![IN SITU logo - place-based innovation of cultural and creative industries in non-urban areas]

<h2 style="text-align:center">WEBINAR SERIES "Creative Vitality in Non-urban Areas?"
WEBINAR #3, December 5, 2023
How does creative work contribute to place base sustainability and resiliency?</h2>

Hosts: *Mark Justin Rainey*, University of Galway, Ireland (IN SITU Partner)

Ieva Zemite, Latvian Academy of Culture, Latvia (IN SITU Partner)

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Introduction

Welcoming and general presentation of *IN SITU: Place-based Innovation of Cultural and Creative Industries in Non-urban Areas* by the project Coordinator Nancy Duxbury from the Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra. Focus is given to IN SITU's objective of providing a spotlight on the creative and culture-based work that is being done outside of large metropolitan centers and to learn more about the challenges, the opportunities and the realities of these workers in such areas, how they connect to the places and the communities where they reside and work, and the whole concept of place-based innovation from a creative and artistic lens. Hopefully, IN SITU will be able to pick up some of the previous collective work that's been done by creators in non-urban areas, bringing their voices and others forward, learning about the realities of doing cultural work in these

environments and creating a framework for a better policy and program structure to enable them to be stronger and more sustainable and to contribute more to the communities where they work.

Roundtable of Presentations of the Webinars' Speakers

Patrick Collins, University of Galway, Ireland (IN SITU Partner)

Patrick is an economic geographer at the University of Galway, Ireland, and Lead Researcher on behalf of this institution for the project IN SITU. His focus is on the distribution of spatial resources, culture, creativity and sustainable development. His research interest includes understanding the role of culture and creativity in the development of places, particularly in non-urban areas and regions on the edge, recognising the distinct nature of culture and creativity within different geographical contexts and the need to support and encourage it accordingly. His recent book explores these themes further and provides insights into his research methodology, such as analysing geotagged photos to understand the dynamics of specific regions, like the western coast of Ireland. Overall, he underscores the significance of considering culture, creativity and geography in tandem to better understand and support the development of diverse places.

Jude Ortiz, NORDIK Institute, Algoma University, Canada (IN SITU International Advisory Board Member)

Jude is based in Northern Ontario, Canada, a vast and sparsely populated area with primarily resource-extractive economies like forestry and mining, in a community with diverse cultural heritage groups: anglophone (settler and newcomer communities), Indigenous communities, and francophone communities. As a researcher and visual artist, she investigates the contribution of the arts to building healthy, resilient communities, focusing on the role of artists as producers in the cultural and creative industries (CCI) sector. Her research examines the relationships between producers, consumers, and the broader community within the value chain of cultural goods. In fact, creative practices and engagements contribute to resilience-building and the development of local cultural-based economies and creative practice is transformative in nature, involving relationship-building and problem-solving within the context of the land or place. Jude suggests that scaling up engagement and interaction in creative practices enhances resilience at both individual and sectorial levels.

Leandro Pisano, Interzona Cultural Association, Italy, https://www.apsinterzona.org/

Leandro is a curator, writer and independent researcher with a focus on the south of Italy and the intersections of art, sound and technoculture. His research primarily delves into the political ecology of rural, marginal and remote territories. He founded the Interference Festival in 2003 and has curated sound art exhibitions globally, thus representing the InterZona association, which aims to revalorise rural and marginal territories through studies, field research, and educational projects focusing on sound, arts, and technocultures. The organisation, founded in 2003 in San Martino Val Cina, works

across various rural regions in Italy, experimenting with hybrid formats such as residencies, workshops and field research to create a research platform centred around the concept of *Neo-rurality*. Its approach is multidisciplinary and influenced by new media studies, cultural studies and postcolonial studies. Through its work, the organisation seeks to explore and elevate the cultural and artistic potential of these often-overlooked regions.

