LOOK

INTO THE FUTURE OF

ART MUSEUMS

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Fragile Relationships Organisational Care Toolkit

Angelica Cianflone

Who takes care of the people who make culture possible? According to a 2025 Artribune survey of approximately 600 workers in the arts and culture sector in Italy, 75,5% consider their work mentally exhausting and 76,1% have experienced psychological difficulties directly caused by their professional situation (Mancini, 2025). Meanwhile, international research documents how museum workers experience what Morgan and Woodham (2025) call emotional ambiguity: feeling passionate yet burnt out, privileged yet guilty, excited yet anxious at the same time, a state that makes it difficult to recognise and address one's own well-being needs.

Nevertheless, care continues to be presented as an individual duty - self-care, resilience, stress management skills - rather than as an organisational infrastructure that requires resources, time and collective commitment. As CIMAM notes in its 2025 position paper, it is no longer enough to focus solely on contracts, wages and representation: what we need are moral and emotional infrastructures that enable trust.

Fragile Relationships stems from this awareness. The project proposes a participatory toolkit for building care infrastructures within cultural institutions, using Museion as a pilot site. The proposal takes the standpoint that care is not only a value to be mentioned in governance documents, but a collective and structural practice to be built over time.

The conceptual framework revolves around a single metaphor: breathing. As suggested by the research of Perezts et al. (2025), breathing can be thought of as a political model of organisation; because it is intrinsically a shared and interdependent action. Institutions, like bodies, need rhythms: inhalation, pause, exhalation, rest. *Fragile Relationships* translates these rhythms into moments of care within institutional life, creating temporary and recurring spaces to slow down, listen, and build more horizontal and conscious relationships.

The toolkit is structured in three sequential layers:

The first layer, Discovery tools, reveals what normally remains hidden in the shadows of daily work life. It includes an anonymous questionnaire - non-extractive, with voluntary and anonymous participation - that explores how people experience the rhythms of work, where they feel heard or invisible, and their desires. This is followed by four mapping exercises: an emotional spatial map of the museum, a map of the rhythm of the working day (inspired by the model of Gibson-Graham et al., 2014), a map of the institutional annual calendar, and a map of the resources and desires present in the group. A final workshop brings this data back to the team as shared material for a collective co-synthesis.

The second layer, Collective rituals, introduces recurring practices into everyday organisational life. A bi-monthly Shared table transforms the Museion spaces into a long communal table: 3-4 people take turns contributing to the grocery shopping, cooking, setting the table and tidying up; seats rotate to encourage encounters between departments; there is no agenda. As decades of research confirms, sharing meals is fundamental to build and maintain social bonds, with positive impact on both individual and collective well-being (Helliwell et al., 2025, p. 83). Thematic evenings are bi-monthly events proposed by anyone in the team, centred on a shared interest or practice, such as drawing, reading, crafts or games. Facilitation rotates, the budget is limited, and the time dedicated to facilitation and coordination is recognised as working time if it is within working hours, otherwise it is recognised as time off (1:1).

The third layer, Framework, transforms the practices and knowledge that emerged during the project into a shared governance document: the Internal Memorandum of Care and Understanding (IMoCU), drawing on CIMAM's position paper on best practices and museum ethics (CIMAM, 2025). It is not drafted in advance, but co-created in the final phase of the pilot cycle, drawing on everything that has emerged during the process. It formalises care as an organisational commitment and collective agreement, and is structured around principles such as integrity, reciprocity and the right to pause. It is conceived as a living document, to be renegotiated and updated over time.

The methodological structure of the project follows a spiral shape: it starts from the inner core of the museum - its staff, its relationships - and gradually expands towards the surrounding cultural ecosystem, then returns inwards bringing new rhythms and shared understandings. This movement mirrors the model of breathing: not a linear progression, but a recurring and profound rhythm of attention, action and reflection.

Fragile Relationships is not a final solution. It is the beginning of a cycle: a carefully crafted invitation to breathe together. The measure of its success is not completion, but continuation. If these practices endure, adapt and inspire others.

Institutions, like bodies, need rhythms. They need to inhale, pause, exhale, rest. This project aspires to be the beginning of a cycle.

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Organisational Care Toolkit materials

Reframing Sustainability
Exhibition Design as a Practice of Care

Piergiorgio Italiano

Exhibition production, by its nature, often entails a considerable environmental impact: temporary constructions can generate material waste, deplete resources, consume energy, and produce carbon emissions through logistics and transport.[1] Henri Lefebvre observed that "every society [...] produces its own space".[2] When we analyze exhibitions as spatial, material, and temporal dispositifs, we recognize in fact that display is never neutral: it communicates knowledge, values, and forms of care toward artworks, spaces, publics. Temporary installations offer a privileged field in which social and environmental responsibilities become visible and actionable, engaging time, matter, energy, expertise, and shared accountability.

Museion, the museum of modern and contemporary art in Bolzano, has long positioned itself at the forefront of sustainability among cultural institutions, combining environmental responsibility with its vision of the museum "as a stage for social debate, which also functions as a space of communication".[3]
The Sustainability Report (Museion 2023) demonstrates this commitment, outlining a systemic, long-term approach that addresses improvements in the institution's structural areas, as well as the development of Environmental, Governance, and Social principles.

While the museum's achievements in the field are significant, this research project seeks to reflect on existing challenges and opportunities, expanding them through the particular lens of exhibition design. Here lies an opportunity: sustainability principles already embraced at an institutional level can be translated into concrete, repeatable, and ethically grounded design actions.

How can exhibition design operate as a practice of care rather than a technical or formal exercise? How might exhibition infrastructures be conceived as systems of support rather than as devices of temporary consumption? Can environmental sustainability be understood as a form of generosity towards the wider community?

