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**GLAMMONS**

**MANAGING &  
ENABLING  
CO-CURATION  
PRACTICES IN  
VISUAL ARTS**



**CREARE**  
SOCIAL

**in  
polis**  
urbanism



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

GLAMs institutes have been long perceived as exclusive spaces for experts, but the recent years have seen a great shift in this with more and more participatory efforts being taken to open these spaces up for public engagement. More and more participatory activities are emerging in the field of arts especially in the contemporary art sector. With this working paper we intend to understand effective ways of managing and enabling co-curation practices in the visual arts sector through an in-depth analysis of the collaborative practices of artmaking by looking closely into the projects undertaken under the New Patrons projects and the Consortium Museum. The New Patrons program started from the Consortium Museum where the Belgian artist François Hers designed a protocol which allows citizens to commission artworks and be involved in the process of art making collectively along with artists and mediators (curators) and thereby giving the citizens a democratic freedom of producing artwork.

Under the scope of this working paper, we intend to closely understand the co-curation process by investigating the subjective experiences of the citizen patrons, mediators and artists involved in the New Patrons projects. Our research objective is to understand the ways in which the collaborative practices between different communities take place in collective art production. We intended to make sense of the co-curation practices through its relational and material aspects by using an integrated theoretical lens of Tronto's care theory and Puig de la Bellacasa's ethos of care. We used qualitative research methods to understand holistically the co-curation practices and its underlying processes. The data for this study was collected over a span of six months through 55 semi-structured interviews of participants involved in the New Patrons projects across seven different countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Switzerland and Sweden).

The analysis of our study shows the importance of open dialogue, shared decision-making and context-specific adaptability in co-curation processes. Shared responsibility and collective accountability foster a sense of belonging and ensure active participation among diverse stakeholders in co-curation practices. We found that innovative practices like the New Patrons protocol overcomes the limitations of traditional art institutions by democratising art production and opens up inclusive spaces for diverse perspectives. Constructive management of conflicts and the importance to relations formed during the process of artmaking can ensure the sustainability of co-curation projects. One of the interesting findings was the need to introduce support systems or care infrastructures (like the role of mediator in the New Patrons protocol) to enable effective co-curation practices by ensuring that the power imbalance is checked during these collaborative practices and to avoid the pitfalls of tokenism in the name of participation. Effective co-curation requires clearly defined roles to balance artistic freedom with community needs, ensuring collective ownership, knowledge sharing, and long-term sustainability.

The conclusion of our study indicates that co-curation as a commoning practice when viewed through the lens of care, offers a transformative approach to art production leading to more democratic cultural rights by shifting the focus from institutional control to collective stewardship and results in making art production more inclusive, accessible and community driven.



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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACRONYM	DESCRIPTION
CA	Consortium Agreement
VbA	Value-based Approach
EM	Ethics Manager
DEM	Dissemination and Exploitation Manager
EC	European Commission
GA	Grant Agreement
QE	Quality Evaluator
PMO	Project Management Office
PCT	Project Coordination Team
PMH	Project Management Handbook
QM	Quality Manager
RM	Risk Manager
SB	Supervisory Board
PSC	Project Steering Committee
WP	Work Package
WP-L	Work Package Leader
NP	New Patrons



# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Purpose and Scope

This working paper looks at co-curation practices in the visual arts as a commoning practice and tries to investigate it through the theoretical lens of care to understand the ways to manage and enable effective co-curation practices. In this working paper, we look into the case of Le Consortium and the New Patrons projects to see how co-curation practices extending outside the institutional settings open up inclusive spaces of community participation thereby contributing to community resilience and empowerment. This study intends to understand the effects of participatory management of commoning practices. The findings of this working paper will provide empirical evidence on real world applications of co-curation practices which will inform policy recommendations regarding the management of cultural institutions through commoning practices.

## 1.2. Contribution to other Deliverables

This deliverable starts from the questions of governance, accessibility and autonomy provided in the D1.6 and looks for the real-world implications of these principles in the co-curation practices. This study extends on the analysis of co-curation practices informed by the analysis of commoning practices in the D1.4 and D1.6. This deliverable is complementary to D2.3 which focuses on the co-curation practices in the visual art sector and beyond through an analysis of its purposes, actors and contexts. The results of this paper will inform the policy recommendations for the WP5 by contributing empirically to the literature through its focus on the application of care in the effective management of commoning practices.

## 1.3. Structure of the Document

The document starts with section 2 by contextualising commoning practices in visual arts. Then we look at curation practices in the context of cultural commons. This will be followed by a literature review on co-curation. We will then discuss co-curation as a commoning practice. The conceptual framework used for this deliverable will be discussed where we look at co-curation through the lens of care theory.

The section 3 will explain in depth the methodological aspects of our research which includes the background of our selected cases, the timeline of our research, the data collection methods used, the sampling of the participants and the data analysis methods used for this study.

In Section 4 we will discuss in detail the findings of our research along with the themes evolved from the data supported by relevant quotes from the semi-structured interviews collected for this research. In the second part of this section, we will explain ways of managing and enabling co-curation practices in visual arts in the light of our findings. We will also discuss the role of care in ensuring effective co-curation.

The last section of the deliverable will focus on limitations, future research and relevant policy recommendations.

# 2. CONTEXTUALIZING CO-CURATION AS COMMONING

Traditional curation practices in the visual arts have undergone a significant change in recent times with many GLAMs institutes shifting towards a more participatory approach. Co-curation



has emerged as an important practice questioning the traditional hierarchical models of curation set in an institutionalised context and offering itself as a more collaborative and participatory alternative. In this section, we discuss through a careful review of relevant literature how the co-curation as a commoning practice is enabled and managed in the visual arts by looking at them through a theoretical lens of care.

## **2.1. Commons in the context of visual arts**

The discussion of commons was brought to the mainstream through Hardin's writings "The Tragedy of Commons" which erratically mistook commons for an open regime where unowned resources are used till depletion ([Bollier, 2024](#); [Hardin, 1968](#)). Elinor Ostrom revived the commons discussion by putting forth a commons framework which at its core examined the role of collectively organized communities in managing resources in a sustainable manner. During recent years the scope of commons has shifted from Ostrom's initial focus on natural resources and has been expanded by the works of many scholars who have been vocal about the need for collaborative stewardship of commons in the arts and cultural sector. The cultural commons as a concept challenges traditional hierarchies of the art world and looks at artistic and cultural practices as common-pool resources that should be managed and shared collectively ([Borchi, 2018](#); [Mollona, 2021](#)). In visual arts, commons theory can be applied to understand how artistic practices can be managed collectively and democratically through community participation.

## **2.2. Curation and cultural participation in the context of cultural commons.**

This section addresses the curation practices in the context of commoning. It draws on notions of active and passive forms of cultural participation. It is based on literature review of scholarly work that explore the link between different modes of participation, commoning and (co)-curation in GLAM sectors.

### **2.2.1. Cultural participation modes: by level of engagement**

Recent scholarly and policy debates on cultural participation, highlights not only its multifaceted importance for economy and society, but also pay attention to the various qualities that cultural participation realises. In general, cultural participation refers to the involvement of individuals and groups in cultural activities, experiences, and practices. It encompasses a wide range of activities that engage people in the creation, appreciation, and sharing of culture. Cultural participation can take various forms and occur in diverse settings, including traditional



formal institutions like museums, galleries and theatres, as well as grassroots, informal settings and community spaces and online platforms ([European Commission, 2023](#)). These differences in cultural participation are characterised by the different levels of participants' engagement.

- **Active and passive cultural participation**

While discussing the various modes of cultural participation, scholars often refer to active and passive participation modes which are two different ways in which individuals engage with cultural activities and have different experiences. Active cultural participation involves direct, hands-on involvement in cultural activities. Participants are engaged in the creation, performance, or organisation of cultural expressions, and they often contribute their own skills, creativity, and effort. We can think here of creating art, or performing in theatre, or organising cultural events or volunteering, or engaging in any heritage activities (craft, rituals, practices). For example, in the context of different participatory policy paradigms (discussed in D2.3.) and cultural organisational settings, Bonet ([2018](#)) differentiates seven forms of active participation, such as a) amateur expression; b) crowd/co-creation; c) self-programming; d) sharing critics; e) self-management; f) audience learning; g) artistic documentation. *Amateur expression* refers to creation, interpretation or appreciation by non-professional individuals or groups who are making their own decisions simultaneously on both - producing and consuming. *Crowd and co-creation* emphasise the intensity of the particular interaction that might be informed by a professional artist. When a group of volunteers are selecting and programming an activity is defined as self-programming and when people share their reflections on cultural events created for a specific online platform refers to *sharing critiques*. While *self-management* describes an activity of volunteers who are taking their strategic decisions. And in different occasions the participant can understand what makes the creative process/product works, i.e. enhance their *learning* and evaluation through *artistic documentation*.

Whereas active cultural participants are directly involved in the activity, the passive participants are involved only in observing, consuming, or appreciating cultural activities without direct involvement in their creation or performance. Participants are associated with an audience or consumer. Here one can think about attending events, visiting museums or galleries, or listening to music, or watching movies, or reading books, or virtual engagement such as watching virtual tours, online exhibitions, or streamed cultural events. Each participation mode can be implemented differently depending on the context of the cultural project and/or organisation. However, sometimes the division of passive and active is very clear, but sometimes the differences can be debatable ([Morea et al., 2023](#)). To better understand these differences, and when possible, reduce the ambiguity we consider the analysis of different levels of participatory engagement based on Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation (1969).



- **Cultural commons and levels of participatory engagement**

Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation (1969) is a **typology** that describes varying levels of community involvement in decision-making processes or by levels of engagement. The ladder consists of **eight levels, which are grouped into three categories**: Nonparticipation, Degrees of Tokenism, and Degrees of Community Power. Each category represents a different level of participant influence on decision-making ([Table 1](#)).

Arnstein's ladder provides understanding of **participants' involvement in decision** – making processes. It highlights the various degrees of power that participants can hold and underscores the importance of genuine, meaningful participation in fostering democratic governance and community empowerment. Though, it is originally designed to evaluate the **effectiveness of participatory process** involving communities in public decision making, it has importance also in the cultural domain, especially when applied to the cultural commons. As discussed in D1.6., the concept of cultural commons refers to shared cultural resources, such as knowledge, art, traditions, and practices, that are collectively created, maintained, and managed by a community. Applying Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation to cultural commons can provide a framework for understanding the varying degrees of community involvement in the management and governance of these shared cultural resources. Each level of engagement can be interpreted in the context of cultural commons ([Table 1](#)). For example, the lowest levels of engagement (manipulation and therapy) in cultural commons can be understood when a small group of individuals or organisations control cultural resources and claim to engage the community, but in reality, the community has no real influence, but rather being educated and not empowered to make decisions. At the degrees of tokenism (informing, consultation and placation), cultural institutions for example, can inform the community about upcoming activities or a museum can seek community opinions through surveys, but in the end ultimately, they make decisions without considering community feedback. The highest levels of engagement (partnership, delegated power and control) which are associated with the commoning refers to situations when the community shares decision-making power with those traditionally in control. This could involve collaborative governance structures where community members and cultural institutions work together to manage cultural resources (partnership) or can represent community-controlled cultural organisations that have authority over programming, funding, and policies (delegated power). An example for the latter could be a cooperative art space where artists collectively decide on the use of the space and its resources. The highest level of engagement (community control) is when the community has full decision-making power and control over cultural resources, for example a community-owned and managed cultural institution.



**Table 1- Different levels of community engagement in cultural commons.**

<i>Degrees of Community power</i>	<b>Forms of participation (by Arnstein)</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Manifestation in cultural commons</b>
	Community Control	Having full decision-making power and governance control	Community has full decision-making power and control over cultural resources. For example, a neighbourhood association which fully manages and operates a community cultural centre.
	Delegated Power	Achieving a higher level of decision-making authority with having the power to make certain decisions and can negotiate and influence outcomes significantly.	Community has significant control over cultural commons, with the ability to make binding decisions. An example could be a cooperative art space where artists collectively decide on the use of the space and its resources.
	Partnership	Share decision-making responsibilities through mutual negotiation (significant degree of shared power).	Community shares decision-making power with those traditionally in control. This could involve collaborative governance structures where community members and cultural institutions work together to manage cultural resources.
<i>Degrees of Tokenism</i>	Placation	Having a limited decision-making power through representation on boards or committees.	Community has some level (not substantial) of influence, often through advisory boards or committees, but lacks the authority to implement changes.
	Consultation	Being asked about the decisions (through surveys, meetings, and public hearings), but without guarantee that their opinion will influence the final decision.	Community's opinion is gathered, but not necessarily influenced by the decisions. For example, a museum might ask for community input on an exhibit but ultimately make decisions without considering the feedback.
	Informing	Being informed about the decisions, but without possibility for or negotiation.	Information about cultural resources and decisions is shared with the community, but their feedback is not incorporated.



Non-participation	Therapy	Aiming at altering participants' behaviour instead of engaging them in decision making.	Community is provided with education opportunities but not truly engaging them in managing cultural resources.
	Manipulation	Aiming at education, but not genuinely engaging the participants.	Small groups of individuals or organisations control cultural resources and claim to engage the community, but in reality, the community has no real influence.

Source: Authors' elaboration of Arnstein's ladder (1969) as applied to cultural commons.

### 2.2.2. (Co)curation as commoning in GLAMs: activities and qualities

Informed by the analysis of commoning in D1.4. and D1.6. and Arnstein's ladder in this section we analyse the qualities of curatorial practices that take place within the GLAM sectors by identifying different activities and participant's levels of engagement.

- **Commoning**

As identified in the deliverables D1.4 and D1.6, the concept of commoning is built around social issues related to collective action and self-organisation. Commoning is associated with a practice which links a resource to its community of users ([Foster & Iaione, 2019](#)), repeated interactions and practices ([Wessendorf, 2014](#)) which induces social learning ([Wenger, 2010](#)) and is a key element to adaptation ([Armitage et al., 2011](#)). It is perceived as a process which exceeds property and capital issues ([Cooke et al., 2019](#); [Leitner & Sheppard, 2018](#); [Potts, 2019](#)). Participants engagement is of high level and manifested in collaboration, partnership and shared decision-making (with reference to Arnstein's ladder). In this sense commoning as cultural participation can be considered a form of social participation where the focus lays on the relational aspects of cultural engagement (European Commission, 2023).

- **Commoning in the context of GLAM co-curation practices**

The reviewed papers which discussed the curatorial process in GLAMs, allows us to identify specific dimensions of the process in different contexts. We distinguish between curatorial practices that take place in traditional cultural settings (for example, in museums, galleries, etc.) or in a digital environment (digital platforms, use of VR, AI, etc.)

