



THE BOOKLET

A collection of ideas, experiences and good practices developed through the ARTFORWARD Erasmus+ project, showcasing how creativity, sustainability and European cooperation inspire innovative learning for a greener and more ethical future in the creative industries.

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ARTFORWARD

ARTFORWARD is an Erasmus+ cooperation project that brings together education, creativity, sustainability, and European collaboration to prepare young people for the challenges of tomorrow.

The project is founded on the belief that meaningful learning emerges when schools, businesses, cultural institutions, and international partners work together. By connecting artistic expression with environmental responsibility and innovation, ARTFORWARD encourages students to transform ideas into real-world solutions while developing critical thinking, creativity, and a strong sense of social responsibility.

Through a shared European learning environment, the project promotes the exchange of knowledge, experiences, and diverse perspectives. Each partner contributes their own expertise to the project, creating a collaborative ecosystem where students and educators learn from different educational approaches, cultural contexts, and professional practices.

Rather than focusing solely on technical skills, ARTFORWARD supports the development of responsible, creative, and future-oriented citizens. Sustainability is approached not only as an environmental objective but also as a cultural value that inspires conscious design, ethical decision-making, and long-term thinking.

ARTFORWARD demonstrates that European cooperation enriches education by expanding horizons, strengthening partnerships, and transforming learning into an experience that is creative, practical, and internationally connected.

Art

Experience

Sustainability



LEARNING TOGETHER



Collaboration

Creation

Dialogue

The academy was built around a shared methodology that places learners at the centre of the creative process. Through interdisciplinary modules, students explore sustainable design practices, collaborate across disciplines and develop innovative solutions connected to future careers. Creativity was approached as both an opportunity and a responsibility. Students observed, explored, experimented, and created. The learning process alternated between field research, collaborative workshops and creative prototyping, helping learners transform ideas into responsible design solutions.

EXPERIENCE AS A LEARNING PROCESS

Exploration

Transformation

Reflection



Experiential learning is a cornerstone of the academy. Students engage with real environments, cultural heritage and professional practices through workshops, study visits and collaborative activities. Observation, experimentation and reflection are integrated into every stage of the learning process, enabling participants to transform experience into creative knowledge.



I. CIRCULARITY

Among the many dimensions of sustainability explored throughout the Green Academy, circularity emerged as one of the most tangible and easily recognizable concepts.

Perhaps because of the image evoked by the circle itself, students often associated **sustainability** with **continuity**, **transformation**, and **connection**.

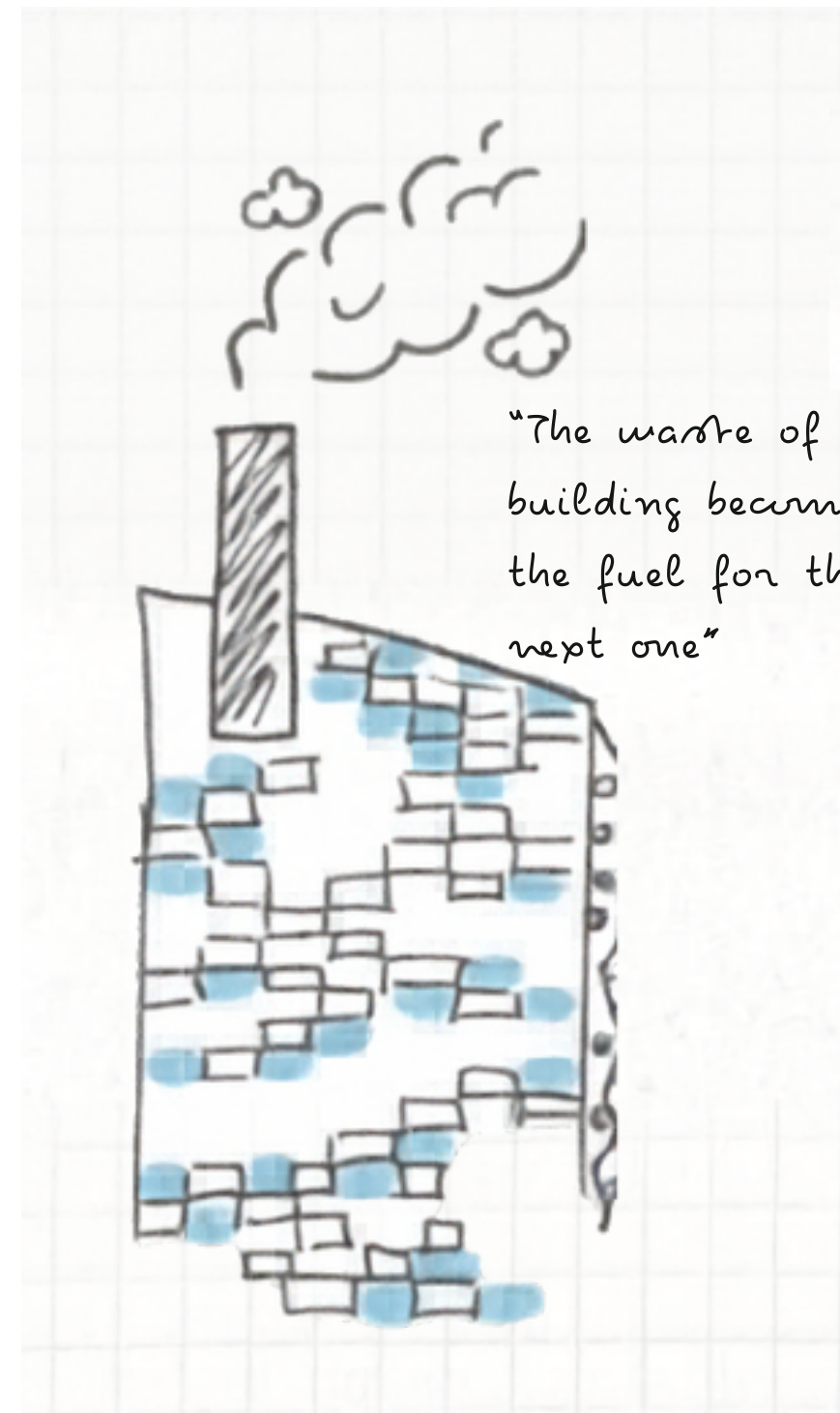
Materials, **ideas**, and **resources** were no longer seen as having a single purpose or a linear path, but as elements capable of evolving, being reused, and generating new value over time.

