

# Arts. Environment. Sustainability.

*An Overview of ASEF Partners*



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Image credit (front page): Artwork by artist Marc Schmitz (Germany) "moon cuckoo" from the 360° Land Art Biennale 2010, organized by the Modern Mongolian National Art Gallery in Ulaanbaatar. Image courtesy of the Modern Mongolian National Art Gallery – Ulaanbaatar.

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## Arts. Environment. Sustainability. An Overview of ASEF Partners

In answer to the increasing recognition of the important role culture has to play in society, in 2008 the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) initiated a four-year programme called *Connect2Culture*. Its main objective was to investigate the role of arts and culture in society by bringing together professionals from different sectors to address pertinent issues from their perspectives in Asia and Europe. The programme fostered cross-disciplinary networks through supporting artistic projects, workshops and policy meetings.

In all their projects, ASEF works in partnership with civil society actors and other public institutions to ensure its work is broad-based and balanced among the partner countries. This document outlines the organisational partners who played a key role in ASEF's art and environment projects conducted from 2008 to 2011.

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### British Council East Asia (Thailand)

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/thailand.htm>

The British Council is the United Kingdom's international organisation for educational and cultural relations. Established by Royal Charter as an independent organisation, they operate in 109 countries worldwide.

In Thailand, the British Council builds partnerships and networks between Thailand and the UK. They do this by projecting creativity, and creating opportunities to connect with the latest skills, ideas and experience. They started in Thailand in 1938, and they now have three centres in Bangkok and one in Chiang Mai.

### China Central Academy of Fine Arts (China)

<http://www.cafa.edu.cn/>

The Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA), located in Beijing, is a leading institution for modern art education in China. It is the only art academy of higher learning directly under the Ministry of Education and was founded in April 1950 by incorporating the National Beijing Art College and the Fine Arts Department of Huabei University. Under the umbrella of CAFA, there are six schools and one college: the School of Fine Art, School of Chinese Painting, School of Design, School of Architecture, School of Humanities, College of City Design as well as School of Continuing Education and the Affiliated High School of Fine Art.

### CitySpinning (India)

<http://cityspinning.org/projects/porous-city/>

CitySpinning is a series of interventions which look at expanding the nature and use of public and unused urban spaces in Bangalore and Delhi. It was initiated by Prayas Abhinav in October 2007 and is supported by Khoj International Artists' Association (New Delhi) and the Open Space, the civil society and youth outreach programme of the Centre for Communication and Development Studies (Pune, India).

### Common Room Network Foundation (Indonesia)

<http://commonroom.info/>

Common Room Network Foundation is a platform for various activities that are organised by Bandung Centre for New Media Arts. Since 2003, Bandung Centre for New Media Arts has utilised Common Room as an anchor that serves diverse individuals, communities and organisations. As it developed, it became a place where people could develop and execute a range of activities with a main focus on developing public knowledge and creativity. Common Room facilitates exhibitions, screening, workshops, lectures, discussions, small-scale music concerts, cultural festivals and more. It has become an open platform that bridges dialogue and multidisciplinary cooperation with the intention of connecting communities with diverse economic, social and micro-political interests through creative collaboration, daily experiences and knowledge exchange. Common Room's activities are far-reaching and include multi-disciplinary approaches in the fields of visual arts, design, urban architecture, music, fashion, literature, media arts and network culture.

### Community Museum Project (China)

[http://www.hkcmp.org/cmp/c\\_001.html](http://www.hkcmp.org/cmp/c_001.html)

The Community Museum Project believes that a museum can be a means to represent everyday living and values. Through the collection and interpretation of artefacts and visual evidence, indigenous creativity, visual culture and public culture can be explored. The Community Museum Project focuses not on establishing conventional "museum" hardware but carrying out flexible exhibition and public programs, often within specific community settings. Through this process the Community Museum Project aims to nurture a platform to articulate personal experiences and under-represented histories. It can also be an occasion to facilitate the participation of the public and cross-disciplinary collaboration. Community Museum Project was founded in 2002 in Hong Kong by Howard Chan (art curator), Siu King-chung (design educator), Tse Pak-chai and Phoebe Wong (cultural researchers).