The analysis of the reviewed literature points to a wide diversity of dimensions that characterised the process of co-curation in the context of GLAM, to name some, *interaction*, *(co)creation*, *(co)production*, *collaboration*, *involvement*. Some of them are used interchangeably, others are explained as clearly distinctive features. Co-curation as *interaction* (especially in the digital environment) comprises any form of participation – “from



pushing the button to the most democratic forms of participation” ([Blancas et al., 2021](#), p. 274). When discussing the AI and VR applications to cultural heritage, authors emphasise the immersive nature of these interactions which lead to co-curation of new meanings and experiences ([Blancas et al., 2021](#)). *Co-creation* in the context of curation is described as anything *creative done collectively* ([Lam et al., 2013](#); [Sanders & Stappers, 2008](#)) and *encompasses creative co-operation* during the design process, service delivery and usage ([Steen et al., 2011](#)). Govier ([2008](#)) addresses co-creation as “working with audiences (both existing and new) to create something together: it could be meaning or interpretation; a space or exhibition; an online resource or collective responses” (p. 3). In the design industry, it is associated with *participatory design* and *co-design* and manifests itself when the consumers’ competencies are appreciated and the creation then shifts from ‘designing for’ to ‘designing with users’ ([Lam et al., 2013](#)). However, the co-creation is associated as co-curation, only with references to the description of the process, whereas co-creation of a product is different from co-curation. Another close connotation in meaning is drawn between co-curation and *collaboration*, where the latter can be considered as *contact* or *cooperation* or *coordination* or *convergence*. *Collaboration* (as co-curation) within the cultural heritage *crowdsourcing*, refers to activities which allows libraries and archives to find support to labour-intensive yet error-free task and includes correction, transcription, classification, contextualisation and co-curation of digital material ([Alam & Campbell, 2020](#); [Candela et al., 2022](#)). These activities are usually performed by volunteers ([Alam & Campbell, 2020](#)). In the digital context, collaboration between users, AI system and experts advances curatorial research of digital collection ([Barranha & Henriques, 2021](#)). Digitalisation of GLAM collections allocated to AI the role of curator which “unlocked the potential of digital image collections by tagging, sorting, and drawing connections within and between museum databases” ([Benhamou et al., 2021](#), p. 14).

### 2.3. Co-curation definition

For having a wholesome understanding of the concept of co-curation we have conducted a keyword search on co-curation on google scholar to find journal articles and academic writings explaining the term co-curation. Co-curation practices are prevalent in the digital world with platforms like Wikipedia. We narrowed our search to keep the definitions from the cultural sector. We reviewed a list of 131 items including books, journal articles and theses. The following definitions were selected from the literature reviewed.



**Table 2- Existing definitions of co-curation identified in the literature**

<b>Author</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Jaye Johnson Thiel	<a href="#">2018</a>	Co-curating in the words of Thiel “refers to the ways bodies, space, objects, and discourse come together” ( <a href="#">Thiel, 2018</a> ). It focuses on fluidity and possible outcomes than “controlling and containing bodies in a certain way” ( <a href="#">Thiel, 2018</a> )
Emma Reilly	<a href="#">2019</a>	Reilly defines co-curation as “whenever museum collaborated with an entity or individual outside of immediate staff in the creation and implementation of an exhibit, program, or project” ( <a href="#">Reilly, 2019</a> ).
Annet Dekker and Gaia Tedone	<a href="#">2019</a>	Networked co-curation is explained by Dekker and Tedone as “networked co-curation is a de-centralized and collaborative alternative to the dynamics of hyper-individualism and cultural gatekeeping that are often at the core of art world systems and social media platforms. Here, the curator moves from a figure of authority to being one of the nodes within a complex socio technical assemblage of human and non-human agents. This leads to the notion of networked co-curation: an alliance between a curator, users, objects and machines” ( <a href="#">Dekker &amp; Tedone, 2019</a> )
Jayne Krisjanous, Janet Davey, Bec Heyward and Billie Bradford	<a href="#">2023</a>	According to Krisjanous, Davey, Heyward and Bradford "a definition of co-curation of place as: service actors jointly select, present and adapt physical artifacts and material resources of the service terrain according to dynamic actor needs and service responsibilities. Place co-curation occurs when the physical artifacts of place are jointly curated through the efforts and capabilities of service actors in the service interaction (the joint sphere)." ( <a href="#">Krisjanous et al., 2023</a> )
Niki Nikonanou & Thouli Misirloglou	<a href="#">2023</a>	Nikonanou and Misirloglou argues that “co-curating projects acts as laboratory for democracy” ( <a href="#">Nikonanou &amp; Misirloglou, 2023</a> )  They further go on to explain that co-curating can be seen as “practices of commoning, practices ‘of making and managing a collective good in a manner of openness, equality, co-activity, plurality and sustainability’ ( <a href="#">Kiouпкиolis, 2019</a> ), providing ‘tangible alternatives’ ( <a href="#">Gielen, 2013</a> ) that enhance practices of participation in cultural institutions” ( <a href="#">Gielen, 2013</a> ; <a href="#">Kiouпкиolis, 2019</a> ) as cited in ( <a href="#">Nikonanou &amp; Misirloglou, 2023</a> ).

Source: own elaboration.

### 2.3.1. Working definition emerged from the literature review



Co-curation is a collaborative curatorial practice including a community or diverse actors from outside the professional staff of museums, archives, galleries etc ([Nikonanou & Misirloglou, 2023](#); [Olesen et al., 2020](#); [Reilly, 2019](#)). It is an inclusive process which focuses on the characteristics of the process of curation and collaboration rather than on the final product or artefacts ([Edmonds et al., 2009](#); [Thiel, 2018](#); [Dekker & Tedone, 2019](#); [Turner & Thomas, 2020](#)). It is a decentralised, inclusive, democratic, collaborative practice which challenges the traditional hierarchy and knowledge production based on hyper individualism by emphasising of the plurality of perspectives ([Edmonds et al., 2009](#); [Dekker & Tedone, 2019](#); [Kioupkiolis, 2019](#)) as cited in ([Reilly, 2019](#)). It is a dynamic process where uncertainty is almost a norm ([Nikonanou & Misirloglou, 2023](#); [Thiel, 2018](#)). Even though co-curation practices face a number of challenges regarding mitigating roles and identities in professional and community spaces, effective co-curation practices could be achieved by setting expectations for each actor in the process and also by being patient and adaptable ([Davis, 2016](#); [Reilly, 2019](#)). Two common co-curation models emerged from the literature are “community-committee model” ([Moore, 2014](#)) as cited in ([Reilly, 2019](#)) and “polyvocal approach model” ([Phillips, 2003](#)) as cited in ([Reilly, 2019](#)). In the former, the committee of community members forms “the primary leaders and decision makers” ([Reilly, 2019](#)) in terms of content production and other aspects of the project while the professional staff adopts the role of a facilitator. In the polyvocal approach model, the community consultants and museum staff work together to “find a space of co-existence of multiple perspectives” ([Phillips, 2003](#)) as cited in ([Reilly, 2019](#)).

We synthesised the evolving definition of co-curation from the review of literature and developed a short definition of co-curation. This definition will inform our discussion of co-curation in the analysis of the semi-structured interviews to understand how it is enabled and managed in visual arts:

*Co-curation is a collaborative, inclusive, decentralised, democratic, polyvocal, interactive and flexible, curatorial practice including a community and/or diverse actors from outside the professional staff of museums, archives, galleries, etc., who use common resources to develop a network aiming not only at the final product or artefacts, but also enhancing the characteristics of the curation and collaboration process.*

Co-curation as a process strives to reflect the plurality of voices in art practices through a continuous negotiation of power and shared decision-making among the communities involved in the process ([Bollier, 2014](#); [Ostrom, 1990](#)). Even though many scholars agree that co-curation as a participatory process can lead to inclusive practices, many studies point to the evidence that the power imbalances and conflicts arising due to difference in interests among the communities could hinder the effectiveness of the process ([Tjosvold, 1988](#)). An institutional



approach of co-curation often limits the participation. Traditional creative institutes and museum spaces often include traditional hierarchical positions and tend to reproduce existing power relations rooted in a patriarchal structure by ignoring the intersectionality of the participating communities ([Diaz Ramos, 2017](#); [Horne et al., 2016](#); [Molesworth, 2010](#)). There is a need to change these perspectives “by promoting equity in the relationship between specialised professionals, users and stakeholders” ([Jorente & Batista, 2022](#); [Pennington, 2018](#); [Simon, 2010](#)). Effective co-curation practices question the traditional hierarchies and create new subjectivities through constant unlearning process through dialogue and negotiation (p.582). According to Decker (2019), they shift the focus from the product to the process by “taking into account a complex interrelated network of dependencies and context” ([Dekker, 2019](#), p.134). In *Unpacking ‘Participation’: models, meanings and practices*, Andrew Cornwall writes that the effectiveness of participation “depends on how people take up and make use of what is on offer, as well as on supportive processes that can help build capacity, nurture voice and enable people to empower themselves” ([Cornwall, 2008](#)). Hence to enable co-curation in visual arts, there is a need for us to pay attention to both the resources and infrastructure needed for collaboration and the underlying relational dynamics.

## 2.4. Co-curation and care

Care serves as a great analytical lens to understand the material and relational aspects of co-curation. Curation as a word finds its etymological roots in the Latin word *curare* or to care and curator as someone who takes care of the object/artefacts and advises on them in an institutional context such as in a museum or an archive. Care is defined by scholars like Tronto and Fisher as “a species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue and repair our ‘world’ so that we can live in it as well as possible. The world includes ourselves, our bodies, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life sustaining web” ([Fisher & Tronto, 1990](#), p. 40). Starting from recognizing the needs, organisation of infrastructures and resources to meet the recognized needs, the provision of care and the response to care, Fisher and Tronto classified care into four phases namely *caring about*, *taking care of*, *caregiving* and *care-receiving* in their initially proposed care theory in 1990. The initial care model was based on the framework of ethics where each action corresponded to a moral principle. This model faced criticisms from feminist scholars, who challenged it for its separation of ethics and politics ([Sevenhuijsen, 1998](#); [Tronto, 2013](#)). The feminist care narratives focus more on the relational ([Tronto, 2013](#)). The initial model of care was revised by Tronto in 2013, where *caring with* was added as the fifth phase of care which focuses on the *reciprocity* of care and solidarity through plurality, communication, trust and respect



([Sevenhuijsen, 1998](#); [Tronto, 2013](#)). Tronto’s revised care theory is therefore useful in understanding the intrinsic motivations related to the co-curation practices. We can map out the phases of Tronto’s revised care theory into the co-curation process as follows:

**Table 3- Phases of care theory according to Tronto ([2013](#))**

Care phases	Associated Virtue	Meaning in the context of co-curation
<i>Caring about</i>	Attentiveness	Recognizing the need for diverse perspectives in content creation and curation in artistic practices
<i>Caring for</i>	Responsibility	Institutional infrastructure and resources needed to support effective co-curation
<i>Care giving</i>	Competence	Meaningful engagement between the artistic community, art institutions and local communities.
<i>Care receiving</i>	Responsiveness	Ongoing feedback and negotiations between the participants based on the needs of the communities involved in the process
<i>Caring with</i>	Reciprocity and solidarity (Plurality, communication, Trust and Respect)	Open and transparent communication, encouraging polyvocal perspectives through meaningful interactions based on trust and respect

Source: own elaboration.

Scholars like Mol et al. ([2010](#)) look at care practices as an experimentation which questions agency and responsibility in shared knowledge production and asks for a focus on the relational aspect of care as a practice ([Mol et al., 2010](#)). Reckitt ([2016](#)) notes how co-curation shifts the focus from “the care for objects to managing the social relationships, collective synergies and networks” ([Reckitt, 2016](#), p.6). Though Tronto’s model tells us about what the care practices are in a co-curation practice, it doesn't develop how care practices perform in a co-curation process. To have a comprehensive understanding of processes involved in the co-curation, it is important to address responsibility, care and agency and shift the focus from product to process. Pennington ([2018](#)) offers us a way to look at curation “as an exercise” of care and “enables attention towards a multiplicity of care practices” ([Pennington, 2018](#), p.582). Puig de la Bellacasa extends the concept of care by including and acknowledging “neglected spaces” in care and expands the notion of care from an anthropocentric view to a more ecologically inclusive one ([Puig de la Bellacasa, 2011](#)). This scholar addresses socio-technical assemblages as “matters of care”. Her scholarship extends the concepts of care explored by Harraway as “a result of making with others what matters in real time and real places” and



Bruno Latour “matters of concern” by expanding it into ethic-political discussions. Puig de la Bellacasa argues that “to represent matters of care is an aesthetic and political move in the way of re-presenting things that problematizes the neglect of caring relationalities in an assemblage” ([Puig de la Bellacasa, 2011](#), p.91). In the book *Matters of Care*, Puig de Bellacasa ([2017](#)) frames care as a way to think and states that “care is not one way; the cared for conforms the carer too” ([Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017](#), p.219). According to Puig de la Bellacasa “care stands for a signifier of necessary yet mostly dismissed labours of everyday maintenance of life, an ethico-political commitment to neglected things, and the affective remaking of relationships with our objects. All these dimensions of caring can integrate the everyday doings of knowledge construction” ([Puig de la Bellacasa, 2011](#), p.66). *Matters of care* puts forward care as a practice based on labour, affect, and politics ([Choi et al., 2023](#); [Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017](#)). Nevertheless, one of the main criticisms to the feminist discourses on care, is its inability to consider the intersectional realities of the participants involved in the process and also disregarding the context-specificities on the effectiveness process by adopting a universalist approach to care especially in the arts sector ([Richardson-Ngwenya & Nightingale, 2018](#)).

Molinier and Paperman ([2020](#)) argue that while studying “social processes involving multiple stakeholders, we should enquire beyond care as a relation and look at care as a process to “understand what happens at the level of direct care giving, the way in which care needs are considered in an institutional or political context and how the means to meet them are considered” ([Molinier & Paperman, 2020](#), p.11). Co-curation practices is a social process that involves a variety of stakeholders and takes place in diverse contexts (inside or outside institutions) and can hence be considered as care practice in terms of agency, access, power relations and participation. This is why it is important to investigate co-curation as a process of care to understand effectively how to enable and manage it effectively in visual arts.

Co-curation as a process of care in cultural contexts involve collaborative process of participation engaging diverse stakeholders in diverse contexts and challenges the traditional hierarchies of curatorial practices leading to inclusive and pluri-vocal outcomes ([Choi et al., 2023](#); [Daga et al., 2022](#)). In the context of contemporary art practices, co-curation challenges the existing hegemonies of the art world opening up inclusive spaces of ongoing dialogues ensuring active participation ([Acevedo-Yates, 2014](#); [Haraway, 2003](#)). Exhibitions like *Decolonial Aesthetics*<sup>1</sup> curated by Walter Mignolo and Pedro Pablo Gómez opened spaces for rethinking the way to conceptualize artistic production from the periphery ([Acevedo-Yates,](#)

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<sup>1</sup> *Estéticas decoloniales* is an exhibition organised by the Faculty of Arts of *Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas* in 2010 in Bogota, Columbia. It was curated by Walter Mignolo and Pedro Pablo Gómez. The exhibition diverged away from traditional exhibitions focusing on artworks and focused on creating spaces of dialogue. ([Mignolo & Gómez Moreno, 2021](#))



[2014](#); [Mignolo, 2010](#)). Nikonanou and Misirloglou ([2023](#)) define co-curation as a “practice of commoning” (p. 35) by looking at it as “practices of making and managing a collective good in a manner of openness, equality, co-activity, plurality and sustainability” ([Kioupkiolis, 2019](#), p. 122). The patterns of knowledge sharing and production in commoning practices and the ways of organisation, interaction and shared governance among communities in these practices contributes to knowledge commons and thereby expands the definition of what can be considered as commons ([Bollier & Helfrich, 2015](#); [Linebaugh, 2009](#)). Looking at co-curation as a commoning practice through the care theory can be an effective way of understanding holistically the process for commoning, which can be considered in itself as a care practice ([Poderi, 2021](#)).