Guidelines For Care-Oriented Exhibition Design

Drawing on case studies, in dialogue with European practitioners and museum professionals, and ultimately questioning the strategies already in place at Museion, the research identifies seven key themes to a pathway toward more sustainable exhibition-making. Organized chronologically according to the project lifecycle, they range from structural strategies affecting museum governance to operational considerations shaping the visitor experience.

Governance encompasses the decision-making structures, guidelines, and protocols that support sustainable practices across the institution. Key actions can include: defining responsibilities, drafting guidelines, selecting criteria for designers and suppliers, cataloguing materials, documenting knowledge. Governance creates a continuous infrastructure that informs curatorial, spatial, and production choices.
Time influences both spatial and operational decisions. Beyond defining the duration of an exhibition, it involves planning for permanence, adaptability, and potential future iterations, ensuring that projects can evolve within the institution absorbing the production costs.
Cycle addresses the life cycle of exhibitions – from concept to dismantling, reuse, and transformation. Installations should be conceived as part of an ongoing process rather than as isolated events, considering assembly, storage, logistics, future reuse, and collaboration with reuse platforms.
Materials selection translates design intent into physical form. A sustainable approach prioritizes durability, low embodied energy, local sourcing, modular industrial components. Moreover, accepting imperfection as an expression of the very nature of materials could legitimize a different aesthetic, clearly communicating responsible choices.
Production concerns the practical realization of exhibitions. Strategies could include optimizing assembly, avoiding irreversible processes, prioritizing local artisans and suppliers, reducing transport and packaging.
Energy management encompasses efficient lighting, climate control, and a critical use of digital or immersive technologies. Finding a balance between visitor comfort, conservation needs, and environmental impact is a key factor in responsible exhibition design.
Experience, finally, makes sustainable strategies readable to the public. Transparent communication of decisions, dialogue between context and display, and active audience engagement provide opportunities to make care, responsibility, and ethical stewardship visible.

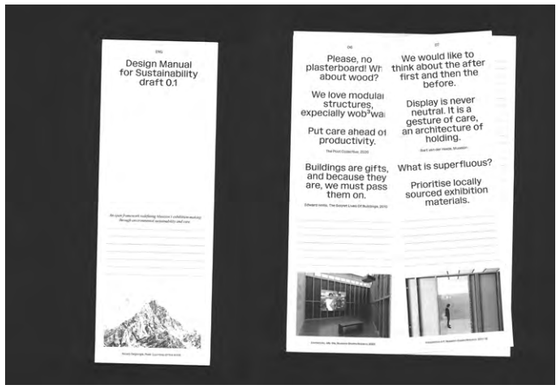
Taken together, these seven themes outline a framework in which sustainability is not an ancillary concern, but an integral component of institutional strategy, design language, and public engagement.

Toward A Design Manual

This collection of themes and guidelines takes shape in the *Design Manual*, a document that defines a strategic orientation that Museion can adopt, positioning the museum as an infrastructure of care and serving as a guide for other institutions as well. The manual is not conceived as a prescriptive code, nor does it claim scientific completeness. Rather, it functions as a cartography – an invitation to explore how sustainability can inhabit, inform, and transform exhibition-making. It is a forward-looking instrument, intended to orient practice toward alternative futures.

Its implementation could work as a first invitation to communicate Museion sustainability approach, enabling the public and the wider community to become integral participants in this trajectory. Moreover, the manual expresses a position of care that could extend beyond the physical walls of the museum, creating connections with design practices, recycling platforms, artists, material libraries, putting Museion at the core of this new network.

The *Design Manual* is intentionally open, fragmentary, evolving, and participatory. Some entries may appear incomplete, outdated, or already in transformation; they will be updated or replaced in future editions of the document, which – ideally – will be further developed by those who choose to take care of it.



Design Manual for Sustainability draft 0.1

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School of Tenderness
An invitation to Kindness, Vulnerability and Love

Nicolò Martinelli

My proposal for a possible future of museums is driven by love, and in particular by bell hooks' book *All About Love*. From this text, I draw several key chapters as conceptual foundations for my proposition, focusing specifically on justice, honesty, commitment, values, community, and healing.

I decided to call this proposal *School of Tenderness* because I am particularly interested in the idea of creating a school within the space of the museum: a school that temporarily occupies the museum, producing a shift through tenderness and kindness, a shift in how we understand the role and responsibilities of museums today. Rather than functioning solely as spaces of display and authority, museums can become sites of learning, care, and relational practice.

A School of Justice

"There can be no love without justice" - bell hooks

In *All About Love*, bell hooks insists on the inseparability of love and justice. From an educational perspective, she argues that learning how to love is inseparable from learning responsibility. The care and affection received in early life shape the forms of love we later become capable of practicing. When children's rights are violated within the domestic sphere, the absence of protection leaves lasting traces, often invisible, yet deeply formative.

Love, when invoked by an institution, immediately exposes the question of justice. A contemporary museum does not operate in isolation: it is embedded in a world marked by climate collapse, the rise of far-right movements in Europe and the United States, the resurgence of neo-Nazi and fascist ideologies, and ongoing wars in Ukraine, Palestine, the Congo, and other sites of ongoing geopolitical violence. Museums increasingly find themselves at the center of social struggles, as demonstrated by activist interventions such as those carried out by Just Stop Oil and Ultima Generazione. These moments expose a tension: between the museum as a space of preservation and the museum as a site entangled in urgent political realities.

Rather than treating these interventions as disruptions to be neutralized, they can be understood as symptoms that cultural institutions are being asked to reposition themselves. The challenge is not simply to address political themes through exhibitions, but to reflect on how institutional structures, funding models, and power relations shape what can be said, shown, and supported.

As Françoise Vergès reminds us, decolonizing the museum cannot be reduced to diversifying what appears on its walls or expanding inclusion programs. It requires a deeper interrogation of the museum's own conditions of possibility, its histories, hierarchies, and forms of authority.

