Minutes - EuroArt Café
General meeting 2026, Ahrenshoop

Table 1 – CONNECT
Meeting, exchange & cooperation
Moderator: Margot Jongedijk

How can we make it easier and more valuable for EuroArt members to connect with each other?

First 15 minutes:

1. Knowing about projects before they happen. Agenda, internal website, Newsletter and to make it easier to connect: description of members on website, make 5 questions for members and put the answers on the website, about yourself, what you do, projects.
2. Local working groups, and when it works go to international groups. Like the municipalities, tourist offices, the museums in one region or country
3. Archive of projects, to be inspired

The second 15 minutes:

4. To organise a symposium (live) and colloquium (online) (members are doing this)
5. Newsletter 4 x in a year
6. Presenting the results of the regional meetings before the general meeting.
7. Thematic meetings, like Tourism, Museums
8. Members sharing their information better and communicate over the borders.
9. Also for countries with less members organise a regional meeting, for example: Nida/Kaunas with Polish members or with Önningeby.
10. Make a podcast series: news from the artists' colonies. Ask members who want to do this in a working group.

The yellow points are connected: if members share more, the website could share more…
The green points are connected: these meeting only flourish when there is a program or a shared goal. I think it is all right to organise first national thematic meetings, and when there is a shared subject or aim, then organise a international meeting.
There was also noticed that the responsibility for connecting is for each member to do. But for the new members, it could help if they know what other members are doing, see point 1.

Table 2 – SHARE KNOWLEDGE

Expertise, research & good practice

Moderator: Annette Winter-Süß

The group identified EuroArt as a network that already contains a great deal of expertise. The key question was how members can benefit from research — not only museums and exhibition venues, but also those working in tourism, municipal administration and other fields. The group felt strongly that research should happen inside EuroArt rather than outside it.

Concrete ideas: a digital archive or database covering documents, artists and experts within the network — currently members know too little about each other's areas of expertise. Mapping artist movements was a central theme: who was where, and what connections existed between colonies. The ICEAC was seen as a potential hub for collecting publications, ideally as a digital library that is broadly accessible. It could also serve as a communication platform for lectures and conferences. Questions about what ICEAC is, who it belongs to and how it is funded were raised again and described as still unclear. Despite this, all participants agreed that research is an important strategic priority for EuroArt.

Table 3 - CREATE TOGETHER

Projects, exhibitions & artistic exchange

Moderator: Michael Fuhr

Ideas for the future:

- POOL FOR IDEAS: find partners for joint projects
- COMMON EXHIBITION THAT TRAVELS TO PROMOTE THE IDEA OF EUROART
- ARTISTS' COLONIES AS THE OPPORTUNITY FOR FEMALE ARTISTS IN THE 19TH CENTURY: exhibition, research project, past + present, book
- COMMON DATABASE OF KNOWLEDGE: artists in places, connections between places, network website for several museums, needs funding for a data manager; provide knowledge (for example how to set up a new museum)
- POOL OF EXPERTS: art historians, museum people, experts on finances, transport, fundraising
- CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXCHANGE: offer more possibilities for members to talk to each other, ideas range from regular online meetings to regional dinner events

Table 4 – INCREASE VISIBILITY
Communication, positioning & new audiences

Moderator: Birte Hölscher

Guiding questions for this session: How can we increase visibility? Where do we position ourselves? What new target groups could there be? How can members benefit from EuroArt's communication? What can we communicate together that individual members cannot communicate on their own?

1. How to reach children / schools

- Artists' colonies could be included in school curricula as part of art and cultural education.