## **2.5. Gaps in the Literature and Contribution to Research**

Even though there is a large body of literature on co-curation, commons, and care, very few studies have explored an intersection of these three concepts especially in the context of visual arts. Most of the studies on these topics discuss the ethical aspects of care and the technical aspects of co-curation, often from an institutional context. The literature review we performed showed a need for subjective understanding of the co-curation as a commoning practice and the role of care in enabling and managing these practices in visual arts. Therefore, the analysis of our research aims to cover this gap by investigating the relational and material aspects of care in co-curation and its role in enabling collective management of artistic practices and art production in visual arts. Our research will contribute empirically to the literature with concrete examples of the practical application of care theory in managing and enabling commoning practices in the context of contemporary arts and will be used to inform the deliverables focusing on policies (WP5).

The contextual framework of this study used a combined theoretical analysis of Tronto’s care theory with Puig de la Bellacasa’s ethos of care so as to comprehend co-curation from a relational and material aspect and hence identify effective ways of enabling and managing co-curation practices of visual arts.

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

The main objective of this research is to understand the different ways of enabling and managing co-curation practices in visual arts. Keeping in mind the research objective, qualitative research had seemed the most suited to address the key questions and to explore in detail the intrinsic participatory practices involved in the Nouveaux Commanditaires projects.



Qualitative research provides a holistic view of complex social systems and helps us gain an in-depth understanding of the underlying phenomenon in these systems ([Collins, 1992](#)). Through qualitative research we can comprehend different actors involved in a process, the relations among different actors and their perspectives ([Crozier et al., 1994](#); [Patton, 2014](#)). Our research leading to this deliverable was guided by these three main questions:

- 1. How to recognize and include the creative capacity of citizens in high quality art productions?*
- 2. How can we analyse practices and processes of content co-curation in cultural organisations?*
- 3. What are the best ways to manage content co-curation practices in cultural organisations?*

We have used an explanatory multi-case study design to examine in detail the co-curation practices taking place under the umbrella of the New Patrons Protocol. Case studies are described as ‘a holistic method’ suitable for ‘gaining in-depth knowledge about a phenomenon by analysing the associated processes and the actors involved’ and ‘is deemed appropriate for describing, explaining, predicting or controlling processes associated with a variety of phenomena at individual, group or organisational levels’ ([Dyer & Wilkins, 1991](#); [Eisenhardt, 1989](#); [Gagnon, 2010](#); [Gersick, 1988](#); [Harris & Sutton, 1986](#); [Woodside & Wilson, 2003](#); [Yin, 2009](#)). With our research we were interested in analysing the processes of co-curation in detail along with the role of different actors involved in the co-curation process and hence case study design proved to be the best suited method for the context of this research. To have a closer understanding of the co-curation practices and the level of participation and engagement of each party, it was important to not constrain the interviewees in a structured interview. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data as we were interested in learning about the subjective experiences of various actors involved in the co-curation process. The contextual experiences of different actors, involved in different roles and functions helped us to understand the nuances of the process characterising the New Patrons (NP) and gave us enough space for flexibility and follow up queries as compared to structured interviews ([Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021](#)).

### **3.1. Background of selected cases**



### 3.1.1. *Le Consortium*<sup>2</sup>

Le Consortium is a contemporary art centre located in Dijon known for its out of the box exhibitions and avant-garde art cultural programming. It was born out of a need for a space to enjoy contemporary artworks in Dijon. It was founded by two young students, Xavier Douroux and Franck Gautherot along with the members of the association *Le Coin de Mirroir* in 1977. It started out as a shared exhibition space for young academics and art enthusiasts housed on the first floor of an alternative bookstore. It was then awarded the Art Centre Label in 1990 and moved to the back of an old appliance store in the Dijon Centre Market Square. Today, it is housed in a 4000 square metre building designed by the Japanese architect Shigeru Ban in Dijon. Le Consortium has recently adopted the name Consortium Museum though it is still commonly known under the name *Le Consortium*. It acts as a space for fostering active collaborations and dialogue between newly emerging and established artists through creativity and innovation.

The Consortium Museum organises various exhibitions on contemporary art by avant-garde artists like Christian Boltanski, Hans Peter Feldmann, Annette Messager, Cindy Sherman has been organised at Le Consortium since the 1970s. Every year around multiple solo or group exhibits are organised by international artists on invitation. It has organised the premier exhibitions of many American contemporary artists in France like Christopher Wool, Rachel Feinstein, Roe Ethridge and many others. Experimentation and reflection of the art process forms one of the main objectives of the Consortium Museum and this is very evident in the exhibitions organised by the Centre. In the end of 1980s, Le Consortium organised an exhibition titled "*Une Autre Affaire*" curated by the Swiss artist Olivier Mosset, which questioned the conventions of organising exhibitions by incorporating minimalist and conceptual artworks. The exhibition featured various artists from different artistic backgrounds and encouraged the audience to rethink the boundaries of art by challenging the conventional notion of arts and aesthetics. This exhibition marked Le Consortium as a pioneer contemporary art centre in France through its experimental approach.

Another notable exhibition is "*Les Choix des Femmes*" in 1998 which was co-curated by four male curators who in turn invited four female artists each. In the following years, Le Consortium has organised exhibitions in France, Austria, Denmark and Korea. It has also curated exhibitions for the 2001 Venice Biennale and the 7<sup>th</sup> Lyon Biennale of Contemporary Arts in 2003. This organisation also offers services as a producer and dialogue- mediator for many

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<sup>2</sup> The information listed on Le Consortium is based on the official website of Le Consortium <https://www.leconsortium.fr/en> Accessed last on 05/09/2024



artists. In the 1980s, they started a publishing house called *Les presses du Réel* for printing catalogues for artists, which has later developed into a very important independent publishing house and the main distributor of books related to contemporary arts in France. They have also ventured into film making by establishing an independent film production company called Anna Sander Films in the 1990s to experiment with “the cinema for exhibitions”. This has resulted in producing many successful films with the film *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives* winning a Palm d’Or at the 2010 Cannes Film Festival.

Le Consortium is an independent non-profit organisation. Currently Le Consortium has 13 salaried employees and 2 volunteers collaborating in its daily activities. Most of its budget is dependent on fundraising and donations. On average, around 62% of the total annual operating budget of the organisation comes from earnings through ticket sales, consulting and curatorial commissions, exhibition-specific partnerships, occasional support from international private foundations, donations from private art galleries, and various membership programs associated with the Friends of Le Consortium. It is also sponsored by the Ministry of Culture/Bourgogne-Franche-Comté Regional Directorate of Cultural Affairs, by the City of Dijon, by the Bourgogne-Franche-Comté Region, and by the Côte-d’Or Departmental Council.

The collection of Le Consortium consists of around 300 artworks either acquired by co-production during exhibition or has been gifted by the artists to the organisation. The collection includes artworks from renowned contemporary artists like John Armleder, Oscar Tuazon, Allan MacCollum, Olivier Mosset, among others. The works from the collection are permanently exhibited on the top floor of the Consortium building. The ground floor houses the temporary exhibitions spaces along with the reception desk and a gift shop. The building is accessible to wheelchair users and disabled guests and can accommodate 800 guests. The art centre offers free visits to visitors under 18, local school groups, teachers, French students, disabled people, journalists, art scholars and critics.

The Consortium has been involved in many public commissions due to their expertise in locating the contemporary arts to the local context and due to the long-lasting relationship, they have developed over the years with many prominent contemporary artists. Under the patronage of the Fondation de France, Le Consortium spearheaded one of the very first New Patrons projects. They are also the designated mediator of the New Patrons project in the Burgundy region. The role played by Le Consortium in the conception of the New Patrons program along with its involvement in various New Patrons projects made it a relevant case for this research.



### 3.1.2. The New Patrons<sup>3</sup>

Les Nouveaux Commanditaires or the New Patrons is an initiative that started in the 1990s extending to the present day, which allows ordinary citizens interested in addressing a societal need to commission an artwork in association with an artist through the New Patrons Protocol. The program is based on the New Patrons Protocol which was drafted by the Belgian artist Francois Hers in 1991 with the intention to promote the democratisation of the contemporary arts. Even though the initiative is similar to programs like the public commission and the artistic 1% in France, the New Patrons program inverts the top-down approach of artistic intervention of these programs by ensuring that everybody who is socially interested in artistic production gets an opportunity to engage with an artist and be part of a creative intervention.

The project started under the patronage of Fondation de France, an independent agency established by the French government to promote private philanthropy and social innovation. Le Consortium mediated the initial project under the New Patrons initiative and played an important role in the development of the program in France by mediating over 80 projects throughout the Burgundy region and beyond. Including the projects undertaken in the US, South Africa, Cameroon, Nigeria and Chile, the New Patrons have completed over 400 projects with a majority of them being commissioned in Europe. Starting out as Les Nouveaux Commanditaires from France, the Protocol extended into neighbouring countries Belgium, Germany, Italy, Spain and Switzerland each forming their regional versions of the program with slight differences in the initial selection of the projects but maintaining the core principles of the Protocol under the respective national organisations of mediation (See Table 4). These national mediation initiatives grouped together to form the *Société internationale des Nouveaux commanditaires (SiNc)*. It is registered as an international non-profit association. In 2010, a new Protocol was added to include citizen science leading to the creation of *Nouveaux Commanditaires Sciences*.

**Table 4- New Patrons societies and the year of initiation across Europe**

Country	Name	Year of establishment
France	Les Nouveaux Commanditaires	1993
Belgium	De Nieuwe Opdrachtgevers	2000

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<sup>3</sup> Information on the New Patrons is obtained from the official website of the following websites

1. The official websites of the New Patrons: <http://www.nouveauxcommanditaires.eu/fr/> Accessed on 12/09/2024
2. The official website of Fondation de France: <https://www.fondationdefrance.org/fr/> Accessed on 12/09/2024



Italy	I Nuovi Committenti	2001
Germany	Neue Auftraggebers	2007
Spain	Nuevos Comisarios <sup>4</sup> and later as Concomitentes	2012 2018
Switzerland	The New Patrons	2014

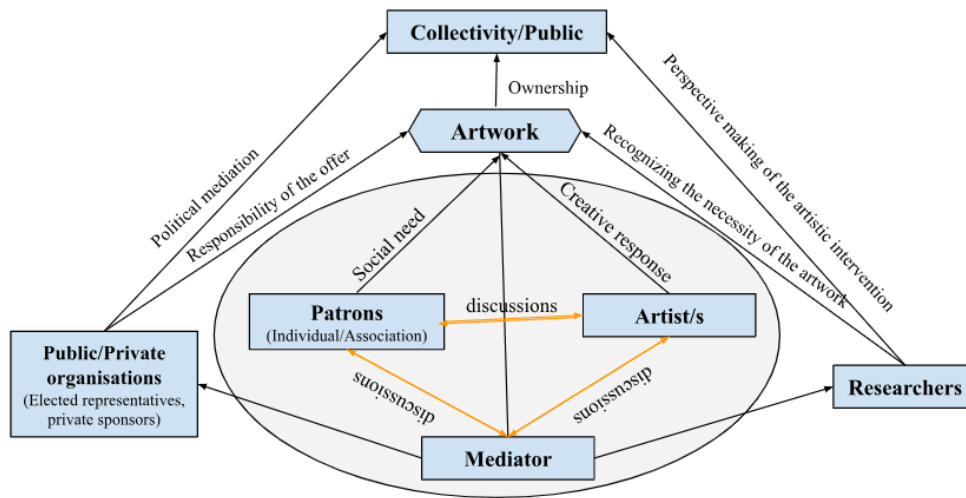
Most of the projects inside and outside France are funded by the Fondation de France along with the support of organisations like Association Daniel y Nina Carasso in Spain and the Adriano Olivetti Foundation in Italy. The implementation of the Protocol varies from one country to another depending on their local systems of funding arts, social structures, laws and customs. In 2022, the Fondation de France announced its termination of the patronage due to internal changes in the organisational focus. The New Patrons project receives a combination of private-public funding depending on the location and social context of the project. Most of the projects were financed by the Fondation de France, Association Daniel y Nina Carasso and Adriano Olivetti Foundation in France, Spain and Italy respectively. Though Fondation de France has supported various projects outside of France as well. In the year 2021, Fondation de France started to withdraw their engagement progressively by transferring the autonomy to the Société des Nouveaux commanditaires en Arts & Sciences (SNC-A&S), which is an association formed by the French mediators of the New Patrons project in both arts and science. The withdrawal of the patronage due to internal changes in the organisational focus. In 2022, the Fondation de France signed a three year agreement with the French Ministry of Culture to help the SNC in its structuring and organisation. The mediators are responsible for arranging the additional funding of the projects. <sup>5</sup>

The New Patrons projects are implemented on the basis of the NP Protocol developed by François Hers in 1992. The Protocol follows a tri-party model, including the patrons, mediator and the artist who are aided in the process of art production by supporting bodies like the local representatives or private sponsor. The role of each stakeholder is defined by the protocol (See [Figure.1](#)) and these roles are not imposed by authority and regulations but rather relies on trust to reach an agreement ([Hers, 2002](#)). The physical form or aesthetic of the artwork is not determined before the project. The artwork is produced collectively through the collaborative efforts of the stakeholders. The resulting artwork then becomes a collective good and belongs to the public.

