CULTIVATED TERRITORIES

3 Forums
1 Symposium

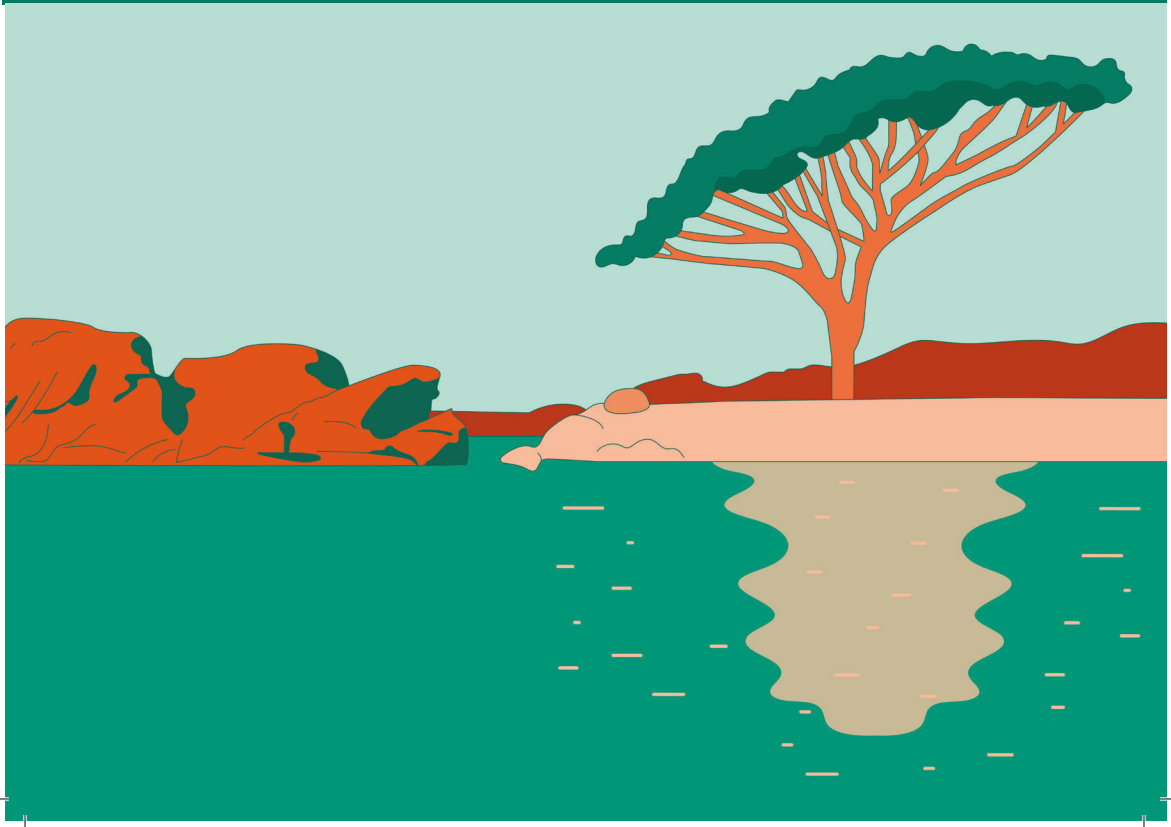
Events report

Nice Forum
28-29 november 2024

Vitrolles Forum
23-24 may 2025

Corsica Forum
19-20 june 2025

Izmir Symposium
4-5 september 2025



MINISTÈRE
DE L'EUROPE
ET DES AFFAIRES
ÉTRANGÈRES

Liberté
Égalité
Fraternité

AViTeM

Agency for sustainable Mediterranean cities and territories

İZMİR
BÜYÜKŞEHİR
BELEDİYESİ

CULLETTIVITÀ DI CORSICA
COLLECTIVITÉ DE CORSE

Vitrolles
vivre ensemble

MÉTROPOLE
NICE CÔTE D'AZUR

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 Chougnet (historian and cultural administrator), Valérie Astesano (director of culture and heritage, Vitrolles), Amine Benaissa (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: 3 Forums, 1 Symposium**

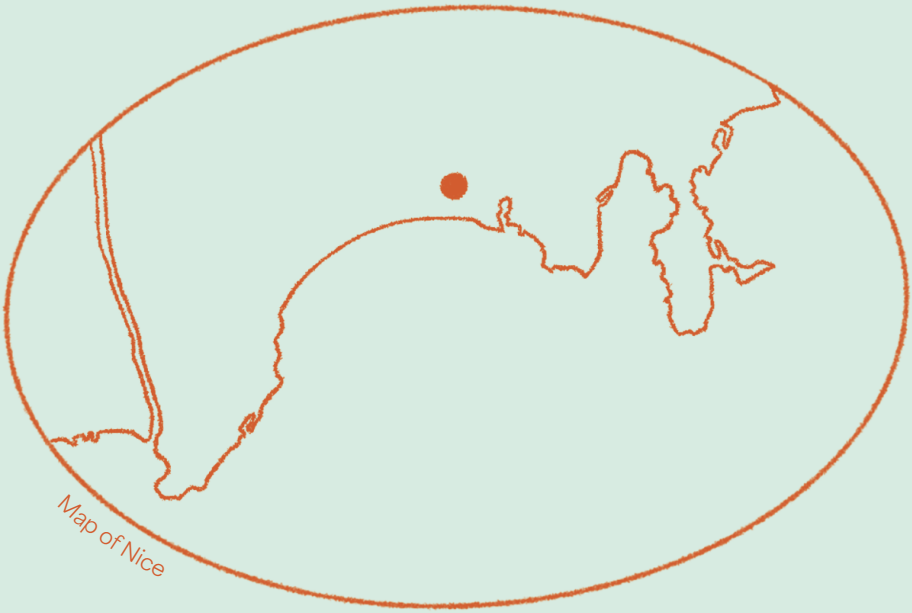
A summary of the round-table discussions, exchanges and opening addresses

Summary

Vitrolles Open Forum

Nice Open Forum

28-29 November 2024


Map of Nice

Opening address

Agnès Rampal - Deputy Mayor of Nice, representative for Euro Méditerranée, Repatriates and CUM, President of AVITEM
Ambassador François-Xavier Léger - Director General of AVITEM
Marie Baduel - Deputy Director of AVITEM

The opening speeches highlighted the following commitments:

- The actions of the Nice Côte d'Azur Metropolis for ecological transition, particularly in two main areas:
  - Urban planning: development of gardens, integration of nature into the city, creation of the Promenade du Paillon and development of the Plaine du Var.
  - Climate: heat management in the city, resource management, water conservation, reduction of the greenhouse effect through the promotion of soft mobility and the search for new energy sources.
- Commitment to culture in the Mediterranean: an opportunity to reflect on climate change and its consequences.
- AVITEM's commitments in the Mediterranean as a player in decentralised cooperation and the five key themes of the Territoires Cultivés project

Inaugural round table: Cultural and territorial commitment to the Mediterranean in the face of ecological challenges: the sea as common good

Speakers
Agnès Rampal - Deputy Mayor of Nice, delegate for Euro-Mediterranean affairs, repatriates and the CUM, President of AVITEM
Aurore ASSO - Municipal Councillor and Metropolitan Councillor responsible for the Marine Protected Area, the Sea and Ecology, Agricultural Engineer ENSAT
Hélène GUENIN - Director of MAMAC in Nice, co-curator of the Biennale des Arts et des Océans

Introduction

The Mediterranean, with its 46,000 km of coastline, is the largest semi-enclosed sea in the world, although it represents less than 1% of the global maritime surface area. It is surrounded by ports and cities, creating a network of intense trade between three continents. Notably, 25 to 30% of global economic trade currently takes place in the Mediterranean.

It is also a region rich in biodiversity, home to nearly 10,000 species, more than a quarter of which are endemic.

However, this sea is severely polluted, with 16% of the world's microplastics present in its waters, and is subject to overfishing despite efforts to manage marine resources. The Mediterranean is also the scene of human tragedies, with nearly 7,000 deaths in the last four years.

We are at a turning point for this sea, which has seen many conflicts, from piracy to wars: this forum aims to create a new collective imagination to reinvent and re-enchant the Mediterranean.

In this sense, artists are not isolated from the world in their ivory tower, but are citizens and actors in the social fabric who play a crucial role. They raise awareness and alert society to our relationship with living things and ecology.

The aim of this round table is to analyse the key role of citizens (artists, sea users) involved in projects and their contribution to the rebirth of the collective Mediterranean imagination, as well as to the ecological transition and new forms of multi-scale governance. Project development, as a collective act, is thus a central vector of this dynamic, enabling these issues to be addressed and strengthening the links between individuals and their environment.

Artists: whistleblowers on ecology

Artists examine the evolution of ecosystems and the diversity of the living world, among other things. They play a crucial role in raising environmental awareness. Indeed, in the face of disasters, when there is a risk of paralysis that can lead to inaction, artists' perspectives and messages offer a way to overcome fear and raise public awareness of these issues.

As early as the 1960s, artists began to speak out against consumer society and its effects. A decade later, in the 1970s, artists denounced the oil crisis and warned of the disappearance of resources it would cause. These denunciations continued into the 1980s, when political crises fuelled artistic creation and further mobilised artists.

Finally, since the 2010s, the concept of the *Anthropocene* has become central to artists' thinking. This term, widely used by

the general public, emphasises that humanity has changed the planet to such an extent that its actions are now comparable to the major geo-climatic phenomena that have shaped the Earth. This awareness has also given rise to a growing discourse on the intelligence of other forms of life, an issue that artists have quickly incorporated into their creations. For example, Gustave Metzger, born in 1926, is a pioneer of socially engaged art and a whistleblower. In the 1960s, he denounced the destruction of biodiversity and air pollution. His work aimed to demonstrate the impact of air pollution on living organisms, a minor issue at the time. Some of these powerful gestures were recently revived in an exhibition held in Nice in 2017.

The role of cultural institutions: supporting and perpetuating commitment

In this sense, cultural institutions play a crucial role. Every year, the MAMAC organises an exhibition to compare pioneering artists with today's research. The MAMAC aims to give more space to artists working on the issues of life and ecology.

The aim here is to connect artists' practices with their ideas about life. The cultural institutions of tomorrow seek to establish consistency between these practices and these reflections. It is also a question of sharing a variety of points of view and narratives, so that everyone can find their place, without moral judgement. In this way, cultural institutions, by promoting the works of socially conscious artists, can encourage people to take a stand and perpetuate this effort to raise awareness.

We can also observe a variety of attitudes among socially conscious artists, whistleblowers, those involved in care and reciprocity, and those who work to raise awareness through their work with citizens. Alliances are forming between the arts, nature, openness, the resilience of life and the hope it inspires.

Ecological transition: the crucial alliance between culture and nature

The creation of the Nice Maritime Protected Area is a very ambitious project, especially in a peri-urban area, as it requires sensitivity and social acceptance on the part of citizens in order to succeed.

The Mediterranean, this sea between lands, belongs both to the people who surround it and is a place where culture and nature come together, two spheres that are thought of as one. When we first started talking about the idea of a maritime area, the aim was to ask the people of Nice about their relationship with the sea. “We are entering the future backwards,” said Paul Valéry. In order to remedy this negative projection of the future, it is crucial to link the past and the present and to consider heritage as a link that connects all territorial projects.

The concept of heritage thus establishes a link between nature and culture. UNESCO’s classification as a “World Heritage Site” reinforces this idea, emphasising the importance of not separating natural and cultural heritage. The gardens of coastal buildings thus become transitional spaces between architecture and the sea. The marine area is simply the natural continuation of this relationship.

The future prospects for the Côte d’Azur region are based on a rich heritage of visionaries in the field of ecological transition.

The creation of a Marine Protected Area: a scientific approach and user participation in Nice

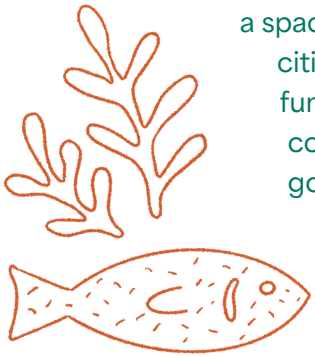
The creation of a marine protected area also requires a complex process. This creation mechanism first involves a strict scientific method applied to local authorities governed by national, regional and local policies.

Following political decisions, the development phase begins: a scientific council is created to establish a methodology involving ecological, sociological and economic assessments, etc., but also to involve all stakeholders so that the process is dynamic and evolving. Using this method, the city of Nice has decided to focus on consultative workshops with Nice residents in order to develop a collective vision of the sea.

This work involves talking to various types of sea users, such as fishermen, boaters, restaurant owners, etc. The term “sea users” encompasses different cultural realities, including those who make their living from the sea (such as fishermen and beach concessionaires) as well as those who use it for leisure (yacht owners, water sports enthusiasts, walkers, etc.). These users were then brought together to define what a marine protected area is and its benefits for everyone. Finally, they were interviewed again using maps, which allowed their observations, disagreements and ideas to be collected, thus providing a space for reflection and creativity for the establishment of the area.

This process therefore encourages active participation and highlights the importance of the project and the shared vision.

Conclusion



The project thus becomes a vehicle for shared culture, a space for mutual recognition and unity, where citizens, whether artists or sea users, play a fundamental role. This helps to strengthen the collective capacity to care for the common good that is the sea and nature as a whole.

In this sense, MAMAC plays an important role because its programmes highlight the work

of artists committed to raising awareness and consciousness of the environment. Thus, MAMAC's artistic curation projects and the creation of a marine protected area by the Nice Côte d'Azur Metropolis are examples of the importance of the project in renewing the collective imagination in the Mediterranean. From the local level (such as Nice Côte d'Azur) to the international level, via the regional scale of the Mediterranean, projects involving citizens are an important vehicle for raising collective awareness in the Mediterranean.

Hôtel Negresco, Promenade des Anglais

Philosophy student's workshop

by Master I Philosophy students at the Université Côte d'Azur, under the supervision of Prof. Vanessa Nurock, in collaboration with the Centre for Research in the History of Ideas and the UNESCO EVA Chair in Ethics of the Living and the Artificial.

Introduction by Vanessa Nuroch

Vanessa Nuroch holds a UNESCO Chair in the Ethics of the Living and the Artificial. This chair focuses on issues such as environmental ethics, biomedicine, new definitions of gender, new technologies, etc. One of the chair's recent objectives has been to develop educational issues closely related to the issues addressed by this forum in Nice.

Based on the premise that nature is not intrinsically present, but is culturally constructed, seminars were organised on how students developed their thinking on the issue of marine ethics.

Three themes emerged:

1. The relevance of Mediterranean cultural heritage
2. What kind of smart territory in the Mediterranean?
3. Eco-anxiety and creation

1. The relevance of Mediterranean cultural heritage today: a detour through Greek history

The sea played a crucial role in the rise of Greek civilisation, both economically and culturally. Indeed, Greece's development was largely based on its maritime power. Piraeus, for example, accounted for half of the empire's revenue during Aristotle's time, with continuous maritime trade. The cities we know today,

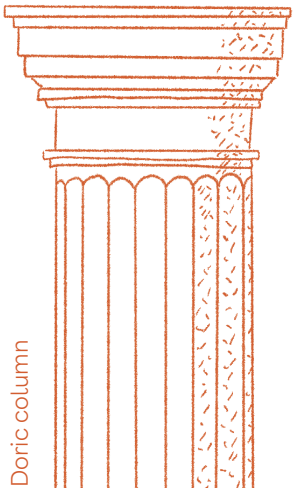
such as Nice and Marseille, also have their origins in this empire: the name Nice comes from the Greek *Nikaïa*, as does the name Marseille, *Massalia*. The sea was therefore an essential vehicle for expansion, generating a major utilitarian relationship between the Greeks and the sea.

How did the Greeks view the sea? - Plato and Homer

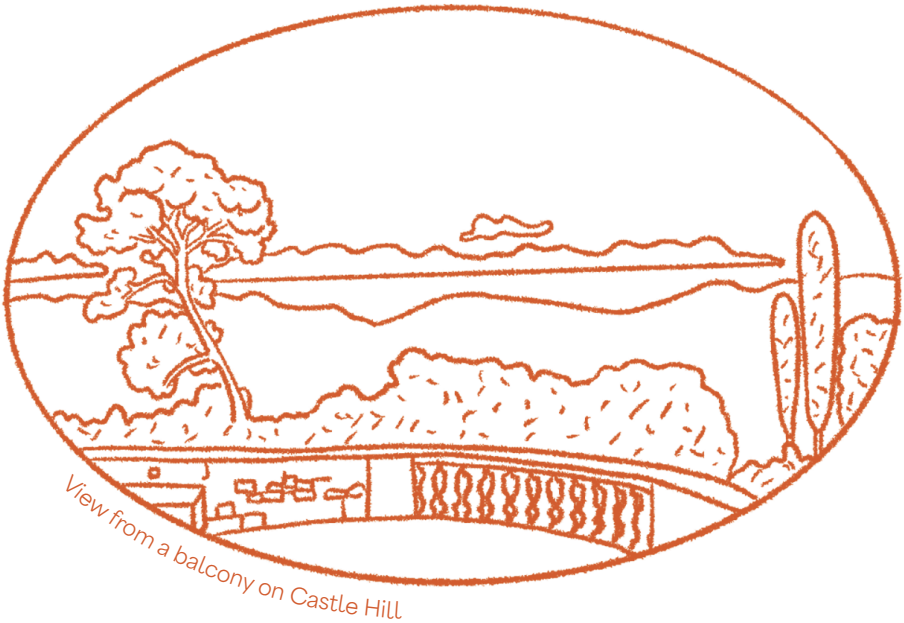
In his philosophy, Plato believed that the further away one was from the land, the purer one became. Thus, sea creatures, living beneath the surface, were perceived as impure.

In Homer's Odyssey, Ulysses hates and fears the sea, which he associates with all his misfortunes, aspiring only to return to dry land. In this hostile world, his only chance of survival lies in divine assistance. From this initial confrontation, the sea is perceived in an ambivalent way: it is viewed positively for its utilitarian aspect, but also as an enemy, hostile and feared.

This utilitarian and conflictual relationship with the sea continues to persist today. In this sense, the ILIAD project, promoted by the European Union since 2022, demonstrates a desire for united European governance in the face of the risks posed by the sea. Indeed, this digital project makes it possible to project the future of the Mediterranean in the coming years in light of ongoing projects.



Doric column



2. Smart Territories in the Mediterranean: What Are They?

Is our instrumental relationship with the sea devastating?

The relationship of instrumentalisation of the sea is very simple: every territory is a space to be conquered.

The sea is still perceived today as an inexhaustible resource and a unified space. In reality, each sea is made up of multiple sub-entities that are very different from one another, and climate change constantly reminds us of our lack of knowledge about this space.

How should we rethink our relationship with the territory?

1. We must rethink our relationship with the Mediterranean and, to do so, recognise its intrinsic intelligence as a space worthy of respect, with which we must form alliances.
2. Reinvest in the sensitivity of the sea

3. Consider it as a host, a fascinating environment that we enter only as guests.
4. Connect with the sea in a simpler and more sustainable way

3. The dialectic between eco-anxiety and creation

In order to avoid falling into shock and inaction, it is necessary to adopt a stoic attitude. We must engage in a collective effort to relieve ourselves of guilt. For Gilles Deleuze, we must rise to the occasion. In this sense, art is a tool for raising awareness.

Artists thus appear as conveyors of lines of flight: they are beings who are never fixed, but always in motion. The artist thus enables us to change our frame of perception.

Conclusion

This philosophical workshop provided an opportunity to examine the rights of living beings and the legal status of natural spaces. In this sense, the Loire River Parliament is a concrete example. This project to protect and create a legal status for the river questions the rights of natural resources and brings together a multitude of actors.

Round table 1:
The Green Wave, transmission and green transition: How nature and agroecological practices are becoming drivers of territorial resilience

Speakers
Richard Chemla, Deputy Mayor of Nice in charge of Health, Environment, Well-being, Animal Protection, and monitoring the organisation of the 2025 Ocean Summit, Vice-President for Ecological Transition of the Nice Metropolis
Bruno Gilet, Director of School Catering Services, City of Nice
Pénélope Ronce, Regional Food Project Manager, Nice Côte d'Azur Metropolitan Area
Marie Hérault, Historian of Gardens and Landscapes of the Riviera

Introduction

In the 20th century, cities were built with their backs turned on the countryside. The countryside thus became a place of exile. This construction therefore took place at the expense of our natural and rural spaces.

Coastal urbanisation is particularly intense in the Mediterranean, far exceeding the global average. Today, thirty Mediterranean cities have more than one million inhabitants, whereas only ten of them exceeded this number in 1980.

All these factors raise concerns about agriculture in the Mediterranean and suggest that its decline could have major

consequences. At present, agriculture accounts for 15% to 20% of the GDP of some countries in the southern part of the basin. As a structuring and vital sector, the undermining of agriculture would have dramatic repercussions.

However, the unbuilt areas of the basin could take on four new values:

1. Landscape: by developing their attractiveness
2. Food sovereignty: by encouraging the need to source food locally, Covid has demonstrated the importance of this
3. Territorial resources
4. Ability to combat climate change

The history of Nice has been built around the concept of nature, with gardens playing a prominent role, single-handedly embodying all of these cultural and economic dimensions.

The aim of this round table is to understand how nature and agroecological practices are becoming drivers of territorial resilience: from landscape changes to agroecological policies and food practices, this discussion aims to put nature and green spaces back at the heart of territorial resilience projects.

Urban transformations in Nice: cultural influences and landscape changes

The development of Nice and its territory is influenced by the landscape and cultural transfers. The geographical boundaries of the Riviera vary according to the period and the author, but the term “Riviera” first appeared in 1887 in Liégard’s work. This territory, at the crossroads of two entities long perceived as dangerous, the mountains and the sea, began to attract the English in the 18th century, who discovered its climate and lush vegetation, marking the beginning of winter tourism. This development followed two earlier tourist trends, the

Grand Tour and thermalism, and differed from the latter in that there were no health facilities at the resorts, which relied solely on the supposed benefits of the mountain climate.

The annexation of Nice by France and the arrival of the railways amplified this phenomenon, attracting tourists from various backgrounds. The gardens of Nice, initially utilitarian, became places for walking and leisure, with designs influenced by various styles. The public gardens and the Parc de la Colline du Château were then designed for foreign holidaymakers. The Sardinian restoration introduced aesthetic improvements with the establishment of the *Concidlio d'Ornato*, and under Napoleon III, the creation of urban gardens multiplied throughout the city. In the 20th century, there was a return to the principles of the Italian Renaissance with the use of local species and materials.

Thus, Nice's urban development has been profoundly influenced by cultural transfers and various external influences on its development.

Nice stands out for the initiative and energy it has devoted to the creation of gardens: the city is redesigning its historic centre around the Paillon, redeveloping the Var Valley with gardens that sometimes serve a preventive function against the risk of flooding, gradually rethinking urban traffic by integrating green spaces, developing new forms of soft mobility and considering ways to refresh urban spaces, among other things. This dynamic is part of a long tradition, now reinterpreted and adapted to contemporary challenges.

Nice: between greening and sustainable urban planning

Looking at Nice from the sea, you can see that only the first few hundred metres are covered in concrete, while the cliffs behind are green. The Pre-Alps form a continuous unit, stretching from the mountains to the sea, and where they plunge into the water, we talk about “drop-offs”, maritime areas rich in biodiversity.

Cities that are greening themselves are those that will ensure the survival of their inhabitants, because the problem lies not only in the heat of the day, but also in the thermal inertia of the evenings: this is when the city becomes difficult to live in. Planting trees to reduce CO2 is not a sufficient solution, as it would take around three hundred trees to offset the emissions of a single person. However, greening creates a soothing environment that is conducive to healing, stress reduction and increased biodiversity.

The green corridor in Nice has helped to reconnect the old town with the new town. Complex flow studies have been carried out to optimise air circulation and improve ventilation in the city. As for the old *Acropolis* Convention Centre, its dilapidated state and excessive energy consumption largely justify its demolition.

In-depth discussions were held to determine which areas could be planted with vegetation and which species would be

most suitable. Experts from various fields, such as allergists, climatologists and botanists, were consulted. Ecology requires an interdisciplinary approach, a “grammar” to be learned through cross-disciplinary perspectives. The green corridor must become an intergenerational, multifunctional space that contributes to air pollution reduction and urban cooling.

The culture of patios has been lost due to a lack of space for new housing, but the green corridor marks a new beginning. Nice’s goal is to increase the number of gardens throughout the city by collaborating with the private sector to open up their green spaces. Initiatives are already beginning to emerge, such as the installation of pots and plantings in cul-de-sacs. These gardens even extend to the Mediterranean.

Finally, the city’s primary noise barrier is actually trees. The only drawback is that they can cast shadows on buildings, hence the need to find a balance between vegetation and urban planning.

- **The strategies of the Nice Metropolis: promoting the region and raising awareness of sustainable food**

The territorial agricultural policies (PAT) implemented in the Nice area are based on a certification process introduced in 2021, based on a two-pronged strategy.

- The first is to maintain and boost agriculture throughout the metropolitan area with several actions:
    - Measures to reclaim agricultural land and natural spaces
    - Implementation of protections for agricultural areas
    - Development of agricultural wasteland
    - Land analyses

- Actions to raise awareness among landowners about returning their land to cultivation
- Renovation of agricultural buildings by the metropolitan authority
- Bonus and subsidy strategy for organic projects (for environmental and health value)
- Creation of test sites in the Var plain to support agricultural project leaders, enabling them to begin this experiment while being employed in an incubator for three years.

- The second is based on education and awareness. Nearly twenty vegetable gardens have been made available in the city to promote positive and socially responsible food education. Studies have shown that purchasing managers (usually women) who have access to vegetable gardens have better consumption habits (CTIFL).

  The aim is to produce locally but also to consume locally, for the health of consumers and producers alike, for the climate, to help agriculture in crisis, etc. Combating food insecurity also works through proximity. Food aid organisations such as , which offer low-cost boxes of ravioli to people in need, are no longer an acceptable solution. People in need deserve more respect, especially since, in this specific case, it also promotes local production and the heritage that goes with it.

From agricultural policies to sustainable food

In Nice, 92% of schoolchildren eat in the school canteen. Canteens therefore play an important educational role: it is during childhood that we learn to eat well for the rest of our lives.

Heritage is passed on in particular through the teaching of a sustainable and local culinary culture. It is a question of re-educating all citizens on how to use and make good use of what is produced, paying particular attention to waste: everything can be used, peelings can be used to make stock, animal skins can be used to make leather, etc.

Furthermore, eating food that is connected to your local area also means knowing how to work with the seasons. Ultimately, it is about putting food back at the centre of life.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the evolution of Nice's urban spaces, driven by ecological and agricultural issues, is an example of the renewal of the collective Mediterranean imagination. The city stands out for its desire to reintegrate nature into its urban fabric by promoting greening and developing responsible agricultural policies. These initiatives, which combine landscape preservation and food sustainability, contribute to territorial resilience in response to contemporary challenges. Thus, through the integration of agriculture and green spaces, Nice presents a coherent vision of territorial resilience, reconciling urban planning with nature and rethinking food on a local scale.

