

Creating a Future-Oriented Research Agenda for Revitalizing Wasted Urban Spaces through Collaborative Writing: An Interdisciplinary Living Lab Approach

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Karin Hannes¹ , Koen Demarsin¹, Carmen Abril² , Marco Acri^{3,4} ,
Luc Alaerts¹, Harisson Awuh⁵, Ana Balea² , Angeles Blanco² ,
Sandy Claes^{1,6} , Kata Cots Pettit⁷, Marisa De Andrade⁷,
Nairy Eivazy⁶ , Jens Iverson⁸ , Olga Kisseleva⁹, Glenn Loughran¹⁰,
Ysabel Nauwelaerts¹, Sonia Quiroga² , Giovanna Sauve¹, and
Nicholas Sowels⁹ UNA Europa Writers Collective

Abstract

Amid growing environmental concerns, there is an increasing demand for creative research that addresses impending crises while simultaneously imagining sustainable modes of living for humans, non-humans (materials) and other-than-humans (nature) to coexist in urban regions. We engaged a mixture of junior and senior scholars from a variety of disciplines in a forward thinking, collaborative grant writing process inspired by an embodied experience of and exposure to a mixture of sustainability projects at the edges of society. Our UNA Europa writers collective aimed to answer the following question: *how can urban regions be revitalized to build a more sustainable and inclusive living environment?* Guided by the concepts circularity and patchwork methodology, we focused on neglected, wasted spaces in society with potential. We explored how co-creation through collective proposal writing rooted in living lab experiences can spark

¹KU Leuven, Leuven, Belgium

²Complutense University of Madrid, Madrid, Spain

³University of Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain

⁴University of Nova Gorica, Nova Gorica, Slovenia

⁵University Utrecht, Utrecht, The Netherlands

⁶Luca School of Arts, Brussel, Belgium

⁷University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, UK

⁸Leiden University, Leiden, The Netherlands

⁹University of Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne, Paris, France

¹⁰Technological University Dublin, Dublin, Ireland

Corresponding author:

Karin Hannes, KU Leuven, Parkstraat 45, 3000 Leuven, Belgium.

Email: Karin.hannes@kuleuven.be

scholar's imagination about what the nearby future could look like. We cognitively hacked or sensed interesting spaces and mapped out what could potentially be done to initiate meaningful change in order to move from the idea of wasted spaces to wasteless societies. This resulted in a patchwork of relevant, testable ideas for interventions in the urban sphere, inspired by seven types of intelligences answering 'what-if' questions that popped up during our process of engagement with the field; artificial, artisanal, kaleidoscopic, systemic, energetic and spatial intelligence. In conceptualizing our ideas we were mindful about creating conditions for engaging citizens with the speculative revitalization interventions in the urban sustainability sector.

Keywords

co-creation, collaborative writing, urban regeneration, sustainability, circular economy, inclusivity, archipelagic theory

Introduction

This paper presents the process and outcomes of a 1-year forward-thinking process aimed at re-imagining liminal spaces in our living environments as fertile grounds for co-creative experimentation. This process of re-imagining the liminal spaces in our living environment was initiated within the activities of UNA Europa (<https://www.una-europa.eu/>) Una Europa is an alliance of 11 European universities with a focus on pursuing integrated cooperation in high-quality education research, and services to society as a driving force to shape Europe's shared future for the better. Una Europa links highly multidisciplinary researchers with a strong focus on sustainability among other topics. In this context, a small group of scholars including public health scientists, material engineers, chemical engineers, economists, linguists, artists, social-behavioral scientists, philosophers and geographers tried to redefine interventions that might contribute to the desired sustainable, inclusive future of our living environments. Together, we formed a writers collective pushing toward joint grant applications in the sustainability sector, inspired by our embodied experiences of visiting liminal spaces in society to spark our collective imagination. The aim of our writers collective was conceptualize a waste-less society inclusive of multiple entangled agencies (human, non-human, other-than-human) by fostering a trans-disciplinary, trans-regional, trans-epistemological and trans-cultural

exchange of knowledge, taking circularity as a core concept to stimulate our thinking about revitalization processes.

In this study, sustainability refers not only to environmental performance or resource efficiency, but to the capacity of urban systems to remain livable, resilient, and meaningful over time through the balanced interdependence of ecological integrity, social inclusivity, cultural continuity, and material circularity. From this perspective, cities' sustainability in the long term depends on how human, non-human, and other-than-human actors co-exist within the urban fabric; how material and energy flows are managed in non-linear, circular ways; and how local cultural knowledge, heritage, and practices are valued as resources for regeneration rather than erased through replacement-driven repair logics. Sustainability is therefore understood as a dynamic, negotiated process of regeneration and care, rather than a fixed end-state or a purely technocratic goal. A shared concern of the writers collective was the sheer quantity of materials used in our built living environment, their environmental impact (Almulhim and Taher 2023) on water infiltration (e.g. in old dikes) and increased heat levels (Illés and Nagy 2020). In addition, the overuse of materials enabling the repair logic (of replacing the old for the new) also alienates and disconnects inhabitants from their living environments.

Over time, up to 40 experts from UnaEuropa universities got entangled into our collective, in

different phases of the project, juniors and seniors, bonded through a shared commitment to set-up initiatives with a focus on sustainable, inclusive futures. Inclusivity here means that the proposed sustainable interventions conceptualized in the proposal must actively involve and benefit diverse groups of people, especially those living in the margins of the socio-spatial city fabric and those generally excluded from decision-making and innovation processes. The collective was brought together from a shared desire to try and increase the vitality of our built and natural environment by re-interpreting the idea of meaningful interactions between things, people and other forms of life in urban regions. It was nurtured by a mixture of embodied, experiential field visits, set up as living lab activities and moments of reflection feeding a collaborative proposal writing project. Central to our collective ambition was the idea of improving circularity, starting from a thorough problematization of how neglected, wasted spaces in society are now generally approached. This problematization also reflects our collective positional stance towards revitalization.

Positional Stance on Revitalization of Wasted Spaces

Our stance towards revitalisation processes is informed by our joint observation of urban and suburban development processes increasingly prioritizing spaces that promise immediate economic returns, leaving wasted spaces -in this project defined as spaces in between or spaces in the margins-largely under revitalized. Resources are usually prioritized for the development of city centers or popular spaces around flagship buildings (Baumeister and Leary 1995; Segers et al. 2021). Wasted spaces mostly receive functional renovation work or are left unattended. By “functional” we mean an urban repair and restore logic meant to cover up physical cracks as undesirable traces of the past and present that provoke social unease, the so-called ‘ugliness’ that disturbs the casual passer-by. By “physical cracks”, we mean ruptures and imperfections in any of the