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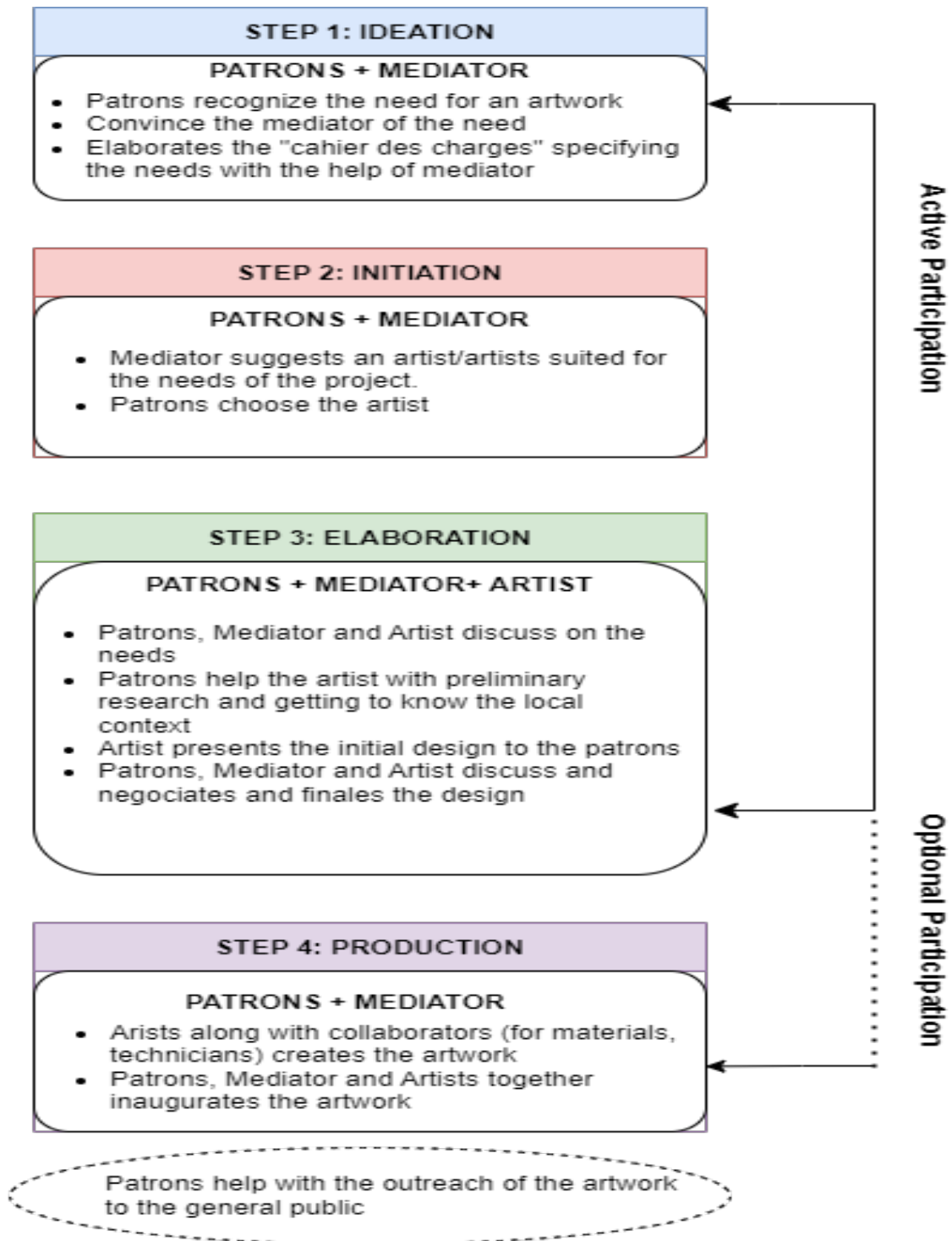
<sup>4</sup> The Nuevos Comisarios was implemented as sporadic interventions in 2012 but the program was relaunched as Concomitentes under an organisational framework.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.fondationdefrance.org/fr/creation-societe> Accessed on 10/09/2024



**Figure 1-** Overview of different stakeholders involved in the NP projects based on the NP Protocol (Hers, [2002](#))

The project starts by the patrons' desire to create an artwork based on a social need. The patrons can be an individual, a group of individuals or an association. The patrons can contact the mediator and once the mediator is convinced by the patron's need. The mediator plays an important role in the New Patrons project helping in the facilitation of process through dialogues. The mediator is responsible for creating the link between the patrons and initiating them into the artistic world. He/she is also responsible for administrative processes and fundraising. Together with patrons, the mediator initiates the commission and draws up a "cahier de charge" detailing the needs they want to address through the artwork. The mediator suggests a list of artists based on the specifications and needs of the patrons. The patrons choose the artist and then they engage in continuous discussions and negotiations with the artist in the presence of a mediator leading up to the creation of the artwork. The [Figure. 2](#) shows in detail the steps involved in the production of artwork in a New Patrons project. The Protocol also ensures the creative freedom of the artists.



**Figure 2-** The different steps involved in a NP project based on the NP Protocol (Hers, 2002)

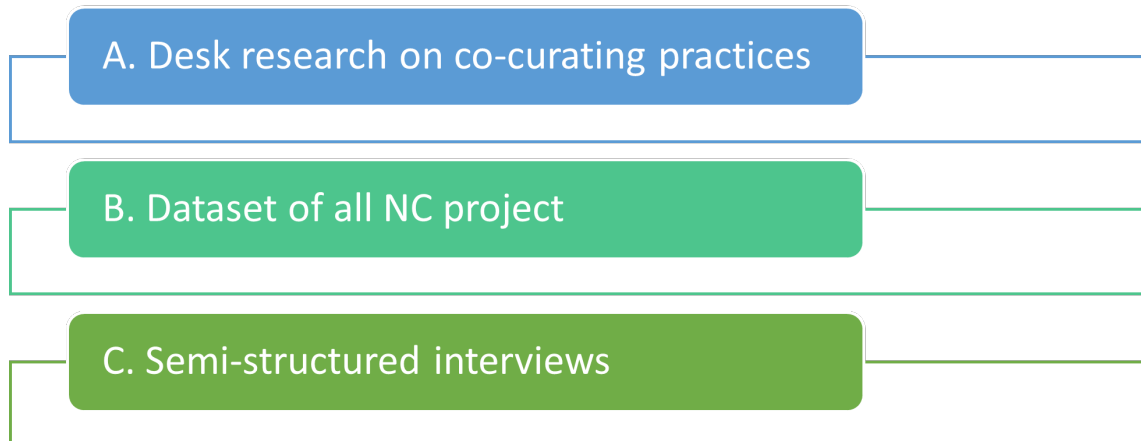
### 3.2. Research Design

The research was conducted in the following three phases:

- A. Desk research to understand the concept of co-curation in detail from M13 to M20.



- B. Compilation and creation of a dataset consisting of all New Patrons projects, from M13 to M15.
- C. Semi-structured interviews with the main stakeholders of the New Patrons projects across Europe (including the Consortium Museum) carried out from M15 to M21.



**Figure 3-** Different phases of research

First, desk research has been conducted on co-curating practices through reading over 121 articles from journals and books to form a deep understanding of various co-curation practices. This material has been collected through bibliographic research done on Web of Science and Google Scholar using specific keywords related to co-curation. Simultaneously with the desk research, we have compiled a dataset of New Patrons projects that took place around the globe. We collected and clustered a total of **321 New Patrons projects** based on the information available on the official New Patrons website. The dataset was compiled as an Excel spreadsheet and identified the name, location, budget, accessibility, type of art, duration of the project, the motivation behind the project, patrons, mediators, artists, the nature of the patrons, political interventions and private sponsors involved in the projects. The collected details were then clustered into four sections and subdivided as follows:

1. **Nature of the patrons** - Name and type of the body seeking the intervention
2. **Scale of the project** - National partners, international partners, private sponsors and budget
3. **Digital dimensions and accessibility** - Nature of accessibility (public-private space), Online accessibility



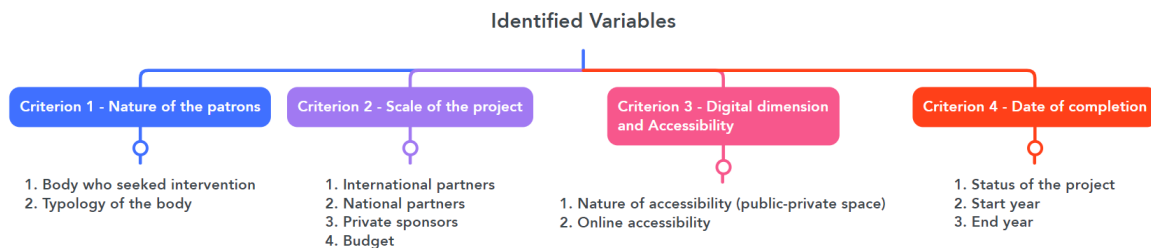
4. **Date of Completion of the project** - Start year, End year and Status (completed or ongoing)

CRITERION 2 - SCALE OF THE PROJECT					CRITERION 3 - D ACCESSIBILITY	
National Partners involved	International Partners Involved	Private sponsors	Budget	Type of art	Art Site (Gardens/Hospitals/ Others)	Accessibility
1. Directorates of Cultural Affairs of Réunion and Mayotte 2. The Regional Agency for Indian Ocean Health (AR SOI) 3. The University Hospital Centre of Réunion 4. The Hospital of Mayotte	1. Daniel & Nina Carasso Foundation 2. Fondation de France.	None	NA	Art-Architecture-Landscape (Garden-nursery with colourful plant silhouettes)	Garden nursery in 3 hospital sites (Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de La Réunion Saint Denis and Saint Pierre Centre Hospitalier de Mayotte in Mamoudzou).	public-non digital

**Figure 4-** Overview of the dataset. Source: our elaboration.

The creation of the dataset was useful as it allowed us to quantify and geographically position the projects as well as to select the case studies used for the present analysis. [Figure 5](#) presents the criteria and subsections we applied to the sample we used.

Based on the identified criteria, we have selected a list of 90 projects, relevant to the objectives of our research. We tried to identify cases representative of each identified criterion so as to have an overall idea about the various types of the NP projects. It is worthwhile to mention that it was quite difficult to reach out to the different stakeholders of the very initial projects due to the passage of time, most of the stakeholders have retired from their offices, and some of them were unable to participate because of difficulties related to old age or due to incidence of death. As a result, we prioritised contacting the more recent projects and most of the cases we selected for the interview ranged from the early 2000s to the present day.



**Figure 5-** Criteria and subsections overview. Source: our elaboration.



### 3.3. Participant Selection

The participants for the data collection were chosen using a mixed purposeful sampling method. Mixed purposeful sampling is defined as a sampling method which uses a combination of two or more sampling methods that will allow researchers to identify a sample better suited to the research objectives (Patton, 1990; Nyimbili & Nyimbili, 2024). We used a mix of purposive sampling along with voluntary sampling. The purposive sampling choice enabled us to identify relevant participants based on our previous understanding of the NP projects from the initial dataset we compiled in the first stage of the research. We wanted to understand the process of co-curation from the subjective point of view of three parties (patrons, mediators and artists) involved in the NP projects in various contexts, so we decided to choose a sample list of participants based on their role and geographic location. We contacted the participants through emails asking for their availability and interest. The interviews were conducted with participants who replied with interest and volunteered to take part in the research. We were also interested in understanding the background of the conception of the NP Protocol as well under the scope of the research, so we have also interviewed the members of the Consortium Museum in Dijon, France. Here is a representation of participants based on their role in the Nouveaux Commanditaires projects.

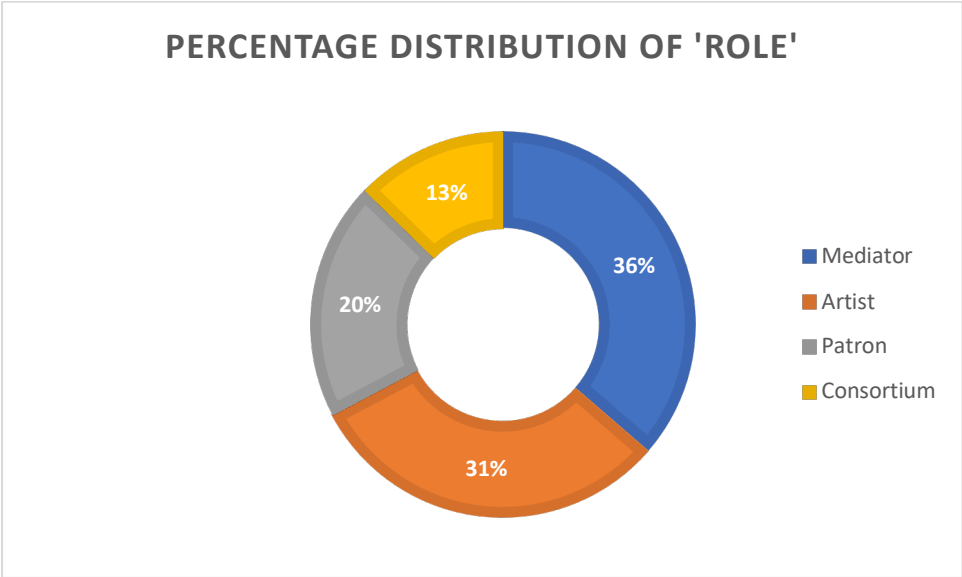


Figure 6- Representation of the ratio of interview participants based on their role.

Source: our elaboration.

### Participant Profile



**Table 5- Participant Profile overview based on language**

Language	No. of participants	Age range	Gender
Italian	7	30-60	Male: 2 Female: 5
Spanish	7	30-70	Male : 4 Female: 3
English	12	30-60	Male: 4 Female: 8
French	29	25-90	Male: 16 Female: 13

Source: our elaboration.

**Table 6- Participant Profile overview based on language**

Participant	Role	Gender
Participant 1	Mediator	F
Participant 2	Mediator	F
Participant 3	Mediator	F
Participant 4	Mediator	M
Participant 5	Mediator	F
Participant 6	Mediator	F
Participant 7	Mediator	M



Participant 8	Artist	F
Participant 9	Mediator	M
Participant 10	Artist	M
Participant 11	Mediator	M
Participant 12	Artist	F
Participant 13	Artist	F
Participant 14	Patron	M
Participant 15	Mediator	F
Participant 16	Mediator	M
Participant 17	Mediator	F
Participant 18	Mediator	F
Participant 19	Mediator	M
Participant 20	Artist	F
Participant 21	Artist	F
Participant 22	Artist	M
Participant 23	Mediator	F
Participant 24	Mediator	F
Participant 25	Artist	F



Participant 26	Patron	M
Participant 27	Consortium	M
Participant 28	Consortium	M
Participant 29	Consortium	F
Participant 30	Consortium	F
Participant 31	Consortium	F
Participant 32	Consortium	F
Participant 33	Consortium	F
Participant 34	Mediator	F
Participant 35	Mediator	F
Participant 36	Mediator	F
Participant 37	Mediator	F
Participant 38	Artist	M
Participant 39	Artist	M
Participant 40	Artist	M
Participant 41	Artist	M
Participant 42	Artist	M
Participant 43	Artist	M



Participant 44	Patron	M
Participant 45	Patron	M
Participant 46	Artist	M
Participant 47	Artist	F
Participant 48	Patron	M
Participant 49	Patron	M
Participant 50	Patron	F
Participant 51	Patron	F
Participant 52	Artist	M
Participant 53	Patron	M
Participant 54	Patron	M
Participant 55	Patron	F

Source: our elaboration.

### 3.3.1. The Interview Protocol

To carry out the semi-structured interviews and to inform the interview questions to the participants, an elaborate protocol containing the key topics and related questions was developed based on the understanding of the main concepts found in the literature relevant to our research questions concerning the co-curation of contents (See [Annex 1](#)). The protocol was divided into six different sections namely:

1. Socio-demographic categories
2. Project overview and governance



3. Community resilience, challenges during the pandemic and digitalisation
4. Inclusion and capitalization of citizen's creativity
5. Practices and processes of content co-curation and commoning
6. Collective intentionality: Exploring community and “we-intentionality”

A consent form was developed alongside the protocol in accordance with the ethical procedures for research actions funded under the EU framework. The consent form ensured the anonymity of the participants, detailed the interview collection method and explained how the collected data will be used in the research. The drafted protocol and the consent form were presented before the Ethics Committee of BSB and was approved by the Data Protection Officer on the 13 of June 2023.

These were then translated in French, Spanish and Italian languages respectively as most of the identified participants for the interviews were native speakers of the above-mentioned languages. We decided to carry out the interview in the native languages of the participants to facilitate better participation of the interviewees and also to avoid linguistic filtering of the contents during the interviews. The researchers cross-checked the translated protocol in tandem with native speakers to see that the essence of the questions was retained in the translation. Finally, a pilot interview phase (during the last week of September 2024) was carried out using the developed interview protocol. Considering the feedback of the interviewees after the initial interview phase, we adapted certain questions to ensure better understanding of the participants.

