

MAIL ART AND SUSTAINABILITY



1. Introduction

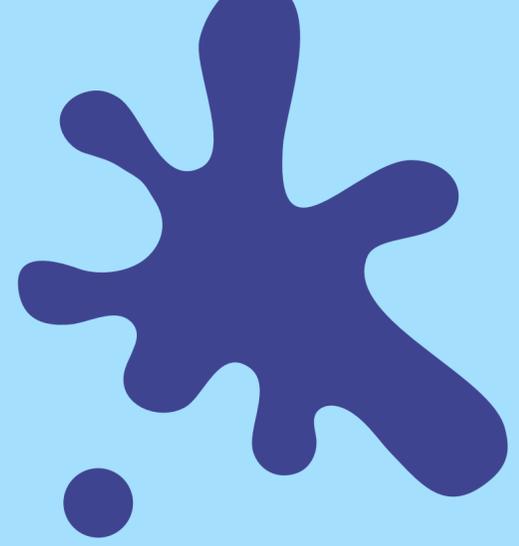
This module is dedicated to social workers and adult educators whom work with seniors in their accomplishments to raise awareness for environmental sustainability having Mail Art as a tool.

Mail Art and Sustainability module has been designed to have seniors engaged in Mail Art while at the same time raising awareness for environmental sustainability. In this module seniors will utilise materials related to environment, such as plastics and recycled paper, while implementing their arts.

In this module, seniors will have a chance of learning about the historical link between art and sustainability, and particularly about how Mail Art relates to the environmental sustainability. Seniors will be exposed to both theoretical and practical information about creating Mail Art.

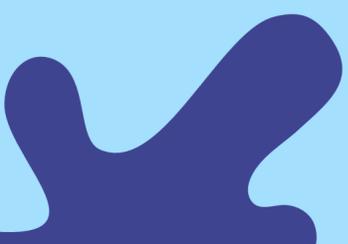


2. What are the Benefits of Art-based activities for Seniors?



In this module:

- Seniors will be able to use their creativity and be involved manually in creating arts and Mail Art.
- They will have an opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings through Mail Art.
- By especially applying concepts of environment and environmental sustainability, they will contribute to raising awareness.
- Furthermore, seniors will be able to disseminate their messages across farther distances as this is what mailing involves as part of Mail Art.
- This project aims to enable them to have a pleasant hobby, while at the same time helping them to cope up with loneliness and isolation, that are especially associated with situations such as Covid19.



3. Background Information

3.1. Environment, Culture and Art

Culture can refer to the arts and heritage, including buildings, works of art and artifacts, historical locations, and sometimes even protected landscapes. In this context, it is frequently connected with the arts.

Art, an irrepressible human activity, is a universal and enduring response to our environment. The connection between art and the natural world is strong. Frequently, nature serves as the muse, inspiring content and commentary, and artists may employ natural materials to create art. Equally frequently, the environment is seen as a key component of our national cultural heritages.



Art and Environment: Art is both inspired by environment and nature, and is created by using natural materials.

3.2. Raising awareness for Environmental Sustainability through Arts

Unique to the arts are the reasons they allow us to conceive, influence, and even create the world we live in. In other words, the arts influence culture significantly. As such, they ought to be central to a sustainable worldview.



Arts may have an influence on environmental sustainability through culture.

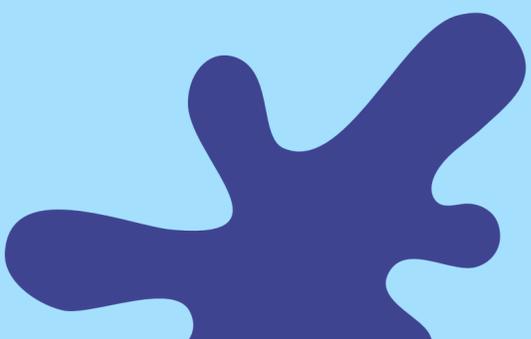
3.3. Upcycled Art or Recycled Art



Sustainable artists attempt to optimize the use of natural resources, lessen the environmental imprint of their work and to urge society to become more aware of its influence on the environment and the future of our planet.