following material or natural dimensions of a living environment: sidewalks, walls, streets, public buildings, parking spaces, squares, parks, the interior and exterior of our houses, including furniture in public buildings etc. It replaces oldness with newness or nothingness (Oliver-Solá et al. 2009) and this, according to multiple authors, severely impacts on people’s sense of belonging (Coemans, Vandenabeele and Hannes 2019, 2022; Vrebos, Hermans and Hannes 2025). It also suggests that revitalization process are not necessarily taking the idea of circularity into account, nor is it properly understood by government that tend to ignore that these physical cracks are part of a cultural environment’s local history and cultural heritage. Our writers collective therefore takes an interest in the place of materiality in the cultural-creative processes of place making (Coemans, Vandenabeele and Hannes 2022; Pratt 2022) and the way objects, things and materials travel through society to arrive at new destinations in altered states and statuses. Place making promotes the idea that physical cracks are inherently connected to social cracks in society, for instance the dysfunctional relationship between different agents that occupy, claim and shape the living environment; those who consider the public sphere as a commodity to be exploited for economic reasons, rather than a public good to be nurtured and shared with other creatures. Some of the recent innovation projects in Europe have introduced a sense of alienation in citizens, mainly due to local governments’ conversions and “infill politics” in relation to urban development processes. Local government renewal and infill projects mainly attract middle class people, including urban creatives that push local residents out of the area (Fasulu 2019; Ikeda 2017). The creatives are then expected to increase the economic potential of renovated areas, which amounts to more tax money being harvested and spent in these areas, while other areas fully escape the policy-maker’s gaze (Coemans, Vandenabeele and Hannes 2022). If they do catch attention, the reflex to patch up physical and social cracks without the explicit buy-in of residents often leads to tensions between policy

makers and citizens, particularly in cases where 'wasted' land is considered a carrier of collective memory (Vrebos, Hermans and Hannes 2025). This may cause negative trade-offs on the cultural and natural environment: e.g. when mitigation actions from policy-makers and project developers threaten traditional practices and resources and undermine heritage protection. Our stance therefore also implies respecting the cultural knowledge base of local communities inhabiting the spaces we would like to see revitalized through a circular logic that focusses on flows to minimize, reuse, repurpose and recycle wastes.

Research Objectives and Research Questions

The writers' collective's primary interest was in how to best nurture processes of creative, ecosystemic place-making at a community-based level (both in the sense of geographical proximity or by sharing a common concern). At the same time, our aspiration and responsibility was to imagine new ways of engaging with the idea of revitalization that could inspire people to adopt a plurality of definitions about what waste is, how it is defined aesthetically and in sustainability terms, and, by extension, how the notion of a 'waste of energy' in urban development processes could be appreciated differently. Secondly, we asked ourselves how the involvement of an interdisciplinary team of scholars interacting with multiple stakeholders to spark their imagination about next steps in urban revitalization processes could help reshape the future landscape of waste-less societies. Both aspects were braided into the living lab preparation program that should result into a successful collectively written research proposals.

Patchwork Methodology to Braid Different Types of Intelligence Together

A patchwork approach to conceptualizing waste-less interventions for society was proposed and conceptually adopted, "patching

together imperfect remnants to explore methodological possibilities" (Higgins et al. 2017). This methodology (deliberate assembling of imperfect, and heterogeneous knowledge, practices, and experiences) takes the form of collective and creative futures thinking, combining speculative inquiry, living-lab experimentation, and collective writing practices. Drawing on Günel and colleagues' (2020) patchwork ethnographic approach of exploring complex realities the writers' collective exposed itself to sustainable, inclusive practices in the margins questioning what happens at the edges of society that might inspire innovative revitalization approaches through embodied experimental field visits from which conversation beyond the boundaries of each contributor's disciplinary background were crafted. It allowed us to value fragments carefully patched together at the intersection of our collective thinking, research, and experiences, wondering what new and different futures they could reveal to us for more sustainable, inclusive and circular revitalization of so-called wasted spaces can be developed. The patchwork metaphor sparked our thinking about how to (un)stitch, snag, patch and creatively mend wasted areas, using both organic and material stuff, whilst simultaneously protecting cultural spheres potentially under threat or disvalued, using the full capacity of our transdisciplinary intelligence base. In doing so we acknowledged physical cracks in our environment as carriers of particular spatial histories through which residents connect with their environment (Segers et al. 2021). We used speculative communal and scholarly inquiry to initiate writing inspired by field visits in context and activated through multiple types of intelligence: artificial, artisanal, kaleidoscopic, systemic, energetic and spatial intelligence.

Linked to our proposed patchwork of different types of intelligence brought together we take an explicit epistemological and methodological stance toward knowledge integration. First, by stitching together imperfect, partial, and heterogeneous remnants into new configurations through experimentation and creative recombination. Second, by approaching each

intervention proposed from different helices. It was our explicit intent to activate a cluster of revitalization ideas from a transdisciplinary perspective, taking into account all types of stakeholders from the quintuple helix (Carayannis, Barth, and Campbell 2012). Thus, we conceptualize sustainable innovation as a process of connecting semi-autonomous knowledge islands (academia, industry, government, civil society, and the natural environment). Adopting the Quintuple Helix reflex is particularly relevant for the revitalization of spaces, because such challenges are inherently systemic and socio-ecological. Wasted urban areas are shaped simultaneously by regulatory regimes, market dynamics, cultural imaginaries, everyday practices, material flows, and ecological processes. Therefore, any attempt to reimagine these spaces requires a framework capable of integrating heterogeneous forms of expertise, power, and agency, including non-human and more-than-human actors and multiple intellectual angles from within which a complex phenomenon is approached. In terms of informing different approaches to revitalization the Quintuple Helix worked both as an analytical lens to identify the diverse actors, knowledge forms, and material processes involved in urban revitalization approaches proposed and as a normative orientation, emphasizing that viable futures must be co-produced across institutional, societal, and ecological domains, rather than designed within a single sector or discipline. So we wrote in response to emerging gaps, overlaps and tensions as drivers to generate new knowledge, ideas and solutions to be proposed.

The Pre-Phase: The Writer Collectives Living Lab Experience

This transdisciplinary collective initiative involved over 40 people through (online) exploratory sessions (mostly seniors), and participation in live events, though none attended all initiatives during which input was gathered and some participants simply disappeared over time or entered the project at a

point where it was no longer expected. The ethos was to allow others into our own scholarly worlds, which regularly led to questioning whose world we were actually living in at which moment in time. We organized two face-to-face, multiple day encounters. These encounters were quite crucial for the thinking and writing process that unfolded, as they invited us to be ‘open to what emerges in between one and another’ (Wyatt et al. 2017, 740).

The *first living lab* took place in and as ‘Almere’ in the Netherlands from August 27th to 29th, 2023. Almere is a purpose-built experimental city that is literally created from liminal space. It is built entirely on reclaimed land in the Flevoland polder, an area originally intended for agriculture and later repurposed into a new town to relieve the city of Amsterdam’s housing pressure. Its very origin story is one of transforming in-between land into a living city. Its multiple abundant liminal spaces – edges, buffers, leftover zones and underprogrammed landscapes attract many citizens, companies and designers for testing e.g. circular use of land, forms of rewilding and community engagement. Almere was therefore considered an excellent lab to expose academics to the reality of experimenting with innovative ideas in society. The living lab brought together both early stage and senior scholars from partnering universities, along with representatives from businesses involved in regeneration processes of urban areas. The living lab took the form of a three stage embedded field trip that gradually moulded the research ideas of the participants by gradually adding different layers of knowledge. The first formative stage (day 1) we focussed on mutual encounter of the participant providing time to explore each other’s expertise and potentialities, as seen through the lens of circularity through presentations, free brainstorm sessions in between partners and a visit of the hosting institutes sustainability projects on-site. This provided a first blueprint of potential and intertwining collaboration opportunities, shared interests, but also of new and converging angles in between the researchers (Image banner 1).