### **3.4. Data Collection**

The data collection process started in October 2023. The participants were contacted initially through emails and through phone calls. The context of the research was explained, and they were invited to participate in a 1-hour interview according to their availability till the end of June 2024, either in person or virtually via Microsoft TEAMS. By the end of the fieldwork period (June 2024), we were able to collect over 55 semi-structured interviews including stakeholders involved in various NP Projects across Europe and also members of the Consortium Museum. The duration of the interviews were 30 minutes to 2 hours. All the interviews were recorded using a hand-held recording device and by the record meeting option of the Microsoft Teams to avoid any technical issues. The consent forms were signed by the participants before the interviews. At the start of each interview the researcher gave a brief description of the project to the participant. We explained to the participants that the interviews will be anonymous, and they have the choice to opt out of answering questions or stop the interview at their discretion.



They were also informed about the storage and treatment of the recording after the interviews. A verbal consent was also collected from the interviewees to record the video/audio for the purpose of research. Semi-structured interviews were carried out based on the questions from the protocol. The two interviewers implemented active listening during the response time and notes were taken during the interviews. We also asked follow-up questions on certain questions to ensure the organic follow of the discussions. The interviewees opened on their subjective experiences of working in the NP projects and also shared the nature of interactions between different stakeholders during the projects. Each interview was transcribed verbatim using the transcription tool Notta and the automatic voice-text transcription tool of Microsoft TEAMS. The transcription was edited and corrected by the research team.

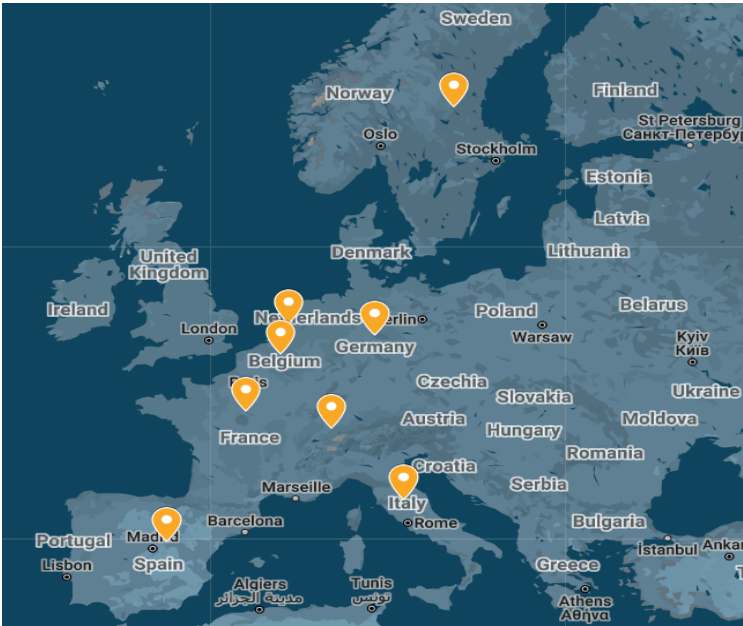


Figure 7- Geographic location of the interview participants.

### 3.5. Data Analysis

The transcribed interviews were then subjected to a qualitative content analysis using the MAXQDA software version 24.2.0. The interview transcripts were not translated into English during the analysis. We analysed it in the original recorded languages so as to catch all the nuances of the interviewees who were more comfortable to use their native language than English and to understand the regional specificities and nature of the NP projects. According to the language of the interview, we divided the transcripts into four datasets namely English, French Italian and Spanish. The transcripts in each dataset were coded using a mix of deductive-inductive coding ([Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006](#)). We developed an initial code





Figure 9- Word cloud emerged from the Italian dataset<sup>6</sup>. Source: our elaboration.

## 4.2. In depth analysis findings and discussion

A detailed analysis was conducted on the datasets using extensive coding and categorisation and the following themes emerged from the data, which will be discussed in detail hereunder.

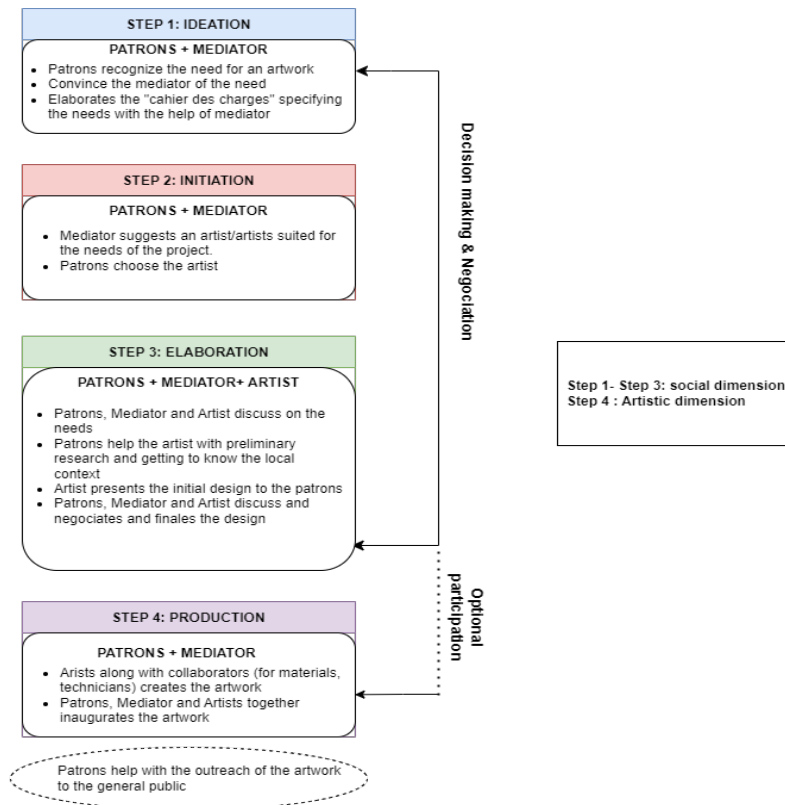
### 4.2.1. Dialogue as a basis of effective co-curation practice

The importance of dialogue appeared re-iteratively throughout the interviews in all four datasets. Participants (Mediators, Artists and Patrons) felt that dialogue between the stakeholders formed the heart of the New Patrons projects.

From the analysis of the datasets, we outlined the process of creation of an artwork in the New Patrons projects in the following steps:

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<sup>6</sup> For the Italian interviews, we asked to cluster the words according to the most frequent word “fare” (to do). The frequency of this concept is really important as it stresses the relevance of the process and of action in the NC’s Protocol.



**Figure 10-** The process of creation of an artwork in the NP project with the different types of engagement. Source: our elaboration.

### ● Ongoing Discussions

Discussion and Negotiation between the three parties was done throughout the process except for the artistic form production which was done by the artist. The following quote by one of the participants highlights this.

*“What I can simply tell you is that the sponsor regularly organises meetings to see the status and progress of the project and this at all stages from design to completion, up to the inauguration, I would say.”* (Participant 46)

*“There is a constant dialogue, I believe that there must be a constant active listening process for that. So, there is that initial desire (for an artwork), but that initial desire moulds, changes and strengthens throughout the process.”* (Participant 9)

The participants also felt that constant dialogue coupled with active listening helped the patrons in refining their initial needs in a way that could be addressed by the means of art. They felt like the process of continuous discussion helped the artist in better understanding



their needs and hence helped the artists to represent and acknowledge the social needs of the participants through their artwork.

*“So, there were several presentation meetings, discussions with the participants, so that the artist could become familiar with the expectations of the group of patrons.”*  
(Participant 48)

*“For me, it feels more like a shared dialogue around a topic. So, basically, everyone has their own characteristics, knowledge and skills, and we're all sitting around the table thinking about what we can do from here.”* (Participant 46)

- **Continuous negotiations**

There are consistent negotiations between the patrons and the artist in terms of meeting their expectations both in terms of addressing their needs and also in terms of the aesthetic of the form. These negotiations enrich the experiences of the participants. One of the participants noted that

*The New Patrons are considered to be an innovation. It is because of how the process of the projects are framed around the engagement with a group of people. So there is a long sequence of negotiation, discussion, interviews, even before the work itself is conducted.* (Participant 22)

- **Need for adaptability**

There is also a need for adaptability from the patrons as well as the artist in accepting the outcomes of the discussions and openness to accept diverse points of views. This has been made evident in the quote below:

*The permanent exchange is certainly important to keep the link and to be able to discuss. You have to know, as a patron, that you also have to adapt because there is only one “cahier de charge”. We just have to decide that. Everything happened easily because we saw that we had to make some adjustments. There is also a part of adaptation that everyone has to do. In the context of such a project, you must not be rigid either.* (Participant 51)

*Of course, as always, in the case of the New Patrons, an artist has to make many concessions to adapt to the type of audience, because there are many audiences, there are many contexts, and he/she has to adapt his/her language to that. In most other types of projects, we are looking for immediate visibility or a product, and follow-up of the process is lost in time. It is this follow-up method of the New Patrons that I think*



*other types of institutions should, in some way, witness and learn from these co-creation processes. (Participant 13)*

The diverse range of stakeholders included in the New Patrons projects makes them very diverse, inclusive and plurivocal and hence challenges the traditional hierarchies of art production common in an institutional context ([Choi et al., 2023](#); [Daga et al., 2022](#)). The method of dialogue and follow-up allow this diversity of participants, as their cooperation is based on negotiation. According to François Hers ([2008](#)), the founder of the New Patrons protocol, the negotiation and dialogue allows for a deeper understanding of the context specific challenges and complexities and also the commitment of each stakeholder to the project ([Hers, 2008](#)).

#### **4.2.2. Democratisation of contemporary art production through the New Patrons Protocol**

Most participants considered the New Patrons projects to a democratic action at its core.

*The strengths of the New Patrons projects are that it makes art more democratic and more accessible, and it really helps in bringing art to the people. (Participant 17)*

Negotiation and shared decision making are fundamentals of democracy ([Gaynor, 2009](#)). Most of the participants felt that the New Patrons are opening up ways to democratise contemporary arts. The following quote from a participant makes this evident.

*But let's say that everyone had their say. Everyone had the chance to express their wishes about the projects and the way it should be oriented. And let's say that it was quite participatory, therefore rather democratic. (Participant 48)*

Another one of the participants mentioned these participative projects as “micro-laboratories of democracy” (Participant 9)

- **Democracy as a strength and weakness**

Though the participants emphasised on the democratic nature of the projects. It was quite interesting to note that most participants felt that democracy is both a strength and weakness of the project. The requirement for a long commitment in terms of time and the conflict of ideas were mentioned as some of the weaknesses.

*The strength in these practices is that it brings us closer to the idea of radical democracy in the sense that not just the artist but everyone who is involved in the process of creation can speak, because the artist has always had freedom. So we are not asking the artist to paint the room in a certain colour or to do it with certain materials,*



*but we are constantly sharing ideas with him which he brings to his artistic language and to what he wants to do here. There is also the weakness that in a radical democracy a lot of time is needed from people. (Participant 14)*

#### **4.2.3. Importance of context specificity and relationships formed**

Another participant goes on to say that the success of the project depends on its specific context and relationships formed during the project.

*I think the biggest weakness is just the fact that sometimes it doesn't work. Even though you have this protocol and it's very clear and you make art more democratic, and you have a mediator and the artist is very happy to also be involved. Even when you work with patrons from the beginning, sometimes they're not happy with the artist or it doesn't work as they wanted but it's part of the process. There are always people who are not open to it. Sometimes it works smoothly, and everything goes very well, sometimes you have some hiccups that you have to challenge and sometimes it doesn't work. But it's just how it goes, it's just how society works, and I think that's also beautiful that it kind of also reflects how society works. (Participant 17)*

- **Constructive Conflicts**

The context specific success of these projects tells us that participative and democratic projects always need to have adaptability and higher tolerance to uncertainty and conflicts. Conflicts were also perceived to be beneficial in certain situations as the following participants observes:

*In some cases, the challenges are also the advantages, because indeed, as there are several stakeholders of different types who are both institutional, associative, individual, each one arrives with different points of view, different constraints and possibilities, and we have to manage to unite everyone. That can be a challenge and a complication, because not everyone has the same objectives and perspectives. This can also be the strength of the project, because indeed, everyone brings an experience, a way of practising, a way of seeing things that are different, and it is rather a stimulus for a project. Finally, I find that it gives a very democratic side. So, it's true that this contribution of different ideas can lead to conflict but it comes with an advantage. (Participant 48)*

*Sometimes there were conflicts within the group of patrons. It could even be conflictual even within this small community that is created (patrons, artists, mediator) for the*



*project. There can be conflicts, but if we manage to overcome them, that is the role of the mediator. It is very interesting, conflicts are rather useful, because the post-conflict period is very rich. (Participant 36)*

As participant 48 notes the New Patrons projects often involve a number of stakeholders in the process who are coming from different institutional contexts and their ideas and expectations out of the project will be different which could lead to conflicts ([Tjosvold, 1988](#)). Though on the other hand if managed carefully these conflicts can be considered productive and as they could open up dialogues and address concerns concerning questions which might prevent people from understanding the function or need of the project and will eventually lead to less enthusiastic reception of the artwork and the process. Conflicts also open up new spaces of dialogue and agency and enrich the projects as in the most well-known case of the *lavoir de Blessey*, where an provoked conflict by the artist led to dialogue, discussion and eventually to the better reception of the artwork and the process ([Stengers, 2013](#)). On the other hand, if the conflicts are not managed well, it can even lead to cancellation of the project. It is the role of the mediator to resolve these conflicts, or find a right balance in the conflicts so that it will be beneficial to the project ([Delsante & Bertolino, 2017](#); [Hers, 2008](#)).

#### **4.2.4. Balancing Autonomy in Collective Practices**

The autonomy and agency of various stakeholders are maintained in the *Nouveaux Commanditaires* Protocol by predefining the roles and commitment of each actor towards the project. This has been highlighted by the quotes below:

*There is a community with a demand that generates a commission and then the artist responds to that commission. In that phase of the artist responding to that commission, a certain autonomy of the artist must also be guaranteed. The commission is not a provision of service, but rather an attempt that supposes at the same time a discussion, a negotiation between that artist, and that community on where that project is going to be developed, or if it is an intervention in the public space etc. So there is a whole process of constant negotiation. (Participant 9)*

*The protocol has this quality of leaving the artist a lot of freedom and giving him the elements to both exercise this freedom, make use of this freedom, and at the same time to listen and exchange with the patrons. (Participant 39)*



The New Patrons project looks at citizen participation not from a performative lens and places an equal emphasis for social and artistic dimensions. The protocol opts a position that provides “a response that does not reduce the question of democracy to a participatory procedure, nor to a negation of expertise, and even less to the question of the singularity of each; and which does not reduce art to a consumer participation or an educational experience” (Collin, 2018, p.109). The Protocol allows complete creative freedom to the artist in terms of the aesthetics and form of the final artwork while answering the demands of the patrons stemming from a social need. Thus, we could say that the New Patrons protocol finds “a fine balance between individuality and collectivity” and proves that art can lead to “commons beyond homogeneity of its actors” (Dragona, 2021,p.110)

**4.2.5. Mediator as a conflict manager and a support system (care infrastructure)**

A mediator in the New Patrons projects are curators with a high social commitment who have profound knowledge of the artworld as well as the local context in which the project takes place. The importance of the role of the mediator seemed to appear frequently in the data. The role of the mediator is crucial in the New Patrons Protocol. It is a role with multiple functions requiring a high level of interpersonal skills and competence. After the analysis of the interview, we have identified the following roles of the mediator which is given below in the table along with quotes from the interviews supporting it.