Mediterranean Chair of History - Inaugural Lecture

Jeremy Guedj Chair

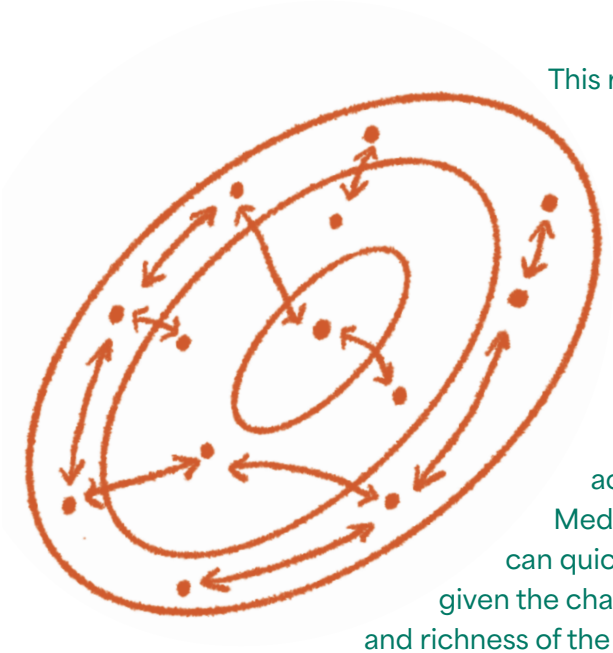
Chapter 1 of *L'impossible paix en Méditerranée* (Impossible Peace in the Mediterranean), co-written by Boris Cyrulnik and Boualem Sansal, is entitled "Singulière Méditerranée plurielle" (The Singular Plural Mediterranean). In it, Boualem Sansal evokes a fascinating and almost mythical vision of the Mediterranean: for him, this territory might seem mundane, a small sea bordered by arid lands, populated by cicadas and where, as Cyrulnik notes, the inhabitants have the strange habit of bringing out chairs rather than parasols at the slightest sign of a heatwave. But this corner of the world is rich in legends, living and producing them at every moment, to the point that it itself becomes a legend. He invites us to reread Camus's Noces à Tipasa to feel how this land of harsh sun teems with new life, untimely geniuses, resonates with mysterious sounds and exudes intoxicating scents. Under every tree, philosophy unfolds freely and the gods play with their metamorphoses.
It is here that civilisation was born, first Eastern and then, surreptitiously, Western, which would become the benchmark for the world. These words encapsulate the very essence of this chair's work: to think about the Mediterranean is to envisage a space where reality mingles with the imaginary, where daydreaming rubs shoulders with sometimes painful experiences, and where space is a veritable cradle of creation and multiple voices.

This chair aims to approach history from a Mediterranean perspective, not as a simple region of the world, but as a starting point for thinking about societies and events. The Mediterranean is seen here as a space for exchange, encounters

and reflection, where intellect and sensitivity meet. The name of the chair - Mediterranean Chair of History - reflects this orientation: the Mediterranean is not a secondary object, it is the source and starting point for historical analysis.

The inauguration of this chair echoes the intellectual history of the region. It should have taken place at the Mediterranean University Centre, founded by Paul Valéry in 1933, designed as an "intellectual stimulus" and a "space for the fermentation of minds". At the time, Europe and the Mediterranean were going through difficult times. Valéry emphasised the special role of the Mediterranean, a territory that should avoid confining itself to overly rigid constructs. The Mediterranean was, and remains, a divided space, but also a place capable of connecting and bringing people together. Historian Peregrine Horden pointed out that exploring the Mediterranean as an object requires thinking outside the box of established categories. Today, we need to rethink these categories, bringing the university and the city, researchers and residents, the people of Nice and the Mediterranean closer together, so that dialogue between knowledge and society is possible.

If we had to sum up the creation of this chair in one idea, it would be to reconnect the Mediterranean of the senses, passion and feeling with that of knowledge and science, without knowledge dominating or suppressing the richness of human experiences. The inaugural lecture therefore proposes questions rather than answers, structured around three fundamental themes: what is the Mediterranean, who are the Mediterranean people, and what can the Mediterranean achieve? These questions allow us to explore the essence and diversity of the Mediterranean, ultimately considering its potential. The analysis begins with space, continues with humans, and opens provisionally onto the future, moving from the sea to the land, and from the land to the inhabitants of yesterday and today.



This reflection on the future also questions the ability of history to shed light on the present. The aim is to offer lessons from history for the present, while demonstrating humility and modesty in the face of the vast amount of knowledge accumulated on the Mediterranean, knowledge that can quickly become overwhelming given the challenges, contradictions and richness of the work that has been done. The chair does not claim to establish historical laws, but only to propose trends, accompanied by counter-examples. Paul Valéry warned against sacrificing to a false concordance of times: we must approach the past, present and future without projecting one onto the other, because “the present is what has never been present”. Historians must return each era to its own time, without displacing it or interpreting it through the lens of today.

The Mediterranean is above all a meeting place, a place where differences coexist and feed off each other. As Camus wrote in The Rebel, “the Mediterranean is a place of moderation”. Mediterranean thinking is not lukewarm: it is firm and measured, capable of fighting against excess and human folly. It is not synonymous with the fusion of opposites, but with coexistence in complexity and diversity. In a fragmented world where difference is difficult to conceive, the Mediterranean offers a reflection on the dialectic between the one and the many, preferring complex turmoil to simplification.

Fernand Braudel gave the Mediterranean its own history, going beyond the vision of a picturesque but soulless sea. For Braudel, it is impossible to understand the Mediterranean without integrating its different temporalities: geographical, social and individual. Historians must engage with these temporalities in order to grasp the depth of this region. Habib El-Malki rightly writes: “When talking about the Mediterranean, if you were born on its shores, it is almost impossible not to sing of death (...) and then become disillusioned.”

This chair must avoid certain pitfalls. First, it must overcome the dichotomy between image and reality: there is no systematic contradiction between the image inherited from the past and everyday reality. Secondly, it must distinguish between the modern and contemporary Mediterranean and remain vigilant against the risk of letting emotion prevail over science, by always questioning the myths that circulate.

There are several models for thinking about the Mediterranean. Roger Brunet sees it alternately as a lake with shores that exchange but sometimes turn their backs on the sea, a centreless home, a strait or an isthmus, and even a barrier or a border. Being Mediterranean cannot be proven, but it can be experienced. It is a shared feeling, a common experience that transcends physical territory. Mediterranean unity is not a given: it is built through encounters, exchanges and syntheses, including between the major religions of Islam and Christianity, with Judaism often playing an intermediary role. Economic al and social networks transcend wars and conflicts, and the Mediterranean remains a space where otherness is possible, even in times of retreat.

Today, the contemporary Mediterranean is in crisis. As André Nouschi notes, “Mediterraneans no longer control their destinies. This Mediterranean, which should have been a land of peace, is fragmented.” History has shattered the

Mediterranean, and history cannot be erased. The chair aims to open up new perspectives by reactivating the links that the Mediterranean has always maintained with its resources and by proposing a reflection capable of connecting ideas and reality, memory and the present, passion and reason.

In short, the Mediterranean Chair of History aims to be a place for dialogue and questioning, articulating space, people and the future. It invites a nuanced and sensitive approach to the Mediterranean, capable of combining knowledge and imagination, heritage and creativity, complexity and encounter.

Round table 2: Arts and Ways of Living Toward an Eco-Virtuous Transformation of Cultural Practices

Speakers
Hélène Guenin - Director of MAMAC, co-curator of the Biennale des Arts et des Océans
Anna Sénéquier - Global Designer in Sustainable Design, Alumni Master's in Sustainable Design, Research, Innovation and Development, Ecole de Condé de Nice
Magali Bonnet-Funel - Senior Lecturer, Master's in Design Research and Innovation, Ecole de Condé in Nice, Heritage Curator and Restorer
Sylvain Roger - Director of Regional Centres, Nice Côte d'Azur Metropolitan Tourist Office

Introduction

The subject of the eco-virtuous transformation of cultural modes is part of a global context in which awareness of environmental issues is becoming increasingly urgent. The cultural and artistic sectors, which have long been perceived as separate from ecological concerns, are now called upon to play a central role in this transition.

Indeed, it has become essential to rethink the ways in which culture is produced and disseminated. Art, heritage, tourism and cultural life as a whole must evolve towards more environmentally friendly practices, while continuing to fulfil their social, educational and creative functions.

In line with this dynamic, initiatives are emerging around the world, whether it be reducing the carbon footprint of museums and festivals, promoting sustainable tourism, or adopting creative practices using recycled or biodegradable materials. The challenge is to reconcile cultural richness with the imperative of sustainability, offering artistic and cultural experiences while respecting our planet's resources.

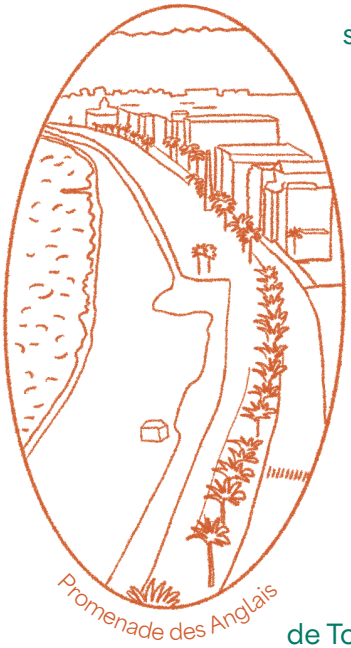
The aim here is to reflect on these challenges and explore how those involved in culture, tourism and the arts can be at the forefront of an eco-friendly transformation, in order to inspire sustainable behaviour on a local and global scale. The aim is therefore **to open a dialogue** on the concrete actions that can be implemented in our institutions and practices to respond to the ecological emergency while preserving our cultural wealth and diversity. How can culture engage in a system of accepted constraints for an eco-virtuous transition?

MAMAC: at the forefront of sustainable cultural policies

Between the imperatives of cultural diversity and the territorialisation of practices

Territorialisation, both in the production of exhibitions, plays an important role in MAMAC's eco-responsible approach. However, this approach must not limit cultural diversity, as a museum must reflect a plurality of perspectives. The aim is to find a balance between local roots and openness to diversity of views.

With this in mind, MAMAC limits transport and favours local production in collaboration with artists. For example, a three-year residency was offered to Argentine artist Irene Kopelman, who lives in Amsterdam and works on fragile ecosystems. She conducted research on Mediterranean ecosystems and regeneration, with projects involving both the arts and sciences,



such as events and exhibitions. This project illustrates the museum's desire to develop long-term work with an artist rooted in the region.

This approach also extends to local networks, such as the BOTOX network, which connects artistic actors on the French Riviera. This includes collaborative practices such as equipment lending and the joint development of projects and artistic visions.

With regard to carbon footprints, some museums, such as the Palais de Tokyo in Paris, have already begun to establish a detailed assessment of their activities, and calculation tools are being developed to be shared with other actors. At MAMAC, current approaches are based mainly on common sense and pragmatism, without precise figures. Finally, it is important to note that the museum's carbon footprint is largely linked to visitor travel, even if visitors do not come solely for MAMAC, but for all that the city has to offer, both cultural and natural, etc.

- **Tourism in Nice: towards a sustainable and responsible model through eco-friendly tools that contribute to the enhancement of the region and local heritage**

Sustainable tourism is a complex and vast subject, the implementation of which is often made difficult by the tension between tourism development and the preservation of sustainability. To successfully make the transition to a more responsible model, two key elements are necessary:

- **The intention**, which is strongly felt both in the city and throughout the tourist office. As with any transformation project, getting such an initiative off the ground is a major challenge, but this stage has been successfully completed. Today, a commitment to sustainability is no longer an option, but a necessity. It is also significant that this desire is shared by visitors themselves.
- **Concrete actions:** The policy of "small steps" is proving particularly relevant and realistic for gradually moving towards more sustainable practices.
  Three examples illustrate the initiatives currently being implemented by the Nice Tourist Office to promote responsible and sustainable tourism:

  - **The development of an "explore game" across the metropolitan area**, aimed at offering visitors a fun way to discover and rediscover the region's cultural, historical, natural and sporting heritage. This game, already available in twenty municipalities, will be extended to ten more in the summer of 2025. The target audience is varied, including both residents and tourists. The aim is to promote responsible behaviour, in particular by raising participants' awareness of resource conservation, waste management and the importance of respecting footpaths. A guide to good practice accompanies this initiative. The game encourages people to respect the area and, where this is not possible, to limit access to it.
  - **The creation of Nice-style cooking workshops**, aimed at promoting the local gastronomic heritage, which is part of France's intangible cultural heritage. These workshops are part of an initiative to promote traditional Nice cuisine, with the certification of establishments that meet strict criteria in terms of quality and the preservation of local culinary traditions.

- **The introduction of a "Clé Verte" label**, designed to support hotels and restaurants in their transition to more responsible practices. This label certifies that establishments comply with specific environmental and social criteria. With 47 establishments currently certified, the region ranks first in France in terms of the number of award winners. Although the awarding and monitoring of this label is costly and demanding for the office's teams, its importance in promoting sustainable tourism is undeniable.

These actions demonstrate a strong commitment to more responsible tourism, integrating eco-friendly practices in the management of spaces, the promotion of cultural heritage and the encouragement of responsible behaviour among visitors.

Finally, Nice is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site as a resort capital: this is a very strong incentive for heritage preservation. The installation of signs and/or plaques and/or labels such as "Nice historic hotels" etc. aims to showcase and preserve heritage.

Restoration of ancient objects: preserving memory, passing on knowledge and reflecting on sustainability

The restoration and rehabilitation of antique objects is not limited to a simple technical operation, but constitutes an act of preservation and transmission of living memory. Each object carries stories and know-how that bear witness to past societies and practices, often marked by sustainable and ingenious solutions. Through careful observation and respect for the traces left by the artisans of yesteryear, the restorer becomes the guardian of a collective memory, while paving the way for reflections on sustainability and repair in our contemporary society. This approach also raises fundamental questions about the function of objects in our modern world: beyond their material

use, they embody emotional and cultural values. Ultimately, restoration, far from being limited to a conservation operation, becomes a dialogue between past and present, between materiality and immateriality, a commitment to constant respect for the integrity of objects and the memory they contain.

Sustainable design and cultural innovation: the ecological transition of Mediterranean ports

The ecological transition of ports, particularly in the Mediterranean, is a major challenge that requires an innovative and sustainable approach. Design, as a tool for transformation, plays a central role in this evolution, integrating ecological and functional solutions adapted to the cultural and environmental specificities of the region. By reinventing port structures, promoting renewable energies and reintegrating biodiversity, these projects illustrate the ability of design to respond to contemporary challenges while drawing on a cultural heritage rich in resilient solutions. The new pontoons at the port of Saint-Tropez are a good example of this, as they can collect rainwater, filter it and store it for boaters, provide solar shade to shelter walkers and produce energy, and host underwater reefs to promote biodiversity in the port.

Culture, as a lever for innovation, is therefore essential to inspire this transition. By reviving past knowledge and practices and adapting them to current challenges, we can not only preserve the environment but also revitalise changing territories. The Mediterranean, with its history of resilience and adaptation, offers fertile ground for this transformation, where every constraint becomes an opportunity to reinvent the future. Finally, these initiatives show that the most relevant solutions to ecological challenges are often rooted in our cultural traditions, which remain a powerful vector for sustainable innovation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the eco-friendly transformation of cultural practices, as demonstrated by the example of MAMAC and tourism initiatives in Nice, paves the way for a reconciliation between heritage, innovation and respect for the environment. Concrete actions, whether they concern reducing the carbon footprint or promoting local know-how, are evidence of a growing awareness in the cultural sector. These approaches offer a tangible response to ecological challenges while preserving cultural diversity.

By committing to this transition, culture is becoming a driver of resilience and sustainable innovation, as well as a powerful catalyst for ecological awareness. In this context, the Mediterranean, with its rich history and knowledge, is fertile ground for this eco-cultural revolution.

Round table 3:
Cultural governance: Actors of change, from the local level to the Mediterranean scale

Speakers
Pauline Chaigne - Deputy Director of the Aix-en-Provence Festival and the Mediterranean Youth Orchestra (OJM)
Benjamin Laugier - Head of Audiences at the New National Museum of Monaco, member of the Board of Directors of the BOTOX Contemporary Art Network Alpes & Riviera Botox

Introduction

The aim of this round table is to reflect on the complex link between cultural policies and ecological transition. During the discussions, the issue of governance emerged repeatedly, whether in relation to governments, local authorities, cultural operators, or interactions with artists.

We can consider that this governance operates on three complementary levels.

Firstly, on a *vertical scale*, where processes are rarely built with a single actor, but rather in an inter-institutional manner, involving various levels: municipal, metropolitan, regional, national and even international. Secondly, on a *horizontal level*, which requires working not only with institutions but also with cultural and environmental operators, as well as with citizens, sea users, artists and other civil society actors. Finally, there is *the network level*, which, although not intended to make decisions, plays a central role in the exchange, co-construction and sharing of knowledge and practices.

In this context, the network represents a great opportunity: that of learning from each other and producing collectively, while maintaining unity of purpose.

This raises two key questions:

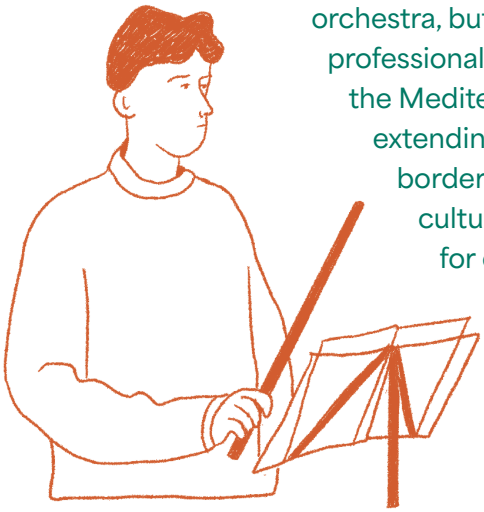
- Does the Mediterranean, as a melting pot, remain a source of inspiration? Do contemporary arts and music in the Mediterranean retain their own specific characteristics, research and struggles?
- Does the Mediterranean, still marked by cultural diversity, continue to be a source of creativity and innovation?

In this context, networks find their effectiveness through connection and interaction with other actors, whether cultural operators or decision-makers. It is a virtuous system, but it remains to be defined how to characterise this Mediterranean ecosystem and what role it plays in the construction of new models of governance.

The Festival d'Aix-en-Provence and the Mediterranean Youth Orchestra: bringing together talent through trans-Mediterranean cultural governance

The Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, founded in 1948, offers a diverse programme that explores different forms of narrative expression and storytelling. One of the festival's main objectives is to put in place measures to support young artists. A significant example of this initiative is the Mediterranean Youth Orchestra, created in 1984. This orchestra embodies the utopian ideal of bringing together young talents from across the Mediterranean basin to form a symphony orchestra, which would be associated with a specific location and could thus develop a specific sound.

Immersion in this programme presents a considerable challenge for these young artists, who must not only form their own



orchestra, but also undertake a tour, a particularly professionalising endeavour. In this context, the Mediterranean is viewed on a large scale, extending beyond the simple regions bordering the sea to encompass a broader cultural dimension, including Portugal, for example. It is also not necessary to be from a Mediterranean country to participate in this project: young people born elsewhere in the world who are studying or starting their careers in the Mediterranean are regularly invited to join the initiative.

The Mediterranean Youth Orchestra relies on a network covering the entire Mediterranean basin to ensure its smooth running. This network must offer local support to identify and support young talent. The presence of conservatories in this network alone is not sufficient, and as these institutions are often too academic, a variety of profiles that can contribute to the professionalisation of young people have been included. This orchestra offers an alternative model, alternating artistic practice with immersion in a real professional situation. Initially made up of teaching staff, the network has evolved to include other players in the cultural sector, such as festival organisers, who bring with them their own networks of curators, producers, etc. The network currently has 42 members.

This relatively informal network, focused on practice and concrete experience, seeks to answer several fundamental questions, including: what is the place of the artist in society?

Cultural heritage and roots vary depending on the artists' countries of origin, as do their conception of the orchestra and

their perception of sound. Although this project was initially launched in France, it has gradually been shaped by Mediterranean influences, with their specific sounds, gestures and heritage.

Territorialisation and institutional collaboration: the role of space and musical practices in the Mediterranean

The orchestra, which has recently been administratively attached to the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, has in fact had a long-standing partnership with this institution. The exchange of best practices, which is particularly important for young artists, is at the heart of this collaboration. Since 2010, the orchestra has benefited from a dynamic network, where young talents are supported by professionals from other major orchestras. While most of these orchestras are supported by administrative institutions, it should be noted that some are self-managed, a model that inspires creativity and autonomy.

In a Mediterranean context marked by difficult socio-economic situations, where many young people come from countries where conditions do not necessarily foster their self-confidence, music becomes a means of resilience and affirmation. The central place of culture in France is an important asset in this area, but it is crucial to note that in many Mediterranean countries, access to cultural facilities is limited. These young artists must therefore demonstrate creativity and adaptability, often in areas that do not necessarily support their endeavours.

A performance organised at the Friche de la Belle de Mai illustrates this dynamic. It was a rare occasion where music took over abandoned, industrial and unconventional spaces. This example highlights an alternative approach, where it is not necessary to have dedicated performance venues to create a place to perform; artists can create their own spaces. This practice is already common among certain musicians,

for whom music remains strongly rooted in Mediterranean culture. Unlike in France, where concert musicians are more highly valued, in the Mediterranean basin, so-called "ballroom" musicians can sometimes find a better means of subsistence through , which raises questions about the social and economic relationships of music, particularly in countries where it has not been separated from its social dimension.

The Mediterranean Youth Orchestra aims to build projects not *for* audiences, but *with* them. The aim is to bring together different forms of artistic expression and create shared forms between civil society and artists. The "Au grand air" programme, for example, combines the recognition and expertise of street artists with their ability to work not only for a given space, but with that space and its environment. This programme offers interactive sound walks, integrating the audience into the experience. In Aix-en-Provence, the programme took place in the Carrières de Bibémus, a place steeped in history where Cézanne painted his works, thus establishing a connection with art. Young musicians were given carte blanche to interact with this space, constantly transforming their creations in contact with various audiences.

This experience demonstrates that, once this type of work has been completed, artists acquire total creative autonomy, capable of pushing the boundaries of conventional spaces and forms of music.

Strengthening the professionalisation of artistic networks: initiatives, mediation and collaboration

The BOTOX network is part of an effort to professionalise the arts sectors, which suffer from insufficient structuring and weak representation among local authorities and public institutions. This situation leads to poor cooperation between arts organisations and the artists themselves, making it

necessary to strengthen this collective dynamic. Several initiatives have been launched to address these shortcomings, such as the 2016 Visual Arts Orientation Plan, modelled on the Contemporary Music Orientation and Development Plan, which was implemented a few years earlier and had already helped to support the structuring of the music sector.

The network also organises meetings in the form of “Assemblies of Values”, aimed at stimulating forward-looking thinking by asking the question: “What could we do better, if anything were possible, to improve the arts sector?” The aim now is to implement the recommendations arising from these exchanges within a framework of collaborative development.

However, we must not forget the main players in this sector: the artists. Unlike those in the performing arts, visual and plastic artists do not benefit from guaranteed remuneration or social security coverage, such as unemployment benefits. This raises the acute question of their economic viability: “Do artists live on love and fresh water?” It is therefore crucial to consider measures that guarantee more structured remuneration and organisational conditions, in particular by developing salary scales and standards, which are still lacking today.

The question of cultural mediation is also important: how can we better address the public and ensure that the content and issues of exhibitions are adequately communicated? New initiatives are emerging to promote this mediation, such as artistic production programmes in various areas of the network, including proposals for alternative cultural activities and , such as walks, parades, and gastronomic events. The Bureau des Guides, for example, organises alternative walks to enable the public to discover the peri-urban landscape from a different angle.

Finally, the Botox network is part of a meta-network, a network within the network, which aims to bring to fruition the ideas and initiatives developed within the CIPAC (Federation of Contemporary Art Professionals), which brings together stakeholders in the sector.

With regard to the ecological transition, the aim is to educate all stakeholders in order to gain acceptance for the transition rather than imposing it.

All the structures that are emerging day after day must be integrated because our region is very conducive to art, culture, etc.

Finally, it is essential to carry out this work in collaboration with the local authorities that support them.

Conclusion and summary of the Forum

The alliance between culture and ecological transition emerged as a fundamental theme in all the round tables at this Forum in Nice. The debates addressed crucial ethical issues, leading to the conclusion that humanity must redefine its relationship with its environment and living beings. This involves a renewal of kindness towards the living world, in all its diversity.

Artists play a key role in this approach to benevolence: through their fight against apathy, their poetry and their social roots, they question, raise awareness and, above all, regenerate both practices and territories.

There is also a legal aspect: it is necessary to examine the legal personality of environmental structures in the Mediterranean, as well as the artist's relationship to their creative role and their ability to perpetuate this process through creation.

This dynamic cannot be achieved in isolation; it requires networks and a gradual, co-constructed approach. The transition must be deployed at different scales, ranging from the Mediterranean as a whole to resilient micro-territories, while connecting these scales. Time scales must also be taken into account, between the urgent and the long term.

This implies a new form of territorial governance, as well as the emergence of evolving professions and the acquisition of increased skills, particularly at the intersection of culture and the environment.

It is therefore essential to cultivate confidence in ourselves and in our territory: the Mediterranean is unique, but also pluralistic, and constitutes a veritable cradle from which polyphonic voices

emerge. It is a space for collective reflection, the “most powerful common denominator”, to use Paul Valéry’s phrase, and a place where minds interact and engage in dialogue on global causes.

Finally, the Mediterranean, through its primarily cultural dimension, has unique potential to actively participate in transforming the world and combating climate change.

Vitrolles Open Forum

23-24 may 2025


Map of Vitrolles

Official opening

by the Mayor, Loïc Gachon

- ## A clearly defined territory marked by spectacular transformation

  Vitrolles stands out for its vast natural space and clear territorial layout, particularly when viewed from outside. This formerly rural town has undergone a radical transformation.

  - In 1950, Vitrolles was an essentially rural area, crossed by a railway line, with around 350 inhabitants.
  - In 2025, the town has 35,000 inhabitants, representing growth of nearly 10,000% in 75 years.
  - In 1979, Vitrolles became a booming new town, riding the wave of the “oil boom”. The vision was of a town designed around car use (with separate areas for living/working/shopping).

  But this development model failed: it produced a town dependent on cars, contrary to the contemporary idea of the 15-minute town. These standardised spaces seem interchangeable, devoid of meaning and identity. This feeling of uniformity generates deep frustration: it becomes difficult to recognise oneself in one’s own territory.

- ## Identity and sense of belonging

  The question of identity is central, but it must be handled with care. Identity can be inclusive or exclusive, depending on whether it opens up or closes off. When it becomes a tool for withdrawal, it expresses a divorce between residents and

institutions: citizens no longer feel represented by those who manage their territory. This is what leads to an "identity shift"[1].

- ## Rethinking the city in the 21st century

The challenge for Vitrolles is to become a 21st-century city. This involves redefining the link between residents and their territory and building an inclusive identity. The urban strategy adopted aims to make Vitrolles a city that can be appropriated and shared, to "create a city", i.e. to create a common heritage.

  - In the 1950s, the city was designed according to a functionalist logic, without any real creation of symbolic places.
  - Today, the aim is to create urban landmarks such as the La Passerelle media library and its large square, spaces that encourage sharing and interaction.

- ## Renewed construction approaches

Development methods have changed: gone are the days of standardised projects imposed on the territory. The challenge now is to "cultivate" the city, on both a large and small scale, by telling a sustainable story.

One of these central stories is that of transport. The aim is to reduce dependence on cars, enabling each household to live comfortably with only one car, or even without one.

