



MAIL ART  
4 SENIORS

2020-1-LT01-  
KA227-ADU-  
094717

# MAIL ART



Erasmus+

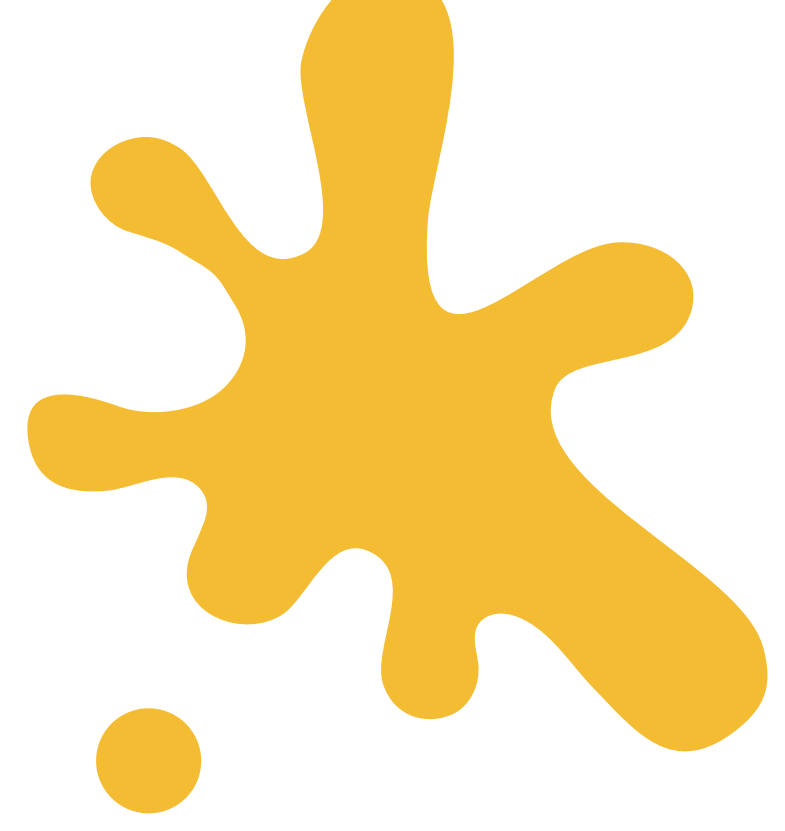
Collection of best  
practices of artists  
involved in mail art

This document has been prepared as part of project "MAILART4SENIORS" with reference number KA227-AE9723D5.and by the following authors:

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# INT RO



## Art & Health Benefits

Existing research reveals the positive role of art on older people. It is evidenced that a higher frequency of **engagement with art** results in a **higher** level of **well-being** and affects health in a positive way. Furthermore, the definition of health is transformed into something that is much more than the lack of disease and art becomes an integrated part of health care.

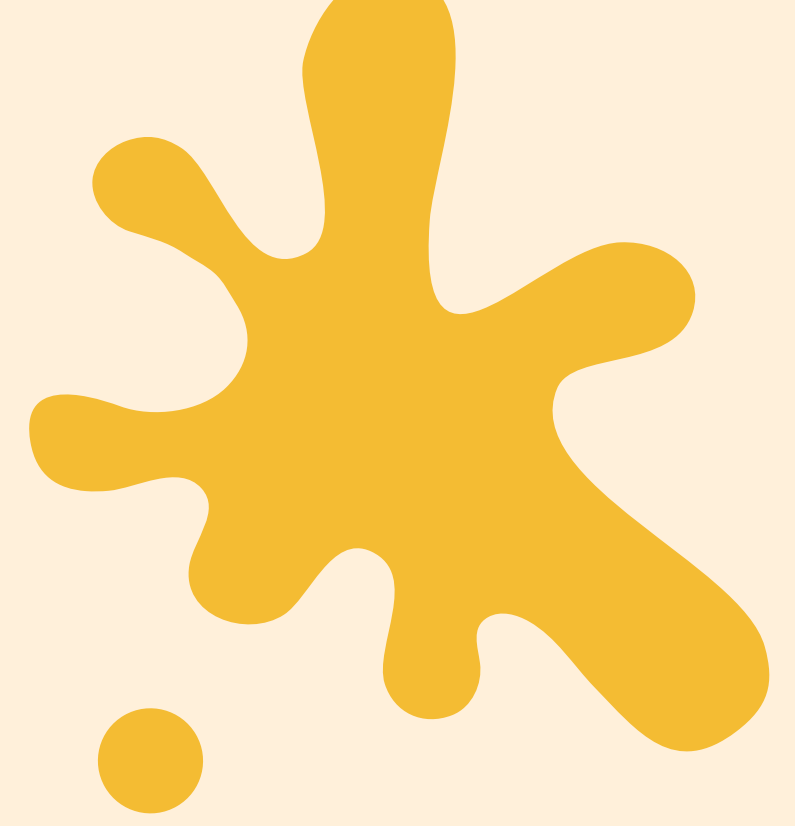
Up until now, it has been reported that art programs in relation to medication and doctor visits have a remarkably lower cost even when it is used alongside conventional treatments.

## MailArt4Seniors what is it all about ?

We propose **MailArt4Seniors** project which will focus on the building of a new **innovative non-formal training program** for Adult educators (social workers involved with the elderly, professionals working in elderly care homes, geriatric psychologists, geriatric nurses, artists offering workshops to elderly people) to help seniors cope with isolation and loneliness, ensure their personal well-being, maintain their social life and enjoy a quality daily living during the pandemic through mail art activities.

Mail art has been around for many decades. It's not a particularly new idea, but in this time of people's isolation due to the pandemic, it felt very important to revive it and utilize it as an artistic means of expression.





## **Creativity Vs Pandemic -| 1-0 |**

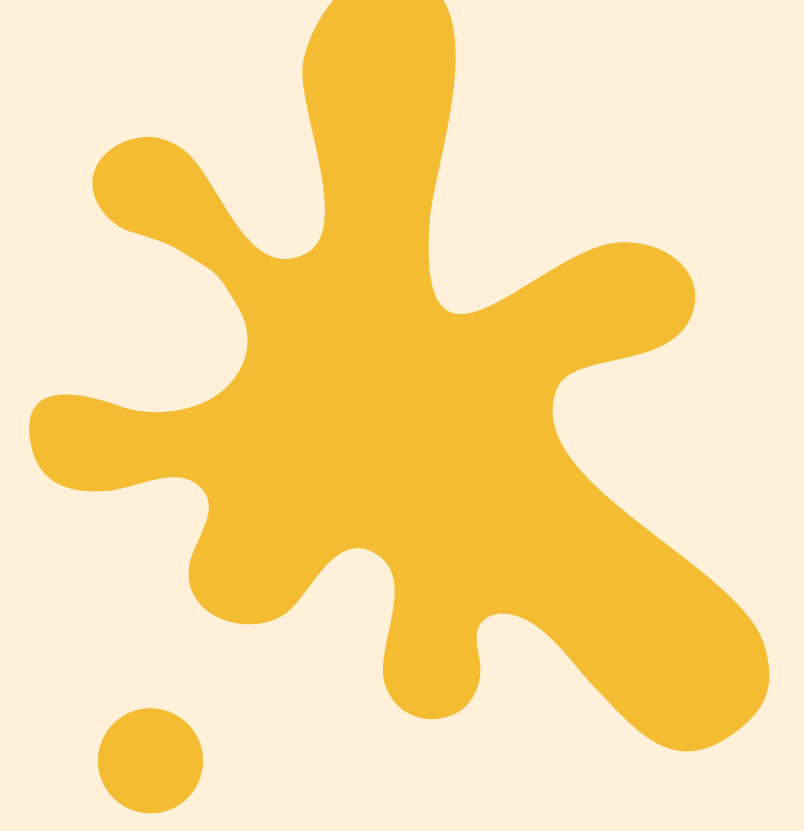
Despite the fact that the lockdown era has taken a toll on artistic production, it has also yielded some scrappy, alternative forms of making—and revived old ones. Months of quarantine have ushered in a mini-renaissance for mail art, a decades-old genre. Many artists have turned to a decidedly low-tech alternative to the internet—the Postal Service —engaging with the history of mail art, sharing physical artworks, and creating connections, even in isolation.