**Table 7- Different roles and responsibilities of the mediator evidenced by quotes from data**

Different roles of the mediator	Supporting quotes from the data
Initiating of dialogues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>My job was to put the artists in dialogue with the group of nursing staff (the patrons). (Participant 11)</i></li> <li>● <i>Of course there is also a mediator who can also at once help the dialogue continue among the artists and patrons. (Participant 12)</i></li> </ul>
Negotiating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>He was a really good mediator so he really negotiated back and forth. He was the kind of conduit in terms of negotiating anything that might be a bit sticky or finding</i></li> </ul>



	<p><i>solutions to certain things, finding experts or helping with whatever we needed as a team, or I needed as an artist.</i> (Participant 21)</p>
Manage conflicts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>We need to work very accurately, we need to take care of the relationship, because of long time commitment, and explain why you need to be patient, why it will take five to seven years sometimes for the completion of the project. And that's where sometimes tension arises in the sense of the connections between people. So it's more a question of taking care. Then we are also very cautious that there is an alignment with in terms of values</i> (Participant 19)</li></ul>
Ensure the participation of patrons and artists and also balance the process by defining roles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>It has to do with how to make the egos flow. In the end, it is very nice to open the door to participation to someone who is not an artist, but who feels that they can help in the production of an artwork. At the same time it is very nice that someone who is an artist does not have to work alone, but puts himself/herself at the service of a community. But in the midst of all that there are people who sometimes feel the need to impose their idea, to stand out.</i></li><li><i>So my job was often like pulling the strings, sometimes privately, sometimes in a group so that everyone felt like they had a role without it being imposed. So I think that's the most important thing.</i> (Participant 11)</li></ul>
Support system for artist and patrons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>In this case the truth is that the protocol gives us the support of the mediators both in terms of psychological and strategic needs. When someone in our project is feeling like they are falling behind, they can have that support.</i> (Participant 13)</li><li><i>So what makes us special is that we not only help with the mediating and curating part, but also with all the</i></li></ul>



	<p><i>administrative stuff. So we actually provide a full service from beginning until the end. We help with finding finances, we help with juridical questions, we help with technical questions. We kind of give a full service in comparison to other mediators or curators. That is what distinguishes us and also the fact that we work in a participatory way, that we really work with citizens and that we give them their responsibility. (Participant 17)</i></p>
Dynamic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Above all, a mediator keeps the dynamic dimension of the process because the job of a mediator is not from A to B but from A to B and after A, C and after putting it back in a circle again. (Participant 40)</i></li></ul>
Ensures fluidity of the process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>In this case, mediation is the centre or is the fundamental part that structures the entire process and it is through mediation from which the rest of the agents of the process emerge, such as in this case the artists. I think this is a main component of valuing the mediation profile and I also think that it takes the burden off the other profiles and allows them to focus for example, on the production perhaps or the development of these artistic forms. (Participant 10)</i></li></ul>
Listening to diverse perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Well, the innovation was the creation of intermediary persons or mediators. So these are people who know the art world and at the same time, these are people who can also deal with diverse patrons. These patrons can be an entrepreneur, a priest from a church, a group of cleaning ladies or a researcher. And so they have to deal with many different people. Mediators are some sort of catalysts who bring their knowledge to the citizens and at the same time, listen to the needs of the citizens. (Participant 16)</i></li></ul>



Expert of local context and the art world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Of course, the difficulty is that perhaps the patrons do not have that expertise, that know-how about those potential artists who can develop their project, so well, it is this role the mediator/curator has in that selection of those five potential artists so that later one of them in the end is the one who develops that work of art. (Participant 9)</i></li> </ul>
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Source: our elaboration.

The introduction of the role of the mediator is indeed an innovation because the mediator ensures that the process runs smoothly by constantly engaging the patrons and the artists. According to a discussion published in the book *New Patrons. Contemporary Art, Society and Public space*, the role of mediator is described as a dynamic one which evolves throughout the different phases of the process. Our data agreed with this observation, as most of the participants (patrons, mediators, and artists) considered the role of the mediator to be a pivotal one which can have a make-or-break effect on the project. The mediator brings the citizens and the artists together through discussions and helps them understand and negotiate by encouraging the dialogue between them. As an expert of both the artistic world and the local context, the mediator can understand the needs and points of view of both patrons and artists and translate these to each party, thereby avoiding conflicts that could arise from misunderstanding. The mediator also keeps in check the power balance between the different stakeholders by ensuring that nobody is imposing their opinions on the project for their personal/professional motivations and thereby breaking the traditional hierarchies that might hinder participation in a traditional institutional setting ([Choi et al., 2023](#); [Daga et al., 2022](#)). We could say that the mediator in fact acts as a catalyst for enabling and managing the co-curation practice by facilitating a space where diverse perspectives are valued and thereby ensuring effective collaboration of different stakeholders through collective decision-making ([Borchi, 2018](#); [Mollona, 2021](#)). The mediator in the New Patrons projects corresponds very well with the “multidimensional role” of a curator envisioned by Maria Lind that included role that “ includes critique, editing, education, and fundraising” makes ‘the curatorial’ as a more viral presence consisting of signification processes and relationships between objects, people, places, ideas, and so forth, a presence that strives to create friction and push new ideas” ([Lind & Wood, 2010](#), p.64).

**Table 8- The role of the mediator corresponding to different phases of the NP project**

Phases of NP project	Duties of the mediator
----------------------	------------------------



1st phase (Preparation phase)	Listening, translation, analysis and deduction
2nd phase (Elaboration phase)	Professional commitment through artistic proposal to the patrons
3rd phase (Production phase)	Convincing, bringing together, managing and disappearing

Source: our elaboration.

#### 4.2.6. Empowered Participation and creation of space for transformation

The constant discussions and negotiations facilitated between the stakeholders by the mediator ensures the shared governance model of the New Patrons. The communities involved in the project take part in active participation which is almost direct democratic as noted by this participant

*The desire to do a project together is a question of a process which is a democratic process at its base, it is to do a part of the journey together at a given moment through its conception and to manage to create a project together in order to do it as best as possible and once it is done, to try to share it, to support it. I think that is what is particular to this process. (Participant 43)*

The project places the power of governance in the hands of the patrons (community of citizens) and involves them throughout the project and not just in the initial phases thereby reducing tokenism or performative participation (Arnstein, 1969).

*“The project is necessarily influenced from the moment when these exchanges take place. They are exchanges of construction and are not just restitution elements. They are supporting bars. So, it forms the relationship or the way in which each of the stakeholders will take their place and also their role to heart, as a participant. In fact, it has an active role, because if the exchange is just to say yes or no, it is insufficient. Afterwards, it is in the capacity of each to be a real stakeholder by bringing their feedback and participating in the exchanges and creating questions. It is much more than just taking the name, “the patron”.” (Participant 37)*

Discussion formed an integral part of the process and consultation was carried out with the patrons on each part of the process ranging from the budget, accessibility, and appreciation to



the use value, thereby making the patrons active participants with an integral decision-making power throughout the process:

*So, there is that practice of co-curation, in the sense that there is a constant dialogue about the possibilities, about the budget, about the possibilities of intervention or not, in the public space, about its accessibility for example, if it has to be digital, who has use or not of that final artistic piece or who enjoys it?" (Participant 9)*

Thus, we could say that the New Patrons projects involve the patrons throughout the process of art production through iterative dialogue and thereby ensuring an active participation with a higher degree of community engagement, almost oscillating between the levels of partnership and delegated power ([Arnstein, 1969](#); [Thiel, 2018](#)).

#### **4.2.7. Collective Ownership**

The communities involved in the projects felt a shared sense of ownership towards the artwork and the artists involved. The following quotes from reveal this:

*Honestly, when I was working with the people, I also had the feeling that it worked, and that they were happy with the artworks, and that they would care more about the artworks because they had a say in it. And they not only had a say in what sort of artists will do the commission, but they also had a say in which direction the artwork would go, and where the artwork would be implemented. And I think these are major questions, when an artwork has to be integrated permanently on a location. (Participant 16)*

*Of course, in the end it is always through that process of listening you get that feeling of belonging. Therefore, it is important to engage with the community so that the legacy of the project remains, responds to their desires and they feel the artwork as their own. (Participant 9)*

*Different agencies, different individuals, different groups are involved in the process. I think it's important to engage when you have the opportunity to engage, to give a sense of ownership to whatever community or context the work is going. (Participant 21)*

The participants shared that the communities involved in the decision making and production of artworks in the public space developed a sense of collective ownership towards the artwork and felt more connected to the artwork in comparison to the artworks imposed on them through public commissions. This led to the development of an increased sense of stewardship on behalf of the communities involved in the projects towards the artworks produced as an



output. This feeling of shared ownership and collective sense-making of the communities involved in the process emphasised that the value of commoning practices like co-curation is not just the resources produced collaboratively but also in the relationships formed during the collective management of the resource ([Niederberger et al., 2021](#); [Pennington, 2018](#)). This aligns well with the concept of commons as a community building process.

The participants also shared their insights on how the New Patrons project gets appropriated by the local communities after the creation of the artwork. In the words of one of the participants:

*Patrons made the work situated in the real sense. But it doesn't mean that it was just for them. So, it was a work that could be approached by anyone in a way, and it could be shared with anyone. We could not assume or predict who's going to take part of this work and what it would mean for each one. I'm very much for this idea of a kind of non-defined consumer or receiver of the work. (Participant 22)*

The artworks were appropriated by the local communities outside of the immediate community involved in the production like the patrons. Most of the time these artworks were received well by the local communities due to their provenance from answering the local social needs. Though it is interesting to note that there were cases where some of the artworks faced initial scrutiny from the public often due to varied aesthetic preference but were later appropriated and accepted through usage and social dialogue and has even gone on to become the symbol and expressions of identity of the local community ([Fourmentraux, 2014](#)). Notable examples of these are the *Lavoir de Blessey* by Rémy Zaugg commissioned by the local inhabitants of the small town called Blessey and the installation *Monstre* in the City Centre of Tours by artist Xavier Veilhan commissioned by a group of shopkeepers.

#### **4.2.8. Importance of relationships**

One of the recurring themes in the analysis of the interview data was the importance of relationships and how it affects the co-curation practices. This quote from one of the participants highlights the above observation:

*I think the strength is this relation to the patrons. It's really widening and deepening the public art project. The way you establish communication and relation to a very specific group of people in my case was crucial for the development of the work, but also for the whole research process around work. And the patrons were immensely helpful for me in order to understand the local situation, the history of the place, and their own experience of living in this place, with all the major and dramatic changes it had gone through. That is the most beneficial part of the project. (Participant 22)*



Another participant noted that one of the important aspects of the New Patrons project is that it places the relations and process at the forefront of the project:

*It's not unlike a regular setting, because as an artist we are often working with multiple different stakeholders. So I don't think it's a wildly different experience as an artist working, juggling multiple stakeholders, but what is different is the emphasis placed on process and relationship, rather than product. (Participant 20)*

The participant goes on to add that the essence of the New Patrons project is its transformational approach to the participation based on relation building which brings diverse stakeholders together and results in community formation:

*What brings together the community is that transformational aspect, 100%. Having the opportunity to think differently, do differently, talk differently, meet different people. The only way we got to do all of the stuff that we did was through that interest in the transformational, not transactional, and having all different people from all different walks of life being curious. People who were just genuinely like, this is a cool thing and wanting to be involved. And that's the only way we could make that crazy and insane thing we did. (Participant 20)*

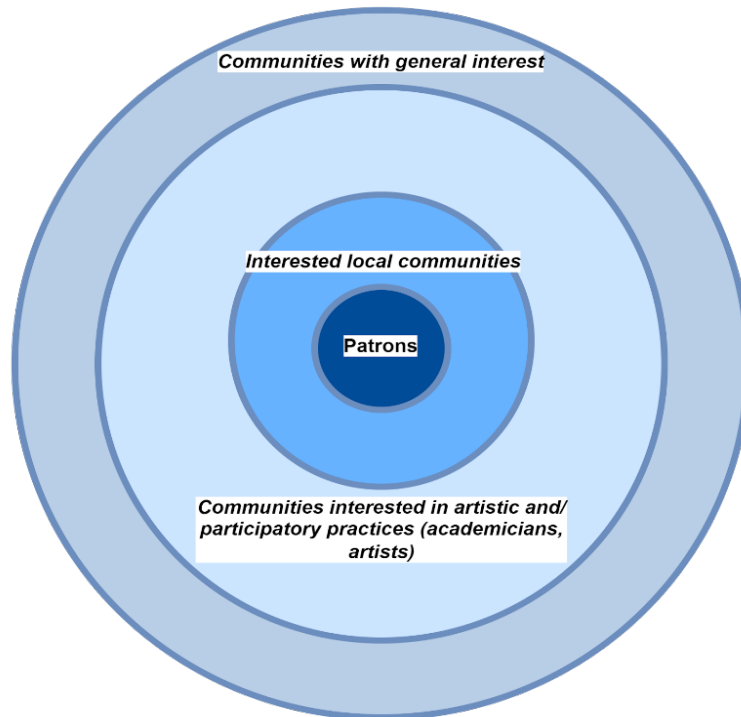
The notion of transformation over transaction places “value over symbolic goods” leading to creations of spaces favouring “reverse economies” ([Bourdieu, 1996](#)). The data shows that co-curation practices opens up “alternative spaces” democratic spaces where the needs of a broader community is satisfied through active participation and “direct actions” ([Foster & Iaione, 2022](#)).

#### **4.2.9. Networked communities and community formation**

The New Patrons projects brings together different communities of practice. At its core it has patrons, mediators and artists. They are supported by the financing body (depending on the country) and the regional organisation supporting the mediators. In some cases, the projects are supported by the local governments, regional and international grants like the EU Leader grants and private sponsors. The Protocol facilitates the coming together of various diverse actors to address the social needs put forth by the patrons consisting of an individual, a group of individuals or an association. It allows the local elected bodies and private sponsors to invest and support the program and thereby providing a political mediation to a project and the academic community to support the program by contextualising the need for the artwork through research. The artwork created by the program becomes a part of the collectivity or public ([Hers, 2002](#)) From the data we collected through the interviews, we have tried to identify



the network of communities other than the above-mentioned actors influencing directly/indirectly with the process (See [Figure. 11](#)).