- ## Culture, memory and development

Development alone is not enough to bring a place to life. A territory only has meaning if it is inhabited and supported

1 From 1997 to 2002, the mayor of Vitrolles was Mrs Catherine Mégret, from the Front National (FN) party and then the Mouvement National Républicain (MNR) party.

by a collective culture. Places must be steeped in history and sharing, and brought together around:

- cultural events,
- ongoing programmes,

The Médiathèque de la Passerelle illustrates this shift: it marked the transition from a town with no name or identity to a town conscious of itself. At its inauguration, it brought together around 1,500 people, representing the full diversity of Vitrolles. It was a founding moment, experienced collectively in the public square.

La Passerelle Library

Conclusion: reinventing Vitrolles: between memory, co-creation and Mediterranean openness

by Marie Baduel

In Vitrolles, reconnecting with the past is essential in order to respond to the challenges of the present. But the cultural history of the city has been so mistreated, even ignored, that it is not enough to turn to memory: we must now invent new places dedicated to the co-creation and co-design of urban uses. It is these spaces for dialogue, experimentation and appropriation that will enable us to write a new shared narrative.

Identifying with Vitrolles is not just about connecting with one's neighbourhood or local history: it is also about connecting with other territories in a spirit of openness. Vitrolles is a Mediterranean city, and it is this cultural, climatic and social dimension that must be fully embraced and promoted.

This ambition can only be realised through close collaboration between cultural services and spatial planning services. By combining their perspectives and skills, these two areas can work together to create a liveable, shared and meaningful city, where spatial planning becomes a vehicle for culture, and culture a lever for spatial planning.

Vitrolles Rock

Mediterranean Voices: Between New Imperatives and the Ability to Re-Experience Territories

by Amine Benaissa

1. The origins of an ambition: urban control

Urban control is one of the great utopias of the 20th century. It is based on the idea that cities can be designed, organised and planned in a rational manner in order to meet the social, economic and political needs of a given era.

a. The era of cities

The **commercial city** is structured around its boundaries. These are not only physical: they play a unifying role in urban organisation and contribute fully to the construction of urban identity and lifestyles.

With the **industrial city**, a dual mechanism emerged. On the one hand, the polarisation of activities strengthened certain urban centres. On the other hand, the city had to expand in order to accommodate both new industries and the populations that came to work there. This dynamic profoundly transformed urban forms and territorial balances.

The **post-industrial city** marks a new stage. In many Mediterranean territories, industry remains important, but it is no longer sufficient on its own. Value creation, innovation and economic diversification become central.

The **22@ project in Barcelona** illustrates this logic. The aim was to move beyond the model of a dormitory town or a town exclusively for tourists and to position Barcelona in the long term as a city of transitions. The sectors targeted included energy, medical technologies, design and media. The project was based on strong urban planning choices, such as authorising construction on previously prohibited land or increasing the floor area ratio, provided that the projects were part of these strategic sectors and contributed to the creation of public and green spaces. This approach enabled the creation of thousands of square metres while delegating part of the costs to private initiative. However, the long timeframe of the project clashed with the short timeframe of electoral democracy, as the elected officials behind the project were defeated in the following elections.

Today, what could be called the **city of the "after"** is emerging, marked by the need to profoundly renew our relationship with living things. Cities can no longer be thought of independently of nature, ecosystems and resources.

b. The age of ideas

Urban thinking is also part of a long intellectual tradition. The Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution placed reason at the heart of the organisation of the world. This rationality has profoundly influenced the way cities and territories are designed.

The notion of the **general interest** varies according to culture. In the Latin tradition, the general interest is not simply the sum of individual interests. Conversely, in Anglo-Saxon culture, it is the result of their aggregation. This difference in conception has a strong influence on modes of urban governance.

The crisis of the 1930s and the period of the **Great Transformation** reinforced the idea that territories needed to be thought of on different scales and over several decades. The logic

derived from the military and industri s enabled significant rationalisation and vast territorial transformations.

Today, we are witnessing a profound reversal in our relationship with living things, which calls these inherited models into question.

2. The emergence of reality: a few injunctions

a. Uncertainties

Territories are now facing a wide variety of transformations, which are often complex and interdependent. Technological, economic or governance risks can jeopardise a project, without it being possible to anticipate or cover them all. This requires collective choices, which must necessarily be democratic.

Territories are increasingly finding themselves at the limits of predictability. Recent crises – the Covid-19 pandemic, major energy failures, geopolitical tensions, wars and aggressive trade policies – illustrate the scale of the external disruptions they face.

In this context, projects must remain open. They must provide structure and direction while allowing for adaptation, response and transformation. It is a question of finding a balance between stability and flexibility, as illustrated by the concept of the 'black swan'.

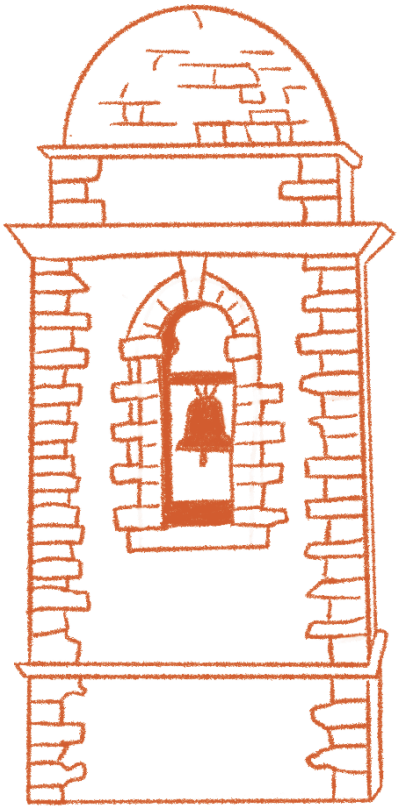
b. Economy and cohesion

The relationship between the economy and the city is consubstantial with urban history. The example of **Amsterdam in the 16th century** bears witness to this. The city's wealth was based on the spice trade with the East. Two major innovations explain its rise: the sharing of commercial risk among several players, who invested collectively in several ships, and the invention of the crankshaft, which made it possible to transform the circular motion of mills into lateral

motion and significantly increase shipbuilding. Amsterdam thus became the main economic hub of the 17th century.

Economic development promotes urban development, and innovation acts as a driver of transformation. This often arises on the margins, in peripheral or interstitial spaces, making the issue of margins essential when considering the future of territories.

Today, territorial attractiveness largely depends on the ability to position oneself in areas of innovation and to create conditions conducive to transition. However, these transitions can weaken the most vulnerable populations and accentuate social inequalities.



Bell tower of Saint-Roch Church

These phenomena are amplified by the reshaping of the global geography. The weakening of the Atlantic axis and the rise of the Pacific are gradually marginalising the Mediterranean, a trend that is likely to accelerate with climate change and the opening of new trade routes, particularly polar routes.

In the short term, responses are often local and community-based. In the longer term, structural responses will be necessary. For the Mediterranean, this raises the question of a "-reinvention of the Suez Canal", in both a symbolic and strategic sense. From this perspective, culture could be a major

lever for repositioning, as suggested by the symbolic arc stretching from Jericho to Mexico City.

c. Climate

The climate issue must be integrated into territorial policies in a central way, not only from the perspective of resilience, but also in terms of upstream action.

Reducing global warming is a major challenge. Around a quarter of greenhouse gas emissions come from local areas, which gives them real power to take action.

It is also essential to mitigate the impacts that are already inevitable. The floods in Gironde, which notably affected the Blayais nuclear power plant, show how rising sea levels drastically increase the likelihood of extreme events. By 2050, some Mediterranean cities, such as Alexandria, could be largely submerged.

Added to these risks are those linked to water pollution, plastics and other environmental pressures. Given this complexity, systemic approaches are essential.

It is also becoming necessary to promote new economic and territorial models. History offers many examples of local techniques for managing scarce resources, whether water or building insulation. This knowledge must be rediscovered and reappropriated.

Finally, the ecological transition can only succeed if it is linked to a reduction in social inequalities.

d. Temporality

Territorial projects face constant tension between different temporalities. Democratic temporality requires actions to be sequenced and short-term progress to be made visible.

The long term corresponds to territorial strategies. It is like a marathon and requires reinventing a narrative and a shared vision of the territory.

The short term is more about tactics and everyday democracy. It involves breaking projects down into successive stages, or steps, in order to generate a dynamic of "positive contagion". This logic refers to the idea of the "open work" developed by Umberto Eco.

e. Collective intelligence

Collective intelligence is based on the principle of working with everyone and for everyone. Bottom-up approaches are becoming increasingly important and are being combined with more institutional approaches.

These processes raise many questions, both conceptual and operational, and mobilise a variety of tools for consultation and co-creation.

The central challenge lies in striking a balance between determination and generation. How far can consultation go without blocking decision-making? This question is worth asking, for example when considering the possibility of carrying out major structural projects such as the Parisian boulevards in a fully participatory framework. Nevertheless, these approaches constitute genuine experiments in democratic urban planning.

f. Artificial intelligence

Artificial intelligence is a new challenge for local authorities. It is transforming the way cities are designed, managed and planned, while profoundly challenging the professions of planning and urban development.

3. Ways of thinking

Thinking about the future of local areas first requires a vision capable of re-enchanting local development and giving meaning to public action.

This vision must be accompanied by a search for coherence. The city can no longer be thought of as a simple addition of functions, but as a complex synthesis of social, economic, cultural and environmental dimensions.

It is also necessary to think in terms of tactics and priorities. In areas under pressure, the fundamental questions remain: where do we come from, where are we going and what levers should we pull? Barcelona, for example, has made the strategic choice to focus on public spaces, cultural facilities and expanding the cultural offering.

Finally, governance plays a central role. Territorial management is more like the role of a jazz bandleader than that of a classical conductor. It is based on improvisation, listening and adaptation, rather than rigidity and the strict execution of a score.

This means working with the strengths, skills and intelligence already present in the region, promoting them rather than trying to constrain them.

Conclusion

Just as the Bauhaus brought a new approach to urban planning in the industrial era, contemporary urban planning must now bring a new meaning to regional development projects. It is no longer so much a question of control as of working in harmony with living organisms, the long term, uncertainties, local resources and citizens' aspirations.

This means reinventing a narrative, building a vision and looking to the future. However, this vision must be translated into concrete and operational steps. The challenge is to enable a city to move from a very difficult situation to a dynamic of movement and transformation.

From this perspective, 'positive contamination' can be an essential lever for initiating and spreading change.

Collective intelligence & Mediterranean dynamics

by Marie Baduel

We are in the Mediterranean, in an increasingly bottom-up dynamic, where collective intelligence is becoming an essential lever.

- ## Three key convictions

  1. Re-enchanting territorial development: breathing new life and hope for the future.
  2. Think coherently: the city and the region are not a collection of projects, but a synthesis, an integrated vision.
  3. Act tactically: which levers should be used? A concrete example: a project integrating public space, cultural space and rehousing.

- ## The Mediterranean: a climate alert, but also a founding space

  - Climate hotspot: the Mediterranean is now a highly vulnerable region.
  - Cradle of civilisations: once a space for exchange, confrontation of ideas and movement.
  - Today: it has become a sea of rubbish, consumable, sometimes a graveyard. An instrumental and destructive relationship has taken hold.

- ## Culture and territories: towards a new relationship with living things

  How can culture play a profound role in the way we shape our territories?

  - Reinventing our relationship with living things.
  - Rediscovering an ecosystemic link: between humans, nature, the sea and territories.
  - Reinventing our practices through a sensitive, creative, collective approach.

- ## The central role of local authorities

  They are **at the heart of this transformation** because they have both:

  - local roots,
  - networking capabilities.

- ## Four research and analysis booklets

  We have begun work on four booklets, guided by a central question:

  What role can Mediterranean culture play in the transformation of our territories?

  Some ideas:

  - Culture as a driver of transition?
  - The Mediterranean as a scale for restructuring and cooperation?
  - Culture as a strong link between Mediterranean territories, to rebuild a collective foundation?
  - A new relationship between humans and their environments: nature, the sea, others?

Culture and territorial engineering: a fruitful relationship

By Maud Le Floc'h

- Can culture “steal” territorial engineering?
- Can it transform the way we plan, through working with the public, our ability to bring people together and challenge them?
- Experiments are emerging everywhere: renaturation of cities, culture and transition.

Mediterranean living labs

- **Development projects** linked to **cultural initiatives.**
- Objective: to identify the links between **culture, territory and transition.**
- Each experiment is the subject of an **analysis booklet**, to enable their **reproducibility**.

Towards a Mediterranean manifesto

- Territorial forums will serve as **a basis for feeding into the process**.
- Objective: a **manifesto signed in Izmir**, focusing on **ecological transition, art and culture.**
- This manifesto must become:
  - an initiative to be amplified,
  - a tool for mobilisation,
  - a convergence of the entire Mediterranean ecosystem (local authorities, associations, academics, etc.).

- A Mediterranean Biennial of Art and Culture of Transition
  - Proposed at **the UNOC World Summit.**
  - A biennial event that:
    - coordinates **local initiatives**,
    - conveys **a common message**,
    - **brings living labs** to life through concrete projects.

The relational landscape, a driver for ecological transition: rethinking our relationship with the territory to respond to the challenges of climate, life, social ties and democracy

by Bertrand Folléa

Landscape culture remains too marginal in society. It struggles to influence minds and be taken seriously in economic, sociological and media circles. Yet it represents a major challenge, a lever capable of accelerating profound societal transformation, far beyond simple adaptation.

1. The legacy of the oil civilisation

Recent history has shaped an imaginary of growth rooted in the oil civilisation. The Trente Glorieuses, the Athens Charter, and figures such as Le Corbusier defended the idea of a radical break with the past – even considering the demolition of historic centres. This model imposed itself physically, but also mentally.

This legacy continues to shape our world: energy dependence, geopolitical conflicts linked to oil (Iraq, Syria, Ukraine), growing individualism, social selfishness. These are all elements that make up the “great acceleration”. Yet these ways of thinking remain unsuited to the complex systems in which we live today.

2. Landscape as relationship

Rather than a simple image, landscape can be thought of as a fabric of relationships. It is constructed from a

tangible reality, an intertwining of populations and their living environments. This relationship is multifaceted: ecological (objective, tangible), cultural (subjective, sensitive) and social (creating bonds and connections).

Landscape is neither a territory to be equipped nor a backdrop to be planted downstream of projects. Nor should it be reduced to a fixed, conservative identity, turned in on itself. It is not a painting to be preserved, but a living space to be set in motion. It is a question of positioning the term correctly and actively mobilising it in policies and projects.

Working on the landscape is like sewing: respecting the scales (“the pattern”), taking care of the edges (“the hems”), paying attention to the details (“the motifs”), because it is precisely these details that allow us to inhabit a place in a sober, respectful and socially open way. The landscape then becomes a precious material for rebuilding social ties and combating soil erosion and biodiversity loss.

What is culture if not a form of experience specific to a particular territory? Not everyone inhabits the same worlds: thinking about landscape means entering into this diversity of experiences and valuing it as the heart of culture.

3. The landscape method: a method for transition

Thinking about landscape as a project means moving away from the logic of infrastructure, postcards or simple decoration. It is no longer a question of setting the scene, but of entering into dialogue with living things.

This method is based on several principles:

- Taking into account the tangible reality of the territory, beyond quantitative data alone.
- Integrating living things in all their dimensions, without compartmentalising the ecological and the social.
- A cross-disciplinary approach that transcends disciplinary silos.
- A participatory approach, because the landscape can be understood and shaped collectively.
- A combination of creativity and practicality, in direct confrontation with reality.

It is a way of reorienting land use planning based on what is already there, what is experienced, perceived and shared.

4. The archipelago of metamorphoses

Faced with urban sprawl and the continentalisation of conurbations – often driven by infrastructure – certain alternative models are emerging. Unique forms of housing and land use remain, particularly in the Mediterranean.

The archipelago becomes a powerful metaphor: a set of related places, connected but unique. Unbuilt space, shorelines, and areas where villages, rivers and the sea meet are the foundations of this logic. These spaces form the structure of a territorial transformation that respects local identities.

In many urban planning documents, the space of relationship is not considered. However, the landscape fabric makes it possible to counter this tendency towards standardisation and loss of uniqueness.

Conclusion

What is at stake here is an ecological and social connection that can give rise to a culture of the environment. The landscape becomes a tool for weaving, which concerns not only the centre of the carpet but also its fringes:

- → Cross-disciplinary work,
- → Areas of friction,
- → A relational approach.

It is indeed a matter of ecological and social connections, to create culture in the environment.

In the background, there is a fertile tension between Fernand Braudel, who thought of the Mediterranean as a unified space, and Edouard Glissant, who emphasised diversity and creolisation. A balance must be found between political unity and respect for singularities. From this perspective, the landscape can become the basis for a common meaning, a shared but not uniform culture.

Walking as a form of discussion, a tool for transition and for reading the landscape

by Julie de Muer

In contexts of institutional suffering, walking can play a restorative role. It becomes a collective act, a way of re-establishing connections and setting in motion what has been fragmented.

This approach originated in an experiment conducted in the northern districts of Marseille. The initial aim was to reconnect with everyday landscapes, local facilities, schools and community structures. Walking served a dual purpose: as **an artistic practice on the one hand, and as a means of exploring territories damaged by history**, on the other. In these marginalised areas, it helped to create processes of weaving, orchestration and connection.

The GR2013 illustrates this dynamic. Designed as a **metropolitan** trail, it goes beyond the urban or peri-urban dimension alone. What characterises it is its ability to **tell the story of the territory** it crosses. Every trail constructs a narrative, revealing a landscape, but above all, it allows us to think about that landscape in a different way. It becomes a narrative structure, a lever for inhabiting metropolitan space differently.

This trail is the result of patient, in-depth work in the field. Developing an itinerary requires collective agreement on the direction and the stories to be told. It is a demanding but fundamental process. It is a **relational practice of the landscape**, built on cross-disciplinary approaches and experimentation. And once the trail is in place, it must **be kept alive**: without this, it risks becoming a mere abstract route, disconnected from its uses and communities.

The integrated approach in the GR2013 also combines a **participatory methodology**: for example, through the collection of "100 viewpoints", a photographic approach designed to document, share and enrich the experience of the trail from a variety of perspectives.

This type of initiative, driven by citizens rather than political institutions, raises questions **about how it can be replicated**. It is not a matter of duplicating a fixed model, but of passing on a **methodology for the process**, which involves one essential condition: creating **communities of use** around the trail. When this works, a transformative effect can be felt.

The GR2013 experience has thus helped to foster a shared awareness in a highly fragmented territory. A **trail effect** has occurred, revealing a collective capacity to connect and invent a new way of reading the metropolitan landscape.

Presentations by École de Condé

- ## Presentation 1: An action research project on the Hermès area in Vitrolles

  The presentation by the Master 1 students at the École de Condé is part of a **living lab approach**, with the implementation of **participatory research protocols** conducted by Master 1 students. The chosen site: the **Hermès area in Vitrolles**, a dense urban space comprising Saint-Exupéry Park, the former Paul Gauguin School (now disused), and Adventure Park, which is little used but has great potential.

  This configuration was seen as an **ideal setting for a scenographic experiment**, combining sensitive questioning and citizen participation. The student team visited the site to observe the premises, meet users, and document daily practices.

  The methodology developed was based on **mapping uses and habits**, with surveys on the frequency of visits to green spaces, users' motivations, barriers to certain uses (e.g. why the Adventure Park remains underused), and expressed expectations. This data highlighted the sometimes contradictory needs of different categories of users, underscoring the importance of a **co-construction process that is attentive to these tensions**.

  Three **main areas for consideration** emerged:

  - Providing **a space** for residents **to express themselves**;
  - Exploring **the relationship between users, urban and natural environments**;
  - Rethinking **flows, encounters and sensory perceptions** in public spaces.

These avenues led to the design of a **participatory module** intended to promote collective ownership of the park. This module combines several dimensions: **biodiversity**, **play**, **intergenerational encounters**, and **social communication**. It could serve as **a support for the local community** and strengthen the role of existing social structures.

Two concrete proposals have been formulated:

- **A gentle introduction to the space**, an " " that values users. This could take the form of activities such as listening or photography walks (with disposable cameras), where participants capture their environment, produce visual or audio narratives, and collectively decide how to showcase this material (exhibition, display on the module, etc.).
- A fun initiative called **"Safara"** (meaning "travel" in Arabic), consisting of **educational games** inspired by local biodiversity: card games such as "7 families", "who am I?", "Top species", or even "hide and seek" with the region's iconic species.

These activities could be enhanced with **additional**, more developed **modules** (tables, installations, green areas), promoting a **more sensory and physical connection with the environment**.

An **impact assessment system** is also being considered, with, for example, QR codes allowing participants to provide feedback on the workshops, the use of the module, or the transformation of the site.

Consideration is also being given to the **practical implementation**. A **social integration project** is being considered to directly involve local residents in the construction of certain features of the future park, further strengthening the project's local roots.

Finally, several additional ideas have been proposed:

- Working **on the imagination around local toponymy** (place names) as a narrative and cultural lever (proposal by Nathalie Siran);
- Linking the concepts of **common goods** and **biodiversity** to integrate ecological and collective dimensions into the project design.

The next stage of the work is based on a **data collection** phase that is already underway, but also on the **development of the following stages**, with the necessary involvement of elected officials, residents and local stakeholders.

- ## Presentation 2: Rethinking the relationship between urban culture and living culture: an interdisciplinary exploration

The group of Master 2 students developed an **engaging project** at the intersection of living culture and urban culture. This project was built around the exploration of **four fundamental concepts**: culture, territory, nature and participation. The aim was to propose a sensitive and critical approach capable of **re-examining the relationship between cities and ecosystems**, starting from a specific site: the former Paul Gauguin school and its surroundings.

The tools used made it possible to articulate conceptual abstraction and tangible material. For example, the concept of territory was envisaged as an evolving fabric, endowed with physical characteristics (porosity, density, malleability), but also social and symbolic characteristics. Based on urban planning documents (PADD and PLU), the study revealed the planned destruction of the school, raising important questions about the identity of places and the revaluation of materials, particularly rubble, in a logic of memory and circularity.

Particular attention was paid to **ecological continuity**, which has been undermined by fragmented urbanisation, even though nature offers cross-cutting benefits (climatic, social, environmental). The **central question** formulated on the basis of these findings was: how can we promote active coexistence between nature and the urban environment, based on the principles of ecological continuity?

Three key areas were identified:

- The **reintegration of biodiversity** into the urban fabric,
- The creation of a **sensory and participatory journey**,
- The establishment of a **sensitive mediation process** between residents and living organisms.

The proposed journey is based on a physical experience of nature in the city, inspired in particular by forest therapy. The aim is to invite passers-by to perform micro-gestures within the park – walking barefoot, creating an ephemeral work of art from elements found on the ground, listening to the surrounding sounds – with the help of QR codes positioned in different locations. These experiences aim to reconnect bodies and imaginations with nature, making visible what often remains invisible in an urban context.

The proposal is therefore based on the idea of offering a fragment of nature that can be experienced and shared in the urban environment, while raising the question of the scale and vocabulary to be used: should we talk about nature, or rather a garden? This nuance was raised in the discussions, particularly in recalling that urban parks are often perceived as spaces of comfort and regulation, whereas their role as meadows, edges and places of contact with less domesticated forms of life remains essential to preserve.

Several comments enriched the discussion:

- The need to **remain attentive to the multiple** and sometimes contradictory **uses** of the site, avoiding the pitfalls of weak consensus or individualised responses to each expectation;
- The challenge of a **Mediterranean interpretation of the urban park**, which was insufficiently present in the initial proposal: what forms, what uses, what narratives are linked to local communities, dry landscapes and Mediterranean mythologies?

The contributions to the discussion made it possible to recontextualise this work within a broader reflection, which began during the day. The following points were raised:

- The necessary transformations in the face of the legacy of the oil civilisation, which require us to **think of the landscape as a relationship**, rather than as a backdrop or support;
- The importance of a **landscape method** based on sewing, porosity and capillarity;
- The role of walking as **an initiatory and cultural practice**, in line with the great Mediterranean narratives (the Odyssey, the founding voyages);

The idea that **heritage** is not simply a static object but a **lever for change**, capable of generating development and shared meaning.

This Master 2 project, through its focus on uses, sensoriality and mediation, is therefore part of a broader dynamic of **reinventing the links between humans and their environment**, between the memory of a place and its possible futures, between living beings and the city.

Urban planning and the Mediterranean context: architecture and climate adaptation, the example of Arles

by Clément Gaillard

How can vernacular architecture inspire new strategies in the face of climate change?

This local architecture, sometimes referred to as 'architecture without architects' (Rudofsky), is based on a detailed knowledge of the territory, its resources and its constraints. Before the era of abundant energy, building meant working with locally available materials and climatic conditions. Shapes, volumes and orientations were designed to take advantage of winds, sunlight, humidity and seasonal cycles. These choices, far from being purely technical, were also influenced by cultural factors.

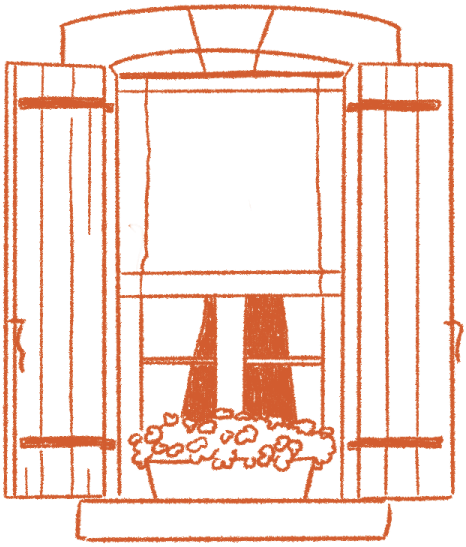
Contemporary bioclimatic architecture is part of this heritage: it seeks to maximise the natural assets of a location (sunlight, breezes, thermal inertia, etc.) to meet the needs of its inhabitants. These needs are also socially and culturally constructed: the challenge is therefore both architectural and sociological.

In Arles, several issues have been identified: significant heritage constraints that hinder transformation, overcrowding in underground areas to escape the heat despite their fragility, narrow streets that retain heat at night, and highly exposed areas where shade is sorely lacking. These characteristics contribute to the formation of urban heat islands.

In this context, certain historical solutions are now worth reviving. These include:

- **The use of curtains suspended above the streets**, which create shade and limit heating;
- **The reopening of the Craponne canal**, which could promote the circulation of cool air through water evaporation and enhance the thermal comfort of the city centre, thanks to the combination with sea breezes;
- **Patios with sloping roofs**, designed to capture and diffuse cool air into homes;
- **Sparta blinds**, made from local reeds, combining traditional know-how, thermal regulation and relocation of production.

These ideas are not simply nostalgic. They embody a reinterpretation of past knowledge in the light of contemporary challenges, with a view to gentle, grounded and reasoned adaptation. As Gilbert Simondon's quote reminds us: "Techniques are never completely and forever in the past."



The open dialogue around these practices also invites us to re-evaluate intangible heritage—crafts, techniques, materials—that could today inspire a different way of living.

