

RE-CREATION

AN ART JOURNEY INTO THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

by Olga Kisseleva

BAC ART LAB Leuven, Belgium

house of art and science

RE-CREATION is a series of contemporary art exhibitions forming the artistic component of the European project *CirCoCréation* and developed in collaboration with KU Leuven, the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, the Art & Science International Institute, and Mid Sweden University. In the project, the international artist Olga Kisseleva explores how citizens can participate in circular urban initiatives. The project aims to encourage active involvement in the design, recycling and reuse of materials, thereby promoting short- and long-term sustainability.

The conceptual foundation of **RE-CREATION** rests on a compelling premise: *can art transform waste into resource, and discarded matter into aesthetic experience?* In response to the growing ecological crisis, the project proposes an alternative model of creation situated at the intersection of artistic innovation, scientific research, and environmental responsibility. An interdisciplinary consortium of researchers from Belgium, France, Spain, and Sweden collaborates to develop an exhibition that functions simultaneously as a platform for the circular ecosystem and as an immersive environment in which each artwork narrates its own process of transformation.

The project unfolds through a series of co-creative workshops conceived as experimental laboratories where discarded materials acquire new meanings and functions. Wood remnants, metal fragments, neglected textiles, plastics, and even food residues are collected in partnership with local associations and material banks. Within these participatory contexts, artists, researchers, and the public collaboratively reimagine the potential of these materials, generating a shared reflection on sustainability, creativity, and collective responsibility.

The international teams participating in the **RE-CREATION** are engaged in experimental processes of material recovery and recycling, each focusing on distinct categories of waste. The French team concentrates on the transformation of organic waste—particularly food residues derived from dairy products and shellfish—into new artistic and functional construction materials. At KU Leuven, researchers have set up a living lab to evaluate the impact of construction material reuse through resource hubs and analyse what information different stakeholders need to develop design principles for a monitoring system. In parallel, the Spanish and Swedish teams are advancing innovative methodologies for the recycling and creative repurposing of paper-based materials.

The outcomes of these collaborative investigations will culminate in a series of four major exhibitions, each hosted by one of the partner countries—France, Belgium, Spain, and Sweden. Together, these exhibitions will present the evolving dialogue between artistic practice, material innovation, and ecological responsibility that defines the **RE-CREATION** project.

LUILEKKERLAND

The first Living Lab was organised by the Art & Science International Institute in collaboration with the City of Bayonne and the Points de Vue festival. The works produced during this event is presented in the **RE-CREATION** exhibition at BAC ART LAB.

The multidisciplinary team ran co-creative workshops using an innovative, entirely bio-based and biodegradable material produced by researchers from milk residues. Titled 'The River of Milk', the co-creative workshop resulted in a monumental urban art installation comprising 50 flags made from bio-based material, each bearing an original drawing created with vegetable ink. Installed on the bridge crossing the Adour River, this circular economy artwork refers to the 'River of Milk on the Banks of Kissel', a fictional land from Slavic fairy tales. This concept has equivalents in Flemish: **LUILEKKERLAND**. This land of abundance has rivers of milk and kissel-lined banks (kissel is a traditional Northern European dessert), and animals run and fly already fried. Houses are made of gingerbread and cheese is found everywhere instead of stones.

The river of milk is a common landscape element in the Slavic Baba-Yaga fairy-tales. For a thousand years now, she has been living alongside a wild apple tree chatting with passers-by, the tablecloth always served, the flying carpet, the invisibility cap, and of course Baba Yaga's house placed on hen's feet, who can walk, run and turn on his heels... A medieval vision of the Smarthouse! Today, the futuristic approach of the **LUILEKKERLAND** sheds light on this medieval dream. The way to achieve this could be precisely the circular economy, which makes it possible to preserve resources, the environment, and fair sharing, while offering the best to everyone.

RE:FLOOR

Re:Floor is a liminal dialogue with discarded materials. The cocreation workshop is facilitated by the Idiosyncratic Inventors Collective and SAM research Group

This co-creative mosaic emerged from a workshop situated within a Living Lab on circular construction ecosystems, where reclaimed materials—wood, stone, fragments of urban infrastructure—were invited to speak, resist, and transform. No longer waste, not yet reused, these materials inhabit a liminal phase: a space of potential, ambiguity, and agency.