Art also entered this discourse. **Circularity is inherently visual** and can therefore be understood through images, symbols, and objects. According to the students, artists and designers play an important role in making circular systems visible, using creativity and imagination to transform objects, invent new purposes, and inspire society to rethink the concept of waste.

Throughout the visits and activities, students identified examples of circularity at different scales within the creative industries: in **architecture**, **urban mobility**, and **fashion**.

Circularity means finding new reasons for waste not to become waste.

It offers a hopeful perspective on sustainability, one based not on limitation, but on transformation.



Copenhill - The power plant that collects all the waste of the city and turns it into energy for the city. The building blends into the city, offering leisure facilities for the citizens.

"The waste of one building becomes the fuel for the next one"



"The bike tour is a loop that connects all the stops, and it reminds me of a circular society where resources don't exit the system"



Circular Atelier Amager is a sewing studio. Through repair, upcycling, and design, discarded materials and unwanted garments are given a new life and a new purpose.

"The raw scrap heap" becomes a source of imagination"

II. RESOURCES

Materials emerged as a central theme throughout the Green Academy. For many students, **sustainability began with understanding resources**: where they come from, how they are used, and what happens to them after their first life cycle.

Through encounters with architecture, fashion, and design, students reflected on the responsibility of working with finite resources. **Sustainable design** was not seen only as a matter of replacing one material with “a better one” but as a **process of understanding the nature, possibilities, and limitations of the materials available**.

In this sense, **resources become active participants in the creative process** rather than passive elements to be used.

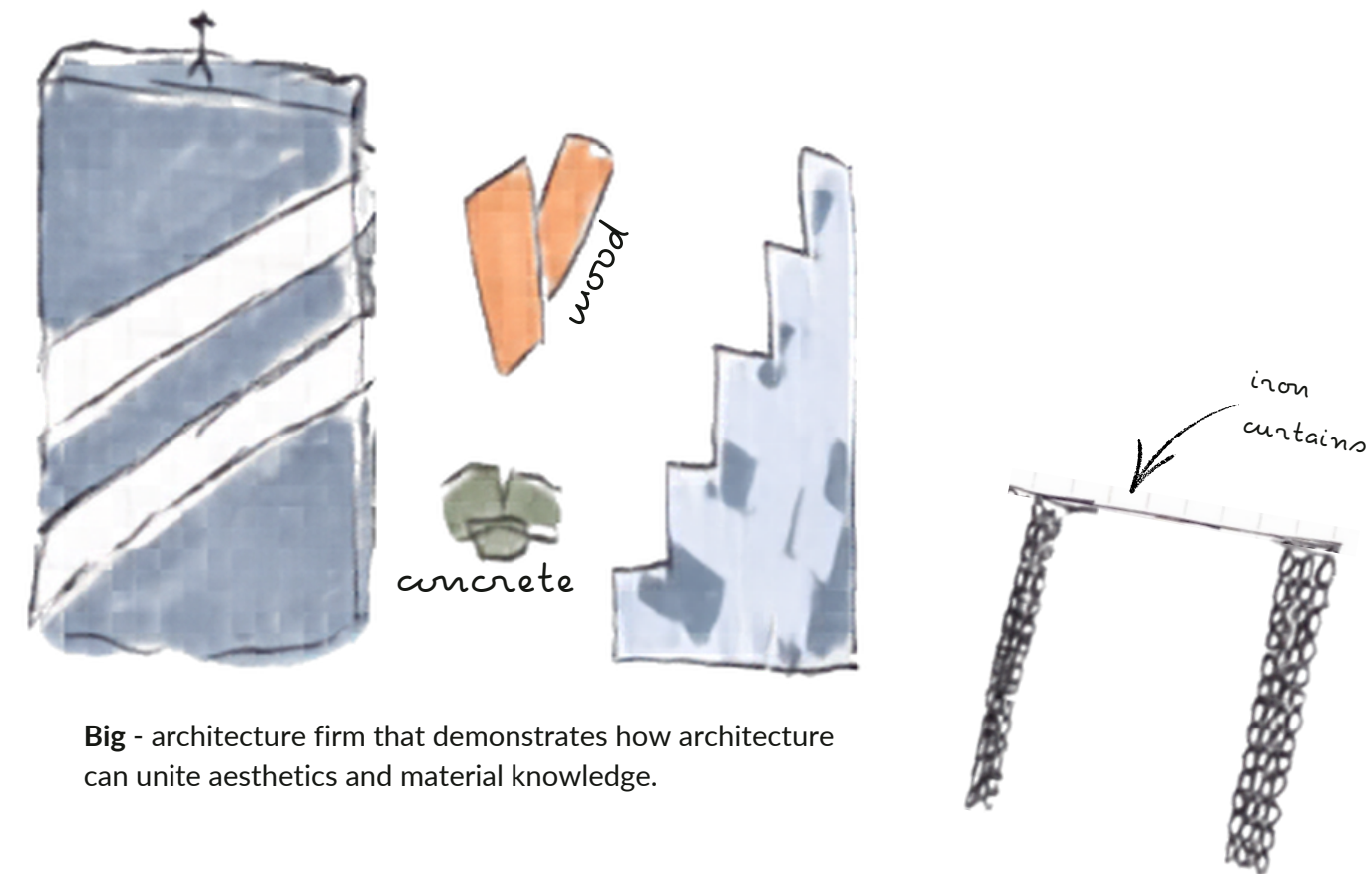
At the same time, the reflection on resources was also connected to the **artistic dimension**. Whether observing textiles, stone, glass, or construction materials, students recognized that **a deeper attention to resources can make creative work more meaningful and authentic**. The material itself carries stories, traces, and possibilities that influence the outcome. **By understanding the available resources**, designers and artists can create works that respect resources while generating **new forms of value and expression**.

