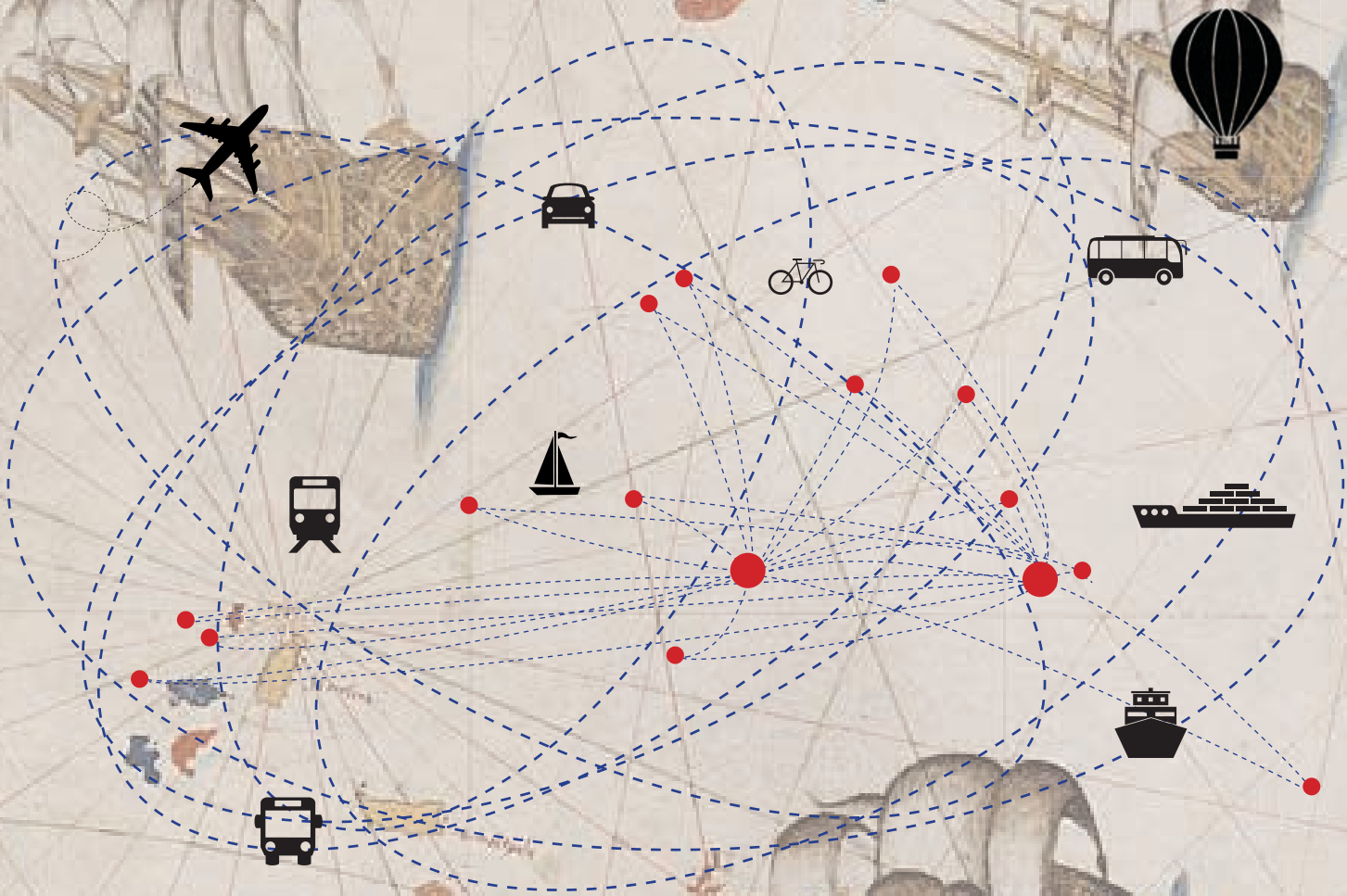
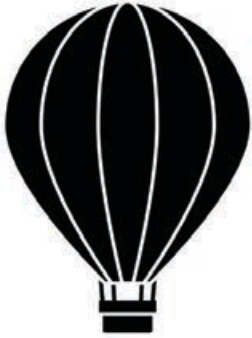
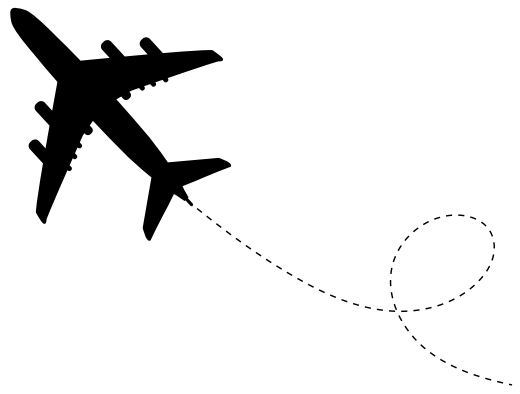




MOVE IN MED: MOBILITY STORIES

..... Ready, Steady, Go!





Ready, Steady, Go!

Ready Steady Go! aims at promoting inclusive mobility for young artists and culture professionals operating in Mediterranean “remote” areas, such as island, small cities, and non-EU countries, facilitating their access to the international scene as a key component of their career development.

Ready Steady Go! offered a learning programme welcoming 14 participants in immersive workshops, online capacity building sessions and international gatherings. It produced two publications offering readers the chance to take a deep dive into the realities and needs of mobility for young artists and culture professionals, and providing practical tools and a space for debate.

The *Guidelines to support mobility of young artists and culture professionals* share partners’ insights to support artists and professionals’ mobility, and *Move in Med: Mobility stories* amplify the voice of young people narrating their own mobility stories and projects.



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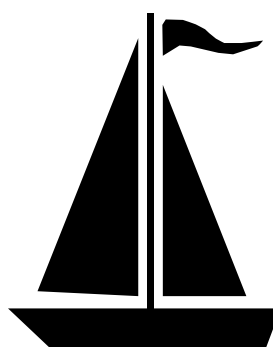
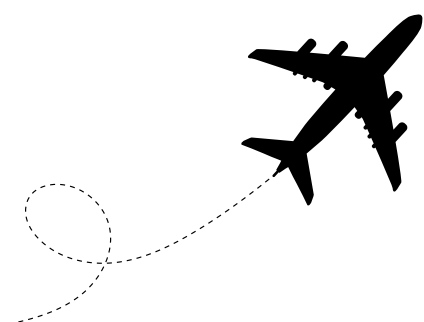
Liv.in.g
the international gallery gallery





MOVE IN MED: MOBILITY STORIES

..... Ready, Steady, Go!



Ready,
Steady,
Go!



Funded by
the European Union



Move in Med: Mobility stories

Credits

Editors

Fanny Bouquerel, Marwa Helmy

with the contributions of

Christiane Dabdoub Nasser and Cristina Farinha, Cristina Carlini and Carlotta Garlanda, Kelly Diapouli and Evgenia Kavvadia, Lydia Prouteau and Selim Ben Safia, Lucia Pierro and Marco Scarpinato

and of

Part 3. was drafted on the basis of one-on-one or two persons interviews as well as texts provided by the participants. They have also sent visuals that are inserted all throughout this document

B. Bordoni, Mia Bradić, Lisa Consolini, Mehdi Dahkan, Eirini Drosou, Fadoua El Azizi, Akrivi Koukouli, Sara Mladenović, Engy Mohamed, Miriam Montano, Molka Nasraoui, Adriana Ruiz García, Dario Sanna, Kristina Zimaj

Photos

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Video credits

- Mia Bradić. Filmed and edited by: Mia Bradić. Music: The Spin - Greg Haines, album Moments Eluding. Filmed at "Mala scena" of the Youth Center in Split with the support of Cirkus Kolektiv - organization for contemporary circus and related artistic practices
- Fadoua Al Azizi: Filmed and edited by: Fadoua Al Azizi
- Mehdi Dahkan: "Sous réserve d'obtention de visa" Filmed and edited by Mehdi Dahkan at HAU Berlin

Other visuals credits

Ready Steady Go! participants

Interactive map

Adriana Ruiz Garcia

Graphic design

Lucia Pierro

Editing

Christiane Dabdoub Nasser

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Partners, artists, cultural professionals, partners' board members

Roberto Cimetta Fund: Mohamed Ben Soltane, Myriam Amroun, Giovanna Tanzarella

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Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the National Agency. Neither the European Union nor National Agency can be held responsible for them.

Ready Steady Go!

Partners

The **Roberto Cimetta Fund** promotes and facilitates the mobility of artists and culture professionals through providing support for the preparation and implementation of their mobilities, by allocating travel grants and taking an active part in debates around mobility and cultural policies.

www.cimettafund.org/

Liv•in•g is an Italian social enterprise committed to promoting fair growth in cultural cooperation and internationalization. It serves both established and independent cultural and creative organizations, as well as public and private institutions, nationally and internationally.

www.livingnet.eu

Busart Busart was established in 2009 with the main aims to promote cultural democracy and equity and to assist the professional development of artists and cultural operators, especially with respect to the internationalisation of their practices. Since 2009, it has initiated and / or engaged in a number of capacity building and mobility activities aiming to enhance the capacities of Greek artists and cultural operators.

www.busart.org/en/

Al Badil - L'alternative culturelle is a Tunisian association active since 2013. Born from the desire to broaden the scope of cultural action throughout Tunisia, its activities are divided into 4 areas: artistic creation, artist management, cultural management training, and the management and creation of cultural events. Al Badil is also active internationally, working on the mobility of artists.

<https://al-badil.net/>

Amuni is an association with a long track record in the field of cultural cooperation projects in the Mediterranean area, developed mainly in the framework of EU-funded programmes, as well as in research and training initiatives targeting young cultural operators and artists' career development. Amuni also deals with the production and dissemination of artistic works at the international scale, especially in the field of performing arts. Based between Paris and Sicily, it is strongly connected to both the European and Mediterranean political and cultural scene.

Partners' teams

Roberto Cimetta Fund (Fanny Bouquerel, Mohamed Bijjeddiguene, Ina Studenroth) • Busart (Kelly Diapouli, Evgenia Kavvadia, Vasianna Antiochou, George Skianis) • Al Badil (Hiba Gharbi, Selim Ben Safia, Zoé Baudoin, Mehdi Saya, Lydia Prouteau) • Liv.in.g (Carlotta Garlanda, Cristina Carlini, Eleonora De Caroli, Giuliana Ciancio, Giulio Stampo) • Amuni

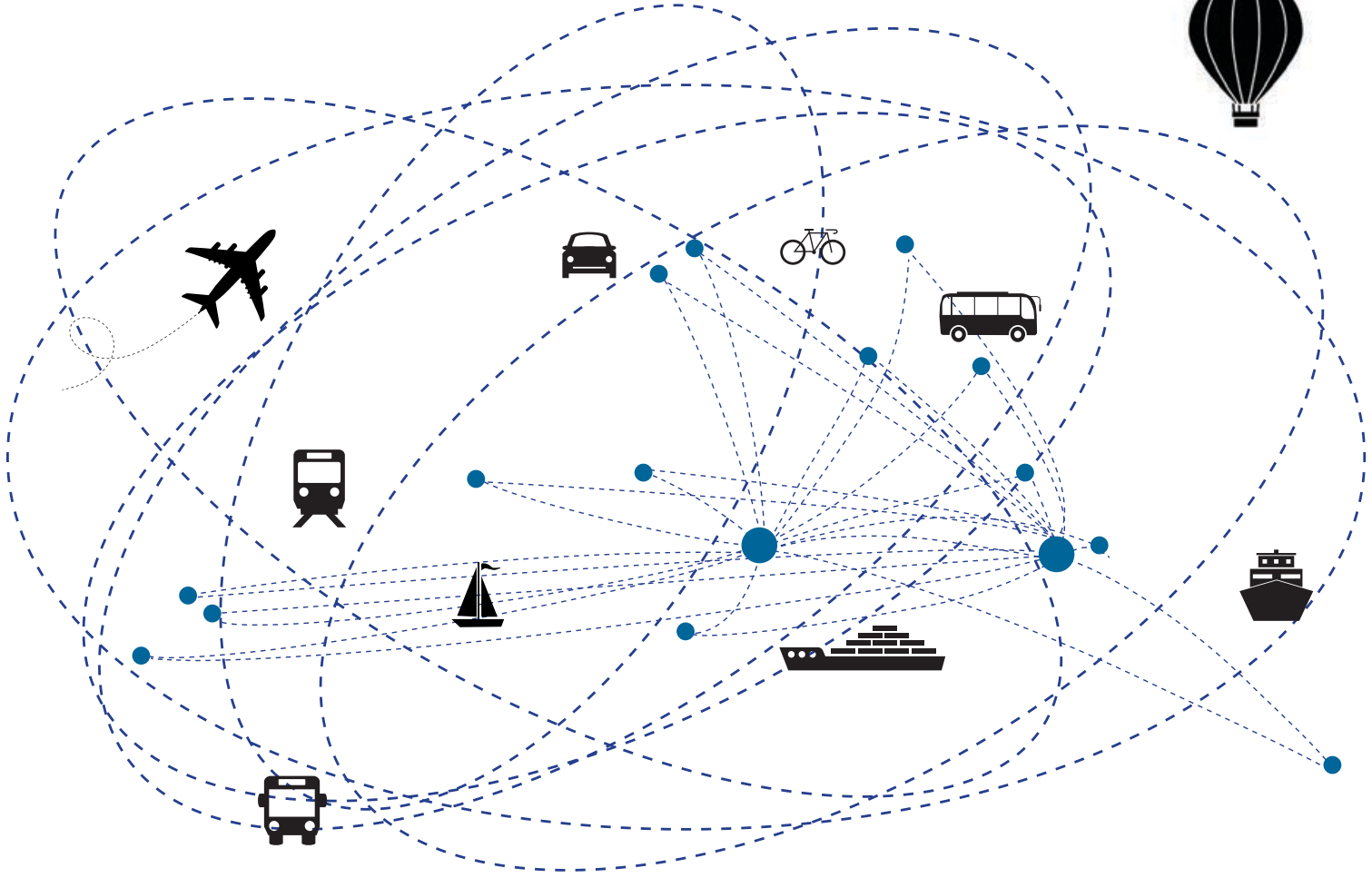
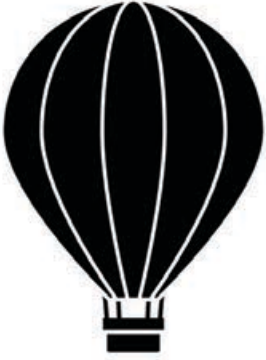
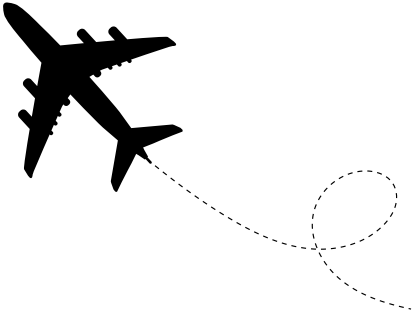


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..... Ready, Steady, Go!