Markéta Dolejšová, Aalto University, Finland – CreaTures: Creative Practices for Transformational Futures, https://creatures-eu.org

Markéta is a practice-based researcher and curator working at Alto University, presenting on behalf of the CreaTures Consortium. CreaTures, or Creative Practices for Transformational Futures, was a Horizon 2020 project focusing on how creative practices in art, design and related cultural sectors contribute to socially and ecologically sustainable ways of life. The Consortium comprised 11 partners, including universities, art organisations and nonprofits, working collaboratively across six work packages to explore diverse creative practices' potential impact on sustainability. She highlights the laboratory component of the project, where 20 experimental productions (XPs) were developed, addressing various eco-social themes such as more-than-human care, community justice and transformative economies. These XPs were presented at public events, providing opportunities for the project team to study and co-develop them further. The data collected from these XPs formed the basis for evaluation work, which aimed to understand the transformational potential of creative practices. The outcomes of the project, including tools, toolkits and policy recommendations, were compiled into the CreaTures Framework, accessible through a website tailored to researchers, policymakers, creative practitioners and funders.

Arja Lemmetyinen, University of Turku

Arja is from the Turku School of Economics at the University of Turku, was involved in the project *DISCE: Developing Inclusive and Sustainable Creative Economies* (2019-2022; https://disce.eu) and has been involved in a recent Horizon 2020 project focused on developing inclusive and sustainable creative economies. The latter project explored the competitiveness of creative city brands, with ten case studies across Europe. As a marketing researcher, she is particularly interested in city branding and its role in economic growth and competitiveness, specifically within the context of creative and cultural industries (CCIs). The research delves into how city brands differ from their competitors in the creative economy, with a focus on understanding the bottom-up creation of a city's image by actors in the creative sphere. Data was collected in 2020, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, with a combination of academic and policy document analysis and semi-structured interviews with various stakeholders in the ten cities studied.

Discussion

The hosts Mark Justin Rainey and Ieva Zemite propose a series of questions and a selection of practical challenges, conflictual concepts on the field work and real daily situations to the speakers to engage in a collective discussion.

Ieva begins by presenting ongoing research on creative cities, networks and intermediate development prospects, outlining the main question driving her research: What approaches are used by creative and cultural industries (CCIs) to fully express their potential as promoters of place sustainability? She then highlights several challenges faced by creative entrepreneurs, policymakers, NGOs and cultural communities. These include policy focus on large audience numbers, limited options for experiencing high-quality cultural events, the push for activities to move out of institutional spaces, cross-sectoral cooperation limitations, and the struggle to acknowledge culture as a value outside of the culture sector. Ieva concludes by posing the first question to the panelists:

1. **What practices do CCIs use that may contribute to sustainable development?**

Patrick Collins:

Patrick reflects on the pressure placed on cultural and creative industries (CCIs) to demonstrate sustainable development. He shares the disaffection felt by cultural and creative practitioners in his region (Western coastal periphery, Galway, Ireland) where the use of their work for branding purposes isn't necessarily fed back to them. However, he acknowledges the diverse practices within CCIs and highlight their search for authenticity as inherently sustainable. These practices, ranging from pottery to documentary making, represent a different business model from massification, tailored to the places they serve. Patrick suggests that CCIs' pursuit of project-based work, characterised by authenticity and narrative storytelling, sets them apart from traditional economic sectors. While these practices may not fit into standardised models of economic development, their demand remains strong due to their unique and authentic nature.

Markéta Dolejšová:

Markéta shares her experience working with artistic collectives rather than with cultural and creative industries (CCIs). She highlights the importance of a practice-based, situated way of working, emphasising the time-intensive process of forming relationships and the unpredictable nature of creative transformation. She notes the challenge of providing clear research plans and definitions for projects, as the outcomes often evolve differently due to the organic nature of relationship-building and practice. This unpredictability can be problematic when justifying projects to decision-makers who may require clear plans and outcomes.

