dialog city

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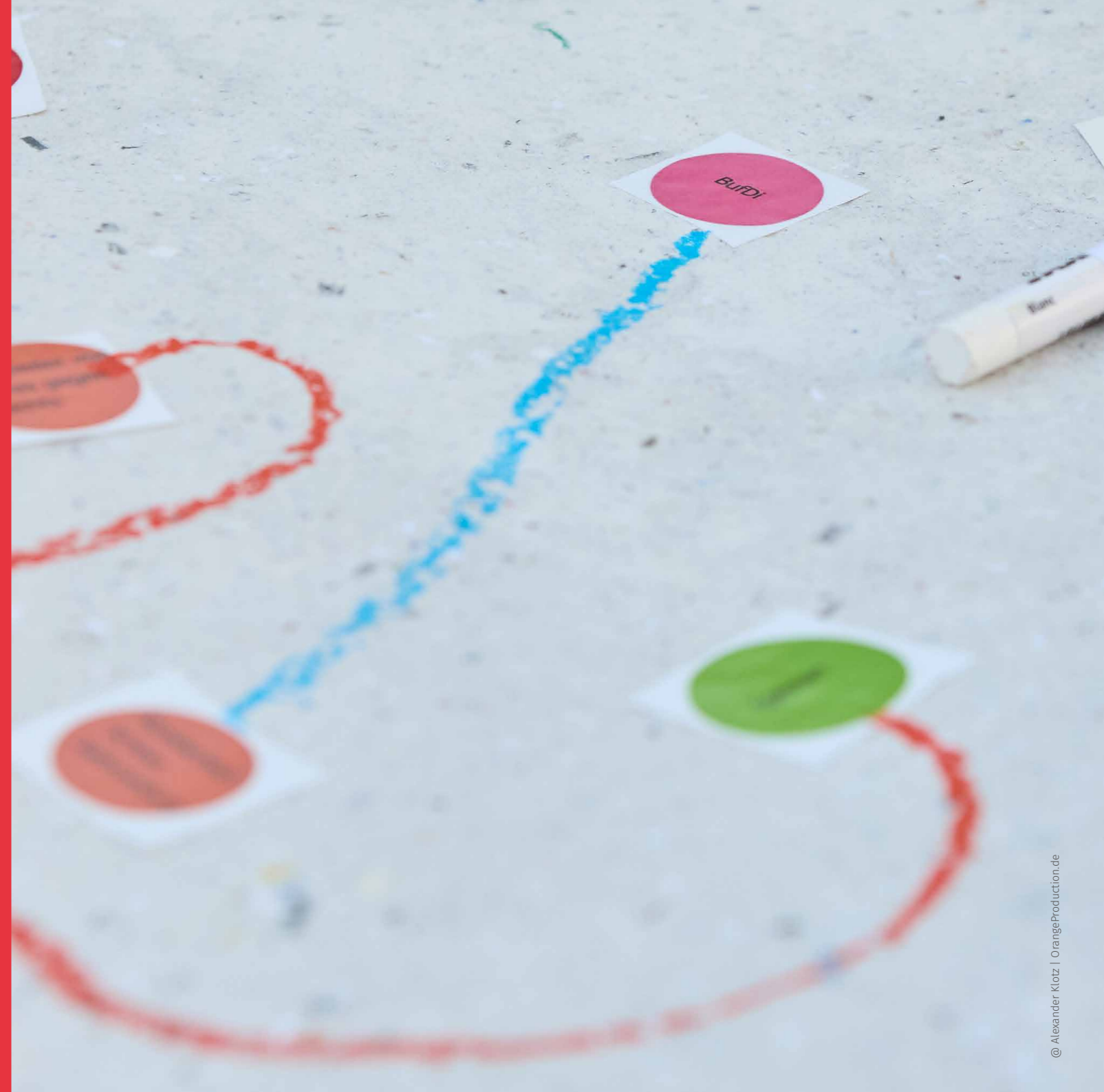


# PAPIERNETZ



LISA MARIA BAIER

# PAPIERNETZ





# dialog city

## DIALOG CITY

### A HOLISTIC APPROACH TOWARDS A DIGITAL CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN EUROPEAN CITIES

Digital transformation is more of a mindset than a purely technical innovation. Hence the overall goal of this project proposal is to create a socially inclusive, environmentally friendly, and economically sustainable urban digital environment.

