The Future of Higher Arts Education Shaping a Trajectory

Scenarios, Guidance,
and Policy Recommendations

FACTS

Publication Credit

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“For any decision you make, you’re using an image of the future based on what you expect is going to happen. And if your images of the future are fuzzy and incoherent, then your decisions will be fuzzy and incoherent.”

(Reed D. Reiner)

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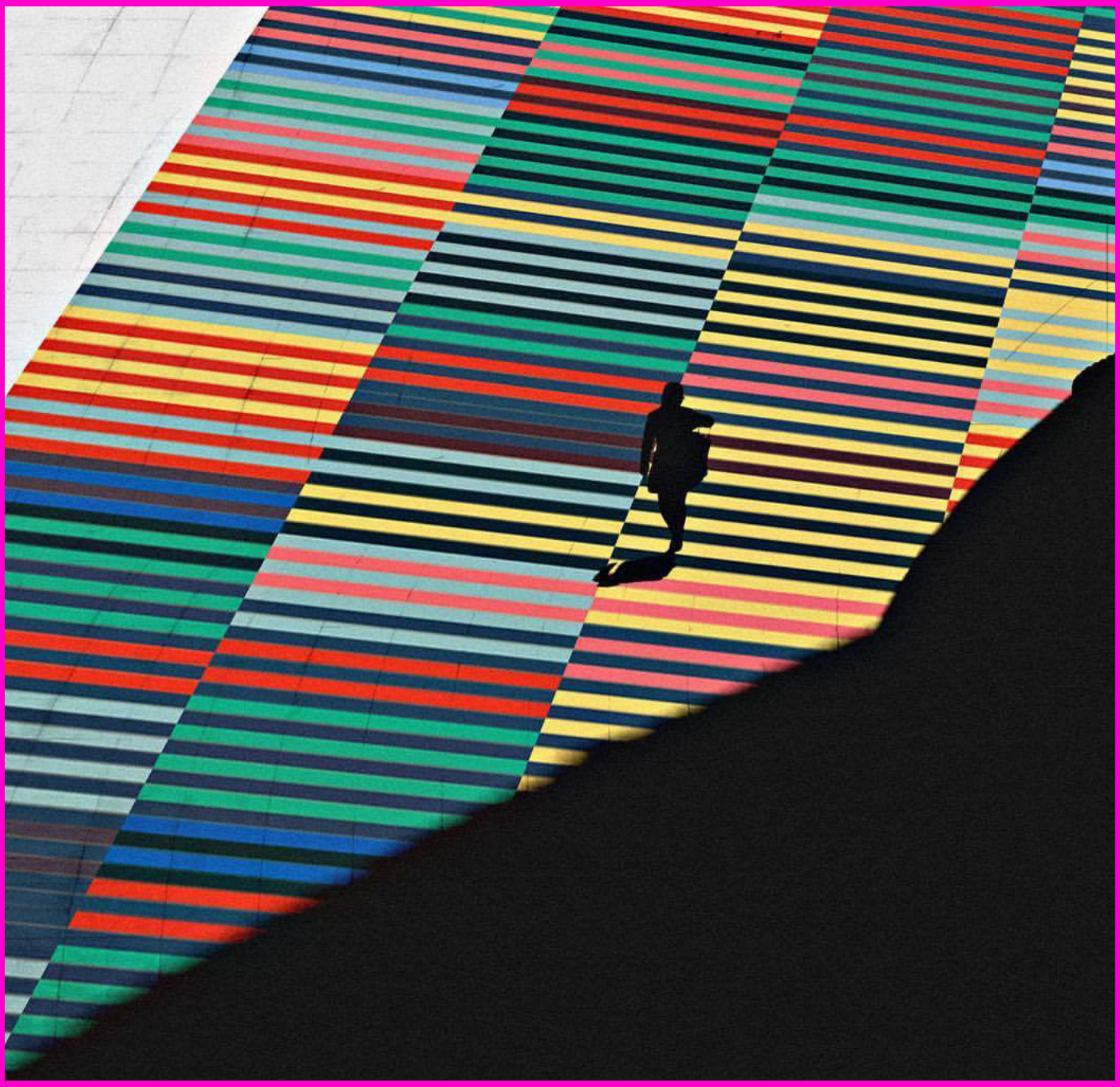

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Higher Arts Education 2045 **Futures (Un)known**

INTRODUCTION

Students born in 2023 and destined to graduate from higher arts education institutions in 2045 will encounter a higher arts education landscape vastly different from today's settings. While the precise contours of future higher arts education institutions are unknown in 2023, one aspect is clear: a unique chance exists to shape its trajectory. Rather than advocate for today's strengths and paradigms adhering to current practices and knowledge, higher arts education institutions should leverage their inherent capacities for creativity and imagination to build their trajectory to the future.

