

# Inaugural Culture for the Planet Summit Lausanne (Switzerland) — 2025

*Summary Report*



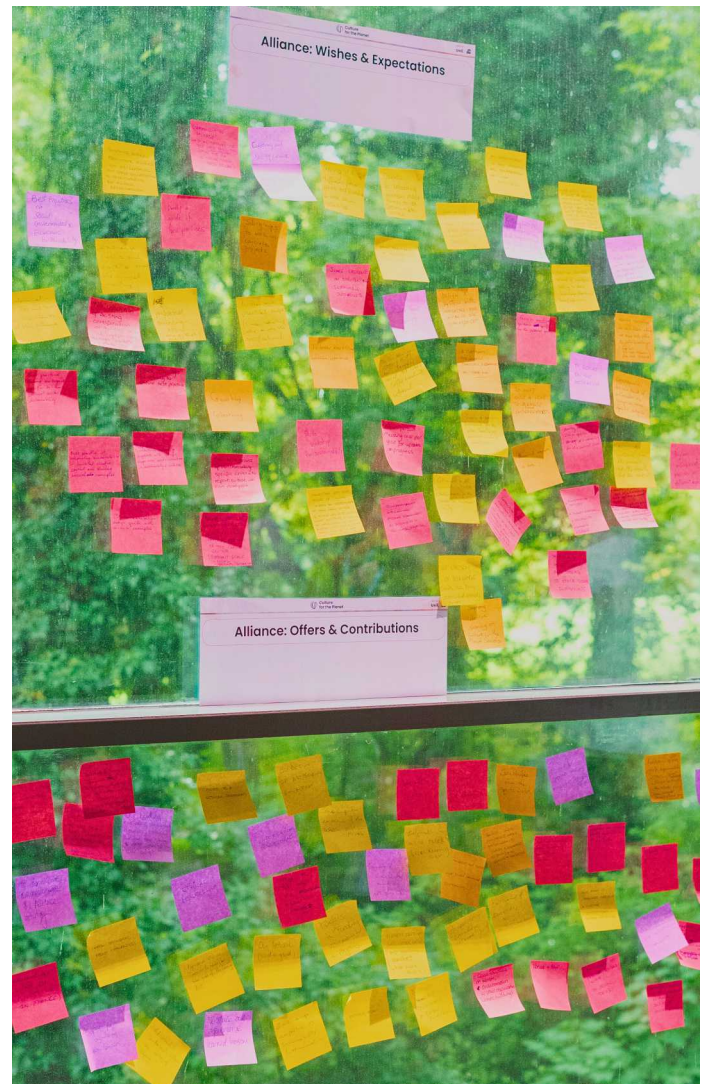
# Executive summary

The Inaugural Culture for the Planet Summit brought together more than thirty leaders from museums, theatres and opera houses along with researchers, funders and policymakers in Lausanne, Switzerland, in October 2025. The Summit marked the formal launch of the Culture for the Planet Alliance, a global community committed to embedding sustainability in arts and cultural organisations through shared evidence, collaborative learning and collective action. Across plenaries, panels and workshops, participants converged on the following shared understandings:

- From individual to collective responsibility. Progress depends on shared infrastructures for knowledge, organisational accountability and peer learning. Participants called for common frameworks and transparent reporting that allow organisations to learn from one another and act in concert rather than isolation.
- Evidence as a foundation for change. The research on modular sustainability indicators demonstrated how data-driven approaches can guide decision-making and show progress across environmental, social and governance dimensions. Participants stressed that credibility in the cultural sector's sustainability efforts depends on grounding ambition in empirical evidence, continuous assessment and the ability to translate research into practice.
- From ethics to systemic integration. Discussions showed that sustainability must be woven into every layer of cultural governance, programming and operations. Beyond values, it requires organisational structures that align leadership, staff engagement and institutional strategy.
- Distributed leadership and learning. Workshops on management and skills mapping revealed that effective implementation connects leadership vision with everyday work.
- Bridging policy, funding and practice. Participants emphasised the importance of aligning policy frameworks, funding criteria, certification systems and governance models. Stronger coordination between these spheres is essential to reduce fragmentation and accelerate systemic transformation.

By the end of the Summit, participants had built a foundation of trust, shared knowledge and collective purpose. This shared commitment crystallised in the Declaration of Lausanne, read collectively by the Founding Members. The Declaration affirms a common responsibility to act within planetary boundaries and to integrate sustainability into governance, daily operations and artistic practice

In the next phase, the Alliance will expand to new organisations and strengthen both online and in-person exchanges. The Summit set the course for a long-term collective journey that places arts and culture at the heart of the sustainability transition.



# Contents

<b>Foreword</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Day 1 – 8 October</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Day 2 – 9 October</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Declaration of Lausanne Ceremony</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Founding Members</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Day 3 – 10 October</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Social Events</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Afterwords</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Future Ahead</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Sustainability Reporting</b>	<b>33</b>



# Acknowledgements

**Summit rapporteur:** Diana Martello

**Editors:** Giovanna Gray Nassralla, Leticia Labaronne, Martin Müller

**Design:** Zoé Berney

**Photos:** Noemi Renevey, Fabrice Ducrest, and Zoé Berney

**Culture for the Planet Team:**

- Leticia Labaronne, *Co-Lead*
- Martin Müller, *Co-Lead*
- Giovanna Gray Nassralla, *Strategy Lead*
- Greta Ortalli, *Researcher*
- Małgorzata Ćwikła, *Senior Researcher*
- Laura Noll, *Executive Education Lead*
- Zoé Berney, *Communication Lead & PMO*

**DOI:** [doi.org/10.21256/zhaw-2611](https://doi.org/10.21256/zhaw-2611)

Led by:



**Institutional Sponsors:**



**Institutional Sponsors:**



Our website:  
[culturefortheplanet.org](https://culturefortheplanet.org)

Find us on LinkedIn :  
[linkedin.com/company/culture-for-the-planet](https://linkedin.com/company/culture-for-the-planet)

# Foreword

**Professor Leticia Labaronne**, *Co-Lead Culture for the Planet*  
**Professor Martin Müller**, *Co-Lead Culture for the Planet*

**“Arts and cultural organisations, funding bodies and policymakers around the world lead thoughts and actions for creating sustainable futures.”** – Vision of Culture for the Planet

When we began envisioning the Culture for the Planet Alliance in October 2024, we believed we would be fortunate to persuade even a few organisations that a research-driven initiative for sustainability in the cultural sector was worth pursuing. Culture for the Planet Alliance was conceived as the spin-off of the research-for-action project Culture Goes Sustainable, funded by the Swiss BRIDGE Discovery Grant. Yet, as the work unfolded, we were met with an unexpected response: Arts and cultural organisations as well as network associations and policy makers began approaching us, eager to be part of the effort.

A year later, we proudly welcomed 33 organisations from every continent as Founding Members of the Alliance. These included museums and theatres, opera houses and cultural centres, funders, policymakers, as well as our own universities. Together, we co-produced and signed the [Declaration of Lausanne](#), the Alliance’s founding document. This declaration represents a shared commitment to both individual organisational responsibility and collective action toward sustainability across the cultural sector.

Through ongoing research and previous exchanges with our Founding Members, we had already come to understand that sustainability efforts are often isolated and usually fragmented across disciplines, geographies, and institutional boundaries.

And while international networks are doing an excellent job in advocacy, the cultural sector still lacks a robust research foundation to root these efforts in organisations and communities and amplify them across the sector.

Speaking with those who had travelled from around the world to attend the Inaugural Summit in Lausanne, one sentiment echoed time and again: “It’s unbelievable how many people are out there doing exciting work and facing the same challenges I do.” That sense of shared purpose, now backed by data, became one of the Summit’s most powerful outcomes and a clear signal that the time for coordinated, research-informed action is now. Without evidence-based insights to guide strategy and measure impact, initiatives risk remaining isolated and under-leveraged.

Culture for the Planet is about building a community of practice that is grounded in research and a data-driven, empirical approach. It is about gathering existing efforts, connecting them across contexts, and advancing them collectively. Our goal is to institutionalise (clunky as the term may be) sustainability within the cultural sector. This means establishing dedicated communities and forums, fostering shared knowledge and training, and developing common codes, procedures, and frameworks that embed sustainability into the everyday workings of arts and cultural organisations as well as the cultural policies and funding bodies that support them.

Going forward, we will continue to link research with professional practitioners to engage in a co-production of knowledge-for-action: to bring about a consolidated way of measuring and managing sustainability, of certifying sustainability efforts, and of training a new generation of sustainability professionals needed for leading the transition ahead.

We are looking forward to many more new members joining us and the Summit in 2026!

