



ENCATC

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Culture Works



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Editorial

New Stories, New Values, New Generations

Culture does not merely respond to the world - it builds it. This issue of ENCATC Magazine explores how culture works as infrastructure, as transformation, and as a practice of care in a time when old systems falter and new ones are emerging. Across continents, mediums, and methods, we see cultural actors reimagining how we live, learn, govern, and grow.

We begin with a special focus on **Bologna**, host city of the **ENCATC Sustainability Academy 2025**. As a city deeply engaged in sustainable cultural development, Bologna offers a powerful example of how local initiatives can catalyse broader change - blending innovation, inclusion, and environmental consciousness into a cohesive cultural vision.

In the section **"Takeaways from the ENCATC Study Tour in Korea"**, we turn our attention to Asia, where the intersections of technology, policy, mobility, and creativity are reshaping cultural practices. Through firsthand observations and dialogue, the study tour offered insights into how South Korea is approaching cultural innovation, AI governance, and the balance between heritage and digital transformation.

We then look ahead in **"Towards the ENCATC Congress"**, as we prepare for our annual gathering—a space where ideas, practices, and research converge to shape the future of cultural management and policy. This year's theme, *The Future is Cultural*, invites us to collectively imagine how education, policy, and practice can align to address the ecological, social, and ethical challenges ahead.

Throughout this issue, readers will discover how **new stories, are generating new values**, and how those values are actively shaping the next generation of cultural professionals. From grassroots circular economy initiatives to rethinking cultural measurement frameworks, ENCATC members and partners are contributing to a sector that is not only adaptive - but transformative.

As the European Commission has just unveiled its next **Multiannual Financial Framework** and the **Culture Compass** continues to evolve, this edition serves as both a reflection and a proposition. It asks: What does a just, inclusive, and sustainable cultural future look like? What policies are needed not just to preserve culture, but to allow it to flourish as a backbone for societal well-being?

We thank all contributors and partners who, through their work and vision, are building the foundations of a cultural sector that is responsive, collaborative, and forward-thinking.

Together, we are not just reflecting change - we are shaping it.

GiannaLia Cogliandro Beyens
ENCATC Secretary General

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DISCOVERING SUSTAINABILITY IN BOLOGNA. INSPIRING STORIES

LE SERRE DEI GIARDINI MARGHERITA



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From Greenhouses to Cultural Ecosystem

Tucked away in the green heart of Bologna's Giardini Margherita, Le Serre is more than just a beautiful space: it's a living laboratory of sustainability, community, and culture. Once a set of abandoned municipal greenhouses, this 650-square-meter complex has been transformed into a vibrant hub where innovation, art, and ecology come together to reimagine the urban experience. Originally built in the early 20th century to shelter plants during the winter, the site began its transformation in 2014 thanks to the vision and commitment of the cooperative Kilowatt. This ambitious regeneration effort, coordinated by the Municipality of Bologna and supported by the Emilia-Romagna

**Le Serre is a place
of community
activation between
nature and culture,
an ecotone that
brings together
art and innovation
to create new,
desirable and
non-dystopian
imaginaries.**

(from the Kilowatt manifesto)