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Ready,
Steady,
Go!



Foreword

by Cristina Farinha

The Erasmus+ project **Ready, Steady, Go!** might come at first sight as yet another usual European Union's (EU) cooperation and mobility initiative, like so many others put in place throughout these years. Yet at times of escalating political and social turmoil, with growing uncertainties from the Middle East to the other side of the Atlantic, focusing on promoting young artists and cultural workers' mobility in remote Mediterranean areas has become an extraordinary challenge and a noble mission for the partners – Roberto Cimetta Fund, Liv•in•g, Busart, Al Badil - L'alternative Culturelle, and Amuni.

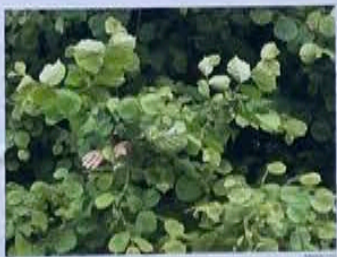
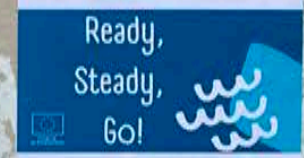
The ability to move, connect, and exchange ideas across borders has always been a cornerstone of cultural and artistic work; in the same way as the Mediterranean has always been a region deeply shaped by centuries of exchanges and movements. Yet mobility and dialogue in this region are nowadays not a given. For many young artists and cultural professionals, especially those in remote areas, access to mobility remains a significant endeavour. This project was designed therefore to address this gap, creating new pathways for emerging talents to navigate and overcome barriers to mobility within their career paths.

Since its inception in 1999, the Roberto Cimetta Fund has been celebrating and promoting the value of cultural mobility in the Mediterranean. Beyond providing funding for the circulation of artists and other cultural practitioners, throughout the years it has realised that accessibility and capacity building were also essential so that opportunities are fully taken and rightly explored by the diversity that characterises this region. Hence this project's focus on remote areas and those that rarely get the chance and/or the resources to move out and collaborate with others.

This report reflects on the project's achievements and amplifies the voices of young cultural practitioners whose journeys highlight the transformative power of mobility in their careers and communities. As mobility is more than just travel - it is a means of artistic expression, professional growth, and cultural dialogue. Through immersive workshops, virtual learning programmes, and international gatherings, it aimed at providing participants with the tools, networks, and inspiration needed to expand their

artistic and professional horizons. Beyond skill-building, the project has fostered a sense of belonging, empowerment, and resilience among young artists striving to make an impact despite logistical, economic, and political constraints. Their stories here captured offer a compelling glimpse into the realities of cultural mobility in the Mediterranean today. From navigating visa restrictions to reimagining sustainable and equitable travel in times of climate change, their experiences shed light on both the obstacles and opportunities inherent in cross-border artistic engagement.

As we look ahead, this report serves as both a testament and a call to action. It reminds us of the urgent need to advocate for more inclusive and sustainable mobility policies that support young culture professionals in the Mediterranean and beyond. It also underscores the importance of solidarity, innovation, and context adaptability in the face of ever-evolving global challenges. By championing mobility as a fundamental right and a driver of creative exchange, we may ensure that artists and cultural practitioners continue to enrich societies, challenge boundaries, and inspire future generations.



Engy Egypt
 Always a collaboration for anyone doing
 Participatory approach about the visa issues

Mehdi
 Arrivi
 Lisa
 Kristina

It'si nuova più appurato rapporto
 Because always something unexpected
 comes up

I. Introduction

Moving Beyond Borders: Empowering Culture and the Arts Through Mobility

Cultural and artistic mobility refers to a **temporary cross over journey** engaged by **artists and cultural operators** willing to **explore and learn, exchange and collaborate with peers, and research and/or present their work as a step in their professional path**. Cultural and artistic mobility serves as a **powerful catalyst** for nurturing the cultural sector **globally, regionally, and locally**. It involves the movement and travel of artists and culture professionals who exchange knowledge, experiences and expertise in other countries, diverse contexts, and among different communities and people. At its core, **the urge to travel and connect with others is a fundamental human drive**. It allows individuals to **learn about different perspectives, share their identities, and foster dialogue across cultures**. This exchange can take place through various forms: showcase performances, participation in events like workshops, conferences, and training programmes that build skills and networks.

Speaking about cultural and artistic mobility is more crucial than ever due to the evolving global landscape. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, the movement of artists and culture professionals plays a vital role in fostering cross-cultural dialogue, collaboration, and understanding. **In the wake of political, economic, and technological changes, mobility offers opportunities to share diverse perspectives, break down cultural barriers, and create inclusive spaces for innovation.**

Additionally, it addresses **the challenges posed by local restrictions, conflicts, and limited access to resources**, especially in regions that have faced instability. Now, as we face global crises and shifts in the cultural sector, discussing mobility is key to ensuring that artists have the freedom to exchange ideas, expand their reach, and contribute to a **more resilient and diverse cultural ecosystem**.

Addressing cultural mobility in **remote areas in the Mediterranean region**, referred to in **Ready Steady Go!** as islands, rural areas and cities with less than 80 000 inhabitants, as well as non-Eu countries, is essential for several reasons. The Mediterranean, with its rich cultural diversity, has **historically been a crossroads of different civilizations, yet many remote areas within this region face isolation, limited access to resources,**



Workshop in Palermo © F. B.

and challenges in cultural exchange. Indeed, **access to mobility is strongly unequal for emerging artists and culture professionals** in the region due to a number of socio-political and economic factors, age and gender variables, and education and access to information.

Additionally, professionals operating in the margins of Europe lack transport infrastructures which leaves them little choice to travel seamlessly, or not take a plane, adding another obstacle to their mobility when mitigating climate change sets the agenda. However, **mobility is a right for everyone**, including for artists and culture professionals from the Mediterranean who need to be empowered to better address environmental issues in their work in a region where climate change has already upset fragile ecosystems.

Promoting cultural mobility in these areas can **bridge the gap between these communities and the broader cultural world**, offering artists and culture professionals opportunities for learning, networking, and showcasing their work on a global scale. Cultural mobility can also contribute to the **revitalization of these regions by fostering local creativity**, preserving intangible heritage, and creating economic opportunities



Workshop in Elefsina © F. B.

through the cultural and creative industries. By focusing on mobility in remote areas, we can ensure that marginalized voices are heard, encourage cross-cultural dialogue, and foster a more inclusive and resilient cultural ecosystem across the Mediterranean. Despite all challenges, cultural and artistic mobility remains essential - not only for the creators and professionals involved but for audiences, as it enables culture and art to transcend borders and promote mutual understanding across diverse communities and cultures.

Designed to support the mobility of emerging artists and culture professionals living in poorly connected areas Mediterranean, the **Ready Steady Go!** project aims at contributing to answer these challenges. It explores the conditions and challenges they face when engaging in cultural mobility. Focusing on these artists' and operators' strategies to overcome mobility barriers, the programme sheds light on the profound impact that mobility has on their careers and creative practices, and the way they strive to access mobility.

Presenting mobility initiatives as projects, **Ready Steady Go!** offered a learning



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Workshop in Elefsina © Miriam Montano

programme for 14 participants from the Mediterranean region that provides a space for debates and gives concrete tools to support participants in the design and preparation phases of their mobility projects. It included two immersive workshops, in Palermo (Italy) and Elefsina (Greece), an online capacity building programme, as well as two international gatherings.

Additionally, it produced two publications offering practical tools and a space for debate. Targeting institutions whose mission includes the support to mobility, the ***Guidelines to support mobility for young artists and culture professionals*** shares the partners' insights into crafting schemes and strategies dedicated to artists and professionals' mobility that respond to their needs.

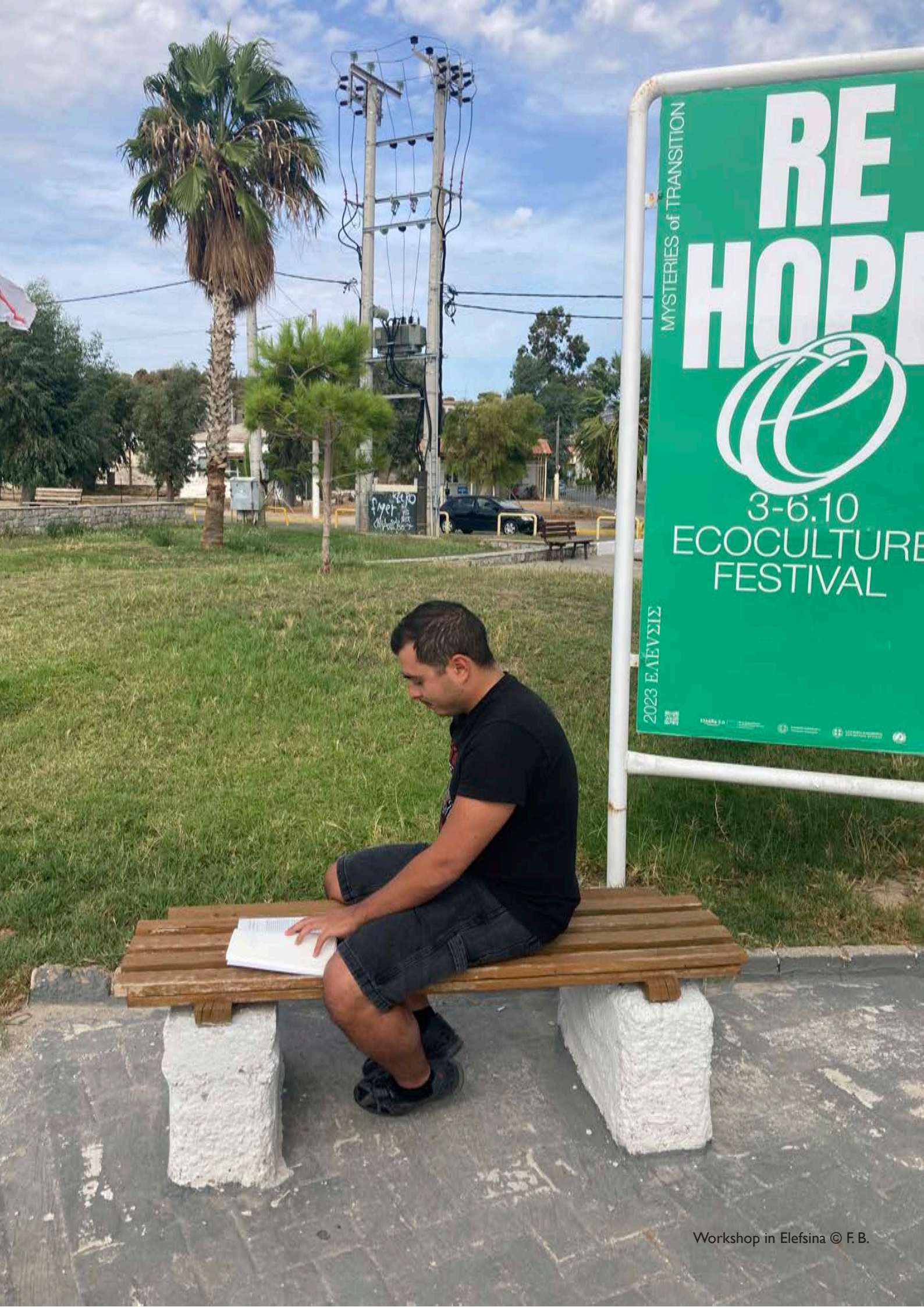
Targeting a large audience, and more particularly young people, ***Move in Med: Mobility stories*** aims at providing a deeper understanding of young artists and culture professionals' circumstances regarding their access to mobility on the one hand, and at showcasing in detail the context, challenges, partners, resources, sustainability strategies, and expectations of the young artists and culture



Workshop in Elefsina © F. B.

professionals developing their mobility project, on the other.

Above all, it amplifies the voices of young people narrating their own mobility stories and projects through their own words. In the end, *Move in Med: Mobility stories* provides a platform for young artists and cultural operators to share their mobility experiences creatively, offering inspiration and valuable insights to their peers. Through this, the programme fosters greater understanding and encourages the exchange of ideas, strengthening the mobility ecosystem for culture professionals.