In this light, John Gerrard's *Flare (Oceania)* (2022) offers a compelling point of reflection. Depicting a gas flare burning in the shape of a flag in the South Pacific Ocean near Tonga, the work draws attention to the ecological devastation caused by fossil fuel extraction, as well as to the geopolitical forces sustaining it. In moments of heightened political violence, when national flags burn both literally and symbolically, the work resonates beyond its immediate context. It suggests that art can remain attentive to the fires already burning across the world, without claiming neutrality or retreating into abstraction.

What would it mean for a museum to respond to such fires? Not by declaring itself righteous, but by acknowledging its own exposure and implication. A museum might become, metaphorically, a burning flag itself: not as a symbol of dominance, but as a vulnerable, porous surface, open to being shaped and reshaped by the realities it engages with. In this sense can the museum become a different kind of school? Not a place that distributes knowledge from above, but one where learning is reciprocal, situated, and collective.

Radical tenderness, or radical softness, is also evoked in Museion's exhibition program *The Softest Hard*, which brings together artists and practices that generate political and transformative effects through soft, tender, and non-violent strategies. Nicola L, for example, used soft figures and pliable materials to address political and ecological issues. In her videos, she challenged the male gaze by observing men interacting with her soft, wearable artworks, reframing power relations through a feminist lens.

A similar tension between justice and care animates *Army of Love* by Ingo Niermann and Alexa Karolinski, a documentary-style film about a fictional support group offering love to those systematically denied access to it. Framed with irony yet driven by sincerity, the project imagines love as a shared, distributable resource, available not to some, but to everyone, and to every body.

The notion of justice articulated by bell hooks can be extended to social rights more broadly. A state, or any social context, that fails to uphold social rights cannot generate love. If a museum speaks about love, it inevitably enters the terrain of justice and the protection of rights. The *School of Tenderness* will therefore learn and exhibit works grounded in strong political and social justice values, as a first step toward creating a space in which love forms the foundation of relationships. It is an invitation to radical tenderness, flexible but not weak, and unapologetically positioned. A school that also teaches how to transgress, echoing another of bell hooks' central ideas. The question then becomes: how can we transgress through tenderness?

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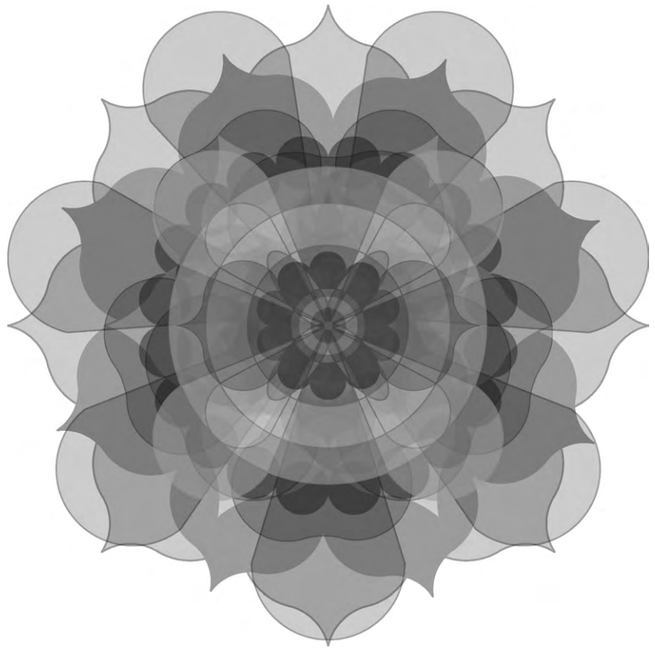

Abstract visualisation of the School of Tenderness

Moving, Thinking, Imagining Together

Beatrice Cera

What to do when we feel like everything we're holding on to is slipping through our fingers?[1] In 2023, two writers were publishing books reflecting on the absurd and uncertain times we live in, both identifying two altered states of the human mind as symptoms of a deeper illness in the system. Franco 'Bifo' Berardi, a philosopher, looks at depression as such a symptom,[2] while artist and writer Gary Zhexi Zhang talks about psychosis.[3] Now, the notion of a 'desperate state of the world' is increasingly solidifying in specific political figures/choices and entering the mainstream discourse. It is sad to realise that the genocide in Palestine – in my opinion an already sufficient enough proof of the 'desperate state of the world' – resonates with indignation especially in cultural, academic and humanities environments.
The unpunished crimes of the Western President Donald J. Trump – yet not limited at him – are triggering a much more widespread anxiety for 'our' (white, Western, privileged) future.

It is precisely this anxiety (or depression, or psychosis) that I am keen to point out, since it is my conviction that one of the few remedies to such a state is to step up and do something, and even better, do something together with others. Doing an action surrounded by others is what defines the reach and limits of our agency.[4]

Building on Museion's current research axis 'The Softest Hard', my proposal is to activate a space of (soft) resistance through dialogue and praxis. A space where different artistic practices encounter activist work(ers) to open up possibilities of imagination for the citizens to start acting together towards desirable futures.[5] I imagine this to happen through a program which expression is participatory and processual rather than solely a display. From the point of view of a museum, enabling a practice of care can look like using its position of institutional privilege to facilitate the happening of difficult and critical conversations (conversations which problematise suprematist power, imperial dominance, patriarchism, genocide...). It is undeniably risky, but although the notion of having a solid base both in terms of funding and position in the broader local-international cultural landscape is a very slippery one, I'd argue that being an established, even though relatively young, institution also comes with the advantage of greater exposure, and this could prove to be a deterrent when it comes to funders withdrawing support.