By developing new practices on how to connect digital innovation directly to citizens' physical participation, DIALOG CITY aims at contributing to increase access to culture through a dialogical approach. Co-creation is at the core of our project idea encompassing a CITIZEN ARCHIVE PLATFORM for the cultural heritage sector and an innovative design thinking toolkit on FUTURE LITERACY. Three HYBRID FESTIVALS serve as physical and digital cultural platforms to reach diverse audiences.

An ART FOR PUBLIC RESIDENCY PROGRAMME invites artists to develop ideas for urban interventions dealing with local or global topics that are of great significance for the respective urban society based on participatory approach.

The CITIZEN ARCHIVE PLATFORM is a web tool to archive all kinds of data-based objects of various citizen groups, direct engagement and mediation with the audience in the interpretation, communication and presentation of cultural heritage will be widened.

The creation of a FUTURE LITERACY toolkit and the subsequent implementation of workshops by trained artists, the methodology has outstanding potential to give citizens and stakeholders a compass in the face of the increasing complexity of our globally interconnected world.

DIALOG CITY builds partnerships between small and medium-size cities in five European countries – Austria, France, Germany, Greece and Italy - based on collaboration comprising city museums, city archives, cultural organisations, urban activists, social architects as well as training facilities.

This way, it includes different viewpoints and creates the basis of humane digitization and ongoing 'user engagement'. And it enables a sustainable network where creative solutions are continuously developed in the most diverse areas of society.



# FUTURE FESTIVAL AND ARTIST RESIDENCY IN ASCHAFFENBURG

Early July 2025, Aschaffenburg hosted the FUTURE FESTIVAL which featured workshops, performances, a three-month artist residency, and participatory processes focusing on digital participation and sustainable urban development. Events took place at various city venues with local artists, municipal staff, and interested residents participating. Highlights included a Game Jam that playfully explored the city of the future, practical workshops on private digital archiving (Citizen Archive Platform), so-called “Future Workshops” drawing on Futures Literacy methodologies, an AI theatre piece, and a relaxed “Coffee Lecture.”

The FUTURE FESTIVAL opened on July 3, near the Aschaffenburg Castle. A temporary pavilion had been set up in May 2025 as the central location of the artist residency; highly visible and publicly present, it served as an analogue meeting place and creative experimental space for the artist in residence, Lisa Maria Baier, who tackled the topic “Women Workers in the Paper Industry.” With the pavilion, the digital culture project DIALOG CITY found its place in the heart of Aschaffenburg and its citizens. In the FUTURE PAVILION and elsewhere, Baier provided a forum for citizen participation, discussed ideas, and contributed to the living dialogue space.

The results of the artist residency could be explored until mid-September 2025 in the exhibition “DIALOG CITY – Shape Your City!” at the City and Abbey Archives. The exhibition also showcased, for the first time, all of DIALOG CITY’s activity areas in a concise and interactive form. The pavilion—together with the artist residency—embodied what DIALOG CITY aims to be: a connecting space between digital innovation and analogue togetherness.

The entire FUTURE FESTIVAL was the highlight of this year’s Aschaffenburg Culture Days, themed “Transformation.” The festival concluded with Museums Night on July 5, when Schönborner Hof opened its doors to welcome the numerous guests. During the musical performances by local and internationally renowned bands, visitors could also view the exhibition “DIALOG CITY – Shape Your City” and take away ideas for the future. More than 1200 visitors had the opportunity to learn about the project structure, admire the striking “Wall of Mondovi,” and gain inspiration for what lies ahead.



@ Lisa Maria Baier / VG Bild-Kunst

# PAPIERNETZ

Aschaffenburg has a rich tradition in paper manufacturing and processing—an important part of the city’s cultural and economic identity. During her art residency there, Baier explored the historical, industrial, and social contexts of paper history—and discovered a notable absence in the city archives: records about women’s work in the paper industry are scarce.