All partners conducted a desk/field research both internationally and locally to investigate the history of the Mail art movement, how it started, and how it has changed and developed over time, and create a collection of best practices, both old and new in order to put together this booklet for both adult education trainers and learners (seniors), but easily transferred to other target groups. Each partner has identified and developed a short presentation of 1 local artist involved in mail art and their approaches and techniques.

## **What for ?**

This collection of best practices will contribute to the development of an Educational eBooklet accompanied by the explanatory videos for the training of adult educators and seniors.





During the coronavirus period and especially during the lockdown, in Italy, this form of art was rediscovered thanks to the idea of some artists from Saronno(Lombardia). They decided to create Mailart to historicize and narrate the quarantine we all lived in those months through postcards and collages. These postcards were sent to three historical archives of the City of Saronno. So, even when all museums and exhibitions were closed due to the coronavirus, art continued to advance thanks to mail art. Even today works of mail art continue to arrive at the three Historical Archives of the city to iconically historicize the quarantine period experienced in 2020! Colors, drawings, and words are very useful to leave a testimony of what we all experienced in these two years. In this sense, mail art has proved to be a beautiful artistic solution and, above all, a beautiful way to express our emotions.

*MailArt4Seniors - Erasmus+2020-1-LT01-KA227-ADU-094717*



# OBJECTIVES



The aim of this publication is to:

- explore how mail art worked across different cultural circumstances.
- Help to better adapt the outputs and products of the project based on the realities (best practices-cases) at the local/national and EU levels.
- Identify patterns and common obstacles, opportunities, and needs when it comes to Mail art during COVID-19.
- Provide a clear understanding of the context and history of Mail art.
- Include useful recommendations to guide the methodological implementation of the project product.
- Summarize and highlight the key conclusions emerging from the tracing analysis carried out by each project partner at the national and European levels as a whole, just after the kickoff meeting.

**The reports from all national and European desk research will significantly contribute to the development of this first Intellectual Output.**



# WHAT IS MAILART ?

Mail art is a mix of art forms, like a mix of text, pictures, sounds, and gestures. All of these media are used on equal terms. These creative endeavors don't place a premium on things like message structure, delivery method, or aesthetic categories.

Creativity is the act of communicating itself, i.e. the artist's behavior. A broad variety of techniques and materials have been employed because of the mail-unrestrained art's and multimedial nature ***MailArt can be defined as a collection of all forms of art, ranging from stickers, picture postcards, rubber stamps, envelopes, artist-issued stamps, telephone use, telegrams - to sketches, paintings, engravings, photographs, photocopies, stencils, collages, art objects, sound and video cassettes, computers, and so on.*** In terms of style, mail-art does not have a strong trend. As a result, the movement conforms to modern conceptions of artistic "nomadism," in which anything is permissible, free, and unique.

MailArt as an art is conceptual art. It is a medium of artistic expression in which envelopes, telegrams, stamps, and postmarks are supported supports for contact between artists. Techniques such as collage, photography, painting, and writing are examples of the modes of manifestation possible in this type of intervention.

Although it appeared in the 20th century, it gained more prominence in France, through the Correspondence Art School. Mail Art was strongly influenced by Dadaism, another artistic movement that was very prominent at the time and was at the forefront of modern art.

It became an alternative to conventional means of art exhibitions in 1960 in Europe. The mail systems served at that time to transport protests and denunciations between different parts of Europe during the Cold War period.

In the 1970s, the practice of postal art grew considerably, providing a cheap and flexible channel of expression. It was particularly widespread where state censorship prevented the free circulation of alternative ideas, such as in certain countries behind the Iron Curtain or in South America. It was also in this period that Mail Art gained strength and identity because the artists who exchanged letters began to create a more creative and artistic content, with illustrations, calligraphy, funny drawings, etc. From that moment on, Mail Art began to gain more expression and visibility.

The growth of a sizable mail art community, with friendships born of personal correspondence and, increasingly, mutual visits, led in the 1980s to the organization of various festivals, meetings, and conventions where participants could meet, socialize, perform, exhibit, and plan new collaborations.

By the 1990s, the heyday of postal art in terms of global postal activities had been reached, and postal artists aware of rising postal rates, were beginning the gradual migration of collective art projects to the Web and new, cheaper forms of digital communication.



The origins of mail art can be traced back to the early beginnings of the artistic movement called "Futurism". Futurism was an artistic and social movement that originated in Italy in the early 20th century. It emphasized dynamism, speed, technology, and the industrial city. Its key figures included the Italians Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, Umberto Boccioni, and also the painter and architect Ivo Pannaggi. The first mail art, in fact, was created in 1921 by Ivo Pannaggi!



The mail art was mailed to Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, the founder of the Futurist movement. In fact, in this postcard, Ivo Pannaggi has combined newspaper clippings and stamps in order to write the name and the address of Marinetti.

## MailArt Essentials

A work of mail-art must nearly always include a contact address, which is cleverly incorporated into the work itself.

**Mail-art materials** range from cardboard, plastic foil, plexiglass, metal, cloth, colorful paper, through confetti, human hair, fingernail parings, common things, printed stuff, photographs, film strips, and so on. Pasting, drawing, and printing are used to make them.

Everything is designed to surprise and provide a strong experience when the parcel is received or opened.

Mail-art may be perceived to contribute to a depreciation of creative merit because it is open to everybody. When contrasted to the conventional art, however, the opposite is true. In mail-art, there is a natural selection for quality. Authors with bad ideas, shoddy execution, and a low potential for creative energy radiating from their work receive no reaction from other mail-art network participants. Their works go unanswered because no one is obligated to respond in mail-art, and they will be removed from the network after a period of time (or rather, they will have excluded themselves).

Mail-art messages take numerous forms: mixed media realist scenes with textual commentary, short verbal messages graphically augmented by images, collages, paraphrases of well-known works of art, communications in the spirit of comics or cartoons, kitsch imitations, sensual scenarios, and so on.