2. Reaching Universities & Students

- It is not enough to just invite academics to visit – the topic of EuroArt needs to be placed within an academic discourse so that lecturers and students become genuinely interested.
- Idea (Kai): invite students to a General Meeting, framed as a kind of scholarship ("Stipendium") granted by an artists' colony/EuroArt – gives the visit a different meaning for the students (example: a student from Düsseldorf attending).
- Link with FSJ (Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr) seminars: these already include self-discovery-type seminars for young people – explore whether such seminars could take place at an artists' colony, connecting the theme of "how did they live, how do I want to live".
- Position artists' colonies as "Transformationsorte" (places of transformation) and link institutionally with university transformation-studies chairs (example: Gerhart-Hauptmann-Haus on Hiddensee, cooperating with the Chair for Transformation Studies at the University of Vienna).
- Enable Bachelor's, Master's and PhD theses connected to the colonies, framing them as sites where the next generation can develop new "Lebensformen" / ways of living – an urbanistic angle.
- Noted gap: university art history has largely shifted its research focus to "Gruppenbewegung" (artist group movements) and lost its earlier connection to "Künstlerkolonie" as a research topic – re-establishing this academic link is a real opportunity.

3. Reaching Young Adults

- Target group: young adults, tied into pan-European mobility schemes such as Interrail-style free/discounted month-long European rail passes for young people.

- Idea: position EuroArt colonies as destinations within such “free mobility + free culture” programmes, so the offer becomes part of a coherent overall package for young travellers.

4. Political & Institutional Engagement

- Possible format: a “parliamentary breakfast” model (as used in Düsseldorf/NRW with Heinrich-Heine-Universität) – a university proposes a topic, politicians are invited to the Landtag to hear about current research.
- Informal routes matter: when mayors or state premiers learn about EuroArt through personal encounters (e.g. guestbook entries, casual conversations during breaks), this can lead to unexpected later support.
- Make sure political representatives from the region are present/aware at international meetings where possible.
- Engage “Landschaftsverbände” (regional heritage/cultural associations, e.g. LWL, LVR in NRW) as multipliers – they have funding and strong regional communication channels; the link between regional artists’-colony history and these bodies could be communicated much more strongly.
- Niedersachsen example: the “Parlamentarischer Abend” hosted by the Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Landschaftsverbände could be a venue to present EuroArt.
- Longer-term aspiration: EU-level (Brussels) funding – acknowledged as currently too high a bureaucratic hurdle for individual member institutions to take on alone.
- Exhibit in Berlin some of the official buildings and in Brussels at the EU.
  Berlin:
  - Deutscher Bundestag – "Kunst-Raum" im Marie-Elisabeth-Lüders-Haus
  - Abgeordnetenhaus Berlin (Landesparlament)
  - Europäisches Haus Berlin
  - Representations of the Länder to the Federal Government (Lower Saxony, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern etc.)

5. Touring Exhibition

- Idea: works from one colony travel to a major city for exhibition (e.g. from Ahrenshoop to Berlin or Bremen) – working title suggested: “Artists’ colonies – works in the big city” (title still to be refined).

6. Growing Membership Beyond Germany

- The network is currently very German-heavy; France has only four member associations, and there are currently no members in Scandinavia despite a rich artists'-colony history there (Sweden, Norway, Denmark).
- Idea: each year, every country/region invites one prospective new town or colony to the General Meeting as a guest, with a dedicated welcome round ("next year we invite you") – concrete example floated: a contact in Sweden.
- Reference contact for Sweden: the Swedish Foundation for Residencies linked to Grez-sur-Loing (est. 1994); contact is Alexandra Herrlitz, art historian teaching at the University of Gothenburg.

7. Brand, Storytelling & Face

- Marketing generally needs a face – a person who stands for the brand – combined with a consistent shared message (Vision, Mission, Values) so members don't each describe EuroArt differently.
- Balance this with showing community, network and "family" feeling – not just one face, but a sense of belonging/connection.
- Prefer real photos over paintings when illustrating the network online – more relatable, more "now".
- Personalise storytelling, but combine it with the community/network angle rather than relying on a single spokesperson alone.

8. Social Media & Content Ideas

- Feature one person/colony per month on Instagram, talking about their colony and why they are a EuroArt member.
- "My favourite place" idea: members send a short video of their favourite spot in the colony (a bench, a tree, a view), with or without a person visible (even just a hand/thumb is enough) – compiled and shared on Instagram.
- Caveat raised: realistically, response rates to an open call/e-mail request for such content may be low – worth testing on a small scale first.
- Produce an image film (Imagefilm) with a QR code linking to it.