Guided by the inputs received in the class,[6] I experimented with a perhaps non-conventional way to approach the making of a program, and I want to pose it here as a possible modus operandi for a more relational practice of doing cultural work. Once identified the themes I want to work on – namely the problem of housing on one hand, and the new rising of fascism on the other – I decided to first reach out to artists and organisations I was interested in collaborating with, and to define in conversation with them the exact content and modalities of their interventions. My intention was to act as a 'connector' between their practices, agendas and activities, and the public, institutional context of the museum. How could Museion help and support their work and efforts? I purposely positioned the museum not as the commissioner, but rather as a space who opens its doors to host a process which shape will be defined through its unfolding. I think that applied at the very initial stage of a project this approach can be extremely beneficial in setting a common ground between all the agents involved. It can assure that an institution, or whatever entity is acting as a platform, is not just taking a set of urgent matters and nicely packaging them into a pre-configured format for an audience to digest them, but rather it is giving effective support to practices and discourses it considers timely and important.

Art, intrinsically, has always carried the potential to open our imagination by means of exposing us to the unfamiliar, the unknown, the other. By extension the museum, as the place where art is held and where we gather to experience it, is the place where art's imaginative potential can be put in use. In this regard, and as an end note, I want to remember Black feminist Lola Olufemi's take on the role of art:

> As feminists, we are moved by injustice in the world, we work because what is happening around us demands a response. [...] We do a disservice to the power of art and artistic creation when we assume that it is less important than political intervention, likewise we do ourselves a disservice when we assume that art alone can liberate us.[7]

NOTES

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Moving, Thinking, Imagining Together, diagram, 2026

Unfolding the Museum

Eleonora Todeschi

In a world marked by instability and rapid change, defining the role of the art museums is not so simple. We are going through a time of profound crisis of every kind, where uncertainty, social anxiety and climate change are invading our lives.

In this constant hurricane, care and kindness are the last things everyone considers. We live in a society that prioritizes competitive individualism, in a world characterized by opportunism and loneliness, where success often seems more important than solidarity.

How can one care in an *uncaring world*?[1] Care needs attention, time, kindness, responsibility, social capacity, action and spaces in which it can be practiced. Care is a radical gesture.

Museums have traditionally been conceived as spaces for transmitting knowledge, but now their role could shift from exhibition spaces to platforms for dialogue, critical thinking and participation. This transformation appears essential if museums are to remain relevant. If they continue to function only as places of display, they risk becoming disconnected from contemporary social realities.

Gustave Flaubert's ironic definition of the museum in the *Dictionnaire des idées reçues* portrays it as a place of national glory, aristocratic audiences, instruction, and especially as a place for the few.[2] Although written almost two centuries ago, this image still resonates: museums are often perceived as niche spaces, primarily frequented by those already connected to the cultural field.

To investigate this perception, I conducted twenty interviews in the city of Bolzano with young adults aged 18–35 years old. Inspired by the 2008 NEA *Survey of Public Participation in the Arts*, which highlights lower attendance among younger audiences[3], I explored their relationship with museums.

The interviews revealed a clear sense of detachment. Many participants visit museums rarely and mostly while traveling, participants expressed interest in informal encounters with curators and artists.

What emerged were three main social issues: lack of comprehension, lack of participation and lack of social interaction.

The idea of addressing these issues through conviviality emerged from a dream I had during the Christmas holidays: the image of a long table in Museion's Passage where people were chatting and eating together. The table was so long that it continued through the façade and extended outside the museum. In this way, it became a central metaphor of the project: a place of equality, hospitality and exchange, a domestic object capable of dissolving hierarchies and fostering dialogue. The table connected inside and outside, the institution and the city.

Shared meals have historically created spaces for reflection. From the Roman convivium to Plato's Symposium, the banquet combined social ritual with intellectual exchange. Ivan Illich later described in the book *Tools for Conviviality* conviviality as the creative and autonomous interaction between individuals through the tools they use. Conviviality, therefore, is not passive togetherness but active participation.[4]

Contemporary projects confirm this potential. There are projects such as *The Dinner Party* by Judy Chicago, *The Long Table* by Lois Weaver, and *VB52* by Vanessa Beecroft, as well as the series *Table Talks* by Studio Fritto Misto in London and the dinner series *S72+* organized by Studio Lovell, that explore how the table can serve as a metaphor for reflection and for initiating dialogue.

Food becomes a medium for connection rather than mere nourishment. It creates proximity and opens space for conversation.

From these reflections emerged *Unfolding the Museum*, a long-term public format that uses shared dinners as informal curatorial devices. Held on the first Friday after each exhibition opening, the dinners offer an alternative way to engage with the museum. At the center of each dinner is a simple tool: the origami fortune teller.

Before the event, participants create their own origami and write questions inside it. During the first dinner, questions may address any aspect of the institution; later events focus on the exhibition itself.

The exchange is reciprocal: museum staff also prepare questions, transforming the dinner into a two-way dialogue.

Over time, the dinners extend beyond the museum into different locations across Bolzano, symbolically unfolding the institution into the city and bringing the museum closer to the people.

The dinner follows a clear structure. The table is prepared with soft lighting and candles. After an introduction, participants fold their origami and write their questions. The first course takes shape without formal questions. Between courses, the origami activates the dialogue: anyone may begin and responses are spontaneous. Key words are written on a white tablecloth, transforming it into a living archive.

After dessert, a second round of questions takes place.

The museum, often perceived as a silent white cube, becomes a welcoming and domestic space. Rather than replacing exhibitions or guided tours, the dinner adds another layer of understanding, one based on dialogue, curiosity and care. Around a table, knowledge emerges not only from observing artworks but from conversation and shared presence. Through conviviality and care, the museum unfolds into a space of participation, dialogue and exchange.

NOTES

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Participation and Accessibility in Museums
A Collaborative Family Program

Nora Anrather

Museums are often seen as spaces for observation, reflection, and learning, but to what extent do museums consider the needs of families with children in their design and programming? This project aims to rethink and imagine the museum as a collaborative environment where families, artists, museum staff, and local communities actively co-create experiences. Grounded in principles of collectivity and decentralization, the program explores how museums can open themselves to multiple voices and redistribute power by implementing meaningful participation.