# Day 1 — 8 October

## Opening Reception and Olympic Museum Tour

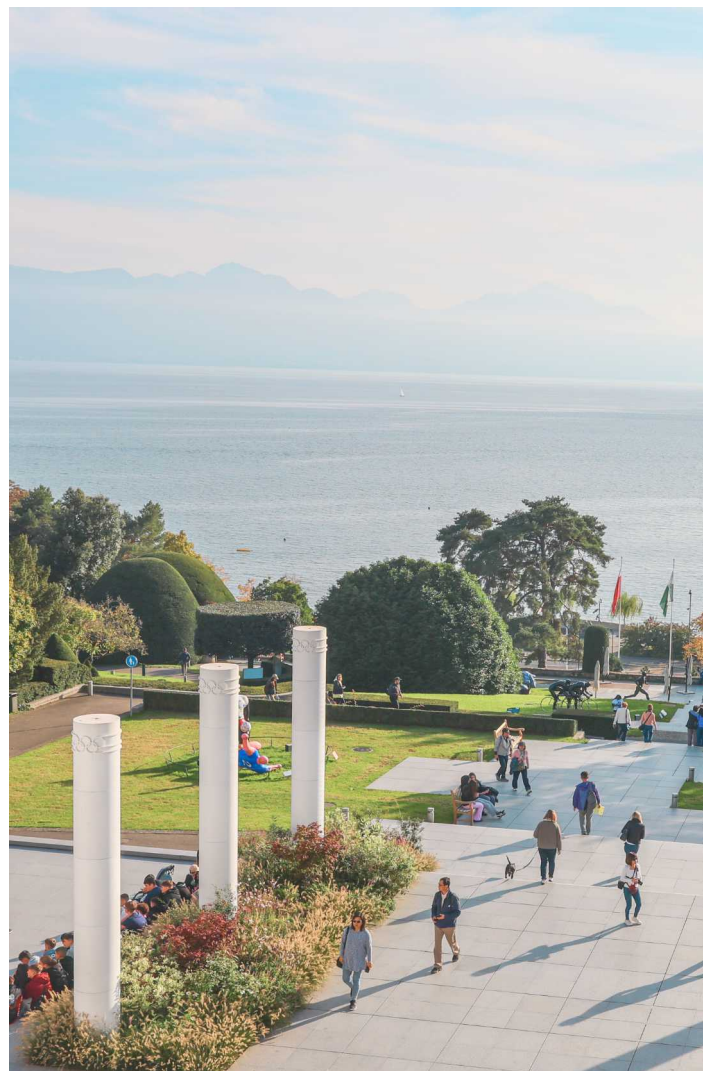
**Location:** Olympic Museum, Lausanne

The Inaugural Culture for the Planet Summit opened with a warm welcome from Professor Leticia Labaronne, Co-Lead of Culture for the Planet, who greeted members arriving in Lausanne from across the world. She set the tone for three days dedicated to international collaboration, shared learning, and collective action towards sustainability in the arts and cultural sector. Held at the Olympic Museum, Labaronne expressed gratitude to the Museum, one of the Alliance's Founding Members, for hosting the event and offering participants a private guided tour of its exhibitions.

The visit, led by Angelita Teo, Director of the Olympic Museum, and Meghan Drascic-Gaudio, Development Manager and Lead Project Manager, provided insight into the museum's cultural approach and its role as a space where art and sport intersect.

Participants explored the Museum's exhibitions while discussing its advanced global digitalisation initiatives, including the development of shared tools and catalogues across institutions worldwide, as well as sustainability-related challenges such as documenting all past and future Olympic Games and addressing spatial constraints for exhibitions.

The evening concluded with a convivial dinner cocktail to welcome participants, offering them the chance to continue their conversations in a relaxed atmosphere overlooking Lake Geneva. It was a valuable opportunity for members of the Alliance to get to know one another, exchange ideas, and lay the groundwork for the collaborative dialogue that would shape the following days.



# Day 2 — 9 October

## Introduction to Culture for the Planet and Research Highlights

### Speakers:

- Prof. Leticia Labaronne, *Co-Lead Culture for the Planet*
- Prof. Martin Müller, *Co-Lead Culture for the Planet*
- Vincent Baudriller, *Director of Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne*

**Location:** Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne

### Key takeaways:

→ Collaboration emerged as the primary condition for translating research into sector-wide practice, shifting the conversation from reflection to implementation and from individual responsibility to collective capability.

→ Systemic barriers such as limited time, funding, and expertise can only be addressed through shared infrastructures of knowledge, accountability, and learning among institutions.

→ Bridging conceptual debates with empirical evidence is essential for credibility and action needs to ground sustainability in data, indicators, and evidence-based tools, strengthening the cultural sector's ability to act as a driver of genuine systemic change.

The second day of the Summit opened with an inspiring joint address by Professor Leticia Labaronne and Professor Martin Müller, Co-Leads of Culture for the Planet, who set the stage for a day devoted to transforming research into collaboration, collective purpose, and practice as guiding principles for embedding sustainability within the cultural sector.

In his welcome remarks, Vincent Baudriller, Director of Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne, underlined the importance of fostering dialogue between science and culture in addressing global sustainability challenges, through research-driven methodologies.



## Research Highlights

Professor Martin Müller used an Aleppo pinecone metaphor to frame the sector's trajectory: ideas need catalytic pressure to germinate into collective change. He invited participants to reflect on the dual role of arts and culture as both contributors to and potential solvers of the sustainability crisis. Müller urged cultural organisations to first mitigate their own negative impacts while assuming leadership in shaping sustainable futures through imagination, education, and shared values. He presented the Sustainability Star (accessible through [this link](#)): a model of sustainability from the cultural sector for the cultural sector. It contains 20 dimensions of sustainability, organised around three spheres: Governance, Society and Environment. As such, it can serve as a shared, research-based planning tool for cultural organisations to structure their work on sustainability. Advocating a sufficiency-based approach, he emphasised meeting human needs within planetary limits rather than pursuing infinite growth, positioning culture as a catalyst for systemic change.

**"Cultural organisations can help us answer one crucial question for the sustainability transition: what do we need for a good life on Earth? And how much is enough?"** — Prof. Martin Müller.

Professor Leticia Labaronne highlighted the barriers arts and cultural organisations face, particularly in terms of lack of time, funding, knowledge, and sector-specific frameworks – and stressed overcoming them through collaboration and evidence-based action. She outlined the project's four pillars (Connect, Manage, Certify, Qualify), noting a year of research focus on developing a Sustainability Management System and the groundwork for a global sustainability certification for arts and cultural organisations. Labaronne briefly presented a scoping review of 69 studies, suggesting that sustainability efforts in the cultural sector are still fragmented, with limited integration across environmental, social, and governance dimensions as well as underdeveloped monitoring and evaluation practices. In terms of academic debates on cultural policy, the discussions are conceptually rich but often lack empirical evidence for implementation.

She presented the finalised modular set of 34 Key Sustainability Indicators (reduced from an initial 456), structured around the Sustainability Star with staged levels (basic, intermediate, and advanced) and labelled as either core (mandatory) or optional, depending on organisational context. This modular approach supports the progressive implementation of sustainability in museums and performing arts organisations, offering

and institutional realities while ensuring coherence across the sector.

Labaronne also reflected on the broader landscape of sustainability labels and standards, which are a crucial part of the third pillar: Certify. She shared preliminary findings from a review of 70+ standards/labels, as well as a more focus analysis of learnings from the tourism sector and dialogues with B Lab and ISO).

The analysis highlights that while standards and labels enhance transparency and trust, they are often fragmented, overlapping, and lack sector-specific relevance. A global sustainability standard for the cultural sector should align with existing frameworks, offer flexibility and modularity for diverse contexts, and integrate with current reporting requirements to streamline implementation

Labaronne closed the introductory session with a call to collective action, inviting participants to actively engage in the Alliance's panels and workshops to reflect on how sustainability is managed within their organisations, envision models of collaboration, and identify the skills and capacities needed to embed sustainability across the sector. **"Today is about moving forward. We're co-creating the community, the tools, the standards, and the skills to advance the sustainability transition in the cultural sector"**, she concluded.



## Panel Introduction — Museums and Performing Arts: Voices of the Sector

### Panelists:

- Celia Grau, *Sustainability & Special Manager of Opera Europa*
- Mireia Azuara, *Head of Communications and Sustainability of CIMAM*
- Morien Rees, *Chair of ICOM Sustain and SAMBA Project representative*

**Moderator:** Prof. Leticia Labaronne, *Co-Lead Culture for the Planet*

**Location:** Théâtre Vidy–Lausanne



The first thematic panel brought together leading representatives from major international cultural networks, particularly of museums and performing arts organisations. The discussion examined current developments, emerging challenges, and opportunities for collective action across disciplines and geographies, emphasising the need for ethical, inclusive, and collaborative approaches to change. The panel was conceived as an open and participatory discussion, designed to foster dialogue among practitioners, researchers, and network leaders representing diverse segments of the cultural sector.

### Key takeaways:

- Sustainability must go beyond technical compliance to become an ethical practice rooted in diversity, reciprocity, care, and long-term relationships with communities and ecosystems.
- While performing arts have advanced environmentally and museums ethically and socially, both sectors need common vocabularies, frameworks, and participatory methods to foster cross-disciplinary collaboration.
- Cultural organisations must reaffirm their civic mission and strengthen cooperation across networks and disciplines, developing flexible, context-sensitive models that balance innovation with reactivated knowledge and practices of care.