MYSTERIES of TRANSITION

RE HOP



3-6.10
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FESTIVAL

2023 ΕΛΕΥΣΙΣ



2. Ready Steady Go! - Concept and implementation

Designing and implementing the learning programme

Gathering a group of committed artists and culture professionals from the Mediterranean

Committed to promote inclusive mobility for young artists and culture professionals, a group of partners from France, Italy, Greece and Tunisia gathered and designed the project for early-stage artists and culture professionals. Aged 20-29 and based in remote areas, these professionals are offered few professional opportunities, both locally and internationally (education, training, residencies, research, creations, performing), compared to professionals living in large urban areas and well-connected regions. Participants were identified through an open call, which was largely disseminated by all the partners, and Al Badil ensured that it reached out artists and culture professionals in the southern Mediterranean region. Candidates willing to embark on this ten-month learning journey focused on mobility were invited to submit a proposal. 67 applicants expressed their motivation to participate and presented an individual project each to develop within the learning programme; all proposals included an international mobility. The applications were assessed by all the partners according to precise criteria, with the goal of forming a diverse and dynamic group of motivated young professionals.

The learning approach

The learning methodology was designed to be **learner-centred, agile, and flexible**, ensuring that participants could shape their own learning journey. It combined theoretical inputs with **interactive, participatory activities** in small groups, which allows for a collective exploration of new themes through discussions and hands-on exercises. Personalised **mentorship sessions** supported participants in developing their individual projects, offering tailored guidance and feedback. All through, special attention was given to participants' **well-being**, creating an encouraging and inclusive environment where everyone felt heard and valued. Communication was managed in a way to address potential challenges in an **intercultural setting**, ensuring mutual understanding and



Workshop in Palermo © F. B.

enriching exchanges. The programme also included visits to local cultural centres and meetings with artists and cultural figures, offering participants direct exposure to diverse artistic practices and professional experiences. These encounters were inspiring, and provided networking opportunities, and offered a deeper understanding of the local cultural landscape, reinforcing the programme's commitment to experiential and context-based learning.

The learning activities

Ready Steady Go! was composed of a virtual mobility programme as well as two four-day workshops in Palermo and Elefsina. The virtual mobility programme was designed to kick off the programme and prepare the first on site session, as well as to maintain engagement between participants during a long-term project, complementing the two in-person workshops. Following an initial discussion with the participants to identify key interests and skill gaps, four online sessions were organised by project partners, and coordinated by Liv•in•g. These included a project management workshop, a networking



Workshop in Palermo © F. B.

session on Mediterranean mobility stories, a review of participants' projects, and a session on climate justice and the role of artists. The virtual programme successfully strengthened connections and facilitated exchanges.

Curated by the Roberto Cimetta Fund¹, with the active contribution of all partners, the **Ready Steady Go!** workshops took place in Palermo from April 15 to 19, 2024, and in Elefsina 7-11 October, 2024. In Palermo, the workshop was hosted at the premises of the Institut français. The first day focused on group-building and exploring mobility. Participants began by illustrating their journey to Palermo and presenting their cultural contexts before engaging in an exercise to unpack mobility as both a social phenomenon

1) For the Roberto Cimetta Fund, this reflection complements the participatory advocacy work implemented in 2022 with the *Manifesto in favor of the mobility of artists and cultural professionals in the Mediterranean and in the world*. <https://www.cimettafund.org/en/blog/2022/11/28/manifesto-in-favor-of-the-mobility-of-artists-and-cultural-professionals-in-the-mediterranean-and-in-the-world/>

For Liv•in•g, this project is part of a stronger and stronger commitment towards the topic of mobility and climate justice, that resonate with the activities it is prioritising and planning for the next future. This reasons e.g. with Giuliana Ciancio being part of On the Move Board or Cristina Carlini undertaking a specific training to become Green Event Coordinator thanks to Next Generation EU Italian funding. RSG contributed to our capacity building as an asset for future projects in this sense, as well as a better positioning of the social enterprise as a reference to these topics



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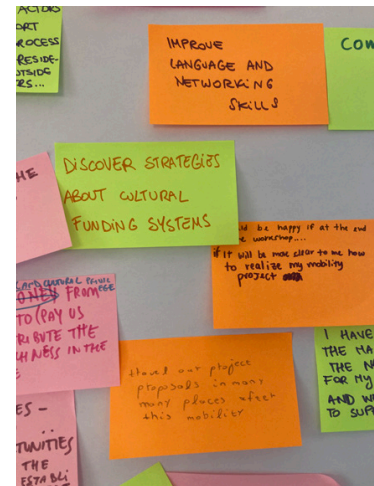
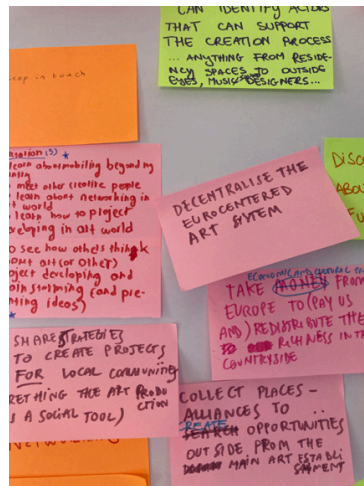
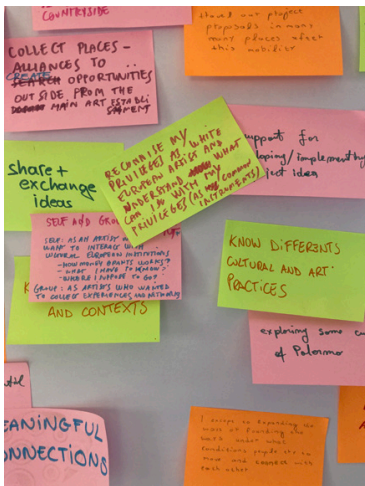


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Workshop in Palermo (all photos) © F.B.





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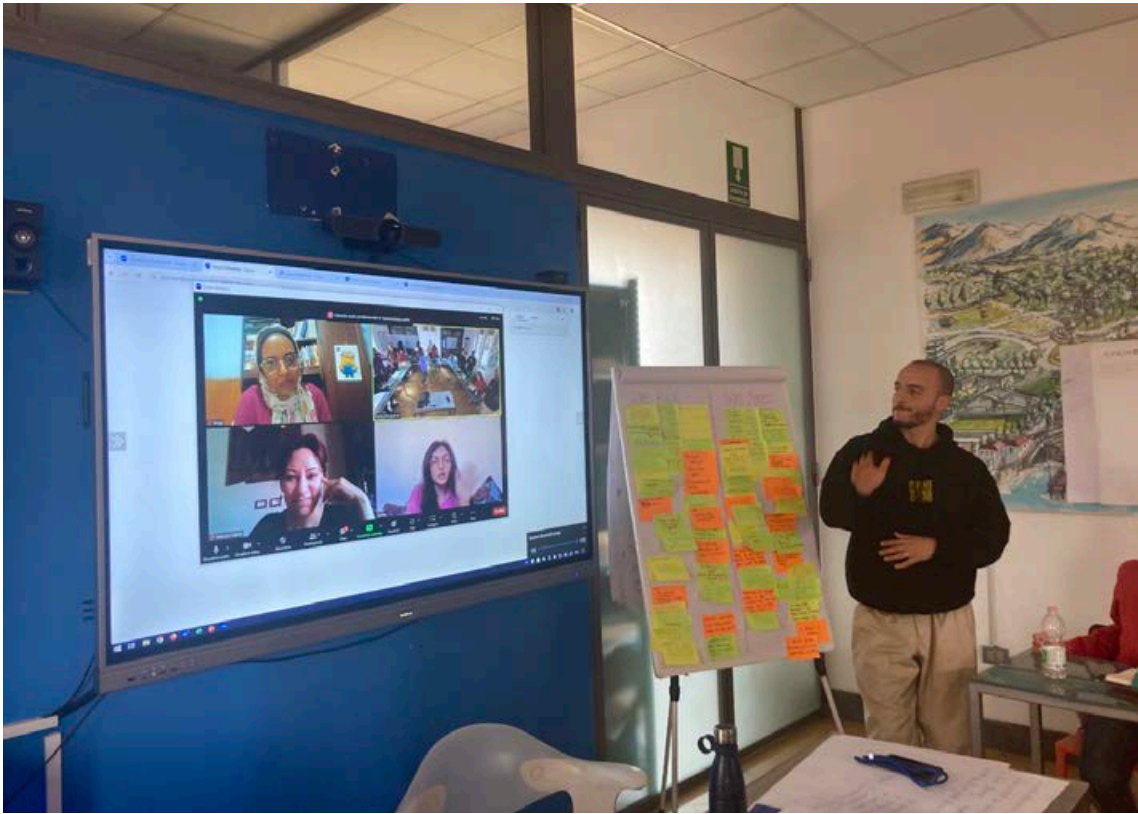


and a structured project requiring preparation. The second day featured a mentorship session, inviting participants to strategize and position themselves within their mobility projects, followed by an overview of the international cultural mobility ecosystem. The third day introduced mobility tools and funding schemes, equipping participants with practical resources to develop their own projects.

Each day also provided opportunities to connect with Palermo's vibrant cultural scene. Participants explored Cantieri Culturali alla Zisa, a multidisciplinary cultural complex with the theatre venue Spazio Franco, a centre dedicated to the environment, with co-working spaces and exhibition venues. They had a guided tour when they visited architectural landmarks, walked to the coast up to the Museo delle Marionette, and stopped at L'Eglise, an independent photography centre. Additionally, they engaged in one-on-one exchanges with artists and culture professionals leading festivals, curating exhibitions, shaping museum narratives, writing theatre plays, designing innovative education programmes for youth or arts programmes for women. These encounters were an integral part of the workshop experience, promoting dialogue and stimulating inspiration for participants' mobility projects.

Workshop in Palermo © F. B.





Workshop in Palermo © F. B.

Workshop in Elefsina © Miriam Montano





Workshop in Elefsina (both photos) © F.B.





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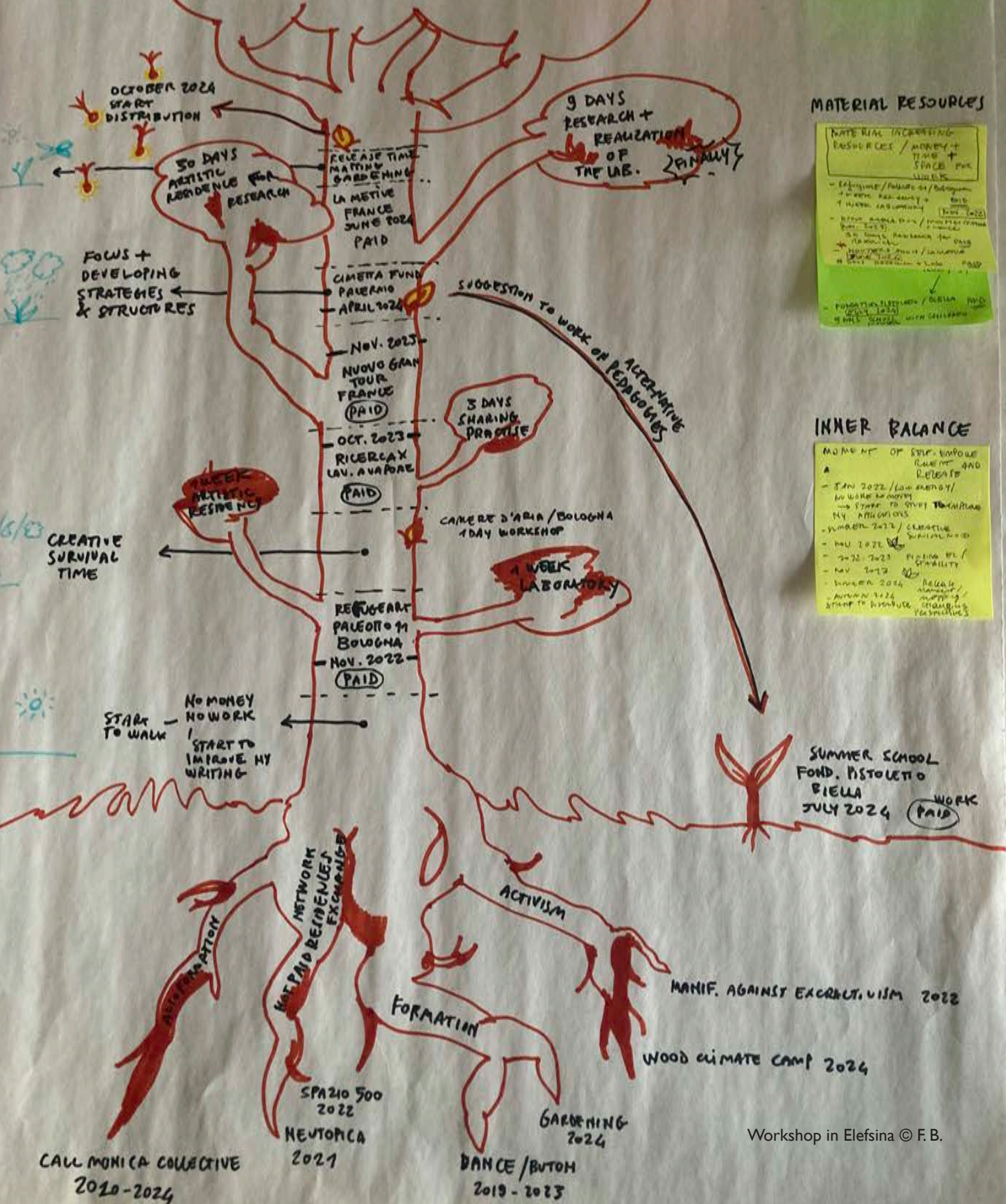
L'ERBAVOGLIO DEVELOPING PROCESS 2021-2024

CHALLENGES
 - DECIDE
 - HOW TO GET THE...
 - ...
 - ...