Valuable works, on the other hand, elicit significant and diverse reactions, encouraging their creators to create new and effective works. In classical, established art, however, weak artists who are sponsored by gallery owners and critics profit unjustly, while great modern art producers are frequently overlooked. Mail-art provides opportunity for unrestricted creative activity and development for the latter, and is a multi-generational practice that can be easily taught and practiced

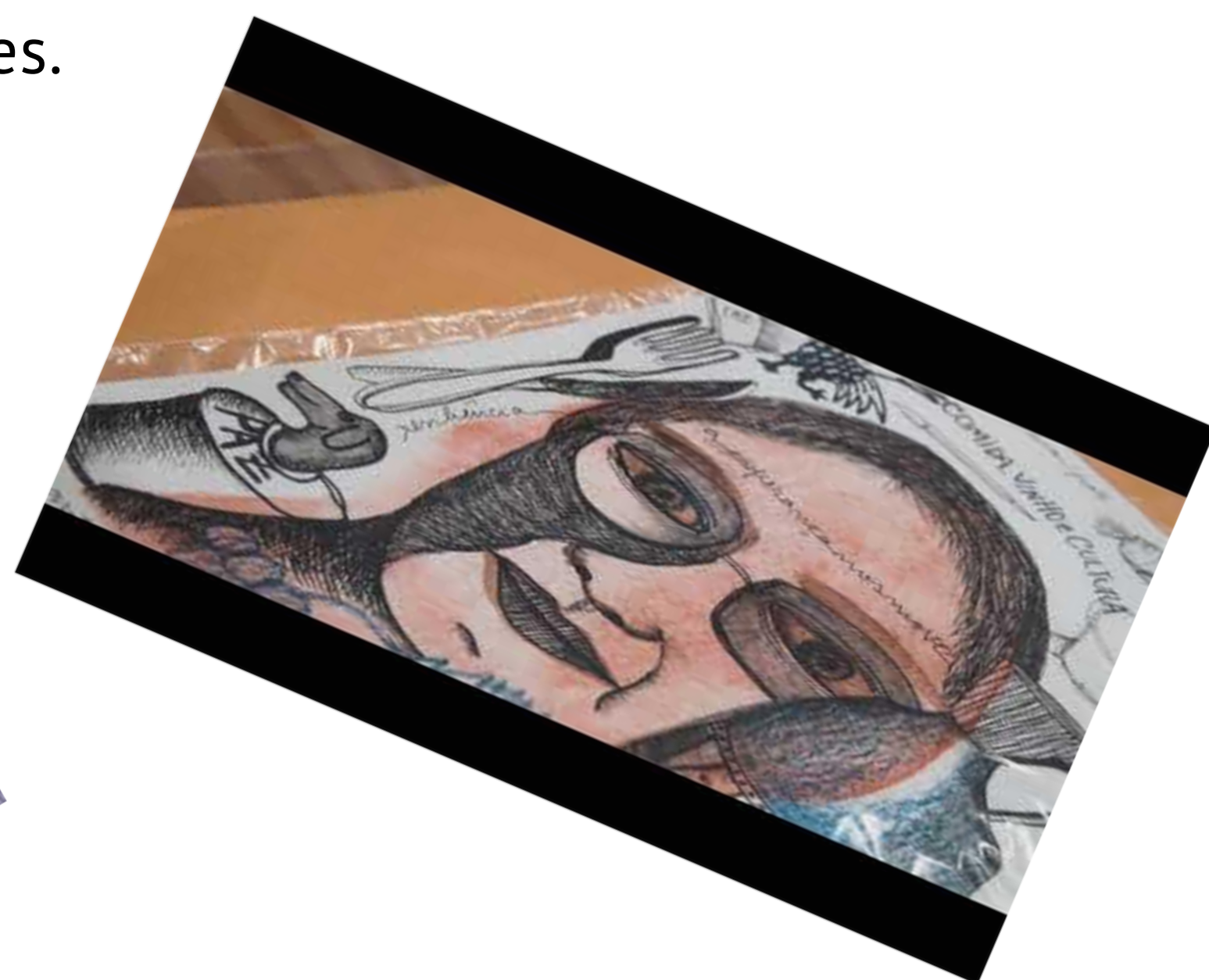
# MAILART TODAY

First, it is necessary to consider that for a long time it was common to create birthday invitations, wedding invitations, write messages of love, and send these by mail. In a roundabout way, this can fit into postal art.

With the massification of the Internet, and more specifically e-mail, letters have stopped being made and are only used in a few cases. In fact, with the commercialization of the telephone, letters have gradually fallen into disuse.

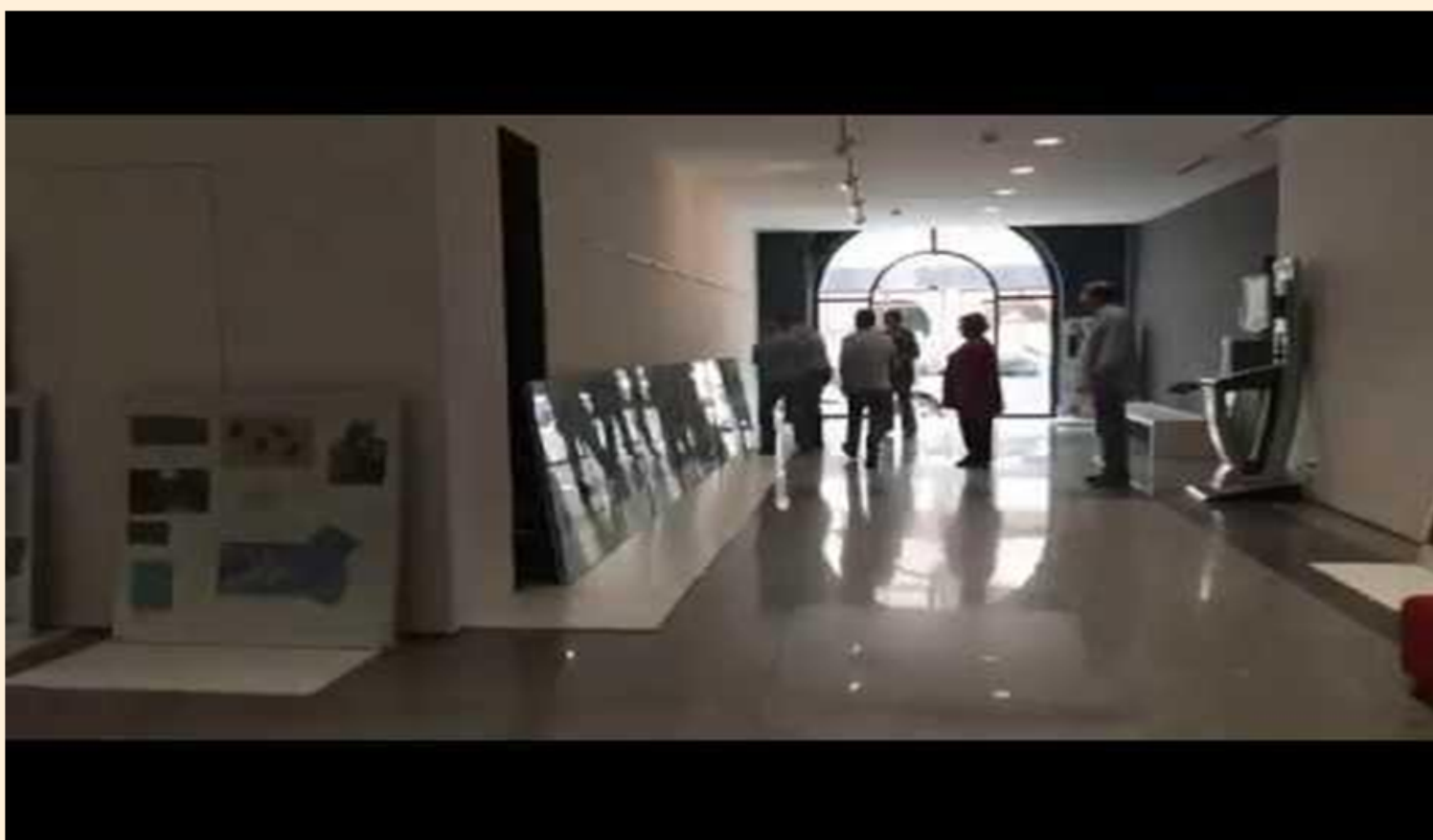
Today there are still people who send letters, but they are a minority. They are usually institutions and companies that use this to maintain multiple contacts with customers.

Letters can also be sent digitally, but when we talk about postal art in digital form, we are talking about different things. Art sent by e-mail can be considered digital postal art, and there are people who do that, but the digital medium is very pervasive and art has found countless ways to express itself, just as people have found countless ways to express themselves.



