

Maija Demitere

"SLOW" MEDIA ART AND "DEEP" SUSTAINABILITY

Summary of the Doctoral Thesis



RIGA TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

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Centre for Humanities and Arts

Maija Demitere

Doctoral Student of the Study Programme “New Media Art”

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SUSTAINABILITY**

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Scientific supervisor
Ph. D. RASA ŠMITE

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Professor Ph. D. Vytautas Michelkevičius,
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DECLARATION OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

I hereby declare that the Doctoral Thesis submitted for review to Riga Technical University for promotion to the scientific degree of Doctor of Science (Ph. D) is my own. I confirm that this Doctoral Thesis has not been submitted to any other university for promotion to a scientific degree.

Maija Demitere (signature)

Date: 11.02.2025

The Doctoral Thesis has been written in Latvian. It consists of an Introduction, 7 chapters, Conclusions, 127 figures, 13 tables, and three appendices; the total number of pages is 180, not including appendices. The Bibliography contains 95 titles.

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Introduction

Increasing environmental degradation and the effects of climate change have created new challenges for society that need to be addressed to ensure a resilient future. The causes and symptoms of the ecological crisis are a global responsibility and affect everyone's lives, and each individual must also take personal responsibility for the current situation. This research focuses on "slow" media art and "deep" sustainability as methods that can help build awareness and agency around these issues. Art can be used to offer alternative approaches that promote a more sustainable interaction with the environment and to encourage changes in attitudes towards ecology.

Autoethnographic approach is used in this research, documenting and analysing various everyday practices and looking for ways to make these practices more accessible and universally acceptable to promote changes in habits and beliefs in society in different ecological fields, with a particular focus on food production and consumption, gardening, individual sustainability and resource awareness. The artistic practices created and described in the research offer a new perspective on food and, through food-growing practices and a dialogue initiated through food, look at contemporary human relationships with nature, ecology, and everyday consumer cultural habits.

The Thesis analyses methods of autoethnographic research and autoethnography-based art practice, describing also the reliability, ethical and empirical validation of the observations and conclusions. The Thesis offers a new theoretical context and contribution to the methodology of autoethnographic arts practice-led research.

The study provides a theoretical and philosophical context for the presentation of a practice-led art research, activism art and contemporary ecological artworks. The study includes case studies related to ecology and environmental philosophies, looking at highly regarded works of art and the works of contemporary and media artists.

The novelty of the research lies in the development of interdisciplinary methods and approaches to address complex philosophical questions in the field of ecology through artistic practice. The interviews and case studies collected in the Thesis provide an innovative context for the relationship between art, ecology and the public. The artworks, artefacts, prototypes, lectures and workshops produced and publicly presented as part of the Thesis have been piloted and evaluated in different audiences.

Current state of research on the topic

The philosopher Arne Naess first established the philosophy of “deep ecology” in the 1970s, emphasising the mutual interdependence of all living creatures and that all living creatures and the environment have inherent value in themselves, regardless of their practical role within the scope of the economy. At the same time, in the 1970s, chemist and inventor James Ephraim Lovelock and microbiologist Lynn Margulis developed the “Gaia Hypothesis”, which conceived the Earth as one self-regulating system in which all living and non-living components, organisms and their environment, are interrelated and form a single complex system that together sustain life on Earth.

Donna Haraway develops the idea of “making kin”, offering arguments for a new kind of relationship that includes not only humans but all organic and inorganic beings. Haraway begins to develop this idea in her book “When Species Meet” (2008), focusing on how humans and other living organisms interact and how these interactions affect our understanding of ourselves and others. Haraway calls for an understanding of cohabitation and interaction that involves more than humans, including our relationships with pets, laboratory animals, and other living beings. In her book “Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene” (2016), Haraway deepens this idea and develops its theoretical basis, emphasizing kinship with other living beings as an essential element for a sustainable and inclusive future. In her work, Haraway also addresses the global ecological crises and the Anthropocene, calling for new forms of kinship that can help to address these crises.

In “Life of Plants: A Metaphysics of Mixture” (2018), Emanuel Coccia looks at how plants and their forms of life are undervalued in our everyday life and philosophy. Coccia argues that plants are fundamental to all life on Earth, including humans, because they provide oxygen and nutrients needed for other life forms, yet plants are often not given the importance they deserve in human cultures and scientific approaches. Coccia emphasises that plants are not only sources of life but also philosophical and aesthetic objects that should play a central role in our perception of nature and life. Coccia urges that we rethink our attitudes towards plants, incorporating them as essential and active players in our ecological and philosophical thinking so that we can fully appreciate and understand our place in the world.

Coccia, Haraway, Lovelock and Naess emphasise the idea of the shared and networked coexistence of all living creatures. They consider life on Earth to be an interconnected web in which humans, plants, animals, all other living things, and the environment are intertwined and interdependent. While Coccia stresses the central role of plants in this web of life, Haraway calls for a radical change in attitudes. Lovelock’s “Gaia Hypothesis” portrays the Earth as a self-regulating system of living and non-living components, while Naess’s “deep ecology”

emphasises the deep understanding of ecological relationships needed to recognise and maintain biodiversity. This shared understanding of networked relationships encourages us to recognise the complex interdependencies that are necessary to address today's ecological crises and build a more sustainable future.

Timothy Morton's "Dark Ecology" (2016) is a philosophical work that offers an approach to ecological thinking. Morton uses the term "dark ecology" to refer to ecological thinking that requires an awareness and acceptance that human life has deep and unavoidable connections with other life forms, as well as with overarching environmental processes that are often complex and contradictory. Morton stresses that human existence is inherently interconnected in a holistic interdependence that goes beyond the traditional beautiful and harmonious perception of nature. Morton calls for an acceptance of the discomfort and uncertainty inherent in living in an ecologically connected world and to find new ways of living and behaving in this "dark" ecological reality.

Koert van Mensvoort's essay "Real Nature is not Green" (2006) highlights the idea that "real nature is not green", which provokes reflection on modern man's relationship with nature and technology. Van Mensvoort raises the question of how we perceive nature in an age of pervasive technological innovation and human impact on the environment. Van Mensvoort proposes a re-examination of our traditional understandings of nature, which are often idealised and unrealistic, emphasising that contemporary "nature" is a mix of man-made and natural elements. This approach complements Morton's dark ecology with its emphasis on the need to accept the complexity and disorder of our existence, where technology and human activity are inevitably linked to natural processes. Van Mensvoort encourages a recognition of the inevitability of this hybrid reality and a search for new forms of understanding and interaction between nature, technology and humans.

Felix Guattari, in his book "Three Ecologies" (1989), proposes the idea that solutions to ecological crises should combine three ecologies – environmental, which concerns the preservation of the natural world; social, which concerns social relations and their organisation; and mental, which focuses on aspects of the human mind and psychological well-being – pointing to the interconnectedness of these dimensions and the need for an integrated approach. For Guattari, the ecological crisis is much more than an environmental problem; it also involves social and mental dimensions. His approach is holistic, calling for changes in everyday lifestyles, politics and economics to address the complexity of the ecological crisis and not just its symptoms. Guattari believes that such an integrated approach is necessary to address global crises and that every individual must be involved in this process of change.