Image Banner 1. Day 1, on-site visits and presentation moments.

The informative stage (day 2) was dedicated to a series of field trips deliberately chosen to nurture the emerging questions and potential collaborations with real life examples (their success and challenges). First we provided an introduction on the environment (genesis, cultural use, current tensions, focussing on the environment, heritage and land use in the environment) as a first orientation. ‘Volkstuinen in de kas’ (a communal allotment initiative) exemplified the potentiality of the worn out structure of old green houses and the potentiality for local migrant groups for the growth of indigenous crops, while also showcasing the complex relationships between neighboring owners in this newly formed community. This particularly brought to the foreground the potentiality of Energetic Intelligence Intervention of the reuse of the heritage of post-industrial sites by migrant communities Oostvaardersplassen (a recently-constructed renaturalized environment) challenged the insights on naturalism and anthropocentric behavior due to the tension between the aimed renaturalization goals projected on a relatively small and enclosed area and the reactions of authorities and municipalities on its consequential faunal overpopulation. This was the basis to deepen our insights on Nature’s intelligence intervention ([Image Banner 2](#)).

In the self-supportive community Oostervold the outskirts of the city we faced the challenges between the visions and heritage of first owners and their sense of community and more newly arrived inhabitants bringing in insights and values, diverging from the primal inhabitants, which was especially stressed through municipal decisions on the community (e.g. distribution and cost of the sewage system). By exploring three different cases related to circularity and sustainable gesture towards the environment, within the same structure we were able to envision the complex and potential entanglements at fullest. This envisioning was essential for the deepening en imaginative process. Personal impressions collected served as foundational elements for the cases to be imagined. By visiting the different practices, participants became aware of the need for contextualization and the potential of diving into real-life contexts. By seeing and experiencing the actual challenges and the solutions sought by community members (e.g. to transform a greenhouse into an allotment adapted to the needs of the culturally diverse community) further thinking processes moved away from pre-existing knowledge frames. In turn, the living lab became an open, flexible and grounded setting adaptable to the different conditions where the practices were embedded, and allowing the researchers to navigate in



Image Banner 2. Day 2, ‘Oostvaardersplassen’ and ‘Volkstuinen in de Kas’.

between the different cases. The interconnections between the cases sharpened our critical capacity to envision new sustainable living options and reconsider the role of anthropogenic re-naturalized environments and how they could be approached from a more holistic perspective. This was done during the synthesising stage (day 3), where we converged our findings, formulated our basic archipelagic framework for future navigation through the project and within small workshops, formulated potential working lines (*Image Banner 3*).

The *second living lab* in Leuven, Belgium, from April 23rd to 25th, 2024, brought together a group of early stage and senior researchers partly overlapping with and partly complementary to the group that met in Almere.

Besides, it expanded to other stakeholders, promoting new forms of quintuple helix interactions ([Carayannis, Barth, and Campbell 2012](#)), including citizens, local businesses (Materials Bank - Atelier Circuler) and authorities. The aim was to co-creatively address challenges in the implementation of circular initiatives in urban environments. First, during the event, we organized a “futures scenario” collaborative writing event led by Prof. Jonathan Wyatt, expert in collaborative writing exercises. He provided the team with multiple provocations that drove the consortium to think about how ‘collaborative wondering’ ([Gale and Wyatt 2017](#)) could lead the collective to look out for more complex storylines in response to ‘what-if’ questions through which well-



Image Banner 3. Day 3, Oosterwold and Consolidation phase.

established histories, lines of inquiry and research narratives could be challenged. We responded to the individual autoethnographic invitations to find a hook, something that left an impact on us and attended to its complexity through a playful engagement with possible locations and positions through which our stories could be told. We attended to the future context of sustainable, inclusive urban environments and worked ourselves through the ethics of attending to each others stories (Tolmos, Hannes & Marisa de Andrade 2024). The further included pitches of operational projects run by different partners in their local regions to identify common interests. A roundtable discussion was organized within a local Leuven 2030 Urban Lab event, integrating the members from the writers collective into ongoing local discussions for developing a knowledge conduit from academia towards city management and local actors in an intertwined way. Third, to bring the consortium back in living lab modus, a second-hand artistically inspired workshop was conducted at the Materials Bank in the vicinity of Leuven, fostering creativity with materials to support the transition to a Circular Economy (CE). This provided hands-on experiences with recovered materials, encouraging participants to brainstorm on innovative ways to repurpose waste materials, making them to think back, as in their childhood, to benefit from the full potential of imagination at that age (Image Banner 4).

The forward thinking process itself was created through and at the same time emerging from relationships formed within the collaborative writing collective, in which experiences of discovery and surprise and the finding of relevant intra-connections and constellations of ideas was key to moving each other's research agenda forward to become part of a greater whole (Bristol Collaborative Writing Group 2012; Speedy, 2012). We each wrote distinct parts of the text before, in-between and after the living labs and searched for ways to weave the multiplicity of different voices of the transdisciplinary group of scholars through the text. Sometimes, our collaborative story making effort was experienced as 'a clumsy and

surprising language to learn...inefficient [at times], often taking a very circuitous route and frequently arriving at an unanticipated destination' (Bristol Collaborative Writing Group 2012, 431). At other times, we experienced collective writing as focused under the time pressure of consolidating some of our ideas into specific research proposals for an interesting call that we encountered. To some extent, we were caught up in what Wyatt and colleagues (2017; p. 740) have called 'the repetitive predictability that is demanded by the neoliberal version of [scholarly] productivity'. But we let ourselves be seduced by the creative power unleashed during personal encounters and in-context meetings at regular points in time, where we exposed ourselves to the practical knowledge of citizens in society and engaged in coordinated writing sessions where exchanges between scholars 'zigged' and 'zagged' through, across and around particular workshop events and brought to the fore the 'multiple political, material, social and ethical possibilities and forces' (Wyatt et al. 2017, 747) we could draw on, in order to move our ideas beyond what we already knew and were comfortable with.

The Post-Phase: Proposed Urban Future Perspectives

Through the working and collective writing process we gradually transformed what was considered 'wasted' or 'a waste of time and energy' into culturally valuable and sustainable revitalisation processes, drawing on the rich tapestry of experiences of the diverse public of the makers and "unmakers" encountered during the living labs. We took up our response-ability to imagine and propose interventions with the potential to restore people's sense of belonging and revitalize their living environment, while simultaneously sparking their pride through cultivation and beautification processes. We present a future image of seven potential transdisciplinary efforts considered worthwhile, based on different types of intelligence, to drive social transformation processes in urban development. They emerged from



Image Banner 4. Inspiration visit materials bank Leuven, Belgium.

unexpected combinations between what we already knew as a consortium and what was yet to be developed to respond to the call for wasteless urban environments. Crucial to the line of inquiry displayed in these cases is the emergence of a circular bio-socio-cultural intervention logic that supports performative, relational and socially engaged art, design and architectural practices initiated as an attempt to answer a future oriented what-if question sparked by the workshop experiences.

