

“Sustainable Art’s Scope and Impact in Southwestern Europe: Palermo as a showcase”- Framing and Assessing Public Engagement, Aesthetic Response and Behavioural Change on Sustainability Challenges through Art Activism and Participatory Practices – Prof. Diego Mantoan

The project PARSEUS envisions the adoption of a new methodological approach to analyzing the appearance and impact of artistic activities that can be considered sustainable –either thematically or instrumentally– in the geographical area of South-West Europe, which are intended as special forms of civic, aesthetic, and cultural activism to foster the necessary behavioral change towards the sustainable challenges of the UN’s 2030 Agenda. The topic is perfectly attuned with the new European policies, as well as with the Italian PNR plan, since it aims at studying the relationship between art and society, evaluating its aesthetical-social impact on sustainable development and climate crisis, and framing the contribution of the humanities to social transformation and inclusion. Specifically, the project investigates various experiences of activism and participatory practices in South-Western Europe since the inception of the new millennium, which self-consciously addressed sustainability in an environmental, social, and economic dimension.

The project addresses the spontaneous appearance of an art field devoted to sustainable development topics since the turn of the millennium, though its dimension, contribution, and evolution has so far been widely neglected at scholarly level and, particularly, in society as well as in sustainability sciences. Nurtured by an alternative system, sustainable art saw the spread in South-Western Europe of several practitioners able to create artistic projects with strong aesthetic and social implications. Looking at the specific case of Palermo, the EUROSTART funded project intends to highlight a paradigmatic example regarding mapping and evaluation methods of sustainable art activities that were developed at urban level –public art, street art, and participatory activities, in particular– and rightly integrating this phenomenon in a wider national and international network.

The research team includes professors such as Gabriella De Marco, Elisabetta Di Stefano, and Vincenza Garofalo, as well as researchers such as Valeria Maggiore and Giacomo Tagliani. The project is developed in collaboration with Peter Schneemann (Universtät Bern) and Carolina Fernandez-Castrillo (Universidad Carlos III Madrid), further participating at the research cluster “The Ecological Imperative” (SNSF Synergia, CH).