The panel opened with presentations from the speakers, each offering concrete examples of sustainability in action. Celia Grau highlighted Opera Europa's network-wide environmental strategies and activities. Mireia Azuara shared CIMAM's Toolkit for Environmental Museum Practices, Code of Ethics, and collaborations with Indigenous knowledge systems. Morien Rees shared ICOM Sustain broad representation and presented the SAMBA project in Norway as a model for collaboration between research and practice for strengthening national sustainability infrastructures.

The discussion revealed notable asymmetries between sectors: performing arts organisations have advanced in addressing environmental issues, while museums have made greater strides in ethical and social dimensions. While tools are proliferation, both sectors, however, often lack systematic evaluation and monitoring. Participants reflected that sustainability should not be reduced to a technical or managerial goal but understood as an ethical condition that reshapes institutional cultures. As Mireia Azuara (CIMAM) noted, "ethics is a way of doing," grounded in diversity, reciprocity, and care. Listening, co-creation, and long-term relationships were recognised as essential to this "ethical turn," positioning sustainability as a process of relational transformation that redefines how organisations engage with their communities and ecosystems.

At the same time, the group acknowledged the sector's growing demand for frameworks and indicators to make sustainability efforts measurable, while cautioning against over-standardisation. They advocated for flexible, participatory models that respect local contexts and enable mutual learning. The conversation also underscored the value of reactivating existing expertise and traditional practices as a counterbalance to constant innovation. Sustainability, they argued, is as much about reinterpreting inherited knowledge as it is about creating new tools. The panel concluded that cultural organisations must reaffirm their civic and democratic role, embedding sustainability within their core missions and strengthening collaboration across networks, disciplines, and communities as a condition for systemic change.



## Workshop I – The Art of Everyday Sustainability: Managing in Cultural Organisations

### Conceptualisation:

- Greta Ortalli, *Researcher Culture for the Planet*
- Dr. Małgorzata Ćwikła, *Senior Researcher Culture for the Planet*

### Table Moderators:

- Prof. Leticia Labaronne, *Co-Lead Culture for the Planet*
- Dr. Laura Noll, *Senior Researcher & Executive Education Lead Culture for the Planet*

- Greta Ortalli, *Researcher Culture for the Planet*
- Giovanna Gray Nassralla, *Strategy Lead Culture for the Planet*

### Observer:

- Diana Martello, *Visiting Researcher*

**Location:** Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne

The workshop was conceived as an exploratory step in developing a tailored Sustainability Management System and standard for the arts and cultural sector, starting from practical insights to co-produce knowledge. Its aim was twofold. On one hand, to explore how cultural organisations manage sustainability, the desired practices they would like to adopt in the future, and the internal and external factors influencing how they manage sustainability. On the other hand, the workshop aimed to understand participants' familiarity with sustainability standards.

Structured around interactive exercises, it invited participants to act simultaneously as informants and co-designers in the research process, capturing diverse perspectives and shared priorities for designing, adopting, and implementing sustainability frameworks. The participants also helped to validate first research ideas based on the literature review on sustainability standards. This approach reflects the Alliance's commitment to grounding research in lived realities and ensuring that conceptual models remain responsive to practitioners' needs.

### Key takeaways:

- Effective implementation depends on connecting leadership vision with staff engagement, integrating sustainability into everyday operations, and fostering shared accountability and responsibility across all levels of the organisation.
- Participants recognised that measuring and sharing progress should balance quantitative "footprint" data with qualitative "handprint" narratives, using storytelling and transparency to build credibility as well as emotional connection.
- The dot-voting exercise in relation to the sustainability standards revealed consensus on the need for leadership development, staff

empowerment, and a flexible, participatory framework for certification. It also highlighted the challenge of understanding the diversity of needs within the sectors and the difficulty of complying with changing expectations and policies.

### Discussing Sustainability Practices:

This part of the Workshop adopted a World Café format across four thematic tables:

**Planning Sustainability:** Participants highlighted the need for systemic thinking that aligns whole-organisation strategies with sector frameworks and local contexts. They stressed the balance between bottom-up engagement and top-down vision, noting tensions between structured planning and adaptability, and emphasised embedding sustainability across environmental, social, and governance dimensions. Long-term institutionalisation within organisational culture was deemed essential for maintaining continuity.

**Implementing Sustainability:** Embedding sustainability requires alignment of leadership, resources, and organisational culture, supported by clear roles, budgets, and accountability. Participants saw implementation as both strategic and operational, and subjected to efforts in terms of communication, participation, and shared motivation. Sustainability should be integrated into daily operations and formal policies, treated as a binding institutional principle rather than an optional initiative.

**Assessing Sustainability:** The discussion evolved from focusing on quantitative KPIs toward using assessment as a tool for shared learning, reflection, and capacity development. Establishing baselines and indicators for both environmental and social dimensions was seen as crucial.

Participants contrasted the “footprint” (quantitative accountability) with the “handprint” (qualitative positive impact), calling for meaningful, flexible, and iterative monitoring that values context and ethics as much as metrics.

**Communicating Sustainability:**

Communication was framed as strategic, shaping engagement and institutional culture. Participants stressed the need to balance transparency, optimism, and accessibility, tailoring messages for internal and external audiences while avoiding greenwashing. Storytelling and artistic practice were identified as powerful tools to embody sustainability values and foster emotional connection.

**Mapping Experience with Standards and Understanding Priorities**

Participants mapped their familiarity with sustainability frameworks across sectors. Almost all had prior experience. Furthermore, the exercise revealed that sustainability responsibilities are increasingly distributed across organisational roles (from directors to sustainability officers),

**Mentimeter Exercise**

Participants opened with a Mentimeter activity connecting the previous day’s Olympic theme to sustainability. Asked which Olympic discipline best described their organisation’s approach, most chose the “marathon,” symbolising long-term commitment, while others picked “sprints” or “hurdles,” reflecting varied challenges and paces in advancing sustainability.

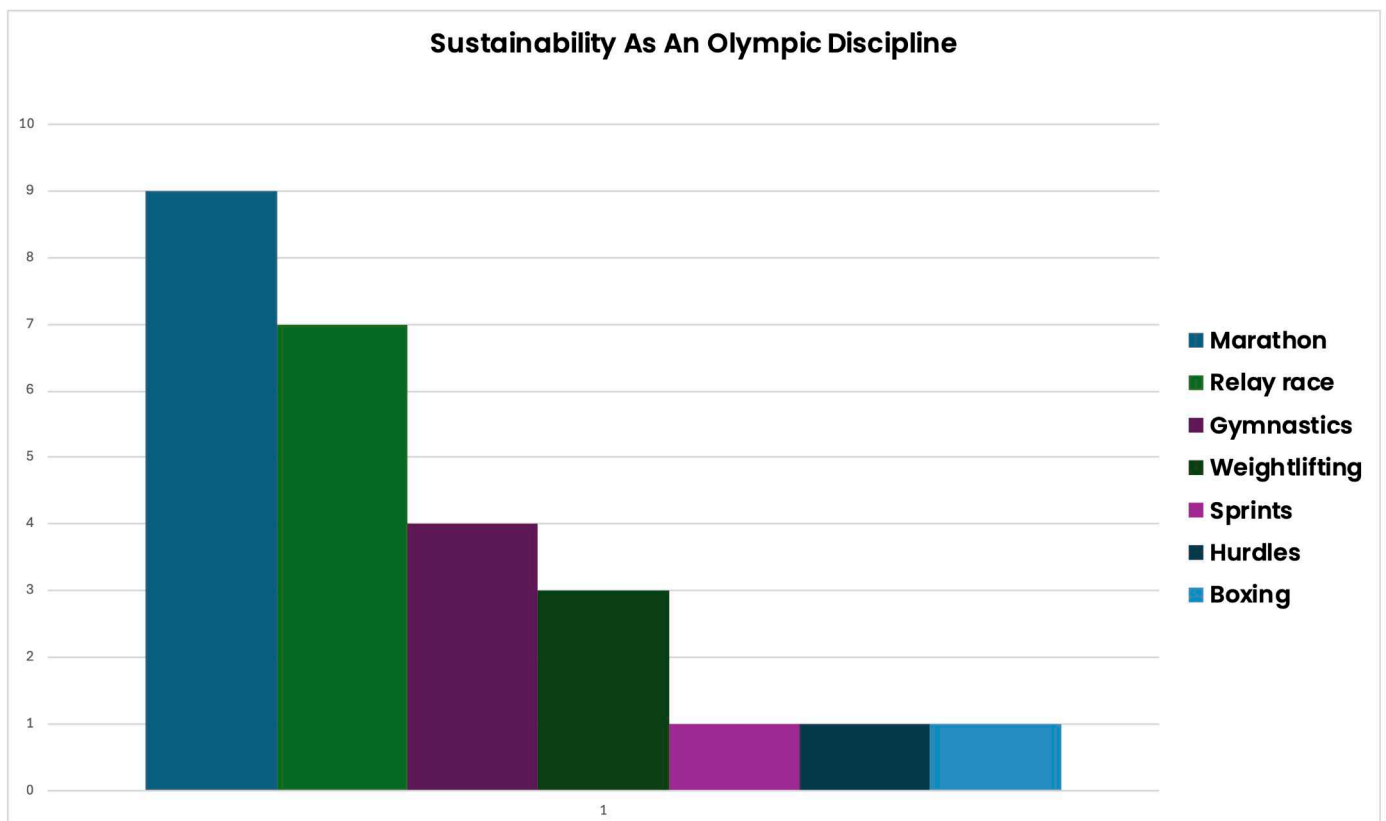
demonstrating a growing professionalisation and knowledge base within the cultural field.

