Clara Bökelheide, Deborah Buerke, Ka Sin Cheung, Liane Schlumberger

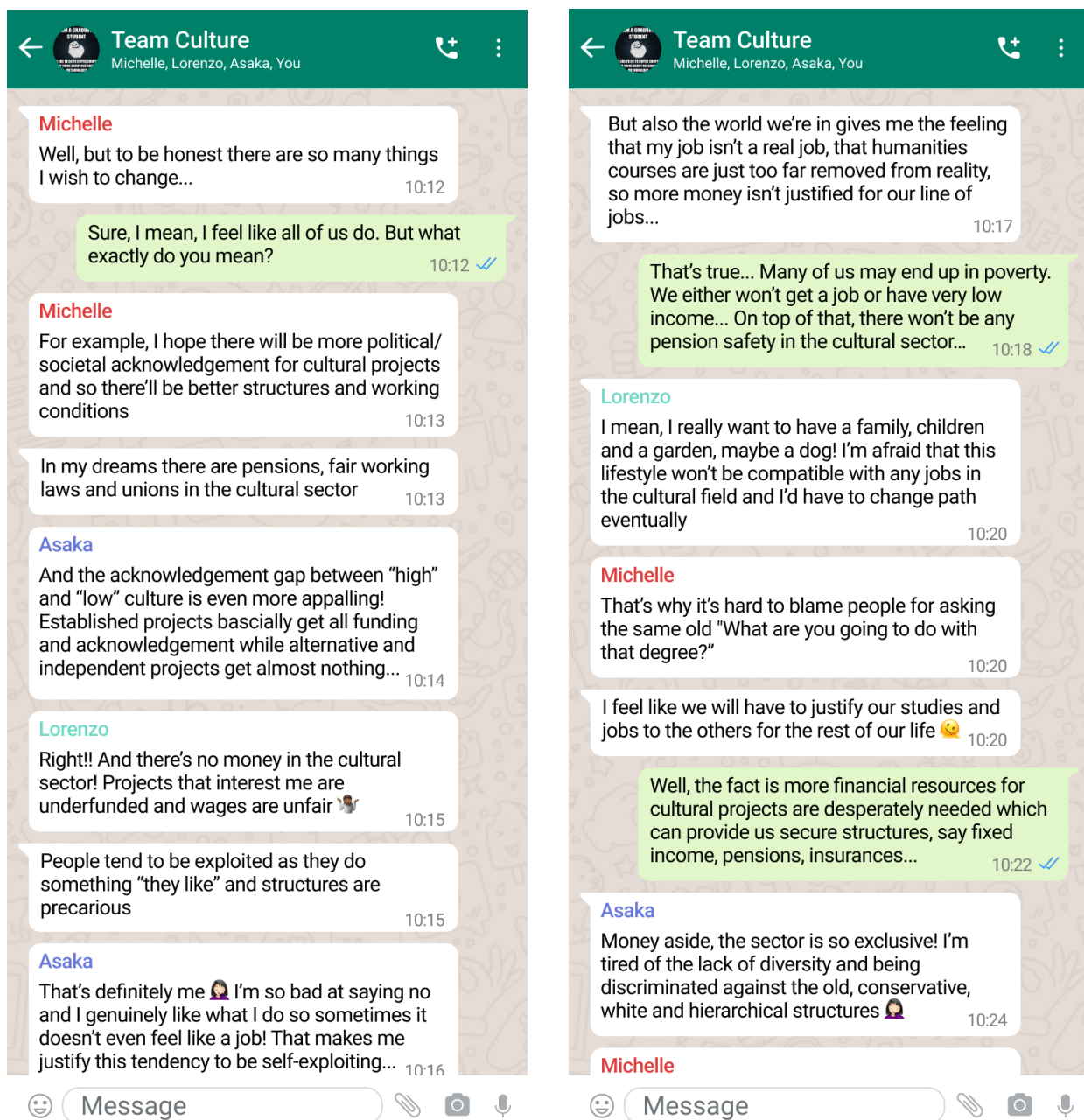**NEW COMMUNITIES FOR CULTURE AND A NEW CULTURE OF COMMUNITY**

How can CSX be applied to different industries in the cultural field? The following three subchapters discuss general problems of the cultural sector (the past), current practice examples of CSX (the present) and visions about new possibilities in this sector (the future), envisioning the progress of the sector through the implementation of CSX as an alternative economic model.