Artificial Intelligence Intervention. What if existing materials could be given new life through artificial intelligence as a speculative compass? Discarded objects in urban space prompt questions—What was this used for? Who used it? Why was it thrown away? What material it is made off? In conceptualizing an artificial intelligence intervention for revitalization purposes we position ourselves as brokers who help externalize these questions into stories that grant agency to waste materials and foster a sense of collective belonging across human and non-human actors through AI (Breken, Devleminck & Claes 2025). While AI is often framed as a tool, design scholarship increasingly approaches it as a more-than-human partner capable of extending human capacities (Giaccardi and Giaccardi 2020). We envision a

public installation in which humans (locals, commuters, tourists), non-humans (waste materials), and AI collaboratively generate stories of urban waste: humans collect discarded objects, AI assists in identifying materials and possible origins, and together they speculate on potential futures of reuse. For instance, Almere's large shopping windows in the city center would create the perfect context for putting an installation in place and informing clients on the ecological footprint of the clothes they are buying. Storytelling in this context serves as a powerful catalyst for reflection and action, enabling shifts from homo-economicus narratives toward more value-driven imaginaries of care and responsibility (Friedland and Cole 2019; Green and Brock 2000; Pera and Aiello 2024). We imagine an installation would consist of a modest, unfinished-looking assemblage—a digital display, camera, computing unit, and waste bins—an aesthetic shown to support local engagement and participation (Claes and Vande Moere 2017). Its anticipated impact lies in cultivating a more-than-human lens through which waste is reimagined not as disposable residue but as a material with future potential, including pathways toward reuse or end-of-waste status (Zorpas 2016). At the same time, we explicitly acknowledge a central tension: AI itself is

embedded in environmentally destructive planetary infrastructures, including energy-intensive data centers, water consumption, and extractive supply chains. Rather than resolving this contradiction, the intervention deliberately foregrounds it. AI is not presented as a sustainable solution but as a compromised collaborator whose participation exposes the limits of techno-solutionism. By situating AI alongside discarded materials and human actors, the installation could make visible the uneven entanglements through which contemporary intelligence is produced, inviting critical reflection on the ethical and ecological costs of computational imaginaries in visions of a wasteless society.

Artisanal Intelligence Intervention. What if we could draw on a different logic for patching up the imperfections in our spatial environment? Could we perhaps look into some ancient cultural heritage techniques to spark our thinking? We imagine a series of community based interventions to increase the liveliness of liminal spaces through the kintsugi method (derived from the Japanese words of kin (gold) and tsugi (reconnect) (Kumar 2022). This was originally a method of repairing ceramics and porcelain with urushi lacquer and metallic powder or gilding. Could we perhaps apply the technique as a socio-spatial practice rather than simply as a rewilding and repairing technique? We argue that kintsugi patchwork elevates the worth of the physical cracks to which it is applied beyond a functional patch-up (Keulemans 2016), while at the same time celebrating people's sense of belonging through the aspect of co-creation (Vrebos and Hannes 2025). The development and testing of such approaches in practice with trained citizen-ambassadors - or why not, eco-surgeons that operate on the streets to create beautiful patches for physical cracks. - can be informed by the expertise of committed partners from the arts and crafts sector. Would it be possible to transfer the knowledge base of such professional eco-surgeons based on a learning-by-doing-it-together approach, which could foster community-driven and sustainable urban

and urban public space transformations? Community members who wish to become eco-surgeons could indeed be trained in kintsugi, artisanal repair logic for the cultivation and beautification of their neighborhoods. To stimulate individual community members to participate in the identification of physical cracks in the liminal spaces of their living environment, we could consider employing playful tactical urbanism strategies to facilitate the buy-in of community members. In ideal circumstances, we could start documenting these repair efforts and develop a geotrail, combining visuals of on-the spot activities and visualizations of changing constellations of involved stakeholders patching their own socio-cultural living environment up.

System Intelligence Intervention. What if we could simply have a network of resource hubs in our urban fabric where stuff recovered from urban mining projects could be stored and then returned to society for a different purpose? Scaling and impact of urban resource hubs addresses the need to grow to next levels of actions and demonstrate impact in the upcycling of waste or leftover materials, and to expand material supplies beyond the more popular and easy materials and the typical smaller circle of hobbyists. In order to convince policy makers of the relevance of these hubs, a divergent approach to measuring its impact should be developed, focusing on imagining and visualizing materials in their destinations to inspire others in working with recycled materials. Visualization comes down to capturing the stories of materials at their new destination and form, inviting customers of resource hubs to share their stories with others, sparking people's imagination and promoting the reuse and recycling of different materials. Such stories could be connected and open up space for debate with complementary stories taking place in other parts of the life cycles of materials, e.g. stories from (de)construction companies on the development of sustainable economic models with sociocultural valorization potential - as such expanding the application domain of resource hubs. To capture this

as data enabling resource hubs, participants' information requirements need to be scrutinized, starting from the down-to-earth question which actors need to know to meet a particular purpose (Alaerts et al. 2024) and taking into account scholarly advice on how to measure the overall impact of resource hubs from a living lab perspective (Ståhlbröst 2012) and involve communities in sharing their recycling and upcycling stories. They can be nourished with data obtained from alternative data sources connected to capturing the tangible stories of materials: e.g. tapping into experiences, storytelling and pictures, relating to overcoming the more typically encountered technical or resource bottlenecks to access certain data (Marin, Alaerts, and Van Acker 2020). What we imagine as most important is the discovery of principles to organize resource hubs (information flows within), serving their operations while also enabling their contribution to circular, sustainable and inclusive cities.

Energetic Intelligence Intervention. What if we could explore community based embodied work in liminal spaces as a form of energy? Generally, people think of energy as electricity, light pollution, burning of fossil fuels, fossil fuel extraction, carbon emissions, and food production and consumption, but what if we could innovate the core practices of daily life with art to change people's core values? Could we then create new ways of living where energy use is valued and felt? Shifting the impact of Europe's energy commodity on the earth's climate is well established as key in building a sustainable future (Tutak, Brodny and Bindzár 2021). So we might want to rethink how energy is used and understood through arts-based methodologies and draw inspiration from archipelagic thinking by researching energy use and production through the relationships between sites of Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC)/Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) immigrant communities, for example in post-industrial urban contexts, where the heritage of their historic urban landscape is key to the identity of places, under the condition of facing massive geopolitical change. Berlin, for

example, is well known for being brought back to life after the Wall fell in 1989, and the Cold War ended by becoming a cultural European hub – a milieu of subcultures, where local artists inhabited abandoned warehouses and lots, which became the draw of the city. Our future is the embodied embrace of our ancestral knowledge. We can learn from the past to re-imagine the future of sustainable European cities and focus on the land and spaces of interest: the local community, parking lots, public parks, private gardens, community centers, homes and the relations between them. We imagine dance as an intervention through which new knowledge about how we could occupy the liminal spaces of our cities can emerge. Such intervention would take into consideration the often-overlooked reality of relating to environments through embodiment. It allows us to engage with the complexity of sustainable circular systems as a progression of changing and moving relationships. Dance is a means to involve people who are generally on the margins of policy making and putting the pleasure of creativity back into daily life and at the same time grappling with the destruction and pain of human systems as collaborative social justice. Sustainability is akin to going from being an immigrant (a guest, a new arrival to a land, a new Scot, a new Berliner) to becoming “indigenous” through the knowledge that our children's future depends on our relationship to the land (Kimmerer 2013, 9). We imagine an intervention called ‘Energy as Life’, inspired by dance activities and embodied movement, to intensify relationships within and between communities, bodies, and spaces that are currently neglected. It is in these spaces that interesting new connections can be drawn.