This lack of documentation inspired Baier to intervene creatively. She responded by producing photographic artifacts that depict women at work in the factories, using both specially trained AI models and her own image stock to reconstruct what was missing from historical records.

At first glance, these images resemble authentic photographs from the past, capturing women’s roles in the paper industry. The faces evoke August Sander’s early 1920s portraits and his archive representing a cross-section of German society. Yet upon closer inspection, it becomes clear that Baier intentionally creates a point of reflection - bridging analogue history with digital innovation.

Why were women in industry so rarely recorded? What mechanisms contributed to their stories being overlooked? By what standards was historical relevance determined at the time?

It is especially against the backdrop of the new image of working women in 1920s German metropolises, marked by independence, modernity, and emancipation, that this archival silence is particularly striking. After World War I, many women entered professional life as office employees, secretaries, saleswomen, or factory workers. They dressed fashionably, wore short hair and comfortable clothing, participated actively in public life, and sought independence both financially and personally. This new ideal was promoted by numerous fashion magazines and symbolized both progress and resistance.

Through her work, Baier draws attention to what is often absent from archives, raising fundamental questions about how women’s lives are represented in our collective memory.



@ Leon Klein



# BETWEEN PAPER AND PIXELS

**LISA MARIA BAIER'S LIVING ARCHIVES**

**BY JOHANNES HONECK**

**DIRECTOR KUNSTHALLE JESUITENKIRCHE / CHRISTIAN SCHAD MUSEUM ASCHAFFENBURG**

Lisa Maria Baier's starting point is the idea of the archive, understood as an open system that must constantly be re-questioned. "Archives store knowledge, but also exclusions. I re-order existing documents, contextualize them from my point of view. It's about transparency, openness, and charging reality with new meanings." In this way she produces works that are simultaneously research, artistic transformation, and social practice.

Her biography is shaped by social upheavals. As a student she was active in activist scenes that saw art as a tool for making injustices visible. "Art became for me a means to expose grievances and to open up new spaces for thought and action." Experiences such as the protests in Budapest in 2014 or the demonstrations in Dresden against extreme right-wing marches have decisively shaped her artistic thinking.

Alongside her individual practice, she is a co-founder of the off-space BIAS PROJECTS in Dresden, a platform for FLINTA artists that promotes collective modes of production and new discourses. Baier works predominantly with photography, video, and installation formats.

Characteristic of her practice is that Baier does not treat digital technologies as an end in themselves. Whether visualizations, AI, or AR elements, they always serve to question the conditions of memory and visibility. Analog materiality and digital structures enter a dialogue in her work that remeasures the relationship between documentation and fiction, between collective memory and individual experience.

For her project "PapierNetz," developed during the Dialog City Residency 2025 in Aschaffenburg, she devised an exemplary working method. Aschaffenburg, known as the "city of coloured papers," is deeply connected to the history of paper production. Baier drew on this tradition and linked it with questions of sustainability and digitization.

The project rested on three pillars: first, digital data visualization with Gephi, through which historical networks became visible; second, participatory paper-making workshops in which citizens brought their own wastepaper; third, the connection of analogue material and digital structures by printing the network diagrams onto the hand-made paper. The results brought past and future, materiality and digitality together into an installation that was both sensual and reflective.

"I am particularly fascinated by participatory projects because they are open and unpredictable. They force flexibility, encourage creative solutions, and understand art as a space for dialogue." Throughout her practice Baier remains consistently research oriented. Her works demonstrate that history is not a closed legacy, but a process carried by many voices. For her, participation is more than a buzzword. "It means questioning one's own perspective. When people with different backgrounds are involved, new perspectives emerge that make art lively and dynamic."

In this way Lisa Maria Baier combines artistic practice with social participation, understanding art as an open laboratory that re-examines cultural heritage and experiments with images of the future.





**Lisa Maria Baier**

# THE ARTIST

*The starting point of participatory practices can be the intention to make contact.*

Lisa Maria Baier is a contemporary German artist specializing in visual art. Born in 1988 in Görlitz, she studied at the Dresden University of Fine Arts (HfBK) and the Hungarian University of Fine Arts in Budapest (MKE). Baier primarily uses video and photography to create collections that are documented in various forms.

