



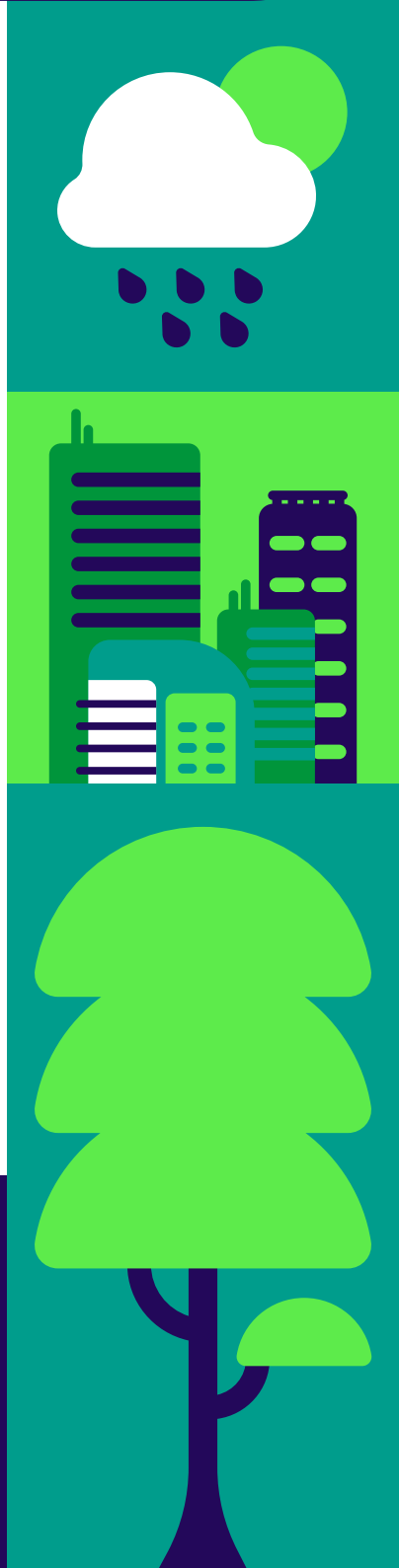
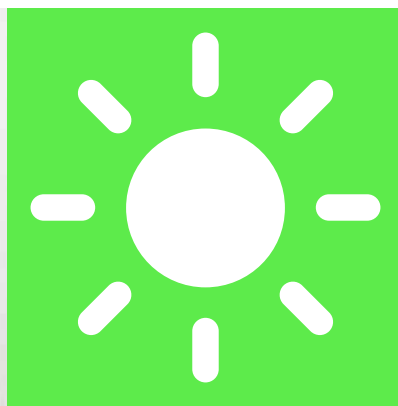
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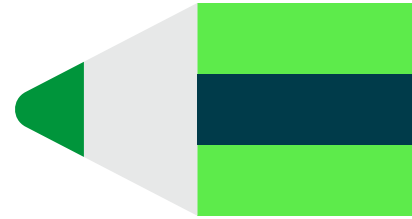
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Towards a new environmental rationale for the arts

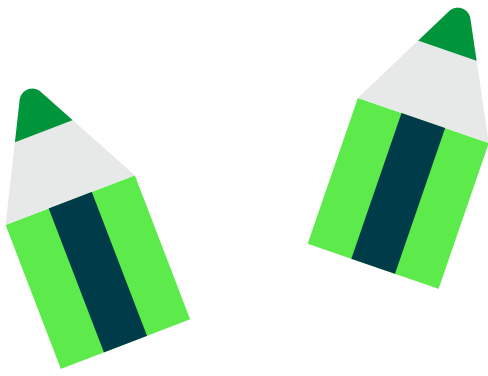
My interest in environmental protection started from an early age; as a child I would often contribute to campaigns and causes of official bodies and ngos, like WWF and Greenpeace, I would initiate recycling and beach cleaning sessions in school or during holidays and so on. Later on, I decided to give in to my love for British culture and communication and did my BA on English language in the University of Athens and my MSc in the University of the West of Scotland. At the moment I continue my studies as a PhD Candidate in the University of Athens focusing large part of my research on British literature, social studies and art.