The first part is based on the results of an online survey conducted to grasp an idea of issues faced in the field, while the second and third part draw from desk research and interviews about existing projects and their struggles. Our interview partners were Layne Garrett from Rhizome DC, a local non profit art organization from Washington DC; Ronja Pohl and Sarah Wittenberg from Myzelium Hub, which provides support for people on their way to their own CSX-businesses; and lastly Marie Bickmann from an independent publishing house in Germany.
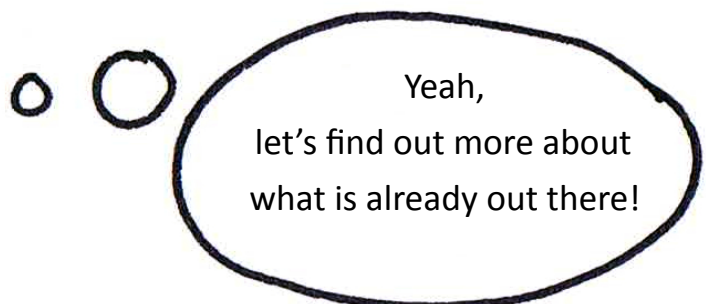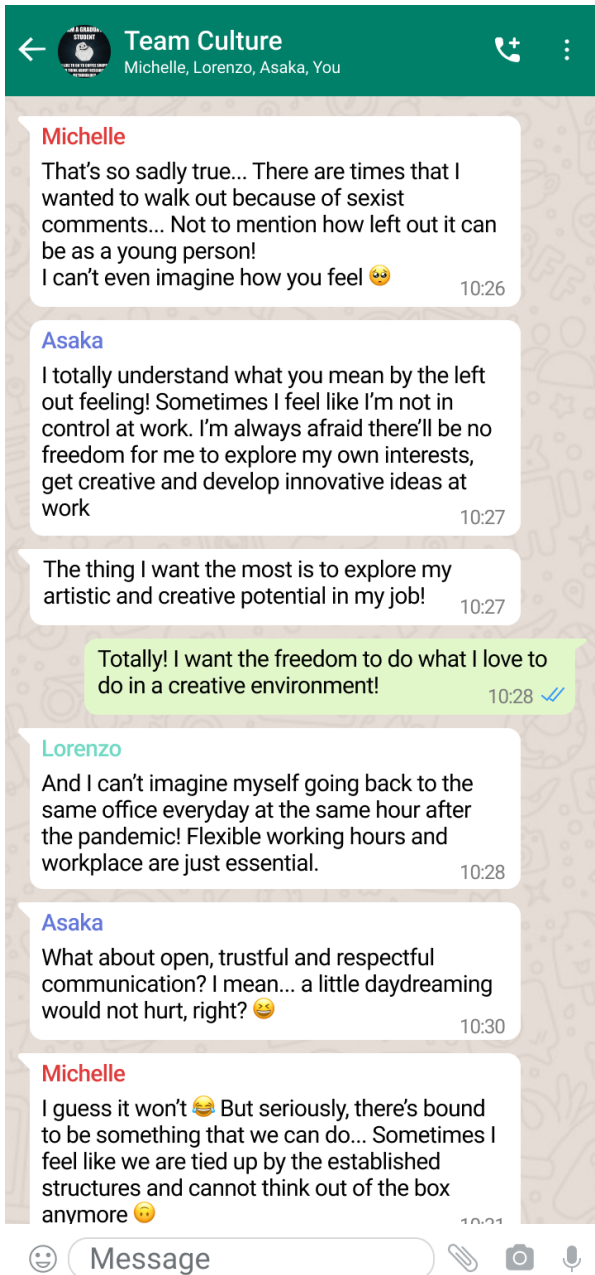
Finally, the last part is shaped by future thinking and our endeavor to move from thoughts to deeds — to not only explore but also take part in the future of the field.