Jude Ortiz:

Jude emphasises the foundational practice of creativity and creative practice in the context of community sustainability. She highlights the parallels between creative practice and community development, both of which involve creative processes to generate outputs that advance society. Community development, she argues, should adopt more inclusive and community-based approaches, shifting from top-down to bottom-up development and focusing on the process rather than just the outcomes. This approach allows for engaging citizens in cultural planning, increasing creative capacity and fostering innovative solutions. Jude suggests that both the arts and community development sectors could benefit from a deeper understanding of each other's roles in sustainability, which would support more dynamic and creative community development practices.

Leandro Pisano:

Leandro emphasises the role of cultural and creative industries (CCIs) as guarantors of sustainability, particularly in promoting social welfare and building the future of Europe. He advocates for a multidisciplinary approach that integrates technology, economic development and social innovation to support stakeholders in improving services and products while focusing on digital empowerment and holistic sustainability. Strengthening and developing CCIs is crucial for supporting cultural systems and their capacity to permeate other disciplines and spheres. Leandro highlights examples of cultural initiatives in Italy, such as cultural organisations, festivals, urban beautification projects, craft experimentation and events in rural areas, which contribute to revitalising depopulated territories and fostering innovation, social development, inclusion and sustainability. He stresses the importance of cross-sectoral collaboration for CCIs, particularly in times of political and institutional crisis in the cultural sector, and suggests leveraging tools like the National Register of Third Sectors to create alliances and synergies, which can lead to better living conditions for rural and marginalised communities through cultural interventions.

Arja Lemmetyinen:

Arja shares an example from her research involving a music venue, which serves as a form of social sustainability. The venue not only functions as a music club but also has a role in developing young artists who may be marginalised or struggling. By providing a platform for these young people, the venue helps them reintegrate into society and contribute positively. This example illustrates how cultural initiatives can promote sustainability by empowering individuals and fostering social inclusion and cohesion. It highlights the potential of cross-cultural collaborations within the creative sector to address social challenges and promote positive change.

Comment from the chat (reported in its entirety)[1]:

"As a seasoned advisor to cities large and small, I tend to agree with PCollins. My experience tells me that unless we spend time studying the context of a place (e.g. doing deep hanging out observation/s), and engaging in dialogue with local creative stakeholders to understand both their needs and potential, we cannot talk of CCIs based sustainable development in a meaningful way. Too many places (and civic leaders) glamourise the sector, and/or engage in policy transfers that can at times have a negative impact on already fragile local creative ecosystems."

Mark mentions how there is a lot of discussion about what sustainability is and one of the ways of approaching the concept is through the four-pillars approach where sustainability operates in the economic, environmental, cultural and social domains. The second question to the panellists relates to this, in particular to Jude Ortiz:

2. **What is the interrelation between CCI practices and the four pillars of sustainability in non-urban areas?**

Jude Ortiz:

The Nordic Research Institute, based on a holistic and strength-based approach to the four pillars of sustainability, places the cultural pillar at the forefront. Understanding that culture is central to the development of places, the Institute utilises a Community Development medicine wheel, emphasising a process-based approach that fosters respectful and transformational relationships between people and their environment. Creative practice, according to this approach, serves as a space for relationship building, problem-solving and transformation, both for individuals and communities. Similar to Community Development, creative practice provides opportunities for individuals to meet, build trust, identify issues, develop solutions and take action. Through creative practice, individuals develop adaptive capacity, envision new possibilities and contribute to cultural products that are exchanged in the marketplace. Moreover, the tangible and intangible aspects of creative practice contribute to social capital development, fostering a sense of community and supporting professional development, particularly in rural areas where formal opportunities may be limited. The infrastructure created by artists, such as workshops, festivals and creative spaces, enhances visibility, accessibility and engagement with cultural products, leading to the emergence of arts clusters and expanded cultural economies. Cross-sectoral collaboration further enhances adaptive capacity, labour force development and community identity. The infrastructure provided by artists not only supports the

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[1] For these highlights, it has been chosen not to openly disclose names for privacy reasons.

creation and consumption of cultural goods but also facilitates informal dialogue, community integration and economic development. Ultimately, creative practice and CCIs create spaces and opportunities for cultural, social, economic and environmental development, contributing to the quality of life and the development of localised culture-based economies that can connect regionally and globally.