For many students, **sustainability emerged at the intersection of creativity and technical knowledge**. It requires both the sensibility towards the materials and the ability to imagine new possibilities for them, and also a professional understanding of their characteristics, performance, and environmental impact.

Thomas Dambo's *Forgotten Giants* - created from discarded wood, they illustrate how materials can become both a resource and a medium for artistic expression.



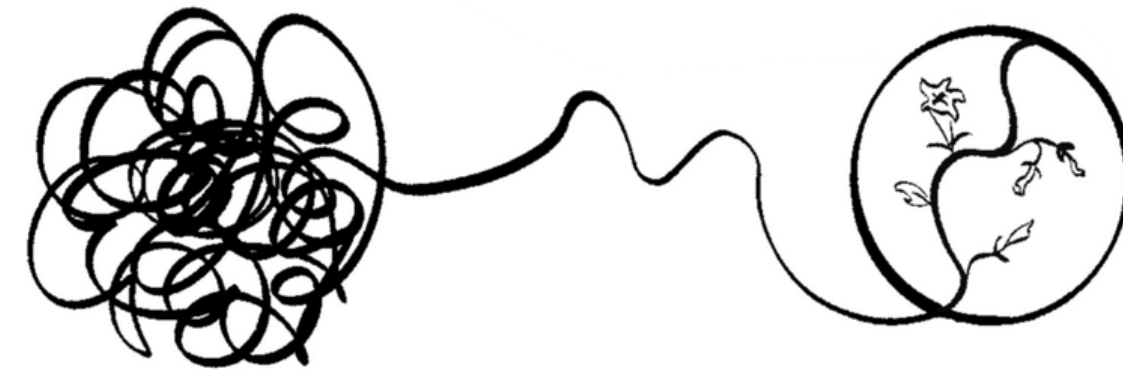
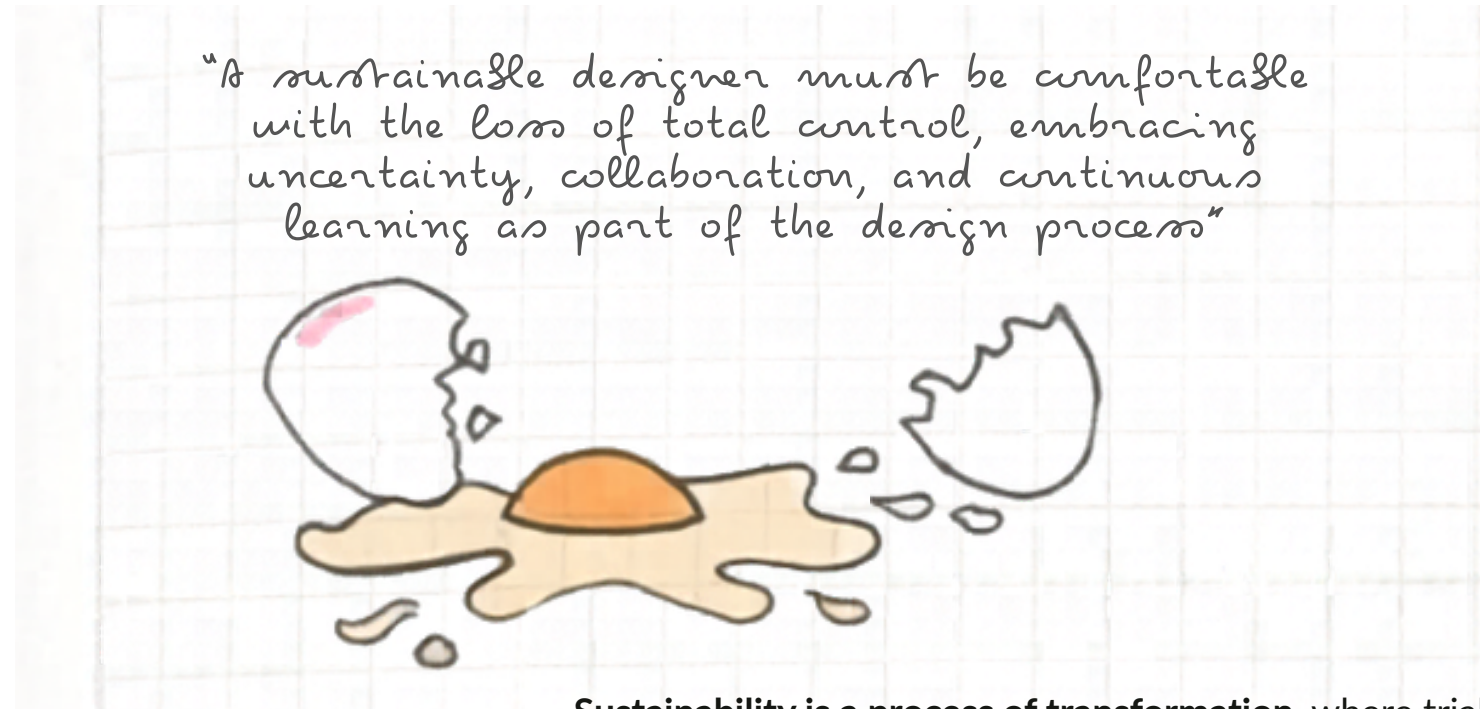
"The material must be the foundation, because you can't design a sustainable future if you do not first understand the limits and the nature of the resources you have."



