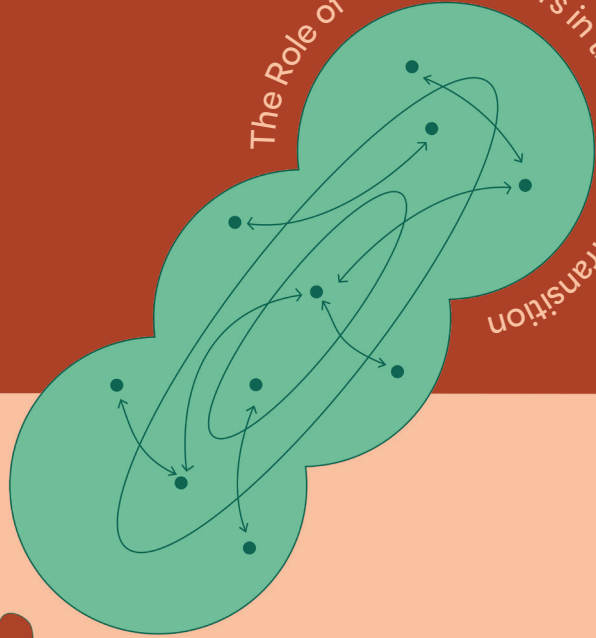


CULTIVATED TERRITORIES

Cultivate as Landscape Engineering

The Role of Cultural Actors in the Territorial Transition





**MINISTÈRE
DE L'EUROPE
ET DES AFFAIRES
ÉTRANGÈRES**

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Agence des Villes et Territoires
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Foreword

“Art and culture can become key players in territorial planning, just like urban planners or developers, in order to support transitions.” (Maud le Floc’h, at the Vitrolles Open Forum, May 2025). AVITEM (Agency for Sustainable Mediterranean Cities and Territories), as lead partner, has set up the “Territoires Cultivés” project with this in mind: culture as a driver for territorial transformation .

Launched in October 2023, the project echoes the principles of the New European Bauhaus, which combines aesthetics, sustainability and inclusion in territorial transformation. It forms part of the “Clés en main” call for decentralised cooperation projects launched by the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs.

It brings together three French local authorities—the Collectivité de Corse, the City of Nice and the City of Vitrolles— with the Metropolitan Municipality of Izmir in Turkey.

This project has made it possible to the establishment of a partnership with the École de Condé, with the aim of giving an operational and educational dimension to the challenges and prospects for action discussed during the various open forums. Students on the school’s Master’s programme in “Research, Design, Innovation and Development’ were thus tasked with devising demonstration projects illustrating the link between culture and territorial transition.

“Territoires Cultivés” is therefore a project for the sharing of expertise between several French and Turkish local authorities –led by AVITEM—and for the educational and professional application of these ideas.

Each partner organised the following:

- Nice Forum: 28-29 November 2024
- Vitrolles Forum: 23-24 May 2025
- Corsica Forum: 19-20 June 2025
- Izmir Symposium: 4-5 September 2025

The aim of these events was to foster dialogue between professionals in the fields of the environment, urban planning and culture, and to draw on the practical experience of these four local authorities to collectively produce guidelines and commitments that formed the basis of the “Manifesto of Mediterranean Cities of Culture and Ecology”. This Manifesto, co-drafted with the support of the group of associated experts and the AVITEM project team alongside the partner stakeholders, was signed at the Izmir Symposium and is intended to serve as a framework for a network of territories and stakeholders, designed to expand to include as many signatories as possible.

The programme is therefore part of a process that will extend beyond the current project, the ultimate aim being that the network thus established can thrive and develop, thereby ensuring the continuity and evolution of initiatives beyond the project’s boundaries, notably through a Cultivated Territories II project.

This project will therefore have enabled:

- to deepen reflection on culture as a driver of territorial transition by fostering concrete links between culture and planning for sustainable development;
- to collectively draft a Manifesto, a commitment endorsed and signed by the partner local authorities and open to all. This document invites cities and institutions to cooperate, integrate cultural approaches

into planning and mobilise artists, residents and local authorities to build collective initiatives;

- to identify concrete examples of cultural and planning projects in the partner regions with a view to establishing living labs;
- to use this identification process to prepare applications for the next phase of the programme, Territoires Cultivés II, the aim of which will be the operational implementation of these living lab initiatives.

In parallel, the project also involves producing transferable booklets that serve as “guides to collective action”. These documents are co-produced by the AVITEM project team and the expert group “POLAU and associated experts”, comprising: Maud le Floc’h (cultural planner and director of POLAU), Jean-François Chougnnet (historian and cultural administrator), Valérie Astesano (director of culture and heritage, Vitrolles), Amine Benaïssa (architect-urban planner, consultant), and with the support of Cleo Smits (cultural operator).

These publications build on practical experience and discussions arising from the forums and the Symposium.

They are structured around four booklets:

- **Booklet 1: Mediterranean culture as a card to play**

In the context of international reconfiguration: how can the Mediterranean’s long cultural history be a determining factor in the region’s future positioning?

- **Booklet 2: Culture as territorial engineering**

How can the cultural sector contribute to the ecological transition of territories?

- **Booklet 3: Towards a laboratory of cultural projects and transitions**

This booklet outlines the design of experimental projects in each partner territory, providing exemplary illustrations of collaboration between actors in territorial transition (planning, ecology) and cultural actors.

- **Booklet 4: Feedback from the forums**

A summary of the round-table discussions, exchanges and opening addresses



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Introduction

What if art and culture were “geniuses” that could be harnessed in terms of defining, diagnosing and open-endedly designing an urban planning or development project? Can their original frameworks of thought help shed light on the contemporary challenges facing territories?

In the field of territorial transformation, development and urban planning, new practices are emerging in France and across Europe.

Faced with increasingly complex local challenges, mediation processes are becoming a standard approach at every stage of projects. Culture and creative expression play a part in re-establishing dialogue to initiate transitions. Development projects, regeneration schemes, rewilding, the re-qualification of public spaces, renaturation, etc. must now be able to bring together the various stakeholders and go beyond simple consultation processes

“Building protects through culture”

These practices, known as cultural urbanism, tactical urbanism or relational urbanism, meet the needs of project owners, local authorities and their operators. The latter find it difficult to envisage a project without first establishing the terms of its ownership. Engage deeply with issues of transition enables them to better “take charge” of them. The philosopher Bruno Latour thus evokes the notion of “concernment” (“*Where to land?*”)

Every act of change requires associated narratives and imaginaries. Cultural approaches deploy methods of *in situ creation*, forms of cultural action, artist residencies and public events; they are, in a sense, a form of “soft engineering” that enables a shared history. Nurtured by the various protagonists, this shared history helps to shape the project to come.

PART I
DEFINITIONS AND UPDATES



In the field of territorial transformation, planning and urbanism, traditional methods are now showing their limitations. The growing complexity of the challenges—ecological emergency, social tensions, scarcity of resources—demands new modes of action. As Amine Benaïssa pointed out at the Vitrolles Forum: *“Projects fail less because of a lack of plans than because of a lack of connections”*. This is why mediation, dialogue and the imagination are becoming essential prerequisites for any territorial project.

In this context, culture proves to be a strategic resource. It is not limited to accompanying transformations but acts as a central lever, generating narrative, sensory experiences and new ways of cooperating: *“creating culture before creating a project”*.

1. The arts and culture sector challenged by societal challenges

To avoid any ambiguity, it is necessary to recall the distinction between art and culture.