CREATIVE RESOURCES
 IMAGINATIONS / COLLABORATIVE
 SUPPORTS
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 ...
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MATERIAL RESOURCES
 MATERIAL / INCREASING
 RESOURCES / MONEY +
 SPACE FOR
 ...
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INNER BALANCE
 MOMENT OF SELF-EMPOWER
 (CLAIMING AND
 RELEASE)
 - JAN 2022 / LOW ENERGY /
 ...
 ...
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Workshop in Elefsina (all photos) © Miriam Montano



In Elefsina, the group was warmly welcomed at the Old Canteen, a coastal venue with panoramic windows overlooking the sea. The first day focused on reconnecting with the group, integrating newcomers, reflecting on the participants' project development journeys, and beginning preparations for the installation that would showcase their work at the dissemination event. The second day was entirely dedicated to green mobility, exploring various sustainable, ecological, and green approaches while encouraging participants to define the concept in a way that resonated with them. Time was allocated for individual



The dissemination event © F. B.

reflection, supported by a series of resources, followed by a group discussion to share key takeaways. These new insights were then integrated to enhance the sustainability of their projects. On the third day, participants moved to Synikismos, the neighborhood hosting the dissemination event, where they installed an artistic promenade to engage the local community in a festive gathering.

Throughout the workshop, participants had the opportunity to connect with the local scene, including the Eco Culture Festival - a key initiative of Elefsina, the European Capital of Culture 2023. They visited the premises and exchanged ideas with the youth art collective Cultterra. Additional explorations included a trip to the ship cemetery near Elefsina's archaeological site, which symbolizes the challenges of Mediterranean mobility, as well as encounters with representatives of the Synikismos community, whose history is deeply intertwined with migration in the region.

The dissemination event

The dissemination event of **Ready Steady Go!** took place in Synikismos, a peripheral area



The dissemination event (all photos) © F. B.





The dissemination event © F. B.

of Elefsina with a vibrant community of descendants of migrants. Participants showcased the results of the project through a **promenade-style installation**, presenting their cultural initiative - including workshops with teenagers, support for artistic activities, and artistic works such as drawings, photographs, choreographic pieces, and video extracts. Artworks were distributed across the neighborhood, embedding artistic expression in the urban fabric. The event drew **great attention from the local community**, with around 50 people, from children to elders, engaging with the presentations.

For the **Synikismos community**, the event was a rare opportunity to connect with a diverse group of international artists. It brought **Europe and the Mediterranean**, known mostly through news headlines, **into a neighborhood that often feels distant from both**. Children explored **virtual reality lenses** and engaged in playful interactions, and the presence of ten artists in this remote area **amplified local pride**, and gave the **community visibility and a voice**. The event also fostered **unexpected and improbable connections**, as Elefsina's local residents and international artists - who might never have crossed paths otherwise - found common ground through creative exchange. Echoing



The dissemination event © F. B.

Dragan Klaić's vision, the event transformed the space into an **experimental zone of sociability**, where young people, often unheard, were given a platform to express themselves and engage in meaningful dialogue.

Challenges and opportunities for partners

Learning on how to better support youth cultural mobility

The partners enjoyed their teamwork and continued collaboration throughout the project, building trust, and sharing learning. The project provided an opportunity for **self-reflection**, when partners reviewed their approach to **supporting artists more effectively**. They managed to capture key takeaways, which are presented in the project's *Guidelines to support mobility of young artists and culture professionals* including: access to information regarding mobility opportunities; empowering artists and cultural operators to develop their mobility; physical and virtual mobility to build a community of practice; a green mobility for everyone; mitigating risks and difficulties; and visa issues.

Erasmus framework and visa issues

The partners greatly valued the **Erasmus+ Small-scale Partnerships in Youth** for its **flexibility and financial support**, which were essential for developing **Ready Steady Go!**. However, they strongly advocate for **equal opportunities for artists and culture professionals from southern Mediterranean countries**, who are currently ineligible for this scheme.

Committed to **inclusive mobility**, they opened the call to candidates from outside Europe and took full charge of their participation costs. The high response - **47 applications from North Africa and the Middle East, compared to 20 from Europe** - highlighted the **high demand for such opportunities**. In this context, the partners believe that Erasmus+ should better reflect this reality by aligning its action with these regional dynamics, enhancing visibility and maximising the programme's impact.

Visa challenges for participants from Morocco, Tunisia, and especially Egypt proved a significant challenge and one participant was unable to attend due to the rejection of her visa application. Despite a relatively successful **online engagement**, this obstacle underscored the **inequalities in access to mobility** that **Ready Steady Go!** addressed and the partners aim to continue addressing.

Hearing the voice of young artists, experimenting ways to respond to their needs

In spite of these difficulties, **Ready Steady Go!** gave the opportunity for the partners to **deepen their knowledge** about the challenges young artists and culture professionals meet when developing their mobility, giving them insights into how to review their activities to better respond to their needs.

Meeting these resilient young professionals - determined to develop their artistic work despite many challenges - was both inspiring and eye-opening. They could also adjust and test their tailored capacity development programme, and experiment with new formats and contents addressing current mobility challenges, which will be instrumental for developing their work.

Nurturing the “green mobility” debate from the ground up

Ready Steady Go! provided a valuable opportunity for partners to **explore and redefine**



Workshop in Elefsina © F. B.

“green” or “sustainable” mobility, a key priority on their agenda. Participants were invited to craft their own definitions, offering nuanced and insightful perspectives that challenge mainstream ideas and enrich the debate. This collective reflection will serve as inspiration for partners in shaping their future activities, ensuring a more grounded and inclusive approach to sustainable mobility.

Connecting locally, thriving internationally

Throughout the project, strong connections were forged with local communities in Palermo and Elefsina, which was an eye-opener. It both widened and deepened the project’s impact and opened new perspectives, least of which the notion that local communities can do without culture or art or that they are not interested. This fruitful interaction was confirmed firsthand by the participants, which will inspire their future work. At another level, the international profile of the participants and the diverse profiles of the partners contributed to expand their professional network, creating new opportunities for growth, mobility, and long-term impact.

EXPECTATIONS

MAKE SOME PHOTOS FOR MY PROJECT

NETWORK WITH ARTISTS AND ACTORS INVOLVED

explore more about concept of mobility

NEW WORK OPPORTUNITIES

FUNDING RESOURCES

CAN IDENTIFY ACTORS THAT CAN SUPPORT THE CREATION PROCESS ... ANYTHING FROM RESIDENCY SPACES TO OUTSIDE GALLERIES, MUSIC DESIGNERS...

IMPROVE LANGUAGE AND NETWORKING SKILLS

Communication skills

Share strategies...

keep in touch

Expectation (s) +
- to learn about mobility beyond my country
- to meet other creative people
- to learn about networking in art world
- to learn how to project developing in art world
- to see how others think about art (or other) project developing and both studying (and presenting ideas)

DECENTRALISE THE EUROCENTRED ART SYSTEM

DISCOVER STRATEGIES ABOUT CULTURAL FUNDING SYSTEMS

... I will be more clear to me how to realize my mobility project

tips (methods) - tools to improve our ideas and projects

SHARE STRATEGIES TO CREATE PROJECTS FOR LOCAL COMMUNITY (RETURNING THE ART RESIDENCY AS A SOCIAL TOOL)

Economic and cultural issues
TAKE MONEY FROM EUROPE TO (PAY US AND) REDISTRIBUTE THE MONEY IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

I have my project proposals in many main places where this mobility

I HAVE IDENTIFIED THE MAIN STEPS FOR THE NEXT THREE MONTHS FOR MY MOBILITY PROJECT AND WHO I CAN CONTACT TO SUPPORT ME IN THAT

NETWORKING

COLLECT PLACES - ALLIANCES TO SEARCH OPPORTUNITIES OUTSIDE FROM THE MAIN ART ESTABLISHMENT

SHARE ISSUES AND DISCOVER POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS ABOUT CULTURAL AND ARTS PROJECTS

meet people for future projects?

share + exchange ideas

RECOGNISE MY WHITE PRIVILEGES AS WHITE EUROPEAN ARTIST AND UNDERSTAND WHAT CAN I DO WITH MY COMMON PRIVILEGES (AS MY COMMON INSTRUMENTS)

support for helping/implementing my first ideas

CREATE ALLIANCE - COLLEG-NARRATIVE

HAVE ESTABLISHED CONTACTS WITH PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR ORGANISATIONS
I KNOW WHAT THEY FOCUS ON, WHAT ARE THEIR STRENGTHS AND NEEDS AND HOW WE COULD COLLABORATE

SELF AND GROUP
I WANT TO INTERACT WITH SEVERAL EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS
- HOW MANY GRANTS WORKS?
- WHAT I HAVE TO KNOW?
- WHERE I WANT TO GO?
KI GROUP: AS ARTISTS WHO WANTED TO COLLECT EXPERIENCES AND NETWORK AND CONTEXTS

KNOW DIFFERENT CULTURAL AND ART PRACTICES

TRAVELING ABROAD FOR THE FIRST TIME

CONNECTIONS, AND COLLABORATION ABOUT LOW FRONTATION ABOUT MOBILITY TOPIC

exploring some culture of Palermo

DISCOVER THE ARTISTIC ENVIRONMENT - SHARE SPACES/OPPORTUNITIES

network + potential future cooperation

I expect to expanding my network of funding... building the... meeting people who are more and connect with each other

MEET NEW ARTISTS

MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS

3. Young artists and culture professionals' mobility stories and projects

Ready Steady Go! (RSG) brought together a group of artists and culture professionals, from diverse backgrounds and who have experienced mobility in various forms. They have shared their views on the way mobility shapes their professional and personal journeys, and explored how it can be an integral part of their projects and careers. Their insights reveal the transformative power of movement, connection, and adaptation. It also shows that each story is unique!

I. CONTEXTS, PROFILES AND MOBILITY STORIES

A diverse group, a shared condition

Adriana, Akrivi, B., Dario, Engy, Eirini, Fadoua, Kristina, Lisa, Mehdi, Mia, Molka, Miriam, and Sara represent the **Ready Steady Go!** group of young artists and culture professionals. They come from or work in Egypt, Greece, Italy, Kosovo, Morocco, Slovenia, Serbia, Spain, and Tunisia, more specifically in what is referred to in the project as “remote places”: islands (Illes Balears, Sardinia, Andros), localities of less than 80 000 inhabitants, or non-EU countries (Alexandria, Rabat, Tangier or Hergla).

Some pursue the career of photographer, visual artist, film maker, video game designer, or performing artists (dance, circus). Others are cultural manager, journalist, educator or even engineer engaged in the field of culture. Many engage in cross-disciplinary work, spanning music, visual arts, performing arts, literature and digital arts. In their work, they blend languages and approaches, combining theoretical insights with intuition and emotion. Often, they combine their artistic practice with the design and full management of their projects from A to Z.

In spite of this plurality of geographical and professional backgrounds, they all have in common being **young and independent professionals** striving to develop their career in environments that are remote from dynamic cultural circuits. Many live in areas that

are deserted in winter and overcrowded in summer due to massive tourism, where qualified job opportunities for young people are limited - especially in the cultural sector - and infrastructures for cultural development are inadequate. Broadly speaking, these areas show little support for the emerging creative scene.

Mobility in 3 words...

When asked about their vision of mobility in three words, participants have replied with a diverse range of terms related to movement, connecting, learning, and transformation. They described mobility as «*movement, excitement, people*», «*connecting and meeting people everywhere, making them your temporary family*», and «*spreading the roots*».

Mobility is linked to «*idea and intention*», «*exploration and discovery*», «*learning and freedom*». Is it a catalyst for change, sparking «*fresh and new ideas*».

Mobility is also a physical experience, involving «*long travels, luggage, sneakers*». It is a force of transformation - a process of self-discovery that encourages introspection, and opens up sensitive worlds full of colours: «*images of green spaces, the elegance of a heron in flight, and the vibrant hue of cyclamens*».

... and 3 definitions of “green mobility”

Following a workshop session fully dedicated to “green mobility”, participants suggested their own definitions of this concept:

«... a concept about moving as well as attenuating the footprint on the planet, making it a good journey for the traveller and for the environment. It prioritises sustainability and environmental responsibility through methods that minimise carbon emissions, that involve relying on the digital to reduce paper consumption, and that take ethical and social issues into account... green mobility is a necessity for nature but it can come with associated costs and sometimes it can be expensive».

«Sustainable mobility is a paradigm that challenges the status-quo asking us to perceive the self in a relation of co-dependence, caring and responsibility [between] the human and non-human, the global and local environment».

«Green mobility means developing intersectional awareness related to the complexities of the

contexts and beyond; to cooperate on priorities to impact the present in order to build a better future».

Mobility as Transformation: stories of growth, struggle, and discovery

For many participants, mobility has been a transformative experience, shaping their careers, identities, and perspectives. Their experience paints a vivid picture of its multifaceted impact - whether through formal programmes, artistic residencies, professional exchanges, or even daily commutes.

Mobility fosters growth, resilience, and connection; it is an engine of transformation, discovery, and endless possibility. Below, they share defining moments from their journeys.

- **Studying, growing and gaining confidence** Eirini recalled her Erasmus exchange in Prague, as a pivotal moment, building her confidence, sharpening her language skills, and giving her the ability to adapt anywhere. For Fadoua, a student mobility programme in cinema was an intense and transformative experience. Mia remembers a year in France as part of a pedagogical group, where she connected with circus artists and professionals, shaping the artist she is today. For Kristina, a hard-won scholarship in the UK became a turning point in her career, and an opportunity to meet people from every continent.
- **Struggling, shifts, and new perspective** B. reflects on traveling across the country, interviewing a large number of independent organizations - an experience that transformed her approach to space and redefined her perspective. Miriam recalls moving to Belgium for eight months, navigating cultural differences, experiencing solitude and the unexpected coldness of a society as a foreigner. A solo trip to Lebanon for a cultural rights and advocacy workshop was an eye-opener for Fadoua, revealing the crucial role of culture in achieving sustainable development goals
- **Mobility within one's country can also be transformative.** Engy's solo journeys to her capital city gave her the space to «change her personality», gaining confidence, developing new skills and expanding her professional network. Though Molka has limited access to international mobility, her every day travels prove to be an exercise in adaptability and resilience.
- **Working and striving abroad** For Dario, a residency in Finland was a defining career milestone - taking him far from home, strengthening his language skills, and broadening

his artistic vision. Adriana describes playing in a Spanish orchestra in Lebanon, side by side with Egyptian musicians that she could never meet otherwise, as a life-changing experience. Sara, a visual arts student, was awarded the chance to move abroad through a competition, and saw it as a unique opportunity - one that meant everything. And as Mehdi puts it, «*The first time you travel to perform, everything changes. We traveled to countries where you are seen as someone “Wahoo!” just because you come from afar (...). Every dancer I know comes back different after their first experience abroad*».

