

What is S+T+ARTS – Repairing the Present?

S + T + ARTS - Repairing the Present is an initiative of the European Union that aims to encourage creative thinking through the generation of spaces for dialogue between science, art and technology. From June 2021 to December 2022, 12 S+T+ARTS centers located in 11 European countries will jointly explore the possibility of “repairing the present, addressing the unintended consequences of steadfast technological development contributing to the European continent’s present social, economic, and environmental challenges.

Through interdisciplinary research and applications, the STARTS Regional Centers focus on a resource, urban, ICT & art-driven transformation as the path towards reconfiguring the current social, cultural and economic landscape.

Which are the other regional Centers?

CYENS Centre of Excellence (Cyprus) is part of the S + T + ARTS - Repairing the Present network of partners, along with 11 other esteemed organizations; Snowball (Belgium), MAXXI Museum (Italy), Art Hub Copenhagen (Denmark), STATE Festival (Germany), Onassis Foundation (Greece), In4Art (Netherlands), MEET (Italy), Ars Electronica (Austria), Sony - CSL (France), Kersnikova (Slovenia) and CCCB (Spain). Together, we have developed a program that includes 21 artistic research residencies, more than 40 educational proposals and a series of samples and exhibitions to showcase the final projects.

Why mix Science, Art and Technology?

To *repair the present*, the EU’s economy must adapt and evolve to create the sustainable future we all want. The Regional S+T+ARTS Centers focus on a resource, urban, ICT & art-driven transformation as the path towards reconfiguring the current social, cultural, and economic landscape.

We believe this shift can only be achieved with the contributions of different perspectives and by tapping into artists’ potential to act as catalysts for change and actively contribute to innovation. We propose shifting the role of artists from that of observers and critics of societal contexts into that of active participants in the reimagination and building of possible futures.

Where does the funding come from?

Repairing the Present is a European project which has received funding from the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology under grant agreement LC01641664.

How does it work? (What does it offer?)

Each regional Centre alongside an industry partner offer a residency to professional individual artists and collectives from any art-related field, excited and ready to collaborate with a network of experts and technology (ICT) professionals in addressing local challenges.

Throughout the residencies, artists are expected to engage with regional issues, local communities, and local expert groups to expand their role in society and integrate their artistic practice with the development process of innovative solutions. The goal of the residencies is the development of a thought-

provoking hybrid between an artwork and a prototype that seamlessly bridges art and technology and proposes a solution with both functional and artistic value to a real-life issue.

How can the artist realize their project?

During the six months of the residency, the artist will work with local experts and companies to design an artistic prototype that responds to the challenges posed by the project.

Each residency offers:

- Up to EUR 40.000 budget for artist fellowships to cover the artist fee and other residency-related costs (including but not limited to artwork/prototype production, transportation to joint Prototyping Park exhibitions, travel and accommodation expenses, insurance)
- Access to the regional fellowship host organization and local expert group
- Access to the Europe-wide S+T+ARTS network
- Access to new technologies and R&D departments
- Participation in Prototyping Parks showcasing the outcomes of the fellowships at MAXXI Rome, ZKM Karlsruhe, as well as at regional locations of the Regional S+T+ARTS Centers upon selection
- Visibility through high impact communication activities to promote the artistic output and its innovation spillovers (including dissemination events foreseen from July-December 2022)

What facilities/expertise does CYENS have to offer?

CYENS Centre of Excellence and its industry partner PwC Cyprus will provide access to ICT/emerging technologies labs and expert consultation. PwC Cyprus will make available its Experience Centre and provide any other relevant input possible. CYENS will offer the research and technological expertise of ITICA MRG, and the Thinker Makerspace team whom will also make available the digital fabrication & prototyping tools.

The Local Expert Group network includes industry professionals that focus on sustainable development, cultural and artistic activities, eco-tourism and emerging technologies, academics from universities and cultural organizations that focus on contemporary art, media art, museology, emerging technologies, and ICT, as well as representatives from municipality authorities and public organisations with a focus on tourism, sustainability-focused strategic planning and development.

What was the challenge proposed by CYENS?

Cyprus' prevalent tourism model relies heavily on the year-round "sun and sea" narrative, overshadowing the true local human and natural assets of the country, while gradually transforming pristine habitats into artificial all-inclusive experiences. This project aspires to tap into, and critically examine the local human and natural assets (narratives/data/materials) and propose novel approaches that will contribute towards sustainable shifts in the sector of tourism.

CYENS, with the "SustainingScapes" challenge aims to develop innovative approaches and solutions for dealing with the tourism industry's footprint while promoting sustainable tourism practices.

What to expect from the artist's final project?

Joseph Hovadik, is an artist born and raised in France to a family of artists and currently based in Guatemala. His work spans from figurative to abstract, 2D to 3D, still to animated, mathematical to poetic. Over the course of this 6-month residency, Joseph will develop the project "Cyprus vital signs".

Standing at the intersection of art and technology, the project will explore and utilize datasets, as well as other local assets, aiming to raise awareness on the impact of human activities and specifically tourism on the island of Cyprus.

Data points collected in space and in time are an indication of the island's vitality and include various general environmental and tourism specific indicators, like tourist arrivals, hotel rates, rain and drought conditions, vegetation coverage, wildfire reports, biodiversity assessments, pollution metrics, economic indicators, cultural engagement, migration statistics etc.

Tourists, citizens and public officials will be able to engage with the artwork on digital platforms, with their user engagement data reflected proactively in the artwork, in order to be incentivized to take part in more virtuous and sustainable activities.

Functioning or just visual?

Data science techniques are used to collect, curate and benefit from a wide range of datasets and select features that best discriminate and highlight the issues examined. The datasets are used for the training of artificial intelligence, machine learning and deep learning models, crafting new variables emerging from these models. These variables can be mapped into audio and visual elements, feeding into digital scenes using 3D computer graphics software, while the code developed will be also made public on GitHub. opening possibilities for collaboration and active public contribution, anchoring the artwork as a live and constantly changing tool that reveals, deliberates, and ideates on pressing issues of social and environmental sustainability relating to tourism bound realities.

What's in that for the local public?

Each year, approximately 3,5 million tourists visit Cyprus, equal to 4 times the country's population, making the tourism sector one of the main pillars of the Cypriot economy. This momentous influx of tourists also brings some negative impacts: disproportionate demands for water and energy, in a place of increased droughts and insufficient natural resources; superfluous development of built environment and infrastructures with a heavy toll on urban, rural and wildlife ecosystems; heavy carbon footprint due to air/sea transport needs. While counteracting all the negative effects of tourism in Cyprus - and in fact, other Mediterranean locales - is utopian, novel tourism practices should foster societal, economic, environmental and cultural changes towards long-term sustainability.

By making the creative journey of the artist transparent via regular updates, related activities and eventually public presentations and events, the local public will have the opportunity to get involved in this data "treasure hunt" and creative process. The public will become aware of the power of these intangible resources and will open to possibilities for collaboration and active public contribution, anchoring the artwork as a live and constantly changing tool that reveals, deliberates, and ideates on pressing issues of social and environmental sustainability relating to tourism bound realities.

Through this pan-European initiative, CYENS explores the collaborative paradigm of art, science and technology as a driver of societal transformation. While the “SustainingScapes” residency addresses the specific subject of sustainable tourism practices, it also hopes to spillover its result and contribute in rooting an inclusive ecosystem that engages and co-creates towards more environmentally and socially minding models of sustainable growth.