**Figure 11-** The role of the mediator corresponding to different phases of the NP project.

During our interviews, we asked the participants about the community formed during the project. Here are some relevant quotes from the participants:

*What brings them together is, in this case, a certain goal to create a commemoration, or a manifestation, or an artistic utterance, that has a starting point within the local condition. (Participant 22)*

*What unites is the desire to do things together (Participant 14)*

The participants identified the patrons, mediator and artist involved in the project as a micro-community. They expressed that the desire to create together is the *raison d'être* of these communities. When asked about the relations formed within the community most of the participants referred to it as friendly, cordial relations filled with conviviality. These relations existed during the time and context of the project and ceased to exist after it. Though it was interesting to note that most patrons continued to take an interest in the artist's work even after the completion of the project. As one of the participants said in the interview,



*I think the benefits are that it kind of creates new bonds between people. The artists often become their artists, and they follow him or her until the end. As in they go to their exhibitions, they go to shows, they go see other openings, they stay in touch.” (Participant 17)*

We could say that the communities formed in the NP project are context based temporal communities united by their desire to do things together, to create and engage socially through art. Even though the individual aspirations of the actors in the project are different, their joint intention is to connect to address social needs by means of arts and to involve in a dialogue to find ways to address these needs through the language of arts. This collective intentionality of the desire to engage socially through art unites this community and pre-exists even before the formation of this community ([Bratman, 2006](#)). The process of knowledge production and shared meaning making through the ongoing dialogue and discussions of the actors involved in the New Patrons project leads to an assembly bonus effect where “the group is able to collectively achieve something which could not have been achieved by any member working alone or by a combination of individual efforts” ([Collins & Guetzkow, 1964](#), p.58). From this we could presume that the New Patrons Protocol in itself becomes an actor which along with the heterogenous group of stakeholders result in the creation of temporal communities with the power to create and engage socially and artistically through active participation by means of dialogue and there by forming a space which questions the traditional hierarchies of cultural institutions ([Hers, 2002](#); [Latour, 2007](#)).

#### **4.2.10. Sustainable and context-based artworks based on social needs**

The New Patrons Protocol places a great importance on the local context of the artwork and emphasis on addressing the social needs in relation to the local context. From the interviews we gathered that in the New Patrons project the patrons are considered as experts of local context and the artist is considered to be expert of artistic form:

*But I think that the nursing team (patrons) has enough experience and has had enough time with patients so that they can directly contribute to the artistic demand of what possible needs the patients and their families might have as well. (Participant 10)*

*Yes, in my case it was very interesting because there was some knowledge that is very much specific to the territory, like the tools or materials of the place, that the patrons are contributing in a very fluid way. Maybe even the mediator might not know about it in detail. (Participant 13)*

The patrons thereby take on an educational role, wherein they initiate the artist into the socio-economic and historical context of the community leading to the creation of context specific



artworks contributing to their long term sustainability. The process of artistic production in the New Patrons Protocol adopts Bourriaud's view of relational aesthetics and subverts the traditional view of artist as the sole authority on artistic creation by extending the expertise of local context to the patrons and looking at "art as a form of encounter" that adds not just the aesthetic value but also "a symbolic value" to the society ([Bourriaud, 2020](#)).

- **Artwork as commons**

*I found it very sympathetic, and also very close to my own idea about public art. Until that point, I've only been involved in one public art project before. But this was a very different model and I was especially very fascinated by the patrons themselves, their function as sort of guardians for the project, but also the way they were engaged from the very beginning. Those aspects were very sympathetic and very important to the whole idea of creating something at a particular location, which had a meaning for those residing there. (Participant 22)*

*There is something very interesting about the links that are generated through the piece of art but with the people and the territory because there is a knowledge that is deeply rooted in that place, so I find the way of working with clients to be wonderful. (Participant 13)*

The artwork in the New Patrons projects originates from a social need or the desire of a community or group of individuals to address a social need through art. This is why the artworks created through the New Patrons projects hold a symbolic value to the communities and the community accept the artwork and take care of it due to the sense of shared ownership that they have acquired by being part of the decision-making process. Thus the artwork in itself becomes a common that has been produced and managed collectively through collaborative efforts of a community ([Borchi, 2018](#); [Mollona, 2021](#)). We could even argue that that the community becomes prosumers of the artworks as it originates from their social needs, takes form through the relations and interactions of the community with the artist and is finally consumed/enjoyed by the community through usage and appropriation ([Lander, 2011](#); [Toffler, 1980](#)). This role of the community as prosumers and active participants of creative practices negotiates and rethinks Bourdieu's "habitus" and hence pushes against the traditional hegemonies existing in the artworld and questions the notion of who decides what art should be and who gets to create and validate art ([Bourdieu, 1996](#); [Puffert, 2021](#)).

- **Power and Agency**

We identified a specific relationship between power and agency through different interviews. The stakeholders involved in the process shared the decision-making power in the NP projects.



The defined roles of patrons and artists together with the facilitation of the mediator ensured that no one imposed or overstepped on each other's roles.

*Well, the subject of the artwork lives through the community, so we (artists) are not the owners of our ideas. We artists know that we are channels, we perceive those issues that communities of citizens do not find a way to express. (Participant 13)*

*I was very intrigued by the project. I found it very sympathetic, and also very close to my own idea about public art. Until that point, I've only been involved in one public art project before. But this was a very different model, and I was quite fascinated by the patrons themselves, their function as sort of guardians for the project, but also the way they were engaged from the very beginning. Those aspects were very sympathetic and very important to the whole idea of creating something at a particular location, which had a meaning for those residing there. (Participant 22)*

There is a wide diversity among the stakeholders of the New Patrons project. This diversity is favoured by the Protocol as it is based on cooperation regulated by negotiations and not on a set of predetermined rules ([Hers, 2008](#)). This allows the New Patrons project to adapt to different social contexts and ensures sustainability to the Protocol. The Protocol provides agency to the communities through open dialogue and transparent communication:

*It is co-governance. In other words, who makes the decisions? We make them together. It is true that I may shape some of these things and I also leave others free, even so that over time they happen in one way or another, but many others arise from the clients themselves. (Participation 4)*

The role of the mediator plays a big role in maintaining the power balance between the different stakeholders through feedback and ensuring that the decision-making is shared among the stakeholders. The project doesn't seek for consensus in decisions but rather a collective sense-making that allows the stakeholders in understanding their responsibilities based on the context and thereby ensuring an adhocratic decision making and a horizontal distribution of decision-making power ([Mintzberg, 1993](#)).

#### **4.2.11. Co-curation as a space for learning and sharing knowledge**

The NP projects allowed a space collective learning for all the stakeholders involved in the process as evident from the following excerpts from the participants:

*I find that for me, it is a democratic challenge. The challenge is to interest audiences who were not involved or interested towards contemporary art and to get them to be part of this creation, to be part of an exchange of knowledge as well. (Participant 38)*



*It's really a continuous learning process because each new order is a new adventure, and it's almost a new world. The advantage for the mediator is to get to know different environments. It's extremely enriching and little by little to learn how we can move forward in our differences, it's extremely positive. And to reassure the artist, if he/she is not used to this way of working, we can really do a buffer work so as not to demand from each a degree of participation or involvement that wouldn't be natural to the project. (Participant 36)*

*At the beginning of the first sessions the patrons asked questions like, "What is this for?" But in the following sessions they began to understand, and they began to remember, "Now I understand why we did this at the beginning. "I think that the process itself has also been a learning experience for all parties. It has been a learning experience for me as an artist, of course. I have learned a lot from the patrons in the health sector about many things, and I think that they have been able to learn about how a design process works in a broader sense. (Participant 10)*

The project fosters a mutual learning environment for the diverse stakeholders through workshops, discussions and negotiations which lead to collective sense-making of the context as well as of the artistic practice. The patrons as experts of the local context can share their knowledge with the artist, who could incorporate it in their production of the artistic form, thereby ensuring the sustainability of the artwork in the local context. The mediator and artists on the other hand could share their knowledge in arts and aesthetics with the patrons through workshops-visits, discussions and meetings allowing for the democratisation of the contemporary arts.

#### **4.2.12. Limiting factors affecting effective co-curation**

One of the interesting findings that emerged from the data were the factors that blocked effective engagement in the co-curation practices of the New Patrons project. The following quotes from the participants throw some light on these:

*I also believe that in this and in all processes, a weakness is the lack of resources. The lack of financial resources is always a weakness and hinders a real transformation. (Participant 10)*

*The weak points are perhaps that it takes a lot of time, it takes a lot of energy. (Participant 46)*



*I think it is probably hard depending on the mediator again if the mediator doesn't excite the patrons or they don't trust the mediator, they might lose interest. I think it's important that they get something out of that process that keeps them interested. (Participant 21)*

The democratic practices of the New Patrons project often emerged as a double-edged sword for the successful completion of the project mainly due to the long duration of the projects from the patrons and the lack of adequate funding towards the project. The patrons chose to join the project voluntarily due to their interests in a social cause or for their desire to explore a social need through art and are therefore not incentivised in the project which often affects the motivations for long term commitment in terms of time. There was a need to keep the interest of the communities alive throughout the process by the mediators. Another factor which led to some incomplete projects were the irresolvable conflicts arising from personal conflicts within the stakeholders and the lack of perennial funding for the projects. Many mediators have expressed the difficulty in receiving funds especially during the negotiation and discussion phases of the project in countries where the project is solely dependent on the local government funds and private sponsorship due to the lack of a predefined artistic form.

The process of artistic production in the New Patrons project can effectively be considered as a co-curation process where the goal of the project shifts from the production of the object to how it is produced collaboratively in different contexts through the relations of shared decision-making and interactions between the different stakeholders ([Dekker, 2019](#); [Reckitt, 2016](#)). The New Patrons Protocol in itself acts as a thinking tool for commoning practice by defining the roles of the stakeholders and by ensuring the management of power imbalances through reiterative open dialogue and feedback ([Brewis et al., 2021](#)). The Protocol opens up a space of attentiveness for diverse patrons to express and take a democratic action directly and hence fostering inclusive and socially just outcomes ([Choi et al., 2023](#)). The Protocol lets the citizens to not only initiate but take action and move from the role of passive observer or audience to an active participant or to say even be an active prosumer, who decides and influences the artistic production through shared responsibility and accountability as patrons in the process. By making the citizens involved in the artistic process and sharing responsibilities, the Protocol also avoids the pitfall of public artworks which are created and then inferred upon citizens without involving them and hence rejected by the public who perceive them to be symbols of patriarchy reinforcing hegemonies. The artwork produced through the New Patrons Protocol redefines the potential of artworks to be perceived more than its market value by infer symbolic value to it through citizens engagement by use and appropriation and in doing so it makes the intrinsic value of artwork a dynamic one based on relations rather than a static one based on aesthetics ([Molinier, 2013](#)). The role of the curator (mediator) becomes a multidimensional one





where his main duties metamorphose from a mere curatorial one to managing collective network of dependencies and relations, facilitating shared decision making and ensuring active participation of the stakeholders through open dialogue ([Dekker, 2019](#); [Lind & Wood, 2010](#)). The mediator becomes a support system for the artists and patrons by providing psychological, administrative aid in the process and also becoming the facilitator of dialogues between the stakeholders by activating discussions and managing conflicts constructively leading to a *sensus communis* from collective dissensus ([Mouffe, 2019](#); [Puffert, 2021](#)). The mediator therefore acts as a care worker in the New Patrons projects and redefines curatorial care from care of objects to care of relations, hence creating affective economies of care part of the curatorial duty ([Dekker, 2019](#); [Reckitt, 2016](#); [Lazzarato, 1996](#)).

### **4.3. Managing and enabling co-curation practices**

In the light of the findings and discussions from the analysis of data looking at the process of co-curation in the New Patrons project, we can draw the following conclusions in regards to managing and enabling co-curation in visual arts. The NC Protocol brings the exclusive artworld out to a more inclusive public where diverse stakeholders can be involved in the process of artistic production. Hence making the process of creation of the artwork and the artwork, a common resource which is created and managed by the community for its collective benefit. The Protocol pushes the boundary of the definition of commons by making contemporary art in itself a common good that could be managed and owned collectively by a community and also a commoning process which leads to formation of temporal communities based in time and context that is negotiated and made sense of collectively through active participation of the different stakeholders. This challenges the view of curation and places the importance on the process of collaboration and knowledge production which is also shared and collectively managed. This challenges the traditional art world which is often exclusive and it suggests that art can be a shared resource that can benefit all.

Effective communication is an important aspect of collective management of the commons. The ongoing process of dialogue and feedback between the community and different stakeholders ensures a collaborative decision-making process. The collective sense-making and continuous negotiation process enables an effective management of the shared resources/process. Ongoing dialogue and transparency in communication is essential not just in the initial stages but also throughout the process in ensuring the sustainability of the commons.

The essence of the commoning process is not just limited to managing resources, but it is also about transforming relationships and power structures within the community and thereby



empowering the diverse stakeholders involved in the process. This reiterates the idea that commons is a space for social transformations and provides a deeper understanding of participation in commons and how power dynamics can be reshaped through the transformative potential of open dialogue and how it can empower diverse stakeholders.

The need for the artworks in the NP projects originate from the needs of the patrons. The patrons are considered as experts of local context in the NP projects, and they are effectively involved with the artist in the research and discussion stages of the project. This ensures that the artwork produced is consistent with the local context. This evidences the need for commoning practices to be sensitive to the environment and be context specific for its long-term sustainability.

The autonomy of each stakeholder is protected by defining their roles in each phase of the NC project. Opinions are balanced through negotiations and the artistic quality of the project is maintained. This provides an interesting understanding of commons where through discussion and compromise, individual autonomy can coexist with collective needs.

The structure in terms of power distributions in the NP project shares some aspects of the adhocratic structure as it relies on decentralised decision making, creativity and adaptability. Defining roles in the co-curation processes can help to maintain transparent discussions and negotiations can address power imbalance in the governance of collective endeavours by ensuring that all the stakeholders have a voice in the decision making.

Another key element that ensures effective co-curation practices in the NP Protocol is the mediator. The mediator often acts as a support system providing care to the artists as well as the patrons by ensuring the creative freedom of the artists while also ensuring that the needs of the community is voiced in the process. A mediator also resolves all the conflicts constructively throughout the process. This suggests the need of stewardship in commoning practices by the introduction of dedicated roles or mechanisms that ensures inclusivity and equity by balancing opinions and power differences for the collective benefit of the process.

The communities involved in the projects feel a shared sense of ownership towards the artwork and the artists involved. This feeling of shared ownership and collective sense-making of the communities involved in the process emphasises that the value of commons is not just the resources produced collaboratively but also in the relationships formed during the collective management of the resource. This aligns well with the concept of commons as a community building process. The NP project doesn't look for consensus in its negotiations, this is shown by the existence of cases where some of the artworks didn't initially gather public approval. Despite these initial oppositions, the communities involved in the different projects started to



appreciate the NC artworks through collective sense making and knowledge sharing. A process of appropriation integrated these artworks in their everyday life. Some artworks became the symbol and expressions of identity of the related community. This advances the discussion by suggesting that commoning practices can foster a shared sense of identity and purpose, which is essential for the long-term sustainability of the commons.

The co-curation practices are a learning experience for both the patrons and the artists involved in the NP projects. The artists learn a lot about the local context from the patrons and also encounter diverse perspectives throughout the project. The patrons learn more about the artworld and artistic expressions through interactions with artists and the mediators. This underlines that commoning practices in essence are dynamic processes which stay relevant and resilient through adaptation involving continuous learning and knowledge exchange.

#### **4.4. Understanding and enabling co-curation through care**

The effective methods of enabling and managing co-curation can be understood in detail in the context of an integrated care theory combining Tronto care theory ([2013](#)) combined with the ecological focus of Puig de la Bellacasa's ethos of care ([2011](#)). Care in the context of co-curation in visual arts can be seen as the ways in which art is created, sustained and shared within a community. It looks into the ways in which participation is ensured and relations are formed in these processes, taking into account power and agency of the stakeholders involved and also the context and space in which the co-curation takes place. The integrated care theory helps us comprehend co-curation practices not just as human relations but also the ecological and social dimensions of the relations formed and sustained in it.