The Erasmus+ Knowledge Alliance FAST45 (Future Arts School Trends 2045) embodies this forward-thinking spirit. By adopting a futures studies lens, FAST45 envisages, delineates, and influences a realm wherein the arts—in participation, education, and research—become an integral part and central pivot for higher education and society.

This reveals the question of how it is possible to anticipate this unknown future for higher arts education. Furthermore, what kind of knowledge, structures, or policies should higher arts education institutions establish in 2023 to consider the prospective needs of future societies in 2045? How do present signals, acting as forces or drivers, propel higher arts education institutions, their research, educational programmes, or third mission activities towards shaping its unknown future?

Global megatrends such as digitisation, demographic shifts, the climate crisis, a changing labour market, economic shifts, and civil and equality movements compel higher arts education institutions to reimagine their trajectories. What speculative visions and dreams of possible and preferable futures could inspire higher arts education institutions to rethink or transform their societal role and existing relations with diverse stakeholders?

At the core of these inquiries lies the fundamental mission of FAST45: to envision higher arts education in a future world transformed by the societal, digital, and environmental transition. The core question that FAST45 grapples with is why the sector should address how these transitions reveal new needs for

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INTRODUCTION

educational opportunities, study programmes, and research incentives at the crossroads of higher arts education, artistic research, and innovation in society.

A good stepping stone to encounter all these questions is to develop future scenarios based on broad consultation of stakeholders and experts. These scenarios are the starting point for formulating recommendations for decision-makers and policymakers.

A LONG-TERM PERSPECTIVE

Effective and practical politics is characterised by its ability to formulate compelling visions and devise strategies, embracing a long-term mindset that extends beyond immediate concerns. Likewise, successful policymaking takes advantage of its capacity to make well-informed decisions grounded in valid and reliable data. All this becomes progressively challenging as plans extend further into the future, given the inherent difficulty in empirically verifying forward-looking and scenario-building.

In the realm of futures studies, the validation of forward-thinking relies on techniques and approaches that prioritise epistemological criteria such as coherence and consistency. While empirical data remains a cornerstone of research, especially in proving the validity of future projections, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations of its application in contexts extending over long-term time frames. Nevertheless, some methods help prove the validity of future projections.

One illustrative method is the widely recognised Future Forecasts technique, prominently featured in climate change research. This method involves employing mathematical tools to extrapolate data from the past that appears plausible or probable under specific conditions. Another prevalent method, Trend Analysis, relies on extrapolating empirical data and finds extensive use in futures studies. Notably, this method integrates concrete empirical data and draws insights based on more general data from social research studies. These methods demonstrate that political decision-makers can primarily lean on valid data for long-term policies even when planning for periods exceeding three or five years into the future.

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AN INHERENT DILEMMA AND CHALLENGE

In her speech to the European Parliament on 12 September 2023, discussing the current state of the Union, Ursula von der Leyen outlined an agenda that, in many aspects, aligns with the foresightedness required for strategic political planning. She identified key areas and addressed topics expanding beyond the typical scope of day-to-day politics. Notable among these are the European Green Deal, a European Wind Power package, NextGenerationEU, Qualified Migration, and the Digital Transition.

The inherent dilemma within the political system lies in the essential need for long-term political-strategic planning, as emphasised by speeches such as Ursula von der Leyen's. However, the challenge lies in the difficulty of executing such prolonged political strategies due to the inherently short-term nature of political mandates. The pace of day-to-day politics remains constrained by the relatively short legislative periods, seldom exceeding four years.

One potential approach to mitigate the effects of this dilemma involves entrusting the development of future scenarios to the community of players and stakeholders within the sector. This delegation occurs within the parameters established by politics, recognising the limitations imposed by the shorter political timelines. The European Union employs this method, among others, by implementing corresponding funding programmes to organise community-led platforms, roundtables, and knowledge alliances.