Depending on the materials used and the intent of the creation, sustainability in art may take on a number of shapes due to the multifarious inventiveness of artists. Even glass bottles, plastic bags, and other garbage may become a type of sustainable art in the hands of certain brilliant artists. This art trend, also known as Upcycled Art or Recycled Art, draws attention to the deterioration of the world and raises awareness about ecological concerns.

Creative potential of artists is limited only by their imagination. Consequently, a rising number of artists, also known as upcyclers, are devoted to this form of sustainable art, using mail to create their own individual practice. Thus, Mail Art in all of its adaptive and inclusive ways to prevail artistic approaches, may embark to shift the total vision of all-doable attempts to a higher degree in approach. The last but not the least, everyone can achieve simple handcrafts, work as simple and fast as they can, and post the mail or share on platforms to reach wider audience.



3.4. Paper as a Sustainable Medium of Art

Paper has the ability to enhance and inspire human existence at any time. From books to tissue paper to currency, we utilize paper on a regular basis. Food is generally supplied in paperboard wrapping when you order takeout. Paper thus has evolved into a medium that inspires us to produce important art and creativity.

Paper has now been utilized as the principal medium of art as well as a surface for paintings, drawings, mail art and calligraphy.

3.5. Mail Art and Sustainable Materials

Mail Art, which uses paper as a natural resource, may help raising awareness for the sustainable materials that relate to environment and nature. Mail Art also allows creative use of other environmental materials in addition to paper, and thus may serve as a means to raise environmental sustainability in greater perspective.

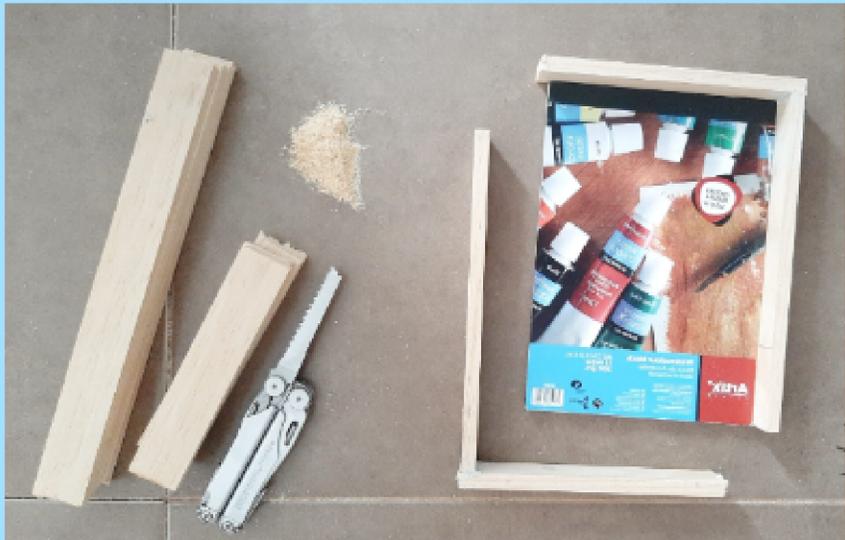
Recycled paper, which can be used as postcard or envelope material in Mail Art, could be a great means to raise awareness for environmental sustainability.

Hereby, it is crucial to emphasize how Mail Art could become a part of an initiative that could involve a mobilized action to deliver messages at distances through arts and paper.



Microplastics can be collected from environment and recycled into paper.

How to recycle paper



a) Making frames



b) Soaking discarded paper, frame and screen in water



c) Peel the sheet off the screen



d) Suspend the sheets for drying

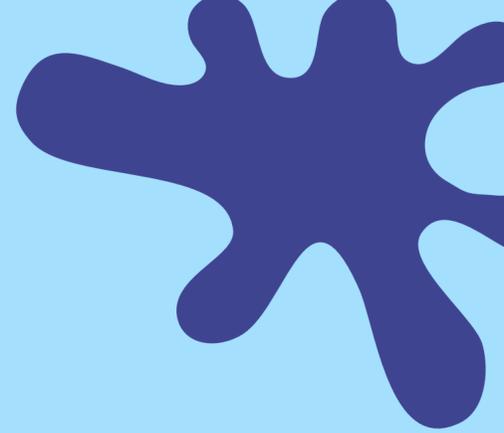


e) Dried flower petals could be embedded into paper during the process

Mail Art Examples Utilizing Sustainable Materials. Mail Art samples created with environmental concepts, including plastics and recycled paper.