Gregory Bateson and Guattari, despite working in different fields, both offer a holistic approach, looking at the interaction between the mind, the social and the environment. In “Steps to an Ecology of Mind” (1972), Bateson analyses how the processes of the human mind and culture are interconnected with ecological and social systems, emphasising the reflection of patterns of thought and action in systemic structures. Both authors call for fundamental changes in human understandings and approaches to global problems, emphasising a systemic approach and an understanding of how the social and environmental domains interact, creating new possibilities for solutions and a broader understanding of the complexity of the world. Thus, the ideas of Bateson and Guattari are complementary, contributing to a deeper understanding of the interdependence of the environment, social space and the individual mental state with its ecology.

Bruno Latour’s “Down to Earth: Politics in the New Climatic Regime” (2018) proposes a provocative idea of the Earth as a political object that requires new political strategies and approaches. Latour argues that political discourse needs to include not only human social and economic issues but also the needs and interests of the planet, which leads to a re-evaluation of our political systems and how we make decisions. Latour insists that the Earth must become an active participant in politics, not just a passive thing to be protected or exploited, calling for radical change and recognising the Earth as a full political actor whose interests must be considered just like those of any other political group or actor. This idea proposes a fundamental paradigm shift in politics, promoting a political theory and practice capable of responding to the contemporary ecological and social crises linked to climate change and environmental degradation. Latour’s proposal is a radical call for the planetary agency to be recognised and mainstreamed at all levels of decision-making, ensuring its sustainable management and development.

The **object** of the research is “slow” media art and “deep” sustainability.

The **subject** of the research is the daily patterns and attitudes of consumers towards food and resource consumption that contribute to both climate crisis and the increasingly fragmented relationship between humans and the environment.

The research **aims** to create practice-based tangible and intangible artworks and prototypes that can be presented to the public as experiences or models to learn from and to take inspiration from in order to change their everyday habits in areas such as food sustainability and food production.

Research **questions**:

What “slow” media art practices and works can inform the public about sustainable gardening, biodiversity, sustainable food, and minimising everyday waste and consumerism?

What art objects (artworks, prototypes) can be used to promote changes in everyday practices in society?

To answer **research questions**, it is important to identify and define what is meant by “society”. I propose this term (society) in order to avoid terms such as “public” or “people”. “Society”, in the broad sense of this Thesis, includes institutions, organisations, processes and decisions planned and managed (by people), as well as positions (e.g. curator, funder, commissioner), etc. Defining “society” in this research is essential to uncover the target audience of research, its motivations and the wider context that facilitates or hinders change.

Tasks

1. To define what constitutes a “slow” media artwork and what represents “deep” sustainability in art.
2. To develop and describe an autoethnographic research methodology in the field of media art.
3. To analyse and describe the development of existing environmental philosophies and theories and the development of underlying ideas.
4. To explore and visualise existing artworks related to environmental themes.
5. To place the artworks and prototypes produced within this research in the context of art history.
6. To develop methodologies and best practices on how media artworks can be used to communicate messages on sustainability and environmental challenges.
7. To develop methodologies and good practices for assessing “deep” sustainability in art.

The Thesis is structured as narrative research, offering an autoethnographic analysis of the research process and results. The study employs a qualitative research methodology based on the collection and analysis of qualitative data. The methods used in the research are the result of a synthesis of different disciplines based on experimentation and artistic practice. The research methods and creative practices used in the study are interdisciplinary, as well as original approaches developed within the research. The results of the research can be described in several categories:

- The outcome of the research is a process-based artwork (art objects, artefacts and immaterial artworks (workshops, masterclasses)) – the results of the research are reflected in installations in exhibition spaces and as documentation.
- The research diary, photographs, videos, artefacts, and documentation of artistic practices and public events serve as a basis for the analysis of the methods used in the research. The research diary, photo and video documentation are not only an archival technique but also a set of data that can be used to find new relationships and draw conclusions.
- Creative engineering and do-it-yourself (DIY) have been used in the research as an approach to creating and exhibiting ecological artworks and prototypes in public spaces. The DIY approach as an experimental artistic practice explores the potential of making as research in interdisciplinary research.
- Post-media art has introduced art-as-research methods – the use of media is conditional on the idea of the artwork rather than the artwork being created to experiment with a particular form or material.
- Artistic data visualisations – visualisations of the food eaten and grown.
- The work explores how everyday practices can be seen in the context of art – looking for new ways of public presentation that could also create long-term social change.

The following research methods were used: qualitative contextual analysis, constant comparative analysis, discourse analysis, phenomenological analysis, participant observation, visual methods, interview (remote deep interview), remote focus group, experiments and quasi-experiments (workshops, masterclasses, prototypes, exhibitions), analysis of cases and case series (critical case sampling).

The theoretical framework of the Thesis is grounded in Felix Guattari's "Three Ecologies" (1989), Koert van Mensvoort's "Real Nature is not Green" (2006), Timothy Morton's "Ecology without Nature" (2007) and "Dark Ecology" (2016), Sacha Kagan's "Art and Sustainability" (2011), Emanuel Coccia's "The Life of Plants: A Metaphysics of Mixture" (2018), Bruno Latour's "Down to Earth: Politics in the New Climatic Regime" (2018), Donna Haraway's "Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene" (2016), and Arne Naess's "There is No Point of No Return" (2021).

The Thesis consists of seven chapters. Chapter 1 describes the theoretical and philosophical context of the "deep" sustainability concept used in the research. Chapter 2

describes the development of the “slow” movement and “slow” media art. Chapter 3 offers the theoretical and philosophical context for the research methodologies developed through the arts-based practice. Chapter 4 describes the research methodology used. Chapter 5 is a description, analysis and self-reflection of the artworks, artefacts, art objects and immaterial artworks (lectures, masterclasses) produced and presented in the research. Chapter 6 is dedicated to the analysis of the interviews conducted within the research. Chapter 7 is a collection of moments and case studies of ecological art and art history and the approaches of different artists.

The research period: February 2016 – August 2024.

1. “Deep” Sustainability

The chapter introduces the concept of “deep” sustainability, one of the central terms used in this research. The aim of this chapter is to provide an understanding of the theoretical basis of “deep” sustainability, highlighting its relationship to eco-philosophies and the context in which the term is used in this research. The chapter details how “deep” sustainability has been used as part of the basis for my artistic practice. The chapter also includes a critique of “deep” ecology and an analysis of its limitations, explaining how the concept and the philosophy fit into the research.

The chapter looks at how the idea of "deep" sustainability has developed, describing its links to various philosophies and authors, including Felix Guattari, Timothy Morton, Arne Ness, James Lovelock and Donna Haradaway. This multidimensional perspective includes not only ecological but also economic and social sustainability.

The term “deep” sustainability used in the study is derived from Arne Ness's philosophy of “deep ecology”, which argues that all life forms have intrinsic value and that humans have no right to reduce biodiversity. Ness argues that the richness and development of human culture require the reduction of human populations in order to preserve non-human life forms.

“Sustainability” is a loosely used term in Latvian, mostly associated with economics – the organisation and use of resources. In Latvian, “sustainable” is also used to describe profit, e.g. sustainable development means steadily increasing profits, sustainable employees – loyal employees. As I do not think it is possible to change the public perception of the term “sustainability”, I propose to use the term “deep” sustainability in my research, which describes an approach to every activity, planning, reflecting, evaluating the impact of the whole process on the whole (holistic approach to ecology).