Nicola L.'s work emphasizes themes of solidarity, equality, and shared experience. She envisions a "collective skin" where hierarchy is suspended, and collaboration shapes reality. Similarly, this project seeks to create a museum environment in which roles are decentralized and shared values are lived, raising questions about how museums can become spaces where everyone feels included, valued, and free to contribute.

Accessibility is central to these questions. Many museums, in both their architecture and their programming, are not designed with families in mind.

To better understand these dynamics, conversations were held with six families about their experiences and expectations regarding museums. While some families enjoy visits as places of cultural exploration, often during vacations or school-related activities, many expressed a preference for institutions that allow children to engage actively and freely. Museums where touching, play, and interaction are encouraged were described as more relaxing and enriching for both children and parents. Families emphasized the importance of creative opportunities, participation, accessible communication, and welcoming spaces.

These observations point toward a broader shift in perspective. Rather than understanding museums primarily as spaces for passive observation, the project explores how they might function as flexible, participatory environments. How can collaborative projects be shaped without imposing excessive control or predefined outcomes? How can a polyphonic space emerge, one in which different voices coexist, and shared goals develop through exchange? Central to this approach is co-creation, supported by attentive listening and a willingness to let participants' needs guide the process.

Collaborative, community-based practices rely on decentralization, trust, and intentional adaptation. Change unfolds through small, responsive steps rather than fixed plans. Interdependence is understood as a strength, allowing participants to support one another and navigate complexity together.[1]

How might these ideas translate into practice without fixing outcomes in advance? The project responds to this question through a series of open encounters that place families at the center of the museum's development. Rather than proposing a completed and fixed model, it begins with shared exploration. The first step is a series of workshops titled *Create Your Museum*, conceived as gatherings that invite participation in an informal occasion.

Within these encounters, children are invited to imagine and create their own visions of a museum using open-ended materials. In parallel, parents and caregivers are offered space for conversation: to share experiences, articulate needs, and reflect on what they would like the museum to become. The staff of the museum takes primarily the role of attentive listeners and dialogue partners, supporting exchange rather than giving directions.

The workshops are understood not as isolated events, but as starting points into a longer collective process. Ideas, questions, and needs that emerge inform subsequent steps, which are developed together with museum staff and culture professionals. In this way, future programs, formats, and spatial interventions are created from lived experience rather than assumption.

Ongoing dialogue is supported through simple, low-threshold feedback formats. A Post-it Wall in the museum lounge offers a continuous space for comments, drawings, ideas, and questions from visitors of all ages. Monthly consultation hours provide an additional opportunity for informal exchange and reflection.

Over the course of twelve months, the project gradually moves from listening and relationship-building toward collaborative realization. Open calls invite artists, designers, and organizations to respond to themes articulated by families. Decision-making processes involve both family representatives and cultural professionals, ensuring that multiple perspectives remain present. The project involves the presentation of collaborative works, actions, and interventions that reflect this shared process.

Throughout, the museum is approached not as a fixed institution, but as a living collective that speaks for care, dialogue, and participation, and in which the families are not only visitors, but active contributors to what the museum can become.

NOTES

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MuseIOT
The expanded urban museum

Martina Salerno

As museums confront the evolving pressures of the twenty-first century (digital transformation, shifting civic expectations, questions of inclusion), they are increasingly called upon to rethink their role beyond custodianship and display. The historical model of the museum as a stable architectural container for heritage is nowadays in contrast within a different society: one defined by constant connectivity, operating in hybrid physical and digital environments, with increasing demands for engagement and entertainment. Museums are therefore challenged to reconsider not only what they convey to the public, but how they exist within the evolving social and urban landscape that surrounds them. Planning for the museum's future, therefore, entails redefining the museum as an active participant in urban processes, one that fosters dialogue, trust, and shared belonging.

MuseIOT - The expanded urban museum responds to this challenge by proposing a structural and conceptual shift, through a revaluation of the museum's spatial and relational condition: from museum conceived as institution to museum as distributed civic infrastructure. Technologies that already permeate our daily lives, especially the Internet of Things, could concretely function as infrastructural tools that extend the museum's presence and responsibility across the urban territory. In this framework, technology becomes a means of civic mediation, as *MuseIOT* is conceived as a network that dismantles the perceived distance between institution and citizens.

The project takes inspiration from the experimental museology workshop ideated by Jeffrey Schnapp in *MuseoFuturo*[1], where the museum is reimagined as a toy, public square, laboratory, and computer. These metaphors shift the institution from static repository to dynamic platform: multisensory, permeable, research-driven, and computational. Considering the public need to meet these aspects, *MuseIOT* is an experimentation of a new model of museums, that questions their practices and open its thinking and research processes directly into the urban fabric of Bolzano.

This approach also resonates with the theoretical framework proposed by Bourriaud in *Relational Aesthetics* (1998)[2], where he argues that contemporary art shifts its focus from the production of discrete objects to the creation of "interhuman relations" and social interstices. Art becomes a state of encounter, a platform for interaction within the everyday: *MuseIOT* extends this proposition into the urban scale.

This distributed system operates in direct dialogue with the Museion's program *Museiopolis 2026*, which seeks to dissolve the polarity between the centre and the periphery and to weave culture into the living fabric of the region. *MuseIOT* translates the curatorial themes of participation, ecology, symbolic systems, and collective imaginaries into situated urban experiences.

It does this by activating a network of connected sensors and responsive devices distributed across key urban nodes in Bolzano: transit areas such as the railway station and the bus stations; Walther Platz; Ponte Talvera; Piazza Domenicani and Teatro Comunale; residential districts and outskirts; and last, the Museion entrance. The *MuseIOT* infrastructure connects the urban nodes that function as "sensory organs", sending data flows to Museion, which operates as the network's "brain," orchestrating artistic responses across the urban body.