Guided by new materialist thinking, participants engaged in silent dialogue with these vibrant matters, composing a temporary floor installation through embodied resonance and sensory exploration. Words were inscribed, gaps were filled, traces were left. The mosaic is not a finished artwork, but a living composition—open to change, reinterpretation, and interaction.

This installation invites viewers to reflect on the lifecycle of materials, the porous boundaries between function and meaning, and the possibility of co-creating futures with what has already lived once. It is a tactile inquiry into circularity, collaboration, and the aesthetic power of reuse.

And for the other materials just a short:

Reclaimed insulation boards, origins unknown, provided by Atelier Circuler

Boards made from recovered local trees fallen or cut due to infrastructure needs or age, provided by Atelier Circuler.

BAC ART LAB

BAC ART LAB is a workspace for contemporary art at KU Leuven, which provides space for creation, presentation, and encounter. BAC ART LAB is a centre for art and science. It focuses on artistic trajectories at the intersection of art and research. It provides a home for new educational methods that combine theory and practice.

BAC ART LAB is based at the former Institute of Bacteriology on Vital Decosterstraat. An exceptional monument of the university's heritage in the heart of Leuven has thus been given a new purpose for the coming years. BAC ART LAB seeks to become a new cultural stakeholder in dialogue with the existing cultural landscape. It seeks to facilitate and foster closer ties between the city and the university.

TEAM & PARTNERS

Idea by Olga Kisseleva

With collaborative works by: Tatiana Drozd, Olga Kisseleva, Taisiya Polishchuk, Nemo Rhunensky

Curators: Alban Morlot, Véronique Verbert

Researchers and scientific supervisors: Luc Alaerts, Delphine Amblard, Karin Hannes, Pascal Gilles, Aurélie Saada, Karel Van Acker, Hanne Vrebos

Design: Lucia Batalla-Tuero, Tatiana Drozd, Lars Leinfelder Verhellen

Participants of the co-creative workshop: ALIBERT Nawin, ABELARD Eulalie, ABENZOAR Noëla, BERGONIER Adelaide, BLAMBERT Sway, BLANC Charlotte, BONACIER Marie, CAMUS Perrine, CLAPIER Mathilde, COMITRE Inès, CONQUET Alexia, DEVERS Justine, DIDIER Eloïse, DUBOULOZ-MONNET Agathe, DUCHAS Eilyn, DUHAMEL Léana, FODE Axelle, FORTABAT Elise-Ann, JORAND Enola, GODET Marius, GRIPON Mateo, GUARDIOLA-LAVERGNE Louna, HIRIBURU Xana, JEAURAT Maayana-Noah, LESPONNE Marie, LOHAU Natacha, LOPEZ Julia, LORR INOSTROZA Luna, MICHELOT Odette, MIEGEVILLE Eva, POIRIER Azélice, SOUTUMIER Adeline, TEXIER-PEREZ Lucas, YASSAÏ Kyana

Artworks co-produced by: Art & Science International Institute, Points de Vue, Alexandr Savchuk Foundation

The exhibition is a part of **CirCoCreation** - *Closing the gaps between stakeholders for successful and sustainable urban Circular Construction initiatives through Co-creation.*

Partners: KU Leuven (BE), UCM (ES), MIUN (SE), ASCII (FR), Stad Leuven (BE), Sundsvall Kommun (SE), Atelier Circuler (BE), Flooré AB (SE), Reboard Technology (SE)

CirCoCreation aims to enhance urban sustainability by fostering citizen involvement in circular construction practices. It seeks to establish a cohesive ecosystem, leveraging living labs for co-creation and developing metrics to track and inspire material reuse.

CirCoCreation is part of **DUT - Joint Programming Initiatives** co-funded by the European Union in collaboration with FWO (Fonds Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek), AEI (Agencia Estatal de Investigación), FORMAS (Swedish Research Council for Sustainable Development) and ADEME (Agence de la transition écologique).



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