- Art refers to an act of creation, an individual or collective aesthetic expression. It can open up “meta-levels” of reflection, bring about shifts in conceptual frameworks, and offer what Paul Ricoeur called a “weaving of knowledge into a narrative”.
- Culture, on the other hand, encompasses a set of shared practices, representations and knowledge. Public policies have long focused on supporting art (creation, dissemination, heritage). Today, these policies are being questioned: their effectiveness, their audiences and their methods of action are no longer sufficient to meet current challenges.

New practices are emerging: street arts, **site-specific creations, contextual arts**. They no longer position the work as a “solitary object” isolated in the public space, but as a relational device, involving residents, associations and users. The protocol of Les Nouveaux Commanditaires is an illustration of this: citizens become co-authors of the artistic commission, overturning the top-down and authoritarian logic.

Furthermore, the rise of **cultural rights** (a central theme of the forum in Corsica) places culture within a democratic and horizontal framework. Everyone has the right not only to access works, but also to the capacity to create, interpret and share. In this sense, culture helps to co-produce meaning and a sense of belonging.

Today, climate upheavals and their effects on people and organisations are disrupting behaviours, communities and ways of life alike. Cultural ecology centres and initiatives combining the arts with transitions are emerging and are being invited to take part in debates and transformations.

These changes are bringing the culture of the planning professions closer together. As one elected representative pointed out at the Corsica Forum: *“We can no longer undertake regional planning projects without incorporating a social and cultural dimension from the very outset.”*

2. Changes in spatial planning

In the field of spatial planning, the upheavals are just as profound. Mediterranean cities, for example, are facing rapid urbanisation, dwindling resources and climate uncertainties. The traditional concept of “territory” or “landscape” is being re-examined in the light of **the Anthropocene**: an era in which human actions are irreversibly altering the environment.

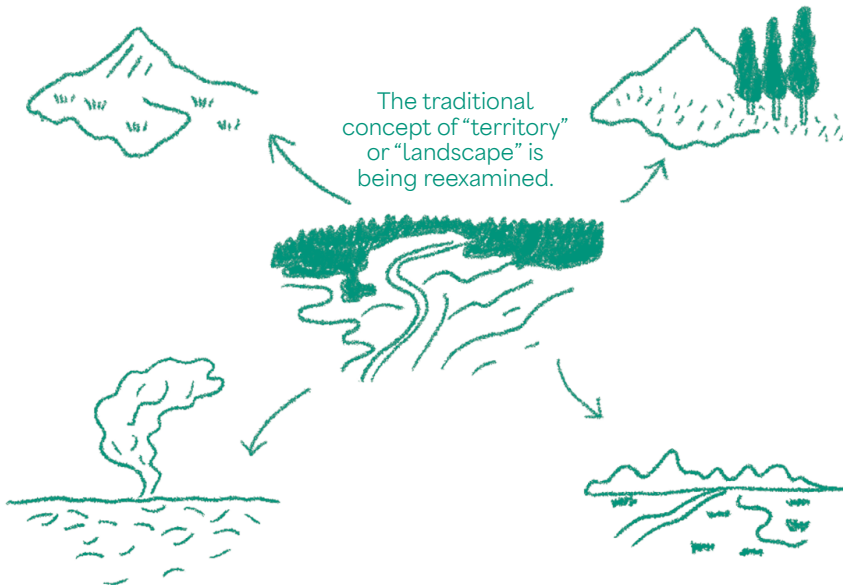
Traditional urban planning methods (zoning, rigid planning, heavy infrastructure) are appearing increasingly ill-suited. They provoke protests and conflicts, as they struggle to incorporate social and ecological complexity. As Martin Vanier notes, *“it is no longer just a question of resilience but of **connection**, which aims to forge deep bonds between individuals, communities and living environments”* (Martin Vanier, *Le temps des liens*, Editions de l’Aube, 2024).

Local authorities are therefore called upon to:

- open up planning processes to more **collaborative** approaches,
- develop shared narratives to give meaning to transitions,
- broaden the circle of stakeholders involved.

This approach aligns with the European tradition of Baukultur, “the art of building” as a cultural act, which connects geography, materials, craftsmanship and social values. It emphasises architecture that is sensitive to uses, emotions and contexts, contributing to a collective appropriation of space.

New paradigms are emerging in urban planning practice, encompassing health, metabolism, reversibility, the circular approach, and the coexistence of humans and non-humans... As one speaker at the Nice Forum pointed out: *“Listening to a territory is not just about measuring its soils or flows; it is also about hearing its “inhabitants”, its memories and its stories”*.





PART II
FROM PLANNING ENGINEERING
TO RELATIONAL ENGINEERING



The forums in Vitrolles, Corsica and Nice, and the symposium in Izmir, have shown that culture is no longer merely an item on the public policy agenda, but a potential tool for territorial engineering, a strategic lever for facilitating transitions.

Some artists and cultural practitioners devise operational concepts rooted in the local context, carry out forms of sensitive and perceptive assessment, experiment with practices of reuse—ecological and frugal—and deploy relational skills. Their site-specific actions can act as territorial prototypes, revealing uses and narratives, and enriching traditional approaches to planning.

Culture bridges the sensory and the technical, memory and innovation, structure and the living, urgency and imagination. It enriches territorial engineering with a collective weaving of connections, essential for tackling the challenges ahead.

Numerous initiatives have demonstrated the strong pull between the cultural sector and the planning sector. This cooperation is not new and has taken many different forms over time (urban beautification, spatial activation, social cohesion initiatives, etc.).

Today, the aim is to revitalise the drivers of these collaborations around the themes of transition and territorial adaptation. The programme of the Cultivated Territories forums has highlighted the strengths of the arts and culture sector, particularly in terms of territorial intelligence. Beyond the production and dissemination of “isolated” works or heritage management, cultural actors propose ways of acting. Their methods are potentially transferable to the urban planning and development sector, and are sources of invention and innovation. Engaged within a territory, these practitioners regularly demonstrate their ability to identify its visible and invisible components. They propose situated narratives and experiment with cooperative ways of working whilst drawing on improvisational skills.



Residents become active partners. These approaches offer new frameworks alongside urban planners and spatial engineers; a complementary language and set of tools.

In this respect, culture is not limited to “supporting” territorial projects: it becomes one of their driving forces.

<p>1. In terms of project / diagnosis / design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detecting weak signals • Raising the alarm and opening the debate • Multiplying subjective approaches • Artistic diagnosis as a relational tool and collective process? 	<p>3. In terms of skills and working methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinking outside established frames • Building networking • Acting under uncertainty • Crafting a collective narrative
<p>2. In terms of good environmental practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing the carbon footprint: frugality and sharing • Reuse, frugality and the circular economy • Linking ecology, food and culture • From anxiety to collective engagement 	<p>4. In terms of public engagement and cultural rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From spectator to participant • Creating communities of experience • Ensuring universal access • Building shared governance

1 - In terms of project / assessment / design

The artistic and cultural approach offers, beyond a simple stock-taking or data collection, a series of **interpretative exercises**. It contains the seeds for bringing the territory into narrative form, capable of bringing to light new perceptions, revealing contradictions or hidden potential. The forums have shown how these approaches complement—and sometimes supplant—traditional methods of urban planning and development.

- **Detecting weak signals**

One of the artist's recurring roles is that of a **watchman**. Through his investigations, site surveys and conceptualisations, he identifies "weak signals" that escape institutional analysis. In Vitrolles, Bellastock's intervention on a disused fountain was cited as emblematic: by transforming this neglected urban object into a meeting place, the team revealed the residents' implicit demand for spaces for social interaction. As one forum participant noted: *"Where an urban planner would have seen a dilapidated structure, the artist saw potential for connection"* (Vitrolles Forum Report).