Our research reveals that the cultural field faces various problems such as underfunding, a lack of acknowledgement in politics and society and old hierarchical structures. At the same time it is a vibrant, inspiring and versatile field that necessarily includes connections and encounters between people - making it the perfect breeding ground for CSX approaches that are based upon these values. However, as CSX originates in the agricultural sector, innovative thinking is needed for its adoption in the cultural field. In conclusion, it can be put forward that CSX might not be able to answer all problems in the cultural field, but holds big potential to further shape it to the benefit of all stakeholders.

This chapter explores this by using creative writing styles. While all the characters are fictional, the characterizations and the outline of the story draw from our scientific research. Our main protagonist is Quinn who studies Cultural Studies, is a volunteer in several cultural initiatives and works at a podcast studio. Planning to be done with the Master's program in about a year, questions about possibilities of a future employment in the cultural sector are becoming more present for Quinn and their fellow students.

The Past: Discussing Experiences in the Cultural Field[1]

Team Culture
Michelle, Lorenzo, Asaka, You

Michelle
Well, but to be honest there are so many things I wish to change...
10:12

Sure, I mean, I feel like all of us do. But what exactly do you mean?
10:12

Michelle
For example, I hope there will be more political/societal acknowledgement for cultural projects and so there'll be better structures and working conditions
10:13

In my dreams there are pensions, fair working laws and unions in the cultural sector
10:13

Asaka
And the acknowledgement gap between "high" and "low" culture is even more appalling! Established projects bascially get all funding and acknowledgement while alternative and independent projects get almost nothing...
10:14

Lorenzo
Right!! And there's no money in the cultural sector! Projects that interest me are underfunded and wages are unfair 💁
10:15

People tend to be exploited as they do something "they like" and structures are precarious
10:15

Asaka
That's definitely me 🙋 I'm so bad at saying no and I genuinely like what I do so sometimes it doesn't even feel like a job! That makes me justify this tendency to be self-exploiting...
10:16

But also the world we're in gives me the feeling that my job isn't a real job, that humanities courses are just too far removed from reality, so more money isn't justified for our line of jobs...
10:17

That's true... Many of us may end up in poverty. We either won't get a job or have very low income... On top of that, there won't be any pension safety in the cultural sector...
10:18

Lorenzo
I mean, I really want to have a family, children and a garden, maybe a dog! I'm afraid that this lifestyle won't be compatible with any jobs in the cultural field and I'd have to change path eventually
10:20

Michelle
That's why it's hard to blame people for asking the same old "What are you going to do with that degree?"
10:20

I feel like we will have to justify our studies and jobs to the others for the rest of our life 🙂 10:20

Well, the fact is more financial resources for cultural projects are desperately needed which can provide us secure structures, say fixed income, pensions, insurances...
10:22

Asaka
Money aside, the sector is so exclusive! I'm tired of the lack of diversity and being discriminated against the old, conservative, white and hierarchical structures 🙋
10:24

Michelle

[1] The messages in the chat shown here are based on an online survey we conducted. They are condensed versions of the original answers, therefore their content is not fictitious, only their wording has been adapted, shortened and thematically summarized by us. More information about the survey can be found in the list of references.

Michelle
That's so sadly true... There are times that I wanted to walk out because of sexist comments... Not to mention how left out it can be as a young person!
I can't even imagine how you feel 🥺
10:26

Asaka
I totally understand what you mean by the left out feeling! Sometimes I feel like I'm not in control at work. I'm always afraid there'll be no freedom for me to explore my own interests, get creative and develop innovative ideas at work
10:27

The thing I want the most is to explore my artistic and creative potential in my job!
10:27

Totally! I want the freedom to do what I love to do in a creative environment!
10:28 ✓✓

Lorenzo
And I can't imagine myself going back to the same office everyday at the same hour after the pandemic! Flexible working hours and workplace are just essential.
10:28

Asaka
What about open, trustful and respectful communication? I mean... a little daydreaming would not hurt, right? 😆
10:30