In a collaborative dot-voting activity, participants identified priorities and challenges for a future cultural-sector sustainability standard. Top priorities included developing leadership skills, empowering employees at all levels, and using culture’s creative capacity to test alternative sustainability approaches. Challenges centred on unifying frameworks for benchmarking across the sector, adapting to evolving regulations, and navigating shifting political contexts.

**Conclusions**

Overall, the workshop depicted a field in transition; one that is eager to embrace sustainability yet constrained by structural and regulatory complexities. Cultural organisations were recognised as potential laboratories for innovation, capable of influencing broader sustainability practices through creativity and experimentation.

Finally, the session underscored that meaningful sustainability tools like a management system and a tailored standard must remain participatory, context-sensitive, and adaptable.



## Workshop II – The Future We Create: Mapping Community Needs, Skills and Collaboration

### Conceptualisation:

- Giovanna Gray Nassralla, *Strategy Lead Culture for the Planet*
- Dr. Laura Noll, *Senior Researcher & Executive Education Lead Culture for the Planet*

### Co-Moderators:

- Prof. Leticia Labaronne, *Co-Lead Culture for the Planet*

### Observer:

- Diana Martello, *Visiting Researcher*

**Location:** Théâtre Vidy–Lausanne

This session's overarching aim was to map the needs, skills, and opportunities for collaboration across cultural organisations, while defining the skills and competencies required for sustainability leadership in the arts and culture sector.

The session unfolded in two main parts: the first focused on Alliance Needs Mapping, where participants articulated their wishes, expectations, and potential contributions to the collective. The second centred on Skills Mapping, during which participants reflected individually and in pairs to co-design the profile of an ideal sustainability leader and identify key training needs.

### Key takeaways:

→ Participants envisioned the Alliance as a collaborative network for mutual learning, supported by a shared platform, regular knowledge exchange, and coordinated capacity-building across the cultural sector.

→ The ideal sustainability leader doesn't primarily need specific knowledge or specialised expertise, but above all soft skills like empathy, reflexivity, flexibility, adaptability, teamwork and communication skills.

→ Sustainability leadership means, above all, that it is not solely the responsibility of one person, but rather supported by a team.

### Alliance: Identifying Wishes and Offers

The opening session invited participants to reflect on the support they need and the expertise they can share to foster sustainability within the Alliance and beyond. Across discussions, collaboration, co-creation, and shared learning emerged as central themes. Sustainability was seen not as an isolated responsibility but as a collective process, dependent on mutual learning and joint capacity-building. Participants

envisioned a network that transcends disciplinary boundaries, connecting opera houses, museums, and other cultural organisations to share experience across environmental, social, and governance dimensions.

This envisioned network was described as both a community of practice and a platform for broader engagement beyond the cultural field, fostering partnerships with other sectors and disciplines. Discussions underscored the need for a shared knowledge base and common language to support coherent sustainability practice. Founding Members stressed wider participation and engagement of all organisational levels, and suggested smaller working groups for specialised topics such as energy efficiency or sustainable supply chains. The network would thus bridge theory and practice, ensuring that visible actions are underpinned by solid conceptual foundations.

### Skills: Defining Sustainability Leadership and Training Needs

The second session focused on the skills, attitudes, and leadership qualities required for sustainability leaders in arts and cultural organisations. Participants highlighted the importance of adaptability, open-mindedness, and the ability to "unlearn to learn", recognising that sustainability challenges often disrupt established norms. Leading sustainability initiatives was seen as requiring a blend of technical, operational, and visionary capacities, as well as the ability to engage with experts, manage teams, and translate complex concepts into actionable strategies.

Most important were soft skills and relational competencies like building trust, motivating teams, and fostering a culture of collaboration, experimentation and learning. Participants emphasised flexibility, resilience, and continuous professional development, enabling leaders to sustain focus amid uncertainty and institutional change. Sustainability leadership, they noted, must not

reside in one individual but rather needs to be distributed across teams, with complementary skills and shared responsibility.

Discussions also addressed the need to balance strategic vision with fundraising and communication skills, ensuring adequate resources for sustainability initiatives. Participants agreed that effective sustainability leadership depends not only on efficiency but also on reflective practice and intentionality, combining mindfulness with strategic action.

## Conclusions

The workshop shows that advancing sustainability in the cultural sector requires both structural mechanisms for knowledge sharing and human-centred capacities for leadership, change and collaboration. These results echoed the insights from the first workshop. Networked learning, cross-sector dialogue, and distributed sustainability leadership emerged as essential for embedding sustainability into everyday organisational practice. Finally, participants recognised the overall ongoing tensions between artistic practice, creative expression and technical rigour, vision and implementation, and individual versus collective responsibility.

## Team Reflections: One-Word Takeaways



# Declaration of Lausanne Ceremony

## Speakers:

- Prof. Leticia Labaronne, *Co-Lead Culture for the Planet*
- Prof. Martin Müller, *Co-Lead Culture for the Planet*
- Mr. Grégoire Junod, *Mayor of Lausanne*
- Giovanna Gray Nassralla, *Strategy Lead Culture for the Planet*

**Location:** Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne



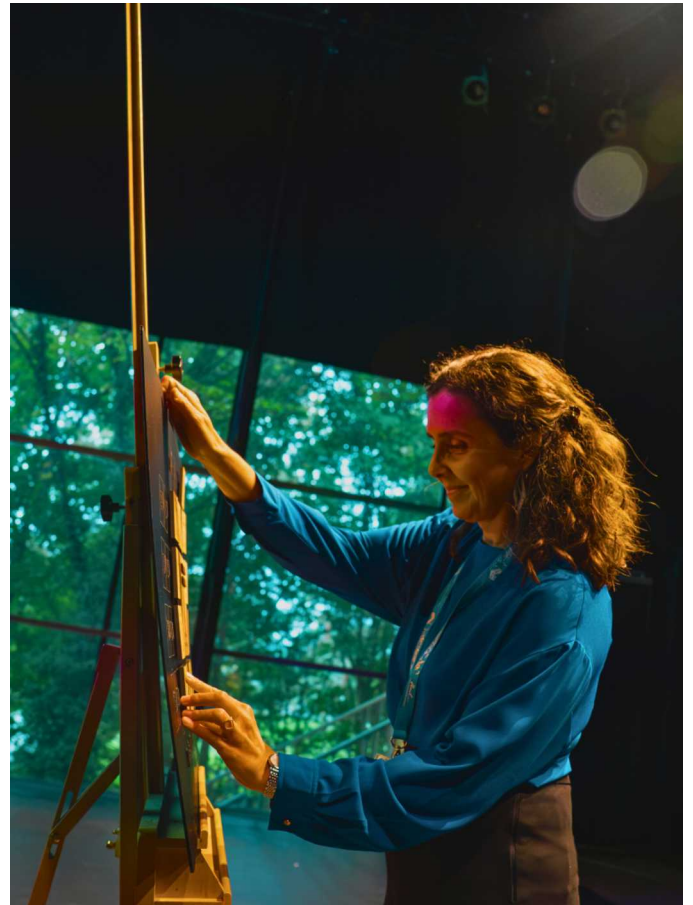
The Declaration of Lausanne Ceremony marked the formal founding of the Culture for the Planet Alliance and served as a defining moment in affirming the Founding Member's collective commitment to sustainability.

Opening the session, Professor Martin Müller emphasised the need for coordinated action and systemic change within the cultural sector. He spoke of the shift from individual responsibility and efficiency toward a paradigm of sufficiency, interdependence, and shared purpose. Framing his reflections with two guiding questions: "What is enough?" and "What constitutes a good life?" he introduced the Declaration's opening statement: **"The role of arts and cultural organisations in fostering a good life for all within planetary boundaries is central to accelerating the global transition towards sustainability."**

Mayor Grégoire Junod followed, situating the Declaration within the city's broader vision for culture and sustainability. He highlighted Lausanne's integration of sustainability into both urban planning and cultural policy, referencing initiatives such as free public transport for conference participants and the establishment of Plateforme 10 as a cultural district symbolically positioned at the city's centre. Junod also underlined Lausanne's engagement as chair of the Permanent Commission on Cities and Sustainable Development within the International Association of French-speaking Mayors, underscoring the city's capacity to drive global knowledge exchange and inspire other municipalities to embed sustainability in cultural development.