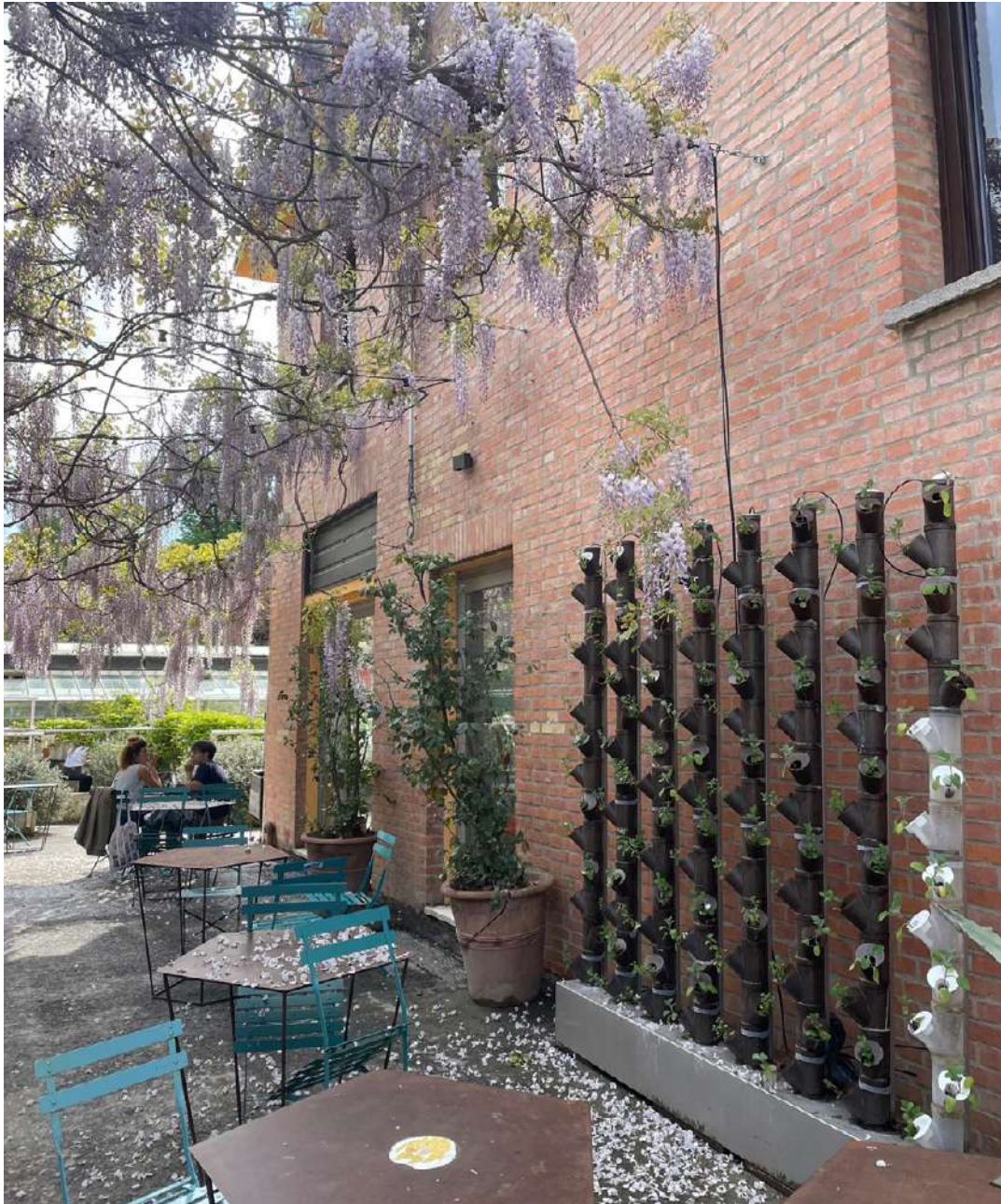
Region and AR-TER, brought new life to the space, turning it into a dynamic cultural centre. Today, it hosts coworking areas, startup incubators, exhibitions, concerts, educational programs, and community initiatives. Kilowatt, a collective of professionals in social innovation, communication, circular economy, and urban regeneration, has invested over €2 million in the project. By combining public support and private initiative, they've created a place where creative energy, sustainability, and social impact meet.

Reinventing Public Space: Work, Play, and Art at Le Serre

The old caretaker's house now serves as Kilowatt's headquarters, a coworking space, a childcare centre called KwBaby, and VETRO, a bistro that serves plant-based and responsibly sourced food. Outside, former seedbeds have been turned into garden-benches framed by greenery, terracotta pots with LED lights, and soft music playing in the background. The Lion Cage, once home to real lions until the 1980s, has become an art installation featuring

Reno, a sculpture by Michele Liparesi. The Serra Bar and Botanical Bar, nestled under a wisteria-covered portico, offer summer refreshments and live events in a unique setting. The southern area of Le Serre comes alive in the warmer months with concerts, film screenings, talks, and performances. Nearby, Serra Sonora, a restored early-20th-century glass greenhouse, is now a high-fidelity listening room and a gathering space for networking and business events.