On a technical level, *MuseIOT* is willing to collaborate with two partners: Eurac Research and NOI Techpark, both located in Bolzano. They share with *MuseIOT* the common objective of taking advantage of the opportunities given by the digital transformation, and can translate the project's conceptual ambitions into working systems.

The project provides in each hub the installation of a series of artworks/environments by a selection of artists, whose practices reflect the commitment to research, contexts, and civic engagement - matters linked to the *MuseIOT* proposal itself.

The selection expects artists such as Luca Trevisani, Michael Fliri, Hannes Egger, Brunner/Ritz, and Alterazioni Video.

To give a hypothetical example of an IoT node, Walther Platz, the hub could provide the artist's operation in the form of an installation of public "statement pillars" through the use of microphones that convert the different speeches (and different languages) into abstract visual glyphs, or other sorts of translation.

The outputs that come up from the node hub are finalized in new inputs: both physical, inside Museion, in the shape of a showcase of people's reflections and ideas (in turn, a new prompt for the museum); or ethereal, in the digital, with the result of having a renewed commitment to the museum's matters.

In this way, *MuseIOT* concretely integrates the contemporary discourse into the different rhythms of public space, establishing a responsive dialogue between communities and cultural production. A reciprocal and looped exchange takes place: the city produces the museum's expanded activity, while the institution listens and responds to the city.

By doing so, the museum chooses to integrate and work embedded within the society. Reimagining the museum as civic infrastructure, the hubs distributed across Bolzano can transform the city into a site of dialogue, where participation, critical reflection, and shared authorship redefine the museum itself as a living ecosystem.

NOTES

1 https://jeffreyschnapp.com/2021/01/20/experimental-museology/;

2 Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, Les Presse Du Reel, 1998, 7–40.

RADIO BACCANO

Maria Costan Davara

The idea for RADIO BACCANO emerges from observing a moment of institutional transition in Brussels: CIVA's relocation from its former quarters in a "usine d'électricité secondaire" (secondary power station) in Rue de l'Ermitage, in Ixelles, into what was once a Citroën garage on the banks of the Charleroi-Brussels canal, in Schaerbeek. The relocation is part of the ambitious as much as contested Kanal–Centre Pompidou project.

The shift marks more than a change of address, as CIVA will be incorporated in the new project, undergoing a transformation in scale, governance, and symbolic weight: from a small-scale institution for architecture, landscape and urban planning to a component within one of Europe's largest cultural infrastructures. Witnessing this transition from within raises a set of questions: what happens when an institution seeks to maintain its intellectual autonomy while being absorbed into a larger infrastructural apparatus? What does it mean for a museum to act as host, and what forms of power are embedded in hosting?

These questions resonate within a broader urban condition. Brussels has long been shaped by governmental decisions that reorganized the city fabric — from the implantation of the European quarter and the violent "Bruxellization" that followed, to contemporary processes of gentrification, housing precarity, and the privatization of urban space. Cultural institutions operate within this terrain, as their expansion intersects with grassroots organizations navigating structural instability, raising questions about which voices are amplified, sidelined, or absorbed in processes of urban and cultural transformation.

Museums themselves increasingly acknowledge infrastructure in a critical lens, as seen in recent exhibitions such as *The Geopolitics of Infrastructure* at M HKA in Antwerp (which recently faced closure due to a withdrawal of funding by the Flemish government), or *Power* at CIVA, whose aim was to examine how contemporary infrastructures shape everyday life through political institutions, citizen participation, energy systems, and climate justice.

RADIO BACCANO situates itself within this discourse, yet shifting the focus from representation to spatial activation.

By approaching the museum as an infrastructure of power, a spatial and symbolic system that selects who speaks, who is archived, and how histories are self-authored, the project tries to address the questions of how to critique the institution, and how to renegotiate its relationship to the other bodies inhabiting the city, acting at different levels of institutionalization. Radio becomes the operative tool by which such testing can happen.

Drawing from the history of 1970s Italian free radio movements — among them, Radio Alice in Bologna, interrupted after just one month of broadcasting in March 1977 — the project recalls a period of intense political upheaval in which experimental, playful, and radically horizontal broadcasting practices emerged as tools of collective expression. In that context, radio dissolved distinctions between producer and listener, transforming communication infrastructure into a space of social reconfiguration.

The idea is to have a radio as a house on wheels circulating across different neighborhoods of the city, inhabiting temporary occupations in public spaces. Nomadic by its nature, the radio acts as a moving, ephemeral, spatial dispositive traveling around and being hosted in alter-institutional spaces, drawing a map of the urban cultural underground.

The object acts by doing "baccano", loudly activating spots around the city that hold symbolic relevance towards questions of space, publicness, power, and infrastructure. The city itself becomes the host of such experiment, both as the site and the subject, being interrogated on how infrastructural power might be temporarily displaced, negotiated, or rerouted. In other words, opening space for alternative forms of publicness to emerge.

The activation mobilizes different historical timelines, while treating radio as a counter-infrastructure navigating through the city.

The choice of radio freely echoes and reinterprets the genealogy and the wider context of Italian radical experimentation from the 70's - like *Pollution. Per una Nuova estetica dell'inquinamento*, a happening held in Bologna in 1972 conceived by Gianni Sassi and including a performance-concert by Franco Battiato.

The question then becomes: how to translate that generative, creative, dissident energy into the contemporary realm, engaging with the liminal spaces living at the border of the institutions and institutionalization? Can radio as an moving object be an experiment in redistributing access and agency over public space?

The spatial dispositive troubles the traditional concept of hosting by allowing its identity to be continuously reshaped by those who autonomously make use of it, operating in a radically open format.

As Sandi Hilal writes in *The Right to Host*, hospitality is structured by power: the host decides the terms of entry, duration, and belonging. RADIO BACCANO intervenes precisely at this intersection, displacing the authority to host and exposing it as a site of tension that is always renegotiated.