Ieva introduces the third question of the discussion, in particular to Leandro Pisano as expert of redesigning the identity of rural areas:

3. **What does culture-driven sustainable development look like, and do you have any examples of either best practices or total failures you would like to share with us?**

Leandro Pisano:

Leandro provides insights into culture-driven sustainable development, emphasising a shift from solely economic concerns to processes of social inclusion, participation and well-being. This shift underscores the importance of local heritage, biocultural diversity and the revitalisation of rural areas through shared and co-constructed projects. He highlights examples from Italy, where there's a growing debate on the national strategy for inland areas, with various organisations and collectives advocating for the revitalisation of rural communities. Leandro also references projects such as "Rehabit Italia" and "Feno," which focus on reimagining rural spaces and promoting community cohesion through innovative cultural initiatives (also: "Riabitare l'Italia" and "Fondazione Appennino" as institutions and less formalised collectives such as "Emidio di Treviri," "Montagne in Movimento," "Dolomiti Contemporanee," "Scatola di Latta," "Ritornanti al future," "Borgofuturo," "Corale di Preci," and "Liminaria"). Additionally, he introduces the "Manifesto of Rural Futurism," a document aimed at reevaluating rural areas as dynamic components of contemporary society and fostering active participation in global processes. Leandro acknowledges that not all projects succeed due to social fragility and inadequate support from public institutions. Nevertheless, he emphasises the potential of arts, creativity and cultural development as economic adaptation strategies for rural areas, promoting social cohesion, inclusion and sustainable futures.

Mark addresses another key concept of the webinar, the concept of "place-based development" and "place-based sustainability." The idea of something being place-based emphasises local agency and the particular geographical context of a place and would seem to involve a range of institutions and communities. He introduces the fourth question of the discussion, in particular to Patrick Collins:

4. What role do CCIs have in building these cross-sectoral collaborations, if any, and are there examples of successes or failures?

Patrick Collins:

Patrick emphasises the role of culture, creativity and the arts in transforming urban spaces, citing examples from Galway City, Ireland. He recounts how a derelict street was revitalised into a vibrant tourist attraction through the intervention of a Spanish street theatre company during the Galway International Arts Festival. This transformation illustrates the power of artistic interventions to change perceptions and drive economic development. Furthermore, he discusses a university project that utilised public sculpture as a catalyst for community engagement and place articulation in a derelict area of the city. By inviting people to interact with the artwork and participate in conversations about the future of the space, the project demonstrated how art and culture can serve as entry points for community dialogue and urban revitalisation. Patrick acknowledges the challenges of translating community desires into actionable outcomes, particularly in the face of economic constraints and bureaucratic hurdles. He underscores the importance of local agency in responding to community needs and suggests that cultural and creative industries play a vital role in envisioning alternative futures and fostering collective imagination. Ultimately, Patrick emphasises the need to support CCIs in their artistic endeavours without burdening them with additional responsibilities, recognising their unique ability to inspire and mobilise communities for positive change.

Ieva introduces the fifth question for discussion:

5. What strategies are there for maintaining and sustaining collaborations?

Markéta Dolejšová:

Markéta emphasises the importance of maintaining meaningful collaborations by paying attention to the lives of collaborators beyond just project work. She highlights the inseparable connection between everyday life and creative work, especially evident during the COVID-19 pandemic when drastic changes affected individuals' lives. She discusses the CreaTures project's experience, where unforeseen challenges forced the team to rethink and reimagine their project plans while prioritising care for each other as individuals. This care extended beyond professional expertise and institutional affiliations to encompass personal well-being and mutual support among team members. She references the "Creative Pathways" tool developed during the project, particularly highlighting the pathway of "transformative friendships." This pathway emphasises the importance of being open to change through deep listening, mutual support, constructive critique and tender accountability within the community of collaborators. Markéta suggests that these aspects of care, mutual support and willingness to go beyond predefined rules are often undervalued in the evaluation of creative projects. She advocates for a shift towards recognising the significance of these relational dynamics in fostering

successful collaborations and achieving meaningful outcomes. Ultimately, she concludes that love, understood as genuine care and consideration for others, is essential for nurturing collaborative relationships and working towards shared goals effectively.