In Corsica, David Raffini's work in the abandoned villages of Castagniccia played a similar role: *"The region is not merely a holiday destination, but a catalyst for creativity and social cohesion."* By taking over deserted sites, he has brought a buried collective memory back into the spotlight. This type of intervention creates **resonant works**, signalling to local communities that there is a latent heritage, a source of identity and social value (Forum de Corse).

- **Raising the alarm and opening up debate**

Art ontologically carries a capacity for opposition, transgression or denunciation of a system (consumer society in the 1960s, the oil crisis and the resulting depletion of resources in the 1970s, political crises, etc.). Since the 2010s, the concept of the Anthropocene (and criticism of the damage it has caused) has inspired the creative field (thinking from the environments, “de-anthropocentrism” and “decolonising” approaches, etc.).

One example is the project *The Herds*, which takes huge animal puppets on a 20,000-kilometre journey, combining public performance with environmental activism.

We might also mention Pauline Gumbs’ poems on marine mammals and their vital role. There is also Thu-Van Tran’s exhibition at MAMAC in 2024, focusing on cobalt mining in Vietnam; or the work of cultural laboratories in Corsica.

Ayşegül Kurtel, founder of the K2 Contemporary Art Center in Izmir in 2003, is categorical: *“Through art, we can make ourselves heard; we can break through barriers.”* Through events (the *Izmir Mediterranean Biennale 2024*) and open calls, the art centre works on ecological themes centred on the sea, storms and the gulf. These events draw on the commitment of artists and aim to foster a shared awareness of the future of the Mediterranean coastline (*“Looking at the Same Water”, “Urla, Breathing Zone” ...*)

The artistic (and/or cultural) approach does not merely show; it can also alert. In Nice, the forum highlighted the role of artists in the fight against climate paralysis: *“We are saturated with scientific data but paralysed in our ability to act. Art has this capacity to open up a space where fear can be transformed into a desire to act”* (Summary of the Nice Forum).

This is also the notion of the “*sentinel territory*” championed by the philosopher Matthieu Duperrex. The artist acts as an advanced radar, capable of making environmental disturbances (erosion, pollution, species extinction...) perceptible before they become manifest crises.

Where technical engineering establishes maps and thresholds, artists offer images and narratives that directly concern the greatest number of people.

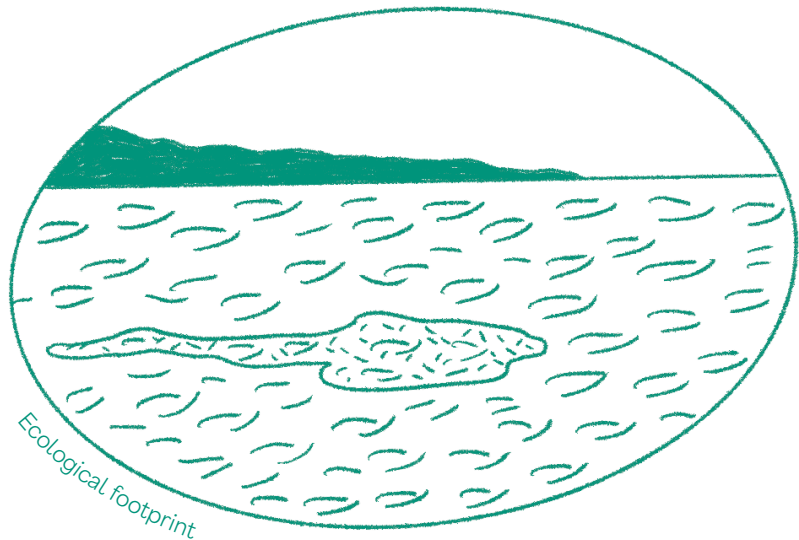
- **Multiplying subjective approaches**

The artistic and cultural approach takes various forms, as described in detail at the Vitrolles forum

- **A critical perspective**, as in Jean-Robert Viallet’s documentaries, which expose the social and urban divides that are often overlooked. Viallet’s films begin with a cry that resonates with historical facts (the disappearance of trams in Marseille in favour of the car in the 1950s) to shed light on current societal choices. Drawing on rigorous research, he adopts a stance of denunciation through his narrative and aesthetic choices (Summary of the Vitrolles Forum).
- **A psycho-geographical approach**, somewhere between poetry and realism, as expressed by Julie de Muer of the “Bureau des Guides’ in Marseille. The latter runs a participatory photographic observatory where residents and artists document changes in the landscape, creating a shared memory. The *GR2013* illustrates this dynamic. What characterises it is its ability to tell the story of the metropolitan territory it traverses. Every trail constructs a narrative; it reveals a landscape, but above all it allows us to reflect on that landscape through a scripted narrative. It becomes a narrative structure,

a lever for inhabiting a particular narrative of the metropolitan space. (Summary of the Vitrolles Forum).

- **A contemplative and/or metaphorical approach**, as
- seen in the photographic exhibitions by Fabien Danesi, director of FRAC Corse. This is also the approach taken by the travelling festival *Pignon sur Mer* (Le Racou, Banyuls, Port Vendres, Collioure...), where seaside areas and beaches have been transformed into symbolic stages, highlighting the place of nature in a territory marked by urbanisation and its risks.
- Finally, a **fictionalised approach**, as with the “*Monster of Loch Berre*” project, an artistic initiative by Anne Guiot of “Karwan”, which provided an opportunity to revisit, through myth, the relationship between the inhabitants and their polluted lagoon. Born of a desire to shift perspectives and models, this project is rooted in the unique and contrast e landscape of the Étang de Berre—both a heavily polluted lagoon and a place steeped



in diverse imaginations. The “Karwan” team created a fictional narrative centred on a “monster” said to haunt the lagoon, a nod to the Loch Ness legend, used here as a metaphor for the ecological footprint. “The monster, initially made of plastic, becomes a story that engages young and old alike” (Summary of the Vitrolles Forum).

These subjective accounts are not merely anecdotal. They produce multiple perspectives, capable of reaching different audiences and sparking collective debates, where technical studies sometimes leave people indifferent.

- **Artistic diagnosis as a relational tool and collective process?**

The forums highlight that artistic assessment is, above all, a process of building connections. As Fabien Danesi, director of FRAC Corse, put it: “*The impact of a regional art project is no longer measured in terms of footfall or visibility, but in the bonds forged and the connections established*” (Corsica Forum). This approach echoes the urban planning concept of the city as a collective creation: yet whilst traditional participatory schemes struggle to move beyond mere consultation, art creates shared experiences, moments of **discovery** and **insight**, where residents and institutions rediscover their territory together. “*Artistic practices that are rooted, slow-moving and fully experimental do not aim to represent the territory, but to traverse it and reveal its invisible lines of force,*” he cautions, however.

The interventions in *Pignon-sur-Mer* presented in Vitrolles, beyond their aesthetic languages, have opened up a space for debate, where residents and elected representatives can envisage a shared (or negotiated!) future. But they also highlight the ambivalent role played by politicians, torn between enthusiasm and caution in the face of unconventional artistic

forms. The event emerges here as a space of freedom within public mobilisation (Summary of the Vitrolles Forum).

These contributions complement the more traditional territorial approach by introducing a dimension of tactical and relational ingenuity. The shared narrative becomes the substance of an iterative process that is already beginning to shape architecture, urban planning or territorial development.