A particular focus of her work lies in participatory practices, in which third parties provide material for the creation of artistic archives through open calls, requests, and commissions. The artist uses these archives for her filmic-documentary works. Her pieces have been exhibited at renowned institutions including the Bundeskunsthalle Bonn, the German Hygiene Museum, and the Kunsthaus Dresden.

Baier succeeds in expressing the ambivalences, discomfort, and doubts of today's younger generation in their engagement with cultural heritage. This becomes visible in her video works and spatial installations, which reveal the ongoing process of negotiating the significance of motifs and images from a personal archive.

Lisa Maria Baier lives and works in Dresden.

[www.lisamariabaier.de](http://www.lisamariabaier.de)

# dialog city

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# INTRODUCTION

By Eric Leiderer, Mayor of Aschaffenburg

DIALOG CITY is an EU project coordinated by the Aschaffenburg City and Abbey Archives in consultation with our European partners in Austria, France, Italy and Greece. The people and the city of Aschaffenburg are particularly proud of this project!

## **Digital transformation as an opportunity**

Digitalization has long since influenced our everyday lives. It is changing our work habits, our communication, our mobility, and our social interactions. It offers enormous opportunities but also presents us with major challenges. This is precisely why it is invaluable that with the DIALOG CITY project - the name of the city of Aschaffenburg's digital strategy - we are embarking on a path that shapes digital transformation in a people-centered, inclusive way, and through constant dialogue with citizens.

DIALOG CITY is much more than a digital project: It is a social laboratory that focuses on the people in the cities. Our goal is to shape digitalization in such a way that it benefits all citizens - regardless of age, origin, educational level, or social status. Digitalization must always make people's lives easier and enrich them culturally.

## **Community and participation**

It is therefore a particular concern of the project to focus on the entire urban community. We want to break down barriers, enable participation, and promote cultural diversity as a strength. Low-threshold offerings and open (analog) exchange are the keys to overcoming digital hurdles and leaving no one behind. Above all, the voices of older people or socially marginalized groups, who are otherwise less heard, should be actively included.

## **Dialogue as a driver of innovation**

As the project name suggests, dialogue is at the heart of DIALOG CITY. Digital transformation is not a process imposed from above. It thrives on the active participation of citizens. That's why we in Aschaffenburg invite everyone to contribute their ideas, wishes, and even their criticism. Open exchange fosters creativity, and mutual understanding can foster trust and acceptance. Digital and analog dialogue is the engine that drives groundbreaking innovations and makes cities future-proof.

## **A strong network for Aschaffenburg**

The City of Aschaffenburg sees itself not only as a project coordinator. We want to provide a digital infrastructure through which ideas and initiatives can flourish. DIALOG CITY opens up new opportunities for effective collaboration between cities, associations, and institutions in the European countries. We sincerely hope that DIALOG CITY has laid a solid foundation for further, future-oriented collaborations.



# DIALOG CITY

## A HOLISTIC APPROACH TOWARDS A DIGITAL CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN EUROPEAN CITIES

Digital transformation is more of a mindset than a purely technical innovation. Hence the overall goal of this project proposal is to create a socially inclusive, environmentally friendly, and economically sustainable urban digital environment.

By developing new practices on how to connect digital innovation directly to citizens' physical participation, DIALOG CITY aims at contributing to increase access to culture through a dialogical approach. Co-creation is at the core of our project idea encompassing a CITIZEN ARCHIVE PLATFORM for the cultural heritage sector and an innovative design thinking toolkit on FUTURE LITERACY. Four FESTIVALS serve as physical and digital cultural platforms to reach diverse audiences.

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The CITIZEN ARCHIVE PLATFORM is a web tool to archive all kinds of data-based objects of various citizen groups, direct engagement and mediation with the audience in the interpretation, communication and presentation of cultural heritage will be widened.

The creation of a FUTURE LITERACY toolkit and the subsequent implementation of workshops by trained artists, the methodology has outstanding potential to give citizens and stakeholders a compass in the face of the increasing complexity of our globally interconnected world.