Examples of major development projects, Grand Parc Urbain and Fontblanche Site

by Michael Menuet and Coralie Charron

1. Area between Exupéry Park, Aventure Park and the former Paul Gauguin School

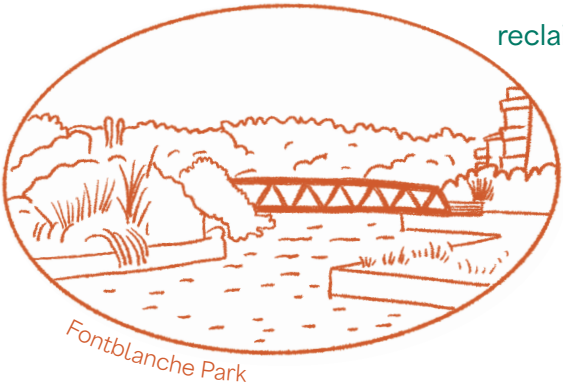
The intervention focuses on a currently fragmented space located between several iconic but disjointed areas of the city. The project draws on inspiring references, such as the Domaine du Rayol, to reinterpret Mediterranean gardens as an invitation to travel, imagination and biodiversity.

In particular, it aims to promote water as a resource and driving force of life, for example by integrating rainwater management to create micro-refuges for fauna and flora. The project thus seeks to weave a sensitive narrative of the site, while drawing on the uses and memories of the place.

2. Domaine de Fontblanche

This second site, rich in agricultural and industrial history (former flour mill, farm), has also had a strong cultural dimension since the 1970s. The study undertaken here aims to reinterpret the landscape identity of a site where historical layers, physical traces and contemporary uses accumulate.

The estate is now divided into three distinct areas—La Tullière, a community space and a sports area—so the challenge is to transform this fragmentation into a resource by revealing a common thread running through the landscape. The strategy for



reclaiming the site is based on pathways: the historical axes that still exist make it possible to imagine a gentle rearticulation between the different entities of the site.

- **Conclusion** by the Mayor - Loïc Gachon

These projects, which are more modest in scale than large-scale urban developments, are fundamental to the creation of a sense of community. They do not seek to homogenise everything, but rather to embrace the diversity of practices, atmospheres and temporalities. Here, the landscape becomes a mediator between scales and uses, but also between history and the present.

As the Mayor pointed out, the question of the “outside” takes on a particularly strong dimension in the Mediterranean: it is there that the space for encounter, sharing, climate and sensitivity comes into play. Shadow, light, thresholds and the transition between public and private are at the heart of a new art of living that can only be built through subtle, contextual and attentive projects. Without this, the city risks remaining a juxtaposition of elements. Yet this is the opposite of what a city should be: a city is what connects, what creates links.

Vitrolles, marked by a sometimes brutal urban history, needs these finely crafted projects to rediscover a sense of community. It is through the landscape that another culture of the city can emerge.

Territorial transition for culture and culture for territorial transition

by Maud le Floc'h

Seven years ago, a study conducted for the Ministry of Culture proposed a **guide** highlighting the links between art and regional planning. This reflection is now paving the way for a **re-tooling of regional policies**, based on a cultural approach to transition.

The aim is to **regenerate**:

- **resilience** to climate change,
- **democratic dynamics**,
- the **representation of territories**,
- **links between centres and peripheries**.

Territories in transition can thus become **fertile laboratories** for experimenting with the link between culture and territorial transition, and for constructing the narratives that accompany them.

One inspiring example is the RAUM Labor initiative, a Berlin-based collective located on a former airport that has been converted into a wetland. This changing space now welcomes architects and designers through workshops, lecture series, performances and mapping workshops, particularly as part of the Floating University project. The challenge is to get to know the place as it transforms, starting with the work of art and moving towards a notion of permanence and a sensitive encounter with the environment.

These new modes of action illustrate how **cultural actors can have a lasting influence on land-use planning practices**.

The experience of European Capitals of Culture

by Jean-François Chougnet

The European Capitals of Culture programme was born out of a simple observation: nobody was interested in Europe. So in 1985, the idea was born to create a major cultural event that would unite the peoples of Europe around a sense of belonging.

Since then, 73 European cities have been designated capitals, with a gradual increase in popularity:

1985 primarily symbolic in nature,
2005 institutionalisation with the establishment of a formal cultural programme,
2011 professionalisation (establishment of juries, calls for applications, significant investment),
2020 entry into a **sustainable legacy** approach, which includes the **Bourges 2028** bid.

Originally, only one city was chosen per year. Then, in response to growing interest, the model changed to two cities per edition, to allow for faster rotation. In 2000, a symbolic year, up to six or seven capitals were selected so as not to exclude too many states.

A geographical imbalance persists: the Mediterranean remains under-represented. Several countries in the Mediterranean basin systematically choose cities located outside this area.

Since 2010, EU candidate countries have also been eligible. This has enabled cities such as Istanbul (2010), Novi Sad, Serbia (2022) , and Skopje, North Macedonia (scheduled for 2028) to participate.

2025 will mark a first: two border cities, Gorizia (Italy) and Nova Gorica (Slovenia), will be joint capitals, alongside a German city.

However, some applications have been based on a territorial marketing approach, disconnected from social or environmental issues.

- In 2004, Lille used its designation as a lever for economic and tourist attractiveness, supported by the Grand Lille employers' club, after failing to win the Olympic Games. The programme did not include sustainability, citizen participation or social issues: it was primarily about restoring the image of the region.
- Marseille followed a similar path. It was after its failed bid for the America's Cup that the city turned to culture. Without this failure, the Mucem might never have seen the light of day.

Towards a new model? The case of Bourges 2028

Bourges' bid, which was selected over Montpellier, Clermont-Ferrand and Rouen, stood out for several reasons:

- It is one of the least expensive projects.
- It is the first bid to address the issue of low carbon emissions.
- It highlights the concept of "territories of the future", with a European matrix, innovative forms of citizen governance and a particular focus on cultural rights.
- Bourges does not have an airport and encourages travel by train. The city is even trying to convince the SNCF to create night trains to other European cities.

European discussions underway

A meeting was recently held at the European Parliament to discuss the future of the programme after 2033, its current expiry date. Three main themes emerged:

- **Strengthening the concept of "legacy"** (lasting heritage),
- **Measuring the social impact of culture** at Community level,
- **Making culture a tool of diplomacy** for countries applying to join the EU.

In Marseille, the cultural capital ended up with a budget surplus of €780,000. Director Bruno Suzzarelli proposed using it to plant trees as carbon offsetting. This idea was rejected, and the funds were ultimately used for MP2018 without any sustainable dimension.

This illustrates a structural limitation: environmental compensation measures should be integrated from the outset into this type of event, which often has a heavy carbon footprint.

Conclusion

The poster for *Marseille 2013*, read: "Come down to the capital". Forty years later, the central question is perhaps: what kind of capital do we want? A capital of culture for prestige, or a capital that promotes a cultural model that is firmly rooted, sustainable, socially useful and capable of meeting contemporary challenges?

Culture as a Catalyst for Territorial Transition

by Maud Le Floc'h

The example of the European Capitals of Culture raises questions about how culture can shape a region, generate economic activity, drive urban renewal and enhance attractiveness.

But today, the question has shifted: **how can culture become a lever for transition**?

The cultural world has the ability to offer unconventional points of view and to shift established perspectives. The Loire Parliament, for example, invites us to shift our focus, to no longer look at the river solely from a human perspective, but to view it as a living being that flows through us as much as we flow through it. It is a call to move from anthropocentrism to ecocentrism, to rethink our relationship with the world and with other living beings.

This approach does not take the form of militant activism or protest, but rather of listening to the voices of the environment, in the awareness that we are an integral part of it.

It is not about being subversive, but about developing our tools and methods so that they can incorporate this new vision. It is an open approach to development, which leaves room for narrative, fiction and culture, and which is now being accelerated by the urgency of environmental issues.

How does territorial governance encourage a global transition movement? Examples of initiatives by public actors

Speakers
Louis Burle - Deputy Regional Director, DRAC PACA

The Deputy Regional Director of Cultural Affairs (DRAC) shared his career path and his thoughts on how public policies, particularly cultural policies, can and must evolve in the face of ecological transition challenges.

A critical view of administrative compartmentalisation
A former advisor to the book industry, he discussed the rigid logic of public policy, which is too often confined to normative categories. He lamented that stakeholders (elected officials, civil servants) think in silos and that norms often hinder innovation and cooperation. In his view, more collective intelligence, cross-functionality and boldness are needed to break down barriers between approaches, particularly by linking functions (libraries and leisure centres, for example).

A Ministry of Culture that must be exemplary
The DRAC PACA has embarked on an internal transformation, led by a government administrator appointed to a position focused on cultural and creative industries and ecological transition. The aim is to question internal practices, behaviours and travel, and to experiment with sustainable solutions.

Some examples:

- Reducing carbon emissions from transport: reflecting on the use of service vehicles, encouraging

public transport (difficult in a large region) and carpooling, despite regulatory constraints.
- Experimental installation of photovoltaic tiles on the roofs of the DRAC building: although still not very efficient, they are adapted to heritage constraints in terms of visual integration.

Two major areas of action: heritage and creation

1. Heritage: Transipat programme

- The PACA region is highly constrained by heritage protection measures (20% of the territory concerned).
- Historically, projects aimed at introducing ecological solutions (such as solar panels) were rejected in 95% of cases.
- An initiative has been launched to bring together the ABF (Architectes des Bâtiments de France), parks, the DREAL, etc., to develop a more open common doctrine.
- Example of Gourdon (06): proposal for a decentralised photovoltaic power plant rather than a rooftop installation, to reconcile energy production with heritage protection.
- Work is underway on biodiversity in buildings (nesting boxes, preservation of fauna/flora) and on combating heat islands.

2. Creation: Transition en scène program

- An agreement (scheduled to be launched on 20 June) is being prepared with the region and Arsud to commit certified venues and companies to reducing their carbon footprint.
- At the same time, work is being carried out on zero waste in the entertainment sector.

- Mobility remains the most complex lever to activate, but work is underway.

Conclusion

Faced with ecological and digital transitions, the DRAC wishes to be both a laboratory for experimentation and a driver of transformation. The challenges are numerous (mobility, regulation, effectiveness of solutions), but the momentum is there, with a strong desire to adapt the framework for public intervention.

Actions by regional networks

Speakers
Rebecca Martin - Traverse Network
Anne Carlini - Cercle du Midi
Aurelien Pitavy - Director of Charlie Free
Louis Burle - Deputy Regional Director, DRAC PACA

- ## Pooling resources as a strategic lever

  Pooling resources appears to be a fundamental approach to avoiding competition between cultural organisations and promoting collective efficiency. It takes several forms:

  - Joint programming between organisations.
  - Shared communication on projects.
  - Circulation of works and audiences through coordinated tours and optimisation of venues.
  - Mapping of available technical resources to avoid duplication and enhance efficiency (proposal put forward by Traverses).

  These approaches not only reduce costs, but also strengthen cooperation between actors in the region.

- ## Mobility, transport and ecology: concrete experiments

  In response to economic and environmental challenges, several initiatives have been implemented:

  - At the Festival d'Avignon, pooling of transport for stage sets and extension of train timetables (trains running until 2 a.m.) to improve accessibility.

- In areas such as Veynes, coaches were made available in conjunction with local authorities.
- Challenges encountered: raising awareness among elected officials, eco-responsible communication, time and process management.
- At the international level, inspiring examples are emerging:
- An orchestra touring by bicycle (Paris-Roubaix),
- A festival in the Netherlands where the public and artists travel exclusively by bicycle.

These experiences show that gentler mobility is possible and inspiring.

- **Budgetary and geopolitical constraints on cooperation**

Regional cultural affairs departments (DRAC), particularly in the PACA region, face very limited budgets:

- Only 16,000€ per year in PACA, compared to 110,000€ in Hauts-de-France.
- International cooperation relies more on decentralised cooperation agreements, often led by the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs.
- Geopolitical tensions complicate relations with certain countries in the Maghreb and the Middle East.

Despite this, some networks (such as COFEES and Traverses) receive limited but strategic support, as the circulation of works remains a major issue identified by the public authorities.

- **Ecology and resilience in artistic creation**

Ecological and economic constraints can become a lever for collective creativity. A round table in Avignon entitled *"Adapting and resisting: how can we turn scarcity into a lever for collective utopias?"* explores this dynamic:

- One example is the Malakoff art centre, which experimented with cutting off utilities to observe the impact on artistic creation and organisational methods.
- A desire to make these practices permanent, in a traditional way but with a clear ambition for transformation.

Raising awareness through artistic experience

The role of festivals as levers for meaningful transformation is highlighted:

- An artist, struck by the sudden silence of the cicadas at the beginning of a concert, testifies to the power of the connection to living things.
- The ecological impact of festivals is questioned, particularly the weight of transport, which can represent up to 67% of an event's carbon footprint.

These experiences show that ecological transformation also involves emotion, immersion and sensitivity.

Towards a change of scale and an opening up of networks

A key question posed by Maud Le Floc'h:

"How can your virtuous initiatives go beyond your professional circles to transform territories?"

She challenges cultural networks on a major risk:

- the more virtuous an organisation becomes, **the more it can withdraw into itself**, hindering cooperation with others.
- It is therefore essential to **change scale**, **open up networks** and **include more players** so that the dynamics set in motion do not remain confidential or elitist.

The ecological and social transformation of the cultural sector cannot succeed without an inclusive, cross-cutting and localised approach.

- ## Conclusion: small steps and a willingness to act despite limitations

  All stakeholders recognise the slow pace and difficulty of the path ahead, but insist on the need to take action:

  - "We are moving forward in small steps. We need to do 100 times more. But we cannot say that we are too small and do nothing."
  - The training of public officials is mentioned as a lever to be developed, while keeping in mind planetary limitations.

Artistic proposals that raise public awareness of ecology

Speakers
Agnès Freschel - Metropolitan Councillor and Councillor for the 1st and 7th arrondissements of Marseille
Chantal Carrié - Elected representative for culture in Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur
Martial Buisson and Vincent Gaudin - Image de Ville
Cécile Arnold - Opéra Mundi

Images de Ville – a pioneer in the field – a film festival focusing on architecture and the city

- between 2006 and 2018 - days spent filming one's environment - raising awareness of the environment
- Since 2022, they have revamped their programme - moving away from the festival rhythm - to create the Images de Ville meetings (Aix and Marseille) as a highlight
    - Docville (architecture/urban planning)
    - Terrestre (ecological issues) - collective programming with partners (from Nice to Forcalquier)
    - Popsu programme - national programme - intensification - supporting filmmakers with their writing

Cécile Arnold, co-founder of Opéra Mundi, which has been organising thematic conferences on environmental issues since 2015 with the aim of provoking public debate, providing critical tools to citizens, and helping to rebuild social ties in an uncertain world, presents the association's various types of projects.

She shares an experience she calls a "POUIC" – which illustrates her emotional and sensitive approach to knowledge:

a surprise in the kitchen that brought her back to a sense of wonder, understanding and the quest for meaning.

The association organises conferences and cultural and educational activities, particularly with young people.

- For example, in Vitrolles, the “Les naturalistes en herbe” (Budding Naturalists) project enables teenagers to embark on a journey of discovery of local biodiversity through treasure hunts, botanical walks, artistic workshops (particularly on plant dyes), philosophical discussions and exhibitions.

The Images de Ville association, founded in 2003 in Aix-en-Provence, has long organised a film festival dedicated to architecture and urbanism, which in 2022 became the Rencontres Images de Ville.

Programming cycles throughout the year, e.g.

- Docville (cinema and architecture/urban planning) and Terrestre, focusing on ecological issues. The latter initiative is supported by a collective of programmers from the cultural and activist community.
- Research projects such as Popsu, in conjunction with the Aix-Marseille metropolitan area, to bring a sensitive approach to territorial transformations through cinema - Support for filmmakers in their writing

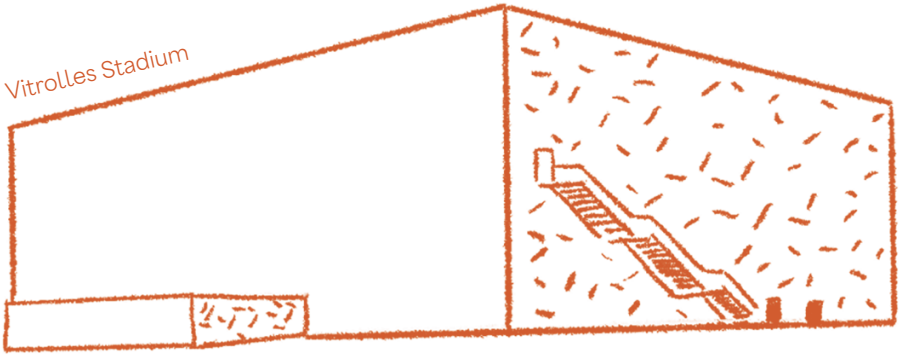
Agnès Freschel (elected representative for the 1st and 7th arrondissements of Marseille) discussed cultural and democratic issues in a context of political tensions and declining resources. Agnès expressed her concerns about the rise of the far right and the weakening of public services, while defending the importance of maintaining equal access to culture through

local projects, such as shows in parks (the 'Avant le soir' project) or initiatives in working-class neighbourhoods.

Chantal Carrié (La Trinité, Alpes Maritime) shared her experiences from her first term in office in a culturally deprived municipality, detailing the project to create a modular hall in the town centre, developed with residents through consultation and collective ownership. (For example, programming an opera in a shopping centre or football stadium).

The aim is to democratise culture and integrate it into everyday life, reaching audiences who are distant from traditional cultural practices. This experimental and cross-cutting approach - combining culture, urban planning and the environment - is seen as a lever for transforming territories in an agile and inclusive way, as illustrated by the transitional urban planning experiments carried out in Vitrolles during MP2013.

The two elected officials advocate for a culture that is rooted in the regions, inclusive and a vehicle for social cohesion.



How are artists and cultural actors responding to environmental issues?

Speakers
Anne Guiot - Director of the Karwan Association
Jean-Robert Viallet - author, director and journalist
Laure Denis - Administrator of Citron Jaune - CNAREP

- **Introduction** by Maud le Floc'h

The relationships between culture, territory and transition can trigger a positive dynamic – a "virtuous circle" of support, inventiveness and the creation of new values. But this dynamic can also swing in the opposite direction, particularly through identity-based withdrawal or rigid uses of the culture/territory link.

With the acceleration of ecological and societal transitions, these interactions can become "dangerous liaisons" that must be observed, analysed and learned from collectively.

The aim of these forums is to produce:

- brainpower (reflection),
- material to be done (experimentation),
- and material for action (concrete implementation).

A follow-up is planned: the creation of a **"Living Labs" initiative**, which would work on projects, methods and topics related to territorial transitions, drawing on examples such as:

- the park
- the Stadium

- or a participatory marine protected area project in Nice, where art and culture become levers for raising awareness, collective investigation and shared learning.

POLAU (Pôle Art & Urbanisme), the driving force behind this initiative, puts forward a strong hypothesis:

Art and culture can become actors in territorial engineering, on the same footing as urban planners and developers, to support ecological, civic and food transitions, etc.

Experiences of Pignon sur Mer at Le Monstre du Loch Berre

The Pignon sur Mer project, led by the Karwan association and followed over several editions, reflects an evolution marked by the diversity and richness of its proposals. These combine literature, cinema, sensory and scientific experiences (sunrise, sea kayaking, etc.), while revealing the complexity of relations with political actors, torn between enthusiasm and caution in the face of unconventional artistic forms. The festival thus appears as a space of freedom in public mobilisation, questioning the place of traditional cultural actors and the emergence of new narratives.

In the same vein, the Le Monstre du Loch Berre project, developed as part of the Cultural Olympiad, lies at the crossroads of the poetic, the political and the literary. Born out of a desire for paradigm shift, it is rooted in the unique territory of the Étang de Berre, both a heavily polluted inland sea and a powerful reservoir of imagination. The project is based on the creation of a fictional story about a “monster” said to haunt the lagoon, an ironic echo of the Loch Ness myth, conceived here as an allegorical figure of the ecological footprint.

The monster, initially made of plastic, becomes a **narrative and mobilising force**. Karwan involves more than 20 partners (sailing clubs, schools, associations, local authorities, etc.),

organises boat trips around the creature, and decides to inform the media without ever revealing the artistic nature of the project, inviting them to be complicit in this fiction. This choice generates massive media hype: BFM TV, Le Monde, TikTok and Facebook pick up on the phenomenon, with hundreds of thousands of views. Some believe it, others are concerned, but the monster now exists in the public and mental space.

This first act was followed by a second phase focused on media education: 300 children took part in a literary project supervised by author Sophie Rigal-Goulard, resulting in a serialised detective novel published in La Provence. The final part of the story is revealed during a closing event at Romaniquette beach (Istres), bringing together the different dimensions of the project: fiction, ecology, science, visual arts, water sports, etc.

The project enjoys strong public support, numerous spontaneous contributions and has been awarded the **Prix de l'Audace Artistique et Culturelle** (Prize for Artistic and Cultural Audacity). On this occasion, 30 children from around the lake are invited to receive the prize at the Quai Branly Museum.

- **Citron jaune /Green Bridge(s) Project**
  by the administrator, Laure Denis

Citron Jaune, the National Centre for Street Arts and Public Space (CNAREP), is located in Port-Saint-Louis-du-Rhône, a unique area caught between a highly polluting industrial hub (petrochemical zone, port of Marseille) and a major natural area (the Camargue). This area is marked by high levels of soil and air pollution as a result of its industrial history. Faced with this reality, the Citron Jaune team, although mostly not originally from the area, has chosen to become actively involved in a long-term project linking art, ecology and the local area.

Genesis of Pont Vert(s):

The *Pont Vert(s)* project, launched in 2021, aims to raise awareness of the issues of pollution and ecological transformation through an artistic, sensitive and participatory approach. It brings together a collective of tree artists (Thierry Boutonnier, Eva Basque, Laurie Huard), residents, researchers (Joëlle Zask, Olivier Hamon), local partners (media library, CNP, Secours Populaire) and scientists (Institut Éco-Citoyen).

Concrete actions:

- Creation of an urban orchard in an “active monitoring” neighbourhood unaccustomed to collective practices.
- Symbolic choice of the olive tree as the project’s totem tree.
- Compilation of residents’ gardening, culinary and sensory practices.
- Scientific monitoring of the plantations (analysis of the edibility of olives, figs, etc.).

- Production in 2025 of the first olive oil from Port-Saint-Louis-du-Rhône - edible but in limited quantities.
- Exploration of agricultural solutions (raised gardens, limiting the release of soil pollutants, etc.).

Artistic and poetic dimension:
Pont Vert(s) breaks away from traditional spectacular forms to promote a **collective and evolving process**:

- Disguised urban drifts, dance rituals around alfalfa, neighbourhood festivals (plant booms).
- Loto-livre: a twist on the local lotto game, incorporating symbols of pollution and agriculture, to address eco-anxiety with humour and distance.
- Workshops on tree care led by artists (actors, visual artists, etc.), producing a poetic shift and a transformation of the relationship with the land.

Positioning and vision:
The project advocates a clear editorial line, but one that is flexible in its implementation. Le Citron Jaune acts as the guarantor of the artistic and territorial framework, while accepting that the project will evolve through contact with residents and partners. This approach is based on a logic of co-construction, slow iteration, and sensitive alliances between disciplines, where transformation comes through care, action, celebration, and listening.

Laure Denis defends the specificity of the arts sector in the public space, capable of acting with agility, territorial responsibility, and creativity in fragile contexts. She advocates for an ecological, civic-minded, and sensitive approach to territorial projects, in which the artist becomes a co-constructor of a shared narrative, rather than a one-off contributor.

“Man has eaten the earth”

Director Jean-Robert Viallet reflects on his approach to documentary filmmaking, which he defines as a cinema of criticism rather than proposal. Often starting with a cry or an outcry, he is interested in the contemporary resonance of historical events, such as the disappearance of trams in Marseille in favour of cars in the 1950s, to shed light on current societal choices. Through films based on rigorous and historically validated research, he adopts a direct, straightforward whistleblower stance, while experimenting with different narrative forms. For him, each film is a political work before it is an artistic one, with the ambition of provoking reflection on progress, models of development, and collective responsibilities.

Above all, he brings a different perspective: that of **a documentary filmmaker** whose field of action is global. He identifies with the local roots of grassroots projects such as Pont Vert(s), but his own role is more to **report on global stories**, using images and archives, to fuel debate in different regions.

He mentions in particular his upcoming film shot in **Jakarta**, a city of 13 million inhabitants threatened with submersion due to the combined effects of

- land subsidence (10 cm/year),
- rising sea levels,
- and monsoons amplified by climate change.

Faced with this crisis, the Indonesian government is considering moving the capital to Borneo, razing inhabited primary forests in the process. Viallet asks: who will be able to protect themselves? Who will be left in the water? He documents these real dystopias in the hope that artists, citizens and thinkers will take up the cause and open up the debate here in France and elsewhere.

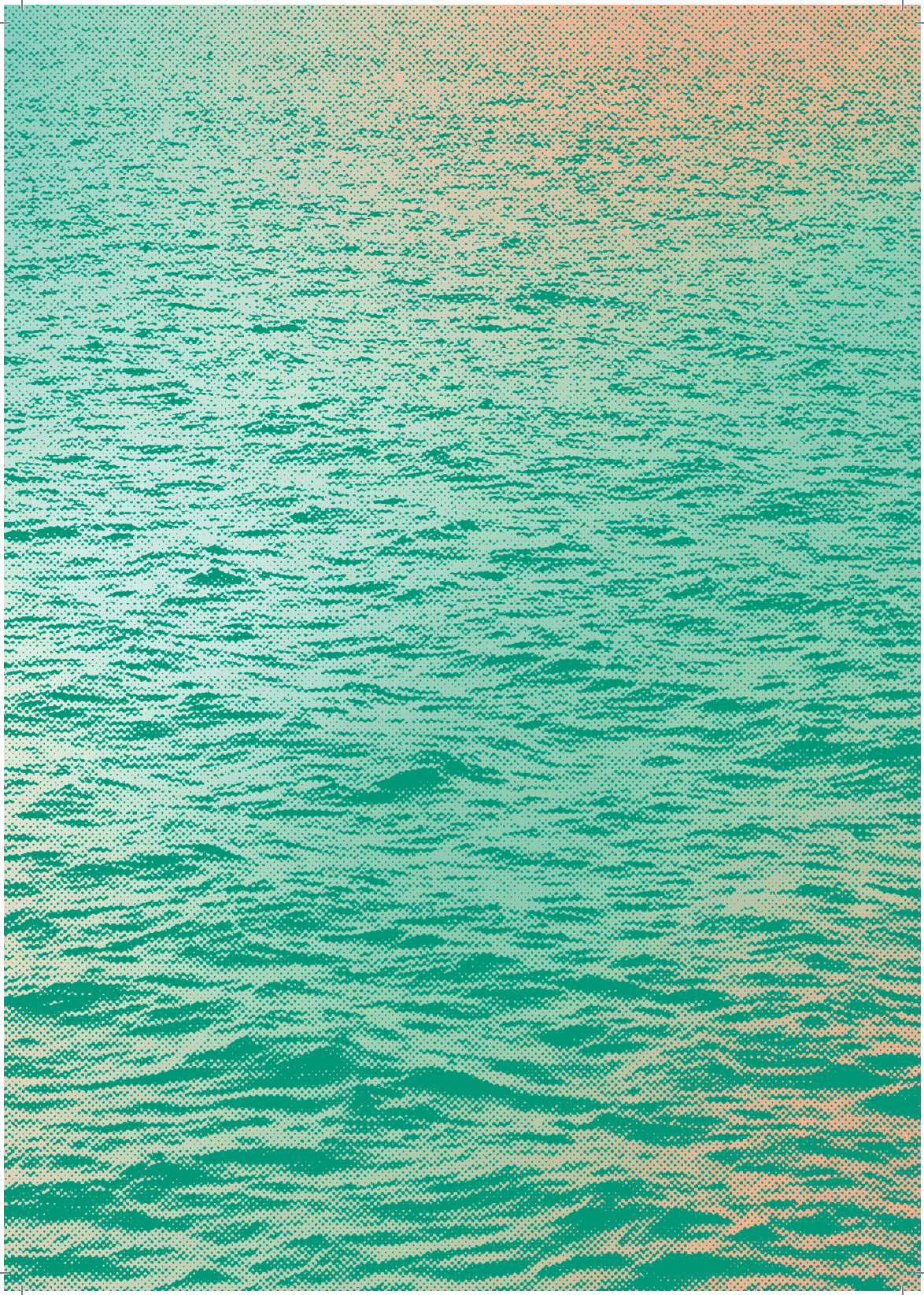
Conclusion

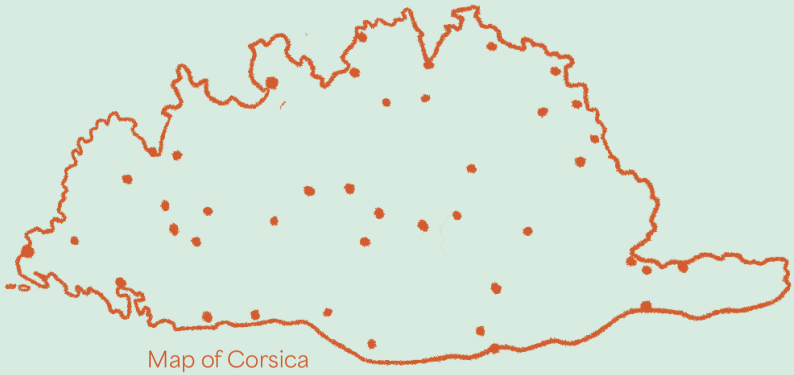
Large-scale narratives can sometimes be staggering, but they reinforce the need for grassroots cultural projects rooted in community, cooperation and the slow construction of shared narratives. In this sense, art has a crucial role to play, particularly in fragile territories, in restoring the power to act and countering populist tendencies.