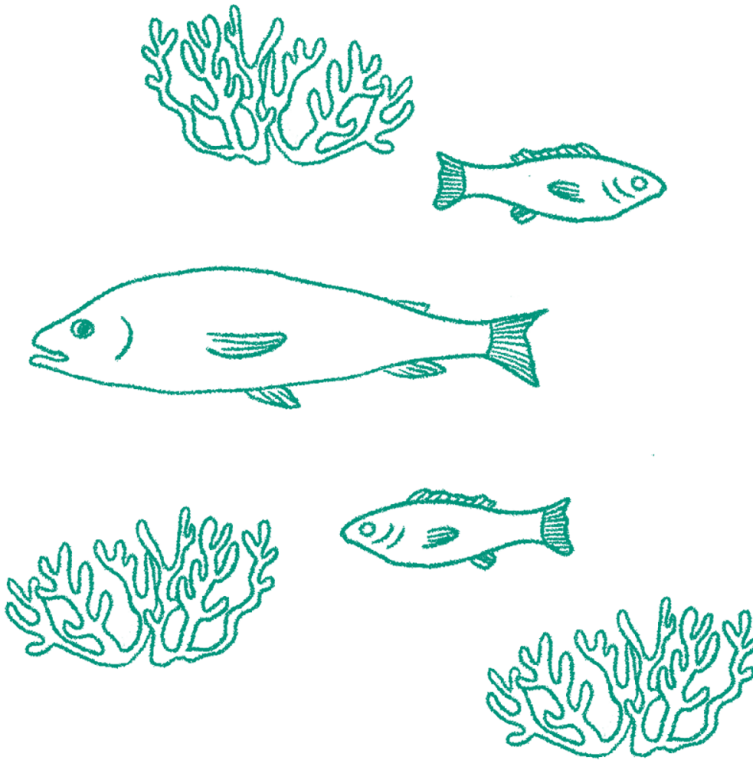
This engineering through culture is not so much a technical expertise as a collective capacity to see and feel differently, to connect, to **shape the project before it formally begins!**

- **Revealing the landscape as a ‘living’ archive**

Beyond objects or places, art offers an interpretation of the landscape as an archive. In Corsica, Laetitia Carlotti (“Arterra” – *Laboratorio Culturale de Moltifao*) shows how eroded agricultural terraces, water-retaining vegetation or sponge soils are all traces that tell a story of human settlement. “Working” on these landscapes with local residents or young people in difficulty (APJJ) provides an opportunity to reflect on ecological resilience. As one speaker noted: “*The landscape becomes an open-air classroom, where we learn by walking*” (Forum de Corse).

In Nice, the marine protected area project operates in the same way: the sea is not treated as an empty space but as a living heritage to be reinterpreted, drawing on the memories of fishermen and contemporary uses (Summary of the Nice Forum). Traditional “landscape assessments” and “usage studies” can thus inform and be informed by approaches that draw on emotions and living memories.

In Izmir, the author and engineer Mark Giraud maps and models the neighbourhood where his family lived (*Urban Heritage Map of the village of Bornova* - Map.bournabat.com)



He carries out meticulous, collaborative work involving modelling and piecing together information from photographs, old maps, archives, cadastral plans, newspaper articles, business cards, postcards, press cuttings, diaries and correspondence books. These materials enable the creation of a GIS that makes it possible to track urban development and social dynamics over time.

One can imagine the value of this type of collaborative research, particularly in informing an urban planning initiative.

2. In terms of good environmental practices

For several years now, artists and cultural organisations have been experimenting with eco-responsible practices that align with—and sometimes even precede—society’s concerns. Whereas traditional urban planning techniques seek to rationalise or standardise, cultural initiatives introduce creative experiments capable of raising awareness and engaging residents. The forums thus highlighted various initiatives that promote ecological transitions through cultural means.

- **Reducing the carbon footprint: resurce efficiency and pooling**

At the Vitrolles forum, cultural leaders highlighted that the performing arts sector suffers from a heavy reliance on carbon-intensive logistics: heavy sets, frequent travel, and international tours. *“We can no longer continue to transport 15-tonne sets for a single performance,”* noted one speaker (Vitrolles Forum summary). The same observation was made at the Nice Forum by H  l  ne Guenin, director of the MAMAC. The museum recycles its exhibition designs and takes into account the distance of artworks and artists in its planning to better integrate into the local area (summary of the Nice Forum). Many cultural institutions (Palais de Tokyo, national museums, etc.) have also begun to draw up a detailed assessment of their carbon footprint

The issue of mobility, particularly in relation to art tours, has emerged as emblematic of the transitions that need to be made. The solutions put forward advocate optimising tours and travel, adopting lighter formats and pooling resources. These concerns echo discussions on travel planning and sustainable mobility, namely how to organise the region to reduce dependence on

long-distance, energy-intensive journeys. By experimenting with new, short-distance distribution channels, the cultural sector is helping to devise more sustainable models, which can inspire the design of transport and urban logistics.

- **Reuse, frugality and the circular economy**

The forums also emphasised the importance of reusing materials and frugality. The example of the Museum of Contemporary Art, the MAMAC in Nice, has become a benchmark. Since 2016, its exhibition designs have been conceived to be reused up to ten times, and exhibitions have been extended to five and a half months. *“It’s not just a question of cost: it’s a political choice to slow down the pace, to display works for longer, to produce less but better,”* emphasised the director of MAMAC. The museum has also rethought its art transport practices to reduce its carbon footprint. It now prioritises works already in France and organises consolidated shipments. For example, for the exhibition *“Les Amazones du Pop”*, the works came from just four European countries, with a single return shipment from the United States (Summary of the Nice Forum).

In Corsica, organisations such as *SCOPRE*, *Arterra* and the *Orizonti* festival in Castagniccia Casinca produce artistic landscape experiences. They adopt an approach akin to the circular economy through artisanal production, recycling of materials, and the sharing of sets... In some cases, the same equipment travels from village to village, transforming a cultural object into a travelling common good (Summary of the Corsica Forum).

These initiatives are directly aligned with the concerns of territorial engineering, where the concepts of low-tech, reuse and energy efficiency are now establishing themselves as new standards (ADEME, *Towards a Culture of Reuse*, 2021).

- **Linking ecology, health, food and culture**

Beyond the technical aspects, culture introduces an **ecosystem-based approach**. The Nice Forum emphasised the importance of linking environmental issues to everyday practices (food, agriculture, health). The metropolitan area presented its regional food policies, involving artists and cultural organisations in projects such as educational gardens, cookery workshops and pilot schemes for young farmers. Here, culture does more than simply raise awareness: it acts as a catalyst for lifestyle change (summary of the Nice Forum).

In Corsica, *the Laboratorio Culturale* led by Laetitia Carlotti (“Arterra”) and the initiatives of *Arte Locu* demonstrate how artist residencies can work directly with farmers and fishermen, promote local knowledge and connect residents with their natural resources (Corsica Forum report). This **cross-cutting approach** aligns with new fields of urban planning, which now incorporate a holistic health approach, food security and the management of the commons into their planning (see, for example, the EGALIM Act and regional food plans).

In Izmir, some thirty “**living parks**” (combining private land and public projects) offer residents and visitors access to forgotten, overlooked natural spaces. Their purpose is threefold and interlinked: to prevent illegal activities (dumping of waste and rubble), to raise public awareness of the value of living ecosystems through cultural programmes and various facilities, and to organise and promote high-quality, socially responsible agricultural produce (such as olives from the Yamanlar region for consumers in Kadifekale, fish at the Yamanlar Pagos market, wool from the Gediz Delta, etc.). The aim is to demonstrate that planned green spaces can be created in a systematic manner and used by all residents (Summary of the Izmir Symposium).