Big - architecture firm that demonstrates how architecture can unite aesthetics and material knowledge.

"For me, the material often speaks first. Its texture, weight, and limits dictate what is possible, guiding the design to follow its natural form. However, a strong design vision can also search for the perfect material to bring an abstract idea into reality."

Holscher - Through an interactive workshop in which students had to design an egg holder without the possibility to assess the item, they learned the importance of making mistakes in order to reach new solutions.



"Art is also used as a tool to bridge the gap between cold functionality and human emotion"

Kirt x Thomson - Adding the Art into the STEM, in order to communicate easily and clearly the usefulness of engineering projects focused on the green transition to the community.

III. PROCESS

Sustainability is a process of transformation, where trials and errors, simplification, collaboration, and imperfection are different expressions of the same idea. We simplify to understand, collaborate to grow, fail to improve, and accept imperfection to stay grounded.

Embracing failure

The process of creating often means accepting that not everything can be planned or controlled. Failure becomes an opportunity to learn, risk becomes a form of exploration, and instability can lead to new forms of balance.

Engaging in simplification

Process involves making sense of complexity. Students recognized simplification not as reducing meaning, but as identifying what is essential. Art, design, together with communication, engage in simplification processes in order to transform complex ideas into clear and impactful messages. They dig in to reach the essence, which lies in the intention and impact of the object, to reveal its core without losing its significance. It becomes immediate and easy to understand, and this benefits the communication of sustainable concepts.

Growing through collaboration

Sustainable processes rarely happen in isolation. Students highlighted that meaningful innovation emerges when different perspectives, skills, and forms of expertise come together. Collaboration requires shared vision, dialogue, and the ability to move beyond individual ego. Through cooperation, ideas evolve and become stronger than they would be individually.