3.6. Relationship of Arts Medium with Health and Environment



3.6.1. Awareness of Artists on Health and Environment

Artists are increasingly seeing things advertised as ecologically friendly being promoted. Terms like eco-friendly, ecologically safe, and green have no universal meaning and are just marketing jargon. Other labels may seem to have clear meanings, yet they conceal more information than they disclose.

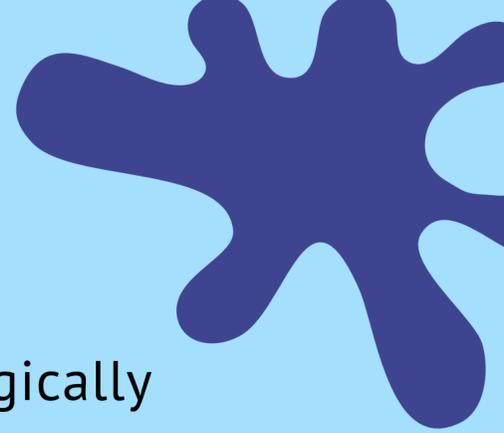
3.6.2. Manufacturing Methodologies That Are Eco-Friendly

Many artists are looking for eco-friendly art supply producers, and there are several out there. Manufacturers' attempts to be more environmentally friendly are in line with the industry's efforts to create materials that are less damaging to artists.

3.6.3. Ingredients derived from nature

In the market one can find watercolor paints made with plant dyes, beeswax, and aluminum oxide. Or environmentally friendly watercolor pencils that are "made from re-forested wood, or wood that has come from forestry that replants a tree for each one chopped down," could be available.

Walnut oil is used as a binder in many artist paints. When cleaning brushes, walnut oil replaces the need for solvents. Walnut oil helps the paint flow off the bristles of the brush, while solvents breakdown paint and are known carcinogens.



3.6.4. Packaging that has been recycled

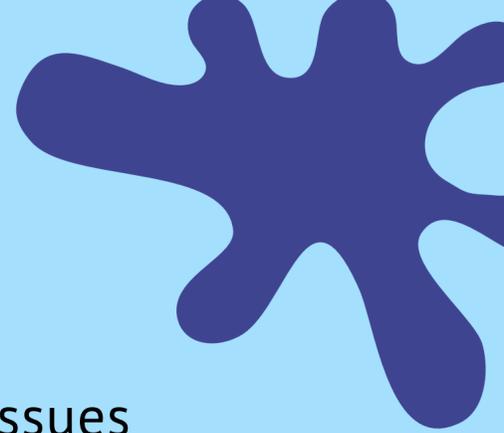
Other art supply companies promote their own ecologically friendly manufacturing and delivery procedures. There are materials with 100 percent post-consumer recycled packaging, biodegradable plastic bags, and recyclable glass bottles, among other things.

3.6.5. Sources of Alternative Energy

There are materials in the market that are power produced completely from wind and low-impact hydro sources, which clearly resulted in a lesser carbon footprint for paints.

3.6.6. Less Water Consumption

Processing and reusing water, rather than "just utilizing water and dumping it into drains," is commonly considered as one of the best environmental practices. A lot of art material brands installed a rainwater collecting system, which offers a free, alternative supply of water for the manufacturing process and allows them to reduce freshwater usage.



3.6.7. Pigment Production Sources

The source of pigments is one of the few proprietary issues that manufacturers guard carefully, and the question of how and where these substances are extracted is rarely raised by artists. The chemical corporations which take raw materials and turn them into pigments utilized in many artist paintings have little influence over the makers of artist supplies. Large companies like vehicle makers and commercial paint producers provide the groundwork for pigments generated by colorant manufacturers.