DIALOG CITY builds partnerships between small and medium-size cities in five European countries – Austria, France, Germany, Greece and Italy - based on collaboration comprising city museums, city archives, cultural organisations, urban activists, social architects as well as training facilities.

This way, it includes different viewpoints and creates the basis of a humane-centred digitization and ongoing 'user engagement'. This also enables a sustainable network where creative solutions are continuously developed in the most diverse areas of society.



## THE UN-CONFERENCE IN ASCHAFFENBURG LAUNCHING THE PROJECT

On September 23, 2022, the city of Aschaffenburg played host to the Un-Conference (or Bar Camp) of the EU-funded DIALOG CITY project. The Un-Conference served as the official kick-off event for the project: A holistic approach towards a digital cultural infrastructure in European cities. The one-day event, held at the Aschaffenburg University of Applied Sciences, brought together international experts, project partners from five European countries, stakeholders, decision-makers, artists, and citizens, both in-person and digitally, to discuss the future of citizen-oriented and participatory digitalization.

Unlike traditional conferences with rigid agendas, the Un-Conference adopted an open-space format, emphasizing critical discussion, exchange and networking. The event began with an official launch of the EU project, attended by key figures including the Bavarian State Minister for Digital Affairs, Judith Gerlach, the Mayor and Digital Officer of the City of Aschaffenburg, Eric Leiderer, and the president of the University of Applied Sciences, Eva-Maria Beck-Meuth. The project's central premise – that digital transformation is a mindset shift rather than purely a technical innovation – was highlighted.

The following sessions facilitated open dialogue on diverse themes such as Participation and Citizen-Oriented Digitization, Urban Development, Art and Public Space, Future Literacy (as an innovative design thinking toolkit), Personal Digital Archiving and Digital Rights. The discussions confirmed the importance of the project's key pillars: a Citizen Archive Platform, the methodology of Future Literacy, hybrid festivals and an Art for public residency programme.

DIALOG CITY is designed to encourage dialogue, participation, and cultural innovation in urban environments. The project seeks to promote intercultural understanding and develop new models of civic engagement. Archives, libraries and other cultural institutions are going to play an active role here, so the tenor of many speakers.

For these reasons the Un-Conference marked a promising beginning for the DIALOG CITY project. The proceedings were visually documented by a Graphic Recorder, which served as a creative, immediate summary of the discussions. By bringing together a diverse array of organizations, experts, and citizens in a collaborative setting, the event set an approach to a digital culture that serves people and enhances the quality of life for everyone.



# DIALOG CITY PARTNERSHIP

The DIALOG CITY consortium brought together seven project partners from five European countries, uniting a diverse range of complementary expertise. This collaborative team was instrumental in successfully advancing the project's objectives, supported by two associated partners who joined for key project events.

The partnership's foundation included two pioneering city archives: the City and Abbey Archive of Aschaffenburg (DE), one of northern Bavaria's largest archives, and the Culture-Historical Museum of the City of Graz (AT). Both institutions are recognized for their leadership in participatory approaches, accessibility, and the use of digital tools. They jointly led the development of the project's Citizen Archive Platform.

Other core partners took ownership of specific programmatic pillars. The civil society organization CulturePolis (GR), with its strong record in participatory methods, collaborated with two Italian vocational training centres – CIAC, Centre for Vocational Training and Employment Services and CFP Cemon, a Vocational and Educational Training centre operating in the southern Piedmont - to develop and deliver the futures literacy programme, Our Common Future.

The realm of public engagement was driven by partners specializing in art and urban design. Cirko Vertigo (IT), a leading contemporary circus organization, partnered with the Commune di Mondovì to produce the first Hybrid Festival in 2023. A second Hybrid Festival was hosted in 2024 by the City Museum of Graz in close collaboration with the Graz city archive. Meanwhile, the creative urban planners and social architects of Association Quatorze (FR) implemented the first Future Festival in Montpellier in 2025, in collaboration with the Festival des Architectures Vives.

Acting as the Lead Partner for this four-year European journey was the City of Aschaffenburg. The project was framed by two landmark events: the DIALOG CITY Un-conference in 2022, held with the Aschaffenburg University of Applied Sciences, and the final conference, „Where do we go from here?“ in late 2025. The City and Abbey Archive Aschaffenburg also organized a second Future Festival in Aschaffenburg in 2025, engaging numerous local collaborators.