Kaleidoscopic Intelligence Intervention. What if we could reconnect ‘maker spaces’ with landscape architecture to stimulate local production and consumption? The fashion industry produces tons of waste every year, which increases our ecological footprint. Could we increase the value and appreciation of locally available resources such as linen and stimulate the circular use of linen clothes and

textiles by wearers, users and consumers? We imagine an intervention in which we engage a selection of artistic fashion practitioners and design researchers into conducting practice-based research to develop new, circular strategies for making, wearing and engaging with linen, by working with either newly and locally produced flax/linen, recycled linen or by re-using linen clothes. Prototypes could be tested by inviting participants (a broad range of potential consumers) to interact with these artistic linen objects on display in our fashion streets. The artistic intervention is important because arguments against consumption are not merely intellectual (Biehl-Missal 2013). Art interventions create an opportunity to build knowledge while increasing more thoughtful consumption. Wardrobe studies (Fletcher and Grimstad Klepp 2023) could be conducted to research the sociocultural value of linen and its local production. If we explore how wearers perceive linen clothes in their wardrobes, why, when and how people wear linen then we could analyze the beauty perception-sustainability-welfare axis that engages a broader public and may create a cultural value chain between producers, museums, and local artisans. We could draw inspiration from fashion designers and brands already design textiles and clothes, made from small-scale local flax cultivation and locally produced linen. We could investigate thermo-chemical and other processes in the linen production cycle with the aim of exploring the extraordinary adaptive properties of linen clothing in response to rising temperatures. The production of sustainable linen garments can be a gentle and versatile strategy, in our efforts to adapt to climate change. Linen's exceptional breathability and temperature regulation will prove indispensable as global temperatures rise and the need for adaptable, environmentally friendly clothing intensifies. In addition, it is intended to further explore how linen, apart from providing comfort and beauty, can offer health benefits (such as alleviating the symptoms of sudamen eczema). The idea of closing the loops between stakeholders to prevent natural resources going to waste is central in this inquiry process.

Nature's Intelligence Intervention. What if we could revisit the idea of the right to the city from a more than human perspective? We envision an intervention that focuses on the "rights to relate" with respect to urban regeneration. The right to relate originally comes from the pioneering work of Prof. Kees Waaldijk (2013) in the field of comparative sexual orientation law, clarifying that certain rights only exist in our relationships with each other. In line with existing imaginary examples of collaborating with nature, such as the Feral Atlas developed by Tsing and colleagues (2016) the intervention we envision would expand beyond this focus on the respect for private life to a right to relate in with the built and natural environment through interactions of humans, non-humans and spaces. Since the available public space has become scarcer, there is a competition for space, with natural elements gradually pushed out of our living environments (Hinchliffe and Whatmore 2017). An expanded vision of the rights to relate would include the right to a healthy environment, the right to assembly, the right to associate, the rights to material and intangible cultural heritage, the right of self-determination, and most controversially the rights of nature itself. The latter is related to ongoing scholarly debates in which the idea of personhood as a basis for agency in the law is challenged and pushed in the direction of right-holders (Corrigan and Oksanen, 2021). Urban public space is undervalued as a space by which the 'fairness' and health of a society can be measured. It can be a space in which citizens can try out, exercise or reject different ways of relating to each other. A democratic public space is a space for experimentation and thus a space to explore and experiment with possible forms of fairer and greener ways of life. Urban public space is also a place where nature can manifest itself in uncontrolled and unruly forms (from cultivated urban forests to untamed fauna and plants, fungi, lichen, that are part of a city's cultural history and heritage). Relying on these notions of democratic spaces an art driven experiment as a toolkit could translate the legal and

philosophical aspects of the on-site realization of democratic public spaces in collaboration with citizens.

Spatial Intelligence Intervention. What if nature could be used to bridge some of the visible and invisible borderlines between communities on European ground? The interventions we imagine would recall the capacities of communities to self-relate to space and turn it into a place (Tuan 2011) by reconnecting the information they gather from history, needs, expert advice, arts, and nature stimulation. The experiential dimension of place-making starts by the confrontation with a space by citizens and users, that could enable their capability to re-imagining it as a socially and environmentally resilient concept, replacing the lack of tacit knowledge that is an increasing issue in contemporary societies. Traditionally, processes of co-diagnostics and co-design include the consideration of both static data (for example, those coming from statistics, scientific reports and plans) and dynamic data (namely data provided by the observation of the users of the space, as well as feedbacks they may provide through walkthroughs, photovoice sessions, cultural mapping sessions, territorial and behavioral mapping, etc. (Ferilli, 2021; Acri, Dobričić, and Kobe 2024). To extend our thinking on the type of interventions required to build a sustainable, inclusive city, inspirational insights are offered by international experiences such as the WeMaketheCity Festival in Amsterdam, as a design thinking engine, or the tactical urbanism examples that are globally nourishing the artistic and activist approach to space making. Indeed, nature and creativity should become the main drivers to match the design of space and community imagination, in part recalling the foundations of the concept of landscape as “perceived by people” (COE, 2005), gathering feedback from different segments of society, including formal and informal “citizens”, such as migrants, students, cross-border workers, etc. We strongly believe that spatial reinterpretation should not be based, as the principles of tactical urbanism recall, on traditional planning alone, but on a “seeds”

combination of small, replicable, and nature-art-inspired solutions, nested in unexpected spots (Acri et al., 2021). We envision a series of interventions meant to restore “landscapes of proximity” (Saša and Marco, 2021). They are meant to increase cultural and natural resilience and to re-connect fragmented tissues. Enabling users’ ability to reconnect spatial cracks, in order to generate places out of space, targets the achievement of a welcoming environment, where human beings are not the only actors and beneficiaries.

Discussion

The weaving of shared stories shaped by our joint physical and social encounters during the living labs created seven different narratives that emphasize the collective impact of patchwork thinking in revitalization processes. Through these patchwork approaches we explored the multi-scalar complexity of environmental problems in regeneration processes, focusing on the forgotten and overlooked objects, subjects, spaces and relationships that could potentially shift people’s mindset on what it means to work towards a wasteless society and to engage with circular economy and sustainability topics. What is at stake in the patchwork approach is not so much the hierarchy of intelligences but rather the entanglement of knowledges, situations, subjects and disciplines (Tsing 2015). It is the relational dynamic formed between these dimensions that characterizes the (re)generative potential of patchworks (Pugh and Chandler 2021). Following this, we focused on the relational capacities of artificial intelligence to inspire new knowledge in the encounter between humans and machines; on how artisanal intelligence is able to redirect the flow of materials through urban mining; on kaleidoscopic intelligence re-imagining the link between fashion and cultural heritage; on energetic forms of intelligence initiated through encounters between bodies and spaces; on nature’s intelligence to facilitate the link between democracy and space; and on spatial intelligence itself in its permanent negotiation with invisible and invisible borders

between places, people, buildings and other forms of life.