In the art practice that emerged from this research, “deep” sustainability emphasises authenticity and practicality, suggesting that ecological art should serve a functional purpose, whether philosophical or problem-solving. The chapter discusses how this approach is reflected in the research, both in the art practice and in the research methods used – interviews with other artists engaged in ecological practices.

“Deep” sustainability promotes an approach that integrates ecological, social and personal dimensions, encouraging a rethinking of current practices and ideologies to promote a more sustainable human interaction with the environment.

The chapter emphasises the need for a holistic approach to assess impacts in a comprehensive way, calling for global policy reforms to address interlinked environmental issues. It criticises the tendency of existing systems to address environmental problems in

isolation, proposing instead to adopt a holistic perspective at the global policy level that could lead to more effective solutions.

“Deep” sustainability requires a holistic approach to impact assessment. In my art practice and when evaluating artworks in the context of art history, the “authenticity”, the practicality, and the practical application of an artwork in the broad sense is important to me. For me, an ecological artwork must be useful in some way – not literally as utilitarian interior design, but in a broad philosophical sense. An ecological artwork must solve a problem by offering a prototype, challenging beliefs, habits and traditions or drawing attention to an issue that is relevant to the artist, a social group, society as a whole or the planet. It was this desire to create valuable, useful works of art that led me to gardening and the use of plants in my artistic practice. The usefulness of artworks is also one of the focal points addressed in my interviews with other artists who work in ecology-related fields.

A holistic approach to the relationship between human beings and nature underlies the work of many philosophers and thinkers – Guattari, Morton, Naess, Lovelock, Haraway – each in their own way, each with their own level of intensity, looking at the interdependence between the planet and all its inhabitants, not just human beings, but all beings and systems.

Philosophers, writers, artists, and other thinkers working on ecological issues emphasise the importance of a holistic approach. A holistic approach requires a holistic view of ecology, ecosystems, the interrelationships between systems, policies, beliefs, people, economies, traditions and different organisms. A holistic approach emphasises that it is not possible to solve a single problem or situation without looking at the conditions and influencing factors at different scales, the so-called planetary scale. For example, it is not possible to save a single endangered species or to solve the effects of climate and/or pollution in the territory of one single country.

A holistic systemic approach is not possible at a local, national or even global level because different levels of decision-making and executive bodies are responsible for different issues and different aspects, and each phase of the problem is addressed and decided separately. A holistic approach would be possible at the global policy level, but there it remains as recommendations and guidelines, while the priorities of national governments will always be to find a balance between economic growth, voter satisfaction, and minimal inclusion in the agenda of global recommendations to mitigate climate change.

A holistic approach is opposed to the current reductionist approach, in which countries and organisations invest resources to “fix” one problem, to save one species. A prominent example is the resources invested in the development and creation of carbon capture and storage technologies.

“Deep ecology” is essential to my research because a holistic approach to environmental problems is the basis for all the environmental movements, global policy statements and strategies that exist today. The deep ecology approach can be seen in the writings of Morton, Coccia, Haraway, the New European Bauhaus Strategy, etc. Not all ecophilosophies emphasise self-consciousness as central, as a starting point for the development of the philosophy, as is the case with Naess's “deep ecology”. In my research, conscious living and conscious activities (like eating and shopping) derive from both “deep ecology” and ecosophy and from the “slow” movement described in the research.

As a young researcher studying for my Master's degree, “deep ecology” seemed to me to be able to highlight and comment on all the existing problems that have led to the climate crisis, biodiversity loss, deforestation, ocean pollution, plastic and microplastic pollution, air pollution, eutrophication, soil erosion, invasive species, food crisis and overpopulation (problems specifically named and described in “deep ecology” texts), writing about them and warning the public, calling for change since the middle of the last century. “Deep ecology” seemed to me to deserve greater attention, to be more widely recognised. Especially since so many artists, writers and philosophers working in the field of ecology use the rhetoric of “deep ecology” without referring to it. Over time, looking at “deep ecology” more critically, I can see how it forms a background to the existing network of ecophilosophies and that its ideas appear in the work of contemporary thinkers. This is why in my research and practice, I use the key words “deep” sustainability to present this legacy offered by “deep ecology” as I see it.

2. “Slow” Movement and “Slow” Media Art

The “slow” movement originated in the resistance to the spread of fast-food chains like McDonald's around 1986, especially in Italy and France – as the “slow food” movement. “Slow food” activists promoted and advocated local producers, local farmers and local traders, emphasising that fast-food businesses were a threat to local customs and local traditions. Nowadays, the word “slow” is used in combination with various concepts, as if to imply higher quality; in my research I have described that there is a need to critically evaluate different aspects of everyday life that might be labelled “slow” by the media and advertising, looking at each situation separately, to see whether the proposed slowness represents any values.

The “slow” movement in my research is related to burnout, the condition of feeling tired, feeling a loss of control, reduction in work capacity, and a loss of interest in events that previously brought joy.

The definition of the “slow” media art object appears in different chapters and contexts in my research. In this chapter, I aim to summarise the contexts that are relevant to my practice so that the context of my art practice, as described below, can be better understood by the readers.

In my art practice and in my research, I propose that the “slow” media artwork constitutes the object to be viewed, regardless of its condition or stage of development at the time of viewing. A “slow” media artwork does not have to address an environmental problem explicitly; it can also be aesthetic, performative, and self-reflexive.

The way and medium of displaying a “slow” media art object is a set of decisions made in collaboration between the artist and the gallery curator – which means that a “slow” media artwork in an exhibition can also be a documentation of the work.

In my research, I have chosen “deep” sustainability as the second focal point, researching artworks that are made with the purpose of solving a problem, informing, and commenting on environmental issues, problems, etc. It is the combination of “slow” media art and “deep” sustainability that forms the context for my practice-based art objects.

One of the more unique perspectives on the dimension of time in a “slow” media artwork would be the fluidity of the art object; the artwork in the exhibition is “alive”. If the “slow” media artwork is the object displayed in the exhibition/event, then we can see some parallels between “slow” media artwork and land art.

In my arts practice, the works are in constant flux, often subject to external influences and dependent on the competences of others (event organisers, attendants, museum and gallery staff, visitors). Similarly, artworks in an exhibition change when they use plants – if the

conditions are favourable and if the staff is competent, the plants grow; if the conditions are not suitable, the plants die. Bringing prototypes into the public space has allowed me to make both formal and informal observations of how different individuals' education, experience, age, and social status enable them to perceive and appreciate these prototypes.

Presenting and exhibiting my work and prototypes in public spaces has allowed me to develop a language that I can use with my audience; I can use my negative experiences to offer additional information and other perspectives on the issues being addressed.

3. The Context of “Slow” Media and “Deep” Sustainability Art Practices

The chapter examines how art and media influence social behavioural patterns, using “slow” media art as an object of research. In this context, “slow” media art is linked to the phenomenon of the slow movement, which began in 1986 as a reaction to the spread of fast food, with an emphasis on the slow food movement. It reflects an awareness of quality and a call to examine aspects of everyday life that are labelled as “slow” by the media and advertising. The slow movement calls for a reassessment of life's priorities, a reduction in digital communication and the promotion of a more straightforward and balanced lifestyle.

Slow movement practices cover different areas of life, such as work/leisure balance, reducing technology use and returning to more personal and engaging interactions with the environment and community. Such an approach encourages rethinking the rhythm of daily life and could also include practical activities such as gardening, which not only provide physical and emotional benefits but also promote an environmentally sustainable lifestyle.