### **Cultura21 (International)**

<http://www.cultura21.net/>

Cultura21 stands for Cultures of Sustainability, allowing human social systems to evolve in harmony with one another and with their environment. Cultura21 retains a wide, anthropological definition of culture and thus has a wide range of interests. Some of these interests include: the arts, inter-culturality, the media, education and other cultural expressions (such as agriculture and food). The International Network, created in 2007, builds upon the existing national organisation Cultura21 in Germany and fosters the rise of trans-local initiatives and further national networks.

### **Danish Cultural Institute (Denmark & China)**

<http://www.dancult.co.uk/>

The Danish Cultural Institute is a non-governmental organisation that works with international cultural exchange in a wide range of areas. In the Danish Cultural Institute in China, they promote cultural exchanges between Danish and Chinese parties and informs about Denmark. It also supports projects that aim at long-term cooperation between Chinese and Danish cultural institutions, artists and other professionals in the field of creative industries and economies. Established in 2005, the Danish Cultural Institute in Beijing was licensed to work with cultural exchange and consultancy, and puts priority on topics which expose Denmark as an innovative and cutting edge nation with a cultural approach. The activities of the Danish Cultural Institute in Beijing range from exhibitions of fine arts to exchange programs for professionals from sectors such as public education and health services.

### **Institute of Cultural Theory, Research and the Arts, Leuphana University (Germany)**

<http://www.leuphana.de/en/institute/ikkk.html>

The Institute of Cultural Theory, Research, and the Arts (ICRA) at the Leuphana University Lueneburg, Germany, pursues theoretical and empirical research on culture and the arts, the scientific and cultural transfer from academia to praxis, as well as teaching from perspectives based in the humanities, social and economic sciences. The Institute is organised in the following units: Philosophy, Sociology of the Arts, Cultural Marketing and Communication, Literary Studies. The Sociology of the Arts research unit is also working on issues of urban sociology and on the theme of art and sustainability.

### **International Council for Cultural Centers (International)**

<http://www.international3c.org/>

The International Council for Cultural Centres is the global network of national networks/associations of community cultural centres (3c-s), currently connecting more than 50 countries on 6 continents. I3C is an international non-governmental organisation representing internationally community cultural centres with their rights, responsibilities, and needs for favourable conditions for the activities of voluntary/non-paid artists and community animators around the world. I3C hopes to link these houses in a family of shared ideals and practices, weaving a larger, living and flexible global net embodying the analogy of the African shekere instrument net and way of producing sound: a net not only virtual but also very real and physically present through the actual house buildings enlivening communities on all continents.

### **International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (International)**

<http://www.ifacca.org/>

The International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA) is the global network of arts councils and ministries of culture. IFACCA's vision consists of a world in which the arts are valued in themselves and for their contribution to strengthening communities and enriching lives. Their mission is to improve the capacity and effectiveness of government arts funding agencies to benefit society through networking, advocacy and research. IFACCA does this by supporting the leadership of government arts funding agencies with a well-informed, global perspective on issues affecting arts and cultural policy. They also aim to consolidate the collective knowledge of arts councils and culture agencies, build networks, promote understanding and enhance cooperation between arts councils and national arts agencies.



### **KHOJ International Artists Association (India)**

<http://www.khojworkshop.org/>

KHOJ International Artists' Association is an artist-led, alternative space for experimentation and international exchange based in India. Part of the global Triangle Arts Trust, KHOJ sees its role as an incubator for art and ideas, artistic exchange and dialogue in the visual arts. Through their programming they assist and develop forms of art such as media art, performance, video, environmental, public and community based art, sound and other experimental modes of cultural production. As a deliberate policy their core invitees have been from South Asia which has resulted in the development of an active network of artists in the region. KHOJ seeks to promote cross cultural exchange within the visual practices of the 'Global South'. Since their inception in 1997 artists from Iran, Egypt, Cuba, Argentina, Brazil, Lebanon, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, Japan, Mainland China, Taiwan and several countries in Africa, have participated in their workshops and residencies.