IV. AUTHENTICITY

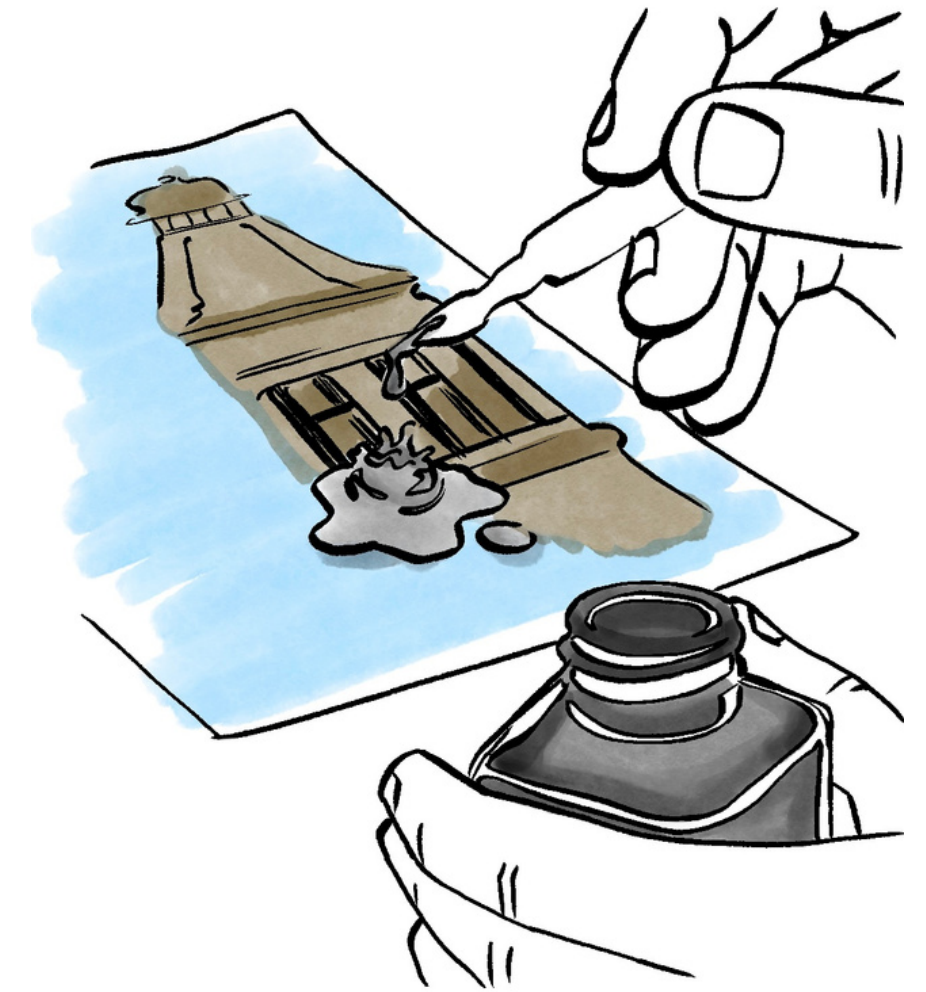
Students noticed that sustainability in the creative industries does not try to erase the imperfections, but rather values them. **Materials age, objects show traces of use, ideas require attempts and mistakes, and people leave visible marks on what they create.** All of this leads to authenticity, which means **accepting the reality** instead of hiding it behind a polished layer.

Those types of imperfections were not seen as flaws, but as evidence of effort and artistic endeavour. **An imperfect object reveals the process behind its creation:** the attempts, adjustments, and learning experiences that shaped it. In this sense, everything that is not perfect becomes a mark of authenticity, making the work more relatable, human, and **grounded in reality.**

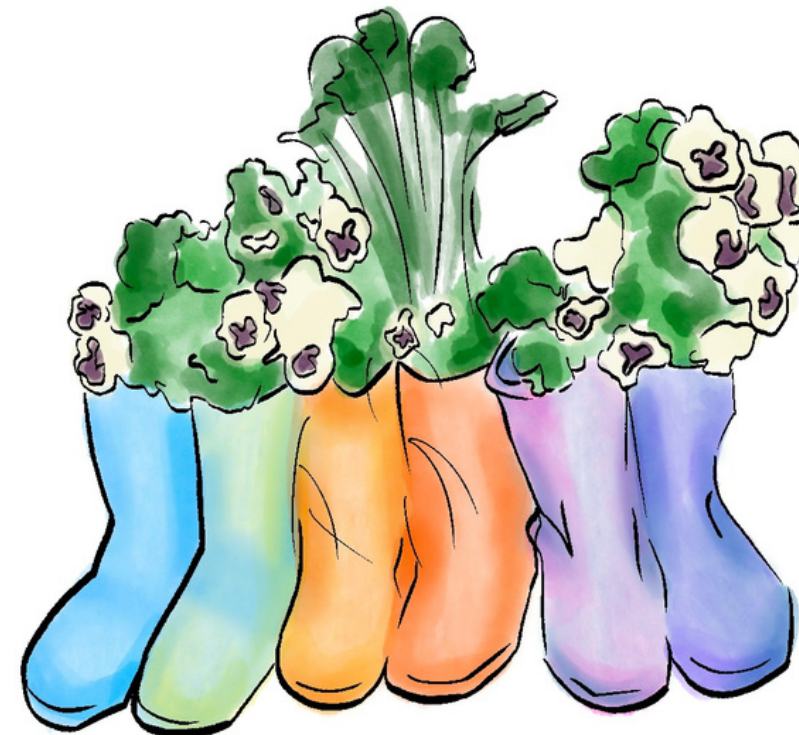
Students also associated authenticity with the materials used to make art. **Sustainable materials often carry visible signs of their history.** They may have been reused, repaired, recycled, or transformed over time. Rather than diminishing their value, these traces connect the object to a **larger story** and to the ecosystem from which it originates. Sustainability encourages creators to acknowledge these histories.

This perspective extends into artistic practice. When artists and designers are willing to be authentic, they start considering where resources come from, how they are used, and what happens to them after their purpose has been fulfilled. **Creative work becomes connected to the real world and its consequences,** thus grounding artistic expression in material truth and long-term impact.