In this context, “slow” media art not only criticises existing socio-economic systems but also offers an alternative in which individuals can actively participate in changing their everyday lifestyles and thinking. This chapter highlights the need for more conscious lifestyle choices that could benefit both individual well-being and overall social and environmental sustainability.

Nicolas Bourriaud's “relational aesthetics”, the term he uses to define art that no longer exists as an autonomous, aesthetic object, but can be described as a relationship between society, the viewer and the work of art: if the viewer does not engage with the work of art, the work of art cannot exist. Nor can the work of art be seen as the subjective self-expression of one person – the artist.

Relational art or relational aesthetics describes my artistic practice and how I make fit the objects into art history. The creative workshops, masterclasses and demonstrations, and the urban gardens created and exhibited aim to create a dialogue with the audience, to inform the public about environmental problems and issues.

My research and artistic practice focus on practicality, on working prototypes, and on works based on scientific methods and visualisations. By no means would I call my art practice utilitarian art or design. I use artistic methods; I create works and processes that help to transform and interpret the problems I see into aesthetic works that are intended to communicate something to the public.

4. Research Methodology and Autoethnography

This chapter outlines the methodological framework of my research, describing and analysing how autoethnography can be used in practice-based narrative research and critically assessing the validity of this research.

Experimental research methods and approaches that were developed and used in this research:

1. Arts practice-led research. In the Thesis, I describe and reflect on my art practice, the experience of making and exhibiting my artworks. The artworks, prototypes, workshops, and masterclasses discussed in the Thesis are developed by reflecting on previously developed works or public events.
2. Autoethnography. The sources, data, and information gathered in this Thesis are the result of my research and arts practice. The Thesis includes self-reflections on my everyday habits and personal attitudes. The observations made during the research are contextualised and generalised, and continuously compared with my artistic practice and the findings drawn from the research.
3. Experiments and quasi-experiments. Several long-term experiments and quasi-experiments were carried out as part of the study. The experiments took place in a controlled environment as well as in public space, where the long-term experiment was conducted in an environment beyond my control.
4. Prototyping, artefact creation and analysis. To answer the research question “What art objects (artworks, prototypes) can be used to promote changes in everyday practices in society?”, a series of artworks and objects were created and presented in exhibitions, public events, and presentations with audience involvement to observe the audience and to obtain immediate feedback on the reaction each art object evoked.
5. Presenting art objects and prototypes in public spaces. The research introduced a technique proposing that the target audience can change their daily habits and their beliefs if they are actively involved in a certain activity, which in the research was the creation and maintenance of a public garden.
6. Visual methods. Creating visual artworks, analysing visual artworks, creating and analysing artworks using previously created visual materials, involving the target audience in the visual work – artworks, photos and videos, data mapping and data visualisations, especially of auto-ethnographic data. The research used and interpreted a variety of visual data to look for patterns and to create models.

7. Workshops and masterclasses. Several different workshops were offered to the target audience, in which everyone could learn a specific skill developed during the research, such as making aquaponics and propagating and cloning plants.

Other scientific methods used: discursive analysis, qualitative content analysis, interviews, focus group discussion, constant comparative analysis, phenomenological analysis, participant observation, direct observation, critical case studies and case series analysis.

Conducting expert interviews

The study involved **five remote interviews** (using the ZOOM video conferencing tool). The interviews were recorded, and the transcripts in the original language (English) and translations are attached as appendices. The Thesis includes interviews presented in a narrative format with quotations where possible, preserving the original spoken language.

The interviews were transcribed in full to preserve the nuances of the language. These nuances, the uses of analogies, expressions, people's stories and ideas that emerged during the conversation are highlighted and analysed in the Thesis.

The study also included two written interviews, the format of which was adapted to the preferences of the interviewees. The written interviews are attached as appendices to the Thesis, and the interviews are summarised and quoted in the main body of the Thesis. The written interviews were conducted via e-mail.

Understanding autoethnography

Autoethnography is a form of research that systematically collects, describes and analyses the researcher's own personal experiences with the aim of understanding cultural traits (auto + ethno). Through the self – outwards, from the inner to the outer. Autoethnographic research is both the research process and the result.

Autoethnography as a method is becoming more widely used and accepted in research, not only in the social sciences and humanities. Autoethnographic research is shaped and influenced by personal stories, experiences, and epiphanies, offered as aesthetic, visual, and narrative reflections of culture. The researcher controls what is studied, who is interviewed, and what is assumed to be relevant; historically, this method developed as a resistance to institutional rules and as an effort to make research more interesting and understandable for everyone. Storytelling was used to reach a wider audience because such texts were easy to understand and more engaging.

In my research, I describe and work with what I call my “target audience” – the people and communities I think have the most to gain from my research, as well as those who I think make up the data and knowledge base that informs my conclusions (in working with my “target audience”, I test my assumptions to draw conclusions). Part of my “target audience” is my family, friends, acquaintances, colleagues and neighbours. The observations are made in an informal setting over a period of 8 years. The information contained in the main body of the study is presented in the form of summarised findings, without describing the process of each observation or the private life of each person involved.

Autoethnographic data are the main primary data in my research. This data is my attempt to make my research grounded in stories and experiences as unbiased as possible; I am keeping a database that could provide additional substantiation for my self-reflexive judgments and stories. The data has been collected in a non-discriminatory way and avoiding or specifically focusing on subjectivity (the moment of each subjective decision is intentional). The autoethnographic data used in the study: photographs of food eaten, personal stories, experiences and interactions with others and family, creations of artworks, artefacts and prototypes, exhibitions, visitor observations at exhibitions, workshops and masterclasses, and participant observations.

The creation of artworks, artefacts and prototypes using the autoethnographic data collected during the research is the main approach used in the art practice. Autoethnographic food data is the main source of inspiration and content of the artworks, artefacts and prototypes created.

5. “Slow” Media and “Deep” Sustainability Art Practices

The chapter covers the artworks, prototypes, and objects exhibited in public spaces, as well as the workshops and masterclasses organised as part of the research process. The chapter describes how the theoretical research guides the artistic practice and critically analyses the making of each work, the choices made in exhibiting them, the observations made of the public, and their reactions to my artistic practice.

The descriptions also include workshops, masterclasses, presentations, and exhibitions, as well as conclusions and suggested questions for further research that have emerged from my experiences.

As part of my research, food growing is a central theme. Prototypes, works, and examples of food growing have been presented to the public in exhibitions and public spaces, including a public garden.

When making my artworks, I devote a lot of time to developing new approaches that could lead to long-term impact projects rather than short-term activities. A garden in a public space, such as the public garden in Market Street developed in the Thesis, the small and medium sized aquaponic and hydroponic gardens exhibited, the aquaponics installation in the Nature House of the Liepaja ZIIC, allows the viewer to be inspired, to get to know the different ways of growing food, viewers and visitors are able to appreciate and also learn from the technological innovations offered, get inspiration and gain additional knowledge about alternative growing techniques, its productivity and environmental impact.

As part of the research, by making observations at each of the occasions when these objects are displayed, it can be concluded that such exhibitions in public spaces do not provide enough emotional or philosophical engagement for visitors to consider adopting them as part of their daily routine.

The most significant public garden that I created as part of my research is the aquaponics system at the Liepaja ZIIC Nature House, which is used as a visitor attraction and also as part of the Nature House's curriculum for environmental education.