The reading of the Declaration of Lausanne was delivered through a pre-recorded video montage featuring Founding Members of the Alliance across continents, each reading in their native language. The Declaration called for immediate, institutional, and systematic action within arts and cultural organisations and recognised their role in shaping narratives, fostering dialogue, and aligning artistic practice with social and environmental responsibility. It outlined commitments to inclusivity, equity, regenerative practice, and the development of sector-wide frameworks that bridge creativity and accountability.

A central and symbolic moment followed, led by Giovanna Gray Nassralla, during which each founding organisation placed a wooden tile into a collective board. This visual act of assembly represented the Alliance's spirit of collaboration — each tile contributing to a mosaic that embodied both unity and diversity within the global cultural community.



The ceremony concluded with remarks by Professor Leticia Labaronne, who reaffirmed that the Declaration was not intended as a symbolic statement but as a co-created commitment for coordinated, sector-wide engagement. She emphasised that it defines a path for integrating sustainability into the governance and daily operations of cultural organisations. The event culminated in a celebratory reception, where participants reflected on the collective energy that had shaped the three-day Summit, marking both a milestone and a starting point for the global movement that Culture for the Planet aspires to sustain.

**“Today you have affirmed collective commitment and a shared vision for sustainability from, within, and across your organisations.”** — Prof. Leticia Labaronne

## The Declaration of Lausanne

### **PREAMBLE**

*The role of arts and cultural organisations in fostering a good life for all within planetary boundaries is central to accelerating the global transition towards sustainability. Now is the time for action and commitment. To achieve greater equity, justice, and wellbeing for all, the arts and cultural sector is committed to responding substantively to the global climate crisis, the loss of biodiversity, air and water pollution, and growing inequalities around the world. It is imperative to take immediate, institutional, and systematic action — guided by long-term strategies and tailored initiatives that address the specific needs and potential of the sector.*

*The arts and cultural sector enjoys widespread visibility, trust, and respect at local and international levels. Organisations offer vital spaces for critical reflection, social cohesion, and community resilience. They encourage open dialogue, helping shape cultural narratives and agreed-upon objectives for sustainable practices and shared visions for the future.*

*Despite the universal recognition of the role of the arts and cultural sector in sustainability efforts, action remains isolated and fragmented. Many organisations struggle to translate ambition into practice. Common frameworks, benchmarks, and sector-specific guidelines need to reflect diversity at the local and global scales. A coordinated, collective approach is urgently needed — one that not only embeds sustainability within the strategies of arts and cultural organisations, but that also institutionalises it in the sector.*

## **DECLARATION**

*We, the signatories, declare our commitment to advancing the sustainability transition of our organisations and to champion efforts within the arts and cultural sector. We recognise that this transformation cannot be achieved in isolation and must be approached institutionally, systematically, and collectively.*

*We call for individual arts and cultural organisations, and for the sector as a whole, to:*

- Recognise their responsibility in the sustainability transition and their potential to influence broader societal change.*
- Develop and implement good governance for sustainability, integrating it into strategy, implementation, and transparency.*
- Act within a community of practice that fosters collaboration, knowledge exchange, and capacity-building.*
- Adopt and support sector-wide guidelines and standards for sustainable management.*
- Reduce climate and overall environmental impact across the creation, production, presentation, and conservation of the arts and culture.*
- Empower communities by embracing inclusivity, social responsibility, and regenerative practices.*
- Act with transparency in tracking, monitoring, and communicating progress in all dimensions of sustainability.*
- Understand sustainability in a holistic way, addressing both environmental concerns and broader systemic challenges of sustainable development.*

*This Declaration stands alongside global efforts calling for culture to become a fundamental pillar of the sustainability transition.*

*There are many constraints in turning intentions into actionable steps. Through this Declaration, we align our sector in a collective effort to overcome these barriers and shape a coordinated global response. One sector, one voice – working together towards the sustainability transition, while recognising our different cultural, political, and geographical contexts.*

## **CALL TO ACTION**

*We call upon arts and cultural organisations, networks, policymakers, funders, and stakeholders to take collective responsibility in establishing sustainability as a core value within our sector. We call on cultural actors worldwide to contribute to a future where artistic and creative freedom align with ecological responsibility, equity, and resilience.*

*By signing this Declaration, arts and cultural organisations affirm their commitment to embedding a holistic view of sustainability within their strategies, governance, and practices.*

→ The Declaration of Lausanne is also available on the [Culture for the Planet website](#).

QR Code Culture for the Planet Website, Declaration of Lausanne:



# Founding Members

## Presenting the Founding Members of the Culture for the Planet Alliance



Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne  
Theater, Lausanne, Switzerland



Plateforme 10  
Museums, Lausanne, Switzerland



Olympic Museum  
Museum, Lausanne, Switzerland



Opernhaus Zürich  
Opera, Zurich, Switzerland



Pro Helvetia  
Swiss Arts Council



M+  
Museum, Hong Kong, China



Instituto Inhotim  
Museum, Brumadinho, Brazil



賽馬會氣候變化博物館  
JOCKEY CLUB MUSEUM OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Jockey Club Museum of Climate  
Change  
Museum, Hong Kong, China



SMK - Statens Museum for Kunst  
Museum, Copenhagen, Denmark



National Galleries of Scotland  
Museum, Edinburgh, UK



Tate  
Museum, London, United Kingdom



MASP  
Museum, São Paulo, Brazil



Museo Guggenheim Bilbao  
Museum, Bilbao, Spain



Australian Museum  
Museum, Sydney, Australia



Museo delle Scienze di Trento  
Museum, Trent, Italy



Museo Nacional  
Thyssen-Bornemisza  
Museum, Madrid, Spain



Royal Ballet and Opera  
Opera, London, United Kingdom



National Gallery of Zimbabwe  
Museum, Harare, Zimbabwe



Museum of West African Art  
Museum, Benin, Nigeria



Royal Ontario Museum  
Museum, Ontario, Canada



Museo Moderno  
Museum, Buenos Aires, Argentina



National Theater & Concert Hall  
Theater, Taipei, Taiwan



The Göteborg Opera  
Opera, Gothenburg, Sweden



La Monnaie - De Munt Opera  
Opera, Brussels, Belgium



Bühnen Graz  
Opera, Graz, Austria



Dubai Opera  
Opera, Dubai, United Arab Emirates



Ibermuseums  
The Platform for Ibero-American  
Museums



Opera Europa  
Organisation for professional  
opera companies and opera  
festivals, Europe



CIMAM  
International Committee for  
Museums and Collections of  
Modern Art



TBA21 Thyssen-Bornemisza  
Art Contemporary  
International Art and Advocacy  
Foundation



ICOM SUSTAIN  
International Council of Museums



University of Lausanne  
University, Lausanne, Switzerland



Zurich University of Applied Sciences  
University, Zurich, Switzerland

# Day 3 – 10 October

## Masterclass I – Navigating the Urgency of Sustainability in Arts and Culture: Frameworks and Policies

### Opening Remarks:

- Bénédicte Brunet, *Artistic Director of La Grange*
- Prof. Leticia Labaronne, *Co-Lead Culture for the Planet*
- Prof. Martin Müller, *Co-Lead Culture for the Planet*

### Panelists & Presentations:

- Roberto Bernad, *EU Funds Manager of Banco Santander. "Supporting the implementation of Fundación sustainability in the cultural sector"*

- Fabienne Schellenberg, *Head of Innovation & Society of Pro Helvetia – the Swiss Art Council. "Sustainability & Art Funding"*
- Clémence Aycard, *Board Member of ICOM Sustain. "Navigating the urgency of sustainability: shaping policies and frameworks"*

### Moderator:

- Elena Borin, *Member of the International Advisory Board of Culture for the Planet*

Moderated by Professor Elena Borin, an expert in cultural management and sustainability, this session gathered representatives from Fundación Banco Santander, Pro Helvetia, and ICOM Sustain to explore how cultural organisations can engage with and influence emerging sustainability frameworks and policies.

### Key takeaways:

→ Coordinated strategies between funders, organisations, and policymakers are essential to align resources, reduce fragmentation, and foster systemic change.

→ Private foundations and public fundings agencies like Pro Helvetia and Fundación Banco Santander demonstrate how funding, innovation, and collaboration can make sustainability a core principle of cultural programming.

→ Through storytelling, education, and advocacy, cultural organisations (supported by networks such as ICOM Sustain) play a pivotal role in shaping public awareness and influencing sustainability policy.

Roberto Bernard from Fundación Banco Santander presented how private foundations can drive transformation through strategic funding, innovation, and partnerships. He highlighted initiatives that promote sustainable cultural industries and that connect urban and rural contexts, stressing the need for aligned funding strategies and public-private collaboration to foster social justice and systemic change.

Fabienne Schellenberg of Pro Helvetia followed showing how sustainability is embedded in 87% of the foundation's cultural funding. Supporting thousands of projects in Switzerland and abroad, Pro Helvetia promotes interdisciplinary practice through concrete tools and leadership programmes. Schellenberg underlined inclusivity, cooperation, and pluralism as guiding principles in sustainable cultural policy.