Mark introduces the sixth question for discussion, particularly directed to Arja Lemmetyinen:

6. **How should CCIs and local and regional authorities interact and collaborate? Are there successful examples? Any failures?**

Arja Lemmetyinen:

Arja shares examples from different cities to illustrate various approaches to collaboration and development:

- In Chatham, UK, a town with a strong IT and computer services industry, the emphasis is on creating hubs or clusters to negotiate partnerships with these industries. As a post-industrial town, Chatham is reevaluating its business direction and considering new strategies after industrialisation.
- Enschede, Netherlands, stands out for its numerous grassroots-level initiatives, indicating a bottom-up approach to cooperation and collaboration. This suggests a strong community-driven effort to drive change and innovation.
- In L'Aquila, Italy, recovery efforts after an earthquake have prompted the city to focus on becoming a creative university city. This initiative highlights the potential for regional authorities to collaborate and coordinate efforts towards common goals, such as urban redevelopment and economic revitalisation.

Overall, these examples demonstrate the importance of identifying partners, coordinating cooperation efforts, and adapting to local contexts and challenges in order to foster sustainable development and growth.

Ieva introduces the seventh and last question for discussion, directed to all the panelists and the webinar's participants:

7. **As practitioners, scholars and advocates, how can we better promote the importance of CCIs? How can we better communicate that culture matters in placemaking?**

Leandro Pisano:

Leandro emphasises the importance of listening to and consulting with communities and local groups in order to design proactive strategies for the development and regeneration of fragile territories. He

highlights the many ongoing experiences and initiatives at the local level, often spontaneous or supported by small funding measures, that are deeply shared by the population. These initiatives include community cooperatives, itinerant festivals, artist residencies, creative workshops and sustainable agriculture projects. Leandro advocates for directing efforts towards radical territorial animation actions, providing widespread support for revitalising abandoned and marginalised places. Furthermore, he stresses the importance of making an inclusive culture of diversity central to project design, as it can fundamentally change perspectives on social innovation and the value of different cultures in local realities. He calls for these efforts to be enhanced and expanded in the coming years to strengthen a complex and pluralist idea of place through culture.

Patrick Collins:

Patrick emphasises the importance of appropriate funding for the cultural and creative sector and making a better case for culture. He expresses concern about how culture is measured, advocating for new metrics that truly capture its impact instead of relying on outdated industrial-era metrics. Additionally, Patrick highlights a worry about the uniformity of the creative city concept adopted by many city authorities, cautioning against reducing culture and creativity to mere celebrations and festivals without supporting the production of culture. He stresses the need to focus on supporting cultural production for a sustainable future in the cultural and creative industries.

Markéta Dolejšová:

Markéta suggests that relationships within the creative sector cannot be effectively measured using traditional numerical metrics. She emphasises the limitations of relying on numbers to capture the complexities of human relationships and the intangible aspects of creative work. Instead, she advocates for a shift in thinking about measurement tools and approaches, acknowledging the challenges faced in justifying non-numerical methods in a funding-driven environment. Despite the pressure to conform to existing metrics, Markéta encourages individuals in the creative sector to push for alternative approaches that truly reflect the nature of their work and relationships. She stresses the importance of challenging the status quo to bring about meaningful change in how creativity and relationships are valued and supported.