As soon as I started working in the arts and culture field in Greece I have quite often been involved in or initiated projects concerning the urban landscape, fast fashion and the environment. I curated a series of exhibitions and screenings focusing on urban life in Athens and as an arts editor I often got to write about events related to fast fashion, art and ecology. As the Production and Communications Manager of Atopos Contemporary Visual Culture, I was a mentor in the 2016 Culture Shift 2016 organised by the British Council and Google in Athens. In 2017 I worked closely with the British Council team for the production of their Sustainable Fashion programme that took place in the Atopos cvc premises.



Since 2018, and from the position of the Artistic Director of Polyeco Contemporary Art Initiative PCAI, I have been in charge of the organisation's cultural and educational programme. PCAI is an awarded Athens based organisation that commissions artists and produces cultural projects that promote sustainability, resilience and environmental awareness. Throughout the years we have organised exhibitions, screenings and talks with international institutions, biennales and museums, including the Venice Biennale, the Lahore Biennale and the Sharjah Biennial. Our environmental art collection often travels to exhibitions and events all over the world whereas our educational workshops and films have been presented in many schools and festivals, including the Athens Science Festival, the Eco-Festival in Technopolis, the Barnes Film Festival in London and the Information Fair of COPs at the Geneva International Conference Centre (CICG).





In 2019 I initiated PCAI's first artist-in-residence programme that intends to combine environmental concerns with art and science. Our first open call received more than 400 applications whereas the selection committee included Hans Ulrich Obrist, Serpentine Galleries Artistic Director, and Krist Gruijthuijsen, KW Berlin Director. Last February PCAI presented the Earth Chronicles exhibition in the Circular Cultures programme, organised by the British Council and the Onassis Foundation in Athens, an extremely successful two-day programme on arts, crafts and circular economy. In March 2020 I got to travel to London as the British Council delegate to participate in the 1st Climate Story Lab, a conference that brought together creatives focusing on climate change and its devastating effects on the planet. Perseverance during climate change, the anthropocene and the impact of the global pandemic on arts ecosystems was also the subject of PCAI's first digital group exhibition titled Anthropocene On Hold; a successful show accompanied by a bilingual digital catalogue with contributions by Hans Ulrich Obrist, Nadim Samman and Selina Nwulu on ecology and art. Quite recently PCAI also became a member of the Green Art Lab Alliance, a unique network of more than 50 cultural organisations with environmental concerns.

To sum up, I truly believe that thorough research, along with the development of solid networks, partnerships and affiliated projects, can be the best tools to work with when someone wishes to get involved in our sector. And, of course, pure concern for the environment, realisation of the gravity of the particular topic and innovative, out of the box thinking, would be additional assets, nonetheless.

Image Captions

1. Recipient of PCAI's award during the 8th Corporate Responsibility Awards Ceremony held at the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center (November 2019)
2. Presentation during the first International Association of Corporate Collections of Contemporary Art (IACCCA) Meeting in Greece in PCAI headquarters in Piraeus (November 2019)
3. Introductory talk during the Voyage Around My Room vernissage in the Athens Municipality Art Center, part of the UNESCO Athens World Book Capital programme (March 2018)
4. Talk during the Art21-100 Artists discussion in the Hellenic American Union in Athens (November 2013)



Videos

<https://youtu.be/5bh0g1rKG6A>

https://youtu.be/l5eg9T_uq4U

Kika Kyriakakou, PhD Cand. University of Athens, is the artistic director of Polyeco Contemporary Art Initiative PCAI, an Athens based cultural organisation focusing on environmental awareness and contemporary art. Kyriakakou has organized and curated

moving image, contemporary art, sustainability and design partnering with ART21 NYC, Loop Barcelona, Unesco-Athens World Book Capital and Künstlerhaus Vienna amongst others.