Clémence Aycard from ICOM Sustain presented how the organisation mobilises 60,000 museum professionals across 139 countries to champion culture-based climate action. Drawing on her work with Climate Museum UK, she stressed storytelling, education, and intersectional approaches linking ecological, social, and cultural sustainability, and called for greater inclusion of cultural actors in policy, advocacy and decision-making at all levels.

### Discussion

Throughout the debate, the speakers converged on the need for stronger coordination between arts and cultural organisations, private and public funders, and cultural policymakers. They emphasised the alignment of funding mechanisms, certification systems, and evaluation criteria as essential for minimising fragmentation and maximising impact. The session also highlighted participatory governance and shared responsibility as crucial tools for embedding culture within sustainability agendas. Transparent accountability mechanisms and data-driven reporting were identified as key to strengthening credibility and informing evidence-based policy development.

The panel discussion reaffirmed that sustainability in the cultural sector extends beyond the environmental realm, encompassing ethics, social inclusion, and innovation as integral pillars of transformation. By bridging policy frameworks, funding strategies, and artistic practice, cultural actors can play a decisive role in systemic change.

The session concluded with a shared call for sustained dialogue and cross-sector collaboration to ensure that culture remains central to the global sustainability agenda beyond 2030, echoing ICOM Sustain's closing message: **"You don't need to be perfect; you only need to start"** – Clémence Aycard, ICOM Sustain.



## Masterclass II – International Best Practices: Cases of the Sustainability Journey in Arts and Cultural Institutions

Designed to showcase practical examples and concrete experiences, the second masterclass, and last research session of the Summit, focused on how cultural institutions are advancing their own paths toward sustainability. Selected participants from the Alliance had been invited in advance to share their institutional experiences and were paired to form four different breakout sessions. These were organised around the dimensions of environmental, social, and governance sustainability, with a fourth presentation developed for an online audience to address broader perspectives on sustainability and climate action.

The session opened with a research introduction by Prof. Martin Müller, who presented the Culture for the Planet research framework and outlined the three sustainability dimensions guiding the discussions. Following this, participants joined the thematic breakout groups, each focusing on a different aspect of sustainability. The flexible format allowed them to attend the presentations most relevant to their professional interests and areas of expertise, fostering cross-sectoral exchange and dialogue.

### Research Introduction

Professor Martin Müller opened the session by linking research to practice, reiterating the project's central message: cultural organisations must first address their own environmental and social impacts before leading broader transformation through imagination and collaboration. He emphasised that sufficiency – rather than efficiency alone – should guide the sector's contribution to systemic change.

He then reflected on the transition from research to implementation, recalling the development of the Sustainability Star model and the modular sustainability indicators presented earlier in the Summit. These tools, validated through expert review, are now ready to be tested through institutional case studies. The masterclass, he noted, represented this next step: where evidence-based frameworks meet lived practice, and knowledge exchange becomes the cornerstone of collective progress.



## Breakout Groups: Environmental

### Speakers:

- Verónica Castillo, *Director Collection & Exhibition and Chair of Sustainability Working Group at M+ Hong Kong*
- Victor Serra Lima, *Strategic Planning Analyst and Sustainability Leader at MASP São Paulo*

### Moderator:

- Greta Ortalli, *Researcher Culture for the Planet*

**Location:** Unil Géopolis, Room 2129

### Key takeaways:

- Environmental sustainability combines infrastructure innovation with institutional culture.
- Monitoring and education anchor long-term progress.
- Cultural organisations are laboratories for sustainable futures through creativity and care.

Verónica Castillo described M+ as a museum where sustainability has been integral since inception. Embedded in Hong Kong's West Kowloon Cultural District, M+ operates under a district-wide framework aligned with the UN SDGs. Infrastructure initiatives (renewable energy, seawater cooling, rainwater harvesting) are complemented by the creation of cross-departmental Environmental Advocates to embed sustainability across the organisation. Castillo stressed that sustainability extends beyond buildings into exhibition design, community programmes, and global partnerships, including engagement with ICOM, CIMAM, and the Culture for the Planet Alliance.

Victor Serra Lima detailed MASP's comprehensive waste management strategy, which links environmental impact with social inclusion through partnerships with local waste-picker cooperatives. Based on the 4Rs (refuse, reduce, reuse, recycle) the programme is supported by staff training, supplier coordination, and real-time monitoring systems. Beyond operations, MASP integrates sustainability into its curatorial practice, connecting exhibitions on Afro-Atlantic histories and Indigenous narratives to themes of ecology, justice, and heritage, ensuring environmental work remains socially relevant.

### Discussion

The discussion underscored that sustainability in museums is both a matter of daily operational as well as organisational culture. Participants recognised that while technical improvements, such as energy reduction and material reuse, are critical, their success depends on the organisation's ability to cultivate awareness and responsibility at all levels. Both speakers highlighted that staff engagement, continuous education, and transparent communication sustain momentum over time. Sustainability, they agreed, is a participatory process that evolves through experimentation and shared ownership rather than imposed mandates. Yet, leadership vision is crucial for organisational change.

The conversation also examined evaluation and continuity. MASP's Theory of Change and M+'s tracking carbon emissions per exhibition were cited as practical ways to measure progress while reinforcing institutional learning. Challenges included maintaining engagement amid staff turnover and translating ambitious targets into concrete actions. The discussion concluded that museums must act as living laboratories, spaces where creativity, measurement, and ethics converge to inspire change beyond their walls. By bridging operational evidence with social meaning, cultural organisations can redefine sustainability as a lived institutional ethos.



## Social

### Speakers:

- Cécile Le Van, *Sustainability Coordinator at La Monnaie / De Munt Opera*
- Alfredo Aracil, *Head of Education at Museo Moderno Buenos Aires*

### Moderator:

- Dr. Małgorzata Ćwikła, *Senior Researcher Culture for the Planet*

**Location:** Unil Géopolis, Room 2130

Alfredo Aracil described the Museo Moderno's transformation into "a museum in motion," grounded in openness, experimentation, and community collaboration. Its Free Ecologies programme draws on Félix Guattari's concept of the three ecologies (environmental, social, mental) and connects artistic creation to ecological justice and social healing. With its interdisciplinary team of artists, educators, and therapists, the museum fosters co-creation and dialogue across diverse communities.

### Discussion

Discussions explored how social sustainability triggered by cultural encounter and artistic expression is less about growth and expansion than about the quality of human relationships that sustain it. Both speakers reflected that meaningful engagement requires consistency and empathy, where organisations act as mediators of care rather than producers of output. Participants noted that social sustainability depends on listening, continuity, and humility. Values that allow creativity and responsibility to reinforce one another over time.

The dialogue highlighted that ethical and social integrity emerge from attentiveness rather than scale. Organisations that privilege long-term trust-building over short-term visibility create the conditions for genuine transformation. The session concluded that when art and culture centre care, reciprocity, and shared authorship, they not only foster inclusion but also redefine resilience itself, as the capacity to sustain connection and meaning across difference.

### Key takeaways:

- Social sustainability grows from relationships of trust, care, and continuity.
- Inclusion and co-creation foster belonging and shared responsibility.
- Depth of engagement outweighs scale in building cultural resilience.

Cécile Le Van presented A Bridge Between Two Worlds, La Monnaie's 25-year social engagement initiative connecting opera with marginalised communities in prisons, hospitals, and care centres. The project positions culture as a right and art as a vehicle for empowerment. Through workshops, participants rebuild confidence and identity – one noting that their "voice had been in prison too; and now it is free."



## Governance

Location: La Grange (Unil), Foyer

### Speakers:

Linda Rullander Drackner, *Sustainability Coordinator at Göteborg Opera*

María Noguera Ortega, *Sponsorship & Partnership Manager at Guggenheim Bilbao*

### Moderator:

Dr. Laura Johanna Noll, *Executive Education Lead Culture for the Planet*

### Key takeaways:

- Embedding sustainability in governance demands continuous translation from strategy to everyday action.
- Cross-departmental structures and external partnerships create long-term institutional ownership.
- Sustainability is an iterative process which depends on experimentation, reflection and learning.



Linda Rullander Drackner described the Göteborg Opera's layered sustainability model, which combines formal certifications such as ISO 14001 and the Nordic Swan with a cross-departmental environmental team that involves all professions from artistic roles and costume designers to chefs and technicians. This inclusive structure allows sustainability to infuse every stage of the opera's workflow. It ensures that daily practices reflect both ecological awareness and artistic integrity. A prime example is the production of Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* as sustainable opera. This production took the organisation's sustainability commitment to another level. It also resulted in key learnings, so that Rullander Drackner shared tangible actions in energy efficiency, waste and emission reduction, material reuse, and biodiversity protection.

María Noguera Ortega presented the Guggenheim Bilbao's transversal governance model, led by its Green Team, which coordinates sustainability actions across all departments and aligns them with the museum's strategic plan, SDGs, and partnerships. She showcased the Home for Our Planet project, which engaged young people through design-thinking sessions to co-create practical climate solutions. This case illustrated how partnerships and cross-sector collaboration strengthen environmental and social sustainability and position museums as catalysts for innovation.