"Imperfection was everywhere, from the wobble of the bike to the rough edges of a sketch. I see it as a mark of authenticity. It shows the human hand behind the work and makes the final result more relatable and unique"



"Sustainability grounds the work in material truth and ethical responsibility, replacing wasteful artifice with a transparent, meaningful narrative. Sustainable design is more authentic because it honors its origins and respects its long-term impact on the world"



"Sustainability introduces consequences back into art. The work becomes grounded in the real world. That can be defined as authenticity"

V. COMMUNITY & SPACE

Students frequently associated sustainability with communities and the spaces they inhabit.

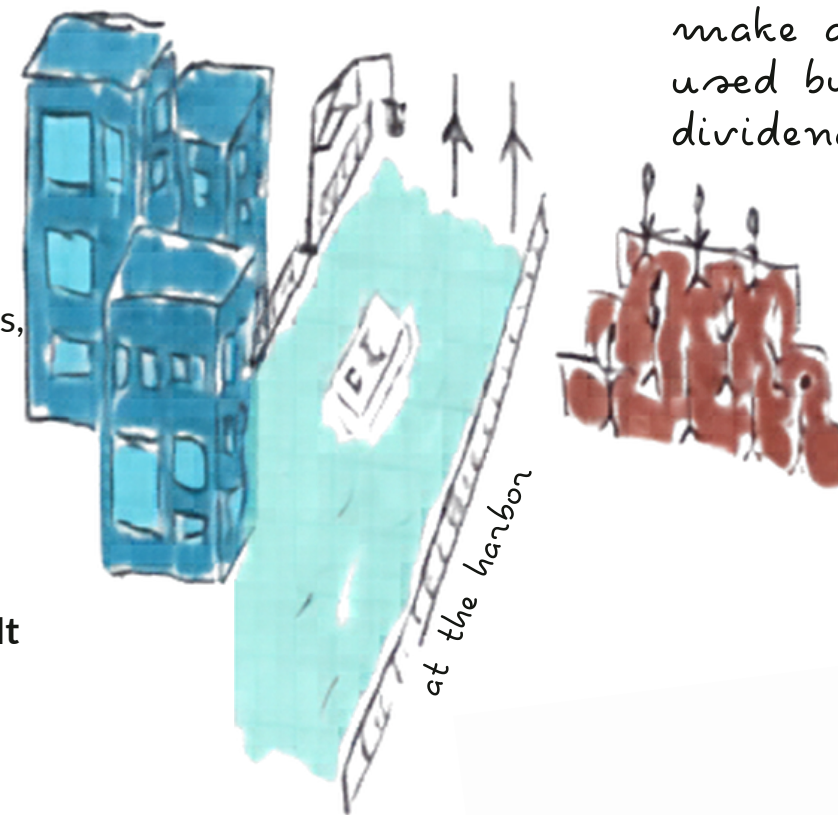
Sustainability was not perceived as something that can be achieved through materials, aesthetic compositions, or technologies alone, but **as a relationship between people, places, and the objects they use.**

Students reflected on how art, design, and architecture should not be created in isolation from society, but together with it and for it. Sustainable creative work responds to human needs, encourages participation, or simply talks with the people. **It becomes meaningful when people feel connected to it.** A building, a product, or a public space can only be truly sustainable if it is valued, used, and cared for by the community it serves.

This understanding was particularly visible in reflections on **urban space**. Students observed how sustainable infrastructures can encourage movement, reduce psychological distance between neighborhoods, and create opportunities for interaction. Sustainability therefore appeared not only as an environmental challenge, but also as a **cultural** and **civic** one. Students recognized that conscious practices depend on cooperation, trust, and shared responsibility. Sustainable communities are built not only through recycled materials and renewable energy, but also through relationships between people.

The concept of space also emerged beyond architecture. In design, students highlighted the importance of creating objects on a **human scale**, considering how people will interact with them and incorporate them into everyday life. Designers must therefore think not only about functionality and aesthetics, but also about **social impact**.

Ultimately, sustainable design succeeds when the community adopts a space or object as its own, making it feel as if it has always belonged there.



"Buildings are treated as urban infrastructures, where sustainability is cultural and civic; to make a building sustainable, it has to be loved and used by people. The building must provide social dividends"



"It shows that you can have eco-materials, but if people don't care about each other, the system will eventually collapse"

"Successful design requires an emotional handover, where the designer steps back, and the community fully adopts the space or object, making it feel as though it has always belonged there"



Freetown Christiania - the visit to Christiania and the exchanges with the locals reinforced the idea that sustainability is about human interactions.

VI. RESPONSIBILITY

The students identified a strong **connection** between **sustainability** and **human responsibility**. Sustainability emerged not only as a technical challenge but also as an **ethical endeavour**. Creative professionals have the ability to shape the world around them through objects, buildings, images, and experiences. With this ability comes **the duty to consider the potential consequences of their work and its impact on society**, and, consequently, make the choice that is the most positive for the society around them.

Many students reflected on the importance of creating with people in mind. Sustainable design was often associated with **prioritizing collective wellbeing over individual profit**. In this perspective, designers and artists are not isolated creators, but active participants in society.