FAST45 is an example of an EU-funded Erasmus+ Knowledge Alliance designed to support and advise the democratic-political process of shaping the future, specifically focusing on higher arts education. To ensure a well-rounded infusion of internal and external expertise, the FAST45 consortium deliberately chose from the project's outset to include stakeholders from various professional fields. This inclusive approach involves partners from regionally anchored cultural institutions, the creative industries, tech sector companies, and representatives from the higher arts education sector.

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FACILITATING STRATEGIC DECISIONS

This document presents futures scenarios and policy recommendations for higher arts education, addressing the imperative of facilitating policymaking and strategic decisions that effectively confront future challenges. Insights drawn from futures research assist in pinpointing and delineating influential factors, offering a foundation of reliable data.

The primary responsibility for shaping and implementing strategic decisions for the continued advancement of institutions falls on those within the higher arts education sector, encompassing educators, students, senior management, and stakeholders. Policymakers, in turn, are responsible for establishing the framework conditions that empower sector participants to steer changes that meet the needs and requisites for developing and sustaining a future higher arts education landscape.

The FAST45 project assumes a dual role in this context. Firstly, it establishes connections between futures research and the higher arts education sector by sharing expertise, developing experiments, fostering dialogues, or disseminating insights. Secondly, the FAST45 project addresses the political sphere by providing considerations and recommendations developed within community-led efforts to help establish the framework conditions that allow the sector to steer its trajectory to the future.

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

At the outset, the FAST45 consortium discussed what methods and tools would empower the project partners to craft their work. In pursuit of the objective of developing futures scenarios forming the basis for reliable policy recommendations, the consortium chose a structured breakdown into three distinct phases: trendspotting, collaborative visioning, and strategising for the future.

The consortium partners delved into existing research and expertise in the initial phase. They interviewed numerous stakeholders to identify current trends and primary drivers of change shaping the futures of higher arts education institutions. Subsequently, the consortium launched the Arts School Futures

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METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Labs, where collectives comprising students, educators, researchers, and higher arts education institution stakeholders collaborated to envision future perspectives.

Using insights from the initial phase as a springboard, their task was to craft future images that inspire reflection and critical thinking. These future images became the foundational elements for developing four future scenarios in the project's final phase. Subsequently, these future scenarios served as seeds for policy recommendations, providing a road map and compass for a future-conscious and future-shaping higher arts education sector.

The FAST45 project scaffolds its design on concepts and techniques from futures studies, futures research, and arts-based thinking. The project aims to strengthen the higher arts education institutions' futures consciousness and futures literacy, the ability to imagine and anticipate different futures, understand the link between the future and the present, and act towards preferred futures (Miller, 2018). The methodology to achieve this aim builds on futures thinking and testing of methods undertaken as part of the Arts School Futures Labs.

Within the project's methodological framework, the innovative approach of Arts School Futures Labs plays a pivotal role in fostering collaborative creation and reflection on futures images.

In these labs, stakeholders from higher arts education institutions actively contribute data, enabling the consortium partners to formulate comprehensive futures scenarios. Hence, the Arts School Futures Lab's approach stands as the first pillar in shaping the overall methodology of the project.

A second pillar is an academic work on the social and cultural embedding of higher education systems and scholarly endeavours to develop innovative methods for futures thinking in higher arts education institutions. The FAST45 Learning Platform supports the public presentation of live research. Over two years, interviews, workshops, and lectures were delivered, archived, and accessed through the platform.

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METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Insights from the wide-ranging and multidisciplinary field of futures studies is the third pillar of the methodological framework. Consequently, the results of the FAST45 project are essentially inspired by the three principles that Roy Amara presented in 1981 as *Basics of Futures Thinking* (Amara, 1981): (1) The future is unpredictable because there is no single future but innumerable alternative futures; (2) The future is not a predetermined, fixed, or inevitable fate, even when we cannot see alternatives; (3) The future can be influenced because it takes shape due to our choices, actions, and non-actions in the present.

For more details on the methodological framework, please consult the Arts School Futures Lab Guidelines (https://learningplatform.fast45.eu/labs).

HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT

The following text serves as a discussion document, presenting four future scenarios, including guidance to shape a trajectory for each scenario. The final chapter presents a set of policy recommendations and a report of a panel discussion in which experts from higher arts education and the European Commission reviewed these recommendations.

The primary objective of this text is stimulating dialogue, instigating action, and driving information. The primary audience is policymakers navigating the intricate institutional and political landscapes at the local, regional, national, and European levels.

Beyond politicians, this document also speaks to senior management and stakeholders in higher arts education institutions, cultural and creative sectors, research and development hubs, corporations, business partners, and social-cultural organisations. These key players consistently contribute to the advancement and revitalisation of the higher education sector. Additionally, the FAST45 consortium aims for this document to reach the community of committed citizens interested in the tasks and processes outlined in this document.

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HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT

The four Future Scenarios outlined below stem from the collaborative efforts in the Arts School Futures Labs. As highlighted earlier, these four scenarios serve as a cornerstone and integral feature in developing a dynamic agenda for strategic planning, shaping the future of the higher arts education landscape.

Likewise, the document includes guidance and a set of recommendations. The guidance derives from analysing each scenario, offering policymakers and decision-makers tools to transform higher arts education and aligning it with the evolving needs and challenges specific to a particular scenario. The policy recommendations concentrate on key lessons shared across all scenarios. The policy recommendations demonstrate how policymakers and decision-makers can bolster the resilience of higher arts education and steer the sector's overall trajectory towards the future.

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Four Future Scenarios for Higher Arts Education

Image source: **FAST45 Learning Platform Image Bank**

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Four Future Scenarios for Higher Arts Education

SCANNING THE HORIZON

The FAST45 Erasmus+ Knowledge Alliance aims to promote futures thinking as a tool for reflection and strategic planning within higher arts education institutions. To ensure the uptake and relevance of the work done, co-creation was vital throughout the process, involving a broad range of stakeholders in each phase.

In the first phase, the consortium conducted more than 60 interviews with experts on arts and design practice, arts education, futures thinking, research, policymaking, and beyond. The consortium also gathered literature on potential futures for higher arts education institutions and artist employment.

Using the gathered information, a knowledge base named the FAST45 Arts School Futures Data Map was created. This online tool is accessible through the FAST45 learning platform and presents potential futures, emphasising artistic, educational, and socio-economic trends.

In the second phase, a futures workshop approach for higher arts education institutions, Arts School Futures Lab, was developed based on fifteen test labs. Twelve Arts School Futures Labs were undertaken throughout Europe in addition to a Summer School in Zürich. These sessions encouraged collaboration between students, staff, and external partners, providing a structured approach to crafting a broad range of potential futures for higher arts education institutions in Europe.

More information on the FAST45 Arts School Futures Data Map and FAST45 Arts School Futures Labs is accessible through the FAST45 learning platform.

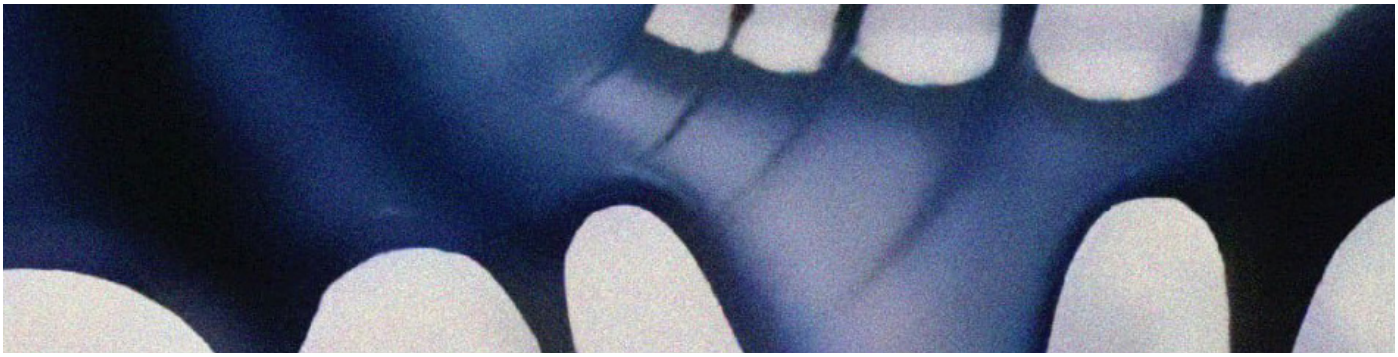

Image source: **Oct0p0s - Footnotes - FAST45 Summer School**

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Four Future Scenarios for Higher Arts Education

DATA ANALYSIS OF THE ARTS SCHOOL FUTURES LABS

The Arts School Futures Data Map and the outputs of Arts School Futures Labs and the Summer School constituted an extensive and rich corpus of data for crafting four scenarios that inspired discussion about the potential futures of higher arts education.