This strategic fusion of archival science, education, artistic innovation, and urban planning expertise generated a sustainable impact, contributing to the development of a more holistic urban digital infrastructure.



# CITIZEN ARCHIVE PLATFORM

## ARCHIVING OUR CITY

Within this work package various methods to support Personal Digital Archiving were developed and implemented. The centrepiece is the CITIZEN ARCHIVE PLATFORM (CAP), a solution that currently holds a unique position in Europe. It is a web-based platform that supports the process of transferring personal digital data to an archive or other cultural heritage institution (e.g. a museum). On this WordPress-based website, private individuals can upload data, and archivists can curate this data and, after a positive assessment, download it as standardized information packages. The upload process is managed by a custom-programmed plugin, with data management controlled via an SQL database.

A series of workshops with experts as well as citizens in Graz and Aschaffenburg were conducted to gather requirements. The archiving and provision of the submitted data are handled by separate infrastructure presupposed in the respective archive. By the end of the project, data had been collected using the platform as part of collection campaigns in Graz and Aschaffenburg, which will now become digital archival material.

Furthermore, courses and a board game were developed within this work package. They teach essential storage methods, key points for digitizing documents and photographs, strategies for data selection and reduction, and even estate planning. The focus is on empowering citizens to acquire core digital competencies.

All developed software components and archival methods were presented and discussed at professional conferences during the project. The code, along with technical and organizational documentation for adapting the Citizen Archive Platform into one's own infrastructure (Transition Framework), will be provided longterm on GitHub.

The project results were presented at three festivals in Graz, Aschaffenburg, and Montpellier, as well as at various professional conferences in Europe and beyond, and through individual meetings. This successfully inspired a number of cultural heritage institutions to prepare or plan the adoption of the platform into their own organizations, with these archives and museums signing a Letter of Intent.

ARCHIVING OUR CITY offers completely new and innovative approach for the preservation and archiving of personal digital data in the future.

### Digitale Nachlässe

Könnten wir die Geschichte des Ersten Weltkrieges in die Gedanken und Gefühle der Betroffenen, die sie in Tagebüchern festgehalten haben, fassen? Wie könnten wir die Grausamkeit der Verfolgungen in der NS-Zeit ohne Rücksicht auf Verluste in ein Tagebuch von Anne Frank nachvollziehen?

Persönliche Überlieferungen sind für die Geschichtsforschung aber auch die Vermittlung von Geschichte in Museen, Schulen, Literatur, (darstellender) Kunst etc. essentiell. Aber auch auf der individuellen Ebene ist es von unschätzbarem Wert, die Aufzeichnungen von Familienmitgliedern weiterzugeben.

Schon seit den 1980er Jahren enthalten Nachlässe zunehmend auch Disketten, CDs, Festplatten oder andere Datenträger mit wichtigen Informationen zu den betroffenen Personen. Dies stellt die Nachkommen gleichermaßen wie Kulturerbeinstitutionen zunehmend vor große Herausforderungen. Neue Lösungsansätze sind gefragt und werden laufend interdisziplinär erarbeitet.

Allen schon einmal passiert – der eigene Daten: Das Handy fällt ins Wasser, das Foto wird von Viren angegriffen und die Fotos sowie die wichtige Abschlussarbeiten des letzten Kurs sind verloren, oder ein Account einer beliebigen Social-Media-Plattform gesperrt und die hochgeladenen Daten sind weg.

Die Sicherheit der eigenen Daten ist nicht selbstverständlich, egal ob sich diese auf einem eigenen Gerät, in einer Cloudanwendung oder bei privaten Anbietern befinden. Archive, Bibliotheken und Museen haben deshalb verschiedene Bildungsformate entwickelt, um Grundwissen zur Speicherung und langfristiger Verfügbarmachung der eigenen Daten für sich selbst, aber auch für zukünftige Generationen zu vermitteln.