It is also rural planning processes (rural roads and routes) that link nature and culture in support of **sustainable tourism**. In Bergama, the archaeological site, the villages, rural tourism (the vineyard route), the dams, the delta and the coast, as well as carpet weaving and local festivals (kermesses), are brought together within a comprehensive project. Indeed, as explained by Yeşim Gül Karabörklü, Director of the Rural Strategy Department at Izmir Metropolitan Municipality: “Rural planning seeks to link nature and culture within a framework of sustainable development”. Rural roads and routes are envisaged as tools for cultural and tourism promotion (education, digital applications), notably by integrating small farms into the local economic dynamism (Summary of the Izmir Symposium).

- **From anxiety to collective engagement**

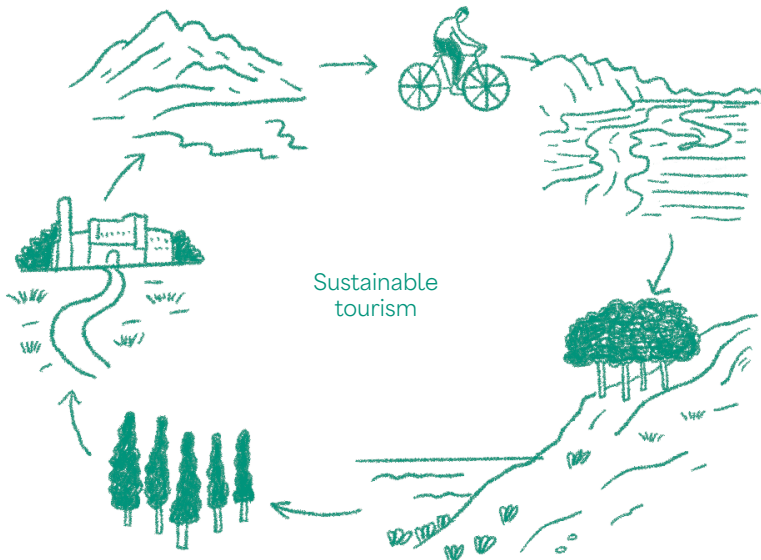
Perhaps the most distinctive contribution of artists lies in their ability to transform eco-anxiety into collective engagement. At the Nice Forum, several speakers noted that people today find themselves overwhelmed by the sheer volume of scientific information on climate change and its effects. By creating narratives, images or shared experiences, the artistic approach can help to “de-deteriorate”. Artists and cultural practitioners are reopening new avenues of thought and expanding the realm of possibilities. *“The perspective and messages conveyed by artists hold the potential to help us move beyond fear and anxiety,”* summarised one participant (summary of the Nice Forum).

Ecology cannot progress without linking emotion and action. The urban philosopher Thierry Paquot suggests territorial eco-design as a replacement for urban planning. For his part, geographer Michel Lussault—inspired by the work of John Dewey (“Art as Experience”)—suggests that, when developing

planning projects, we should draw on forms of collaborative inquiry and, why not, collective fiction: “it’s as if...”, “what if...?”

The times call for moving beyond the logic of plans and zoning to favour a more “design-oriented” approach, where symbolic scenes and territorial narratives emerge –sources not only of new representations of places and issues, but also of new forms of mobilisation.

Culture is not limited to “accompanying” transitions; it acts notably through concrete gestures of connection, through inspiring narratives and collective innovations.



3. In terms of skills and working methods

If artists and cultural actors make a unique contribution to territorial engineering, it is also because they deploy a repertoire of skills and working methods that differ from those of conventional urban planning or development, whilst complementing them. The forums highlighted several specific qualities: the ability to improvise, to forge new partnerships, to act in the face of uncertainty and to create shared narratives.

- **Improvising and ‘breaking the mould’**

One of the key skills is a certain taste for the **unexpected**, for playing within contexts that are not always predictable. In Vitrolles, projects such as the opera in a supermarket or the staging of the Loch Berre monster demonstrate how artists know how to intervene in unexpected places, transforming everyday spaces into symbolic stages (Vitrolles Forum Report). This ability to “reframe” opens up new perspectives: *“The artist is the one who shows that an ordinary space can become exceptional,”* as one speaker pointed out.

This skill is akin to what is known as *tactical urbanism*. Minor interventions, small-scale developments, temporary installations, which test new uses before a major planning decision is taken. Where urban planning lays out the blueprint, cultural actors reposition, combine and experiment in real time. These lessons are inspiring for professionals in local development and public policy.

- **Cooperating and networking**

The forums also “highlighted artists” ability to forge unlikely partnerships. In Nice, the BOTOX(s) network demonstrated

how galleries, institutions and artists can coordinate to share resources and skills. The same applies to *the Mediterranean Youth Orchestra*. Founded in 1984, it brings together talent from the Mediterranean basin and forms a network of artists in constant contact. More than just a symphony orchestra, the OMJ develops projects with the public and Mediterranean communities. (Summary of the Nice Forum).

In Corsica, organisations such as *SCOPRE* and the *Brigades de San Martinu* organise touring programmes that bring together schools, village associations, local authorities and European partners (Synthèse forum de Corse). These collaborative initiatives are rooted in a framework of cultural rights, where everyone plays an active role in the project.

These approaches align with the concept of territorial ecosystems that urban planners are seeking to establish (charters, territorial cooperation projects, etc.) to view territories less as vertical organisations and more as **constellations of interconnected actors**.

- **Operating in uncertainty**

The artist knows how to work in unstable, incomplete situations. As several speakers in Corsica emphasised: *“Here, there are no resources, no guarantees. But **this fragility is also a strength**: it forces us to invent in new ways”* (Corsica Forum report).

In Nice, artist Irene Kopelman’s residency focuses on Mediterranean ecosystems. She had to work with incomplete scientific data and “sensitive” observations, and produce a work that is by no means a definitive truth but an exploratory proposal; *a process-based work*.

This ability to deal with the undefined echoes the practices of adaptive planning (master plans) which seek to anticipate without setting things in stone, to plan whilst leaving room for uncertainty. Engineering knows how to establish operational scenarios but is undoubtedly less adept at dealing with the uncertain, accepting error and the unexpected.

- **Crafting a collective narrative**

The cultural sector is adept at producing stories, **mental images**, and a collective imagination of representations. *“The Loch Berre monster does not exist, and yet it says more about the region than many studies”* (Vitrolles forum).

In Corsica, travelling festivals such as *Arte Locu* create collective dynamics that extend beyond the duration of the event. Residents continue to talk about it, pass on the experience, and link it to their own memories (Corsica forum).

In Nice, the narratives created around the marine protected area are crucial to its acceptance. This project goes beyond its scientific purpose; it tells a story involving fishermen, researchers, restaurateurs and artists (Summary of the Nice Forum).

In the field of urban planning, this dimension is increasingly recognised under the term **“territorial narrative”**. Transformation or transition projects succeed only if they are underpinned by narratives that engage residents, who in turn will be better equipped to take ownership of the projects.

These skills complement those of urban planners. The narrative and mobilising dimension of culture is, in a sense, a **natural form of relationship engineering**.

4. In terms of relations with the public

“It is a matter of recognising the equal dignity of cultures and giving them the means to express themselves, to be passed on, and to be recreated,” says Sébastien Quenot, a sociologist at the University of Corsica, referring to the concept of cultural rights and its key principles (access for people to their own culture and that of others / guarantee of free artistic expression / interactions between cultures to promote the vitality of local communities)

As we have seen, an increasing number of contemporary artistic expressions are developing modes of action based on co-presence, active participation and sometimes even **co-creation**. These approaches blur the boundaries between producers and audiences, and tie in with reflections on the collective shaping of territories.