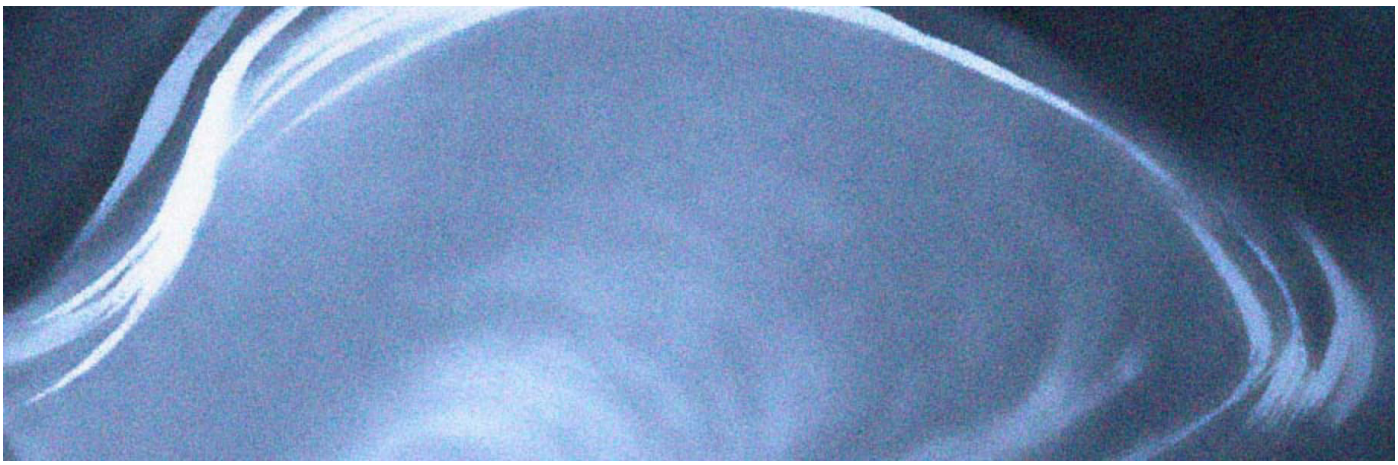

Image source: **0ct0p0s - Footnotes - FAST45 Summer School**

As shown in Table 1, the scenario-making process began with the entire consortium classifying the accumulated raw data (2,561 items) by selecting 1,145 relevant items for the analysis. The selected items were sorted into categories: megatrends and trends or emerging issues and weak signals (Analysis 1).

These *building blocks* underwent three primary analyses. First, they were assigned to general domains of the higher arts education institutions' (HAEI) operational environment: culture, economy, education, energy, environment, governance, politics, population, technology, and other (Analysis 2a). Then, the blocks were categorised within different proceedings of higher arts education institutions, such as administration and management, art and design practice, curricula and programmes, learning and interaction, mindsets and values, organisation and facilities, relations and communication, research, and resources and sustainability (Analysis 2b). In addition, they were further structured in reference to pre-selected themes: acceleration and transformation, adaptability and flexibility, identity and ownership, interdisciplinarity, neoliberalism, polarisation, posthumanism, social and cultural diversity, well-being, and other (Analysis 2c).

Subsequently, the building blocks were estimated regarding their impact on higher arts education institutions and their uncertainty level for higher arts education institutions (Analysis 3a). Following this, the *futures triangle* (Inayatullah, 2008) was employed as an analytical framework to consider their position in time as regards three categories of influence: weight of the past, push of the presence, or pull of the future (Analysis 3b). Finally, the building blocks were assorted in line with Jim Dator's (2009) *future archetypes:* continued growth, collapse, disciplined, or transformative (Analysis 3c).