Responsibility was also connected to personal values. Students highlighted **empathy** and **integrity** as **essential qualities for those working in the creative industries**. Meaningful innovation requires listening to others, collaborating across disciplines, and allowing ideas to evolve through dialogue rather than individual ego. In the same way, successful design often involves an emotional handover, where the creator steps back and the community adopts a space, object, or idea as its own.

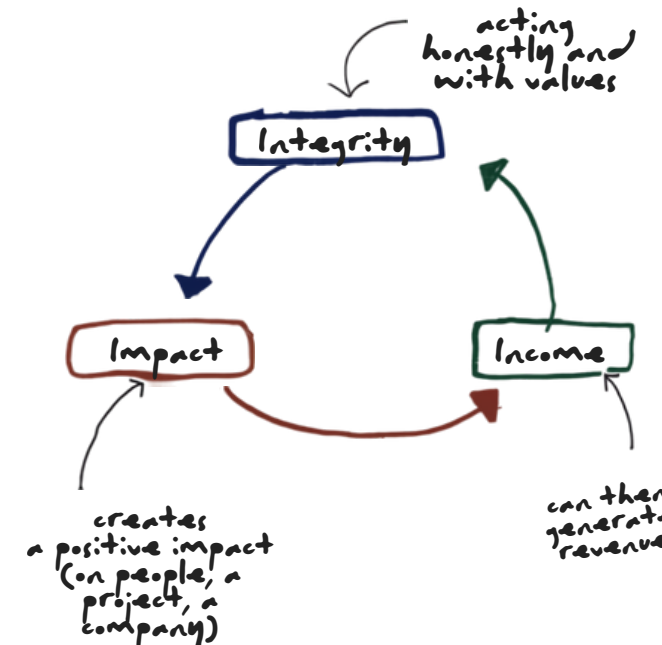
For some students, responsibility extended even further. They suggested that the purpose of art and design should not simply be to create something aesthetically pleasing, but to contribute to a better future. Beauty remains important, as it helps people connect with and care for objects and spaces, yet **aesthetics alone are not enough**. Sustainable creativity requires considering where materials come from, how they are used, and what impact their creation will have over time.

Ultimately, students recognized that professional **success**, positive **impact**, and **integrity** are not competing goals. Rather, they form a shared foundation for the future of the creative industries.



"Sustainability only limits lazy creativity, it shuts the door on 'disposable' ideas to force you through the door of 'enduring' ones, it replaces the freedom to be wasteful with the freedom to be resourceful"

"Because the principal objective of sustainability isn't aesthetic or beautiful, but to build a better world in which future generations can grow"



VII. DESIGNING THE FUTURE

The Green Academy encouraged students to reflect on their future role within the creative industries. Throughout the experience, they began to imagine **the kind of designers, artists, and architects they aspire to become.**

Communication emerged as one of the most important capabilities for future professionals. Students recognised the need to communicate ideas clearly, translating complex concepts into meaningful messages that can inspire and engage others. At the same time, communication was understood as a dialogue rather than a one-way process. Designers and artists must listen and co-create with communities in order to understand their needs and perspectives.

Alongside communication, students highlighted the importance of **technical knowledge and expertise.** Willpower alone is not enough to create meaningful change. Future professionals must understand materials, production processes, supply chains, and the environmental and social consequences of their choices. Knowledge provides the foundation upon which responsible innovation can be built.

For many students, sustainability emerged as a **duty** and a necessary condition for relevance within the creative industries. At the same time, it is a duty that also brings along **opportunities** for innovation, and can therefore be seen as an **investment.** For this reason, they imagined sustainability as a “**lifestyle**” that informs both their work and their way of living.

This vision rests on three interconnected dimensions: materials, people, and values. **Materials** require an understanding of resources, limits, and adaptation; **people** remind creators that meaningful work should be used, appreciated, and embraced by society. **Values** ensure that creative practice serves a purpose that extends beyond individual interests and contributes to the collective good.

At the centre of this vision stands **art**, as the powerful force capable of shaping culture, processing reality, and building bridges between functionality and emotions. In this sense, sustainability becomes one of the ways through which creative professionals can design a more conscious, inclusive, and hopeful future.