- **From spectator to actor (research and collaborative actions)**

Various initiatives presented at the forums, residents and users describe artistic and cultural processes, beyond their final forms

In Vitrolles, Bellastock’s transformation of the fountain has reshaped residents’ relationship with their space. They have become **“actors” in the transformation**, not through consultation but through lived experience: sitting, playing, gathering around transformed street furniture. As one participant put it: *“This isn’t a project for the residents, it’s a project with them.”*

Similarly, the *Orizonte* festival in Corsica and the *Pignon-sur-Mer* festival involve local residents beyond the mere role of spectators, through a programme of cultural events that engage both body and mind with local issues, particularly those relating to

the landscape and the retreating coastline. These are initiatives that engage the public in reclaiming their local environment.

- **Creating communities of experience**

Some performances by the travelling festival *Arte Locu* bring together 70 spectators for every 60 inhabitants in a village in the heart of the Golu Valley in Corsica; the cultural event creates temporary local communities where residents, artists and a few visitors come together, and these connections endure throughout the year. In this sense, these communities of experience go far beyond the notion of “citizen participation”. The experiences shared around these outdoor artistic events help to change perceptions of the local area. *“We don’t just come to see a play: we share a moment together that transforms the way we live,”* explained its director, Patrick Vignoli, during the forum.

- **Ensuring universal access**

The relationship with the public also involves active democratisation. In Bastia, the 100% Arts and Cultural Education (EAC) strategy ensures that at every stage of their schooling, every pupil will meet an artist or take part in a cultural project (Forum de Corse). This principle of equal access echoes the ambitions of social urban planning in the 1970s: to offer everyone, regardless of their neighbourhood, access to public services. Here, culture takes on this emancipatory role. It is not merely a matter of providing a service, but of fostering a lasting relationship between young people and the creative arts.

The collaborative platform, from the Bornova project in Izmir (Map.bournabat.com)

Enables the continuous integration of new contributions (photographs, documents, testimonials). Potentially, everyone’s

active contribution consolidates a shared history and strengthens the capacity to “live together”.

- **Building shared governance**

In Nice, the participatory marine protected area project demonstrates that engagement with the public could extend as far as co-governance. Fishermen, restaurant owners, residents and artists are involved in the project as stakeholders in its development, rather than merely being “consulted” (Summary of the Nice forum). *“We were able to discuss our uses, our fears and our aspirations together,”* said one fisherman, highlighting the fact that this approach helps to overcome mistrust of top-down decisions.

This experience ties directly into debates on the commons: the idea that certain spaces or resources (sea, river, air) cannot be managed by the market or the state alone, but by hybrid communities.

These forms of symbolic commitment go beyond the framework of functional participation. Whereas planning is based on validation through public consultations, art and culture reveal attachments to places and environments. As Fabien Danesi puts it: *“Impact is measured in terms of the bonds forged”* (Proceedings of the Corsica “ ” Forum). These bonds extend beyond the duration of the project: they become sustainable social resources for the region.

In this sense, culture embodies a new way of “shaping the territory”, by combining emotion, participation and shared governance.

PART III

**TRANSFERRING ARTISTIC AND
CULTURAL ASSETS INTO THE FIELD
OF TERRITORIAL TRANSITIONS**



As we know, territorial transitions today require more than a mere accumulation of diagnoses, action plans or technical measures. They must inspire a desire for change. It is precisely in this sensitive zone—between understanding, perception and desire—that culture operates as a form of engineering. Artistic approaches can make issues that remain potentially abstract or anxiety-inducing more visible, more tangible and more shareable. They help to transform the very way we inhabit a territory, act upon it and imagine its future.

The artistic and cultural approach can make complex issues—coastal erosion, natural hazards, loss of biodiversity, agricultural changes, social divides—more accessible by translating them into experiential or symbolic terms. Performances, artist residencies, exploratory walks, collective inquiry initiatives and travelling festivals foster a far deeper engagement than a technical or institutional presentation.

These shifts in perspective invite us to view a situation differently, to feel it, and then to discuss it. The forums present culture as an “**empathy accelerator**”, capable of opening up spaces for dialogue where engineering or planning alone sometimes encounters misunderstanding or mistrust.

This essential contribution takes on a particular significance in Mediterranean regions, where issues of identity, coexistence, memory and transmission are particularly sensitive. The “**Cultivated Territories**” **Manifesto** emphasises the importance of building a contemporary, open and active Mediterranean identity, drawing on a living heritage and millennia-old cultural exchanges. This vision calls for working from the margins, the peripheries and popular cultures, where forms of adaptation, hybridisation and creativity—essential for thinking about transitions—are often invented.

These approaches suggest that territorial transformation cannot arise solely from a project conceived in advance, but rather stems from a **collective process**. By shifting perspectives, they enable us to address what is changing. Issues such as , including tensions between urbanised areas and natural spaces, changing land uses, the vulnerabilities of coastal or mountain areas, the arrival of new residents, and shifts in mobility, are collective concerns. In this respect, culture is not merely a veneer, but a **political tool** that makes the invisible visible and detects early warning signs. It invites us to move beyond divisions; to foster a form of **social resilience**, which is essential for the implementation of transitions.

The example of the travelling Corsican festival *Orizzonte di qui è d'altrò* illustrates this function. By touring forty-two municipalities, the event contributes to **the cognitive fabric of the region**, drawing as much from oral tradition as from contemporary forms. It helps to bring together initiatives as diverse as the Landscape Plan, the “Land of Art and History” designation, and the creation of a Heritage Interpretation Centre. This “on-the-move” strategy, which combines residencies, workshops, meetings, artistic experiments and community involvement, produces a form of **territorial curation** that becomes a project catalyst for both elected representatives and technical staff.

1. Approaches through people and communities

“How do the current upheavals affect me? How am I involved? In what way am I affected? What can I do?” The notion of **“concernement”** as described by Bruno Latour lies at the heart of the challenges of transition. Thinking about the territory from the perspective of people, their actions, their **attachments**, and the environments in which they live and work is a distinctive contribution of cultural engineering (organising an art biennial on risks, collaborative mapping, travelling festivals centred on the evolution of a neighbourhood or landscape)

Beyond meeting objectives, zoning requirements or indicators, the transition process can be facilitated by storytelling, and by drawing on memories and attachments. It gives full recognition to tacit knowledge—agricultural, maritime, artisanal, linguistic, ritual, and experiences of vulnerability—which shapes the identity of places, particularly in Mediterranean territories.

This perspective aligns with the ambition expressed in the **“Cultivated Territories” Manifesto**, which calls for the invention of a 21st-century Mediterranean identity based on cultural exchanges, memory, the meeting of shores, and the celebration of popular cultures. The “cultural entanglements” it evokes—these intersections between arts, heritage, traditions and innovations—help to construct visions of the future that do not break with our roots, but extend them.

2. Matrices rather than finished projects



Cultivated Territories posits that art and culture can offer frameworks (matrices) to bring together a thousand and one situated narratives (mosaics) and organise them around a shared vision. These frameworks form a solid network linking ecological imperatives, social dynamics, local customs, practices and memories.

The cultural dimension reconnects with **the systemic approach** to planning, navigating between multiple timescales, multiple scales of action and multiple registers of sensitivity. It opens up a space where residents can project their own experiences, their family memories, their connection to the place, but also their expectations and creativity.

The Mediterranean projects discussed at the forums demonstrate how creative initiatives can successfully integrate various socio-environmental and economic factors –whether official or alternative–into a common framework.