The fourth and final analysis phase examined the blocks by content about broader domains of the operational environment (Analysis 4a) and considered them as regards the potential impact (hinder strong/hinder weak, support strong/support weak) on various dimensions of higher arts education institutions (Analysis 4b).

Analysis phase	Focus of analysis
Analysis 1	Megatrends and trends OR emerging issues and weak signals
Analysis 2a	Domains of operational environment: culture, economy, education, energy, environment, governance, politics, population, technology, and other
Analysis 2b	Dimensions of HAEI: administration and management, art and design practice, curricula and programmes, learning and interaction, mindsets and values, organisation and facilities, relations and communication, research, and resources and sustainability
Analysis 2c	Pre-selected themes: acceleration and transformation, adaptability and flexibility, identity and ownership, interdisciplinarity, neoliberalism, polarisation, posthumanism, social and cultural diversity, well-being, and other
Analysis 3a	Level of impact on HAEI (low/medium/high) AND level of uncertainty for HAEI (low/medium/high)
Analysis 3b	Futures triangle (weight of the past, push of the presence, pull of the future)
Analysis 3c	Dator's analysis (continued growth, collapse, disciplined, transformative)
Analysis 4a	Impact on culture, economy, education, energy, environment, governance, politics, technology (hinder strong/hinder weak, support strong/support weak)
Analysis 4b	Impact on administration and management, art and design practice, curriculum and programmes, learning and interaction, mindsets and values, organisation and facilities, relations and communication, research, resources and sustainability (hinder strong/hinder weak, support strong/support weak)

Table 1: **Phases of data analysis**

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Four Future Scenarios for Higher Arts Education

CRAFTING SCENARIOS

Project partners in the six higher arts education institutions undertook the four analysis phases. This data categorisation was done based on each partners' interpretations. Building upon these analyses, a selected team convened in February 2023 for a three-day intensive session at the University of the Arts Helsinki to strategically choose key points of interest from the analysed building blocks for scenario writing. Their focus was primarily on the solid impact factors identified in analyses 3a and 3b, hindering and supporting strong outcomes.

The result of this effort is the creation of four scenarios for higher arts education institutions' potential futures, derived from the original dataset and highlighting shared and distinctive insights. These scenarios were designed to be explorative and change-oriented, focusing on European contexts from the viewpoint of higher arts education institutions.

The goal was to pay attention to (1) some of the most critical change drivers; (2) how art practices, teaching, and research will evolve and transform; (3) the future roles of higher arts education institutions in society; and (4) changes in facilities, organisation, and governance of higher arts education institutions.

The scenarios reflect the intricate balance between frequency in the data and the synthesised understanding from the analyses. Subsequently, the team considered the identified ideas and formulated the core concepts of the four scenarios: *Open Spaces, Slow Eco-Life, Phygital Frontiers, and Profitable Endeavours.* Each of these scenarios encapsulates:

- Dominant drives and trends
- Description of the operational environment
- The journey towards that envisioned future
- A portrait of the higher arts education realm
- Depictive persons

Consortium members and stakeholders from network organisations (AEC and ELIA) validated the scenarios to ensure their credibility and relevance. The feedback helped the team refine the scenarios for this publication.

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Four Future Scenarios for Higher Arts Education

FOUR DISTINCT SCENARIOS

Foresight and strategic planning often employ a methodology that hinges on developing four distinct future scenarios. This approach has been favoured for several reasons: (1) In its vast complexity, the future can be challenging to distil into narratives. Four scenarios provide an optimal balance between capturing the nuances of potential futures and ensuring that each narrative remains clear and understandable for stakeholders. (2) Creating four distinct scenarios helps to take on varied perspectives, ensuring a more holistic view of potential challenges and opportunities. (3) Addressing a set of four potential futures enables organisations to prepare for various outcomes more effectively. It helps stakeholders adapt to unexpected shifts and changes by considering various possibilities.

While various methods exist for scenario planning, crafting four distinct scenarios has repeatedly demonstrated its value in offering a comprehensive yet concise and workable view of the future.