### Dialog City

Inmitten der Corona-Pandemie saßen alle im Homeoffice, stellten sich Fragen: Wie wollen und können wir in Zukunft miteinander zusammenleben? Welche Rolle kann Kultur zwischen den Verwaltungen und Bürgern in Europa einnehmen? Wie als Gesellschaft auf unvorhergesehene Herausforderungen, wie sie die Pandemie erlegte, vorbereiten?



# OUR COMMON FUTURE

## CREATING A FUTURES LITERACY TOOLKIT

At the heart of DIALOG CITY's ambition to strengthen democratic innovation and civic participation lies the Futures Literacy Programme. Based on the UNESCO methodology of Futures Literacy Labs (FLLs), this programme enabled citizens to explore and imagine alternative futures for their cities – and their lives within them – through artistic, participatory, and locally grounded workshops.

The programme began by training a group of artists and cultural practitioners as mediators of Futures Literacy. Equipped with creative methodologies and facilitation skills, they became key actors in engaging local communities. Their dual role – as artists and civic facilitators – helped bridge imagination with participation, ensuring the workshops were both inclusive and deeply rooted in local cultural contexts.

Between May and September 2025, those trained artists delivered 18 workshops across five European countries, engaging people of all ages and backgrounds in cities such as Aschaffenburg, Thessaloniki, Patras, Graz, Montpellier, Paris, Mondovì, Torino, and Grugliasco. Each workshop followed a structured process of collective imagination: revealing assumptions, building alternative scenarios, reframing the present, and co-designing local actions. Facilitators combined cultural tools with anticipation exercises to create welcoming, creative spaces for deep reflection and playful experimentation.

Futures Literacy, in this context, is not about predicting the future – it is about learning how to use the future differently. Through this approach, DIALOG CITY empowered local communities to develop a stronger sense of agency, expand their capacity to navigate complexity, and build bridges between citizens and decision-makers. The use of visual storytelling, speculative design, and collaborative scenario building strengthened emotional connection and intergenerational exchange.

The programme also resulted in a practical Toolkit and a Training Guide, ensuring its impact can be sustained and transferred beyond the project's lifetime. Most importantly, it demonstrated how cultural participation and future thinking can help shape inclusive, human-centred smart cities.



## DIALOG CITY FESTIVALS

The first of the Hybrid Festivals took place in Mondovì, Italy (2023), bringing together artistic experimentation, participatory creation, and digital connection. Over three days, the event combined livestreamed performances and collaborative workshops with citizens, blending physical presence and virtual engagement across borders. A highlight was a 24-hour performance format that unfolded throughout the city, encouraging both local participation and remote viewing.

In Graz, the second Hybrid Festival (2024) explored the intersections of memory, technology, and civic imagination. Over several days, the programme delved into themes of personal digital archiving and collective foresight, inviting participants to reflect on how cities preserve and project their identities into the future. The festival culminated in launching the Citizen Archive Platform, a collaborative tool designed to safeguard shared urban histories while enabling citizens to actively contribute to their evolving story.

The Hybrid Festivals evolved into Future Festivals in 2025, marking a shift toward more tangible, community-rooted engagements. In Montpellier, this new format took shape within a historic building in the old town, where an abandoned youth hostel was reimagined as a space for cultural renewal and temporary housing. Within this restored setting, artistic residencies and architectural interventions came together under the theme of sensorial pleasure and shared experience, highlighting the link between urban revitalization, creativity, and social inclusion.

The Future Festival in Aschaffenburg continued this trajectory by introducing a temporary pavilion near the city's historic core. Serving as both an artistic workspace and a public meeting place, the pavilion became a hub for dialogue between residents, artists, and researchers. Exhibitions, performances, and citizen-led discussions centered on themes of transformation, industry, and community participation, transforming the site into a living laboratory of ideas for the future city.

## THE FUTURE PAVILION

stands as a lasting symbol of these encounters – an adaptable 15 m<sup>2</sup> structure shaped by principles of reciprocity and shared creation. It offers a space for gathering, exchanging, and celebrating togetherness. Designed for assembly and reuse, it can be reconstructed in different contexts, embodying both sustainability and connection. Over time, its modular wooden frame may evolve into a greenhouse, a nurturing extension where ideas and relationships continue to grow. Economical in resources yet rich in meaning, the pavilion reflects the essence of the Future Festivals: open, collaborative, and rooted in the shared desire to shape a more connected urban future.