In addition to the objects on display in public spaces, workshops, masterclasses, and other creative activities should be offered, especially for children and young people, to foster a deeper understanding and a personal, emotional connection.

The unconfined atmosphere created in the context of an art event can encourage a dialogue that can lead to a change in attitudes and allow visitors to come to a realisation about fast-paced lifestyles, stress, anxiety and everyday pressures, as well as about creative activities

and the connection with other people and nature. Working in a leisurely but focused way in a workshop or masterclass allows a person who is used to the hectic schedule to allow themselves a certain amount of time to not be productive – to not constantly check their messages, to not be in constant communication on social platforms or through emails. Workshops based on crafts can replace the usual simulated productivity and the constant communication with crafts that allow the participant to feel productive without feeling bored or wanting to constantly check notifications on their phones.

When organising discussions, workshops, and masterclasses for the public on the topics of the research – ecology, connection with the environment, resources, climate crisis, waste, and food – a horizontal approach and avoidance of moralising attitudes are essential. I observed that the Latvian audience has traditional views of the environment and natural materials, i.e. animals as a resource, and there is an unwavering conviction of human superiority over nature and other beings. Within the framework of the research, it was empirically observed that it is impossible to challenge these beliefs with artistic methods. To stimulate a productive conversation with the Latvian audience, focal points such as saving individual resources (money, time) and explaining future changes (giving the example of regulations and fines in neighbouring countries, which will soon be introduced in Latvia) can be used.

It has been observed that participants in public events are able to acknowledge and agree with common best practices but are unable to apply these insights to themselves, to their everyday practices and beliefs. Participants admit, for example, that they could cycle to work instead of driving, and they often admit that they travel too much by plane, but these participants in workshops and masterclasses also always mention that they already fly only once a year, and that could be considered as nothing important, when it comes to global crisis.

In my opinion, the most important reason Latvian society can justify its unwillingness to change its daily habits is cost and convenience – if people gain tangible benefits from sorting waste, they will do it, e.g. the refund of deposit fees when handing in drinks bottles and cans, the services offered to deposit sorted waste free of charge. This observation was also shared by the artists interviewed as part of the research. The second reason is the acceptance of cultural and social norms – I observed that visitors of public events have no desire or interest to challenge the existing order, family habits, and traditions. The habits that each person identifies as having a negative impact on the planet, people are unable to see as having a direct connection to their everyday choices. This rationalisation of habits could also be linked to a lack of information and the circulation of false claims.

6. Interviews

The study included seven remote in-depth interviews, five of them using the video conferencing tool ZOOM and two via email. The interviews took place between April and October 2021. Full transcripts of the interviews and the original interview questions in their original language (English) and translated into Latvian are attached as an appendix to the Thesis.

Before the interview, several discussion blocks were prepared, each containing several questions. Some of the questions were highly subjective, designed to answer my own research question, and some were broader questions that helped to better understand and contextualise each artist's creative and research practice and insight.

Interviewed artists Jan Glöckner, Lina Kusaite, Bart H. M. Vandeput or Bartaku, Eva-Maria Lopez, Theun Karelse, Bianca Hlywa, and Ken Rinaldo.

The idea underlying the organisation and planning of the interviews was to build a network of collaboration and communication with artists who, I believe, work with similar personal motivations as I do. It is not the art objects themselves, the aesthetics, the methods, the techniques, etc., that are similar, but the subjective approaches of the artists themselves.

This choice led to the echo chamber described in the subsection “Limitations of the interview results”, but I think I have the right to accept these results in the context of my research.

Through the interviews, I wanted to compare my practice with other approaches of artists of my choice to find out what these artists thought about my approach and my art forms.

Interviews, although based on a planned structure and questions, resemble more informal conversations (email interviews are, of course, exceptions). The interviews also include my opinions and my attitudes, which I use to guide the course of the interview and also to provoke the artists to reveal their positions.

Interview results

The interviews led to the extraction and analysis of eight emerging themes:

- Code 1. “Yes to the scientific approach. No to the scientific approach”. In the interviews, it was important for me to find out what the position of other artists is, whether there is a concrete answer to this question or more of a gradient or a scale. For the artists in the PhD programme (Bartaku, Jan Glockner), scientific methods are at the heart of the work process and influence the creation of the artwork. Both doctoral students clearly understand their role in their community (code: target audience in science). Ken

Rinaldo's work is also based on a methodological approach, but here it is more related to the technical engineering of the work rather than the visualisation of conceptual ideas through the media. The other artists I interviewed prefer to reject the use of scientific methods, instead choosing to work with a more holistic approach. The difference, I think, is that in the first case, the medium and the final result are subject to method and research, while in the second case, the work is made more intuitively, more spontaneously.

- Code 2. “Target audiences in science. Target audience in the public”. I refer a lot to the target audience in my research, because my research question is directly related to it: “What art objects (artworks, prototypes) can be used to promote changes in everyday practices in society?” To answer this question, it is important for me to discover who is meant by “society” in the focus of this research question. The interview process did not give me as clear a picture of who the target audience of eco-artists is, according to themselves, as I would have liked. This is an area of research that deserves further research, perhaps including the collection of statistical data on the interests of museum and gallery visitors and their level of education and knowledge. In the interviews, there was a division between those artists who are studying for a PhD and those who are not. Those who are studying (Bartaku, Jan Glockner) quite clearly and specifically refer to their target audience as colleagues, peers, other professionals, researchers, artists, technicians, programmers, and exhibition and event volunteers (assistants). Other artists focus more on working with people, visitors of exhibitions and events. A negative attitude towards the public (exhibition visitors) emerges in all interviews – distinguishing between those who are interested and motivated and those who are not. It is repeatedly stated that if the public is willing, they will find the necessary knowledge.
- Code 3. “Clowning” for the public. No to clowning. Clowning for policymakers”. I use the word “clowning” to refer to the use of the artist's work as an object of entertainment, the entertainment for the audience and the public. “Clowning” in my research is meant as the involvement of the public through play, exciting, interesting events, workshops, works and projects made in collaboration with local public, local people. The interviewees were divided in their opinions – some of them think that “clowning” is necessary, others think that it is not the responsibility of the artists. There is a strong warning that it is dangerous to involve artists in community work; if artists are not sufficiently trained, they do not contribute to the desired change in communities but rather give the impression that “something is being done”, and therefore, communities

are not getting the support they genuinely need. “Clowning” was also discussed at a political level in the interviews: artists are expected to offer solutions that are more pleasant and amicable than those that scientists can provide. This line of inquiry has been mapped out in several sections of the research: resource use, changes needed in the habits of individuals, changes in production processes, the cult of recycling, greenwashing and artistic greenwashing. It is clear from the interviews that artists do not want to be used by institutions, residences, agencies or systems to pretend that they are doing something. “Artist-as-global-fixer” is not a role that eco-artists want to play.