II. DESIGNING AND DEVELOPING ONE’S OWN MOBILITY: EXPLORING, CREATING AND CONNECTING

Ready Steady Go! participants submitted mobility projects that reflect the diverse ways mobility can be envisioned. Their proposals reveal various perspectives on mobility expressed in artistic content, explored through human and non-human movements across borders, addressed as immigration-related initiatives, and through the development of their own careers as well as those of their peers internationally. Some of these projects reflect an anthropological approach that adds depth to this intellectual process.

Mobility, home, and belonging

Miriam’s photographic project explores the ideal of having a ‘room of one’s own’. She examines the bedrooms of young women in Madrid’s periphery during the economic crisis, linking them to landscapes typical of the outskirts of cities and highlighting depersonalized spaces. Her work resonates with broader struggles of identity and stability. «*This project allows me to blend my passion for photography, history, and social issues... But it’s difficult to follow all the parts with the same energy*».

Sara explores the concept of belonging through movement and mobility, questioning what defines home. Her visual work is deeply connected to her background, using digital arts and integrating familiar ready-made objects from former Yugoslavian countries. «*I am from a Serbian village, a really small place. Some people see some elements in my art related to my culture, this is something they know, and we start to communicate*». Both projects delve into themes of displacement, identity, and personal space.

Arts and learning for cohesive societies

Some participants' projects use arts and education to foster social cohesion. Adriana explores music education's role in social integration, drawing from her research with the *El Sistema* programme, «*bringing the expertise gathered by different international music for social change initiatives across the Mediterranean closer to [her] local community, located in the rural part of Mallorca and comprising a diverse population of newcomers, through teacher-training and exchange experiences*». This project shows her care commitment for her community: «*I don't need this project, I'd be better off without it. But this is my context, I can't turn my back on it*», seeing her role as a facilitator to create fulfilling experiences for children.

With his collective, Dario organises a nomadic contemporary art festival in a small village in Sardinia, bringing together local residents, artists, and the public, through exhibitions, a residency, and a space for dialogue and relationships. With this festival “Nostos”, named after the Greek word “return”, his team brings back to Sardinia the knowledge and experience they have acquired abroad while addressing depopulation and marginalization, and valuing local artistic expression. «*The community will get closer to contemporary arts; local artists will have more opportunities*».

Eirini aims to establish an academy for teenagers and professional artists on her island, combining workshops and a festival to nurture creativity and engagement. «*It's completely normal elsewhere, but for us, no... [Teenagers] don't know they need it because they've never had it*». Kristina's research examines the impact of non-formal education on cultural workers' professional development, with a focus on the Western Balkans. Each project highlights the impact of the arts in building inclusive and connected societies.

Art, Identity, and Environment: Creative Narratives for Community and Change

These projects explore the intersection of art, identity, and environment. Akrivi connects coastal communities with their surroundings through participatory art, emphasizing environmental responsibility. «*My project's mobility starts from the need to hear the voice of a smaller community near the sea... in a call for care and protection between humans and the environment*».

B's workshop examines fluid identities and the body's relationship with the landscape,

evolving into a therapeutic practice. For her, mobility is central and also raises key questions: *«How do you connect with temporary communities without ‘colonizing’ - without just bringing your work and treating people as test subjects?»*. Lisa seeks to establish an art centre to address cultural gaps in a tourism-driven region, trying to address a shortcoming: *«I always suffered from the lack of art-related opportunities when I was growing up»*.

Molka develops a narrative video game that interweaves Tunisian and Italian heritage, using interactive storytelling to highlight local history: *«Set in a dystopian future where rising sea levels have devastated coastal communities, [the game] aims to raise awareness about climate change’s impact on the region while fostering cross-cultural dialogue and challenging gender stereotypes within the gaming industry»*. Each initiative fosters community engagement and social reflection through art work.

Supporting and internationalizing practices and art works

These projects focus on film, dance, and performance to foster artistic growth and cross-cultural connections. Engy’s online festival connects filmmakers and producers across borders, addressing challenges faced by Arab filmmakers. Beyond visa issues, mobility is a challenge for her *«Everything takes place in the capital. You need to travel to attend festivals, etc. But for people like me who are introvert, mobility is hard. Now I changed, I started to talk to people»*.

Fadoua expands the reach of the Morocco Short International Film Festival through international collaborations: *«My project connects cultural diplomacy, economic benefits, and sustainability»*. Mehdi’s hybrid festival-workshop supports emerging Moroccan dancers with training and mentorship, facilitating their international career. He explains his approach: *«I wanted to create my own company in Tangier, but there weren’t enough trained dancers. Having more trained dancers in one place is beneficial for everyone. It fosters supportive relationships and exchanges»*.

Mia’s solo piece, *Survival of the Body*, explores identity and perception, and she aspires to take her work beyond Croatia: *«Circus artists in the Balkans have very limited opportunities... There’s no recognition of circus as a profession»*. Each initiative enhances artistic visibility and supports art works internationalisation.

III. READY STEADY GO! JOURNEY: THINKING AND ACTING STRATEGICALLY, TOGETHER

IDENTIFYING AND EXPRESSING CHALLENGES

Ready, Steady Go! participants face a range of challenges in developing their project, spanning from artistic direction to communication, as well as administrative and financial burdens. They also navigate the complexities of building connections both locally and internationally.

They struggle with maintaining their artistic direction and coherence, and with shaping their ideas into concrete projects while ensuring their consistency. Communication and mediation pose additional difficulties, as they find it sometimes hard to share their vision, engage their communities, and facilitate the reception of their artistic work. Many experience stress in meeting deadlines and overcoming bureaucratic hurdles when asking for funding. Sustaining their practice requires significant efforts - applying for multiple grants, securing resources or taking on additional jobs. The reliance on external funding to survive demands vigilant research, navigating grant opportunities and understanding donors' expectations... often without successfully overcoming the competition.

Participants' stories reveal deep-rooted social structures and systemic challenges they must navigate on their own: conservative, sometimes poor inclusive societies; limited to inexistant public support for the arts; international project-based funding that hinders long-time planning; and an emphasis on artistic production at the expense of dissemination, etc. In this context, many stressed the importance of artists being aware of the administrative aspects of their careers.

Moving forward together

Participants have identified various strategies to continue their work and build upon the insights gained from the **Ready Steady Go!** experience. These strategies reflect their commitment to developing their artistic work, collaboration and networking, and community engagement.

- **Project development and feedback:** Participants expressed their intention to design structured project plans while actively seeking feedback. Miriam mentioned that «*Seeking continuous feedback will help me develop my project further. It's important to stay open to*

ideas from different fields». **Ready Steady Go!** precise methodology, promoting horizontal exchanges, was also instrumental to reach concrete results. B. highlighted *«I appreciated the highly self-critical, non-institutional approach. Meeting people who strive for horizontal collaboration made me feel comfortable. I was surprised by how the process guided my stream of consciousness and made things feel feasible and concrete - something I needed»*. By sharing their projects with various interlocutors, participants refine their projects and ensure they meet their audience and community needs.

- **Strengthening partnerships and networks:** Many participants emphasised the importance of building strong partnerships with people who share the same values, and continued networking.

Dario noted: *«We need to engage local authorities in our activities. It's crucial to build partnerships that support our initiatives»*. This sentiment was echoed by others who plan to reach out to their local communities and seek collaboration with fellow participants.

- **Skill development and learning:** A commitment to ongoing skill development is also evident. Kristina expressed the need for more tailored workshops: *«Working as a freelancer - it could be interesting for me and perhaps for others. I want to continue improving my skills in project management»*. Several participants plan to engage in further training opportunities, attend workshops, and connect with experts in their respective fields to enhance their capabilities.

- **Explore funding opportunities beyond the obvious.** Several participants found it stimulating to address fundraising through broad and strategic lenses. Rather than focusing only on culture or artistic-related calls, searching for opportunities in the field of human rights, gender equality, or education, opens new doors. Culture professionals have particularly valued the presentation of Erasmus and Culture Moves Europe calls, as well as the European network On the Move information tools.

- **Creating long-term mobility opportunities:** Mehdi highlighted the importance of developing sustainable mobility opportunities: *«We need to discuss how to create long-term mobility opportunities that can benefit our communities»*. This includes advocating for support systems that facilitate mobility and foster creative exchanges across borders, ensuring that artistic practices are not limited by geographical constraints.

- **Emphasising environmental and social sustainability:** Sustainability emerged as a key theme. Fadoua pointed out the necessity of considering the impact of their work: *«I want*

to focus on sustainability in my projects. It's vital to ensure that what we create has a lasting impact». Participants expressed their commitment to integrating sustainable practices into their projects, showing their concern and awareness towards environment issues.

- **Community engagement and cultural exchange:** Many participants recognised the value of engaging with their local communities. Akrivi noted: *«I see my mobility as a way to connect with people and address shared challenges»*. By organizing community events and cultural exchanges, participants intend to foster dialogue and collaboration, enriching their local environments with diverse perspectives.

- **Building and reinforcing trust:** For many, the **Ready Steady Go!** experience reinforced the importance of trust - both in oneself and in the community. As Sara put it: *«It's a question of trust. Trust in myself and in the community as well. When you have the right group of people, everything is possible»*. Dario echoed this sentiment, emphasising the importance of deep engagement: *«RSG showed me that we need to go deeply, really deeply, deeply, deeply - no limit in going deep with our work»*.

This emphasis on depth and trust created a sense of shared purpose, while offering a silver lining. As B. put it: *«I was surprised by how many individuals have complex stories and are trying to bring change to their local areas. It made me feel less alone»*. The journey was not just about acquiring skills but about forging meaningful connections and discovering new ways to collaborate.



Interactive map by Adriana Ruiz Garcia including participants' location and projects: <https://public.flourish.studio/visualisation/21901144/>





photo: © Miriam Montano

Adriana Ruiz Garcia

My participation in Ready Steady Go! encouraged me to take on a strategy of regular, structured networking that has led me to invest time and effort into valuable partnership development, and is helping me step up not only this project but my overall career as a freelancer in Mallorca. As of now, I am more focused on community building but still hold a vision to bring and attract international talent to benefit local stakeholders at multiple levels.



Adriana Ruiz Garcia's project





photo: © Miriam Montano

Akrivi Koukouli

My mobility is an attempt to activate and explore possible ways of coexisting and caring for both people and water resources - something especially vital in our increasingly polluted environment.



Akrivi Koukouli's project



photo: © Miriam Montano

B Bordoni

Sustainability is about avoiding self-exploitation, financial instability, stress, and anxiety. It's also about having the right material, time, and attention from those you work with. Beyond economics, it's about mental sustainability - managing workload, knowing when to step back, and avoiding burnout.





photo: © Miriam Montano

Dario Sanna

Starting from the concept of mobility, I understood it in ways we had not previously known or considered. Metaphorically, we could define mobility as the center of a compass that serves as a vertex - or point of intersection - of many paths that generally help orient us toward achieving our goals.



photo: © Dario Sanna









photo: © Dario Sanna





Dario Sanna's project





photo: © Miriam Montano

Eirini Drosou

My project is deeply meaningful to me because it takes place in the area where I grew up, on an island of Cyclades named Andros. Returning to my roots and contributing to the community that shaped me provides a profound sense of fulfillment. It allows me to give back and make a positive impact on the lives of young people who are in a similar position to where I once was. (...) The project also aligns with my long-term goals of using the arts to foster personal and community growth. It's an experience that deepens my understanding of the transformative power of the arts and prepares me for future endeavors in similar contexts. (...) The emotional rewards of seeing teens grow in confidence and creativity are immense.