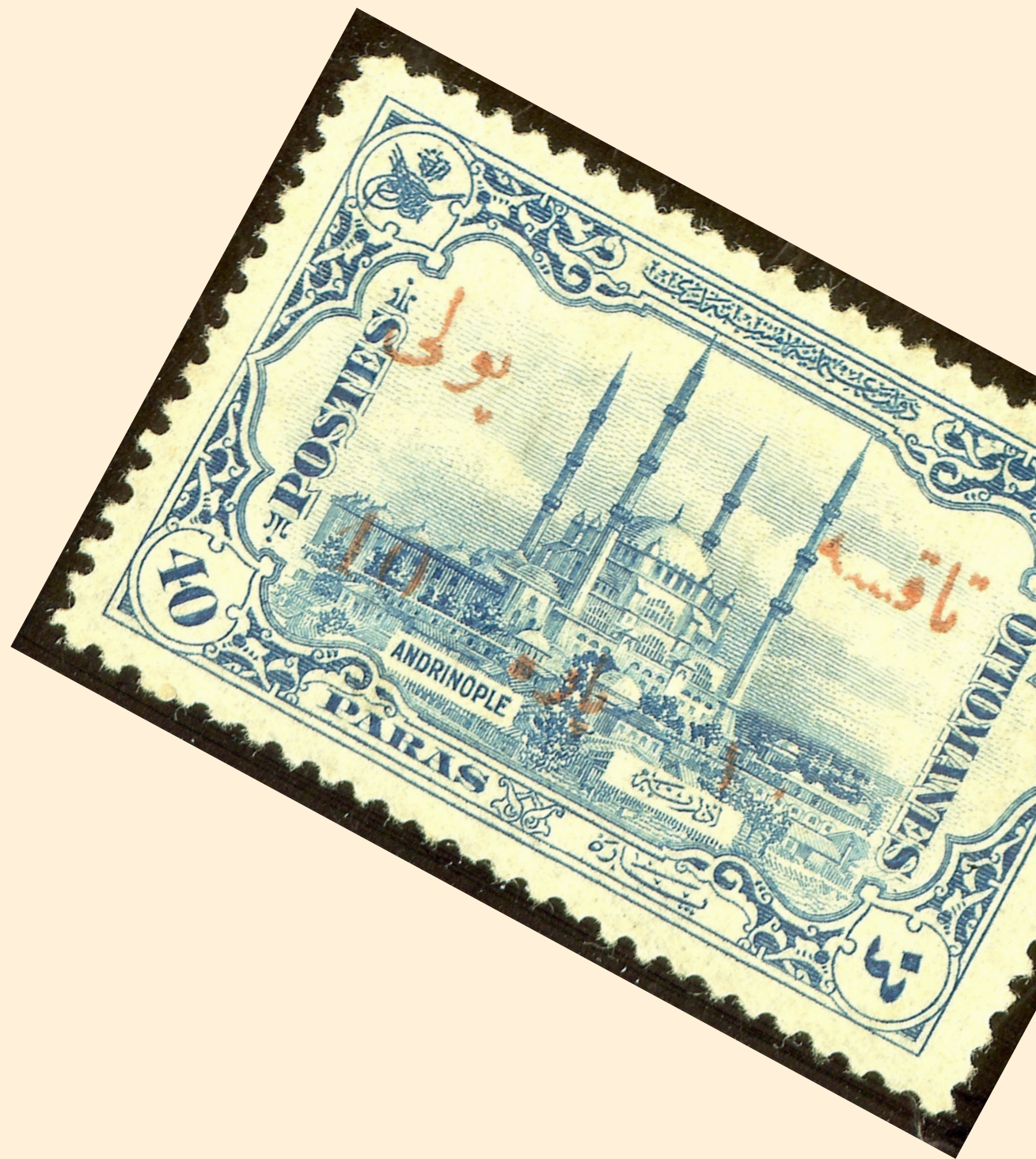
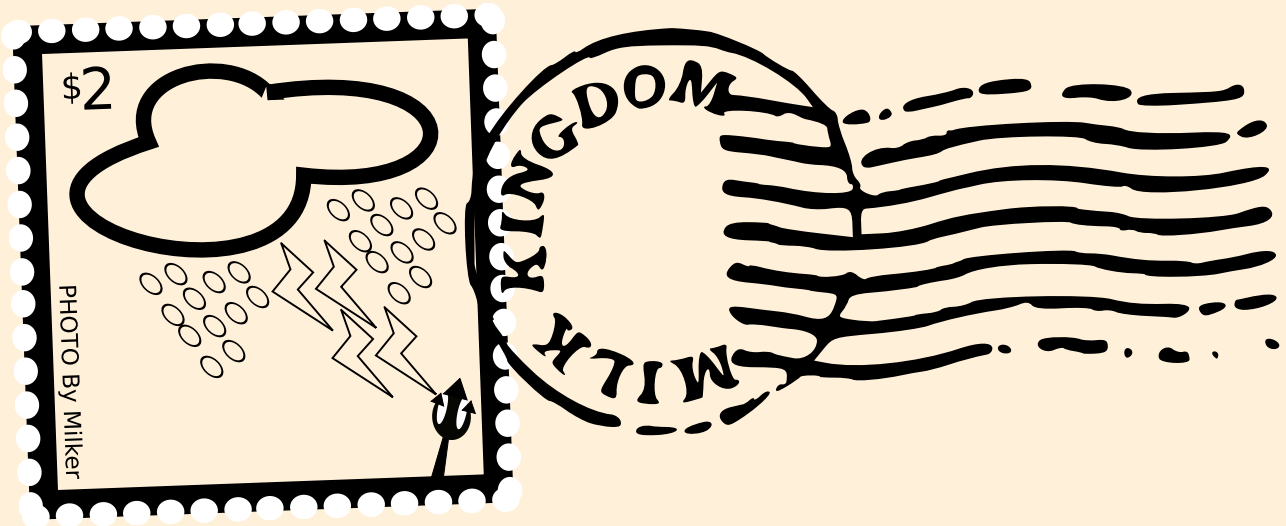
# MAILART TODAY

Even though postal art is still practiced these days, it is basically dying out. There are not as many arts that focus specifically on email, but embrace social networking and the multimedia factor for a more comprehensive expression. Nevertheless, in the 1990s, a few movements emerged that sent postal art via e-mail to each other. The Internet has facilitated the more rapid dissemination of postal art invitations. Blogs and postal art websites have become increasingly used to display contributions, documentation, and the sharing of opinions.[1] This part also covers Mail Art in general, it is not country specific and can be used in the introduction of the e-book.



**Making of Exhibition: Ida e Volta (Postal Art) This exhibition represents 150 works spread over 30 years of complicity and exchange of Postal Art between the Portuguese Carlos Barroco and the Canadian Paul St-Jean. Production and Direction Ana Ferreira Comunicação e Relações Públicas Portuguese Communications Foundation**

# MAIL ARTISTS



Ikonen sent her first postcard, a piece of wood with holes drilled into it, on its way in 2003, when Margaret Huber, the artist's BA tutor at the University of Brighton, set students a summer holiday project with the title 'Location, Vocation, Vacation'.

The collection is gradually building up, since Ikonen still sends postcards to the same recipient. Every few years, Margaret Huber returns the works that she has received to the artist. For Ikonen, the project serves as a diary and a common thread linking journeys and memories.

