

CIRCE: the European research network is examining the significance of creative driving forces for the future

Berlin, 13 October 2023. **The Creative Impact Research Centre Europe (CIRCE) is examining how the cultural and creative industries can provide inspiration for present and future challenges. The think tank has already spawned 58 creative research projects. In November, there will be two opportunities to get to know the network and the results of research and practical work.**

Just one year on, **CIRCE has 140 participants from 18 countries in Europe.** The researchers and stakeholders in the cultural and creative industries are all driven by a shared notion: they want to bring about changes and improvements, develop new things and focus on subject areas that societies and businesses cannot shy away from in times of change.

'I am very impressed at how quickly this international project was able to build a pan-European community that comes up with solutions and creative approaches to social challenges with so much passion. The close collaboration between researchers and creative entrepreneurs is what makes this project so extraordinary and successful,' explains **Katharina Schumacher, CIRCE project director and managing director at the u-institut.** *'We now need regular idea-sharing to consolidate this community so that the teamwork continues to have an impact after the end of the project. We need the tremendous potential of this network to deal with the transformations facing our society now and in the future.'*

Starting out by considering the creative impact – the way in which the cultural and creative industries act as a driving force – CIRCE is testing new approaches to advancing the sectors. In doing so, CIRCE is utilising experience from the UK, whose pre-Brexit policies had played a pioneering role in terms of policymaking for creative entrepreneurs.

CIRCE is funded by the **Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media.** With **headquarters in Berlin and research labs in London, San Sebastián, Tallinn and Zurich,** the think tank brings together an international network of prestigious researchers and experts. Alongside the individual projects developed within these research labs, the CIRCE community has a **fellowship programme** and the **Creative Impact Fund.** Regular knowledge and experience-sharing meetings strengthen the network whilst also shedding light on what stakeholders need to create a lasting impact together.

Currently, **58 projects** so far have materialised in no time and are aligned with the following **six primary subject areas:**

- **Structures for improved social cohesion:** various projects tackle problems like discrimination and isolation and develop ideas for socially sustainable relationships in organisations, institutions and companies.

*Whereas, for example, Creative Fellow **Naja Kikelj** in Slovenia is developing a **service** designed to support urban planning and facilitate **quality improvements and systemic changes to urban areas**, the Finnish **Kuulu** project has designed a **digital tool** to enable organisations to implement comprehensive **diversity, equity and inclusion strategies** in order to build organisational cultures in which people ‘belong’ and ‘are heard’ – which is what the Finnish word ‘kuulu’ means.*

- **Building communities to bolster society:** the researchers focus on building and shaping communities that face certain challenges such as stigmatisation and exhaustion.

*The **Museum of Homelessness** is a London-based Fund project that turns the notion of museums on its head. It **utilises art and events to shed light on homelessness** and the struggles of people living in poverty, offers practical support to the local community and is involved in research and campaigns for the vulnerable community. In turn, the **Civic** project supports creative entrepreneurs with their humanitarian work and the **reconstruction of Ukraine**.*

- **Ecological sustainability:** the projects tackle problems including the loss of biodiversity, resource consumption and other ecological emergencies, and develop alternative practices, products and services to help preserve our planet’s ability to sustain life.

*The **Myceen** project team from Estonia, for example, is researching **mushroom materials as a sustainable architectural alternative**, and **Madeleine Arber** in the United Kingdom is examining the extent to which an **online game** can raise awareness of **climate change** amongst children and young people.*

- **Technology for empowerment and participation:** this cluster of projects explores technological designs intended to empower marginalised groups and improve democratic processes.

*The German **Vertical52** project wants to bolster **investigative journalism** by developing methods of working with **open-source satellite data** from politically or geographically inaccessible regions. In contrast, Research Fellow and Deep-Tech Researcher **Gemma Milne** from the UK is examining what **notions of social and political order** underpin innovation and design processes **in space travel**.*

- **Education, skill development and skill matching:** this cluster of projects is responding to the skills shortage in the creative and cultural ecosystems as well as the rapidly changing standards in the sectors.

For example, PhD student **Anastasia Platonava** from Ireland is exploring the new possibilities for collaboration, creativity, innovation and value creation opened up by **combining blockchain technology and artificial intelligence (AI)** in order to counter the skills shortage in Europe. **Lezo**, a Fund project based in Ukraine, is a **personalised AI career guide** designed to support IT and creative experts with professional reorientation.

- **Transformative governance:** projects in this cluster focus on fairer, more effective governance and financial structures in a creative ecosystem.

Kübra Karataş is a cultural economist in the Netherlands who is researching innovative and **sustainable financial strategies for the art and cultural sectors in Europe**. Political Analyst **Luiza Moroz** from Ukraine is examining **new methods and approaches to policymaking in the creative industry** in Europe: intergenerational analysis, big-data analyses and regulatory sandboxes in which new strategies are tested in real-world conditions.

For space reasons, we are only able to present a small selection of the projects here. You will find more brief descriptions of projects and potential interviewees in the **enclosed dossier** and on the [website](#).

SAVE THE DATE: Berlin Science Week and the second CIRCE Symposium

The [second CIRCE Symposium](#) is being held at **Silent Green in Berlin** on 29 November, where project members will unveil their creative projects and research results to the public.

Admission and participation in all parts of the programme is free of charge. Capacities for participation are limited. Therefore, we kindly ask for [registration](#).

Parts of the event will be available online via livestream on the [CIRCE website](#).

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