### Discussion

The discussion expanded on how governance can operationalise sustainability as a long-term institutional practice rather than a project-based endeavour. Both speakers highlighted that sustainability must permeate management and decision-making, influencing how organisations allocate resources, define responsibilities, and engage their audiences. Participants reflected that sustainable governance requires mechanisms for accountability, feedback, and ongoing learning. Beyond environmental outcomes, these practices were seen as reshaping the very culture of organisations. They encourage self-reflection, transparency, and responsiveness to social and ecological realities.

The dialogue also addressed the role of leadership in enabling experimentation and distributed responsibility. Governance structures that empower staff participation and foster internal communication were deemed essential for maintaining coherence between sustainability ambitions and practice. Participants agreed that while certification and standards are valuable anchors, real transformation depends on fostering commitment across teams. The session concluded that sustainability governance is not static but iterative: its strength lies in adapting to evolving

## Online Session

### Speakers:

- Ada Chan, *Head of Communications & Engagement of the Social Responsibility & Sustainable Development Office at CUHK Museum of Climate Change*
- Rachel O'Sullivan, *Environmental Manager at Royal Ballet and Opera*

### Moderator:

- Giovanna Gray Nassralla, *Strategy Lead Culture for the Planet*

**Location:** Zoom, filmed at La Grange (Unil) Auditorium

## Discussion

The discussion emphasised that sustainability communication must move beyond technical metrics toward storytelling that engages, educates, and inspires. Both speakers argued for reframing sustainability narratives through accessible formats and visual storytelling that connect emotionally with audiences. Chan highlighted CUHK MoCC's SD Matters programme and O'Sullivan addressed RBO's creative social campaigns as best-practice examples of how organisations can humanise sustainability, building trust and enthusiasm. Education and programming were also central: Chan shared MoCC's experiences of ambassador training, artist collaborations, and inclusive materials, while O'Sullivan described RBO's commissioning climate-themed productions and embedding circular design principles in creative processes.

Internally, both organisations demonstrated how culture change depends on empowering staff through both leadership commitment and grassroots participation. Chan noted how MoCC's induction programme and micro-grants model mirror RBO's "little and often" approach: frequent, low-barrier activities that build shared responsibility and joy. Participants envisioned a future where cultural organisations extend their influence beyond their buildings, collaborating with communities, schools, and NGOs, while measuring progress not only through emissions but through shifts in attitudes, knowledge, and behaviour. The session concluded that sustainability in culture succeeds when it becomes narrative, participatory, and embodied. This means an ongoing conversation between organisations, their people, and the world around them.

### Key takeaways:

- Organisations can tell better stories by replacing technical reports with human-centred, visual narratives that audiences and staff connect with.
- There is the need to combine top-down commitment with bottom-up engagement, micro-grants, and joyful participation to normalise sustainable habits.
- To capture culture's full impact and not be restricted only to emissions, organisations need to track changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours.

Ada Chan introduced The Chinese University of Hong Kong Jockey Club Museum of Climate Change's integrated sustainability model, grounded in a "knowledge–attitude–behaviour" framework connecting science and art. Through exhibitions, school programmes, and digital platforms, MoCC extends outreach while minimising environmental impact. Its Ambassador and Alumni programmes cultivate climate literacy and empower young leaders to transform knowledge into action.

Rachel O'Sullivan discussed embedding sustainability within a historic performing arts organisation through measurable targets, participatory workshops, and creative reuse in production. The Royal Ballet and Opera collaborates closely with suppliers to strengthen transparency and applies a sustainable production framework across departments. Ecological themes now increasingly inform new artistic works, reinforcing sustainability as both operational practice and creative lens.



## Plateforme 10 Visit

**Location:** Plateforme 10, *Photo Elysée*

The final afternoon of the Summit concluded with a guided visit to Plateforme 10, Lausanne's arts district and home to the Musée Cantonal des Beaux-Arts (MCBA), Photo Elysée and mudac. Participants were welcomed in the foyer of Photo Elysée by Béatrice Demenet, Secretary-General of Plateforme 10, who introduced the site as a symbol of Lausanne's commitment to sustainable urban and cultural development.

Christophe Krebs, Sustainability Representative of Plateforme 10, presented the organisation's Sustainable Development Charter, developed by its cross-institutional working group in 2023. The Charter is structured around four guiding principles: reducing the site's carbon footprint; implementing measurable day-to-day actions; encouraging responsible behaviour among all museum actors and partners; and engaging audiences in dialogue on ecological and social issues through exhibitions and public programmes.

These principles are translated into nine operational areas: governance, exhibition design, transport and mobility, conservation, events and mediation, partner selection, public engagement, energy consumption, and labelling. Measures already implemented include the introduction of waste sorting across the entire site, temperature regulation in buildings to reduce energy demand, and the creation of a shared fleet of electric cargo bikes for internal logistics.

The visit concluded with a presentation by Lydia Dorner, Research Associate at Photo Elysée, who guided participants through *L is for Look*, a photography exhibition exploring perception and visual literacy. The visit provided an opportunity to observe how Plateforme 10's sustainability principles are integrated into exhibition design, building management, and audience experience, closing the Summit with a concrete example of local leadership of sustainability in culture.



# Social Events

Networking and informal exchange were woven throughout the three days of the Summit. Shared moments provided space for reflection, dialogue, and collaboration among participants. These convivial gatherings helped strengthen the emerging Culture for the Planet Alliance, reinforcing the Summit's collective spirit.



## Opening Reception and Exhibition Tour at the Olympic Museum

The Summit opened with a guided tour of the Olympic Museum, offering exclusive insights into its blend of art, sport, and sustainability. The evening reception overlooking Lake Geneva set a warm and collaborative tone for the days ahead.



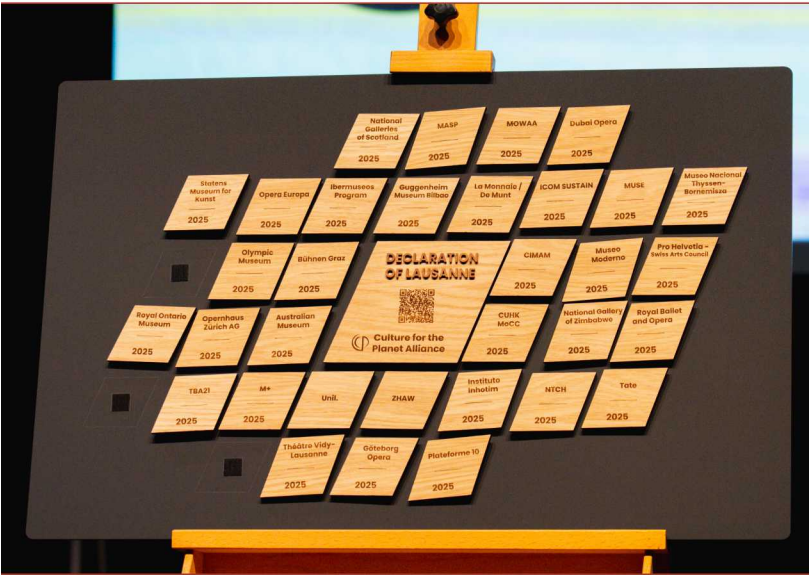
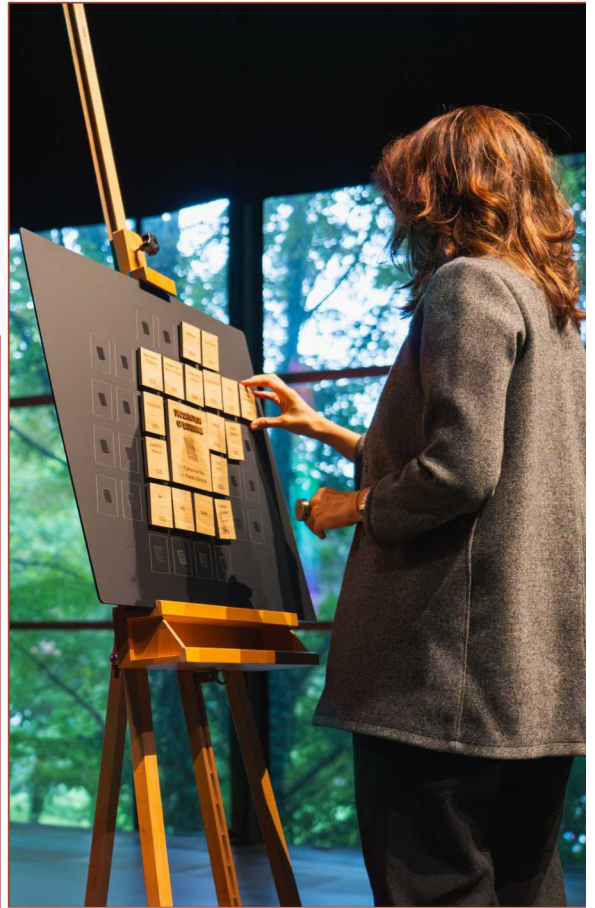
## Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne

The second day unfolded at Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne, where participants explored how sustainability can be embedded across the arts and culture sector. Through panels and workshops, they shared experiences, exchanged knowledge, and co-created ideas for collective action within the Culture for the Planet Alliance.