Michelle
I guess it won't 😂 But seriously, there's bound to be something that we can do... Sometimes I feel like we are tied up by the established structures and cannot think out of the box anymore 😳
10:31

Lorenzo
With a system so established, I cannot think of how it is possible to shape the industry the way we envision, unless we have a completely new way to do culture
10:32

Asaka
I totally feel you all... Hopefully people out there are trying to got this figured out....
10:32

Wait, actually I might know something that might help!
10:32 ✓✓

Remember the podcast studio that I'm working at? We are interviewing people working in the cultural sector to talk about an alternative business model called CSX
10:33 ✓✓

Lorenzo
Interesting, I've never heard of CSX before! What does that mean?
10:34

It means community supported economy. I'm also not so familiar with it, but I'm excited to find out more about it!
10:35 ✓✓

Oh and the guests come from different industries - arts, publishing, and cultural education & events. So I think it can definitely be interesting for all of us!
10:35 ✓✓

Asaka
I've marked it down on my schedule! Can't wait!
10:36

Yeah,
let's find out more about
what is already out there!

The Present: In the Podcast Studio

Quinn	**Aya**	**Mia**	**Phil**
A Cultural Studies student, host of the Culture Today, a culture-themed podcast	Program Director, Rolla Art Collective, a community art centre in Missouri, USA	Project Manager, Future Vision Hub, a consulting & education hub for CSX	Head of Relations, Independent Publishing, a local independent publishing house

Quinn: Hello and welcome to today's episode of "Culture Today". Last week we talked about different possible future models for the cultural market and you guys voted to find out more about CSX. So… I am very excited to introduce you to Aya from Rolla Art Collective, Mia from Future Vision Hub, and Phil from Independent Publishing who will talk about their experience with CSX in their projects. Thank you for being here. Let's dive right into it! What do you think makes your CSX project special in your field of work?

Aya: To us, the most exciting part is that we provide a space for local artists to shine and a way to sustain themselves. *We found that while everyone loves art, our society does not love artists[2],* so here is our way to help. We are glad to see how the community got to know all these brilliant small local artists and supports the community art scene financially, even though we lost money running this project.

Mia: Interesting! That's quite different from our approach. We created our project to help people by giving them an alternative to purely market-based, conservative ways of having their own companies and projects. For us it's more about the connection between people and trust due to shared experience and risks. That's why we changed the usual CSX model a bit. For example we have our bidding rounds to fund our workshops almost at the end when everybody already knows what they gained from the project and a foundation of trust and good communication is established.

Phil: Actually we are experiencing a lot of trouble adapting the CSX model to our field and company. Some parts just don't seem to fit well… like when it comes to

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2 Garret, Layne (2022, 17 Aug). Written interview.

books, people consume based on their interests - it's not like they need them as they need food.

Quinn: What about you, Aya and Mia? Are you experiencing any difficulties while adapting CSX to your needs?

Mia: Actually yes. It's difficult to find enough participants with a critical mindset and also to keep a totally equal relationship with them. Cultural and educational projects need a lot of organizing. So it's quite challenging to break these structures between participants as consumers and organizers as a higher form of hierarchy.

Aya: That is also a problem that we face. While our subscribers and artists definitely don't have a consumer-producer relationship in a traditional sense, it is not easy to foster a direct relationship between them. We have organized pick up events for them to get together, *but we were disappointed with the attendance rate[3]*. And some artists fear that such relationships would mean that they would need to give up certain creative freedom if the subscribers have the say on what they deliver.

Quinn: But nevertheless, do you think that CSX can be used more broadly in the cultural and educational field in the future?

Phil: I am not sure yet because the mix between participation and shared risks doesn't work for us yet. Plus financing multiple books together is difficult. As for now *I think I wouldn't be interested in publishing anymore if there was a community deciding what I would have to publish. Because we want to be independent.[4]*

Aya: On the contrary, I think it is working really well for us - as far as I know, more than 60 local art organizations in the US have incorporated the CSX model. It helps revive local art scenes in a major way and I cannot see why it would not work in other industries.

Mia: I absolutely agree. *Encounters and connection are the key aspects of culture. That's why there is no better sector for CSX than culture! CSX is more than just a model for financing. It's about the encounter between people and spaces.[5]* So.. that makes it perfect for future use.