The core of the site is Serra Madre, a cultural production centre that fosters ecological imagination through the dialogue between art and science, offering a space where diverse forms of knowledge and creativity converge to shape alternative presents and imagine accessible, desirable futures. Positioned as a transdisciplinary hub open to citizens, researchers, businesses, and institutions, Serra Madre approaches the ecological crisis as a deeply systemic and cultural issue, advocating for an intersectional perspective that transcends human exceptionalism. Embracing all artistic practices and putting them in conversation with scientific research and technological innovation, Serra Madre supports artistic production and critical inquiry through residencies, public programs, educational workshops, exhibitions, and hands-on labs, creating a porous and generative environment that encourages imagination, reflection, and change. It offers immersive experiences and learning opportunities that challenge the dominant anthropocentric worldview and open space for new questions, new rituals, and new relationships capable of transforming perception and fostering ecological awareness.

The vegetable garden, located on the site of the former ornamental nurseries, is a

place of growth, learning, and artistic expression. It serves therapeutic and inclusive educational purposes and has been developed in partnership with social cooperatives and local institutions. Since 2016, Kilowatt has collaborated with the University of Bologna's Department of Agricultural Sciences to explore sustainable food systems and agricultural resilience. Projects like *Semino* and *GREAT Life* promote healthy food access, environmentally responsible farming, and economic sustainability for small producers. In 2019, Le Serre introduced an aquaponics system developed with local startup Aquaponic Design. This urban agriculture technique reduces water use by up to 90 percent, cuts fossil fuel consumption and CO₂ emissions, and increases productivity per square meter – thus offering a tangible vision for more resilient and sustainable cities.

Sustainability isn't just a concept at Le Serre, it's a way of life. Since 2018, plastic packaging has been eliminated, and in 2019, single-use items were replaced with reusable glassware. Since 2020, all cleaning products have

Sustainability, protection of resources and the balance between man and nature, inclusion. Kilowatt wants to create opportunities for change that generate sustainable and inclusive well-being.

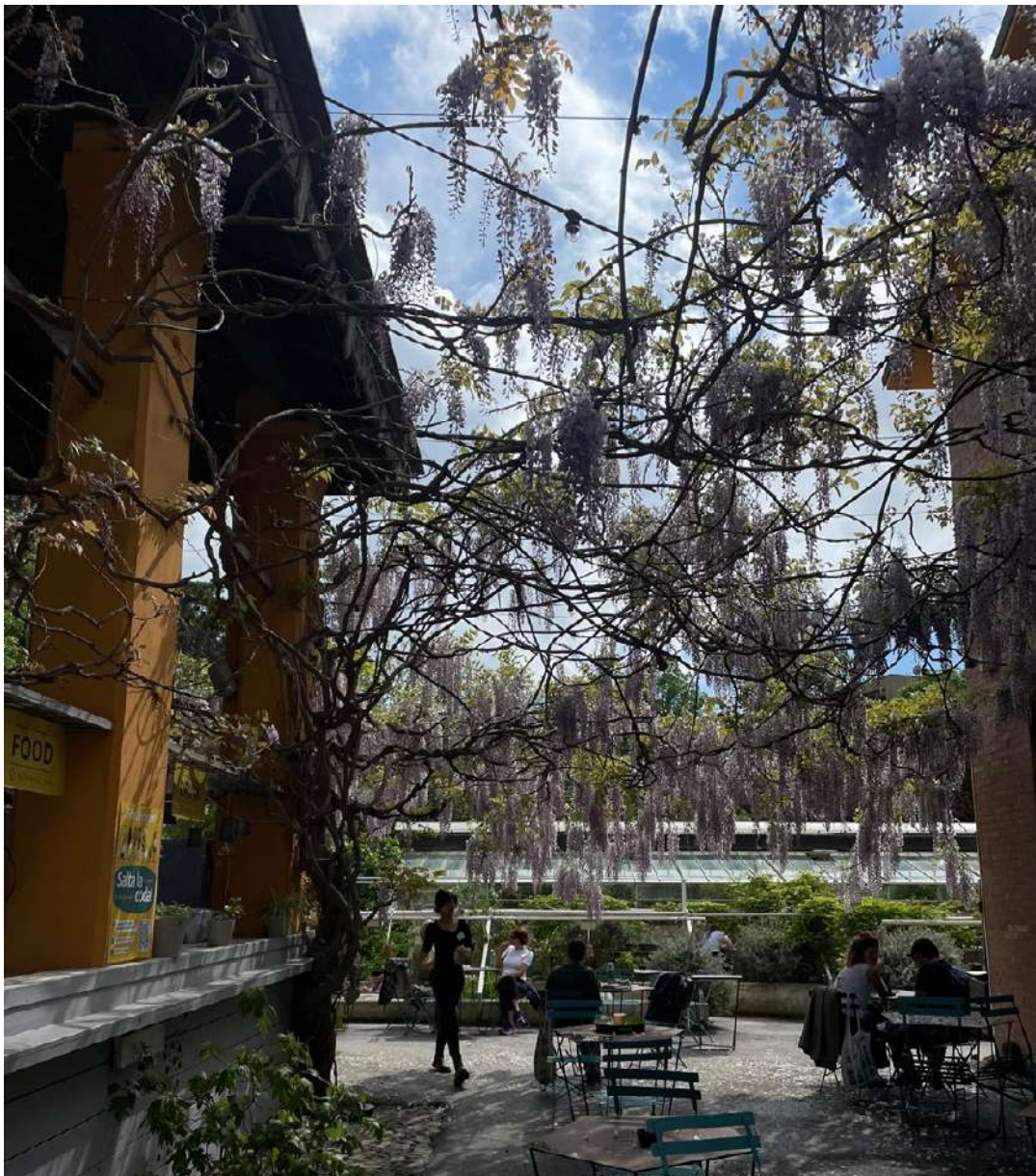
(from the Kilowatt manifesto)