Open Forum of Corsica

Bastia & Ajaccio

18-20 June 2025




Map of Corsica

Opening remarks

"The fog will lift one day between the two shores, and we will recognise each other." Jules Michelet, *Le Peuple*.

This message of hope resonates across the Mediterranean, from west to east, but also from north to south.

The title of this forum has particular resonance in Corsica, a region where heritage, languages and the aspiration for cultural recognition are particularly strong.

Introduction

by Marie Baduel

- ## An ambitious decentralised cooperation project

  This forum is part of a decentralised cooperation project bringing together the territories of **Nice, Vitrolles, Corsica and Izmir**, whose main objective is to explore how culture can contribute to transforming territories.

- ## The AViTeM approach

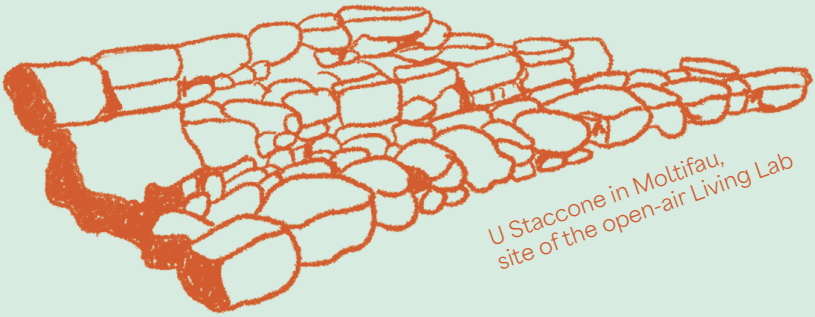
  - AViTeM has a vision of cooperation across the entire Mediterranean region.
  - A shared observation: it is local authorities that now have the capacity to bring about real change.
  - There are many challenges:
    - Increased environmental risks (with more than 50% of basins already urbanised),
    - Social and territorial cohesion,

- And geopolitical reconfiguration, which tends to marginalise the Mediterranean in global trade.

- **Culture as a vehicle for transformation:**
  1. It can **bring about a new model of power and repositioning for the Mediterranean**.
  2. It can **re-examine our development practices** and nurture a new way of caring for our territories.

- **Towards a Mediterranean manifesto**
  - Objective: to produce a **joint manifesto** on the commitment of local authorities to **ecological and cultural transition**, to be signed in **Izmir on 4 and 5 September**.
  - This manifesto will mark **the beginning of a process** of amplifying local capacities and **re-enchanting territories**.
  - At the same time, **summaries of the forums** will highlight the content of the round tables and discussions.

- **Concrete actions: "living labs"**
  - The project aims to identify pilot sites for local experimentation with the link between culture and development policy.
  - These "living labs" will serve as demonstrators on a Mediterranean scale: they will be based on local issues, with clear roadmaps and alliances between regional stakeholders.



- **Nathalie Siran** - Nice Côte d'Azur Metropolitan Area
  - The UNOC World Conference recently held in Nice marked a strong international commitment to the preservation of marine ecosystems.
  - The event also saw the launch of **the first global summit of coastal cities**, bringing together 200 mayors to share solutions to:
    - Rising sea levels,
    - Coastal erosion,
    - The enhancement of coastal heritage,
    - The emergence of a blue economy.

- **Culture as a lever for citizen engagement**
  - Civil society has been involved through the "The sea, our common good" programme, rolled out in museums and public spaces in Nice.
  - The aim was to use culture as a tool to raise awareness of the challenges of ecological transition.

- **The Vitrolles Forum: 23-24 May 2025**
  - The forum organised in Vitrolles focused on:
    - Nature in the city,
    - The mobilisation of cultural actors for ecological transition.
  - A different but complementary approach to that of Nice, reflecting the diversity of methods and perspectives on the Mediterranean.

- **Görkem Kiter - Izmir Metropolitan Municipality**
  Izmir, crossroads of civilisations
  - The event planned for Izmir in September will be an opportunity to explore how different cultures can coexist and engage in dialogue.
  - According to Görkem Kiter, Izmir is a historic city of coexistence that embodies the Mediterranean spirit:
    - Religious diversity,
    - A wealth of traditions,
    - A vocation to become a space for cultural dialogue.
  - The aim is to share common solutions, in line with the second phase of the project, and to reaffirm unity within Mediterranean diversity.

“Pasquale Paoli, a great figure of the Enlightenment”

by Eugène Gherardi - University of Corsica

- **Tricentennial of Pascal Paoli - A figure of the Mediterranean Enlightenment**
  - In 2025, Corsica will celebrate the 300th anniversary of the birth of Pascal Paoli (1725-1807), founder of the University of Corsica and an iconic figure of cultural emancipation.

- **Education as a pillar of culture**
  - As early as the 18th century, the Corsican revolution demanded access to education for all.
  - In 1736, the Corsican constitution provided for a college of arts and letters.
  - In 1765, Paoli founded the University of Corte, inspired by the Sardinian model, which operated for four years but remains a founding institution in the Corsican collective imagination.

“The Corsican government did not tax anything... except books and paper.” A symbol of the importance given to culture.

- **A university open to the Mediterranean**
  - Young Corsicans were educated in Naples, Pisa, Padua, Rome and Livorno - all centres of Mediterranean intellectual exchange.

- Culture is passed on:
  - Through family heritage,
  - Through the streets and everyday life,
  - Through school

Pioneering social policies

- The Corsican government awarded scholarships, sometimes signed by Paoli himself, to enable those from modest backgrounds to access education.
- This policy highlights a modern vision of cultural rights, dating back to the 18th century.

Portrait of Pascal Paoli

“From the declaration to the recognition of the cultural rights of the Mediterranean community”[1]

Inaugural lecture by Sébastien Quenot

What do cultural rights mean on a Mediterranean island with 350,000 inhabitants flying the European, French and Corsican flags at a time when humanity is experiencing the greatest cultural revolution in its history? What do cultural rights mean in an era of liquid societies where individuals connect and disconnect at will, with a like or a heart, sometimes renouncing attachments that were once considered absolute? What do cultural rights mean for a hyperconnected island minority whose main trait of belonging, namely language, is in danger of disappearing because, according to the 2022 sociolinguistic survey, its transmission rate is ten times lower than the vital threshold estimated by UNESCO? What do they mean in the Anthropocene era, when humans consider themselves at the centre of the world order, free to tame nature in the name of progress and, specifically, culture? “Drill, baby, drill,” chanted by the President of the world’s leading power, is a plea for his culture based on the consumption of fossil fuels. Let us not make Trump a scapegoat. To date, each Corsican emits about nine times more CO2 than the French average. To what extent can exceeding planetary limits justify contempt for the rights of nature or the rights of living beings in favour of an anthropocentric and populist approach to culture?

1 This text is Sébastien Quenot’s presentation material. It was sent to us by him following the Forum.

After obtaining political, social and economic rights, cultural rights are a procession whose direction is still uncertain. What duties do they impose on states and public institutions? What rights do they give to individual citizens and cultural communities that the French Republic refuses to recognise in the name of the constitutional and constitutive unity of the French people? The welcome organisation of this day dedicated to "cultivated territories" raises questions but also inspires a desire to act, to seize these rights, to create law from this breach and, above all, to create new works of the mind capable of supporting the cohesion of our societies, which are undermined by social inequalities and partisan strategies of cultural or religious hegemony.

1. The foundations and definitions of cultural rights

Cultural rights have been a topic of debate at UNESCO since the post-war period. After the Holocaust, the affirmation of the unity of humankind was accompanied by a demand for recognition of the cultural diversity of peoples. The biological universalism of humankind, i.e. the existence of a single human race, is matched by their cultural diversity. Human beings are equal but different. This recognition of equal value took longer to conceive, formalise and implement than the first human rights, civil liberties and social rights.

I see three reasons for this: the influence of Marxism on class differences to the detriment of cultural differences, the influence of modernity and colonialism on representations of ethnic and community hierarchies, and the persistence of these influences in our late modernity, which presents a situation of survival of historical national and/or indigenous cultural minorities, as well as migratory dynamics within Western societies that have become multicultural, multi-ethnic and multi-faith.

In short, even if they were not initially conceived in these terms, cultural rights were initially reduced to the rights of nation states. This right translated into a belief in the duty to civilise colonised peoples and assimilate minorities. Today, we must recognise the equal dignity of cultures and give them the means to express themselves, to be transmitted and to be recreated.

Globalisation, which has been studied extensively for over thirty years by Appadurai, Fukuyama and Stiegler, has not brought about the end of history, nor the cultural standardisation or Americanisation feared by Jérôme Fourquet and Régis Debray. Burgers are flourishing on our tables. Blockbusters flood our screens. GAFAM is used constantly, but in Corsica, who spontaneously says "I love you" or prefers the Chicago Bulls to Sporting Club de Bastia?

Globalisation has exacerbated feelings of belonging to identities that have become fluid, mobile, versatile, unbound and hyperconnected. Paradoxically, individualism has not atomised society either. It has accentuated community dynamics in all directions and the emergence of tribes, not in unexplored forests, but within megacities, towns, stadiums, campuses, everywhere around us, in the different neighbourhoods, bars and streets of Bastia. Sometimes in the same place, but at different times!

The clash of civilisations envisaged by Samuel Huntington has not happened either. The major civilisational blocs are divided. Trump imposes tariffs indiscriminately on Europe, Canada and China. Relations between countries in the Global South are chaotic. The border between Algeria and Morocco remains closed. Europe itself is divided, at the very least, between liberals, environmentalists and populists. More and more autocrats are ruling the world. Diplomacy is based on the policies of states, not on civilisational blocs. The advent of democracy and liberalism for all has not happened either. Technology saves lives by improving

healthcare, but the ecological and climate crisis is redrawing the map of Earth's habitability . The hopes of the 1990s seem very naive. Despair seems to inhabit post-Covid populations. They are demanding more security, more state intervention and the protection of their cultural rights, without always using the term, in order to protect themselves from the decline and acculturation caused by globalisation and the fear of Islamisation, while flicking through the catalogue of American films offered by Netflix.

So what do "cultural rights", understood as the legal rules applicable to culture, mean?

A legal framework has developed in recent years at the international level, before also being adopted at the French level in Article 103 of the NOTRE Law of 7 August 2015, which refers to the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, and in Article 3 of the LCAP (Freedom of Creation, Architecture and Heritage) of 7 July 2016.

In concrete terms, cultural rights are based on four main principles. They aim to:

- Enable people to access their own culture and that of others,
- Guarantee freedom of artistic expression,
- Collectively and continuously develop the "desire to live together",
- Develop the vitality of the territory by promoting interactions between cultures.

These four objectives pose significant philosophical and practical problems. They are challenged by individualism and the nationalism of states and minorities. They are also disrupted by the technological revolution in culture.

What is an individual's own culture? That of their state, their family, their parents? Why use the singular? To what extent can individuals choose their culture or cultures? Do Corsican cultural institutions have the power to combine freedom of artistic expression with the promotion of access to each individual's own culture? On a multicultural island, what are the cultural drivers of the desire to live together? Loyalty to one's own people, authenticity towards the self, and interculturality with others create a complex interplay between the different actors.

2. Cultural rights in the French context

The first objective of Article 3 of the LCAP law (Freedom of Creation, Architecture and Heritage) adds a clarification that challenges us. It states: "to support the existence and development of artistic creation throughout the territory, in particular the creation of works of original French expression". Does the legal pre-eminence given to supporting French expression not risk conflicting with the application of cultural rights in the Corsican context? While international law defends linguistic diversity, French law remains immovable in favour of linguistic unity and the hierarchy of modern languages. The decision of the Council of State on 5 June 2025 has just reminded us of this once again.

The proposed constitutional revision for Corsica will not grant any more linguistic rights than the 2008 revision, which recognised the heritage status of the languages of France in Article 75-1. Under the hierarchy of norms, the organic law that could be adopted following the constitutional revision cannot go beyond the linguistic rights enshrined in Article 2. Therefore, if non-constitutionalised cultural rights seem just as decorative as Article 75-1 of the Constitution, how can cultural rights be recognised in the Corsican context?

3. Recognising cultural rights in Corsica and the Mediterranean

Beyond declarations, it is therefore a question of committing to genuine recognition of cultural rights. For the German philosopher Axel Honneth, recognition encompasses a *legal dimension, an emotional dimension and a social dimension of solidarity.* It is not a matter of waiting. Recognition is first and foremost a question of responsibility. Our elders of the Riacquistu movement have long insisted on the need to belong and to commit to belonging. It was not a question of holding a party card, but of creating a community by developing new aesthetic forms. Cultural authenticity, like Glissant's intersubjective recognition or rhizomatic identity, are the offspring of this commitment. Hello, indiatura! Recognition is empowerment; it is the determined conquest of the power to act.

In the Mediterranean, decolonisation movements generally fought against Orientalist representations. The Mediterranean was defined by the people of the North. It was lazy, idle, barbaric.

After independence, the cultural reconquest of these countries was often reduced to Arabisation, or even Islamisation, particularly after the Arab Spring, under the influence of the most radical movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood. Get rid of this stereotype so that I can create another one. There are a few notable exceptions, however, such as the promotion of Amazigh in Morocco, which enjoys constitutional rights.

In Corsica, self-hatred faded in the 1970s with the Riacquistu movement. In addition to the creations of founders D. Geronimi, R. Coti, G. Fusina, G. Rocchi, L. Santucci and others, G. Thiers' article published in October 1981 in Les Temps modernes: "Une nouvelle politique culturelle pour la Corse" (A new cultural policy for Corsica) presents an urgent cultural programme.

Writer, playwright and university professor G. Thiers asks himself and challenges us:

"Without recognition of the national rights of the Corsican people, does the government have the institutional means and political will to take and implement the bold measures required by the current situation and the future of the Corsican people and their unique culture?" The term "cultural rights" is not mentioned in the text, but is it not implied?

From a legal point of view, the recognition of Corsica's cultural rights was a major factor in the island's first special status in 1982. This concept underpins everything, yet it does not appear anywhere! Article 2 provides for the creation of a Council for Culture, Education and the Living Environment in Corsica. Article 40 refers to "the cultural future of Corsica", "Corsica's cultural action" and "the preservation and dissemination of the Corsican language and culture". The same expressions are repeated in the Joxe Statute of 1991. The word "culture" or "cultural" appears 28 times, compared to 6 times in the previous statute. Title III is entitled "The Cultural Identity of Corsica".

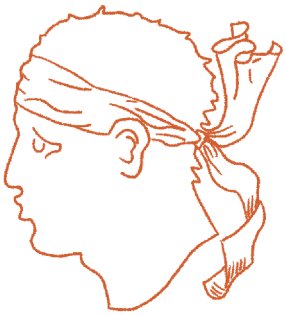
In 2002, cultural action was transferred. Article 9 states: "The territorial collectivity of Corsica defines and implements cultural policy in Corsica." As for the State, it "may support actions which, due to their interest or scope, fall within the scope of national cultural policy". The transfer is therefore not complete, demonstrating the political stakes of cultural hegemony.

Since the transfer of powers to the Corsican Regional Authority, a detailed analysis of Corsica's cultural policy deserves special attention. Which works receive public funding? What about aesthetic and linguistic requirements? What about public procurement in the cultural sector? What remains of this in the minds of Corsicans? What about the cultural and creative

industries, cultural facilities and digital cultural mediation tools? What are the cultural practices of Corsicans, when a few representatives of so-called "cultural" groups observed yesterday, during the day dedicated to music that we organised at the University, a disaffection among islanders for their concerts? Do cultural commodification and touristification risk reifying and stereotyping Corsican identity into a folkloric product aimed at visitors eager for Corsican polyphony?

Finally, the Notre law has enshrined cultural rights in French law. It also introduces a new public player into the landscape: *the Intercommunal Tourist Office*. For example, Bastia offers the Creazione festival, which showcases and promotes creators in a museum setting with refined aesthetics. Also noteworthy are the polyphonic singing performances and the promotion of industrial statuary by businessman Richard Orlinski. Meanwhile, Bastia is the setting for the series Plaine orientale broadcast on Canal +. Here we see the dialectics at work on the island. Should we universalise ourselves through uniformity by consuming colourful animals displayed everywhere else? Should we submit to the dictates of the audiovisual market, which demands that we consume a stereotypical image of Corsica as sinister, murderous and mafia-ridden? Should we give more support to Corsican artists and creators in the originality and diversity of their expression, beyond the stereotypes of Corsican identity?

Let's end the suspense: the cultural programme presented by Ghjacumu Thiers in 1981 has remained a dead letter. Even the nationalist parties have been unable to implement it, either as actors in public life or at the head of the Corsican regional government. Did state nationalism give rise to Mediterraneanism as a projection of Northern ideologies onto the South and of Northern representations of the South? Did the process of assimilation result in the Corsicans becoming



"acorsité" with a privative "a"? In response to this lack, Corsican identity has perhaps never generated so much political Corsicanism and exodiglossia as the production of identity goods mobilising the Corsican language to symbolically compensate for the withdrawal of the threatened cultural identity. To respond to the deficit of cultural skills and the limits of the revernacularisation of Corsican, we consume the emotional commodities of Corsican identity: fabrics, jewellery, design objects, flags, cheeses, beers, sausages, football matches, concerts featuring our figures and heroes. Emotional commodities label our belonging. We visualise it through the ostentatious display of these relational objects, these comfort blankets, as Donald Winnicott might say.

Commodification is an essential vector of any cultural identity. Broadway and Hollywood are perfect examples of American soft power. On the other hand, we know almost nothing about the cultural dynamics of our Mediterranean neighbours, just as they know nothing about ours. The Mediterranean is a sea of strangers where life is despised. While the intercultural crises of the Anthropocene should lead us to cultivate a pooling of Mediterranean archives and creations within the Mediterranean community, we exist separately, locked in rival, nationalistic, entropic and increasingly identitarian solitudes.

4. Five major challenges for cultural rights in Corsica: demography, identitarianism, tourism, populism and Collective Artificial Intelligence.

Thiers takes a decolonial approach to cultural rights, for which the main challenge lies in a change of national paradigm. Since

then, the collapse of the Soviet bloc in favour of liberalism has almost unified the world. This has also come at the cost of climate and ecological risks, which should remind us of the finiteness of our resources and our need for common goods.

Since Covid, we have entered a new era. The question of the cultural rights of Corsicans is no longer just a matter to be decided between Corsica and Paris. At least six factors are changing the game: demographic dynamics, identitarianism, tourism, populism and IAGs.

- Demographics. The island's population is ageing and growing solely due to new arrivals who do not speak Corsican. Regardless of future language policy, for purely demolinguistic reasons, even if the education system and families produce Corsican speakers, the use of Corsican will continue to decline over the next 30 years. Newcomers choose Corsica for economic, heliotropic or identity reasons, but they are eroding the Corsican language, which the Corsicans are not defending sufficiently.
- Identitarianism. Sometimes indiscriminately viewed as a white, Christian enclave facing Muslim invaders, Corsica suffers from identitarianism as a pathology of Mediterraneanism, this projection of the dreams, ideologies and powers of the North onto the South. Choosing Corsica therefore means rejecting the Mediterranean community as a pooling of the rights of living beings. Should we therefore be surprised by the manifestation of the symptoms of identitarianism, ranging from Catholic nationalism to political Islamism, via a plethora of mysticisms of personal development, football or consumerism?

We are therefore living in a period of over-identity, over-ethnicity and traditionalism that are deadly for cultural rights as understood by UNESCO.

- In connection with this identitarianism, authoritarian and/or anarcho-libertarian populists are in power in major countries. Their rise seems inevitable. Conspiracy theorists, they defend hermetic representations of identities that are irreducible, incompatible and irreconcilable with one another.
- Tourism has exploded and is expected to continue growing. It remains weakly oriented towards cultural consumption. Cultural spending per tourist is lower in Corsica than in Limousin. The commodification of Corsican culture is professionalising young performers, but it risks reifying Corsicans and turning our living culture into a heritage staged for visitors in search of exoticism.
- Given the amount of time we spend on screens and the monopoly of screen-based media among young people, AI technologies are transforming our digital and cultural habits. The big narratives are in the hands of a few large American or Chinese operators who prescribe highly stereotypical identities, without drawing on our archives and for which the Corsican language is not always available. Technological sovereignty: mastery of LLM, preservation of archives and sensitive data have become the conditions for exercising one's cultural rights.
- A final cross-cutting issue is the relationship between cultural rights and the rights of living beings in the context of anthropogenic climate change and the even more worrying collapse of biodiversity.

5. Giving substance to the cultural rights of Corsicans and Mediterranean peoples in the 21st century

The current situation is a wake-up call. It calls for resolute, joint and continuous action by the various actors gathered here today.

Without being exhaustive or peremptory, I would like to share with you some ideas for action on cultural rights in Corsica and the Mediterranean.

Defining a cultural policy focused on Corsican language and Mediterranean multilingualism

Language is universal. If it were to be replaced by another signifier, religions would risk being used as a pretext for identification and, given the rise of identitarianism, confrontation.

Corsophonise adults and children in and out of school

This objective can be achieved by making public aid conditional on certain conditions, while offering support in terms of vocational training. Cultural rights, like human rights, are universal. They could be made a condition for the granting of any public aid.

For reasons unknown to me, pupils from the most disadvantaged classes are kept away from the Corsican language and culture. Cultural rights are necessarily territorial. There was a time, in the early days of bilingual education, when Corsicans still denigrated their language and suspected Corsican-speaking teachers of proselytism, that bilingual education developed on the margins, in rural areas... Today, it is in the peripheral territories where the vernacular use of Corsican is in decline that equal opportunities for Corsican language learning must be provided. Otherwise, ethnicity will be the main criterion for belonging.

Affirming the Mediterranean community as a space for the expression of cultural rights

Cultural rights are a rejection of victimhood. My rights are what I make of them. Everyone must take ownership of their legitimate and inalienable rights. Of course, state schools do not teach Corsican to all pupils, but neither do they manage to teach other fundamental subjects such as mathematics, philosophy, English, history and art to all pupils. The curricula could be Mediterraneanised...

Include Mediterranean arts, literature and cinema in the common core of knowledge and culture.

Can we modernise without westernising, asked Maurice Godelier. Revising school curricula to include a Mediterranean dimension could transform young people's imaginations and bring Mediterranean artists out of invisibility. Mediterraneanisation as a struggle against the Mediterranean identity inherited from colonialism appears to be the path for the Mediterranean community towards a polyphonic interculturalism adapted to each territory, favouring the pre-eminence of democratic rights and local culture, in interaction with other cultures. The project to publish Great Contemporary Figures of the Mediterranean Community, in partnership with numerous Mediterranean universities, is part of this approach.

Making universities incubators of cultural rights in the Mediterranean community

A Mediterranean Erasmus

During his visit to Marseille in 2023, Pope Francis declared that the Mediterranean was a project to be undertaken by universities. The development of exchanges between Mediterranean universities appears to be a key issue here. A Mediterranean Erasmus programme would be welcome.

The creation of our own Large Language Model
Through joint action by Corsican institutions, the University and the tech ecosystem. I see this as a technological issue of cultural sovereignty.

Developing research-creation and research-participation experiences to promote media literacy and combat conspiracy theories

In carrying out various participatory research and research-creation projects, I am aware of certain practical pitfalls that I would like to return to, as they are probably at the heart of the results obtained.

Sguardi zitellini project.
The establishment of a creative villa, based on the model inaugurated in Avignon

Creation of a platform between academic and non-academic actors based on the model of the Creative Villa in Avignon.

The development of cultural tourism

Development of local tourism and quality tourism (A cerca Paulina project, Nozze in Mediterraniu, etc.)

Conclusion

Cultural rights are somewhat uncertain, forcing us to seize them through intercontinental and transnational, multilateral and territorial, academic and non-academic action. The recognition of cultural rights is an appropriation. Rights are an eternal renewal. They will not fall from the sky. Women's political participation first required their willingness to vote, to stand for election and to represent both women and men. Similarly, cultural participation calls for a willingness to tell one's story, to put oneself on stage.

Every right calls for determined action. From where we speak, from where we act, Università di Corsica, Bastia Town Hall, Collectivité de Corse, collective, creator, these different levels must guide and articulate our actions of creation and research-creation. I believe that many actions carried out on the island illustrate this path. I am thinking here of the Università statinale di teatru organised from 5 to 8 June by my colleague Davia Benedetti, and the Rim'Lab organised with Fabien Landron. With the UNESCO Chair in Mediterranean Futures, I am thinking of our Cerca paulina project, Sguardi zitellini and Nozze in Mediterraniu, but many other events also contribute to Corsican-language creation, interculturality and our own invention of the future of the Mediterranean community. The best is yet to come!

AXIS 1: GIVING EVERYONE THE OPPORTUNITY TO RECEIVE, SHARE, CREATE, AND PRACTICE THEIR OWN ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL PRACTICES.

Round table 1:
Cultures and territories

Moderators
Fabien Danesi - Director of FRAC Corse and
Jean-Jacques Ottavianni - Director of Visual Arts Services for the Corsican regional authority

Speakers
Laetitia Carlotti - Artist, founder of the Arterra association
David Raffini - Visual artist
Paul Ceccaldi - Founder of the SCOPRE association
Stéphane Orsini - Representative of the Castagniccia-Casinca community of municipalities

- ## Introduction: Re-examining the place of the arts in regional development

Cultural mediation invites us to rethink the link between art and the territory, particularly in rural or peripheral areas.
Rather than imposing metropolitan or coastal models, the aim is to support a slow, rooted, often modest but sustainable ecology of creation. These artistic practices, developed in non-standardised places, reconfigure the relationship with living things and the landscape, and promote a renewed cultural hospitality.