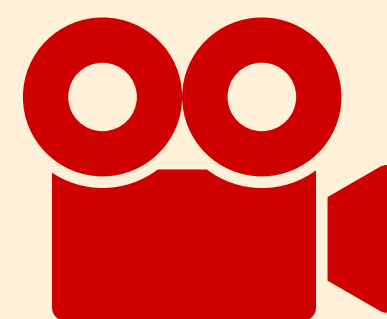


*R.Ikonen- Good News from Finland*

The exhibition at the Finnish Postal Museum (27/11/2015 - 28/02/2016) featured over 200 of Riitta Ikonen's postcard-sized works of art sent, through the postal service from different parts of the world.

Assembled using glue, tape or wire, the works are created from chopsticks, pins, bark, a flipper, bird nests, phone wires, shreds of paper, lint from a washing machine, streamers, scissors, seaweed have been and put in the mail without an envelope. Each work of art takes on its final form during the mail handling and transport process. Of more than 200 postcards sent by mail, only a dozen have never reached their destination.

# IKONEN Riita Finland



Mail Art in Finland  
Sofia Danskain



Riitta Ikonen: Mail art, Art

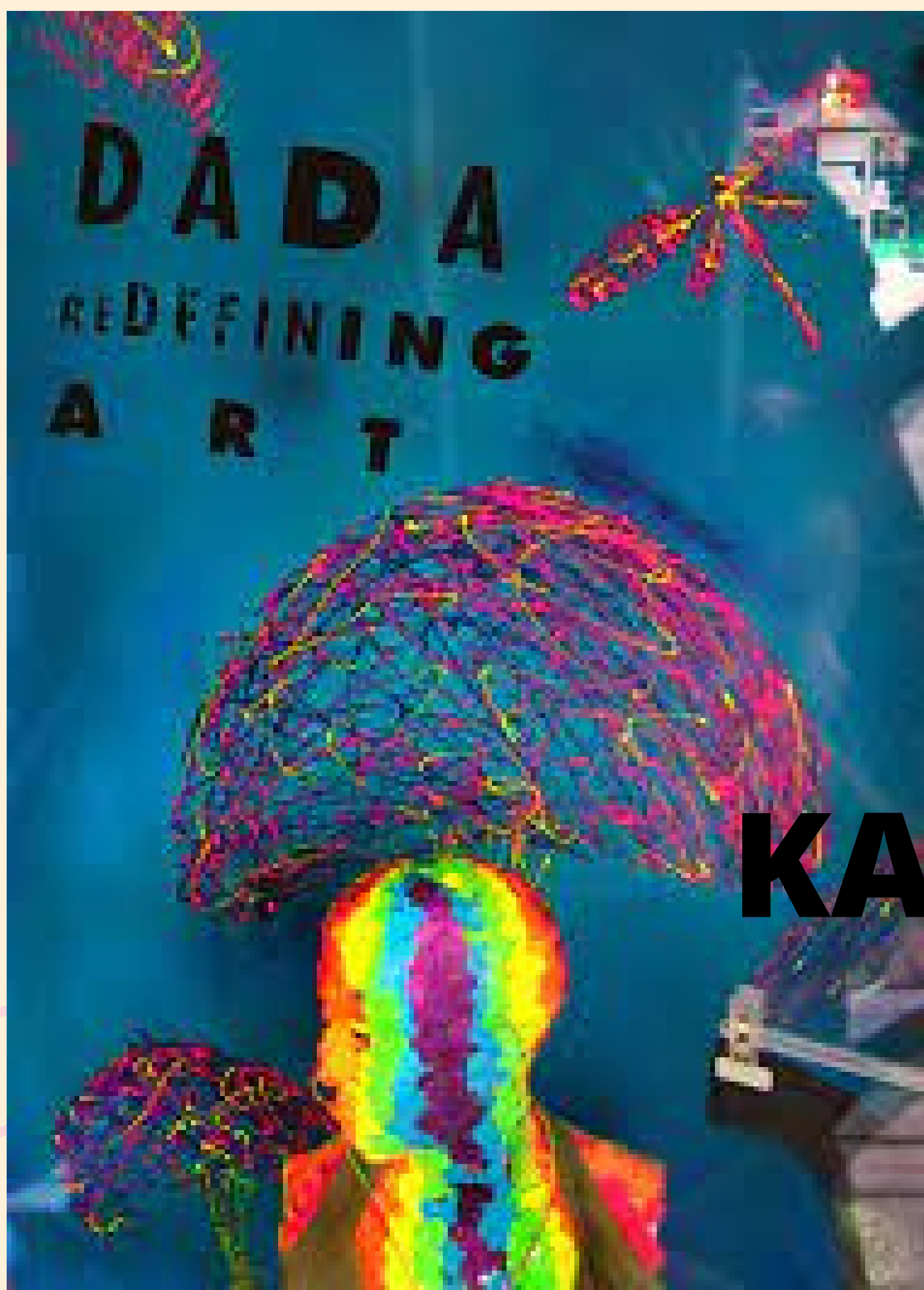
Paul Tiililä's collection has been granted for the Finnish Postal Museum

# IKONEN Riita

Ikonen's other productions include wearable sculptures of natural materials, performances, workshops and a creative series of photographs, *Eyes as Big as Plates*, dealing with people's belonging to nature and aging. The series was produced in collaboration with the Norwegian photographer Karoline Hjorth. The series has photographed seniors in eight different countries, the latest addition to the list being Greenland in October 2015.[1] History: This covers a bit of methodology and techniques

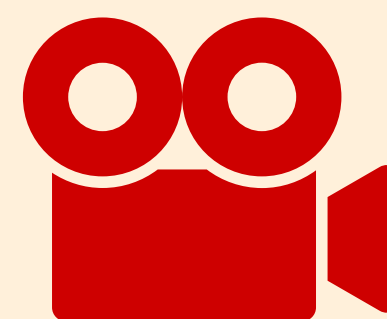
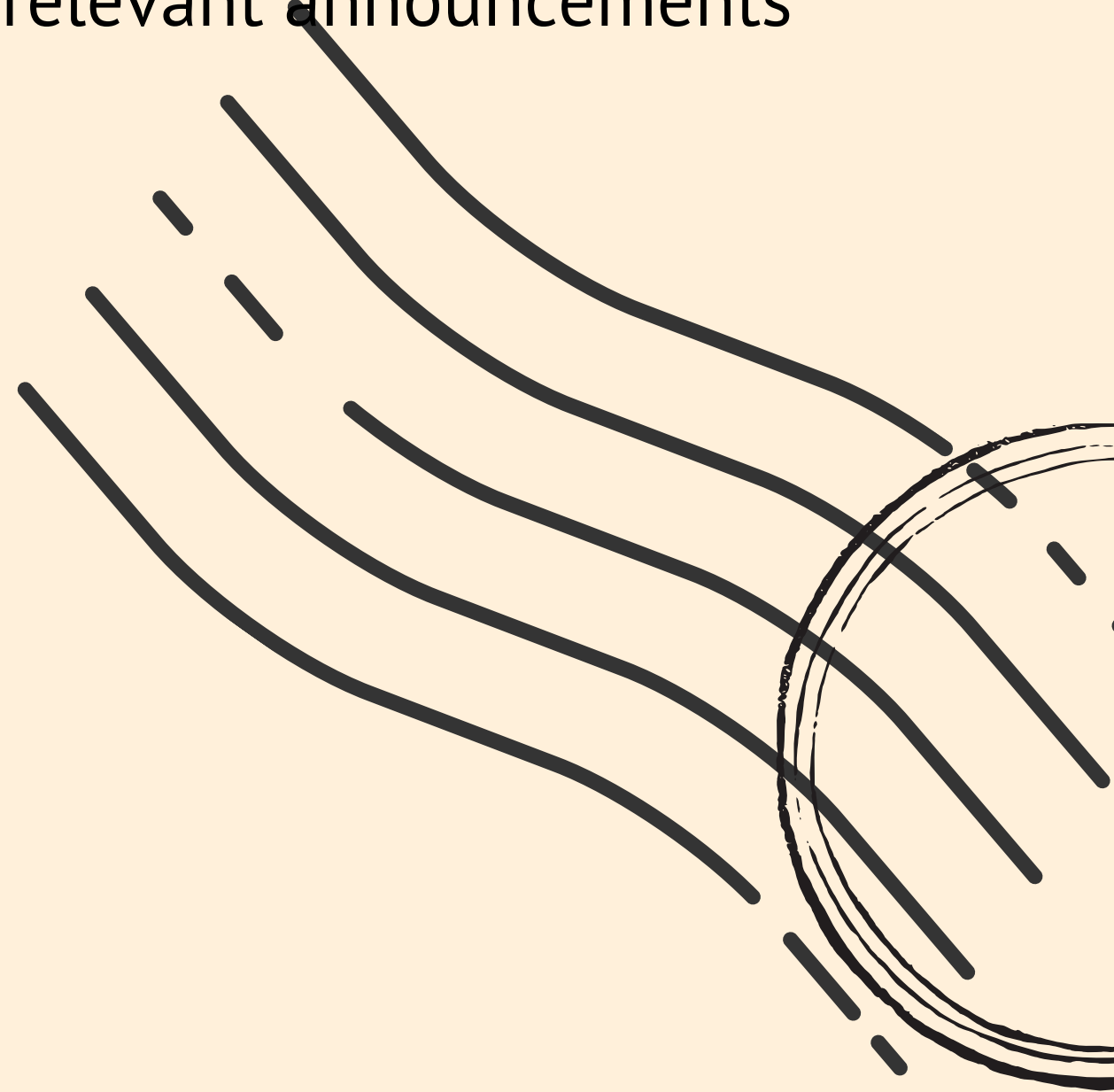
**Riitta Ikonen (born 1981) is a Finnish contemporary artist from Kouvola. She graduated from the Royal College of Art in London in 2008. She has participated in exhibitions worldwide including the Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma in Helsinki, the national galleries of Norway and Greenland, cultural institutes in Paris, Stockholm and Oslo, and in New York and Seoul. Ikonen was an Ars Fennica candidate in 2013.**