9. A Shared Annual Moment – "EuroArt Day"

- Idea: one day a year, all colonies across Europe do something together on the same theme, within the same short time window (e.g. five minutes), to generate shared media/PR attention.
- Concrete suggestion: at night, project a painting onto walls simultaneously across colonies in Europe as a shared visual signal.
- Seen as a way to make EuroArt "in the world" more visible, and to make EuroArt more diverse and transcultural.

10. Cross-Arts & Cultural Partnerships

- Combine visual art with music, film or food – cross-genre projects tend to reach new audiences (reference: Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, orchestra collaborations).
- Work with well-known cultural figures with large followings (e.g. regionally known electronic musicians/DJs such as Christian Loeffler, based near Graal-Müritz) to reach new audiences.
- Proof of concept: a nature film festival combined with orchestra and electronic DJ at the Laeiszhalle Hamburg drew around 2,000 visitors with a big screen – described as the organiser's biggest and most inspiring event so far.
- "Sound of the artists' colonies" idea: turning the sounds of the landscape into music (already done for Hiddensee, published on Spotify) – could be extended to other colonies.
- Analogy: pairing art with its real-world subject works well (e.g. flower paintings shown alongside an exhibition of real flowers in a museum).

11. Seasonal Visibility – Beyond Spring/Summer

- There is interest in attracting visitors beyond the spring/summer tourist season – quieter months (e.g. November or January) have their own appeal, connecting to a more contemplative understanding of landscape, and deserve dedicated content/promotion.

12. Resilience & Meaning

- Future outlook: people are likely to feel a growing need for resilience and introspection ("nach innen gehen") – a stay at an artists' colony could be positioned as supporting exactly that need.
- Related idea: frame the colony experience around "Selbstfindung" (self-discovery) and "Verortung in der Welt" (finding one's place in the world) – also ties back to the FSJ-seminar idea under Universities & Students.

13. Internal Members' Platform

- Idea: an internal (non-public) website/space where members can post what they are currently working on – projects in progress, not yet ready for the public website.
- Open question raised: would enough members actually contribute content to sustain this? Not resolved in the session.

Table 5 - DEVELOP THE FUTURE

Connecting heritage with contemporary artists, Artist exchange, younger generations and new forms of cultural practice.
Moderator: Eric Schaftlein

- What is already happening:
  - artist residencies
  - art festivals
  - artist associations
  - workshops

- What would we like to see:
  - promotion towards art students
  - creating connections among the different local initiatives
  - open up to different disciplines, not only painters
  - develop a European discourse
  - involving more young artists

- EuroArt could:
  - help financially
  - creating informal meetings not directly related to art such as a Dinner Club
  - help creating the connections by creating collective art projects/residencies open to different artists from different regions/countries/disciplines
  - include and stimulate more contemporary artists
    it would be a good thing if more contemporary artists became members, maybe EuroArt can create a new member category for this

Table 6 - CREATE CULTURAL IMPACT

Communities, cultural dialogue & European understanding
How can artists‘ colonies create greater cultural impact - locally and across Europe?
(Leader of the table: Florian Hartmann)

1. WE SEE - What is already happening?

   - only a very small proportion of the population is interested in art
   - workshops with artists (90 participants), low cost
   - exhibitions (with financial support from EuroArt)
   - exhibitions in collaboration with other artists‘ colonies

- annual calendar featuring paintings (affordable price)
- cultural education in schools
- school trips to museums / museum visits at school
- artists‘ paths
- exchanges with contemporary artists from other countries

2. WE WANT - What would we like to see?

- spark people’s interest in art
- get the majority of residents excited about museums and culture
- present art in a modern way (interactive, …)
- get more young people interested in Art
- build networks for the exchange of ideas and collaboration
- bring together international contemporary artists at historical sites to work there
- exhibitions by people with mental health conditions
- joint exhibitions with other artists’ colonies
- coach trips to other artists‘ colonies
- help local residents learn more about the history of the (local) artists’ colonies

3 key points:

1. give people a better understanding of the history of artists’ colonies / to bring history closer to people
2. a major travelling exhibition across Europe
3. inspire more young people to take an interest in artists’ colonies

3. EUROART COULD … - What could EuroArt actually do?

- money
- network
- organisation of a major exhibition