Where necessary, we reflected on the potential risks involved in the proposed interventions. For instance, the inclusion of artificial intelligence in our framework also compels us to confront a paradox: the use of an environmentally intensive technology to imagine wasteless futures. AI is not external to planetary destruction but is instead constituted through it. From an archipelagic and patchwork perspective, this paradox is not a failure but a diagnostic site. It reveals how attempts to imagine sustainable futures are inevitably entangled with infrastructures that may simultaneously enable and undermine them. In our proposal, the use of AI thus functions as a provocation: it makes visible the frictions between speculative imaginaries and the material realities of contemporary technological systems. A wasteless society, from this standpoint, cannot be achieved through technological substitution alone, but requires ongoing negotiation with the damaged worlds in which such technologies are embedded. Simultaneously, we need to take into account existing regulations. Extending and embedding the life of material (both organic and non-organic) in the socio-spatial fabric of communities requires the development of socio-economic models of circular economy and industrial symbiosis as is being pushed by EU legislation. For instance, citizens and other stakeholders from the quintuple helix are encouraged to promote sustainable production, which implies the optimal use of resources (raw materials, water and energy), the reuse of waste streams to obtain products for different applications, and cultural changes with improvements in consumer behavior for more responsible consumption and waste management at home (awareness and education). This requires us to consider e.g. the promotion of industrial symbiosis. This not only requires the development of viable solutions, but also has to be complemented by business awareness of collaborative opportunities (the solution may be “outside the box”) and by appropriate policies and incentives to allow for the implementation and industrial

integration of the proposed solutions. We perceive this as a useful way forward to consolidate the long term effects of sustainability interventions on a community level.

Our patchwork methodology reminds us of our historical, political, and industrial realities we need to take into account to support and promote waste reduction practices in revitalisation processes that are perhaps less linear and therefore better adapted to engaging with the cultural-creative industries and heritage communities, in order to build sustainable environments/societies on a (g)local scale. In each of the different interventions conceptualized we opted for a relational dynamic between citizens and other stakeholders involved in urban revitalization processes, many of them currently reduced to a consumer-service provider relationship or a distant exchange without active involvement and without proper technology to stimulate the formation of meaningful assemblages, to take care jointly of a living environment. This evoked creative thinking processes that mediated the effect of cultural heritage on socio-economic redevelopment through the aesthetic and historical value of liminal spaces (Cerisola 2019). We gradually came to understand the link between physical and social traces of a particular history left behind in the public sphere, the role of the mundane objects, such as the bricks and pipes on display to the broader public in a museum context but also the existence of fences at Oosterwold during the living lab in Almere, a space that was initially conceptualized by its inhabitants as boundary free. We learned that what people consider worthless, waste or simply too valuable to leave unprotected is part of a collective narrative of how people relate to their surroundings, taking into account the aspect of who considers what to be trash and where the power to decide on what should be renewed, erased or demolished is located. We learned from the fieldwork how low-resource community members have shown remarkable resilience in nurturing the particular history of their living environments, many of which are in decline or yet to be developed (Wright 2002). We collectively agreed that values such as

inclusivity and sustainability and how they translate into tangible and intangible outcomes in the public sphere need to be constantly renegotiated and that this notion of the fluidity of things should guide us in developing a more future-proof theoretical framework for revitalisation processes in relation to social ideals, such as an improved sense of belonging, active citizenship and an increased awareness about how to best share the planet with other-than-human organisms. We sought inspiration in co-creative art/design and nature-based repair logic that enhances the vitality of Europe's urban socio-spatial fabric in the liminal spaces which currently escape the expert and policy eye. [Harrison \(2011\)](#) suggests refocusing archaeology as a creative engagement with the present and exploiting the spaces in which the past engages with the future. This allows us to bring into perspective the material dimension of our environment, through repelling and embracing change, while simultaneously capturing the lived experience of all stakeholders to imagine new links between past, present and future. What we wish to add to this discussion is that such attempts should be democratized. Developers, scholars, those trying to make a significant impact in society should be able to turn their gaze towards seemingly invaluable traces of culture that largely go unnoticed, simply because they are part of the more neglected environmental places in a living environment. It is commonly known that environmental, ecological and cultural issues are usually treated marginally in revitalisation projects, with cultural and historical markers receiving least attention in regeneration processes. We attended to this gap through our focus on restorative practices where the past of buildings, landscapes, objects and socio-spatial histories was re-imagined to provide new and robust significance for the future, under the auspices of skillful circular craftsmanship, artistic, architectural and design practices with potential – a potential that should be nurtured by exposing it to the right conditions.

While it seems relatively easy to imagine how to put different types of intelligences to work in urban sustainable development and

inclusive transformation processes, it remains important to invest in the necessary conditions to strengthen the confidence by the public, funders, and partners that the ideas are worthwhile considering by rooting them into concrete experiences of being and seeing on-site. An investment in communicating and disseminating the ideas through pilot exercises and public outreach efforts could be useful to achieve a buy-in on the level of public opinion and governmental decision-making. A future-proof communication strategy should help us relate to 'lost links' between transregional initiatives and restore those links, for which the metaphor of patchwork methodology proved to be helpful. Besides conceptualizing interventions it is important to monitor change and develop a set of evaluative criteria to measure the tangible and intangible, explicit and tacit, scientific and aesthetic knowledge emerging through the collaborative research process. We propose the development of a clear theory of change that emphasizes the emergence of new forms through environmental, cultural, political crossings, clashes and compositions ([Stephens & Martinez-San Miguel 2020](#)): i.e. through 'hybridisation.' These dynamic intersections should enable us to model a future method of inquiry, capable of capturing flows in future environments inspired by the goal of circularity, while at the same time being sensitive to the bottom-up transition processes we identified at the beginning. Our assumed impact will need to be underpinned with data that can be fed back to other initiatives and allow for a possible re-enactment of ideas elsewhere and moves beyond general product-related interests ([Zeiss et al. 2020](#)). In addition, such measures should be able to capture the flows of material and organic "stuff" "traveling through" society, using intelligent methodology procedures such as tracking and visually supportive mapping practices, as well as data mining to capture these material flows in relation to demands to illustrate environmental, economic and social impacts, creating metrics from the viewpoint of material flows ([Baars, Rajaeifar, and Heidrich 2022](#)) with attention for the way multiple stakeholders would sketch their desired future ([Carayannis, Barth, and Campbell 2012](#)).