Jude Ortiz:

Jude highlights a shift in the philanthropy sector towards focusing on equity and prioritising relationships in funding structures. This movement acknowledges the importance of relationship building and its impact on creating meaningful change. She notes that while some funding still requires numerical metrics, there is a growing emphasis on understanding the holistic impact of collaborative and relationship-based approaches. Additionally, there is a call to change how funding is allocated, with a suggestion to fund artists themselves rather than specific activities. This approach allows artists to have more control over how funds are distributed and enables longer-term support for

organisations, festivals and employment within the cultural sector. Furthermore, the idea of using a social return on investment framework is discussed as a way to evaluate the holistic impact of creative initiatives. This framework allows for localised assessment aligned with local priorities, emphasising the importance of capacity building to effectively collect and analyse data on the relationships and impacts generated by creative projects. Overall, Jude underscores the need for a more nuanced approach to funding and evaluating the cultural and creative sectors, one that values relationships, equity and the broader societal impacts of creative endeavors.

Comment from the chat (reported in its entirety)[1]:

"In Finland there was an interesting research [project] of measuring cultural well-being. The report is sadly only in Finnish, but the description is in English and maybe it can be translated with google etc. The link is here: https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/164860/VNTEAS_2023_26.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y".

Patrick Collins:

Patrick agrees with the other speakers, mentioning that there's a growing recognition globally that the traditional metrics like GDP and GNP are insufficient for measuring overall well-being and progress. This realisation is driving a movement towards rethinking and reshaping these metrics to better reflect the broader aspects of human and societal development, including environmental sustainability and cultural vitality. Culture plays a vital role in this reevaluation process, as it contributes significantly to people's quality of life, sense of identity, and community cohesion. By incorporating cultural indicators into the new metrics of progress, we can better capture the diverse and holistic dimensions of human flourishing.

Participant's intervention[1]:

The participant, from the HSSE, serves as the Healthy Ireland lead for arts and culture and highlights various measures being taken to advance creative practice in Ireland, including initiatives like Creative Ireland and micro projects at the local level. The participant emphasises the importance of building alliances and cohesive messaging to support these efforts effectively and expresses enthusiasm for the ongoing work to promote creativity and cultural vitality in Ireland.

Participant's intervention[1]:

In line with Patrick Collin's previous comment, the participant emphasises the need to demonstrate the value of culture to policymakers by adopting alternative ways of measurement beyond just economic indicators. The participant highlights ongoing projects like UNCHARTED, as well as others such as MESOC and INVENT, that focus on measuring the societal impacts of culture and stress the importance of combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to capture the complexity of

cultural practices, including emotional connections and nonverbal expressions.[2] The participant advocates for active participation of cultural agents in policy-making processes at multiple levels of governance to promote a better understanding and appreciation of culture.

Conclusion

To wrap up the webinar and provide a "big picture" context for this discussion, IN SITU Coordinator Nancy Duxbury highlights the ongoing efforts by the international association United Cities and Local Governments to advocate for a cultural goal in the next iteration of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). She emphasises the importance of smaller and rural communities in this discussion, noting that cultural work holds specific significance in these areas and recognising the need for collaboration and new measurements to make a compelling argument for the importance of culture, especially at the local level. Nancy also acknowledges the complexity of non-urban places and stresses the need to bring attention to the specificities and vitality of these communities. She highlights the importance of shifting away from negative definitions of rural areas and instead recognising their potential contributions. Nancy also emphasises the centrality of people in creative work, highlighting the collaborative and interactive nature of cultural production. Gratitude was expressed to the European Commission for funding the IN SITU project (which runs until June 2026), allowing for continued research and discussion. The IN SITU webinar series concludes today after bringing together diverse voices and initiatives, leaving space for future and more focused discussions on relevant issues. After encouraging participants to stay informed by signing up for social network channels or subscribing to IN SITU newsletters, the IN SITU Coordinator announces an upcoming practice-research encounter event in September 2024 in Šibenik, Croatia, organized by IN SITU through its partner Kultura Nova Foundation. Finally, Nancy thanks the audience, presenters, and organisers for their participation and contributions, highlighting the richness of insights shared during the webinar.

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[2] UNCHARTED: Understanding, Capturing and Fostering the Societal Value of Culture; MESOC – Measuring the Social Dimension of Culture; INVENT Culture – European Inventory of Societal Values of Culture as basis for Inclusive cultural policies.

[3] Affiliation: Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra, IN SITU Partner