- Code 4. “Institutions, galleries, curators”. The education of museums, galleries, staff, curators, and commissioners are also identified as one of the problems of the “uninformed public”, pointing to what the respondents called “artistic greenwashing” – the use of ecological and sustainability themes to promote one's own, possibly commercial, goals. Responsibility of exhibition organisers and curators – further research should include an elementary knowledge test for curators who curate various exhibitions based on sustainability themes to assess what part of the problem is the ignorance of curators and institutional staff and what part is the desire to please the public and sell their services by choosing artists who are popular in society, completely ignoring the context in which the artwork was created and the validity of the artists' philosophies. The literature and sources used by scholars in the humanities are mostly from other practitioners, thinkers and philosophers in the humanities. The interpretations offered in the literature are often simplistic or inaccurate. This problem came up from several perspectives in the interviews: the theories used may be inaccurate or even misinterpreted (Bartaku), artists need to draw on their own feelings rather than using tools from other fields (Lina Kusaite), artists need to do enough research to be competent (Eva Maria Lopez), artists need to work in dedicated teams (Theun Karelse). Perhaps artists' lax attitude towards scientific facts and their inability to use scientific methods is the reason why artists' work involving innovative technologies is being questioned in terms of being a work of art, as is the case in my artistic practice. This line of research could also be explored in more depth with more interviews and observations. One source of data could be an analysis of MA theses and PhD theses defended in recent years, looking at the methods used as described by artists.
- Code 5. “Abstraction, mystification, questioning. Truth”. The interviewees outline their attitudes to my proposed distinction between a work of art and a functioning prototype. Interviewees were much more likely (compared to my own artistic practice) to consider aesthetics to be important in art, but none emphasised aesthetics as being the central

element of the artwork. This would be an issue that could also perhaps be investigated in more depth. In the interviews, there was also the opinion that a work of art cannot be a product – a prototype cannot be at a level of development where it can be sold. This view is more in line with aspects of greenwashing – companies and people using different sustainability themes to market their supposedly sustainable products. In all the interviews, the opinion was expressed that the purpose of the artwork and the exhibition is to provoke reflection, not to provide concrete knowledge. I think this is problematic because offering concrete knowledge is linked to the learning process and the development of methods. I think it is possible for artist-researchers to provide knowledge to the public if they are interested in doing so. All the interviewees agreed that a work of art that provides knowledge must be based on some kind of truth. Unless the artist is making a provocation, an intervention, offering for the viewer to learn from mistakes.

- Code 6. “The artist's motivation is key”. The artists interviewed all believe that the artist's message and motivation is the main factor; whether an ecological artwork is based on research, data, scientific methods – for the interviewees this seems to be a choice that depends on the individual and does not form any critical categories of whether or not a particular work is art, ecological or not. In several interviews, a distinction was made between activism and art, the distinction being that activism is based on methods, more concrete attitudes and dogmas than art. This view could perhaps be explored further to build a more complete account of how to distinguish between ecological art and ecological activism.
- Code 7. “Everything is garbage”. The artists interviewed are clearly aware not only of their own resource use but also that of their institutions; the problematics of exhibitions and the choices that are made in the process of making and exhibiting a work were mentioned in the conversations. The “cult of recycling” also creates greenwashing and “artistic greenwashing”: artists use recycled materials, ignoring the problem and its context, either to gain popularity and sell their products or based on some superficial assumptions. The “cult of recycling” also underlies much of the circular economy, where supposedly sustainable packaging – production and consumption – is stuck in assumptions and beliefs that are based not on genuine sustainability and care but on a balancing act between price, convenience and consumer expectations. The attitudes expressed in the interviews are of helplessness and confusion about how to act and how to react, which is a feeling that I also experience in my everyday life – it is clear that there is a problem, but the individual has no way of influencing it to any significant

degree. It is up to the individual to choose, for example, to go for products without packaging, but that is not always available, and I have also noticed that zero-waste shops tend to have a bad reputation, and financial circumstances do not always allow one to shop there, because organic food tends to cost much more than their non-organic counterparts.

- Code 8. “Ignorance is the issue”. The interviews suggest that gardening and plant care should be included in the education system. Caring for plants and growing food are also skills that allow the development of more complex problem-solving and a better understanding of the natural processes. In the workshops and masterclasses I have conducted as part of my research, I have included topics such as the biochemical cycle, the nitrogen cycle, the role of oxygen and water, and the composition and importance of soil. Interviewees also shared memories of gardening as children, which gave them skills and an understanding of nature that other people do not have.

7. “Slow” Media Art and “Deep” Sustainability Artworks

The chapter focuses on artworks and projects that fit into the context of my Thesis. These works are described in the context of “slow” media art and include references to “deep” sustainability themes. The chapter highlights examples of ecological art, including works created using autoethnographic approaches, works created as part of a research process or as a result of research.

The works included in the chapter have not been selected on the basis of their renown or the opinions of art critics but rather on the basis of philosophical statements offered by the artists themselves or my own interpretation of the works. The chapter includes a variety of approaches and techniques used by the artist.

Conclusions and Findings

The aim of the Thesis – to create practice-based tangible and intangible artworks and prototypes that can be presented to the public as experiences or models to learn from, to take inspiration from, in order to change their everyday habits in areas such as food sustainability and food production – has been achieved in full. Based on theoretical research, interviews and empirical observations, I can conclude that the art projects and prototypes developed in this research can be presented to the public with the aim of empowering people to change their everyday habits in areas like food sustainability and food production. The research produced small and medium-sized aquaponic and hydroponic garden prototypes that are scalable and adaptable to the needs of any household. The research resulted in the creation of various ecological artworks that inform the public about different areas of ecology and promote discussions. The research developed workshops and masterclasses designed to initiate a discussion with the public to allow them to better understand themselves and their daily practices, also offering solutions to improve personal sustainability and well-being.

Answering the first question of the study – What “slow” media art practices and works can inform the public about sustainable gardening, biodiversity, sustainable food, and minimising everyday waste and consumerism? – there are several approaches developed in the study: the audiences react favourably to the presented tangible everyday practices that could save them resources (time, money) and that could become activities that bring family members closer together, such as creative activities with children.

Answering the second research question – What art objects (artworks, prototypes) can be used to promote changes in everyday practices in society? – it can be concluded that the intangible art practices – workshops, masterclasses, lectures – created in the framework of this research have a significant impact on the participants, encourage discussion and offer new perspectives on ecological issues. The works and projects developed as part of this research, which were not included in a wider public programme and were not presented with accompanying work-related workshops or masterclasses, only created a short-term impression on the audience, focusing more on the technology used rather than on a change in attitudes.

Conclusions

1. A public garden, such as the public garden in Turgus Street developed in this research, the small and medium-sized aquaponic and hydroponic garden samples exhibited, the aquaponics installation in the Liepaja ZIIC Nature House, allows the viewer to be inspired, to get to know the different food growing techniques. The viewers and visitors are able to

appreciate and learn from the offered technological innovations; they show interest in the alternative growing techniques, their productivity and environmental impact. However, such exhibits in public spaces do not provide sufficient emotional or philosophical engagement for visitors to adopt them as part of their everyday lives. In addition to the objects on display in public spaces, workshops for the public, especially children and young people, masterclasses or other creative activities should be offered to ensure that visitors have sufficient time for discussion, reflection and introspection. It is precisely the open atmosphere of discussions that facilitates a change of views and allows the visitors to reflect on the fast pace of life, on the feeling of stress, anxiety and feeling of overwhelm in daily life, on creative activities and on the connections with other people and with nature. Relaxed but focused activity in a workshop or masterclass allows a person accustomed to being in a fast-paced environment to allow themselves a certain amount of time to be unproductive – to not consume media, to not be in constant communication on social platforms or in emails. Workshops based on arts and crafts offer to replace this simulated productivity, the constant communication, with hands-on activities that allow the participant to feel productive and therefore not bored and not wanting to constantly check notifications on their phones.