(Part of) the writers collective is now consolidated, putting some of these ideas into practice, through a couple of successful grants won and yet to be judged. The writing dynamic we created did not belong to any of us. It was rooted in the plurality of perspectives we adopted and the collective energy we infused in our forward thinking process. Perhaps the end of this collaborative writing process also initiates a potential new beginning of reflecting on what it means to work with the energy of a multiplicity of people, what sort of social environment it creates and how this sparks a number of ethical questions, such as who should be recognized as an author? What should be considered as a substantial intellectual contribution to a paper? What is an active and timely response to a call and who was able to respond? Who can claim a pole position in terms of first authorship and when does someone cease to become an author? Who feels over-coded? To what extent can we simply write across and through each other's words, and is there a risk that some of the 'textures and intensities would be flattened out in the search for a unique voice'? (Wyatt et al. 2017). Or even which institute runs the show and how is this perceived by others? We found an implicit way of relating to these queries from within the assemblage we created, and with respect to the levels of energy different persons have brought to the fore in different moments of the time we spent together. Over the years, we felt privileged to work with each other, and we created an atmosphere for experimentation where new creative ideas could flourish, some of them meeting with uncertainty, others with frustration, but all of them leaving an imaginary footprint in society through this collective writing exercise.

Conclusion

A UNA Europa writers consortium directed its gaze to the seemingly invaluable, tangible "stuff" "traveling through" society, the traces of tangible and intangible culture left behind in society that largely go unnoticed and the urban forms of energy that could be activated but are

currently neglected. Their mission was to re-imagine urban regions using a forward-looking perspective on how different types of intelligence could be put to use, in order to create visible change in the built environment. They did so by combining seven different types of intelligence, each one of them representing a form of energy that could initiate change.

While our proposed interventions are still in the making and will only reach their change-making goal by putting the ideas to the test, the collective writing process has already changed us. We have demonstrated that innovative solutions can be developed if we open our minds beyond knowledge and disciplines by accepting and bridging gaps, overlaps and tensions as a new resource of knowledge, ideas and solutions and we found beauty and resources in what it is normally considered waste. The forward thinking process initiated in both living labs made us sensitive to the fragility of wasted spaces and places that go unnoticed. We each added our intellectual intelligence in beautifully divergent but complementary ways. It began with listening to each other's stories and the story of place in the cities of Almere and Leuven, our chosen living lab environments, and the virtual tools that connected our disciplinary and personal spaces. We found that the language from different disciplines could somehow be bridged through an understanding mediated by common interest and embodied, sensed practices. Saltmarshe (2018) sets out a threefold change-making function by considering stories as light, glue and as webs. We conceptualized the stories as light to help us understand the past, present and future, to illuminate paths of change, highlighting challenges, and shine light on the future. We embraced stories as glue. Their consequences help to build communities through empathy and coherence. The generation of stories holds groups, organizations and movements together. The forward thinking stories we proposed as perspectives are in themselves webs that help us rewrite what we have developed at this stage. But they also invite each of us into making smaller or bigger changes to our own scholarly or personal lives. Some of us already

re-enacted ideas in their own living environment, and created their own little archeology of the future in the here and now. Collaborative writing carries the potential of breeding change-makers. Once you can imagine an intervention, you can actually work towards realizing it in order to create our preferred more-than-human wasteless world. It was in the merger of different types of intelligence that new connections could be made.

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ORCID iDs

Karin Hannes  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5011-3615>
 Carmen Abril  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1595-5195>
 Marco Acri  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0480-487X>
 Ana Balea  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2456-230X>
 Angeles Blanco  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6820-7698>
 Sandy Claes  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5402-4417>

Nairy Eivazy  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4450-2841>

Jens Iverson  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8041-258X>

Sonia Quiroga  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4269-5053>

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Author Biographies

Karin Hannes is a transdisciplinary researcher trained in social welfare, public health, andragogy and futures studies. She coordinates research group TRANSFORM's Idiosyncratic Inventors Collective at the Faculty of Social Sciences and mainly explores the potential of artistic, embodied, place-based and futuring approaches from a community-based perspective. With her innovative, co-creative research agenda she actively pushes for meaningful change in society. Karin works from an activist, inclusive, and post-qualitative perspective. She favours living lab methodology and relational approaches to research to stimulate sense of belonging between humans and other-than-humans. Karin chairs the European Network of Qualitative Inquiry, co-coordinates the Institute of the Future, KU Leuven, and curates Townsquare13, a free space for lateral thinkers in her home town.

Koen Demarsin has studied archaeology and religion. He has been looking for trends and undercurrents in our society and ways to sustainably reverse them. The thread weaves through his entire career: as an archaeologist at the Sagalassos project (K.U.Leuven), as heritage coordinator and general coordinator at ZENDER (collaboration on culture and heritage in the Pajottenland and Zenne Valley) and as a freelance journalist. Today, he looks at people in their environment as an independent writer, researcher and project designer and bridge builder. He does this by engaging in conversation, both individually and in teams, as a networker and as a bridge builder. Some of the themes that often cross his path are heritage, culture and landscape,

diversity, worldviews, living together, (peripheral) urbanity, periphery and borders and that in all their connections.

Carmen Abril is a Full Professor of Marketing at the School of Business and Economics, Complutense University. Her research centers on the intersections of brand equity, innovation, and sustainability. Her recent studies examine how firms' sustainability practices influence financial brand equity and investigate how business values and sustainability-oriented strategies drive innovation and enhance firm competitiveness. By integrating managerial and consumer perspectives, her work offers a holistic framework for understanding how sustainability initiatives can create value for both consumers and organizations. She has collaborated on several research projects funded by the European Union. Her research has appeared in the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *Technovation*, *Journal of Advertising Research*, and *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, among others.

Marco Aciri is senior lecturer at the University of Nova Gorica. He holds a degree in architectural conservation at University IUAV of Venice and a master in Urban Management at the University of Rotterdam, EURICUR. His professional career ranges from applied heritage conservation projects to role in national and international organisations such as UNESCO, World Monuments Fund, IMED. His research focuses on heritage preservation from the perspective of traditional knowledge and crafts. He has been recently working and researching on urban regeneration through nature and art, leading his unit, CHS, Cultural Heritage Studies programme, into investigations on how Nature Based Solutions and creative circular processes may contribute to urban regeneration, also within the EU Culture Capital 2025, Nova Gorica, GO! 2025. He is also secretary general of the ICOMOS ISCEC Committee on Economics for Conservation.

Luc Alaerts (1981) is a senior researcher at KU Leuven, Department of Materials Engineering, and works on monitoring sustainability transitions with a focus on circular

economy and on data challenges. He is managing CE Center, a research project directly funded by the Flemish government, in close interaction with policy makers, and in which he coordinates the production of an online circular economy monitor for Flanders. Between 2019 and 2022 he led the Knowledge and Data program of the Leuven 2030 Roadmap for a climate-neutral city, in which he developed a prototype circular economy and emissions monitor and explored monitoring the urban metabolism centered around a local wood reuse initiative. He has (co-)authored 40 international publications, and has an h-index of 24 (WoS, April 23, 2026)

Harrison Awuh is a political ecologist and human geographer by training. He is an assistant professor in food health inequalities and planetary health and sustainability transformations at the Department of Human Geography and Spatial Planning, Utrecht University (The Netherlands). His research focus departs from one of the biggest drivers of food insecurity that is climate change. Given existing and potential significant challenges linked to climate change, it is obvious that the ideal food systems should be resilient, inclusive, productive, sustainable, nutrient-rich, and sustainable for the sake of both individual and global health. To achieve these goals, Harrison's research interest explores alternative pathways to food system transformation that decentre mainstream approaches and give more importance to indigenous, local and practice-based approaches

Ana Balea is a Professor in the Department of Chemical Engineering and Materials at Complutense University of Madrid. Her research focuses on advancing industrial and urban sustainability through circular economy strategies, the production and application of nanocellulose, and advanced wastewater treatment. Bridging over a decade of industrial experience in the paper sector with academic innovation, she specializes in waste valorization and the optimization of processes to drive the transition toward a sustainable bioeconomy.