Eirini Drosou's project



Eirini Drosou's project





Eirini Drosou's project





Engy Mohamed

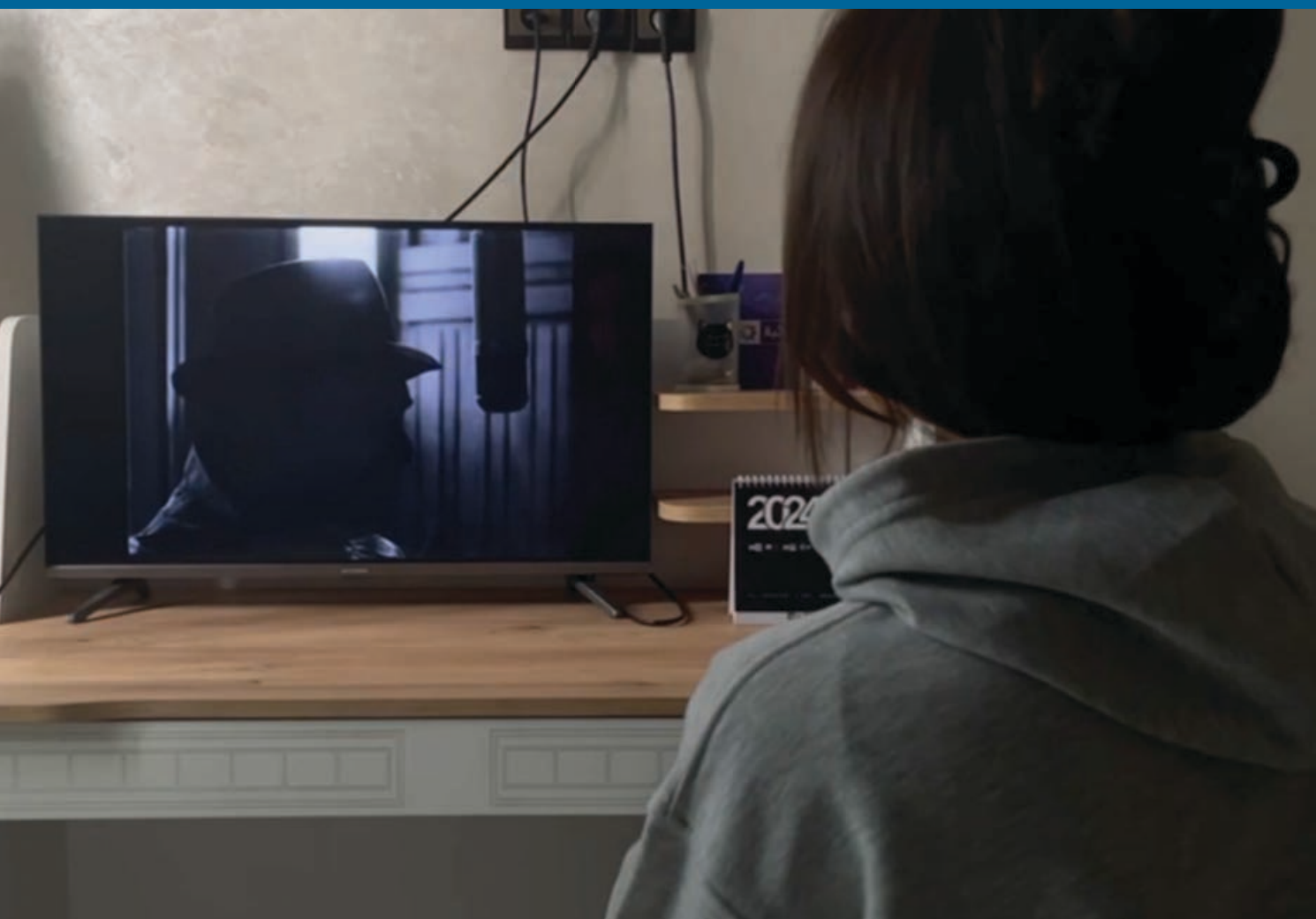
Ready Steady Go! was my first experience with [a mobility programme], and I was excited to present my “Bridging Borders” project. However, I quickly learned about the challenges on the ground. The programme had two phases: one in Italy, which I missed due to complex paperwork, and another in Greece, where my travel request was rejected because artistic projects were not seen as a valid reason. Although I didn’t make it, I still found the experience incredibly valuable. The lectures and discussions in the programme gave me new insights into the world of artistic mobility, and I learned firsthand about the obstacles that artists face when trying to move between countries. These lessons were not just theoretical - they would be crucial in helping me plan my own project, ensuring that others could avoid the difficulties I encountered. My experience with the “Ready steady go” programme taught me that even when things don’t go as planned, there is still a lot to learn. I realized that the path to supporting artistic mobility is filled with challenges, but these challenges are part of the journey. I am continuing my efforts, hopeful that I will succeed, and I know that every step - successful or not - is a step forward in making my vision a reality. (...) With my project “Bridging Borders”, I aim at making the film industry more accessible and connected. My project was inspired by my own journeys between Alexandria and Cairo - creating paths and opening doors for storytellers everywhere. My work showed the power of moving between places, not just physically, but in building bridges that connect people and ideas across the world.





All photos: © Engy Mohamed





Fadoua El Aziz

Often, I find myself lost in the narrative of others, the enchanted landscape and the simple act of observation. From classic cinema to my own short films, I have experienced the thrill of bringing stories to life and sharing unique perspectives. My journey has also involved working with and supporting other film makers, creating platforms for them to connect with audiences and showcase their art. The Morocco Shorts International Film Festival is a community that embodies this artistic vision. Each film inspires me deeply and leaves a lasting impression. And as a passionate cinephile I travel through the world of film and express myself through this universal language.



Fadoua El Aziz's video
<https://youtu.be/vT5F4n7-10o?si=XETec3D0pEyZC3-l>





Fadoua El Aziz's video





photo: © Miriam Montano

Kristina Zimaj

My research highlights the importance of non-formal education in the professional development of cultural workers. Although my study was not initially intended to focus on Europe, I have broadened my observation wherever possible. My primary focus is on non-state organisations in the Western Balkans. I intend to publish this research, as it may be relevant to others.



photo: © Miriam Montano

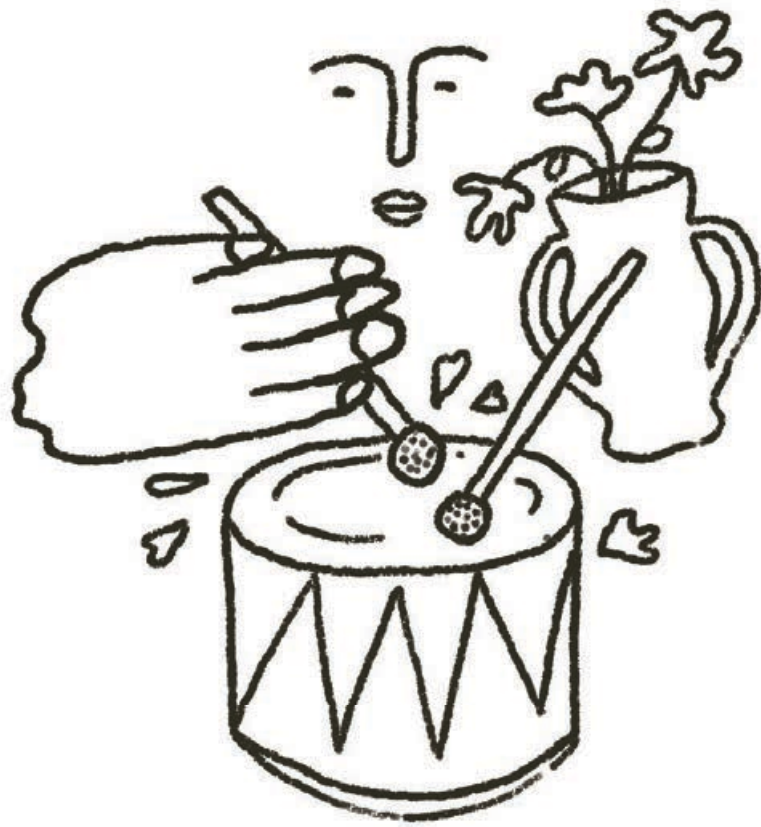
Lisa Consolini

I applied to Ready Steady Go! to understand how to make my project happen. The programme helped me to better understand the focus of my project, I got tips for funding support and opportunities, precious information about project management, new ways of thinking and planning my actual and future projects, exchange and networking, new reflections and point of views about mobility. And it also made me understand the importance of taking into consideration, when starting a new project, the context and scenario we are moving in the present.



Photos © Lisa Contarini





Lisa Contarin's project

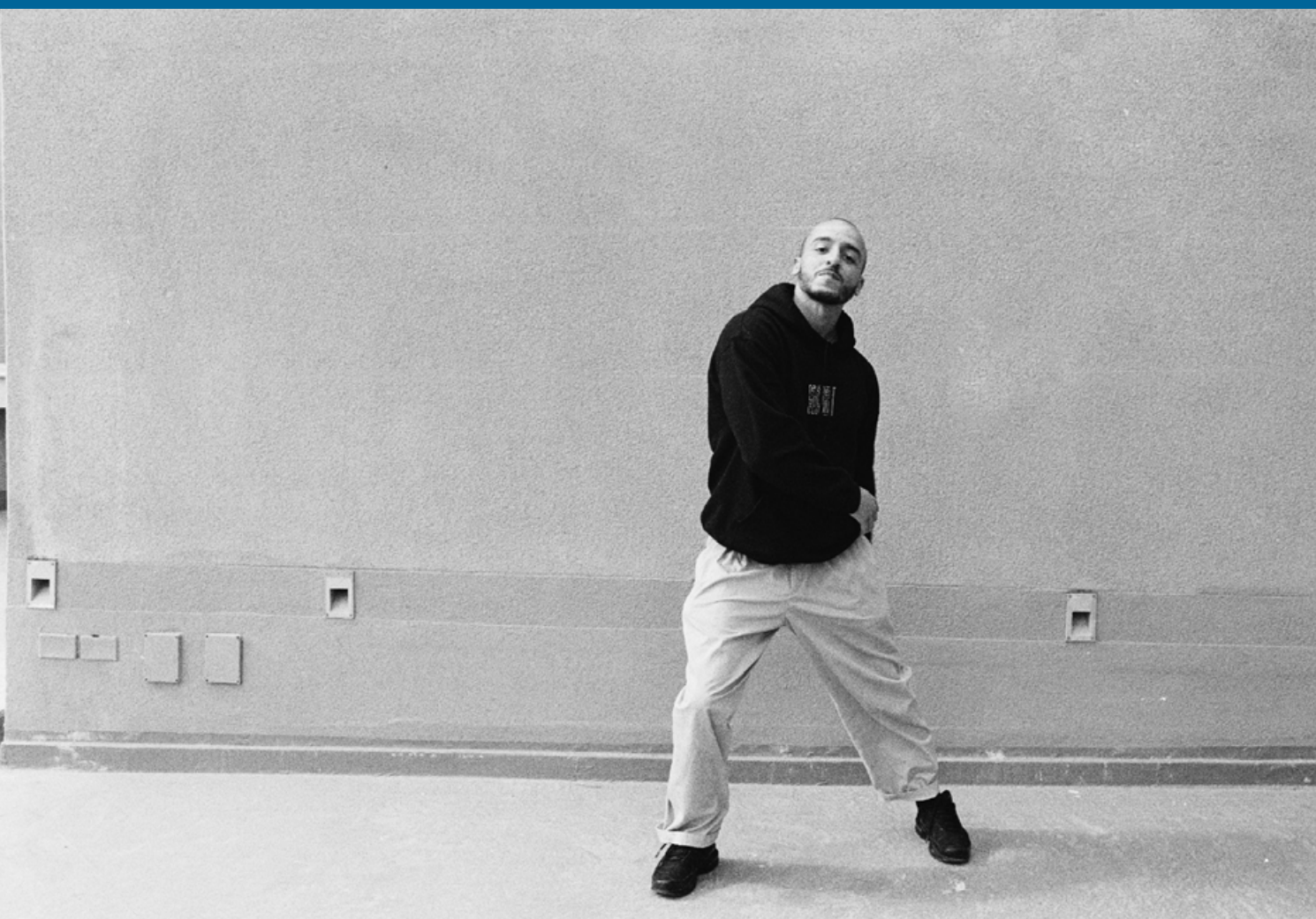


photo: © Miriam Montano

Mehdi Dahkan

I was invited to Canada next month, and I was really looking forward to going. Apparently, visas are difficult for Africans, and I didn't get my visa. The director offered me an online version instead. I will still be there with my video, my intentions, and my ideas. In the past, this would have upset me, but now I think the virtual version is quite good; it's better than nothing, at least. The title of my solo is « Sous réserve d'obtention de visa » (Subject to Visa Approval). It's a funny and representative name. I have performed it in French Guiana, Egypt, Jordan... this solo has traveled well, and I'm happy with that. I wanted to tour the Americas, and we will do it in another way.



Mehdi Dahkan's video
<https://youtu.be/Xbrx6RqfWuU?si=M62tyl3cj7CbU0W4>





Mehdi Dahkan's video





photo: © Miriam Montano

Mia Bradić

I think I could count on the fingers of one hand the number of people in Croatia who make a living solely from circus. For me, and for circus artists in the Balkans in general, there are just not enough opportunities to perform and build a sustainable career. There is an almost inevitable dependence on taking part in programmes outside the region, which often leads artists to leave permanently, and not to be able to give so much back to their community. Personally, I need to expand my network, and perform outside the Balkans to make my project sustainable – so that it lasts longer than just a few performances after the premiere and that's it. (...) My biggest challenge is expanding beyond of Europe and the Mediterranean specifically.









Photos © Mia Bradić's





Mia Bradić's video
<https://youtu.be/OYcz9uzrE2s?si=458z0xlhxV4l69d6>





photo: © Miriam Montano

Miriam Montano

Living far from everything in a small town has made me more introverted, yet participating in the Ready Steady Go! mobility programme opened my eyes to new perspectives and the strength of the artistic community across Europe, connecting me with artists who share a strong bond with nature and a unique sensitivity towards creating communities outside the capitalist circles that dominate big cities. (...) Mobility has not only shaped my artistic vision but also promises to bring lasting changes to my environment. It has introduced me to new perspectives and methods, which I plan to incorporate into my work.



Miriam Montano's project



Miriam Montano's project





Miriam Montano's project





Molka Nasraoui

Molka Through the Ready Steady Go! programme, I discovered strategies for realising projects, received guidance on navigating the funding landscape, explored contemporary mobility issues, and learned about the impact of storytelling. I also deepened my technical skills by engaging with experts and identifying valuable resources.



Molka Nasraoui's project



photo by Molka Nasraoui



photo: © Miriam Montano

Sara Mladenovic

Supporting young artists is a very important matter, and encouraging experimentation and resilience is crucial for their development. An ideal scheme for such development would include financial support for travel and project costs, mentorship, and opportunities for more international exposure. In addition, access to a network of established artists and feedback platforms would also be highly beneficial.