Quinn: Thank you for all of your input... That was inspiring! We are curious to see what can be done with CSX in the future.

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[3] Garret, Layne (2022, 17 Aug). Written interview.
[4] Bickmann, Marie (2022, 4 Jul). Zoom interview. Translated by us into German.
[5] Wittenberg, Sarah (2022, 21 Jul). Zoom interview. Translated by us from German.

And the future?

After a busy week, Quinn is relaxing in the garden, reflecting:

Yes, that's the question: What could the future look like? Because that's not the end of the story! I can tell there is so much potential for CSX in the cultural sector, getting away from the idea of consuming culture. In this way, cultural practices can become a way to connect with people and with arts in a different way.

Actually, some of it isn't that new - like the idea that culture, arts and education should be supported by the community, as it is so valuable for the whole of society. Certain practices in the cultural sector already align with some CSX principles - like a subscription for a journal with a regular payment of contribution. So, only minor shifts are required to accentuate the idea of community building and participation even more! What else could be possible?... Hmm, let's say... - *A music school could be organized as CSX!*[6]

And funding and creating co-working spaces for several people like the Franz!werk in Tübingen could become more common. On the other hand, CSX might also be a great possibility for smaller cultural projects that don't receive state funding. That could be two or even one person wanting to realize a dream... I guess one just has to experiment with it! Hmmm…………may-be……….hmmm…………………..

Yes!
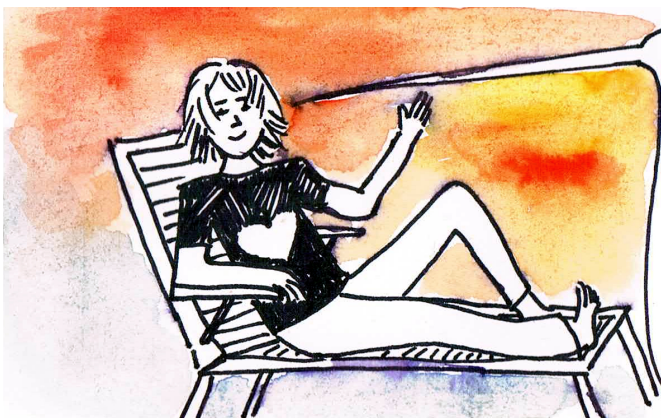
I will just do so myself!
As I am planning to start my master thesis about the cultural theory of „Becoming together", I will integrate a participatory project. I will invite people to join me to explore this theory together - and embody it!

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[6] Ronja Pohl (2022, 21 Jul). Zoom interview. Translated by us from German.

Instead of writing my master thesis in the ivory tower, I will create a space to think, experience, and exchange with each other. It is an offer for people who are interested in gaining new insights in cultural theory and especially into this philosophy of community - without needing to be an expert in that field. So it can become a meeting point between university and society!
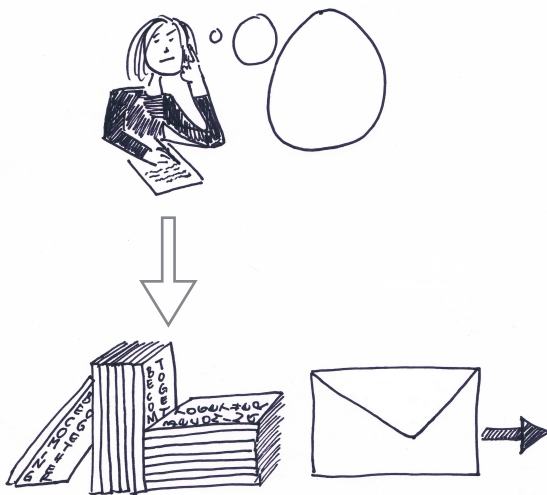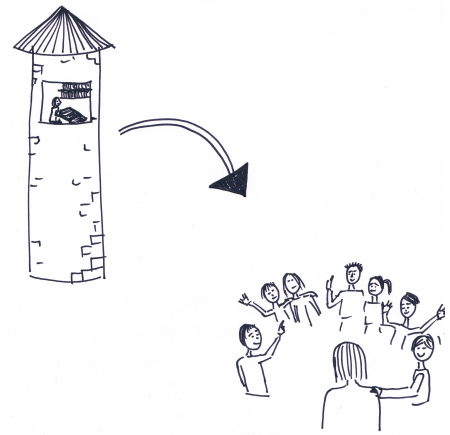
I will write texts about my topic, print them and share them with the members of the community… about 4 times for one year. But I won't be the only author of the texts! The members can comment on the texts - and this will become a part of the