3.6.8. Disposal of materials

For artists worried about environmental effect, the options are mostly about how they dispose of their trash rather than the things they acquire. Paint scrapings and painted-on sheets and canvases, for example, can contain dangerous substances that should not be thrown away with conventional rubbish. Also, it is important to indicate not to throw solvents or other solutions needed to clean brushes into the toilet. Rather, they should all be kept and removed in accordance with municipal hazardous waste disposal legislation.

Artists can't purchase their way to sustainability, and they can't ignore the health and environmental consequences of their medium and practice entirely. However, with these insights, artists may be a bit more environmentally conscious at the end of the day.

3.7. Mail Art for ‘research’ and as a ‘tool for change’



The arts may be utilized for two different goals, firstly as a method to know specific elements of reality (‘art in research’) and secondly as a learning and communication experience to modify these realities (‘art as a tool for change’).

3.7.1 Arts in research

‘Art in research’ is an investigation based on arts-based methodologies. Recent systematic studies (Coemans and Hannes, 2017; Wang et al., 2017) have revealed the great diversity of art genres employed as a component of approaches to gather data. They documented various research employing visual arts through drawing, painting, photography (photovoice or photocomics), animation, literary art, performance art (such as theater, dance or music) and other multiple forms such as collage through upcycling or installation art.

However, there is no research in this area employing Mail Art.

3.7.2 Mail Art as an artistic research approach towards sustainability

Mail Art could be evaluated as a means for collecting data and assessing its value in raising awareness for environmental sustainability.

3.7.3 Mail Art as a ‘tool for change’

To note, it is as important to consider Mail Art in research as well as in more innovative approaches such as a ‘tool for change’. Environmental sustainability is a great concept to get involved with Mail Art, not only because of historic links between arts and environment, but also because the sustainable materials utilized in Mail Art. Furthermore, Mail Art will allow sharing abilities through distances enabling mobility and goals achieved in a more widespread fashion.

4. Practical work

One implementation of this module has been brought into practice in our workshops during Madeira and Greece LTTAs. Work created demonstrated connection between Mailart and environment.

4.1. Activity description

- **Goal of activity:** Activity aims to train seniors in creating Mailart.
- **Materials used:** Materials related to environmental sustainability (recycled paper, chopped plastics), materials related to environment (flowers), stamp, ink, glue, glue gun, A4 cardboard paper, pen/pencils, postcards, envelopes
- **Setting and environment:** Seniors may be seated around a table, with materials on the table in the center.
- **Group size:** Workshop can be carried out for 5 people to be guided by one trainer.
- **Steps:** Trainer guides the group on the basics, all people start together and follow the same steps along with the trainer. After their first training, seniors are asked to accomplish one task based on their selection of materials and creative use of the concept.

In order for your activity to be successful, follow these steps (general guidelines):

- Collect materials related to environmental sustainability (like plastics).
- Provide above-mentioned materials required for your activity.
- Establish your group size as suggested.
- Allow sufficient time for hand force required for this manual activity considering seniors age and capability.
- Guide your learners for using materials and tools.
- Work simultaneously while training. Allow time for individual accomplishments after the training.

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Practical Work 1- Stamps paced on recycled paper as a basis for postcards and envelopes

Step 1: Recycled paper (as described in Part 3.4), stamp and ink are placed on the table.



Step 2: Stamps are applied to recycled paper to create final forms.