Sara Mladenovic's project



© Sara Mladenovic (all photos)





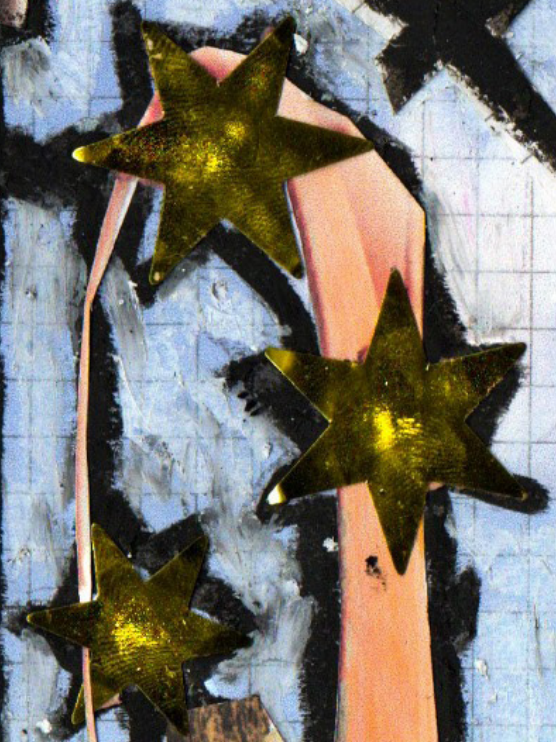


Sara Mladenovic's project



radna Akcija

DOM



Sara Mladenovic's project



2011

dom
vojske
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L'EGEMONIA DI
 RI E DOMINAZ
 STORICAMENTE
 SU AGR. NATURA
 A ATTUALI
 IL TURISMO

ISOLA DEL MEDITERRANEO

CAPITALE MIGRATORIA OPERAIO/IMPERIALE

CONTESTO

TURISMO EUROPEO SPORT

SISTEMA
 ASSOCIATIVO
 I.C.T.
 PIANO PUNTO

MUSEALIZZAZIONE

POLITICHE CULTURALI

LUCA SPANO

LAVANDER'A A VAPORE

MONOPOLIO SAN PAULO V

SCENA CULTURALE

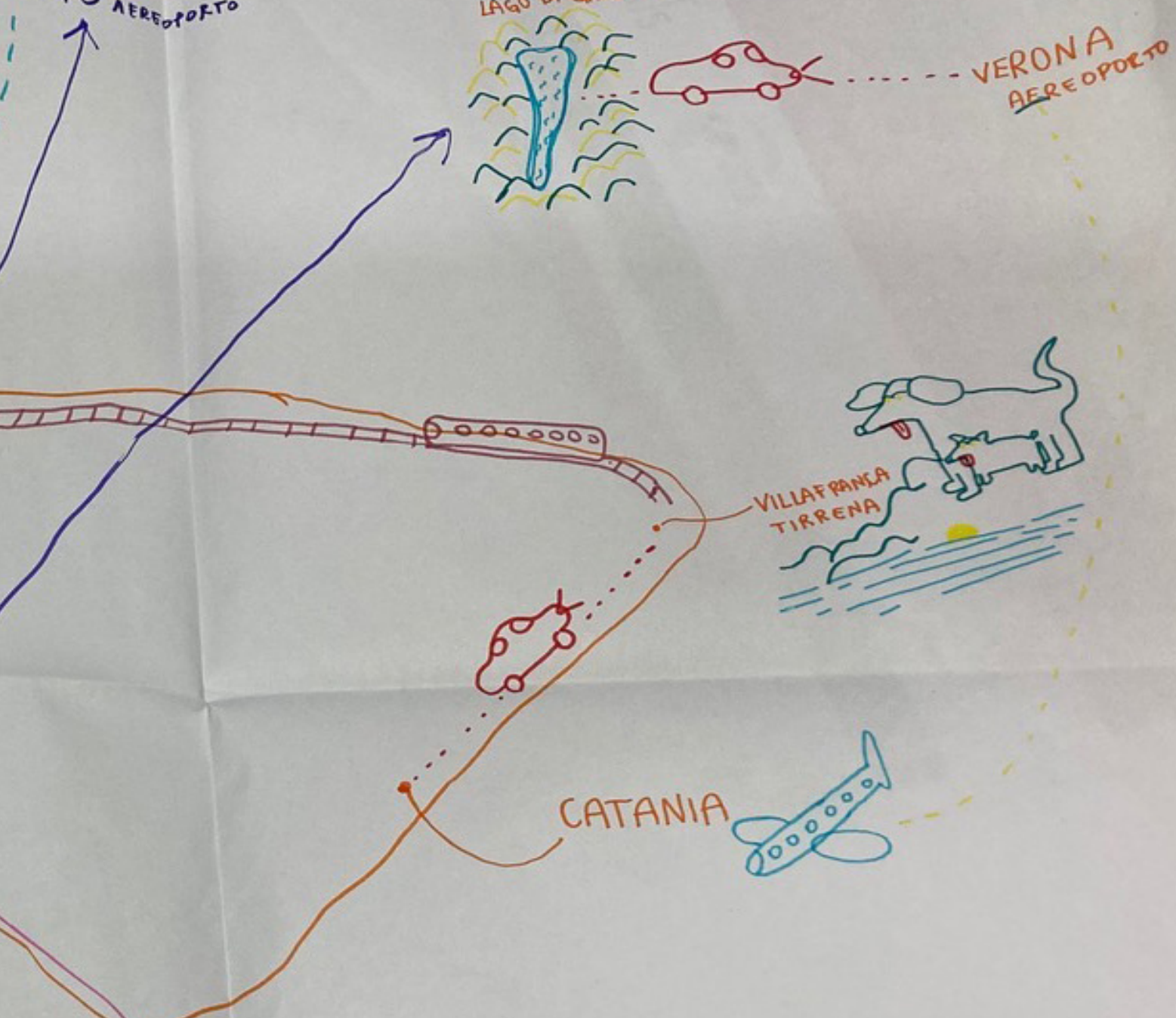
COLLEGGIO VS BANDA MUTANDA

PAESE MEDIEVALE TEATRO DEGLI ULIVI

TRAPANI
LIPARI
MORINO AEROPORTO

LAGO DI GARDA

VERONA
AEROPORTO



VALLE R. TERRITORIO TRADIZIONE

ASSOCIAZIONI CULT. DI QUARTIERE



Palermo (all photos) © Miriam Montano



4. Palermo and Elefsina

4.1 Stories of mobility in Palermo

by Lucia Pierro and Marco Scarpinato

Diverse, layered, both bright and dark, provincial and capital all at once, composed of multiple centers and peripheries where different communities coexist—barely touching—Palermo is a city that welcomes and repels, lending itself to various narratives while remaining impossible to fully grasp.

Located in the northwestern part of Sicily, the city has been a strategic hub in the Mediterranean for millennia, a crossroads of peoples and cultures that have shaped its unique and layered identity. Its geographical position, overlooking the Tyrrhenian Sea and at the center of Mediterranean trade and military routes, has made it a privileged meeting point between Europe, Africa, and the Near East. This situation has facilitated the arrival and settlement of diverse civilizations over the centuries, each leaving an indelible mark on the city's history, architecture, language, and traditions.

Palermo's origins trace back to the Phoenicians, who established a commercial and port settlement around the 8th century BCE. The city later came under Greek control and subsequently Roman rule, integrating into the empire and transforming into an administrative and productive center. Following the fall of the Western Roman Empire, Palermo experienced periods of Vandal and then Ostrogothic domination before being conquered by the Byzantines in the 6th century CE under Justinian.

One of the most significant phases in Palermo's history began with the Arab conquest in 831, when it became the capital of the Emirate of Sicily. The Arabs introduced major agricultural advancements, such as irrigation systems, and enriched the urban landscape with Islamic-style architecture. During this period, Palermo became a center of cultural and commercial exchange, where Muslim, Jewish, and Christian communities coexisted, fostering an unprecedented cultural hybridization.

In 1072, the Normans took control of the city, integrating into the existing Islamic context



Palermo © Miriam Montano

rather than erasing it, blending it with their Nordic and Christian traditions. This period saw the construction of extraordinary buildings that still testify to the cultural fusion that marks the city: the Palatine Chapel, the Norman Palace, and the churches of San Giovanni degli Eremiti and La Martorana, characterized by a combination of Arab, Norman, and Byzantine architectural and decorative elements. Under the subsequent Swabian rule, led by Frederick II, Palermo became a European cultural center. Under the Angevins and Aragonese, the city maintained its Mediterranean prominence, albeit in a changing political context. During Spanish and Bourbon rule, Palermo served as a key reference point for the Viceroyalty of Sicily, with further layers of Baroque and Neoclassical cultural influences.

Today, Palermo bears the marks of its millennia-old history in an urban fabric that is a true palimpsest of past eras and cultures. Its architecture, from historic markets like Ballarò and Vucciria to Neoclassical theaters, from Baroque churches to repurposed mosques, tells the story of a past where coexistence and hybridization shaped a complex and fascinating identity. This characteristic makes Palermo not only unique in the Mediterranean landscape but also a continuously evolving laboratory of cultural osmosis,



Palermo © Miriam Montano

capable of absorbing and transforming new influences into vital elements of its historical essence.

Today, Palermo moves at multiple speeds: while a portion of its young and promising population chooses to leave in search of stable and qualified job opportunities, and the most vulnerable struggle, signs of potential new development paths are emerging. Among these is the spread of “*South working*” and the rise of innovative startups, which grew by 3.7% between 2023 and 2024 thanks to opportunities provided by digital nomadism. According to the 2024 “*Executive Nomad Index*” report by Savills, which ranks the best destinations for remote work, Palermo holds the 22nd spot worldwide and is the most appreciated Italian city for smart working, thanks to its rich cultural heritage and an affordable rental market, with lease costs up to 70% lower than in other Italian cities such as Florence.

The beauty of its landscape and its historical-artistic heritage, a legacy of the peoples who have intertwined over millennia, have made Palermo one of the most recognized cities in the Mediterranean. Which is also why the tourism economy, with its many contradictions, reveals a vibrant entrepreneurial structure that, after overcoming the pandemic’s



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stagnation, has managed to grow by leveraging the city's recent revival as a cultural capital. Between 2022 and 2023, Palermo saw an increase of around 200,000 tourists, both Italian and foreign. However, alongside the unfulfilled expectation of stable job opportunities, the city's growing tourist appeal brings with it the ever-increasing risks of uncontrolled tourism-driven gentrification, leading to the displacement of permanent residents and the definitive transformation of the social and cultural identity of the most prized parts of the historic center and surrounding areas. Without mitigation and compensation policies for residents, these neighborhoods are losing their urban character and turning into spaces for rapid tourist consumption.

Palermo's syncretic and multifaceted nature is also reflected in its diverse landscape and, most notably, in its extraordinary botanical richness. Thanks to its geographical location and favorable climatic conditions, Palermo has welcomed and nurtured plants from distant lands, transforming its natural heritage into another symbol of cultural fusion. Two of the most representative plants of this botanical history are the pomelia (*Plumeria*) and the ficus magnolioides (*Ficus macrophylla*). The pomelia, native to tropical America, arrived in Palermo through trade routes and became a characteristic element of the city's gardens



Palermo © Miriam Montano

and terraces. The *ficus magnolioides*, originating from Australia, found an ideal habitat in Palermo, giving rise to some of the most imposing specimens in Europe, such as those in Garibaldi Garden.

These plants, like the peoples who have reached and transformed the city over the centuries, testify to Palermo's role as a place of receptivity and transformation—a crossroads not only of cultures but also of biodiversity. This human and botanical diversity echoes the theories of Stefano Mancuso and his idea that travel cannot be prevented, as life itself demands it. In this sense, one cannot help but highlight the adaptability of Mediterranean species and their extraordinary ability to travel, settle in different areas of the planet, and cooperate to assert that «drive for the spread of life that has led plants to colonize every possible environment on Earth».



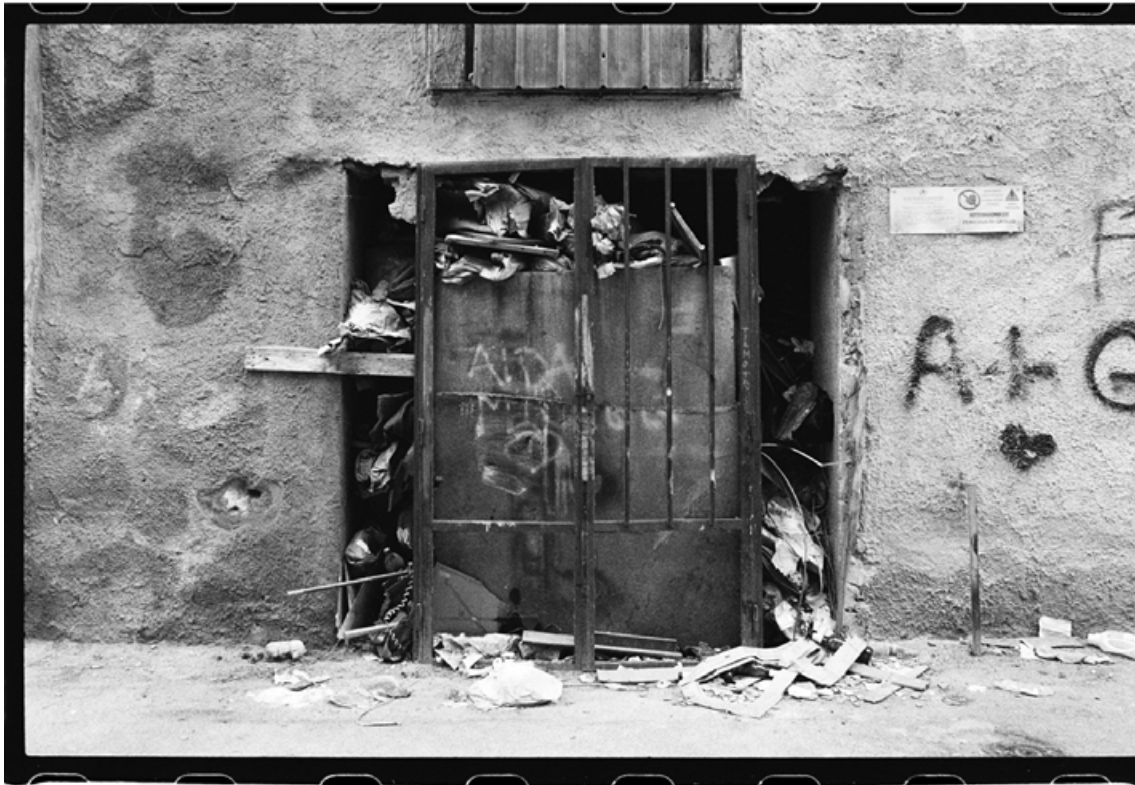
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4.2 Elefsina

from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Elefsina (Greek: *Ελευσίνα*, romanized: *Elefsína*) or Eleusis; Ancient Greek: *Ἐλευσίς*, romanized: *Eleusís*) is a suburban city and municipality in Athens metropolitan area. It belongs to West Attica regional unit of Greece. It is located in the Thriasio Plain, at the northernmost end of the Saronic Gulf. North of Elefsina are Mandra and Magoula, while Aspropyrgos is to the northeast.