- The territory is no longer a mere support, but becomes a co-author.
- We need to redraw maps where cultural impact is measured in terms of the connections forged, rather than in terms of notoriety or visitor numbers.

- **A journey of artistic commitment in Castagniccia** - David Raffini

  A visual artist based in Castagniccia, David Raffini explores the transformation of matter, the memory of landscape, and the relationship between the body and abstraction.
  He develops his projects in places not dedicated to art, often abandoned.

  Key points:

  - Career began at the University of Corsica, enriched by training at Villa Arson (Nice).
  - Returned to Corsica motivated by a desire to share and structure local creativity.
  - Creation of a mobile, shared workshop, thanks to a Corsican carpenter, to compensate for the lack of equipped production facilities.
  - Creation of residencies, workshops and training courses off the beaten track.
  - Desire to create a "cultural factory" open to non-initiates, to break down barriers in contemporary art.

  "The region should not just be a holiday destination, but a lever for creativity and social cohesion."

- **The experience of the Arterra association in Moltifao** - Laetitia Carlotti

  A visual artist trained at the Beaux-Arts in Paris, she founded **Arterra** in 2012 after extensive fieldwork in Corsica. She is currently developing a creative laboratory called "La Fabrica" around a sustainable art trail in Moltifao.

Challenges and approaches:

- Working without infrastructure has been an opportunity to avoid imposing a model, but rather to invent in connection with the place.
- Art is conceived as a relationship, a co-creation with artisans, residents and scientists.
- Arterra catalyse interdisciplinary encounters between artists, landscape architects, muralists and residents.
- Creation of an art trail in an abandoned village: memory, geomorphology, re-emergence of forgotten stories.
- Taking into account the living environment: water management, toponymy, use of animal traction, natural regeneration (e.g. pine silkworm).

"Culture is also about the land. The work does not seek to be spectacular, but rather to convey the intensity of the relationship."

- **Cultural roots through the SCOPRE association in Marignana** - Paul Ceccaldi

Founder of the **SCOPRE** association, created 30 years ago in Marignana, Paul Ceccaldi is committed to ensuring the **permanence of cultural offerings in rural areas**.

Observation:

- The rural world has long been seen as disappearing.
- Today, the challenge is to revalue local popular cultures (e.g. hunting, fishing, weasel hunting), which are often considered marginal to a dominant culture that is more bourgeois in nature.
- SCOPRE does not seek to lecture or "distribute culture", but acts on the basis of co-construction and citizen participation.

Actions:

- Workshops in schools since 2004.
- Annual film programme in villages (films also screened in Ajaccio).
- Workshops in the Corsican language, theatre, music and IT.
- Film festival combining Corsican, African and Polish productions.
- Reflection on East-West relations in the Mediterranean in addition to North-South relations.

"We cannot abandon the interior of the island. Culture must be accessible to everyone, including those in remote areas."

- **Action by the Castagniccia-Casinca community of municipalities** - Stéphane Orsini

Vice-president of the community of municipalities, he is responsible for the **Orizonti travelling festival**, a cultural project that brings together the 42 municipalities in the region.

Objectives:

- To bring together municipalities that were previously isolated around a common project.
- To combat demographic, economic and cultural decline in certain rural areas.
- Avoid centralising culture: the festival changes location every year.
- Encourage territorial cohesion, with the support of the population and elected officials.

Tools:

- Creation of a year-round tourist office, linked to natural and agricultural heritage.
- Pooling of equipment (marquees, facilities) to support local initiatives.
- Mapping of associations and driving forces in the area.
- Establishment of a heritage interpretation centre and a landscape plan.

"Culture is not a mandatory responsibility for local authorities, but we have made a political choice to actively support it."

Summary

Marie Baduel:

- These rural initiatives are laboratories for territorial innovation.
- Culture is becoming a resource for the transition of territories, nourishing them and connecting them to the world.
- The territory itself is also an essential resource for creation, which becomes co-constructed, multidisciplinary and situated.
- We are moving from cultural consumption to cultural experience.
- The quality of the connection with the public is becoming decisive: culture that unites and collaborates.

Maud Le Floc'h:

- These cultural narratives are currently lacking in urban planning: they need to be integrated.
- These artistic approaches are demonstrators for landscape plans.
- It is not just a question of thinking about infrastructure, but of giving meaning, telling stories and involving residents.

Round table 2: Implementing cultural rights

Moderator:
Yolaine Lacolonge - Head of Educational and Cultural Activities, Corsican Regional Authority

Speakers:
Delphine Ramos - Director of Cultural Affairs for the City of Bastia
Marie-Laure Poveda - Director of ARIA (popular education association)
Laurent Muracciole - Head of the Cultural Mediation Department for the City of Ajaccio
Dominique Godelle - DAAC of the Corsican Academy Rectorate
Marina Lahitte-Loustau - Director of Culture CDC - Deputy Director of Performing Arts
Olivier Lechevré - Art Education Advisor for the Porto-Vecchio district

Introduction

Access to culture is primarily an economic issue: how can funding be found to keep culture alive in remote areas, which are often experiencing demographic decline? These areas are becoming depopulated, and culture can play an important role in making them attractive again. Arts and cultural education therefore appears to be a strategic lever.

1. 100% EAC label and transformation of the Bastia region - Delphine Ramos

Obtaining the “100% Artistic and Cultural Education” label has helped to transform the Bastia region. This label recognises a strong commitment and sets out a clear strategy.

For Delphine Ramos, cultural rights make it possible to rethink cultural projects in a bottom-up rather than top-down way, i.e. no longer with “experts” imposing their knowledge on the regions, but with a co-construction that respects local singularities.

Bastia is a city marked by strong cultural singularities, such as multilingualism, and a rich and already established cultural ecosystem.

The city’s cultural affairs department organises around a hundred activities per year: events, school residencies, cross-disciplinary projects also involving early childhood, social services and associations.

An investment of €4 million is being injected into the EAC for cultural life in Bastia. This funding must be structured through programming and coordination between partners in order to guarantee equal access to culture for all pupils.

The label supports this approach with the following objectives:

- Combining coherent cultural pathways
- Contributing to the development of creativity
- Extending EAC to all areas

The approach consists of offering a varied cultural programme, both during and outside school hours, by developing appropriate tools, both digital and non-digital.

Beyond access to culture, the initiative aims to empower young people and transform the region over a 5- to 10-year period, starting with practical activities.

Respect for cultural rights also translates into recognition of local cultures and traditions.

2. Cultural mediation in Ajaccio and feedback - Laurent Muracciole

After fifteen years of directing in New Caledonia, Laurent Muracciole is now responsible for cultural mediation in Ajaccio.

He points out that the reality in New Caledonia is very different from that in Corsica, with specific challenges. He recently discovered cultural rights and realises that they correspond to what he applies in his practice, as does the EAC.

In his view, the label can sometimes be disappointing, as it is often perceived as a simple label without any additional resources. However, it helps to structure existing actions and achieve a certain visibility, promoting new partnerships.

He gives a few examples of projects:

- Loaning musical instruments in priority neighbourhoods to enable children to learn the violin
- Open-air cinema accompanied by creative workshops to encourage children's creativity

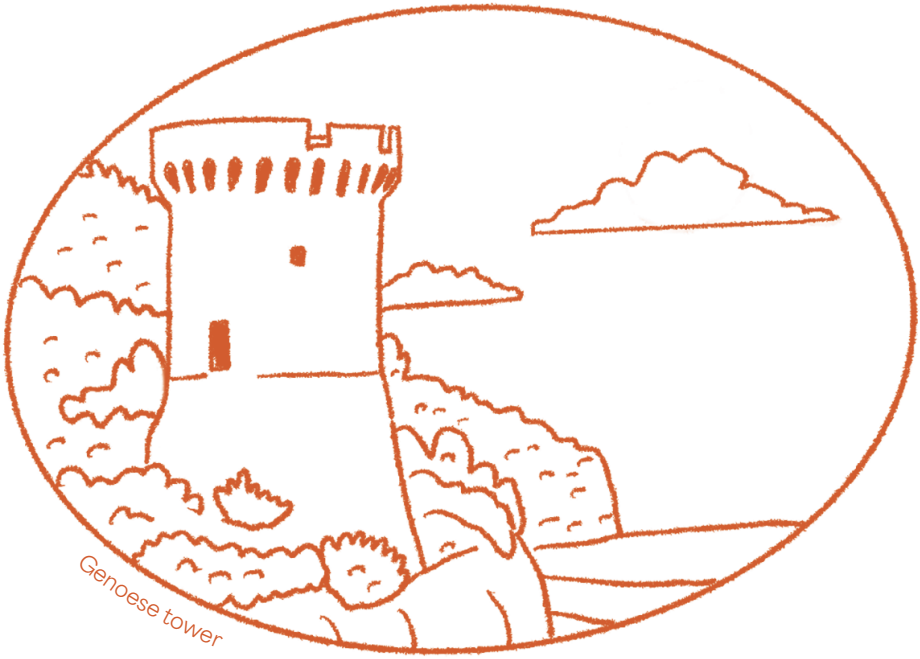
However, he stresses the need to further structure projects in order to move towards a common goal and a shared vision.

3. ARIA: a popular cultural venue and artistic laboratory - Marie-Laure Poveda

ARIA is a popular cultural venue open almost all year round, combining training and education through creativity, mainly in the performing arts (particularly theatre).

Thanks to an agreement signed with the Collectivité de Corse, ARIA has been awarded the national label of **Centre Culturel de Rencontre** (Cultural Meeting Centre), broadening its mission to include heritage preservation with a dual focus on theatre and nature.

This is an innovative school project, bringing together rural areas and offering pupils an annual artistic programme, accompanied by artists, speakers and dedicated resources. In addition, Corsica has recently signed a State-Region agreement aimed at strengthening artistic and cultural education (EAC).



4. National Education objectives for EAC - Dominique Godelle

Dominique Godelle reiterates the objective set by the National Education System: to reach 50% of pupils with EAC within a year.

He sees EAC as an opportunity to restore a school experience of enjoyment and fulfilment everywhere, which is not necessarily accessible to all.

He emphasises that the relationship with culture varies according to geographical origin and social class, and that it is the school's mission to leave no child behind.

5. "L'Oiseau bleu" project in Porto-Vecchio - Olivier Lechevré

Olivier Lechevré, educational advisor for art in the Porto-Vecchio district, presents "L'Oiseau bleu", a musical created with 130 pupils.

The artistic approach, combining singing, theatre and philosophical reflection, focuses on the search for happiness.

The show was performed four times, notably in front of other schools and parents. All the teachers were volunteers and rehearsals took place two afternoons a week, from Year 1 to Year 6.

The project also incorporates vocabulary related to Mediterranean plants (juniper, myrtle, arbutus), in connection with sustainable development and environmental issues.

The main constraint is working alone, without partnerships or support.

6. Leghje e Cumédie Prize, theatre in the Corsican language for young audiences - Marina Lahitte-Loustau

The **Leghje e Cumédie Prize** is an annual call for projects inviting schools to adapt a children's book in the Corsican language into a live performance.

This initiative helps to keep the Corsican language alive, while raising awareness among young audiences in theatres.

The project promotes the development of creative theatre in a minority language.

The average budget per production is €35,000, supplemented by a distribution budget for around 50 performances per year.

Every year, more than 5,000 children from rural communities, from nursery school to Year 6, attend the performances.

The main challenges lie in accessing the venues (transport) and adapting the shows to a very young audience (aged 2 to 9), while remaining within the realm of art theatre without falling into pure pedagogy.

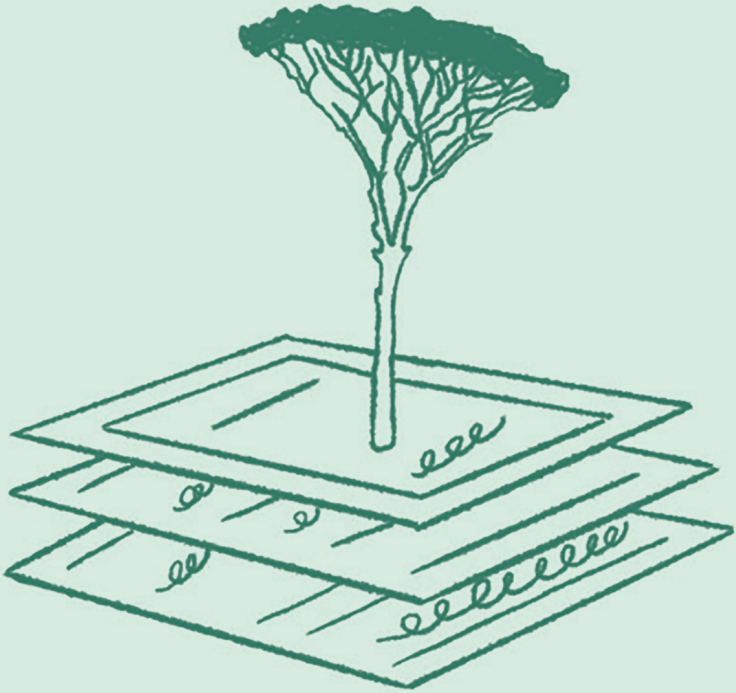
This initiative promotes theatre and the Corsican language, encouraging authors to take an interest in this specific field. The work required of the companies is demanding, as it involves a real adaptation to the Corsican language and young audiences.

• Conclusion

In short, this round table highlights the crucial importance of cultural rights as a lever for social and territorial transformation, particularly in rural contexts. Through their varied experiences, the speakers illustrate that arts and cultural education, supported by local initiatives such as the "100% EAC" label, innovative projects in schools, and the promotion of regional languages, contributes not only to strengthening social cohesion but

also to preserving and revitalising specific cultural identities. This not only helps to strengthen social cohesion but also to preserve and revitalise specific cultural identities. Although these initiatives still face challenges in terms of funding, structure and accessibility, they contribute to a shared vision in which culture becomes a fundamental right, accessible to all, and a factor in individual and collective emancipation.

AXIS 2: PROTECTING, PROMOTING AND TRANSMITTING CULTURAL AND LIVING HERITAGE



Round table 3: Tangible, intangible and natural heritage: “our common goods”, legacies and vectors of creation

Moderator
Pierre-Jean Campocasso - Director of Heritage at the Corsican Regional Authority

Speakers
Damien Delgrossi - Head of the sound archive at the Museum of Corsica
Sébastien Celeri - Architect, member of CESEC
Raphaël Quilici - Confrérie de Speluncatu
Jean-François Luciani - Artist, trainer in Corsican polyphony
Laurence Pinelli - European cultural project leader

- **Introduction** - Pierre-Jean Campocasso

The fundamental concepts of heritage are outlined here, categorised as tangible, intangible and natural, avoiding the use of the term “living heritage”, which could imply, by contrast, the existence of “dead heritage”.

Intangible heritage was only formally recognised in law in 2002, which broadened the boundaries of what can be considered heritage. In 2025, anything can potentially be considered heritage, provided that there is a desire to protect it. This includes:

- Tangible heritage: architecture, furniture, public or private property (churches, palaces, religious objects, etc.)
- Intangible heritage: know-how, language, songs, traditions

- Natural heritage: landscapes, local resources (such as chestnut trees)

1. The Sound Library: the region's audio memory – Damien Delgrossi

Damien Delgrossi presented the work carried out at the sound archive of the Museum of Corsica, described as a "sound library". Its main mission is to collect, digitise and archive sound recordings made in Corsica, particularly by musicologists, researchers and private collectors.

With over 2,500 hours of archives, a third of which come from collection campaigns conducted directly by the museum, the sound archive is becoming an essential tool for preserving the island's sound memory.

A prime example is the collection of the liturgical repertoire of Speluncatu, carried out in partnership with Olivier Tourny (CNRS) and a musicologist and choir director, which in just four days saved an intangible heritage that was in danger of disappearing. This initiative showed how sound memory can become a lever for cultural revitalisation.

2. The rebirth of a singing tradition – Raphaël Quilici

Raphaël Quilici returned to the specific case of **Speluncatu**, a village whose brotherhood had stopped singing in the 1990s. Thanks to the recordings collected, the brothers were able **to reconstruct and reinvent** a liturgical repertoire specific to their territory: 62 songs today, drawn from their tradition or recreated in its spirit.

These songs are not simply artistic expressions: they embody the identity of the village. It is not a question of 'singing Corsica',

but of 'singing the village'. This shows that intangible heritage is not static: it lives, adapts and is transmitted in a movement between faithful reproduction and reinterpretation.

3. Restoring architecture and voices – Sébastien Celeri

Sébastien Celeri drew a parallel between the restoration of buildings and that of liturgical singing in the village of Piedicorte-di-Gaggio.

In this project, the sound archives made it possible to revive a lost singing heritage. At the same time, the parish church was restored on the basis of old documents (19th-century photographs) with a desire to rediscover the original architectural meaning – in particular by leaving the bell tower in its unfinished state, which is now considered to be significant.

The Mass on 15 August, sung according to ancient traditions, thus brought together tangible and intangible heritage in a single celebration. The return of singing to the restored space has enabled the rediscovery of links between villagers through musical similarities, revealing shared histories and past movements.

4. Oral transmission in the face of modernity – Jean-François Luciani

Jean-François Luciani spoke of his commitment to passing on Corsican polyphony, which he defines as a uniquely Corsican invention, transmitted orally through the generations. For him, this heritage is a living species that must be protected from oblivion. He has led 750 polyphony workshops around the world to pass on this heritage.

Quoting Édouard Glissant: "The universal is the local minus the walls", he emphasises that polyphony is not just an aesthetic, but a way of thinking, living and

existing in the island world. Its disappearance would mean the loss of an entire part of Corsican culture.

Concrete actions carried out by the Corsican authorities:

- Regular workshops in schools (more than 350 pupils involved)
- Freely accessible sound database
- Partnership with the museum's sound archive
- Development of an immersive learning model

"The right to sing" must be guaranteed to all, regardless of musical or linguistic proficiency.

5. Natural heritage as living memory - Laurence Pinelli

Laurence Pinelli presented cultural projects aimed at promoting natural heritage through contemporary art and European cooperation.

Flagship project: "Les arbres voyageurs" (Travelling Trees), a cross-border route between Corsica, France and Italy, focusing on chestnut tree cultivation. This tree, which is essential to Corsica's culinary, landscape and cultural heritage, had been neglected but has since been rehabilitated, particularly with the rediscovery of gluten-free chestnut flour.

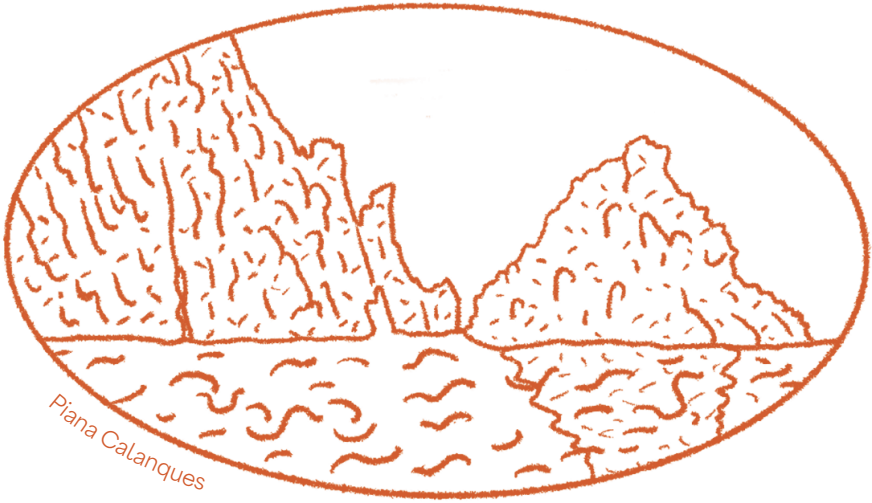
The aim is to make this heritage accessible to all audiences, including those with disabilities, through art, trails and storytelling. The chestnut tree becomes a vehicle for memory, transmission and shared identity.

• Conclusion: Between improvisation and structure

A final presentation evoked the notion of "sound painting", a gesture that guides music without freezing it, between improvisation and strict notation. This idea serves as a metaphor

for thinking about land use planning: between anchoring and adaptation, between local traditions and openness to other places.

For Sébastien Celeri, singing in tune, like restoring or developing, is not primarily a matter of technique but of sincerity. What matters is the ability to recognise what makes up the structure, to feel the rhythm, to understand the relationships - in short, to make a place, a gesture, a culture resonate.



AXIS 3: “BUILDING TERRITORY TOGETHER”: FACILITATING CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AROUND A SHARED PROJECT

Round Table 4: Art and Life

Moderator
Antoine Filipi - Director of the Corsican Film Library

Speakers
Fabien Danesi - Director of FRAC Corsica
Davia Benedetti - Artist, researcher, director of a university cultural organisation
Fabien Flori - Head of the Popul'Arte project
Jean-Emmanuel Pagni - Artistic Director of Casell'arte in Venaco
Sébastien Celeri - Architect

- **Introduction: three cross-cutting themes structured the discussions:**

1. The impact of the immediate environment on art: How do cultural structures fit into their territory, interact with it and contribute to its transformation?
2. From the local to the universal: How can micro-local initiatives address global issues and create international dialogue?
3. The creation of hybrid collectives: Moving away from a vertical relationship between artist and audience to build ecosystems that bring together citizens, artists, researchers, architects, etc., around locally rooted projects

- **FRAC Corsica: Art, landscape and the Anthropocene** - Fabien Danesi

  Fabien Danesi recalled that this institution, created in 1982 as part of cultural decentralisation, has the primary mission of bringing audiences who are distant from contemporary art closer to it. In Corsica, this mission takes on a specific flavour, notably through:

  - A policy of acquiring works related to rural life and local issues.
  - A redefinition of landscape as a prism for analysing the Anthropocene, incorporating works that bear witness to the impact of human activity on the environment (e.g. Jason Hendrick Ansma's video on amateur flooding and tsunamis, which is both fascinating and disturbing).

FRAC Corsica

The FRAC structures its exhibitions around this tension between the local and the global, drawing inspiration in particular from Bruno Latour's work on the need to relocalise ecological thinking.

- **Art as a living process and territorial methodology** - Davia Benedetti

  Davia Benedetti proposes an approach in which art, research and education are closely linked. Through university projects involving students, researchers and artists, she seeks to:

  - Turn students into "artist-anthropologists" capable of translating local issues into artistic objects.
  - Explore territorial issues, such as tourism in Porto-Vecchio, through participatory field surveys: "How do you experience tourism? Do you suffer from it?"
  - Create temporary but reproducible mechanisms, where the objective is not so much to perpetuate structures as to disseminate methodologies for cultural co-construction.

  She emphasises the role of the artist as a "whistleblower", capable of observing differently, of not conforming to norms and of revealing invisible realities.

- **Popularte: Land art, heritage and participation** - Fabien Flori

  As head of the Popularte project, Fabien Flori is developing a travelling art initiative in the villages of Haute-Corse, based on land art and the transformation of built heritage.
  Rather than a festival, it consists of:

  - Long artist residencies, including forums with residents, workshops in schools and performances in natural spaces.
  - Artistic creations deeply connected to the locations: for example, an Argentine artist recounting Corsican

immigration or a project about rural women, created by female artists with around forty portrait testimonials.

Popularte thus enables residents to reclaim their territory, while offering a reflection on new forms of rurality. It promotes off-peak periods (outside the summer season) to avoid tourist saturation.

- **Casell'Arte: Cross-residencies and interpretation of the territory** - Jean-Emmanuel Pagni

Jean-Emmanuel Pagni runs Casell'Arte, a cultural centre based in Venaco, which was set up following a call for projects by the CdC. The centre hosts writing and creative residencies for Mediterranean artists, as well as interdisciplinary collaborations with:

  - The FRAC, the Corsican film library, and the Corsican Embassy in Rome.
  - Creative projects linked to the territory: photography and the wool industry, reinterpretation of the forest landscape decimated by parasites, etc.

The aim is to enable the public to rediscover their region through the eyes of outside artists and to build lasting informal networks to connect the island's cultural actors.

- **Architecture, memory and connection to the land** - Sébastien Celeri

Sébastien Celeri offers a deeply ecological and cultural vision of architecture:

  - Culture is both agriculture and transmission: "Di terra è da a terra".

- Traditional Corsican buildings, which grew out of the culture of the land, were used for food, shelter, defence, cultivation and livestock farming - they are the bearers of an essential collective memory.
- Project examples:
  - A semi-underground cultural centre, designed based on the topography and materials of the site (granitic tuff concrete).
  - Dialogue between architect and client around bricks made from local earth by a young cook.

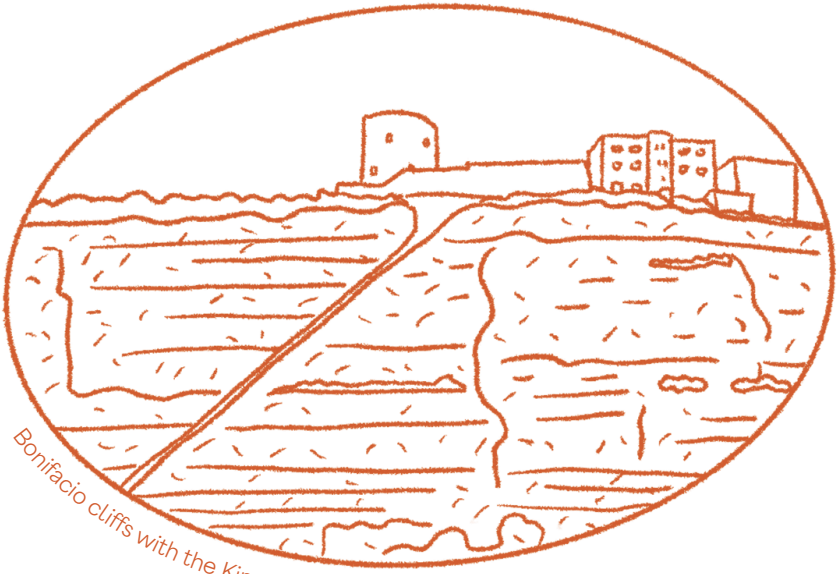
He advocates for architecture that is rooted in its territory and contributes to a sustainable and sensitive social project.

Conclusion: Art as a lever for territorial transformation

All speakers agree on a vision of art not as an activity detached from reality, but as a force capable of rebuilding the links between individuals and their environment, through:

- Participatory projects, rooted in micro-realities, but with universal significance.
- The creation of networks between structures, disciplines and territories.
- The strengthening of critical thinking and the creation of a common culture that is inclusive and open to dialogue with otherness.

Finally, this round table highlighted the central role that artists, architects, researchers and citizens can play in the co-construction of living, sensitive and sustainable territories. All the initiatives presented share the same objective: to reconnect inhabitants with their environment and with each other through artistic mediation.



Bonifacio cliffs with the King of Aragon's stairs

Through these projects, artists no longer appear as isolated creators, but as actors in the field, sensitive mediators, even whistleblowers, capable of formulating contemporary issues in a different way. In this sense, art becomes a powerful lever for dialogue, emancipation and cohesion, paving the way for new forms of living together in these territories.