**CARING ABOUT:** Communities involved in the co-curation process should be attentive to the needs and concerns of the local context in which these activities take place. Care should be taken to include diverse perspectives in the process of creation by integrating the marginalised communities, alternative knowledge systems and ecological needs in the process. By doing so, the social and ecological needs take a centre stage in art-production. In doing so, the art production moves from an individual expression to a collective activity based on the needs of the community.

**CARING FOR:** While ensuring institutional support, infrastructure and resources, it is also important to take responsibility for ensuring that citizens have equitable access in the production and consumption of contemporary arts especially concerning the artworks in the public space. This leads to the creation of inclusive artistic spaces and democratises contemporary arts. The communities involved in the co-curation process are also responsible



to take eco-conscious decisions and ensure that artworks produced, and the process involved in the production aligns with the needs of the local ecosystems.

**CAREGIVING** phase in co-curation practices focuses on the collective labour involved in the artistic production. It is important to provide adequate funds and infrastructure for ensuring the sustenance of these practices. Introduction of care infrastructure like the mediator in the case of the NC projects, allow that the participants involved in the process of co-curation are taken care of both in terms of psychological labour and also practical like taking care of the administrative process. The existing traditional hierarchies and power structures result in a difference in affective labour from different stakeholders in a co-curation process. This will hinder active participation from the participants who are not favoured by these power structures, making them passive participants or even leading to tokenism, so it is indeed necessary to incorporate care giving mechanisms in co-curation activities by defining the roles of the stakeholders and through third party facilitation like the mediator who could ensure that the power is balance in participation through open and transparent dialogue.

**CARE RECEIVING:** In a co-curation process, both the community involved in the process, and the collective process of creation become the receivers of care. Ongoing dialogue, negotiation and feedback between the stakeholders can ensure that the community needs are met during the co-curation process and that the resulting artwork reflects the needs or addresses them. By doing so the community involved in the co-curation process share a sense of collective ownership towards the artwork. This collective ownership created through symbolic sense-making through collaborative action, empowers the community and extends their participation outside the co-curation process as stewards of the artwork created. It is also important to take into account the ecological impacts of the artwork and its implications on the recipient community of the artwork during the negotiations.

**CARING WITH:** Effective co-curation practices take time and it should not be a unidirectional one-time thing. Curatory practices which involve one party giving care and the other one receiving care could not be considered effective co-curation as it replicates traditional hierarchical power structures. Caregiving in co-curation practices is reciprocal among participants. The process in co-curation should be based on solidarity, trust and mutual respect among the participants where every participant contributes to and benefits from the process creating a sense of collective ownership which ensures the sustainability of the artwork produced as a result of the process.



**Table 9- Care as seen in NP projects (Based on Tronto’s care model (2013) and Puig de la Bellacasa’s ethos of care (2011))**

Care phases	Associated virtue	Meaning in the context of NC projects
<i>Caring about</i>	Attentiveness	Identifying the need to address and include social and ecological concerns of the community in the production of artworks.
<i>Caring for</i>	Responsibility	Shared responsibility for democratising art production by ensuring equitable access and empowered participation of participants and collective accountability of all the stakeholders involved in the process.
<i>Care giving</i>	Competence	Ensuring the sustainability of the co-curation practices through open dialogue and effective conflict management
<i>Care receiving</i>	Responsiveness	Ongoing feedback and negotiations between the participants based on the needs of the communities involved in the process to ensure collective agency
<i>Caring with</i>	Reciprocity and Solidarity (Plurality, communication, Trust and Respect)	Sustaining long term relations in co-curation practices based on trust, solidarity and mutual respect. Open and transparent communication, encouraging polyvocal perspectives through meaningful interactions based on trust and respect

### 5. Limitations, Future Research and Recommendations

The results obtained in this research helps us understand globally the ways of enabling and managing co-curation practices in visual arts. Co-curation practices are very much context based and hence care must be taken when generalising the findings to other cases in sectors



outside the contemporary arts. We draw our conclusions from the NP Protocol-based cases, so the findings may not be exactly replicable to other cases of co-curation which follows a different model. Time and resources were a constraint to our research due to the large extent of New Patrons projects (over 500 projects around the globe involving more than 1000 stakeholders). The availability of the stakeholders for the interviews also posed a problem. Due to the spontaneous and sporadic nature of the NP projects, reaching out to the stakeholders proved to be difficult during the data collection stage of the project. Our findings are based on the analysis of the NP projects where our interview participants were involved, so there is a scope of future research where different insights could be derived from the other cases of the NP projects. Our research only focuses on the stakeholder perspective of co-curation, it would be interesting to also explore the perspective of the general public who were not directly involved in the co-curation process and their reception of the artworks produced under these projects.

The limitations mentioned above leave the scope for further research which could look at different co-curation models in the context of visual arts and conduct a comparative study on it. Our research focused mainly on exploring the processes associated with co-curation practices. Further study could be done focusing on the user experiences of the participants involved in these co-curation practices as well as the dynamics and positive externalities generated by the NC projects in the medium and long terms. Moreover, it would be also interesting to conduct qualitative and quantitative studies looking at co-curation from the perspective of organisations involved in the process.

The findings from our research indicated that traditional institutions often stay behind in organising effective co-curation practices as they lack the infrastructures for ensuring space for inclusive dialogue due to their institutional hierarchies. Our research sheds light on effective management of co-curation activities by recognising the social and ecological needs of communities and by opening up spaces of open dialogue by bringing diverse perspectives from local communities. There is a need to pair local expertise with artistic experts and incorporate effective facilitation to balance the power dynamics involved in the negotiations. We found that effective co-curation practices can be enabled and managed by incorporating care along various steps of the collaborative practice leading to the sustainability of the artworks created and to the empowered participation of communities involved by opening up transformational spaces of knowledge production. Difficulties in consolidating funding came up as one of the main constraints of effective co-curation practices. The perception of cultural institutions as exclusive, elitist and hierarchical often stopped the communities from exercising a higher level of community involvement in co-curation.



Under the light of these findings, the following policy recommendations can be made to ensure and enable co-curation with an increased engagement from the public:

- **Need to include public consultation throughout the creation of the artwork**

Most of the artworks commissioned in the public space doesn't take into account the social and ecological needs of the local context. The local communities are involved after the creation of the artwork, often at the end of the process. This is often perceived as patronising and treats the local community as passive audiences. Involving the local community throughout the process of art production in the public sphere, creates a sense of collective ownership among the locals involved in the process, and creates continued stewardship on behalf of the community towards the artwork.

- **Increased funding for co-curation projects**

Most of the co-curation projects suffer because of the lack of sufficient funding. Most of the funding is allocated to projects that have a predetermined form of the artwork. Funding bodies should be flexible towards collaborative practices where the artwork is made as a result of the interactions and negotiations.

- **Implementation of independent facilitation role in co-curation processes**

Facilitation or mediation roles should be introduced as proper care infrastructure to maintain open dialogue and to question hierarchies thereby maintaining a power balance between the stakeholders involved in the co-curation process. Museums or cultural institutions can include local and artistic bodies who could mediate the negotiations and ensure active participation from all the stakeholders and avoid a unidirectional decision-making process.

- **Institutional policy changes and collaborative governance in co-curation practices**

Traditional cultural institutions should make necessary policy changes to implement more co-curation practices. They should try to self-reflect on their traditional hierarchical structures and include diverse perspectives in their governance structure by ensuring participation of the local community in their decision-making processes. They should open up spaces of dialogue with the local community outside their hierarchical structure, thereby transforming the museum spaces as spaces of active collaboration and knowledge sharing.



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## ANNEX 1: THE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

### CO-CURATING CONTENTS

Task 2.2 of the GLAMMONS project

Resilient, sustainable and participatory practices: Towards the GLAMs of the commons (GLAMMONS; HORIZON-CL2-2021-HERITAGE-01-02; HORIZON-RIA, 101060774)

#### Short description of the research's objectives

The COVID-19 pandemic served as a wake-up call to rethink how cultural production and consumption are organised and articulated with different sets of actors and local contexts, towards safeguarding sustainability, access and the wellbeing of the sector, its workforce and surrounding communities. Long before the pandemic crisis, European cultural policy encouraged museums to embrace participatory governance and digitisation (European Commission, 2010), become more financially self-reliant and diversify their income-generating activities. It is thus vital to map pre-pandemic practices across the sector, to fully account the pandemic effects on the sector and to explore novel solutions that will inform GLAMs response and adaptation to the post-pandemic era, under a new conceptual paradigm that will advance GLAMs as the agents of change. GLAMMONS project aims to provide answers to the above challenges, fill gaps and advance research and policy employing the theory of the commons to i) provide an in-depth analysis and evaluation of ongoing shifts (with a specific focus on both pandemic-driven transformations and digitalisation) in the field of GLAMs, ii) explore and assess practices (concerning management, finance and participation) that emerge around small scale, community-led GLAMs and the possibility of transferring relevant knowledge to more “established” and traditional ones to provide more sustainability to the sector.

Specifically, with this protocol, BSB research team aims to understand:

(a) how we can recognize and include the creative capacity of citizens in high-quality artistic productions and (b) to what extent we can analyse practices and processes of content-co-curation in cultural organisations. Moreover, (c) we will look into what are the best governance models to assure sustainable artistic and managerial decisions.

**Interview target:** the Consortium (Dijon) and les Nouveaux Commanditaires

**Place of interview administration:** Dijon (premises of the Consortium) and different French sites (for the Nouveaux Commanditaires).

**Objective:** 30 semi-structured interviews.

**Period of administering interview:** September 2023-March2024.



LE CONSORTIUM/ NP project

### **Socio-demographic characteristics**

Name and family name:

Position in the organisation:

Background:

Age:

Sex:

### **A. Introduction and Governance**

1. Could you please provide context for your activity within the Consortium?
2. How would you define the scientific program of the Consortium?
3. How does the Consortium distinguish itself from other cultural sector initiatives in terms of innovation?
4. What is the business model adopted by your organisation?
5. Faced with the covid pandemic challenges, did you experiment with new or alternative ways of supporting and financing your exhibitions and activities?
6. Can you provide insights into the governance structure and evolution of your organisation?
7. What are the main sources of funding, and have they experienced any changes over time?
8. Are there any collaborative practices within your organisation? If so, what are the characteristics of these collaborations?
9. Are you collaborating with external partners in order to implement your activities? If so, can you describe them?

### **B. Community Resilience and Challenges during COVID and Digitalization**

1. What challenges have you observed or personally faced within the artistic community during or after the Covid 19 pandemic? How does the community collectively respond to these challenges?
2. Can you describe any instances where the community involved with your organisation showed resilience in the face of adversity or change during or after the Covid 19 pandemic? How did this resilience manifest? [Organisational level]



3. Are there any strategies or practices within the community that contribute to its resilience (sustainability and adaptability)?
4. Are you developing projects involving digitalization of your collection? (like digital archives, videos)? Can you describe them (objectives, target, etc.). When did you develop them? Why?
5. What role do digital reuse and creative practices play in engaging active users with cultural heritage collections? >> This could be also for patrons such as city hall, region board, etc.
6. Do you employ the OPEN-GLAM licence? >> this could be also for patrons such as city hall, region board, etc.

### **C. Inclusion and Capitalization of Citizen's Creativity**

1. Could you explain the process(es) involved in creating an artwork/exhibition/project by the Consortium?
2. Can you distinguish between a local audience (population living in the location/region) and a more general audience (national, international...) of reference at Le Consortium?
3. Did the composition of the local audience change during and after the pandemic? How can you explain this? Do you have any relevant examples that you want to share with us?
4. Do you have specific social programs to include disadvantaged/marginalised people?
5. Did the relationship between your audience and stakeholders change because of the pandemic? If so, in what sense?
6. Can you describe the collaborative efforts occurring between curators, practitioners, Open GLAM community members, and your audience?
7. What strengths and weaknesses have you observed in these activities?
8. To what extent can these practices be considered as co-curation? Can you provide some examples? (How, When)
9. Did the pandemic change in some ways the co-curating practices? In what ways? Any examples?

### **D. Practices and Processes of Content Co-curation and Commoning**

1. Can you describe the co-curating practices applied by your organisation?
2. Besides the NC's protocol do you have other documents governing content co-curation?



3. How does your organisation manage and transfer knowledge internally?
4. Could you provide insights into users' co-curation practices involving your collection?
5. Do you implement co-curating projects? If so, how do these co-curating projects facilitate engagement with collection objects and digitised materials? If not, why?
6. What challenges and benefits arise from these co-curating projects for different stakeholders?
7. How do you see the relationships and interactions between artists, patrons, and curators shaping the overall project experience? [NC project]
8. Could you share a particular instance where collaboration or collective effort within the local community or different stakeholders influenced your artistic work decision-making or practice in the NC program?
9. If you have any, can you share a memorable collaborative moment within the stakeholders involved during the NC project that reflects the essence of shared/commoning experiences?
10. To what extent can the concept of commons (use of a specific good as a common pool resource example like forest and water) be applied to your activities and philosophy?
11. Which specific practices align more closely with the concept of commoning?

### **E. Collective intentionality: Exploring Community and "We Intentionality"**

[Organisational Level]

1. How would you define the values and identity of your organisation? Has it evolved over the years? Did they change during and after the COVID-19 pandemic? If so, in what ways?
2. To what extent is your organisational identity (purposes, values, culture, characteristics) used internally within your organisation and recognized externally by your audience and stakeholders?
3. What kind of efforts are made to share this identity and these values [internally or externally] and to enable engagement from your members /stakeholders/ audience? Why were these efforts made initially? Did they change because of the COVID-19 pandemic?
4. Could you describe the results of these efforts? [Before and after COVID-19 pandemic]
5. What does community mean to you and who constitutes the community associated with Le Consortium/NP project?"
6. How would you define this community using characteristics and values? In your opinion what brings this community together ?



7. Is there an alignment between your organisation's intentions, objectives and values and those of your community of reference? To what extent is this alignment materialised in your exhibition activities and co-curatorial activities?
8. Do the members/audience/stakeholders of your organisation have a sense of belonging to this community? Have you implemented strategies to encourage a sense of belonging?
9. What kind of relationship have you established with your members/audience in your organisation/community? [Liberal shared responsibility and equality between the organisation and its audience in decision-making processes or conservative (audience/members compliance to decisions made by the deciders in the organisation]?

[Individual Level]

1. What does 'community' mean to you within the context of art and culture? How do you see the collective experiences shaping individual artistic practices, especially in terms of citizen engagement?
2. In your opinion what brings this community together ?
3. What kind of efforts have you made to shape the collective identity within this community?
4. Can you describe your experiences of working within the artistic community? How do you perceive the sense of belonging or shared purpose within this community?
5. As an artist/patron/curator, how do you perceive your role within this artistic community? How does your role contribute to the community dynamics?
6. How do you as an artist/patron/curator collaborate or interact within this community? Can you describe any shared goals or aspirations?
7. Is there an alignment between your intentions, objectives and values and those of Le Consortium? Do you have any examples of how this alignment is materialised in the exhibition and co-curatorial activities?
8. Do you have a sense of belonging to this community?
9. What kind of relationship have you established between you and Le Consortium/NP project community?