The **Manifesto** also emphasises the need to look after the margins, the peripheries and popular cultures that contribute to models for the future, local economies and adaptive practices.

3. Beauty is no longer merely cosmetic

Beauty is no longer confined to a cosmetic function. It can be transformative. It does not merely soften; it makes things visible.

Drawing on art and culture is therefore no longer merely a matter of embellishing and bringing a space or project to life. They form part of the development project itself, from its definition through to its implementation and adoption.

In Bastia, the presentation of maritime archives has made it possible to address sensitive issues (erosion, tourist pressure, pollution) from an aesthetic perspective without reducing them to their purely technical dimension.

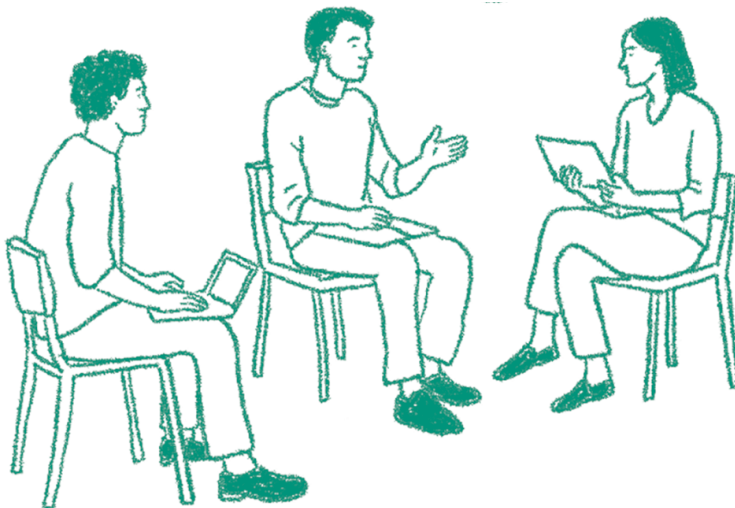
In this regard, artistic surveys of the territory, focusing on the state of altered natural environments, can aid in diagnosis; narratives and fictionalisations help to develop the stages of urban or territorial planning; creative experiences, serious games (see the experience in Urla, a coastal town in the province of Izmir) and other immersive experiences all have their place in sharpening perspectives and facilitating dialogue.

Following nature-based solutions (see Urban Green Up in Izmir) and by identifying initiatives addressing the culture of resilience, the culture of risk and the culture of transitions, the Cultivated Territories programme paves the way for the development of “culture-based solutions”!

4. Towards culture and creation

Through their own prisms, artists propose concepts, contribute to assessments and forge new collaborations. Yet their primary role remains creation itself. In these approaches, creation can never be reduced to a mere tool for mediation process or communication. It retains its uniqueness, its freedom, and sometimes its fragility. It is precisely this freedom that allows frameworks to be shifted. Artists introduce deviations, dare to propose hypotheses and novel associations.

Art and culture nourish regional development, and vice versa. Each transforms the other. Regional challenges provide contexts, “**dramaturgical**” materials of a sort, and resonating chambers for artistic expression.



5. Contextual approaches

The venue, beyond being a medium or a “stage”, becomes a context that resonates with the artistic message. *The Pignon sur Mer* project thus enables artists to situate their artistic proposals (whether performative or visual) within a coastal landscape marked by tension. It is no longer an external object, but a **conversation with the venue**.

These creative approaches place the audience in a situation, bringing them into play. The *Mostra teatrale* in Corsica presented the repurposing of ordinary places—fake guided tours, shop makeovers, offbeat strolls—to reveal the urban or rural landscape in a different light. Conversely, it is the landscape that has guided the artistic approach and gesture.

Territorial creation (artistic projects in the territory) is part of a long-term ecological approach. Unlike one-off cultural events, which are often fleeting, the projects presented in the forums are based on long-term residencies, meticulous site-specific research, and local interactions built up over several years.

As one Corsican speaker put it: “*What matters is not the date of the performance, but the trust built up before and after.*”



6. Operational conditions for success

Integrating culture into urban development projects is not really a spontaneous practice. Nevertheless, it is proving increasingly fruitful insofar as it acts as a driver of territorial transformation. However, this partnership must meet certain conditions to have a real impact. In particular, the forums highlighted the need for a vision and political backing, collective and cross-cutting organisation, a contributory economy, and a shared understanding of the place of art in society.

To drive hybrid initiatives, which are often cross-sectoral and cross-departmental, the first requirement is **clear and sustained political commitment**. Culture, in its relationship with the local area, with citizens, and with non-human beings... can only play a strategic role if elected representatives affirm that it is an integral part of public action and not merely a token addition. This commitment goes hand in hand with the sincerity of the co-creation processes offered to residents, without any pretence of participation.

In Vitrolles, it is notably the strong involvement of the local council that ensures the quality of the residencies. In Corsica, the clear support of the Fium'Orbu Castellu community of municipalities for the travelling festival *Orizonti di qui et d'altru* has given the initiative real stability, enabling regular returns and a lasting relationship with residents.

This commitment involves recognising the value of processes of creation and exploration, and opening up spaces for experimentation. It also means accepting that artistic approaches introduce uncertainty, questioning, and sometimes even friction; all elements necessary for territories to transform.

The second condition relates to **the quality of artistic commissioning schemes**—or, more precisely, cooperation schemes—which link the arts or culture to urban planning issues. As we know, projects that are too illustrative or instrumental risk diminishing the transformative power of artistic creation. Thus, the most fruitful contractual arrangements are those that encourage collaboration and are designed to last for the duration of a project; those that invite creators and planners to conduct public-facing research, to immerse themselves in places and communities, to forge links between diverse entities through innovative approaches, and so on.

In Sainte-Lucie-de-Porto-Vecchio, the commission focused on understanding the coastline rather than on producing a physical object.

Similarly, *in Nice*, the invited designers worked on the sensitive interpretation of hydrological dynamics in the Plaine du Var, *without* any obligation regarding the final form. These contextualised commissions enable the description, questioning and revelation of sites and situations

The “Territoires cultivés” Manifesto emphasises the importance of considering artistic and cultural intelligence for their ability to broaden the frameworks of thought regarding territories in transition and to link them with local knowledge and citizen-led experiments.

A third condition lies in effectively integrating the contributions of a cultural approach into a development project. Whether it involves devising a flexible and light-touch programme of actions to prefigure a project, recruiting cultural expertise, setting up local partnerships, or involving the entire chain of project stakeholders, **cultural engineering**—or more precisely, **cultural urban planning**—proves necessary. This function enables the creative and cultural

sphere to be linked with that of project management and local authority technical services; it connects subjective modes of action with objective spheres of intervention driven by public action.

In Bastia, the role played by the Mediterranean Centre for Culture was crucial in ensuring the flow of information, the stabilisation of partnerships and the continuity of the initiative. Without this structured mediation—whether led by a local authority, a cultural operator, a third place or an independent organisation—such initiatives remain marginal and struggle to influence regional policy directions.

The conditions for success also depend on **appropriate funding mechanisms**. Regional cultural initiatives require a long-term commitment, the ability to adapt, and a continuous presence. They necessitate multi-source funding (culture, urban planning, ecological transition, Mediterranean cooperation), ideally spanning several years. Initiatives supported by European funds—LIFE, LEADER, Interreg—or by public-interest foundations demonstrate how such hybrid arrangements enable the implementation of bold projects and the consolidation of a Mediterranean network of innovative practices, as proposed by the Manifesto.

Methodologically speaking, cultural initiatives involving a neighbourhood or a region proceed largely through iterations. The context is as important as the concept developed by an artist.