Round table 5: Cultural and artistic initiatives as drivers of change

Moderators
Marina Lahitte-Loustau - Deputy Director of Performing Arts for the Collectivité de Corse
Lionel Giacomini - Head of Public Reading Services, Pumonte

Speakers
Noël Casale - Co-director of Teatru di u Cumun
Patrick Vignoli - President of Arte Locu
Fiora Giappiconi - Head of the Mostra Teatrale Festival
Christian Andreani - Les Brigades de San Martinu

Introduction

Globalisation and the emergence of new soft powers have disrupted cultural balances, including in Corsica. Since 2015, the island has undergone a profound transformation linked to an intensification of migratory flows. The arrival of new populations, bringing with them ideas that sometimes clash with the reality of island life, has generated cultural friction.

Faced with this complexity, the speakers agree on one point: culture can become a lever for transformation, integration and resistance. And even if the integration of artificial intelligence into the cultural field is inevitable, the Corsican response could be different, unique, rooted in its local specificities. The Corsican regional authority therefore has a role to play in building a more horizontal, inclusive culture that is capable

of mobilising citizens and promoting those working in the field, whether they are artists or project leaders.

- **Arte Locu: Promoting art in rural areas** - Patrick Vignoli

For the past four years, Patrick Vignoli has been developing travelling cultural spaces through the *Arte Locu* organisation. His starting point is simple: despite their favourable geographical location, several Corsican villages between Bastia and Balagne remain without any real cultural offering.

In these areas, travelling to access culture is a major obstacle: petrol prices, road conditions, weather, distance, etc. Added to this is a still rigid view of culture in villages, often reduced to a contrast between tradition (brotherhoods, rituals) and a lack of other options. The aim is therefore to offer contemporary art forms in contexts where they are not expected, and to break down prejudices surrounding art that is perceived as “too pompous” or “not for oneself”.

The solution? An approach based on itinerancy: taking over everyday places – village halls, chapels, alleyways, public squares – to divert them from their original use and turn them into places of creation and cultural dissemination. The success is immediate: even in villages with 60 inhabitants, the shows attract up to 70 spectators, proof of a real need and high expectations.

This work is accompanied by a territorial network that extends to the gates of Castagniccia. The programme, developed with the inhabitants, takes into account their desires and stories. One show, for example, was created around the family history of a village. Seasonality is also a lever: the actions take place out of season, from October to May, contributing to sustainable territorial development.

In Brussels, Patrick Vignoli also participated in the "*Ce qui a été dit*" (What has been said) project, an urban transformation initiative combining artistic practices (video, models, photography) and residents' stories, supervised by the Wallonia Cultural Institute of Architecture. This is an example of what art could become in our neighbourhoods: a tool for reappropriation, dialogue and the revitalisation of neglected spaces, both physically and symbolically.

- **Teatru di u Cumunu: theatre and emancipation in times of change** - Noël Casale

Noël Casale, director, actor and co-director of *the Teatru di u Cumunu* in Bastia, offers a more political reflection on the role of art today. For him, theatre, since its beginnings in the 1980s, still carried the post-war ideal of art serving emancipation and the collective.

He emphasises that we are living Thatcher and Reagan's dream, that is to say a neoliberal, individualistic world in which art is often reduced to an economic tool, while culture becomes a mere "product" of communication. In Corsica, this situation is exacerbated by a worrying rise of the far right, which is achieving record scores in certain localities. For Casale, the "catastrophes" we are experiencing - unbridled urbanisation, tourist tsunami, rural desertification - are not natural but political.

In this context, the *Théâtre du Commun* is clearly positioning itself against the tide. For 30 years, the company has been working with marginalised audiences, rejecting the format of large tours in favour of local projects designed for those most excluded from cultural practices.

The aim is to make each work an object of thought, a place for questioning, and to break away from the

stereotypes conveyed about Corsica. The objective is no longer simply to "show what is wrong", but to reveal the intelligence at work, here and now, in the region.

- **Mostra teatrale: participatory theatre and living repertoire** - Fiora Giappiconi

Fiora Giappiconi directs the *Mostra teatrale*, a festival rooted in the region that combines contemporary creation and classical repertoire. Her approach is based on an original format: three writing residencies per year, spread across spring, summer and autumn . During these sessions, an author collects local stories from residents, then composes a play that is put together quickly and performed at the end of the residency.

These creations are accompanied by workshops in schools and colleges, and published by *Les Éoliennes* in Bastia. The ambition is clear: to talk about people, in their own words and language, to give them back their place in theatrical creation. And it works: spectators who never go to the theatre identify fully with the plays, touched by the accuracy of the stories.

At the same time, the *Mostra* also offers a "repertoire play", either classical or contemporary, performed just before the local play. This dual format creates a bridge between aesthetics and allows audiences to open up to other forms of theatre.

Another example: the Ardèche-based company *Les Nouveaux Nés*, which specialises in contemporary circus, was invited to work on the theme of "truth and falsehood". They practise hybrid forms, combining fake guided tours, clown performances and the reappropriation of abandoned places. This approach resonates with that of the Mostra: temporarily transforming forgotten spaces into places of imagination and life.

- **Brigades de San Martinu: European roots and new ruralities** - Christian Andreani

Finally, Christian Andreani looks back on a 40-year journey, between returning to Corsica and building a cultural project deeply rooted in the territory. With the *Brigades de San Martinu*, he has developed an embodied cultural itinerary, certified by the Council of Europe.

This project draws on built and intangible heritage (legends, stories, rituals) and rural memory. Created in 2008, the San Martinu festival now travels to around twenty villages, often not served by traditional cultural facilities. It highlights a historical figure, Saint Martin, a 4th century Hungarian evangelist who became a European symbol.

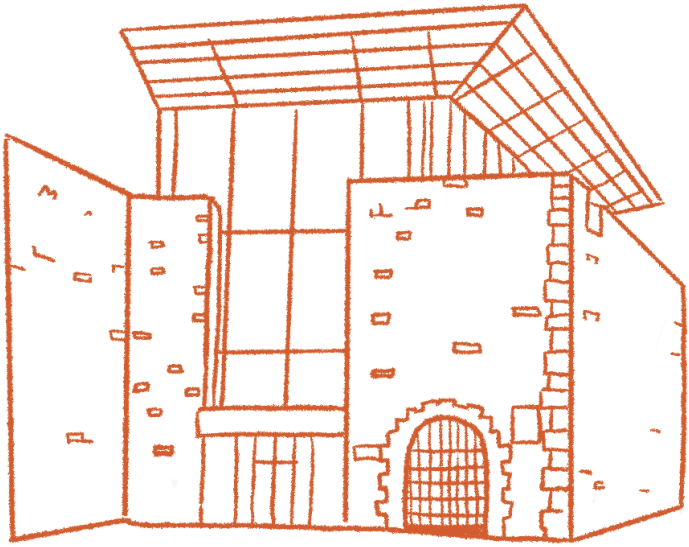
The approach is intercultural and sustainable: it aims to organise cultural days where residents can rediscover or discover their own heritage resources. The idea is to use this local foundation to forge connections with other European regions (Puglia, Paris, Pau, etc.) through a network of cultural itineraries. This also makes it possible to address new ruralities on the outskirts of cities and to highlight villages as laboratories for territorial innovation.

This network operates throughout the year through various events and is reassessed every three years by the European Union. For Andreani, Corsican associations are the essential glue that binds together to bring about real, lasting change.

Conclusion

This round table discussion showed how artistic initiatives can be a catalyst for change, provided they are rooted in the reality of the territories, value the stories of those who live there, and take a political and sensitive view of the world.

From rural wastelands to villages without stages, from schools to public squares, from the local to the transnational, the projects presented demonstrate that culture is not a luxury, but a collective necessity, a way of resisting, emancipating oneself, connecting and transforming together.



Museum of Corsica

Presentation by students from the École de Condé

General theme:
Examining the relationship between heritage and the future through the transformation of wastelands and vacant spaces.

Positioning:
In situ research, with an outside perspective on Corsica, without intimate knowledge of the territory but bringing a fresh vision.

Focal point:
The **citadel of Corte** and the **Museum of Corsica**, former military sites that have been rehabilitated.

Three areas of focus:

1. Brownfield sites and vacant spaces as places of living culture
2. Autonomy of territories: redefining lifestyles
3. Materials and know-how: transmission and innovation

Territorial development:

- From 1950 to 2025: +47% population growth, three times higher than the national average.
- Challenge: pressure on land coupled with **mass tourism** → the issue of **vacancy**.

Types of empty spaces:

- **Legacy empty spaces**: industrial wastelands, disused buildings
- **Projected voids**: areas undergoing desertification
- **Symbolic voids**: ageing villages, sense of abandonment

References:

- Land recycling fund for brownfield sites in Corsica
- Climate and Resilience Act

1. The designer's role in these transformations

- **Emptiness** can become **a catalyst for regions**
- Rediscovering **rural autonomy** through the example of **casas** (production units integrated into villages, based on mutual aid)
- **Spatial resilience**: transhumance, anchoring in the territory
- Food autonomy:
  - Before 1950 → near self-sufficiency
  - In 2010 → 2%
  - Today → beginning of redeployment

Challenge:
How can we repair the networks that have been damaged by rural depopulation, the loss of traditional skills and tourism?

2. Reviving local skills

- **Ethnological design** approach:
  Start from **memorised practices**, reinterpret gestures, recreate links between **technique**, **environment** and **culture**
- Example of **lost know-how**:
  - Cheese-making → from woven rushes to sheet metal, then plastic
  - Economic opening → loss of local materials
- Specific example from Corsica:
  Asbestos pottery since the Iron Age, unique in the world → evidence of an **endemic culture**.

Objectives:

- Reconcile technical objects and culture
- Promote **evolving traditions**
- View **brownfield** sites not as failures, but as **matrices for transformation**

Areas for action:

- Training in **local skills**, halfway between **tradition** and **innovation**
- Rethinking vacant spaces as **social laboratories**:
  - Participatory
  - Anchored in the **long term**
  - Based on a **low-tech** and sustainable approach

Conclusion

Corsican brownfield sites can become a **fertile interface** between past and future, between material and use, between tradition and contemporary creation.

Summary of the forum

1. Empowering territories

An intimate relationship between art, culture and territory, driven in part by a desire to rebuild history with the past, an attachment to rural areas and villages, and above all by an awareness that globalisation, in the face of climate change, social risks and political risks, has its limits.

Numerous examples over the two days showed us how culture is a source of transformation for regions, how it renews the social, economic and heritage resources of rural areas. And, conversely, how the territory is an essential resource for cultural creation. This dynamic even blurs the notion of authorship in favour of co-creation, with cultural projects evolving in line with alliances with local residents and civil society.

2. Empowering populations so they do not feel powerless

Culture creates a space for working together, with a demand for professionalism and participatory methods. It all starts at school, with an active policy of artistic and cultural education. But beyond school, cultural experiences facilitate participation and co-production. We are moving from cultural consumption to collective experiences of rare intensity!

The quality of relationships with audiences, residents or tourists, is built on vernacular, ancestral know-how, to leave a lasting impression and influence the local area.

3. Territorial connections

On different scales, so as never to feel too small. Cultural connections allow territories to be placed within a network of scales: the distant, the elsewhere, the local, the margins, the private, the public.

Corsica is eminently Mediterranean. Therefore, the distant, the elsewhere, is constitutive of the way the local is treated. Cultural experiences during these two days have shown us how the micro-local dialogues with the international, to overcome segmentations and amplify itself in paths of itinerancy.

4. A capacity for new life stories, so as never to feel powerless

Narratives that are part of vernacular histories in order to move forward, create shared futures and pass on knowledge. A culture that strives to support the emergence of contemporary practices, to renew society, to renew society's relationship with living things, to put living things back at the heart of transformations.

Take heritage, for example: it is a question of overcoming the divisions between tangible and intangible heritage. "Heritage becomes both highly localised and transnational signatures, woven between architectural and musical melodies, invitations to come together, even if we cannot sing, beyond knowledge and skills."

• Conclusion: a long road ahead, but a strong commitment

Transformation takes time, a long time, even if milestones can be reached quickly. The road is difficult. Counterproductive forces are powerful and continue to reinforce social difficulties, the transformation

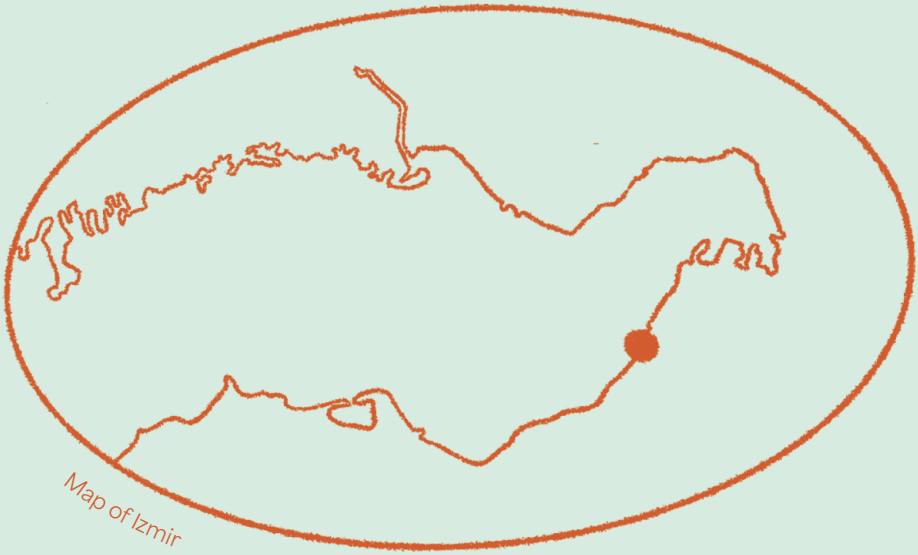
of our landscapes towards standardisation, particularly in peri-urban areas, the marginalisation of rural areas, etc.

Cooperation is a strong choice, supported by Corsican policies. We will continue this approach in the **Territoires Cultivés** project, both by making political commitments (with the signing of a manifesto) and by experimenting with concrete projects in the field where culture challenges development practices, paving the way for sustainable development.

How can a factory support a landscape plan? How can we reinvent ways of living in urban and rural contexts?

Izmir Symposium

4–5 September 2025



Map of Izmir

Opening Address

Fabien Flori
"The 'Cultivated Territories' project opens up avenues for cooperation to make the Mediterranean a place of cultural mixing and dialogue. It offers real prospects, particularly within the framework of the coalition. The ambition is to make culture a driver of territorial transformation, in a particularly important ecological context."

Juliette Bonpoint
"Welcome, everyone. I wish you all a very successful symposium. Transdisciplinarity is an essential field for the future, particularly at the intersection of culture and regional planning. We are undertaking numerous initiatives in this direction, particularly through our residency programme.

These moments are therefore important for sharing, reflecting together and coming up with concrete solutions for Izmir and the Mediterranean."

Agnès Rampal
"The Mediterranean is not just a heritage. It has been emphasised how natural history, in particular, inspires a culture of resilience. During our round tables at the forums, we saw how culture is being rebuilt: food traditions, forms of sustainable housing... Culture transmits a heritage, but also adaptive and environmentally friendly lifestyles.

Despite the many challenges, I continue to believe that, with targeted cultural actions, dialogue remains an essential foundation: the simplest means of appropriation and change. I want to believe that we can work together to build a global system that connects Mediterranean people, between cities and metropolises. This manifesto is only the beginning of a

long adventure. We must consider how to disseminate it to new actors and invite them to join us. Thank you once again for helping to strengthen the fraternal identity of the Mediterranean.

Loïc Gachon

"We face the same challenges: colossal, unprecedented challenges. In the face of risks and doubts, the temptation is to withdraw into ourselves. However, the history of the Mediterranean teaches us the opposite: it bears witness to the importance of exchange, encounter and an inclusive identity. Culture - our common and shared cultures - allows us to feel at home in Athens, Barcelona or Alexandria.
The "Cultivated Territories" project should help us to chart the course and set the direction for the decades to come.

Pinar Okyay

"Placing culture at the heart of the process is essential in order to deal with uncertainty and injustice. The pandemic has shown us how indispensable cooperation is. AVITEM contributes to strengthening this Mediterranean cooperation. Culture, both what differentiates us and what brings us together, is a common good that we must protect, nourished by our diverse histories. Kindness, benevolence and affection are founding values of our cultures, as are heritage and knowledge. The Manifesto is intended as a guide to achieving these objectives. Izmir is part of the steering committee of the Culture Committee of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and, as such, is working to have culture recognised as one of the Sustainable Development Goals. As a pioneer city of the UCLG Culture Committee, Izmir will be present in Barcelona for the 6th UCLG Culture Summit and will actively support this initiative.

Round Table 1:
Izmir's view of the Mediterranean

Moderator
Prof. Dr. Ferhat Kentel - Art Venue İzmir, AVİ / The Sociology Shop
Prof. Dr. İlhan Tekeli - Honorary Founding President of the Mediterranean Academy of Izmir, "Izmir in a Mediterranean meta-narrative"
Serhun Al - Izmir University of Economics, Department of Political Science and International Relations, "Cultural Encounters and Walls in Izmir".

The Mediterranean social space

Ferhat Kentel discusses an unstable Mediterranean social space, torn between global neoliberalism and the need to preserve its own culture.

How can we control neoliberalism, understand market logic and, at the same time, safeguard an autonomous culture, far removed from economic standardisation? He proposes embracing a **humanist socialism** that allows us to rethink our collective memory.

The approach must be **interdisciplinary and intercultural**, because **another culture** – born of diversity – must spring forth before us.

The meta-narrative of Izmir

Ilhan Tekeli emphasises that in Turkey, history is conceived in an interdisciplinary manner.

The Mediterranean meta-narrative

Izmir can be understood as a **meta-narrative**, a **meta-history**, in parallel with Braudel's approach.

What is the true personality of the Mediterranean? Are we talking about 10,000 years of history, or 5 million years? Around 8000 BC, a 'mega-flood' marked a turning point - it was during the Neolithic period that the Mediterranean truly came into being, giving rise to around 10,000 years of shared history.

Neither the Ottomans nor the Romans considered themselves "Mediterranean". The concept of the "Mediterranean" only emerged after the Second World War, particularly with the development of tourism and the prospect of the European Union expanding southwards and eastwards.

The Mediterranean according to Braudel

For Braudel, the Mediterranean is based on three concepts:
→ **Integrity**,
→ **Differences**,
→ **Dynamics**.

A meta-narrative presupposes a **common dynamic**, whether geographical, climatic or commercial.
These interactions developed during the classical period, thanks in particular to advances in naval technology.

Under the Roman Empire, the *mare nostrum* embodied this geographical unity.
But the Mediterranean concept only really emerged in the 13th century, with the great trading cities–Byzantium, Venice, Pisa–which, through their trade and innovations, intensified Mediterranean interactions.

In the 16th century, the Mediterranean opened up to new centres of innovation (England, Northern Europe, the Atlantic). Trade and piracy coexisted in a standoff between Spain and the Ottoman Empire around Malta.

- ## Tourism and the redefinition of the Mediterranean

Until the Second World War, and then around 1956, the Mediterranean underwent a profound change: working practices and paid holidays encouraged the rise of mass tourism. Tourism then became a means of recreating Mediterranean unity, a shared concept.

- ## Cultural relations and the European project

According to Ferhat Kentel, it is relations between cultures that can constitute a new Mediterranean unity, integrating the South into the European project. Instead of focusing on our differences and conflicts, we should value our commonalities. Otherwise, we risk becoming isolated exceptions.

Questions:
After the Second World War, did tourism contribute to the creation of a Mediterranean integrity capable of producing a Mediterranean meta-narrative? A major challenge would then be to create a Mediterranean tourist culture, as an expression of a cultivated territory, a culture that influences the behaviour of tourism itself.

- ## The project "Forms of nationalism in Izmir: perceptions, attitudes and negotiations"

Serhun Al mentions the project **"Forms of Nationalism in Izmir"**, bringing together 2,000 researchers to work on the identity of Izmir and its interactions with the Mediterranean.

In the 20th century, with the creation of nation states, and then under the influence of the UN and the EU, cultural and minority rights achieved fragile gains. Today, resistance to multiculturalism is reappearing. Some argue for the protection of a more homogeneous culture, while **Kurdish, Mediterranean and African migration** is transforming Izmir.

- ## Izmir – confidence and openness

Two movements coexist:

- a **liberal and open over-identity**,
- and a **retreat into identity** towards secular homogeneity.

According to Serhun Al, Izmir could become a model in the face of the rise of the far right: a port city, urban, with a strong historical consciousness, mixed and multicultural (particularly in the Kemeraltı district).

Izmir's hybrid identity has long been shaped by religious diversity. The Turkish Republic, on the other hand, has sought homogeneity. But Islamist, Alevi and secular movements coexist today, while new Balkan and Syrian migrations are reviving the question of identity.

Can Izmir become a model pluralistic and multilingual city, capable of overcoming cultural barriers? This would require a **strong cultural democracy**, serving **social and civil peace**.

Ferhat Kentel points out that the lack of trust between groups remains a major obstacle. Everyone is searching for their own identity, but this can build walls. On the contrary, we must **keep the windows open**.

For Ferhat Kente, the Izmir project could serve as a model of emotional resonance, based on a network of Mediterranean cities seeking to overcome barriers and promote multiculturalism.

Panoramic view of Izmir with Mount Kadifekale

Conclusion – Towards a new Braudel

Mediterranean culture calls for a new Braudel, a reinterpretation of the Mediterranean in all its specificity and complexity. Nation states have fragmented this space into multiple entities, but cultural interactions cannot be prevented.

Izmir alone cannot resolve these tensions: cooperation between states and international organisations (EU, UN) as well as decentralised cooperation is necessary, particularly on cultural and migration rights. Multiculturalism concerns both citizens and international companies.

To build this “new Braudel”, we must engage in politics at the level of the inhabitants, far from populism and neoliberalism, in order to regain our voice and reinvest in our territories.

Round table 2:
The relationship with the sea, design and culture in the Mediterranean and Izmir

Moderator
Prof. Dr. Çiler Çilingiroğlu - Department of Archaeology, University of the Aegean

Speakers
Prof. Dr. Güzel Yücel Gier - Institute of Marine Sciences and Technologies, Dokuz Eylül University, "A view of the Mediterranean beyond the human perspective"
Aylin Göknur - Head of Urban Design and Urban Aesthetics, Izmir Metropolitan Municipality, "The Coast: Where We Breathe"
Ayşegül Kurtel - Founding President of the K2 Contemporary Art Centre), "Experiences of the Mediterranean Biennial and the Izmir Port Triennial"
Dr. Işıkhan Güler - Chairman of the Board of Directors of Izdeniz
Gökhan Marım - Managing Director of Izdeniz, "Maritime Projects Specific to Izmir"

Introduction

This round table explored the complex relationship between the sea and the land in the Izmir region. It brought together presentations on the history of coastal development, port planning, pollution and wetland management, and the role of art and culture in building a shared maritime consciousness.

The Kordon and the history of coastal transformations - Aylin Göknur

Architect and coastal urban planning specialist Aylin Göknur describes the example of the Alsancak coastline, an iconic space marked by a succession of controversial projects. Since the 18th century, the seafront has undergone numerous expansions and interventions: first with the creation of European-inspired avenues, then with successive embankments in the 20th century.

From the 2000s onwards, a turning point occurred: the coastline was transformed into public green spaces and landscaped promenades. A vast participatory design project entitled "Project to strengthen the relationship between the inhabitants of Izmir and the sea (İzmirdeniz)" was designed and implemented in order to question and strengthen the link between the inhabitants and the sea. This project also includes a component dedicated to the development of maritime culture. However, this evolution has taken place in a context of increasing risks related to climate change, flooding and marine submersion.

Today, the redesign of the coastline is underway, with a target date of 2026. It is based on three principles: design, participation and sustainability. The projects include soil de-impermeabilisation, protection of endemic species and the extension of green and blue corridors. The issue of resilience and risk prevention is now central to planning.

- **Ports and the maritime economy** – Işıkhan Güler

  Izmir is a port city with a wide range of activities, where cargo ports, cruise terminals, logistics zones and heritage sites coexist. This diversity poses a major challenge: how to reconcile economic development and environmental imperatives in the context of climate change?

  The temptation to pursue unlimited expansion, dictated by economic growth, comes up against ecological limits. The answers certainly lie in technological innovations – infrastructure, improvement of water quality – but they must also integrate a cultural and social dimension, which concerns both tourism practices and urban planning. Isikhan Güler calls for a global and cross-cutting vision, linking the development of the bay, port management and the protection of marine environments.

- **Pollution and ecological restoration** – Gökhan Marim

  Gökhan Marim, CEO of Izdeniz, the maritime transport and coastal clean-up operator, painted a worrying picture: widespread pollution, persistent odours, loss of biodiversity, proliferation of algae and micro-organisms, pollutants from rivers, boats and fires.

  In response to these threats, Izdeniz has implemented an emergency plan, particularly following episodes of mass fish mortality. Satellite analyses show the speed of these phenomena, whether ash deposits or phosphorus pollution. To address this, several experiments are underway: the use of modified clay (4 g/m²) to reduce turbidity and improve water quality, and dredging to enhance marine circulation and restore depth to certain areas.

  These measures are being carried out in close cooperation with universities and international organisations. But they also have a social and cultural dimension: Gökhan

Marim has emphasised the need to democratise access to the sea by promoting public boats, sailboats and kayaks, rather than reserving the coastline for large yachts.

- **Wetlands and Posidonia: a vital heritage** - Güzel Yücel Gier

Wetlands specialist Güzel Yücel Gier pointed out that the Gulf of Izmir, covering an area of 960 km², includes several areas protected for military or ecological reasons, notably Ramsar sites. The Gediz wetland, connecting the mountains and the sea, is a major ecological corridor.

However, urban pressure is considerable: in twenty-five years, the population of Izmir has doubled, and urbanisation is now reaching the gates of protected areas, including those that are home to 10% of the world's flamingo population.

In this context, lagoons and Posidonia seagrass beds play a fundamental ecological role. These "olives of the sea" produce oxygen and sand, store carbon, stabilise dunes, reduce wave energy and combat erosion. Their extremely slow growth (1 cm per year) requires strict protection. But they also have cultural and symbolic value: they are seen as sacred entities to be preserved and passed on.

Conservation plans are underway, bringing together scientists, fishermen and local residents in an approach that combines local knowledge, academic research and toponymic memory. Güzel Yücel Gier has broadened the scope of her work by participating in artistic activities related to the Gulf of Izmir.

Flamingos in Karşıyaka, protected area known as "Bird Paradise"

- **Art and maritime awareness** – Ayşegül Kurtel

Artist Ayşegül Kurtel, founder of the K2 Contemporary Art Centre in 2003, presented her work on the links between art, territory and the sea. Housed in a former port building, the centre has become a place of creation and transmission, aiming in particular to keep creative youth in Izmir.

The Izmir Mediterranean Biennial, now conceived as a Mediterranean biennial, invites twenty-two countries and brings together mainly young artists. Its themes, centred on the sea, storms and the gulf, offer a shared reflection on the future of the Mediterranean coastline. For Aysegül Kurtel, art helps to raise shared awareness of the sea and anchor this issue in collective culture.

Questions and debates

The discussions highlighted three main areas to be addressed: the development of the bay, port management and the ecological quality of marine environments. But they also raised a broader question: how to move beyond purely technical solutions to integrate a shared maritime culture based on social practices, balanced tourism and better coordination between the hinterland, water sources and the coastline.

Conclusion

It is important to keep the sea and its shores accessible to all in order to strengthen the connection between residents and the sea and build a true maritime culture among citizens.