### Declaration of Lausanne Ceremony

The ceremony marked the official founding of the Culture for the Planet Alliance, as Founding Members united around the Declaration of Lausanne, a shared commitment to sustainability in the arts and culture sector.





### Masterclasses

The final day featured two masterclasses showcasing concrete examples and practical approaches to implementing sustainability in the arts and culture sector. Participants learned from international cases, exchanging ideas on how to turn commitment into action.



# Afterword

**Diana Martello**, *Visiting Researcher and Summit Rapporteur*  
*Doctoral Candidate at IMT School for Advanced Studies Lucca*

In recent years, the discourse on sustainability within the cultural sector has reached a new stage of maturity. Whereas earlier debates centred on whether culture should be regarded primarily as a means or an end in advancing sustainable development, contemporary discussions have shifted toward the identification of concrete, operational strategies within arts and cultural organisations. International efforts to integrate culture into sustainability frameworks have been increasingly reflected inside the sector itself, prompting arts and cultural organisations to deepen their understanding of sustainability principles, climate action and social responsibility. Yet, despite this growing recognition, a coherent and actionable roadmap for sector-wide implementation remains limited.

Simultaneously, this institutional shift resonates with the expectations of audiences and communities who view cultural organisations not as neutral spaces, but as active forums for civic engagement and critical dialogue. It is therefore unsurprising that museums have emerged as symbolic sites for climate protests, that curatorial practices are increasingly shaped by demands for inclusion and decolonisation, and that theatres are once again positioning themselves as arenas for public debate and social mobilisation. These converging forces indicate a sector in transition, grappling with its responsibilities beyond its artistic mission while seeking to align its practices with broader sustainability imperatives.

As I write this Afterword, two weeks have passed since the conclusion of the Inaugural Culture for the Planet Summit. This interval has provided the necessary distance to reflect, situate the Summit's takeaways within the broader discourse on culture and sustainability, and respond thoughtfully to a central question: What have we learned? The Summit provided a valuable opportunity to bring together arts and cultural organisations that are geographically distant yet united in purpose, enabling them to look beyond their differences and envision a shared operational pathway capable of addressing an urgent, systemic, and global challenge. Through the collective work of the Alliance, several key insights clearly emerged.

First and foremost, sustainability matters. This is the first and most important takeaway. Beyond the widespread use of this word, the Alliance members reaffirmed that sustainability constitutes a profound ethical challenge for the sector. And it is a challenge that can be meaningfully confronted only through the cultivation of a network of knowledge and practice. Sustainability is understood as a collective endeavour, a practice that must be advanced collaboratively, grounded in shared and deeply held values within organisations, and extended outward through the involvement of communities and stakeholders such as funding agencies and policy makers.

This relational approach is also reflected in the recognition that an effective framework for assessing sustainability is needed but must be flexible and responsive to context. Members of the Alliance repeatedly emphasised the importance of addressing the challenge of social and climate wellbeing, while respecting geographical specificities and minority perspectives, advocating for approaches that evolve through participatory governance and reciprocal learning processes.

The arts and cultural sector provides a fertile ground for developing innovative sustainability frameworks, as it inherently functions as an experimental space capable of reimagining practices, shaping collective imaginaries, and fostering a deep understanding of sustainable futures. Cultural practice is defined by its integration of experimentation with tradition, of past with present, and of care with enhancement. This duality nurtures a dynamic form of stewardship, requiring institutions to balance responsibility towards the past with responsiveness to the present and openness to the future. Members of the Alliance emphasised the importance of embedding sustainability at the core of organisational practice, cultivating shared responsibility, transparency, and accountability.

So, what have we learned? The cultural sector now appears poised to take a next step with heightened awareness and intentionality. Sustainability is not an isolated goal but a relational and iterative journey, nurtured through cooperation, mutual learning, and the cultivation of practices attuned to context, heritage, and the horizons of collective imagination. The Summit reaffirmed that meaningful action in the cultural sector cannot flourish in isolation. The sector is increasingly developing the capacity to operate within global dynamics while making substantive and situated contributions at the local level. In this sense, arts and cultural organisations are not merely responding to contemporary challenges but are actively shaping the conditions for a more thoughtful, resilient, and visionary future. They are ready. The pressing question now is: what's next?

### *Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne*



© Ville de Lausanne / © Matthieu Gafsou

# Future Ahead

The Inaugural Culture for the Planet Summit marked a turning point: the moment when the Alliance moved from intention to collective action. The three days in Lausanne demonstrated the power of exchange between disciplines and organisations; between research and practice. The conversations, ideas, and commitments forged now set the course for the next phase.

In the coming months, the Alliance will enter a period of consolidation and deepening. The research team at the University of Lausanne and the Zürich University of Applied Sciences will work alongside Alliance members to co-produce knowledge through interviews, case studies, and validation workshops. These efforts will test and refine the frameworks and tools developed so far, ensuring they are practical, credible, and adaptable across the diversity of institutional and geographical contexts represented in the Alliance. Through this participatory process, Culture for the Planet will continue to translate research outcomes into operational models that can guide the sector's transition.

After the founding phase with 33 Founding Members, the Alliance will open to new arts and cultural organisations. It will also seek to connect and foster dialogue with partners, including initiatives and networks that share its commitment to advancing a more sustainable cultural sector and strengthening the role of culture at the heart of climate action.

Building on the lessons from the Summit, new formats for collaboration, both digital and in-person, will foster continuous learning, exchange, and peer support among members. One of the clearest insights emerging from the Summit is the importance of connection: sustainability advances when organisations offer spaces to listen, share, and build trust. The Alliance will therefore strengthen its online platform and regular member dialogues, ensuring that engagement between members, and between Culture for the Planet and its community, remains active, inclusive, and globally accessible.

The Summit also reaffirmed that sustainability in culture is not a checklist, but an organisational transformation that blends vision with evidence, and responsibility with experimentation. As the Alliance evolves, its role will be to hold this balance, remaining research-grounded yet imaginative and visionary while pragmatic.

The journey ahead is collective. Each organisation that joins, each experiment that takes shape, and each connection that grows will continue to define what Culture for the Planet stands for: a shared and credible Alliance placing arts and culture at the heart of the planet's sustainable transition.



# Sustainability Reporting

Sustainability principles informed all aspects of the Summit's organisation: from venue selection and travel logistics to catering and materials. The event aimed to model the values promoted by the Culture for the Planet Alliance by minimising environmental impact and ensuring inclusivity and accessibility.

## Mobility and Travel

Participant travel represented the largest share of the Summit's footprint. Based on post-event survey data, an estimated 19,500 kg CO<sub>2</sub> were generated by travel. Of the 31 participants, roughly 12 travelled by air, while others arrived by train from neighbouring European countries but also from distant places. Several attendees combined their trip to Lausanne with other professional engagements, combining purposes to maximise the value of travel. While global gatherings inevitably entail emissions, the Summit's outcomes in knowledge exchange, connection, and collaboration demonstrated the broader value of convening in-person.

## Local Transportation

Most participants stayed at the partner hotel located with ample access to public transport and within walking distance of some venues. All activities were easily reachable by public transport, and the organising team coordinated group travel each morning using Lausanne's metro and bus system.

## Catering and Food

All meals were 100% vegetarian, prepared with seasonal, locally sourced ingredients. Efforts were made to minimise packaging and single-use plastics, although some providers still used these items. Food waste was limited through portion control and careful planning.

## Materials and Waste

The Summit followed a digital-first approach. Programmes, schedules, and presentations were distributed electronically. Printed materials were minimal and, when used, were recycled after. Post-it Notes used during workshops were recycled following data capture. Badges and lanyards were collected for reuse, and no promotional giveaways were produced.

The only gift presented to the Founding Members of the Culture for the Planet Alliance (a wooden tile) was crafted from sustainably sourced wood, with all packaging made from certified and recycled materials. This symbolic gesture reflected the Summit's commitment to both environmental responsibility and meaningful, lasting design.

## Inclusion and Accessibility

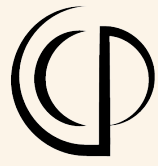
The event brought together participants from over 11 countries and across different institutional types, aiming to ensure gender balance among speakers and diversity in perspectives. Travel support was provided to selected participants to enable global representation — about 30 % of attendees joined from outside Europe. Inclusivity in session design and facilitation remained a guiding principle.

## Local Cultural Integration

By partnering with Lausanne's leading organisations — the Olympic Museum, Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne, La Grange (Unil), and Plateforme 10 — the Summit embedded sustainability discussions within the city's vibrant cultural landscape. Site visits and receptions fostered exchange between international delegates and local actors.

## Knowledge Legacy and Impact

Key materials (including the Declaration of Lausanne video, session summaries, and this report) will be publicly accessible to extend the Summit's reach. Participants identified areas for continued collaboration, and many organisations expressed interest in joining the Alliance's working groups. Feedback and emissions data from this edition will guide improvements for future Summits, reinforcing a cycle of learning and accountability. The Summit also informed the research, and the results will feed into an open-access publication strategy.



# **Culture for the Planet**