

Artistic Practices as Environmental Research

Designing and Implementing Public Engagement for Sustainability

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Abstract

This paper investigates how socially engaged art projects can operate as environmental research through practices that explore new ways of living in the current climate crisis, grounded in cultural activism and community-driven collaborations. Focusing on three initiatives—*CLIMAVORE* by Cooking Sections, *Casa delle Agricolture* co-led by Luigi Coppola, and the forthcoming *Field Hospital* by Andrew Merritt—the study illustrates how creative interventions can be responsive to ecological challenges, re-invent forms of living that promote resilience in the face of climate change, and facilitate a regenerative culture. Drawing on my curatorial experience with Looking Forward, a London-based curatorial studio I founded in 2019, and on my position as curator at Visible (an international grant-awarding project by Cittadellarte-Fondazione Pistoletto and Fondazione Zegna), as well as documentary analysis and interviews, the paper highlights how each undertaking fosters resilience, sustainability, and regeneration.

CLIMAVORE, developed by Cooking Sections, proposes an adaptive, regenerative approach to food production that shifts the economy and ecology of consumption toward environmental well-being in the climate emergency. While the project encompasses multiple contexts, one notable implementation takes place on Scotland's Isle of Skye, where scientists, chefs, farmers, policymakers, and practitioners from various fields collaborate to transform fish-farming practices. *Casa delle Agricolture* revitalises farmland and cultural heritage in southern Italy by merging agroecological methods with community-oriented events, which could be seen as an example of radical ruralism. While *Field Hospital*—scheduled to launch its pilot phase, *Field Kitchens*, in the UK's Great Fen in autumn 2025—will combine art, science, and local engagement to restore degraded landscapes through culinary-based research and workshops.

These case studies underscore the potential of socially engaged art to integrate ecological restoration with cultural activism and local collaboration, thereby promoting new forms of shared responsibility and regenerative practice within threatened environments.

Art and Ecology; Socially Engaged Art; Regenerative Design; Ecological Awareness; Sustainability; Public Engagement; Climate Change; Community-Based Projects