been replaced with Ecolabel-certified alternatives, and a public water fountain helps reduce the need for plastic bottles. The food served across the venue is always plant-based, organic, or environmentally responsible. Car and scooter access is restricted to encourage visitors to cycle, supported by the installation of sixty-three bike racks. These choices are guided by the desire to create a space built on respect, balance, and care for relationships and the environment.

A collaborative and hybrid Model

The management of *Le Serre dei Giardini* is based on a multi-layered hybrid model that blends public and private sectors, institutional and non-institutional stakeholders, informal groups, profit-generating services, and community-oriented activities. Kilowatt works closely with the Municipality of Bologna and other partners to create a space where a wide variety of actors - from startups and creatives to families and children - can come together. Economic sustainability is ensured by integrating business activities, such as coworking and events, with less profitable but socially impactful projects. In



this way, the space remains accessible to all while promoting innovation and inclusion. It's a balancing act that reflects a broader European trend: the development of new, socially driven entrepreneurial models capable of addressing today's challenges while remaining viable in the market.

Kilowatt's Impact: Culture, Values, and Vision

According to its 2024 Impact Report, Kilowatt's work revolves around four major goals. First, it creates opportunities for artists, citizens, and marginalized communities by offering spaces and experiences that encourage cultural expression and participation. Second, it challenges conventional models of value creation by putting relationships, sustainability, and individuality at the centre of business, education, policymaking, and everyday life. Third, it resists dystopian narratives by fostering a hopeful and actionable vision of the future, where art plays a central role in helping society observe, understand, and respond to contemporary crises. Finally, Kilowatt works to make the quality of work equal to that of leisure, striving to ensure that everyone involved feels valued and connected to a meaningful, collective project.

Le Serre dei Giardini Margherita isn't just a cultural venue, it's a prototype for a new kind of urban life. One where community replaces isolation, sustainability replaces waste, and imagination offers an alternative to resignation. In the heart of Bologna, that future is already taking root.

Mutuality, cooperation, transparency of power structures. Kilowatt believes in the values of cooperation and is committed to nurturing new declinations of the mutualistic exchange on which it is based.

(from the Kilowatt manifesto)



KILOWATT

Kilowatt is a cooperative that operates in consulting, communication, and education, supporting projects in social innovation and urban regeneration. Its communication agency, K2, delivers services ranging from brand strategy to multimedia content, while its educational initiatives create inclusive responses to evolving social and welfare needs. Kilowatt's modular structure fosters new professional opportunities, collaboration, and social ties. It provides tangible support to freelancers, innovative entrepreneurs, and families, offering a space for exchange between citizens, innovators, businesses, the third sector, and public institutions. As a sustainable public-private partnership, Kilowatt aligns public goals with entrepreneurial energy around projects grounded in community, experimentation, and inclusion. In doing so, it addresses pressing issues such as employment precarity, changing labor markets, and the retreat of public welfare systems.



www.kilowatt.bo.it | www.leserredeigiardini.it | www.serramadre.art



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