Gianni Sassi, creator of the *Pollution* event, threatened with a polyurethane "Sasso" by Piero Gilardi.
Photo courtesy Gianni Ummarino.

Last image of the bike-vacco, or the bivacco on wheels, shot at Casa dei Beni Comuni, Belluno, 2024.

Commercial Culture
A Mirror of Intangible Heritage

Arianne Streitberger

Commercial culture refers to the production, circulation, and consumption of cultural goods within market systems. It encompasses industries such as fashion, media, advertising, design, and increasingly, museums themselves when they operate within economic frameworks shaped by fashion brand sponsorship and audience competition. Commercial culture transforms objects, images, and experiences into commodities, attaching symbolic meaning to them through marketing and exhibit to create programs and services that leave visitors with a positive and memorable Museum experience design (MXD).

Tangible heritage, in contrast, consists of the physical remains of culture, monuments, artworks, artifacts, architecture, and collections, that are preserved as evidence of historical continuity. While commercial culture is dynamic and market- driven, tangible heritage is rooted in preservation and memory. Yet in contemporary society, these two spheres are deeply interconnected.

Museology today operates within this intersection. The 2022 definition of museums adopted by the International Council of Museums (ICOM) emphasizes that museums safeguard both tangible and intangible heritage while serving society as inclusive, participatory institutions. The inclusion of intangible heritage, skills, rituals, craftsmanship, and social practices, broadens the museum's responsibility beyond the preservation of objects to the mediation of living culture. In this context, commercial culture becomes both an objection and opportunity. Since museums face critical financial challenges, i.a. through a global decline in public funding for museums (2008 financial crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic) they rely on market mechanisms for funding and visibility. Yet museums must maintain a critical distance from purely commercial thinking.

Urban media environments illustrate this tension clearly. LED screens in major city squares, such as Times Square, Piccadilly Circus, and Shibuya Crossing, are traditionally associated with advertising and consumer spectacle. However, they increasingly serve as platforms for artistic interventions and museum collaborations, e.g. to display the Cinema Godard program on the facade of Fondazione Prada in Milan, immersive art experiences at Outernet in London or for various multimedia art installations, as in the lobby of 150 North Riverside in Chicago spanning over 3000 square feet. These digital facades transform urban space into hybrid environments where art and commerce coexist.

Museums extend their presence beyond their exhibition walls, reaching broader audiences through projections, media installations, and digital communication. At the same time, art presented in such contexts must compete with the visual

intensity and immediacy of commercial messaging, raising questions about depth, duration, and attention.

One of the most visible intersections of commercial culture and heritage is the collaboration between artists and fashion brands. Historically, Salvador Dalí and Elsa Schiaparelli demonstrated how art and haute couture could merge, transforming surrealist imagery into wearable design. In contemporary culture. Luxury brands institutionalize cultural engagement through foundations like Fondazione Prada (Milan, Italy) and Fondazione Fendi (Rome, Italy), embedding themselves within the infrastructure of contemporary art.

Numerous artist–brand partnerships, from Yayoi Kusama, Takashi Murakami, and Jeff Koons with Louis Vuitton, to Damien Hirst with Alexander McQueen, Kaws with Dior, Virgil Abloh with Louis Vuitton, and Andy Warhol with Versace, illustrate how fashion and art mutually reinforce visibility and prestige. For brands, artistic collaboration conveys authenticity and intellectual depth; for artists and museums, it offers funding and expanded audiences. Fashion itself functions as both tangible and intangible heritage: garments are physical objects, yet they embody craftsmanship, identity, and social ritual.

The influence of commerce in culture has clear positive aspects. It can provide financial sustainability for museums (e.g. sponsorships for exhibitions), support the preservation of traditional craftsmanship, expand audiences through digital platforms and encourage a global dialogue. However, the negative dimensions are equally significant. Medial performance can overshadow education and artistic integrity. By focussing mainly on marketing strategies, art risks its ethical purpose, to the point of reducing itself to aesthetic matters and detach from its status.

Business partnerships influence curatorial independence, and collaborations with brands reinforcing exclusivity rather than inclusivity. Moreover, global commercial strategies may accommodate diverse cultural expressions, influenced by economical or political interests.

Museion for example, with its characteristic architectural facade, could be a possibility for digital projections and turn urban media into a promotion for its art exhibitions the institution or a platform for critical artistic engagement.

for digital projections. Strategic collaborations with fashion, particularly those rooted in regional craftsmanship, could highlight intangible heritage while maintaining transparency and curatorial autonomy. Expanding digital communication, fostering cross-border partnerships, and openly addressing the relationships between commerce and culture would strengthen both visibility and credibility.

Ultimately, commercial culture acts as a mirror to tangible heritage, reflecting and reshaping historical memory within contemporary market structures. Museums operate within this mirror world, negotiating between preservation and promotion, education and exhibition. The challenge is not to reject commercial culture outright, nor to embrace it uncritically, but to engage with it consciously and ethically. By doing so, cultural institutions can transform visibility from a marketing tool into a meaningful platform for dialogue about heritage, identity, and the values that shape our shared future of art museums.

Example of LED screens in an Art show context

Artemis: A Mobile Space for Mycelial and Care-Based Art Mediation

Siri Brandis

“Creativity is a practice of freedom. Art is the practice of imagining what freedom looks like, feels like, and how it can manifest for all people.” Indya Moore

Artemis is my attempt to shift how encounters with art can begin, who gets to feel entitled to participate, and what counts as expertise. Cultural institutions increasingly commit to participation, care, and inclusion, yet the conditions of participation are often pre-set by architecture, scheduling, funding logics, and invisible codes of behaviour that decide who feels welcome. Even when intentions are generous, thresholds remain difficult to cross. *Artemis* asks what changes when artistic exchange is not anchored to a permanent building or institutional authority, but can emerge in everyday life.