Fresh fish at the Kemeraltı bazaar

Round table 3: The spatial dimension of culture

Moderator
Dr Mert Kaya - Directorate of Urban Equality and Justice, Izmir Metropolitan Municipality, sociologist

Mark Giraud - author, "The Elders of Izmir: The Levantines bringing the West to the East and carrying the East to the West".
Nesim Bencoya - Director, cultural heritage activist, "Jewish cultural heritage and space".
Elmas Köckün - activist, "Roma neighbourhoods and urban transformation".

- **Historical overview and memory issues** - Mark Giraud

The discussion begins with the history of Izmir, a city that began to develop in the 16th and 17th centuries. The population, of mixed origin, was characterised by the absence of ghettoisation. The First World War marked a break, leading to a kind of impoverishment of the collective spirit and the disappearance of part of the multiculturalism. Despite everything, history remains present and continues to shape the city's identity.

It is recalled that "change is inevitable, but it must be done consciously" and that "remembering is better than understanding, but to remember, one must understand". The reflection thus focuses on the transposition of social memory into spatial memory.

Multiple sources are used: georeferencing of names, photographs, correspondence, press articles, Ottoman, ecclesiastical and private archives. These materials enable the creation of a Geographic Information System (GIS) at

the cadastral scale, a tool that makes it possible to track urban development and social dynamics over time.

The analyses highlight frequent changes in street names as well as profound transformations in the urban fabric. An interdisciplinary approach, combining cartography and three-dimensional modelling, contributes to the reconstruction of collective memory. This approach reflects the disappearance of Greek and Armenian Orthodox churches as well as certain Jewish neighbourhoods, particularly during the Republican period.

An interactive website, designed as a collaborative platform, allows new contributions (photographs, documents, testimonials) to be continuously added. The aim is to develop a shared history, promoting common knowledge and a greater capacity for "living together".

- **Jewish cultural heritage and urban space** - Nesim Bencoya

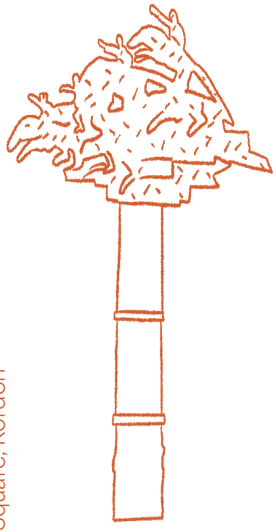
The following presentations focus on the Jewish cultural heritage of Izmir and, more broadly, on the relationship between culture and urban space. This research and preservation work has been ongoing for more than fifteen years. The Jewish presence in the Aegean Sea has been documented since the 1st century BC. In Izmir, a Sephardic diaspora has built up a rich cultural and identity heritage, notably through the establishment of synagogues that occupy a central place in the city.

Several iconic synagogues illustrate this history:

- **Bikur Holim**, founded by a typically Sephardic Portuguese diaspora, part of which was used as a hospital (the term "bikur holim" means "hospital" in Turkish).
- **Shalom Synagogue**, with its original Sephardic architecture but influenced by Italian style, with an off-centre prayer space that marks a typological evolution.

- **Etz Hayim**, considered a building of great importance.
- **Portekiz Sinagogu**, a Portuguese synagogue completely destroyed by fire in 1976, of which only the foundation stones remain.
- **Talmud Torah**, which underwent extensive restoration between 2010 and 2020 and is now protected, is located near the **Foresteros Synagogue**, which was probably built for Italian Jewish merchants.
- **Sinyora Sinagogu**, a building with architecture similar to that of a church, founded in the 1960s. It served as a place of worship, a court, a school, a classroom and a place of daily life.

Renovation projects also concern buildings such as the Sabetay Sevi house and the Mavi Kortejo, led in particular by the Tarkem organisation. Conversely, the Sabetay Sevi house is a negative example of poorly integrated preservation.



War memorial in Gündoğdu Square, Kordon

The challenge of preservation is not limited to physical conservation. Rehabilitation also concerns the intangible and emotional heritage that connects residents to this history. According to the conclusion, “this is not just the history of a minority, but the shared history of the Mediterranean.” The stated aim is to contribute to a multicultural city that is conscious of its past and heritage.

- **Roma identity and space in Izmir** - Elmas Kockun

  Here, three main themes are addressed: the definition of Romani identity, the components of migration and the location of Romani neighbourhoods in Izmir.

  Roma people are distinguished by a unique characteristic: they are often referred to by names that do not correspond to their own. Space must be considered not only as a geographical territory, but also as a place of belonging. This relationship to space contrasts with the nomadic lifestyle, which embodies diversity and movement.

  The origins of the Roma community lie in India, with gradual migration to the Balkans and the Ottoman Empire, motivated by political and social factors. Their dispersion across the Mediterranean is attested to by various sources.

  The history of this population is marked by discrimination and persecution, particularly during the Second World War, which led to numerous forced displacements. In Turkey, the First World War and the creation of the modern state led to demographic control measures and forced sedentarisation. From 1935 onwards, nomadic Roma were no longer allowed to move freely, which led to their settlement in urban peripheries.

  The transition to sedentarisation often resulted in temporary housing, shanty towns or precarious neighbourhoods. In Izmir, there are 32 Roma neighbourhoods, including Tenekeli and Tepecik. These areas suffer from difficult conditions: limited access to water, electricity and public services, social stigmatisation and institutionalised marginalisation. The neighbourhood is seen as an extension of the home and becomes an identity in itself.

Current issues include the threat of assimilation of Roma living in the city centre and the need for urban transformation that respects social and cultural dynamics. Negative examples, such as the case of Sulukule in Istanbul, show the destructive effects of renovation imposed without consultation with residents.

The conclusion emphasises the need to analyse not only housing, but also the social, political and cultural dynamics behind sedentarisation. Urban planning and culture must be considered in dialogue with residents in order to ensure inclusion and respect for community history.

General conclusion

The joint study of the trajectories of the Levantines, Jews and Roma highlights the richness and complexity of the relationship between culture and space in Izmir. These communities share experiences of rootedness, memory and resistance, and are now involved in joint projects. The dynamic also includes Armenians and Greeks, who, as early as the 19th century, had already collaborated on reconstruction initiatives, notably the rebuilding of a church.

Round table 4: Transitional spaces and design possibilities 1

Moderator
Dr Tolga Çilingir - Directorate of Rural Area Strategy, Urban Planner, Izmir Metropolitan Municipality

Sinan Alper - Directorate of the Mediterranean Academy of Izmir Metropolitan Municipality, architect
Hüseyin Öztürk - Head of the Green Space Planning Project Department, Izmir Metropolitan Municipality
Elif Kocabıyık Savasta - Izmir University of Economics, Department of Industrial Design

- **Migration and urban memory** - Hüseyin Öztürk

The discussion begins with a personal recollection that sheds light on the link between memory, migration and urbanisation. Born into a family originally from Malatya, Hüseyin Öztürk recounts a journey marked by successive displacements: a father who left to work in Istanbul, parents who remained in the village, then an arranged marriage to a woman from the same village, reflecting a desire to maintain rural roots despite mobility. Migration to the city as a teenager marked a decisive stage in this process.

In the new urban spaces, the buildings are inhabited by families from the same village, reproducing community dynamics. Neighbourly relations are based on mutual aid, resource sharing and collective living. Urbanisation is gradually transforming this organisation, with the emergence of new building regulations: preservation of historical heritage and construction of new buildings in the immediate vicinity.

Living park projects are part of this continuity. They are based on a circular system that combines private land and public projects, integrating agricultural production and social functions. The aim is to show that planned green areas can be physically created and used by all residents, regardless of social group. These parks regularly host annual community activities. The approach highlights the importance of integrating geographical conditions, natural elements and human needs in order to design sustainable spaces.

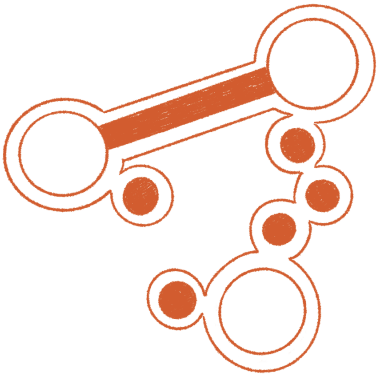
- **Ecological corridors and green infrastructure** - Sinan Alper

The following presentation focuses on urban resilience and nature-based solutions. Since 2014, the municipality and the Mediterranean Academy have been working on green infrastructure. The method adopted is one of “small steps”: gradual experimentation in maritime areas, then in terrestrial spaces.

The **Urban Green Up** project positions Izmir as a pilot city in the development of nature-based solutions (NBS). One of the main focuses is to reconnect residents with streams, which were often previously perceived as degraded spaces or associated with unpleasant odours. Rehabilitation work, particularly on the Peynircioglu River, combines non-isolation, bank reinforcement and vegetation integration.

These interventions aim to transform streams into **ecological and recreational corridors**, connecting the city with nature. They are accompanied by complementary infrastructure: cycle and pedestrian paths, large urban parks, stormwater management systems, tree planting and biodiversity enrichment. The objective is twofold: to strengthen urban resilience and reintroduce nature into the fabric of the city.

- **Social design and collective design** - Elif Kocabıyık Savasta



The final section addresses the issue of design and its social dimension. The analysis focuses on the history of design in Izmir and the **İyi Tasarım İzmir** ("Good Design Izmir") event, conceived as a space for professional and theoretical debate, but also as a hub for innovative production. The event takes place every year around a specific theme and includes presentations, exhibitions, workshops and other activities in the fields of design and creation. It is designed and managed in a participatory manner. This year marks its 10th edition.

The aim is to encourage co-creation and collaboration by opening up design to all residents. The approach questions the role of design: should it only criticise bad practices or participate in the construction of a collective and inclusive design?

The fundamental principles are based on a participatory, egalitarian, transparent and inclusive approach. Design is seen not as a passive value, but as a **creative and transformative space**, capable of producing collective worlds. The approach encourages experimentation, constructive criticism and social transformation, valuing amateur practices as much as experimental approaches.

A concrete example is a **textile project** based on a circular process, participatory production and design innovations. This project illustrates the importance of combining creativity, sustainability and a collective dimension.

General conclusion

This round table highlights the convergence of three complementary approaches:

the memory of urban migration and the construction of **living parks** as spaces of solidarity and sustainability (Öztürk),

the development of **ecological corridors** and green infrastructure to reconnect the city with nature and strengthen its resilience (Alper),

the emergence of a **social and participatory design** that brings together residents and professionals in a spirit of co-creation (Savasta).

Together, these perspectives highlight the importance of integrative urban planning, where memory, nature and collective creativity form the foundations of a resilient and inclusive city.

Round table 5: Transition spaces and design possibilities 2

Moderator
Dr Tolga Çilingir - Directorate of Rural Area Strategy, Izmir Metropolitan Municipality, Urban Planner

Koray Velibeyoğlu - President of the Izmir Metropolitan Municipality Planning Agency
Iraz Candaş Kılıçgedik - Hifco, permaculture expert
Nehir Yüksel - Head of the Rural Services Department of Izmir Metropolitan Municipality

Introduction

The *Cultivated Territories* project seeks to rethink the relationship between humans and nature by creating economic, social and environmental opportunities tailored to the specific characteristics of the Mediterranean region. In a context marked by social fragility and rapid urban transformation, ecological transition is presented as a central issue. It requires an appropriate mindset and the implementation of systemic approaches that bring together ecology, agriculture, culture and territorial development.

Planning and citizen participation – Koray Velibeyoğlu

The Izmir Planning Agency integrates climate and urban issues, particularly sudden shocks such as fires and floods, into its design methods.

In Urla, a testing ground has been set up to trial an urban spatial vision based on citizen participation. The process involves:

the creation of citizen panels and open forums, with balanced representation by neighbourhood and profession;

participatory mapping, producing thematic maps showing the location of projects and initiatives;

a final vote to prioritise and define areas to be protected or developed.

This approach has been enhanced by the use of innovative methods, including “serious games”, which are used to understand coastal dynamics, share a common language and translate observations into operational projects.

- **Ecological memory and regenerative agriculture** – Iraz Candaş Kılıçgedik

HIFCO’s work on permaculture and beekeeping is based on a worrying observation: Mediterranean soils are suffering from water shortages, salinisation, desertification and a gradual disappearance of organic matter and micro-biology. These processes are exacerbated by extreme climate change, agricultural diseases and heavy dependence on pesticides.

To respond to these crises, the team proposes regenerative agriculture based on several levers: composting, introduction of earthworms, soil recarbonisation and revitalisation practices to improve soil absorption capacity. Monitoring is scientific, measurable and reproducible, but it also incorporates a social dimension: farmers are supported in rediscovering their connection to the land, so that soil health is perceived as a shared issue between science and culture.

- **Mobility, rurality and heritage** – Yeşim Gül Karabörklü

  Rural planning in Izmir seeks to articulate nature and culture within a sustainable development framework. Rural roads and routes are seen as tools for cultural and tourist development, while integrating small farms into the local economy.

  This approach is based on respect for world heritage (UNESCO) and intangible heritage, as well as interdisciplinary planning guided by the natural boundaries of river basins, covering an area of 12,000 km².

  A striking example is Bergama, where archaeology, villages, rural tourism, the delta and the coast are linked in a comprehensive project. The routes are accompanied by digital services and applications, enabling visitors to experience new forms of nature and cultural tourism.

- **Cross-cutting lessons**

  The presentations highlighted several common points:

  - the importance of active citizen participation through panels, forums and collaborative mapping;
  - the role of educational and experimental methods such as serious games, summer schools and collective workshops;
  - the inseparable link between soil health, biodiversity, water quality and ecological transition;
  - the need for an integrated vision, combining spatial planning, regenerative agriculture, social ecology, sustainable tourism and heritage.

Conclusion

The ecological transition of Mediterranean territories requires a multidisciplinary, participatory and systemic approach. It must promote natural, agricultural and cultural heritage, while actively involving local populations. Urla and the Izmir region appear to be a laboratory for this transition: a place for experimenting with models of “cultivated territories” that could be adapted and replicated elsewhere in the Mediterranean.

Posidonia seagrass beds, Local marine ecosystem

Summary

The first round table highlighted one observation: the Mediterranean meta-narrative seems to have been weakened by a certain degree of isolationism and by the decline of Mediterranean "multiculturalism", now marked by forced migration. Mediterranean culture appears to be in search of a new Braudel, capable of reinvigorating interactions and renewing cultural exchanges.

Then, to Braudel's triple temporality – geographical (long term), social (that of states) and event-based (short but immediately perceptible) – a fourth time dimension has been added: that of climate. The latter combines urgency and the long term, and requires new concepts, new representations and responses that are both structural and rapid. It calls for a rearticulation of geographical spaces, with metropolitan areas emerging as genuine project spaces.

Four main areas can be identified:

→ **Transversality and fertile contradictions**
The second round table brought together researchers working on Posidonia and lagoons, port network specialists, water quality management stakeholders and cultural initiative leaders, such as the Biennale de la Mer. This diversity illustrates a cross-cutting approach, which is essential for responding to climate challenges. The debates revealed tensions, particularly between ecosystem protection, citizen engagement and the need to strengthen port infrastructure. Far from being sterile, these contradictions are essential for fostering realistic and innovative compromises.

→ Multicultural memory and urban traces

The presentations recalled the transition from a multicultural Izmir to a more unified city after the First World War. Contrary to globalising approaches, some researchers are now engaged in meticulous work, carried out on a small scale, to rediscover traces of a multicultural past and highlight the remains of a lost cultural heritage.

→ Culture of living and Mediterranean urbanisation

Reflection on the culture of living has highlighted the importance of the city's rural origins, resulting from a mass exodus. Mediterranean urbanisation is characterised by often chaotic development, marked by successive and spontaneous construction. This dynamic reveals an ability to adapt, but also raises the question of survival in the face of climate change, through the management of parks, ecological corridors and common spaces.

→ Reconciliation with living things and the role of sustainable tourism

The presentations highlighted the need to rethink the culture of development by reconciling the human and the non-human, in favour of a genuine culture of living and a circular approach. It was also pointed out that the concept of the 'Mediterranean' was partly born out of tourism, and that an active sustainable tourism policy could give the region a new image: a Mediterranean focused on its nature, its geography and a peaceful relationship with time.

Conclusion

At the end of the two days, one imperative emerged: the need to design territorial transformation projects based on a clear political vision, a participatory method and a diversity of mobilised actors. The experiences of citizen co-production and co-management presented offer avenues for renewing modes of action.

The challenge is to reconstruct a narrative, made up of visions and practices, capable of articulating local memory, societal ambitions and ecological transitions. The Cultivated Territories project is part of this perspective: not only as a witness or whistleblower for citizens, but above all as a driver of transformation. It can contribute to changing the forms of design and action, and to strengthening the collective maturity of Mediterranean projects.

Manifesto signing ceremony
Closing session

Introduction

"Dear guests,
Since ancient times, the Mediterranean has been the shared home of many civilisations.
Today, our home continues to call upon us to face the crises we are experiencing, with shared responsibility.

Izmir, one of the most important meeting points in the Mediterranean basin, is hosting this symposium today for the signing of the Manifesto."

François-Xavier Léger - Opening address

"Thank you to the Mayor and his teams, and to the speakers for their professionalism and conviction.
Thank you to the embassy and the Institut français.
Thank you also to the translators."

These exchanges confirmed:
→ the **close links between culture and territories**,
→ the importance **of sharing and exchanging best practices** in the face of climate change.

Reading of the Manifesto
Speeches by the partners:

Jean-Jacques Ottaviani - Corsica, Director of Visual Arts
"I would like to apologise on behalf of the members of the executive board. We were very grateful for AVITEM's invitation to participate in this project. It is an innovative approach to raising collective awareness. Our objectives are clear: to unite people, cherish peace and harmony, and preserve our common goods."

Mr Loïc Gachon - Mayor of Vitrolles
"This symposium has been exceptionally enriching.
I will say to Benoît Payan, Mayor of Marseille: "You must come here!" Thank you to all those involved in this cooperation programme. We share 6,000 years of common history in the Mediterranean: olive trees, Posidonia, dry rivers that come to life with the first storm, scorching afternoons, evenings that stretch on and on on a terrace cooled by the breeze. We have inherited ancient heritage, music and culinary specialities. The Mediterranean unites us, brings us together.


L'Asansör

Faced with the challenges and risks of the 21st century, our destinies are linked. Whatever the size of our territories, whether they are large metropolises or small towns, signing this Manifesto is a solemn commitment

to combine culture and ecology, to link development and global issues, and to listen to artists.

Ms Angnès Rampal - Deputy Mayor of Nice, President of AVITEM

"Mr Mayor, on behalf of Christian Estrosi, I would like to express my gratitude for the warm welcome and the excellence of this symposium. Resilience, multiculturalism... we share the same questions.

This Manifesto is the culmination of three years of work with AVITEM, a unifying project that rises to the challenges. So many similarities! We form a great people, around this sea between the lands. It represents only 1% of the oceans, yet it compels us to work together. The urgent need for transition and adaptation to climate change is clear to all.

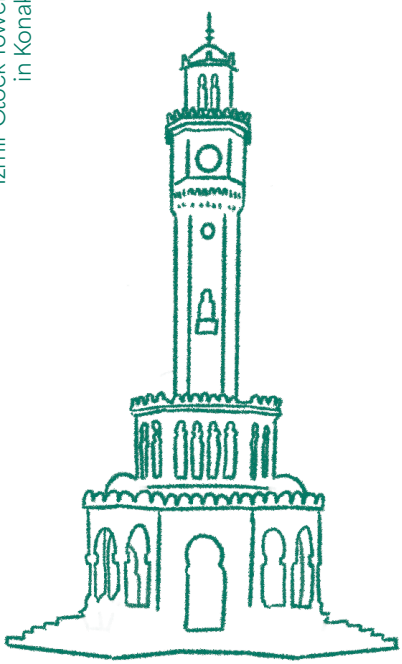
We must continue our actions to achieve vital objectives: there will be no replacement planet."

Dr. Cemil Tugay - Mayor of Izmir

"I would like to say how happy I am to welcome you. We have just turned a new page. We are talking about our thousand-year history, that of a fertile basin, a heritage of humanity. Climate change is already affecting us: the Mediterranean, which accounts for 7% of the world's population, is one of the most affected regions. Temperatures there are rising 20% faster than the global average. Water scarcity is worsening – less than 2,000 m³ per capita – sea surface temperatures are rising, sea level rise and biodiversity loss are accelerating, and extreme events are becoming more frequent.

These phenomena impact our economic and social development and peace. We need collective intelligence to transform our practices and a healthier relationship with

Izmir Clock Tower
in Konak



nature. Living in harmony with nature, supporting the creativity of our young people and acting in solidarity with Mediterranean cities: that is our goal. We want to build more sustainable cities, where citizens are agents of change, where there are comfortable living spaces and healthy forests, and where songs of peace resonate. Izmir, with its rich history, must combine heritage and future in order to preserve our common home. The nature of tomorrow is being created today: taking care of it today means taking care of tomorrow.

Reactions, debates and reflections

Dr Ferhat Kentel - Surprises

"The first round table was remarkably cross-cutting. The conflict between economy and health was clearly laid out. When we think about the Mediterranean, we cannot avoid conflicts of class and interest. Mediterranean regeneration must be rethought on a large scale."

Ayşegül Sabuktay

"The city of Izmir has always had a complex relationship with the sea. After 2009, the Cultural Workshop ("Kültür Çalıştayı") organised helped define a vision for Izmir that was open to the Mediterranean, developed through design and culture. Subsequently, through a series of **Design Forums** launched in 2011, the Summit brought together around a hundred creative professionals to design a maritime project aimed at reconnecting the city's inhabitants with the sea, mobilising architecture, cultural heritage, events and cultural cultural cooperation . This project has been widely implemented. For Izmir, the issue of maritime culture and strengthening the connection between residents and the sea remains a relevant design and urban planning issue.

Loïc Gachon

"Izmir's relationship with the sea is in every way similar to that of Marseille. The contradictions you encounter are the same as those faced by French elected officials, which they must resolve. I was particularly impressed by your work on green spaces, by this ability to recreate a green network in a dense city. It is a real skill."

Sinan Alper

"Green spaces are essential in the context of **climate pressure**. What we need to focus our attention on is **designing resilient cities**. Interventions–whether they concern water, agriculture, urban planning or culture– , all converge on the same issue: the cultural dimension. How can we spread and share this culture around the world? Our common goal must be to build resilient Mediterranean cities."

Derin Sönmez - Izmir Planning Agency

Presentation of innovative projects:

- Use of serious games
- Work on the coastline, carried out during international workshops with students
- Multicultural and transdisciplinary approach
- Training courses on the relationship between the sea and the land

WORKSHOP - Living Lab Workshop

- ## Introduction

  The four forums produced a wealth of food for thought.
  We now want to put this into action to create cooperation between culture, territories and transition.

  The aim is to enjoy artistic, cultural and innovative experiences, but also to experiment with new forms of development. This involves taking concrete action through the creation of four "Living Labs".

- ## Definition and objectives

  A **Living Lab** (living or citizen laboratory) is a space for urban, social, ecological and Mediterranean experimentation, based on a real situation and mobilising cultural, institutional and citizen actors.

  These laboratories aim to:

  - connect culture and territorial transition projects,
  - promote active citizen involvement (the concept of "concernement", according to Bruno Latour),
  - experiment with cultural actions in the service of ecological and social transitions.

  Example: The Loire Parliament
  A concrete example is the Loire Parliament project, which focuses on issues related to the river: pollution, drought, flooding, declining natural flow and drinking water supply.

This project provides a cultural response to these environmental issues and aims to change the way territorial planning is conceived. It is a Living Lab in its own right: a space where culture becomes a lever for action to transform the territory.

- ## Workshop task: Imagine four Living Labs

The workshop will consist of **inventing four Living Labs**, i.e.:

- imagining **urban projects that cooperate with culture**,
- mobilising **territorial transition hypotheses** as starting points,
- designing long-term **experimental spaces** supported by **local authorities and their services**.

These laboratories will be long-term projects, but the initial exercises will serve to kick-start the process and experiment with modes of cooperation.

- The choice of topics has not yet been finalised: it has a political dimension that must be validated.
- The project ends in December, so results must be produced quickly and concrete avenues explored (networks of parks, green spaces, agriculture, environment, etc.).

Example: Font Blanche Park

- This is a major meeting place and living space for the city.
- Despite a lack of funding, there is strong political will.
- The value of the Living Lab is to reflect on the method: how culture supports urban development (and vice versa) in the design and implementation phases.

Living Lab proposals

1. Darağac neighbourhood (Ferhat Kentel)

   - Issues: cultural and urban heritage.
   - Objective: to develop civic awareness and a sense of ownership of the city.
   - Status: project awaiting municipal approval.

2. Nice Marine Protected Area

   - Issues: reconciliation between the maritime environment, residents and human activities.
   - Objective: to work on the port district, involving residents in a cultural and environmental initiative.
   - Stakeholders: artists, street painters, steering committee, independent local stakeholders.
   - Possibility of incorporating an audiovisual and artistic dimension (media, cultural creation).

Conclusion

The proposed Living Labs are citizen-led laboratories aimed at bringing culture, ecology and urban planning closer together. They encourage collective experimentation, participation and the search for new methods of territorial planning guided by cultural creation and ecological transition.

EVENTS POSTERS


LA VILLE DE NICE PRÉSENTE LE FORUM
Culture
& Transition
Écologique
POUR UNE
Méditerranée
Durable
Quels modèles pour
des pratiques culturelles
écoresponsables
en Méditerranée ?
TABLES RONDES,
ATELIERS, DÉBATS
28 NOV. | 9h-20h
VILLA MASSÉNA
29 NOV. | 10h-16h
L'ARTISTIQUE
GRATUIT
PLUS D'INFOS
SUR NICE.FR
INSCRIPTION OBLIGATOIRE
JOURNÉE DE LA MÉDITERRANÉE
28 NOVEMBRE
AViTeM
MINISTÈRE DE L'EUROPE ET DES AFFAIRES ÉTRANGÈRES
MÉTROPOLE NICE CÔTE D'AZUR
VILLE DE NICE

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Territoires Cultivés Forum #2

Culture & Transition Ecologique

POUR UNE

Méditerranée Durable

TABLES RONDES ET CONFÉRENCES

Territoires, culture et écologie

23 mai 2025 | 10h – 18h

Médiathèque La Passerelle & Domaine de Fontblanche

24 mai 2025 | 10h – 18h

Domaine de Fontblanche

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COLLECTIVITÉ DE CORSE

TERRITOIRES CULTIVÉS FORUM #3

I DIRITTI CULTURALI PÈ TRASFURMÀ I NOSTRI TERRITORII

LES DROITS CULTURELS POUR TRANSFORMER NOS TERRITOIRES

TABLES RONDES ET CONFÉRENCES

19 DI GHJUGNU
BASTIA
CAC UNA VOLTA
09.00 - 17.00

20 DI GHJUGNU
AIACCIU
GRAN PALAZZU CULLETTIVITÀ DI CORSICA
10.00 - 15.00


Kültürle İşlenmiş Bölgeler
Territoires Cultivés
İZMİR SEMPOZYUMU
Symposium d'Izmir
10:00 / 10h00 4-5 Eylül septembre 2025
Tarihi Havagazı Fabrikası Kültür Merkezi & Art Venue İzmir
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MÉTROPOLE NICE CÔTE D'AZUR
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Credits

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