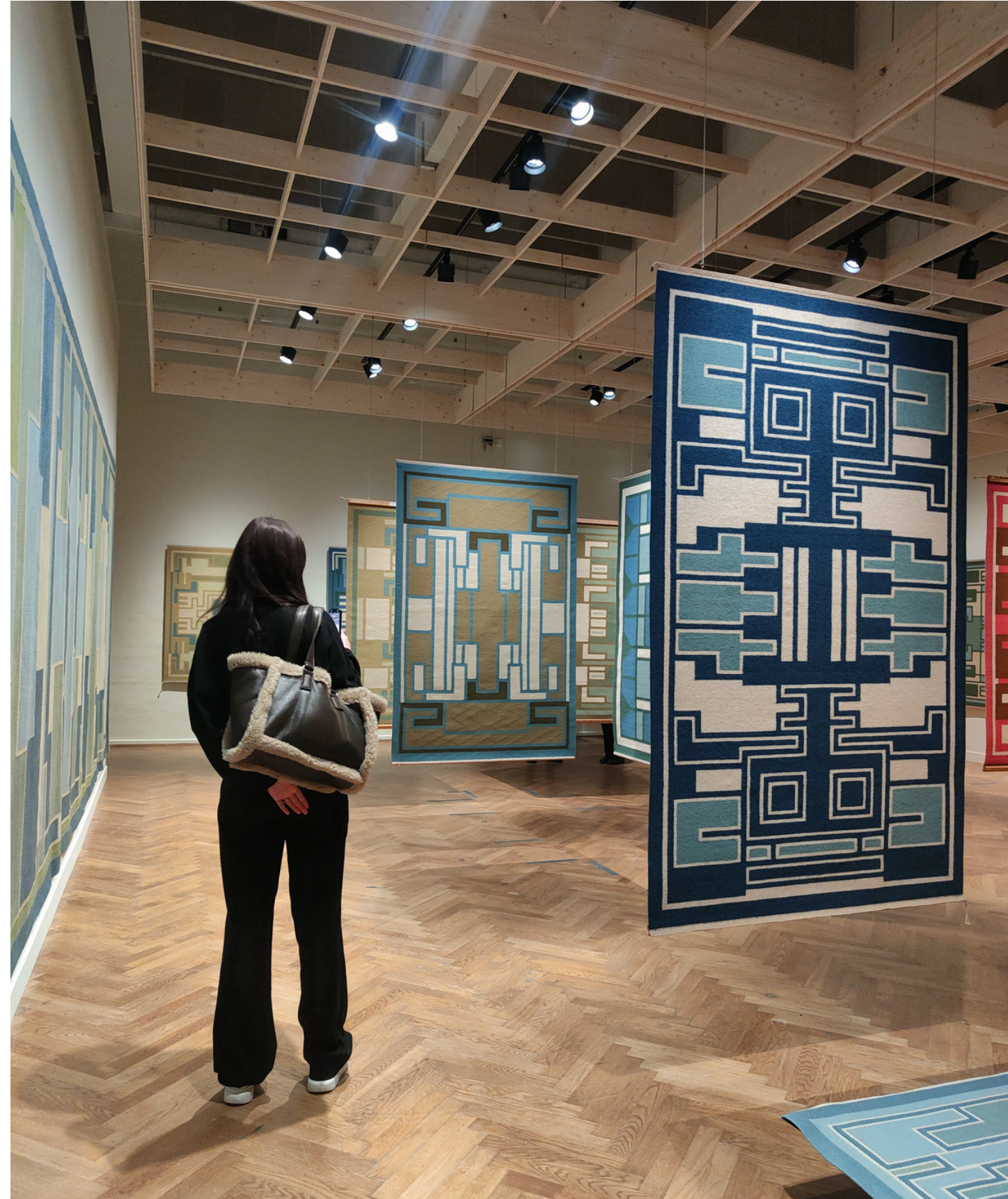
"True art is not only what we create, but the positive impact it leaves on people, materials, and the future"



...FORWARD

A shared concern, explored through different perspectives, can become the starting point for collective creativity and change.

Throughout the Green Academy, students, teachers, designers and enterprises were invited to observe the same challenges from different angles: environmental, social, artistic, professional and human. Through dialogue, reflection and co-design, sustainability became not only a topic to study, but a shared process of imagining solutions together.



Artforward showed that creating spaces where questions, doubts, and ideas can circulate freely allows education to become collaborative, open, and connected to society. For this reason, we now encourage other educators to build learning experiences based on observation, discussion, experimentation, and real encounters with creative professionals and local communities.

An inspiration to:

- create spaces for reflection,
- connect students with real professional experiences,
- collaborate with local realities and sustainable enterprises,
- value questions as much as solutions,
- recognise creativity as a collective practice connected to society.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- BIG - Bjarke Ingels Group
- CEA Capsule
- Circular Atelier Amager
- Freetown Christiania
- Holscher Design
- Kirt x Thomsen
- SMK - Statens Museum for Kunst

We would also like to congratulate and sincerely thank the 2026 students of Liceo artistico Chierici – classes 5A and 5I (Fashion Design), 5C (Furniture Design), 5H (Architecture) with their teachers Adriana Adamo, Simona Messori, Paola Panciroli and the Headmistress Elena Ferrari; the students of Lycée Toulouse-Lautrec attending the second, first and final year of vocational baccalaureate in Crafts and Arts, Upholstery and Furniture, with their teachers Mmes Darrigues, Guercy, Lescouzeres, Ramon Didier, Suc, and Maestralli, the Head of the Business Office Mme Cadaugade and the Headmaster M.Flèche; and Danitacom's art student interns, Giulia and Clarissa with their tutor Veronica Gallo. The thoughtful, critical, and remarkably mature reflections of all these students inspired this booklet and gave voice to two years of project experience.

This publication is, above all, the result of their curiosity, creativity, and willingness to imagine a more sustainable future for the creative industries.

The Artforward team

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[Educational Section](#)

[B2S Events](#)

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