It is the site of the Eleusinian Mysteries and the birthplace of Aeschylus. Today, Elefsina is a major industrial centre, with the largest oil refinery in Greece as well as the home of the Aeschylia Festival, the longest-lived arts event in the Attica Region. On 11 November 2016, Elefsina was named the European Capital of Culture for 2021, which became effective in 2023 due to the COVID-19 pandemic postponement.

The word Eleusis first appears in the Orphic Hymn to Eleusinian Demeter: «*Δήμητρος Ελευσινίας, θυμίαμα στύρακα*». Also Hesychius of Alexandria reports that the older name for Eleusis was Saesara (*Σαισάρια*). Saesara was the mythic daughter of Celeus (king of Eleusis when Demeter arrived for the first time) and granddaughter of Eleusinus, the first settler of Eleusis.

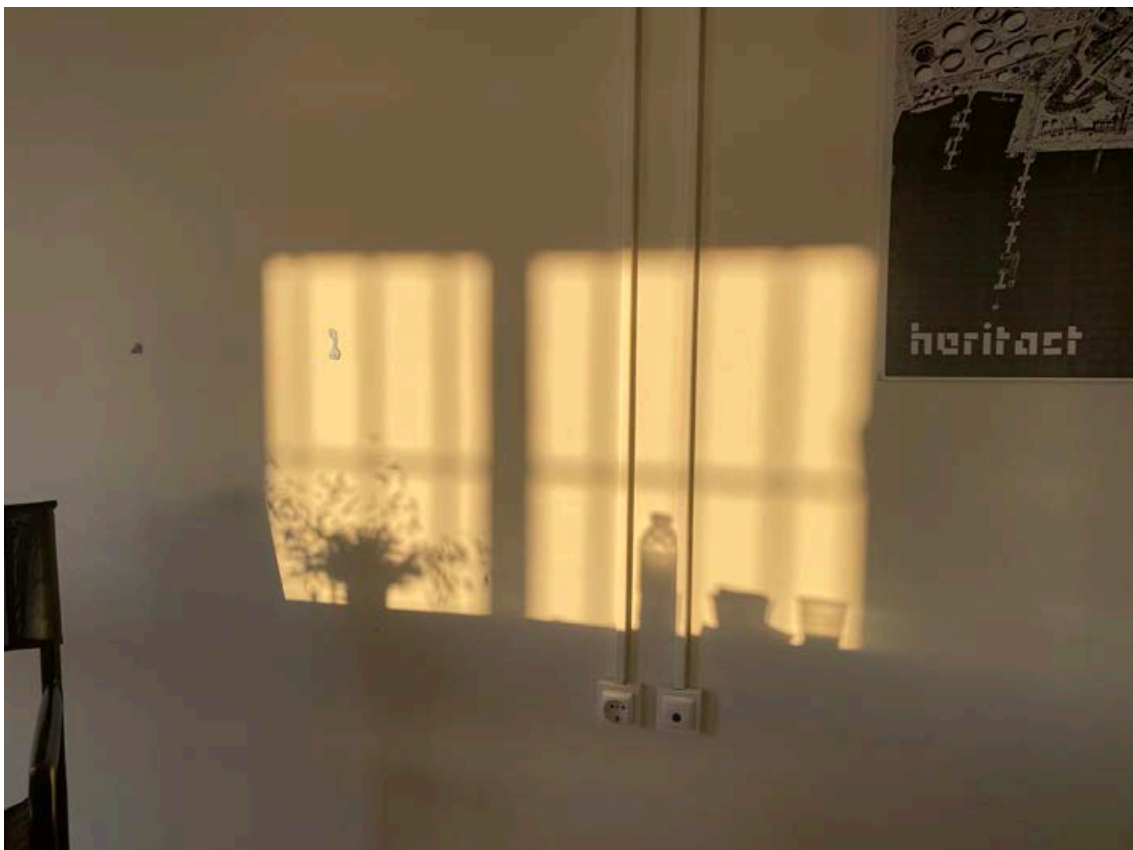
The municipality of Elefsina was formed at the 2011 local government reform by the merger of the following two former municipalities.

The municipality has an area of 36.589 km² (14.127 sq mi), and the municipal unit has an area of 18.455 km² (7.126 sq mi).

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elefsina>



Elefsina (all photos) © Miriam Montano





Elefsina (all photos) © Miriam Montano

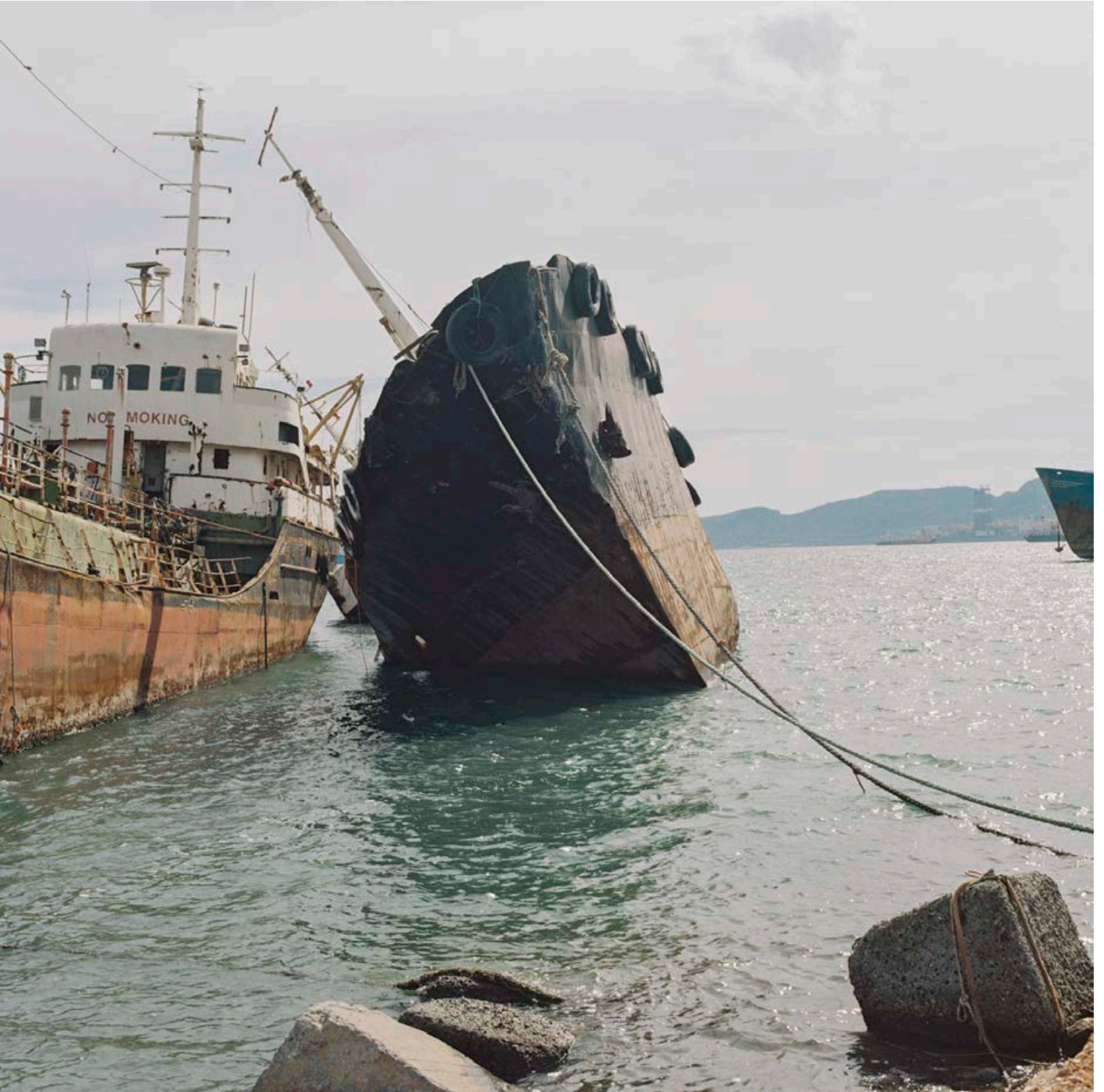




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5. Moving Forward Future & Recommendations

by Christiane Daboub Nasser

Mobility has become an important signifier in cultural work as well as a hot issue in as much as it implies a binary division between those who are mobile and those who are not (or hardly so). But is it? **Ready Steady Go!** tells us otherwise.

By design but mostly through the organic process it has applied, **Ready Steady Go!** underlines the significance of mobility, and defines the major impediments to its happening whilst highlighting its value for artists and cultural operators, and more particularly for emerging professionals working in remote or marginalised areas. The centrality of mobility is summed up in a few telling words: it is essential for defining an artist and culture professional's career, and it opens up opportunities for networking, exchanging, and enriching and circulating one's artistic and cultural oeuvre. It has also shown that putting together a diverse group of young artists and culture professionals – diverse in terms of geography, culture, language, and disciplines – is a sure recipe for bouncing ideas and powering creativity. In the words of the participants themselves, **Ready Steady Go!** has opened to them new vistas and new ways of thinking and doing whilst making them aware of the value of engaging with their peers, and with their environment and community for achieving more rewarding careers.

For the sake of provocation, and through the prism of **Ready Steady Go!** it could be useful to delve into a scenario where mobility is non-existent, and imagine the consequences that such a situation could have on the youth of the region.

Without mobility, none of the fourteen participants would have been aware of the other's work, or shared in an experience that defies classic tropes. None would have learned about new or different approaches to artistic and cultural work, or would have been exposed to new ways of thinking and doing; none would have benefited from the privilege of assessing their own work in comparison with that of others; none would have experienced the sense of solidarity and camaraderie that comes through sharing; to find solace in the fact that notwithstanding their different backgrounds, their struggles and disappointments are shared by their peers from other corners of the region; and



Workshop in Palermo © F. B.

Workshop in Elefsina © F. B.



none would have acquired a new understanding of mobility in its current usage, as an encompassing process with links to climate change and the ecosystem. In their own words, they will all go back to their quotidian with a new breath, an eye to their environment for inspiration, and a new frame of mind to continue and evolve.

Ready Steady Go! is not your run-of-the-mill vapid project; the partners have set the bar high and it is incumbent upon them to maintain the momentum and push it further. The question is how. Knowing that funding is scarce and needs are immense, they need to be creative in finding the right solutions. For one, the partners' recent experience with the project has confirmed existing inequalities of access to opportunities and regional/international mobility. These inequalities are likely to deepen in the current climate if cultural institutions do not call out on decision-makers and government and civil society institutions to give priority to this issue and allocate the necessary funds to alleviate it. To do that, aligning themselves with other similar organisations and advocating for mobility justice with one voice as a right for all is paramount. It will also require a robust argument and entryways in the corridors of power to win the case, which is no easy task. By the same token, organisations will have to seek new sources of funding beyond the classic ones to guarantee reliable support for their activities. This is where creativity will serve them in good stead, and looking into different funding models and sources, such as corporations, can open up new avenues. Indeed, mobility is a complex enterprise that requires resources to support beneficiaries in the before, during, and aftermath of the mobility. Such support may take different forms: the design of a mobility project, travel planning and itineraries, coordination and mentoring, capacity development... Finally, integrating the concept of green mobility requires vigilant tracking of new developments and trends, and weaving them into learning approaches and methodologies demands resources. At the risk of missing the banwagon, organisations have to factor this dimension into their budgets.

This publication is elemental in enhancing the visibility of both the participants and the partners and promoting the methodology and learning experience this project provided. In line with what transpires above, it provides a strong argument to advocate for mobility for the region.



6. List of web resources

Culture Moves Europe

<https://culture.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe/creative-europe-culture-strand/culture-moves-europe>

Mawred Wijhat mobility grants

<https://mawred.org/wijhat-application-guidelines/?lang=en>

Ettijahat Zad miles for Connections

<https://www.ettijahat.org/page/1545#gsc.tab=0>

On the move newsletter (EN/FR/IT/DE & ES)

<https://on-the-move.org/newsletter>

On the move Cultural mobility funding guides

<https://on-the-move.org/resources/funding>

On the move Cultural Mobility funding guide focused on the South Mediterranean region (2023)

<https://on-the-move.org/resources/funding/mobility-funding-guide-south-mediterranean-region>

On the move Cultural Mobility funding guide focused on 10 Balkan countries (2022)

<https://on-the-move.org/resources/funding/mobility-funding-guide-balkan-region>

On the move Cultural Mobility funding guide focused on the Arab region (2021) (en,fr,ar)

<https://on-the-move.org/resources/funding/mobility-funding-guide-arab-region>

Mobility Info Points (visas, social protection, taxation etc)

<https://on-the-move.org/mobility-information-points>

Move on! A guide to prepare your mobility

<https://on-the-move.org/resources/library/move-step-step-guide-going-international>

Report on Schengen visa on the African continent

<https://on-the-move.org/resources/library/schengen-visa-code-and-cultural-mobility-latest-insights-focus-artists-and>



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