The creator since the 1990s, with his participation in IUOMA (International Union of Mail-Artists) was active in creating anti-art works, works that would not hang on the walls of a trading house, but would post for free (or as an informal exchanges) to friends, known and unknown around the world, mainly through the relevant announcements of respective homodox bodies or creators.



# KARKATSELIS Vassilis Greece

Over time, the parallel participation in various international groups of the FLUXUS movement expanded the international presence, targeting (instead), shifting interest from the final product to the production distribution process and the theoretical expansion of similar actions. In the beginning, the dominant form of creation and expression of "art made to be posted" was the creation of unique works with the technique of painting, engraving or collage.



Mail Art in Greece  
Vassilis Karkatselis





# KARKATSELIS Vasilis

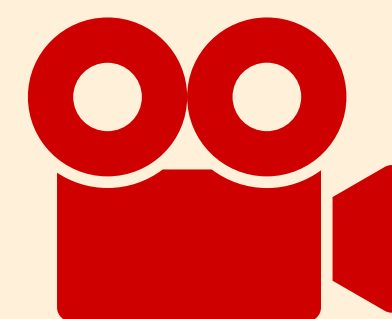
Towards the middle of the first decade of the new century, however, as fine art prints began to be accepted, as a new technical entry into the world of engraving primarily, it slowly found its way into this world and photography, analog or digital, with or without processing on the Computer, "solid" or with "physical transformation

"All my artistic work is centered on" visual verb writing "and on sound / performative actions. I did not want to invent a new code, but to attempt a process of de-semanticizing the verbal code and its different resemanticization. A subliminal writing, in the sense that I wanted it to act within us without the distraction of the current meaning of the words and without being dazed by the sound of the words themselves: a silent writing."

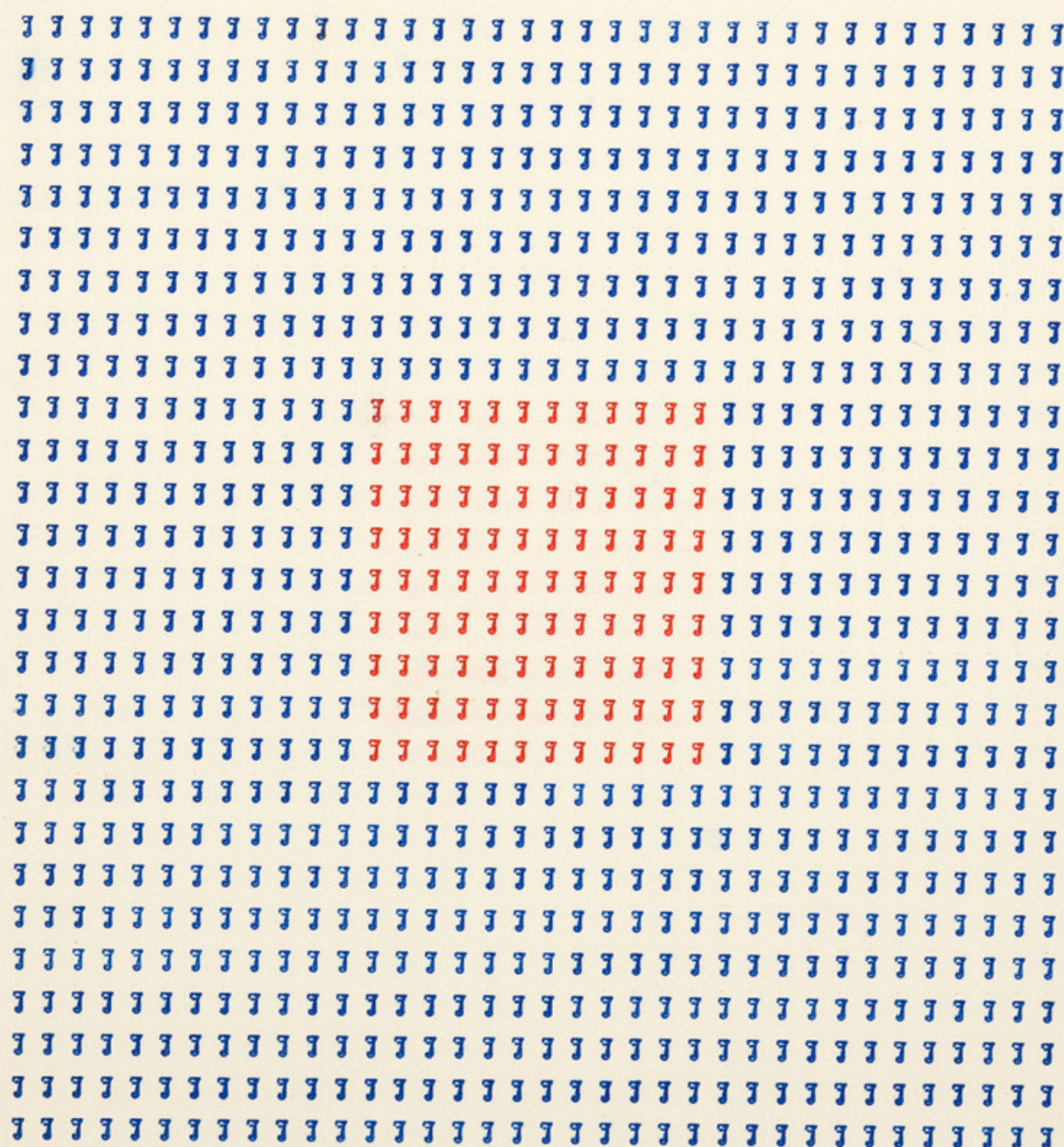


# BINGA Tomaso Italy

Gianapolo Caciottolo writes of her: "The investigation of Tomaso Binga (stage name of Bianca Pucciarelli Menna), an artist from Salerno who lives and works in Rome, is a perennial oscillation between different artistic forms, lucidly mixed. The label of Scripture Verbo-Visual forces the originality of Binga's work, which takes concrete form in continuous encroachments and passionate osmosis between poetry, painting and performance, on the always slippery ridge of contemporary art. Unhinging false stereotypes through the discovery and restyling of an already known , of words undressed and clothed, used as darts often dipped in irreverent irony, turns out to be the artist's favorite destination "