2. When organising discussions, workshops, and masterclasses for the public on the topics addressed in this research – ecology, relationship with the environment, resources, climate crisis, garbage, food – a horizontal approach and refraining from moralistic attitudes are essential. I have observed that the Latvian audience has traditional views of the environment and natural resources, i.e. animals as a resource, and there is a strong belief in the superiority of humans over nature and other beings. The research demonstrates empirically that it is impossible to overcome these beliefs with artistic methods. To stimulate a constructive discussion with the Latvian audience, such key elements as saving individual resources (money, time) and explaining future changes (giving the example of regulations and fines in neighbouring countries, which will soon be introduced in Latvia) can be used.
3. Participants in public events are able to acknowledge and agree with generally accepted good practices but are unable to apply these insights to themselves, to their everyday practices and beliefs.
 - 3.1. The most important reason for this is cost and convenience – if people get a tangible benefit from waste sorting, they will do it, for example, the refund of deposit fees for the return of drinks bottles and cans, the services offering the collection of separated rubbish free of charge. This observation was also shared by the artists interviewed as part of the research.

- 3.2. The second reason is the acceptance of cultural and social norms – people attending public events have no desire or interest in challenging the existing order, family habits, and traditions. This rationalisation of habits could also be linked to a lack of sufficient awareness and the pervasiveness of false information.
4. During the discussions, I have observed that the audience is not characterised as multicultural and open-minded, and during the research it became clear that the target audience for ecological art in Latvia is children and young people who are open-minded and ready to explore ideas about the role and diversity of the planet's inhabitants. Ecology workshops and public gardens should be developed in every kindergarten, primary and secondary school, including universities, in an effort to encourage positive long-term changes in the understanding of ecological issues in the future.
 5. The creative workshops allow visitors to explore all their questions in a more relaxed atmosphere, sometimes even giving the impression that they are trying to test the limits of the workshop facilitator/artist's knowledge. The research showed that there is a demand for specific, technical knowledge and information (tutorials) on how to start hydroponic production on one's property. In order to encourage the development of hydroponic farms, rules and regulations on the environmental impact of such farms need to be developed at a municipal and national level to allow for transparent administration and planning when establishing such farms.
 6. In the context of ecological art, there is a lack of critical assessment of the practice of art. While art practice may be subjective and self-reflexive, artists working in ecology-related fields should also take responsibility for the views and facts they are presenting, and the public and other artists should develop the practice of critically examining the work presented by their peers, shaping the debate and improving the quality of the existing discussion. Critics, curators, producers, and museum and gallery staff should raise their level of awareness in order to be able to assess which artists should be seen in the context of ecological art.
 7. “Slow” as an adjective is nowadays used in combination with a great variety of phrases – “slow” food, “slow” media (media as in journalism), “slow” fashion, “slow” tourism. “Slow” fashion encourages reflection on the ecological impact of fashion and comments on consumer culture. “Slow” food promotes the consumption of local food and the exploration of the uniqueness of the region, establishing connections with food growers and caterers, which is in many ways an ecological theme but does not directly address climate change. The origins of the “slow movement” lie in the “slow” food movement, which emerged around 1980 as resistance to the spread of fast-food restaurants, particularly the McDonald's

chain in France and Italy. The various “slow movements” focus on quality and a level of mindfulness, of taking time to examine and evaluate. “Slow movements” linked to individual well-being and mindfulness contribute to a higher quality of people's lives by slowing down the pace of consumerism and increasing the quality of consumer goods.

8. “Slow” media art is an artwork, object or prototype, or an immaterial work such as an experience, workshop, performance, masterclass, a narrative that focuses on a time dimension, or is created over a certain period of time, or offers visitors a time-based experience – time is part of the artwork. “Slow” media artists tend to reflect on ecological themes, but this is not a prerequisite for a slow media artwork.
9. “Slow” media artworks are in direct relation to the flow of time. This research addresses agricultural time: one cannot grow plants faster than they are meant to grow; people recognise time as seasons; local and seasonal food is also subject to an awareness of agricultural time. The time-lapse videos produced as part of the research, used to capture the invisible in everyday life – the growth of a plant, the ripening of a fruit, the invisible action of a plant – can be viewed differently. Much of the work and public events in the study are designed to invite the viewer to re-evaluate the fast pace of the everyday, the burnout caused by excessive productivity, etc., offering a philosophical and conceptual perspective on the “slow”.
10. The concepts of “slow” media art and “deep” sustainability are used to discuss the works in this research, both of which together can provide a conceptual and philosophical context for artworks created to inform and educate the public on different ecological themes. “Sustainability” is a term related to economics and management which, in the context of this research, was chosen purposefully to provide a platform for discussion about resources and existing economic systems.
11. An autoethnographic study requires careful evaluation and validation of the data. For this study, I committed to the assumption that all observations and results should be tested, and all processes should be repeated. All workshops, masterclasses, and presentations were repeated in different contexts and for different audiences. The resulting artworks, objects and prototypes were presented to the audience using different techniques. The process of verifying qualitative data, especially data generated by auto-methods, is based on the researcher's experience and ethics. The methods of self-analysis and assessment of potential threats developed in this research can be applied in other similar autoethnographic or experimental studies.
12. Artists' practices and works are made intuitively and based on each person's assumptions, beliefs and understanding of objective truth. Artists' work can be illustrative and made to

comment on or make the viewer think about a subject. The prototypes produced as part of this research are presented in an artistic context, also offering the artist's perspective, philosophy and certain views. It is the choice of the viewer whether to consider the gardening prototypes as technological tools, as works of art or as design objects; as the creator of these works, it is irrelevant to me whether the viewer sees an in-depth artistic value in each of the artworks presented, as long as the viewer is prepared to explore the ecological themes presented.

13. The difference between artistic practice and activism in the field of ecology or any other field is based on each person's motivation and the context in which the work is presented – ecological art can be used as activism, just as various ecological activism activities can be examined as artworks.
14. The motivations and incentives of artists working in the field of ecology are based on individual considerations – some use nature and natural materials as a source of initial inspiration, others use natural materials with or without exploring the symbolism of nature, and others create artworks to inform and comment on ecological themes. Ecological art is fragmented and interpreted by each artist (critic, curator, viewer, etc.) based on their own opinions. Ecological artists themselves see a concrete distinction between art and activism, but the identification of specific characteristics varies depending on the themes of each artist's work.
15. An ecological artwork can be a functional technological prototype if the artist's motivation is to promote a shift in the perception of the viewer or to promote some other philosophical, conceptual change in a specific setting. Ecological art prototypes can be grassroots works designed to address a local problem. Such initiatives should be recognised and supported by local institutions and organisations in order to contribute to the development of a politically and socially active society.
16. Philosophies related to ecology and the positioning of human beings in an age driven by climate change are fragmented, with no established key players. Most philosophical and conceptual thinkers believe that a holistic approach to problem-solving is needed, ignoring the practical impossibility of this approach. Greater collaboration between horizontal and vertical systems is needed to promote local, national and global movements that can create significant ecological transformations – involving different groups of people in the process, providing local and global support to enable people to make decisions that are not based on economic efficiency alone, promoting the development of economies based on the resources of local communities.