The members will pay a contribution so that the costs for printing and editing will be covered…

"Becoming Together"
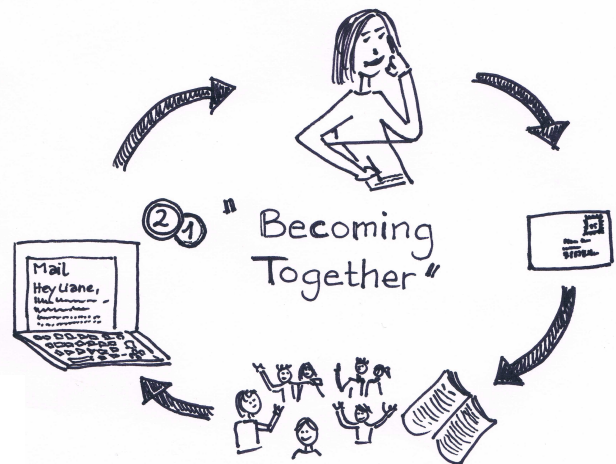
Quite a simple idea, isn't it?
I **have a vision** of it now, but I guess, I will need to **refine my offer**. For example I still ask myself if there's a way how I can strengthen the connection between the members? And I need an exact **calculation** to be able to think about how to organize the payments!
And then, it's time for me to get out and talk with people about my idea in order to **get some feedback**!

Now, what about you, dear reader? What do you want to share with others? As Howard Thurman wrote: „Ask yourself what makes you come alive and then go do that. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive."[7]
One way to do that can be through applying CSX to the cultural field!

On the journey of experimenting, exploring and promoting CSX in the cultural sector, there will certainly always be new challenges and rewards for and with this striving to practice a (new) culture of community!

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[7] As quoted in Gil Bailie: Violence Unveiled (1996), New York, p. xv.

References

Online Survey

- Time frame: June 27, 2022 - July 18, 2022
- Target group: persons with (work) experience or an endeavor to work in the cultural industry; communicated via cultural studies programs' messenger groups (with students from Leuphana Universität Lüneburg) and personal networks
- Results: 35 responses, 11 of these held valuable information

Interviews

- Oral interview with Marie Bickmann, member of a German independent publishing house. Zoom interview. 4July, 2022. Translated from German by us.
- Oral interview with Ronja Pohl and Sarah Wittenberg, members of Myzelium Hub. Zoom interview. 21st July, 2022. Translated from German by us.
- Written interview with Layne Garret, program director of Rhizome DC. Written interview via email. 17 August, 2022.

Further references, links and websites of CS projects

- Gemeinschaftsgetragenes Wirtschaften:
  https://gemeinschaftsgetragen.de/en/
- Ein gemeinschaftsgetragenes Unternehmen gründen. A German blogpost by Mona Knorr: https://gemeinschaftsgetragen.de/ein-gemeinschaftsgetragenes-unternehmen-grunden/
- Mona Knorr Landwirtschaft und Community: https://monaknorr.de/
- Myzelium: https://www.myzelium.com/
- Springboard for the Arts - CSA: Community Supported Art: https://springboardforthearts.org/jobs-opportunities/csa-community-supported-art
- Rhizome DC - Community Supported Art: https://www.rhizomedc.org/csa
- Justseeds - 2022 Community Supported Art: https://justseeds.org/project/csa
- Cambridge Arts - Community Supported Art: https://www.cambridgema.gov/arts/Programs/creativemarketplace/communitysupportedart
- Franz!werk Tübingen: https://franzwerk-tuebingen.de/.