She is actively involved in international interdisciplinary projects.

Angeles Blanco is a Full Professor at Complutense University of Madrid, leading transformative research that actively drives urban and industrial transitions toward sustainability, with a strong focus on circular economy strategies, advanced water and wastewater treatments, water reuse, and waste valorisation. Her work bridges fundamental science and applied innovation to deliver scalable, real-world solutions for environmental and industrial challenges. She heads the Cellulose, Paper and Advanced Water Treatment Research Group, leading a highly interdisciplinary team and fostering international collaboration across chemical engineering, environmental sciences, and socio-economic domains. Recognized among the top 2% of researchers worldwide, she also contributes to shaping European policy.

Sandy Claes is Assistant Professor at the Associated Faculty of the Arts (LUCA) and the Faculty of Social Sciences, Lab for Mediaculture and Policy at the KU Leuven. Her work lies at the intersection of design research, data visualization, artistic research, and science communication, with a particular focus on participatory and speculative design practices. She investigates how narrative, visual, and hybrid media formats, including immersive and performative approaches, can support meaning-making around complex knowledge for diverse audiences. She is co-lead of the Data, AI & Creativity Lab at LUCA and is involved in several international research collaborations and European projects.

Kata Cots Pettit is an independent artist-researcher based in Berlin and working at the intersection of dance, health, anthropology, and community engagement. Her work combines ethnography, writing, performance, and collaborative practice to investigate creative, embodied responses to political and ecological injustice across human and more-than-human worlds. She holds a MSc by Research in Health

Humanities and Arts from the University of Edinburgh. Her dissertation is *The Heart of the Action: Becoming Theory, Embodying Affect, and Knowing Power - A Critical Performative Autoethnography of Movement in Everyday Life*.

Marisa de Andrade is a Senior Lecturer in Health, Science and Society at the University of Edinburgh in the School of Health in Social Sciences. She uses “traditional” and (post)-qualitative methodologies to situate arts at the helm of strategic decision-making across multiple sectors including health and social care, employability, education and social justice. Marisa is Programme Director for the MSc by Research in Health Humanities and Arts; Co Director of the Centre for Creative-Relational Inquiry; Co-Director at the Binks Hub at Edinburgh Futures Institute. She was Joint Winner of the 2023 International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry Book Award for “Public Health, Humanities and Magical Realism: A Creative-Relational Approach to Researching Human Experience”, Routledge.

Nairy Eivazy is an animation artist and design researcher specializing in animated film with a participatory approach. She received her PhD in the Arts from LUCA School of Arts/KU Leuven, where her research focused on expanding animation film into a socially engaged art practice using methodological tools of participatory design. She holds a Master’s degree in Animation Directing from Tehran University of Arts. Her short films and animation installations have been presented internationally, with exhibitions in cities including Barcelona, Ghent, Leuven, Vienna, Yerevan, Tehran, and Isfahan. Nairy’s research has been published in international peer-reviewed conference proceedings, with a focus on participatory design and animation film.

Jens Iverson is an Assistant Professor at the Grotius Centre for International Legal Studies at Leiden University. He has served as a visiting professor at Vermont Law School, Santa Clara University School of Law, and

University of California College of the Law, San Francisco. His research includes a monograph on transitions from armed conflict to peace, three volumes published by Oxford University Press, and numerous articles and chapters on international criminal law, environmental protection, international humanitarian law, history of international law, transitional justice, and human rights. He received his Ph.D from Leiden University, his J.D. cum laude from U.C. Law San Francisco, and his B.A. from Yale University. He is a member of the California Bar.

Olga Kisseleva since 1990s became part of a team of creators working on the development of numerical technologies in the United States, thanks to an invitation by the Fulbright Foundation. Olga Kisseleva teaches New media art and Art&Science in the Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne. From 2007 to 2009 she was a member of the High Scientific Committee of Sorbonne. Her work integrates urban, digital, and exhibition-based interventions, exploring the relationship between reality and imagination through interactive and collaborative projects. Awarded the International ProArte Prize, she develops installations in collaboration with the Academy of Sciences, focusing on the boundaries between the real and the virtual.

Glenn Loughran is an artist and educator at the School of Art and Design at TU Dublin, holding a BA in Painting, MA in Sculpture, and PhD in Education from NCAD. He is recognized for innovative work in art, education, and social practice in Ireland, focusing on socially engaged art and community-based research. His research explores interdisciplinary exchange through artistic events, with interests in education innovation and island studies. In 2025, he received a Highly Commended Award at the Green Gown Awards UK & Ireland. He will undertake a 2026 residency at the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA) under the Technologies of Peace programme. His work has been exhibited internationally, including at the Venice Biennale, Centre Pompidou, and Medialab Prado.

Ysabel Nauwelaerts is Associate Professor and researcher at the Department of Management, Strategy and Innovation (MSI) at the Faculty of Business and Economics (FEB), KU Leuven. She obtained a PhD in Applied Economics at the University of Paris 1, Panthéon-Sorbonne in 1999. Her research mainly focuses on international strategies and sustainable and circular business models in the fashion industry and entrepreneurship and sustainability in creative, fashion and design sectors. She coordinates a living lab circular economy on the footwear industry and a Metaforum on sustainable fashion at KU Leuven.

Sonia Quiroga is a Full Professor at the Department of Economic Analysis and Quantitative Economics, Complutense University of Madrid. Sonia does research in Microeconometrics, Environmental Economics and Climate risks. Expertise in assessing economic impacts of climate risks and public policy effectiveness. Work on modelling and understanding compound climate and extreme weather events. Research on climate change adaptation across water resources, agriculture, and coastal systems. Integration of health,

ecosystem services, tourism, and sustainability in climate strategies. Experience in interdisciplinary projects linking environment, wellbeing, and socio-economic systems. Strong background in European research frameworks

Giovanna Sauve (1992) is a postdoctoral researcher at KU Leuven, Department of Materials Engineering. Her expertise lies in the sustainability assessment of emerging technologies and circular strategies. Her PhD thesis, in 2021, focused on the environmental impact assessment of resource recovery from waste. She is involved in projects at European and regional level on sustainability and circularity.

Nicholas Sowels is a Senior Lecturer in English for economics at the Département des langues, where he has taught since the late 1990s. His present research areas include economic and public policy in the United Kingdom, Brexit and finance, as well as poverty and inequality in the UK. He also works as a freelance translator and editor of texts written in English by non-native speakers.