Mail Art in Italy  
Sofia Danskain



# BINGA Tomaso

**Tomaso Binga is the stage name of Bianca Pucciarelli Menna (Salerno, 1931). The artist began to use her male pseudonym as a provocative act to emphasize the countless privileges that characterized the male world, at a time when women were widely discriminated against and gave birth to feminist movements**

In fact, in an interview, she declares: "My male name plays on irony and displacement: it wants to expose the male privilege that also prevails in the field of art. It is a challenge, due to a paradox, of a superstructure that we have inherited and that as women we want to destroy. In art, sex, age, nationality should not be discriminating. The artist is not a man or a woman but a PERSON. My alter ego, Tomaso, is a direct reference to Filippo Tommaso Marinetti (with only one "m" for falling of a rib) and to a very lively season of Italian art and lively".

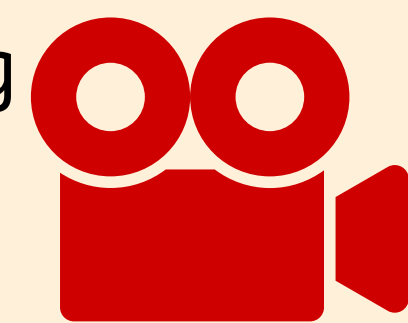
Ričardas Šileika. He is interested not only in the images captured on the postcards (as true amateurs in this field do), but also in the texts written on them. His unusual collection consists mainly of letters and postcards sent to him at various times by friends and acquaintances, which includes expressed emotions, impressions and concise information.



# ŠILEIKA Ričardas Lithuania

The most valuable works of mail art for the artist are those in which he is criticized. "I like what is a little shocking," explains Ričardas Šileika.

For example, a letter from Lithuanian teachers attacking one of the editors for publishing Richard's poem which declares discord in the family in family. He is still trying to write as many letters and postcards as possible by hand. He doesn't buy postcards; he prefers to make them by himself. "It would be fun if there were as many such warm creations in our lives as possible," says Ričardas Šileika. He created an exhibition created exhibition named "From the mailbox". It contains postcards, letters, notes, clippings and more.



Mail Art in Lithuania  
Mindaugas Zuromskas



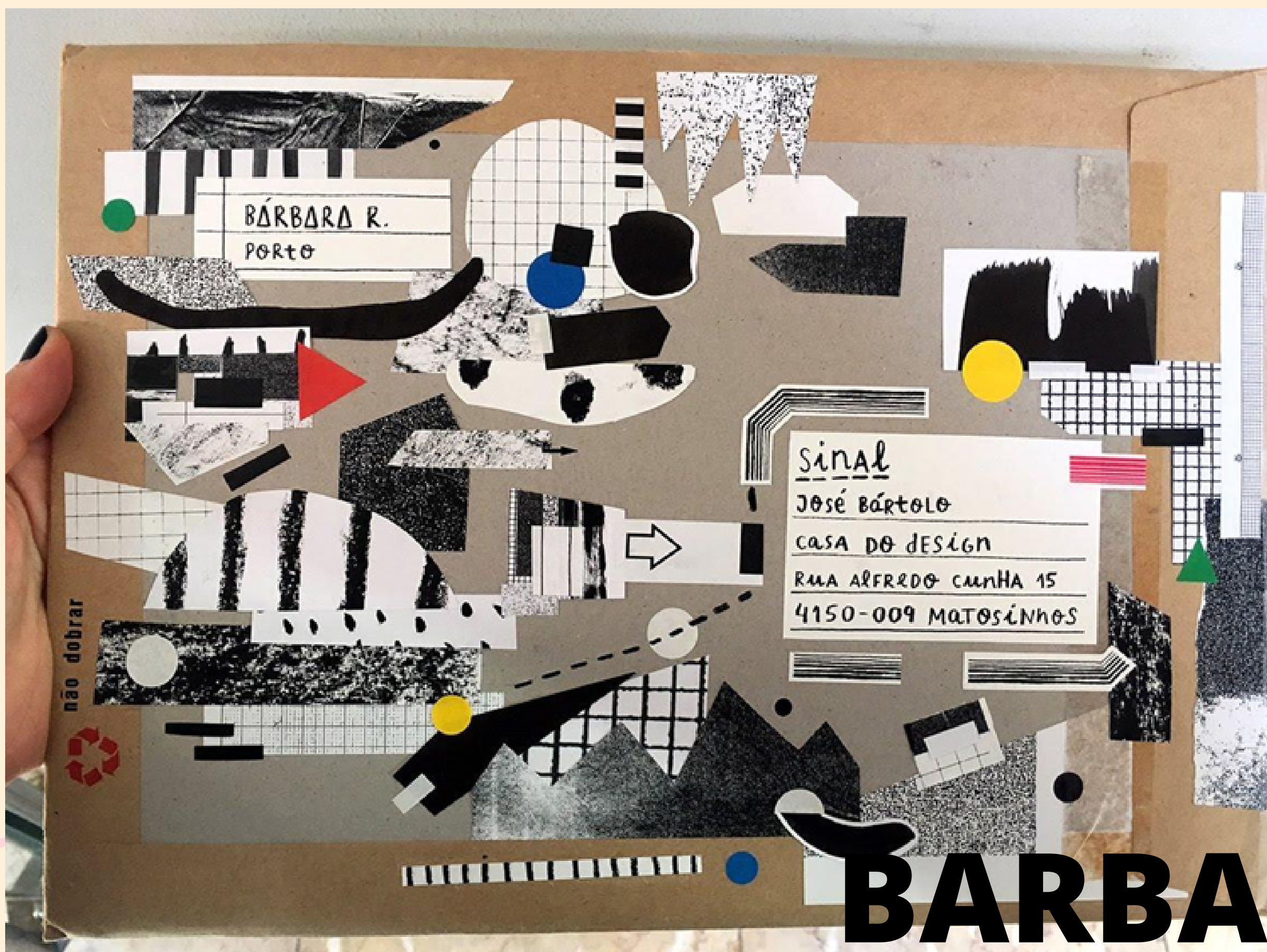
# ŠILEIKA Ričardas



Lives in Vilnius. Member of International Union of Mail Artists.

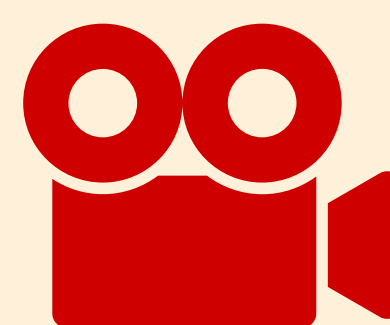
Bárbara R. is a Portuguese graphic designer and illustrator.

she graduated in Graphic Design from ESAD - Matosinhos in 2004 and also studied at ESA - Lorient (Erasmus). Later, he took a professional course in Photography (IPF - Porto) (2006) and graduated from ESAP - Guimarães with a Master in Illustration (2012).