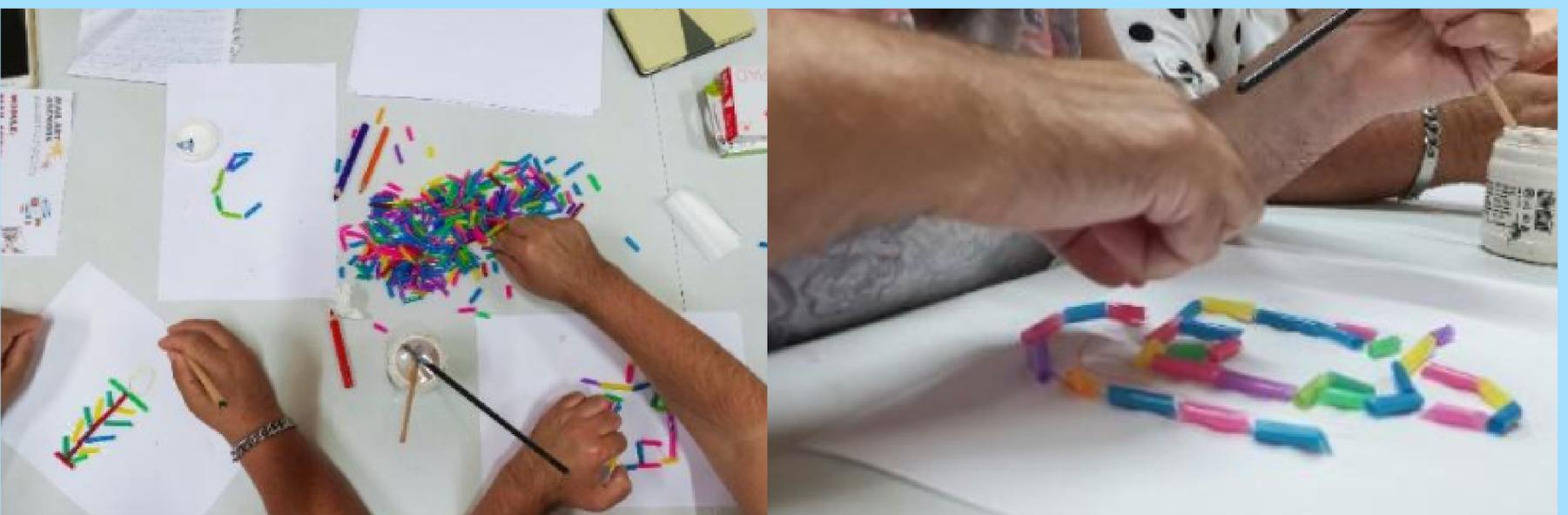


Practical Work 2-Postcards created with plastics

Step 1: Plastics collected from environment are chopped up and laid on the table along with other materials.



Step 2: Plastics are glued to A4 cardboard paper cut into the shape of postcards.



Step 3: Stamps are practiced onto postcards. Pens and pencils are used to write notes for final creation.



Step 4: In a variation of the above methodology; drawings are applied on postcards made of recycled paper.



Step 5: Postcards are shipped to accomplish goals of Mail Art.





5. Conclusion

Art has followed the global trend and contributed significantly to sustainability. The purpose of sustainable art is to increase public awareness of environmental, political, and social concerns via artistic expression.

Sustainability is not an attainable goal; rather, it is a never-ending learning journey towards a transformation that should be pursued, impacting moral standards and value systems. Sustainability necessitates both individual and social participation in examining and altering unsustainable practices. Therefore, transdisciplinary approaches to sustainability are essential in order to transcend a single disciplinary perspective. The transdisciplinary method permits the consideration of several viewpoints and forms of knowledge (Wals & Rodela, 2014).

Mail Art has emerged as a tool to combine concepts of arts, culture and environmental sustainability in order to contribute to the aims of the society for the fore-mentioned perspectives.

Our trainings in Mail Art, that included both theoretical knowledge and practical activities, have displayed the possibility and feasibility of Mail Art in achieving fore-mentioned goals.



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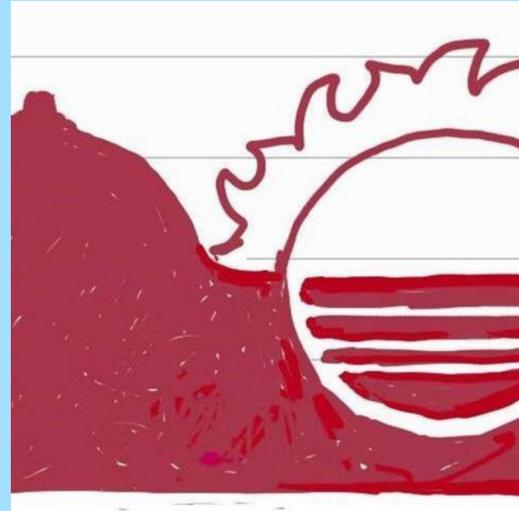
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ACTIVITIES!!!**



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