Artemis is a mobile infrastructure for feminist art mediation and shared making. Working from a converted van, the project unfolds as twelve workshop-based encounters across Ireland, Germany, and Italy. In each location, me and my project partner collaborate with locally based cultural contributors to co-design temporary, free workshops rooted in craft, conversation, and shared experimentation. The van arrives, unfolds into a small working space, and offers a portable invitation: a moment of collective attention, making, and exchange before moving on again.

The workshops are deliberately low-threshold. *Artemis* is for people who want to feel closer to art without being intimidated by it. Participation can be active, but it can also be quiet: observing, listening, drinking tea, staying briefly or for an afternoon. There is no expectation of expertise. Curiosity is enough. Mediation supports agency in the sense that making, interpreting, and contributing are not reserved for a trained few.

The name *Artemis* references the Greek goddess associated with wilderness, protection, and movement. *Artemis* belongs to thresholds. She does not settle comfortably inside established order, but moves through it, keeping her own pace. That in-betweenness is a key orientation for the project: mobility as method, and attentiveness to what becomes possible in temporary, situated encounters.

This orientation also shapes *Artemis*’ partnerships: it relates to institutions collegially, as a peer infrastructure within the same cultural landscape. Partnerships are reciprocal and context-specific. Institutions can offer continuity, resources, and critical dialogue, while *Artemis* offers mobility, low-threshold access, and care-based formats that institutions may not easily host. Like any cultural infrastructure, *Artemis* comes with distinct limitations and benefits: it can move, adapt, and reach different publics, but it cannot offer the same permanence or long-term infrastructural stability. The relationship is understood as mutual learning rather than legitimization.

Methodologically, *Artemis* draws on feminist care theory and mycelial thinking. In fungal ecosystems, mushrooms appear only briefly; beneath them lies an extended network that makes their emergence possible. *Artemis* adopts this logic: each workshop is a visible “mushroom moment,” while the sustaining work (listening, preparation, negotiation, hospitality, collaboration) often remains less visible, yet it is the core of the practice. After the van departs, what persists is rarely an object. It is a shift in relation: a skill remembered, a new confidence with materials, a connection made across difference, a creative spark and a step towards art.

This logic also shapes how the project documents itself. *Artemis* does not aim to produce polished outputs for consumption. Instead, each location becomes a node in a growing digital “mycelial map,” where methods, prompts, and reflections circulate as open resources. The archive is designed as living and revisable. Documentation becomes a care practice rather than proof of productivity. It is shaped by consent, by the right to remain unrecorded, and by attention to what it means to make something public. The goal is not to extract stories from participants, but to circulate practices others can adapt.

Care operates as structure. Each engagement begins with days of listening and contextual immersion; no programme is imposed in advance. This shared knowledge is translated into workshops that are conceptualized and facilitated in cooperation with locally based cultural workers. Their situated knowledge, networks, and artistic practices enrich each encounter and can reduce language barriers. Local contributors are not “service providers” for a visiting project. They are valued collaborators, and their labour is acknowledged, valued and reimbursed.

Because *Artemis* is co-designed locally, the encounters are not planned as a single replicable format. They remain responsive to what a place makes possible. The point is not the theme, but the conditions: an invitation that allows different intensities of participation and treats embodied knowledge exchange as central.

Artemis imagines cultural work as parallel growth: small, situated practices that connect across distance without requiring a single centre. Like mycelium beneath the surface, these practices can spread quietly, forming a network of encounters that are modest in scale but potentially transformative in effect. Sometimes transformation does not arrive as institutional overhaul. Sometimes it begins as rehearsal: people gathering around a table, sharing skills, and discovering that art is not something distant to be consumed, but something already within reach.

Illustrated by Siri Brandis

NOTES ON LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE

"...there's no single answer that will solve all of our future problems. There's no magic bullet. Instead, there are thousands of answers–at least. You can be one of them if you choose to be."
Octavia Butler

Addressing the shifting dichotomies of the museum this zine shares 10 proposals that looks into the future of the art museum and beyond. Part of the final module for the Masters in the Future of the Art Museum - the temporary studio *Infrastctures of Care* introduced methodologies and approaches to be applied to a wide set of disciplines and practices. We are moving beyond the realm of seeing museums purely as rarified spaces privileging the care of the art object. Museums are understood as powerful institutions that need tools to reassess their wellbeing and relevance. As museums continue to face the evolving challenges of balancing their responsibilities towards civic and social functions, how do we plan for their future? How might we work together towards change that highlights their social responsibility?

This zine gives 10 plausible ways to consider how practices can shape the future of the museum as well as their social and cultural production. Museums of care are imagined through practices of wellbeing, environment and sustainability, activism, through creating convivial spaces, and rethought by the engagement with their various communities. Going beyond the boundary of the museum, this zine offers reflections on the use of different media in public spaces while creating opportunities to engage with culture.

These texts are not only the result of the Studio but also brings together the knowledge, skills, reflections and experiences developed over the duration of the course and work placement. The candidates have devised their own methodologies and approaches to museum practice and community engagement which may prove valuable to the future of art museums. Throughout the studio there was a growing desire for museums to not be impartial to the current moment of social anxiety and political instability. We were looking into the current state of things, realising that the future may present more challenges than opportunities.

This zine presents hope for a hereafter and perhaps some ideas for how we might shape that future collectively.

For their final projects we focussed on how we could map a series of complex relationships that could create an infrastructure of care. The aim of these exercises was to not only understand and develop a sense of the function of the museum but to move into a speculative sphere where we could imagine what is needed for the future. Each proposal maps a complex set of relationships to the museum, identifying care as a practice of being in relation.

What does an infrastructure of care look like? How is it felt and enacted in daily life? Our future is shaped by our capacity to imagine, to dream, to find tools to resist and take collective action. If we want to create change then we need to consider how we change our collective habits, rituals and behaviours.

This zine is a brave attempt to develop models, tools and formats that rethink the future of art museums.

Sepake Angiama, Guest Professor