# DIALOG CITY SHAPE YOUR CITY!

**An exhibition on display from June 13 to September 14, 2025 in Aschaffenburg**

The Aschaffenburg City and Abbey Archive organized an exhibition about the project DIALOG CITY, which presented the organization, development, and activities of the initiative through images, texts, and films — from the hybrid festivals in Mondovì and Graz to the creation of a digital citizens' archive and the design of a Future Literacy Methodology.

Officially part of the Aschaffenburg Cultural Days and the DIALOG CITY Future Festival, the exhibition gave more than 1,500 visitors the opportunity to learn about the project and its participants, reflect on the digital transformation of cities, and take away valuable insights.

The exhibition began with the forward-looking guiding question: “How do we want to live in the future?” Its concept was primarily based on providing insights into the project’s work and organization, while also highlighting the challenges of digitization in the cultural sector. The explanatory texts, enriched with visual material, described the partner organizations and the project’s individual components — such as the festivals, the Citizen Archive Platform, and the Futures Literacy Toolkit.

The exhibition also emphasized the local dimension of the project in Aschaffenburg: it presented the city’s digital strategy, the Digitalladen, and digital initiatives such as heimat:hub. A map illustrated the connections between the project’s partner organizations, spanning from Greece to France and from Germany to Austria and Italy.

Another focal point of the exhibition was the four artist residencies in Mondovì, Graz, Aschaffenburg, and Montpellier. The impressive “Wall of Mondovì”, created by Anne Fehres and Luke Conroy, adorned the exhibition space, as did the AI-generated fabric panels by Lisa Maria Baier, which made visible the women workers of Aschaffenburg’s paper industry. The “Salt of Montpellier”, developed by culinary artist Alexandre Benetas-Ottobrini during his residency, was also featured. In addition, videos documented the artists’ working processes.

A prototype developed during the Game Jam at the Future Festival (July 2025) also found its way into the exhibition space, inviting visitors to engage playfully with ideas about the cities of the future. In an interactive corner, guests could reflect on the future roles of archivists.

Overall, the exhibition demonstrated how a culture of dialogue can shape and guide the creative and sustainable development of European cities. In doing so, it helped raise awareness of social and cultural developments – such as the use of artificial intelligence – taking place across Europe.

# DIALOG CITY FINAL CONFERENCE

## WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

On 5 and 6 November 2025, the DIALOG CITY consortium gathered online for its final conference, entitled Where Do We Go From Here?, marking the conclusion of our Creative Europe-funded journey. Partners, artists, researchers and citizens from across Europe came together - online and physical - to reflect on four years of collaboration and exchange - and to imagine what might follow.

The discussions revisited the key outcomes of the project: the Citizen Archive Platform, empowering communities to preserve and share their digital heritage; the Our Common Future Methodology, supporting civic creativity and critical thinking; and the Dialog City Festivals and Artist Residencies, which brought art and participation into urban spaces across Europe.

Beyond celebrating achievements, the conference looked ahead - exploring how cultural innovation, digital participation and artistic practice can continue to shape more connected and inclusive European cities.

## SUSTAINABILITY IN A NUTSHELL

The sustainability strategy of DIALOG CITY builds on three interconnected pillars designed to live on beyond the project's funding period. The Citizen Archive Platform (CAP) will remain active through institutional anchoring in partner cities, offering communities a free and accessible tool to preserve their digital heritage, integrated into public archival services.

The Futures Literacy Toolkit will continue through a "train-the-trainers" network of artists and educators, open-access dissemination, and partnerships with schools and cultural organisations to embed future thinking in education. The Dialog City Festivals and Art for Public Residencies could evolve into a replicable model for other cities, supported by a "Dialog City Network" sharing resources, formats, and experiences.

Together, these pillars form a transferable framework enabling small and medium-sized European cities to foster cultural participation, imagination and collaboration - ensuring the spirit of DIALOG CITY continues to grow.



### IMPRINT

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