# BARBARA R. Portugal

She worked as a freelancer and designer in some companies in Portugal, France and Canada. She was co-founder of an Illustration Association and has participated in many individual and collective exhibitions, as well as many workshops. She likes crafts and handmade techniques, and has many projects in mind. Currently lives in the city of Porto.

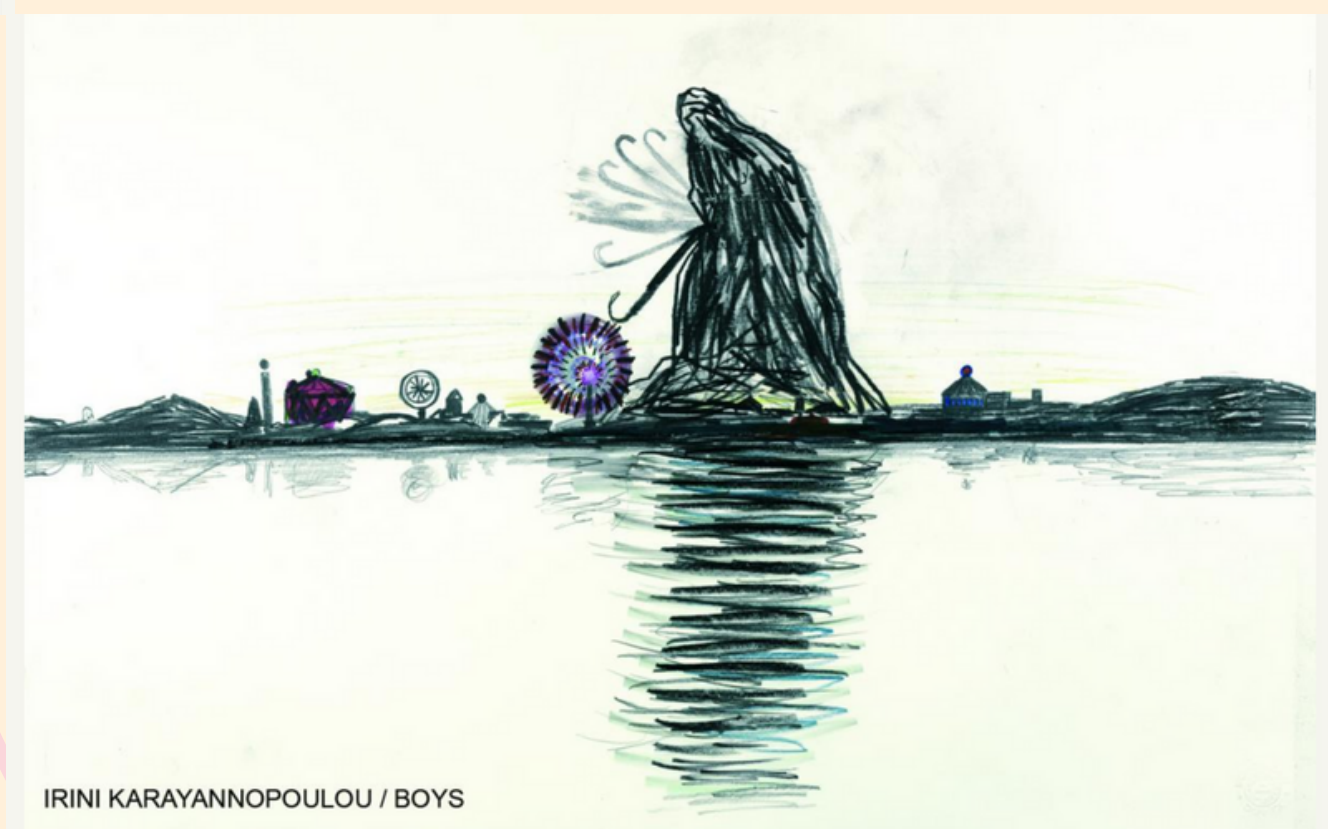


Mail Art in Portugal  
Adonis Galvao

The special face of Cyprus as it was formed over the centuries, often multicultural, due to its geographical location, history, but also the experiences transferred by artists returning from their studies in other countries as a result of the absence of a school of fine arts in place, are always evident in Cypriot Art.

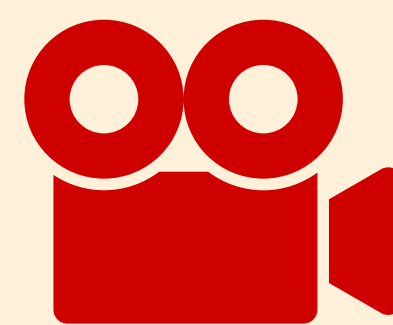


**Artists use simple materials along with paper such as pencil, ink or just folding, cutting and gluing paper. This simplicity emphasizes the refined nature of the paper, the delicacy, transparency, sensitivity, softness and flexibility.**

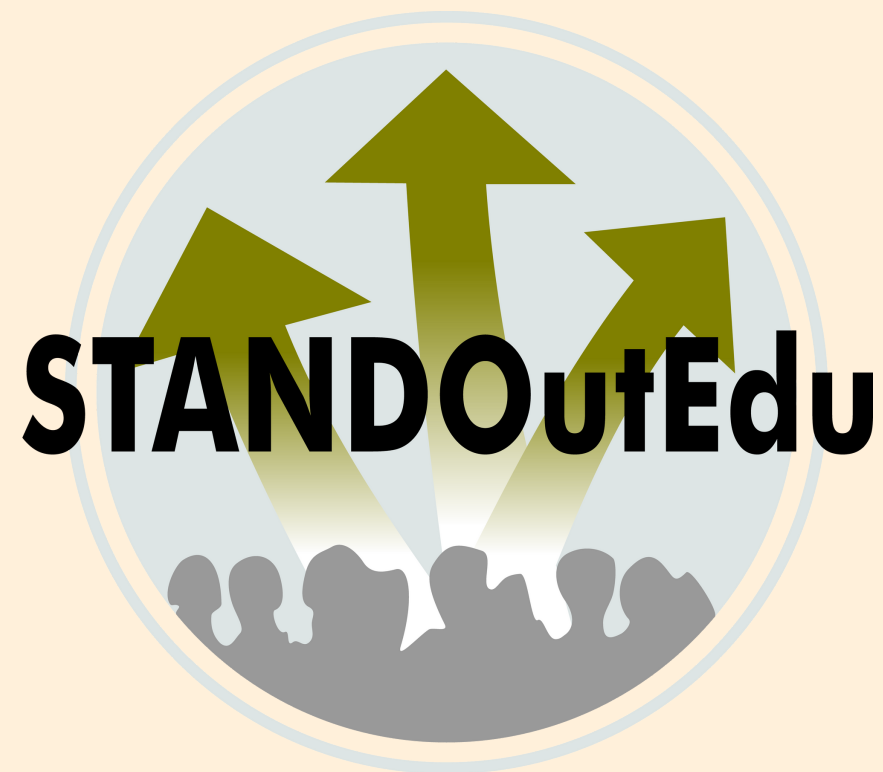


Thus, the local element is inoculated with other characteristics, with Cypriot artists redefining the island's heritage, challenging underlying narratives and emerging socio-cultural situations, bringing a very creative perspective to the European art scene. Some artists working with mail art are creating drawings, 3D collages, installations, cartoons and sculptures that explore the characteristics of paper as a material, as an archive and as a narrator.

# Cyprus



# PROJECT PARTNERS





# BIBLIOGRAPHY





Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