This process of back-and-forth, which applies to devising an artistic or cultural project for a territory, is inspiring for conceiving urban planning or development projects outside the traditional programming/planning sequences. Furthermore, through constant dialogue with the place, the site and its occupants—residents, users, inhabitants or local stakeholders—a different form of organisation may emerge. **Iterative design** does indeed require a cross-

cutting, open approach and **governance structures** that facilitate collective intelligence and *bottom-up* decision-making systems.

Finally, success depends on a **long-term approach and regular documentation**. Transformations do not impose themselves; they are built. Artistic approaches must be able to take root, return, adjust their course, and preserve their traces. Films, atlases, narratives and collaborative platforms are all ways of building a shared memory— a memory that nourishes the relationship with the territory and helps to consolidate collective learning.

In Vitrolles, the documentation of work around the Étang de Berre—sensory maps, field notebooks, sound recordings—enables the involvement of multiple stakeholders and fuels reflection over several years.

Similarly, in Castagniccia, the archives of the travelling *Orizonti* festival now inspire local councils to develop their projects.

When these conditions are met, culture becomes a driving force for territorial transformation. It enables transitions to be viewed less in terms of constraints and more in terms of **possibilities**. It bridges the sensory and the strategic, the Mediterranean heritage and futures yet to be invented, the knowledge of living things and human aspirations. It restores to public action its profoundly cultural dimension: that of creating, together, the forms of a liveable future.

The “Territoire Cultivés” programme offers the four local authorities operational pilot schemes, “Living Labs”—that is, field laboratories involving citizens, cultural actors and stakeholders in urban planning or development projects—to work on concrete topics (objects?) relating to territorial transition (see Booklet 3 “Territoire Cultivés”).

APPENDIX

CONDÉ NICE × CULTIVATED TERRITORIES

Introductory remarks

The Territoires Cultivés project, at the crossroads between territorial transitions, artistic practices and ecology, provided an opportunity to establish a partnership with the Ecole de Condé in Nice. This collaboration was designed to serve as an both educational tool for students and a source of practical proposals for partner projects and territories.

The students' contributions enriched the open forums organised successively in Nice, Vitrolles and Corsica. As the terms of the exercise varied from one territory to another, they demonstrated, with the support of the teaching staff, a great capacity for adaptation, as well as creativity and intelligence in action.

The text below was written by Justine Nau, Director of Studies, who was involved throughout the project. It presents a review reflective of these few months of partnership.

Condé Nice x Cultivated Territories

A pedagogy of the territory, between research, creation and emerging commitments

Condé Nice's involvement in the Cultivated Territories programme, in partnership with AViTEM, has opened up a whole new field of exploration for our students: a learning environment where design thinking is confronted with the complex realities of territories, the narratives that run through them, and the transitions that shape them. This project acted as an experimental matrix, a shifting space that allowed us to shift perspectives, question uses and rethink the place of the designer in spheres where they are rarely called upon.

The students quickly understood that this programme was not **just** an applied exercise, but an intellectual and sensory immersion. The initial questions were common to all – uses, wastelands, heritage, resilience, materials, narratives – but each territory visited provided a unique prism, a different way of questioning itself. Design, a discipline often called upon to provide answers, had to learn to listen, to accept uncertainty, and to serve the places themselves. To serve their tensions, their memories, their resources. They thus understood that their goal was less to transform the territory than to let the territory transform them.

- **Nice: an introduction, a laboratory for the programme's themes**

The first forum, in Nice, laid a solid foundation for the project. Students from different disciplines—interior architecture and scenography, fashion, art direction, design, research, innovation and development—explored the programme's major themes: **the Mediterranean**, sensitive diagnostics, living issues, ecological continuities, and territorial narratives.

Their work was still based on fictional scenarios and hypotheses, subjects for reflection close to the field of traditional design. At this stage, the territory was a conceptual framework. This forum enabled the students to identify the fundamental issues of the programme: how to formulate a situated perspective; how to question the relationship between culture, territory and transformation; how to produce a way of thinking that goes beyond form to become a genuine stance.

This first stage laid the foundations for a paradigm shift. The designers understood that they needed to change their perspective: they should not **only** provide an answer, but also conduct an investigation.

- **Vitrolles: confronting limits, learning from reality**

The Vitrolles forum proved decisive. Approached in advance, the students of the Master's in Design Research and Innovation were invited to design an «interpellative device» capable of questioning the links between living culture and urban culture in a territory marked by ecological and social upheavals.

They responded to the specifications with seriousness, but their initial short investigation proved insufficient: they did not yet understand the issues at stake in the area, its actors, its constraints or its latent narratives. Their proposal, presented at a round table, revealed this discrepancy: a structured reflection, but one that was partially detached from reality.

Far from being a failure, this observation was welcomed by the students themselves as a turning point. In hindsight, they showed remarkable lucidity: they understood that any territorial response requires time for immersion, dialogue and «friction» with the field. This constructive criticism strengthened their position and profoundly guided their preparation for the next forum.

Vitrolles thus served as a methodological testing ground: a transitional space that taught them that the complexity of a territory cannot be understood without confronting it directly and in depth.

- **The territory of Corsica: immersion, maturity and the emergence of localised perspectives**

The Corsica forum enabled them to take a new step forward. This time, the students were able to explore the territory, sometimes briefly but significantly. They explored the citadel, observed the emblematic wastelands, questioned customs, collected traces, and encountered intangible heritage and contemporary issues. They immersed themselves in the dynamics

specific to the island: land pressure, dependence on imports, agro-pastoral heritage, rapid transformations of landscapes and lifestyles.

From this immersion emerged three highly mature exploratory avenues:

- **Wastelands and vacant spaces as archives of the territory:** no longer seeing them as «leftovers», but as possible matrices for future uses; schools of doing, places of living culture.
- **The upheaval of local materials and know-how:** how the transformation of practices, seasonality, and the loss of vernacular gestures and techniques are profoundly reorienting housing, production, and transmission.
- **Autonomy and territorial continuity:** how to revitalise the cooperative and sober logic of the agro-pastoral system in order to imagine non-extractivist futures.

The students successfully combined analysis, narrative and projection. Their proposals were no longer formal responses, but genuine open hypotheses; frameworks for interpretation, sensitive readings of the territory. They questioned the relationship between heritage and future, between transformation and transmission, between material and use.

This experience had a profound impact on the students' journey. Some of them now plan to get involved in local communities, convinced that design thinking can inform public action.

- **A project fully in line with the Master's programme and research**

Territoires cultivés resonates fully with the ambitions of the Master's in Design Research and Innovation. This programme trains designers to turn uncertainty into an ally rather than

an obstacle; to investigate uses, and to articulate sensitive approaches, public policies and territorial transitions.

It is also part of the dynamic of our CeReDe research unit, created in September 2025, whose objective is to develop partnership-based research projects, bringing together teachers, students and institutional actors. Cultivated Territories has shown how design-based research—the situated approach, co-construction, storytelling—can become a strategic tool at the service of territories.

- **Conclusion: learning to let ourselves be transformed by the territory**

This project has transformed our students, but also the way we approach projects in the department. It has enabled them to understand that creation is not an isolated act, but a relational process. That territories are not mere supports, but living environments. That designers are not only creators, but also mediators, investigators and storytellers.

Territoires Cultivés has opened up a fruitful new avenue: that of design that connects, listens, reveals and accompanies. Design that contributes to transitions not by imposing objects, but by inventing new ways of inhabiting territories and imagining their future.

Justine Nau
Director of Studies, Condé Nice

Credits

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