Approbation of Research Results

Scientific conferences

- September 22, 2023 – Cripto, Art, and Climate, RIXC Art and Science Festival. Presentation (discussion): Climate Anxiety in the practices of emerging artists in Liepaja.
- October 8, 2022 – SPLINTERED REALITIES, RIXC Art Science Festival. Presentation title: Food and Art.
- September 24, 2021 – Postsensorium. RIXC Art and Science festival. Online, LNB. Presentation: Lifestyle Trends and Deep Sustainability.
- September 16, 2021 – The 6th International Conference of the European Narratology Network, September 15–16, 2021. Presentation: The Climate and Environmental Literacy: An Artist’s Narrative and the Public Opinion.
- May 21, 2021 – University of Latvia Institute of Literature, Folklore and Arts “Young Researchers Day”, online. Presentation title: Slow Media Art and Competences.
- 2020 – ECODATA. RIXC conference. Presentation title: “Freeze Fast, Cook Slow”.
- 2019 – Science and Creativity Days at Liepaja University; presentation: “Data visualization as a work of art”.
- 2018 – Scientific conference of the humanities and arts (Liepaja University, HMZF).
- 2017 – RIXC Open Field Conference. Title of presentation: “Slow Media Art and Sustainability”.

Other conferences, speeches and events

- August 31, 2024 – Workshop “Sustainability Workshop” at the “Ancient Fire Night at Vecāķi Beach” organised by the Vecāķi Neighbourhood Association – a workshop on making flags for biodiversity using plant-based paints.
- November 17, 2023 – Workshop “Eco Paints” at Vilnius Art Academy Symposium “Not Yet King” organised by Vilnius Art Academy doctoral students.
- July 16, 2023 – Workshop “Eco Paints” at Liepaja Museum (as part of the program of the exhibition “RETROSPEKTROIJA”).
- November 26, 2022 – Workshop “Hydroponics/ Aquaponics” as part of the program of the exhibition “Eco/techno/systems”.
- November 25, 2022 – AUGE NEXT Arthaton – seminar and discussion organized by RIXC. Presentation title: Food and Situated Knowledge.
- 2021 – Ideathon “Climate Change, Art and Isolation” organised by RIXC. Speech and workshop on sustainable lifestyles and aquaponics systems.
- 2021 – Artists' speech at PIXELACHE festival BURN_SLOW - burn.aste.gallery.
- 2019 – Social Innovation Forum organised by the Liepaja Municipality Culture Department as part of the project “Future DiverCities – Creativity in an Urban Context”. Presentation title: “How can art affect climate change?”
- 2019 – Interregional Symposium on Baltic Media Art: 1989–2019. Cracks and Continuities, (Nida, LT). Presentation title: “Slowness of the Medium”.
- 2019 – UN/GREEN. RIXC conference. Presentation title: “Not-letting go of Nature”.

Scientific publications

- Demitere, M. *Deep Sustainability to Offer a Holistic Approach to Ecological Problems*. Acoustic Space Journal. 2024. Red. L. Diaz-Kommonen, J. Tenhunen, R. Smite,

R. Smits. Rīga: RIXC, pp. 249–259. Available online:
http://rixc.org/press/BeyondTheHybrid_download.pdf

- Demitere, M., Glockner, J. *Two Perspectives on Ecological Art. Scriptus manet* – Journal of Humanities and Arts, No 13. Editor in Chief Z. Gūtmane. Liepāja: LiePA, pp. 33–43.
- Demitere, M. *“Slow” art, growing tomatoes and sustainability. Scriptus manet* – Journal of Humanities and Arts, Nr. 8. Editor in Chief A. Helvida. Liepāja: LiePA, 2018, pp. 99–101.

Other publications

- Demitere, M. *Gardening as Art*. Collection of essays “Decolonial Ecologies”. Ed. I. Astahovska. Riga: Latvian Contemporary Art Centre, 2024, pp. 272–285.
- Visual Arts Magazine “Studija”, No. 4, 2017. Exhibition review. Embracing Emotions.
- Visual Arts Magazine “Studija”, No. 6, 2017. Exhibition review. Unlimited space for imagination.
- Demitere, M. *An evening of discussion on art and dilettantism*. Scriptus manet humanitāro un mākslas zinātņu žurnāls/*Scriptus manet* – Journal of Humanities and Arts, No. 4. Liepāja: LiePA. July, 2016, 129 p.
- Visual Arts Magazine Studija, No. 4, 2016. Exhibition review. Contemporary art in a capsule of another era.
- Visual Arts Magazine Studija, No. 3, 2016. Exhibition review. Out of Time.

Exhibitions:

- 2023, November 8 – December 9. Exhibition “Retrospectropia” at Liepāja State Gymnasium No. 1. Work: “Endless Flow. A Hydroponics prototype in public space”.
- 2023, September 25–30. COOLDIGA ART FEST photo exhibition “Signs of the Time”. 3 images.
- 2023, August 18 – September 17. Karlsruhe (DE) City Festival “Media Art is Here”. Work: “Paper Trees”.
- 2023 – “RETROSPECTROPIA – 15 years of media art in Liepāja” at Liepāja Museum (work: “Endless Flow”).
- 2022 – Digital Gallery ART+ (works: Roots, Clover, Aquaponics, Potato Eaters, Food Towers).
- 2022 – “Eco/Techno/Systems”. Works: various gardening prototypes, video work.
- 2022 – Latvian Contemporary Art Centre exhibition “Decolonial Ecologies”, Riga Art Space. Work: “Tomato-potato Calculator”.
- 2022 – Group exhibition “Mindful Explorations” in Klaipėda (LT), KKKC. Artwork: Examples of hydroponics and gardening as practice-led art research.
- 2022 – Liepāja University doctoral students’ exhibition: <https://izstade21.liepu.lv>; artwork: “Food Radio”.
- 2021 – Exhibition “ECONAUTS”. Artwork: Hydroponics garden
- 2021 – Augmented reality digital gallery ART+. Artwork: “Paper trees”: <https://artplus.app/>
- 2020 – “Art Extends Lives” (Liepāja and online – gara.aste.gallery).
- 2019 – European Scientists' Night, Liepāja University Art Research Laboratory, MPLab exhibition “In the Cage of Visions”; works: “The Price of Sustainability II”, “Make Kin”.

- 2019 – MPLab Exhibition at the Museum Night in Europe (18.05.2019) “Whistle-blowers”; Work: Mini Aquaponics Prototype.
- 2018 – New Media Art Exhibition “ENTER 19” (Šiauliai, LT); work: “The Price of Sustainability”.
- 2018 – Museum Night (Liepaja, MPLab); work: “The Price of Sustainability”.

Objects in public space

- Growing food in an aquaponic environment. Liepaja ZIIC Nature House (Zirgu sala 2).
- 2019 – Public Garden (Liepaja, Tirgus Street 9, May – August 2019).

Study courses developed

- “Sustainable Art and Design Project” (bachelor’s study “New Media Art and Design”, RTU Liepaja Academy (Liepaja University) since 2023).
- “Design for Sustainability and Society” (master’s study “Design”, Latvian Academy of Arts since 2021).



Maija Demitere is an artist and researcher focused on ecology and sustainability. Her approach is interdisciplinary, often using rapid prototyping tools. Demitere combines conceptual and philosophical work to create artworks and objects in public spaces, informing viewers about various ecological issues, especially food, resources, and waste.