### **Kunst-Stoffe (Germany)**

<http://www.kunst-stoffe-berlin.de/>

Kunst-Stoffe is a collection and distribution centre for scraps and trash that can be creatively reused for art and culture. Materials such as fabric, paint, metal, wood, tiles, plastic, foam and cardboard that are of no further use or value to their owners are collected in Kunst-Stoffe's warehouse where they are made available to artists, cultural, educational and social organisations. Kunst-Stoffe provides a platform for recycling and re-using materials. Scraps can be donated to them, and they collect them before they lose their value and negatively impact the environment as trash. In addition crafts(wo)men are invited to rent their professionally-equipped work spaces for woodworking, metal and textile production. They also serve as a centre for sustainable cultural development by offering workshops with different subjects for every age group.

### **Manchester Metropolitan University (United Kingdom)**

<http://www.mmu.ac.uk/>

Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) was established as a Polytechnic in 1970 and became a University in 1992. MMU offers courses relevant to the real world, supported by staff who share their passion for their subject in a great environment that fosters creative learning. They offer over 1,000 courses and qualifications, many with a strong professional bias. They have a diverse student body, including more than 2,800 students from 109 countries.

### **Maraa Media Collective (India)**

<http://maraa.in/>

Maraa Media Collective is a media and arts collective whose core values impress the need to give more attention to media – what are the forms it takes, what content does it push out, who are the actors, who are the owners and who are the consumers? A key aim at Maraa is to work with art as the transformation of thought into the sensory experience of the community. Their art related work chooses to focus particularly on notions of spaces in the city and how they can use creative practice to negotiate various spaces for diverse publics in the city of Bangalore. Their activities so far include producing films on social issues, street plays, event management and activities that use media for development projects.

### **Media Art Research Interdisciplinary Network (International/Finland)**

<http://marin.cc/>

Media Art Research Interdisciplinary Network (M.A.R.I.N.) is an initiative integrating artistic and scientific practices in researching cultural and environmental ecosystems. For the first three years M.A.R.I.N.'s operational focus is a mobile residency and workshop programme looking at marine environments, sustainable mobility, and various methods and technologies for field work. The initial idea for the project grew out of experiences of Polar Circuit workshops in the Finnish Lapland (1997-2000), Solar Circuit residency in Australia (2002) and an idea to research the Baltic Sea using islands as field camp sites. These initiatives were moderated by Finnish media artist Tapio Mäkelä. Marko Peljhan, with a long history in Makrolab projects joined Tapio to draft the initial M.A.R.I.N. concept where he suggested wanted to equip a boat using sustainable technologies.

### **Reloading Images (Germany)**

<http://www.reloadingimages.org/>

Reloading Images is a project by Berlin based organisation NewYorkRioTokyo e.V. (NYRT), initiated by Azin Feizabadi and Kaya Behkalam in 2006. Their practice takes the form of process-oriented artistic research, with one of its focuses on the relationship between fictional narratives and historical and social connotations of urban spaces. Since its inception, Reloading Images has been committed to fostering mutual capacity between international artists. The core aim has been to develop a reciprocal network of collaborative practices focused on exchange, collaboration and interdisciplinary research. In the past they have organised exhibitions, conceived performative interventions, published books and implemented workshops.



### **Transmediale (Germany)**

<http://www.transmediale.de/>

transmediale was founded in 1988 as VideoFilmFest, a side-project of the Berlin Berlinale's International Forum of New Cinema. The co-founder and artistic director Micky Kwella intended to offer a platform to electronic media productions not accepted at traditional film festivals. Currently, transmediale presents and pursues the advancement of artistic positions reflecting on the socio-cultural, political and creative impact of new technologies, network practices and digital innovation. As a festival aiming to define the contours of contemporary digital culture, it seeks out artistic practices that not only respond to scientific or technical developments, but that shape the way in which we think about and experience the technologies which impact virtually all aspects of our daily lives. As such, transmediale understands media technologies as cultural and aesthetic techniques that need to be embraced in order to comprehend, critique, and shape global societies. The festival includes exhibitions, competitions, conferences, film and video programmes, live performances and a publication series.

### **Urban Research Plaza (Japan)**

<http://www.ur-plaza.osaka-cu.ac.jp/en/about/index.html>


The Urban Research Plaza serves as a centre for research and practice on urban revitalisation at Osaka City University. The Plaza works with private and public sectors as well as citizens on urban studies projects in Japan and cities around the world. It is active in building international networks of urban research and policies through annual international symposiums and workshops that gather leading researchers and policy-makers working on urban planning.




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