HOW TO USE AND INTERPRET THE SCENARIOS

Scenarios are powerful tools for envisioning potential paths the future might take. They are not predictions but co-created imaginative constructs illuminating possibilities based on current knowledge and uncertainties. Below is a brief guide on how to interpret and engage with them:

- **To explore with an open mind:** Recognise that scenarios are explorative and speculative, not prescriptive. Approach them with curiosity and openness, allowing for reflection on each scenario's implications without getting fixated on the likelihood of any single one.
- **To understand the context**: Always be aware of the critical assumptions and driving forces that underpin each scenario. These give insight into the foundation upon which the scenarios are built and can help contextualise their narratives.

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Four Future Scenarios for Higher Arts Education

HOW TO USE AND INTERPRET THE SCENARIOS

- **To probe for implications:** As you delve into each scenario, ask yourself: What are the consequences for my organisation or sector? What opportunities or challenges might emerge? This active engagement will make the scenarios more relevant to your context.
- **To compare and to contrast:** Look across all the scenarios presented. What themes or trends are consistent? Where do they diverge? This comparative approach can unearth deeper insights about broader shifts and potential pivot points.
- **To strategise and to plan:** Use the scenarios as a backdrop for strategic conversations. They can guide discussions on risk management, innovation opportunities, or resource allocation. The goal is *not* to react to every scenario, but to be more prepared and adaptive in the face of uncertainty.

In summary, future scenarios are both a lens to view potential futures and a compass to navigate them. Engage with them actively, reflect on their implications, and let them inform—but not dictate—your decisions.

Image source: **FAST45 Learning Platform Image Bank**

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Scenario 1
Open Spaces

Photo by **Evert Palmets** / Used with permission

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Scenario 1
Open Spaces

SCENARIO ABSTRACT

In 2045, higher arts education is vital to fostering creativity and innovation in society. It strives to create open and transdisciplinary work environments as part of a globally connected international community. These Open Spaces actively cultivate strong relationships with diverse communities, acknowledging the significance of these partnerships. By prioritising individualistic lifestyles focusing on self-dependence, uniqueness, abstract thinking, privacy, and personal goals, the partners in these Open Spaces promote a deep respect for individual and local needs. The setting of Open Spaces encourages people to explore their passions and pursue the opportunities that bring them joy. It recognises the value of personal growth and fulfilment throughout one's unique journey. Higher arts education actively engages with societal, environmental, sociocultural, and technological queries as the central focus shifts away from classical art practices and artistic craftsmanship. In short, Open Spaces serve as hubs of artistic ingenuity, empowering individuals to engage with the world creatively while navigating the challenges and wicked problems of society and the planet.

MAIN DRIVERS AND TRENDS

- Flexible and collaborative working environments
- Remote work and automation
- Project-driven and transdisciplinary work
- Increasing internationalisation and cultural diversity
- Demographic shift and lifelong learning
- Work-life balance

THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT IN 2045

Due to more diverse student populations and an increasing number of adult learners, the demographic make-up of students in higher arts education continues to change. This demographic shift is leading to a need for more flexible and accessible learning environments that can accommodate a variety of intentions and preferences for study and inquiry. Moreover, economic pressures are placing arts universities under financial strain.

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Scenario 1
Open Spaces

THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT IN 2045

As a result, there is a growing urgency to explore more efficient and cost-effective approaches to delivering high-quality education in the arts. Additionally, a rising awareness of the environmental impact of campus infrastructure has led to strict regulation on how to design sustainable buildings and educational landscapes. Creating Open Spaces that foster collaborative partnerships across multiple sectors makes it possible to reduce the number of physical workplaces and infrastructure. Finally, the ongoing development of new technologies is still transforming higher arts education. Online and hybrid learning models are prominent, while expanded reality technologies are leveraged to enhance the learning experience.

THE PATH

In the second half of the 2020s, the arts university fundamentally restructured its curriculum organisation and educational design. It abandoned a vertical, discipline-oriented approach and transitioned to a horizontal model grounded in transdisciplinary work and process thinking. This shift allowed the institution to navigate complexity and embrace change effectively. As a result, new skills became essential in this dynamic environment. Traits such as openness to changes, awareness of intersections, understanding agency and signal functions, empathic imagination, transdisciplinary focus, counterpoint thinking, self-directed learning, playfulness, and engaging in protest and activism became crucial transferable skills for all stakeholders within the arts university.

In those years, the arts university also actively engaged with a multicultural perspective, ensuring a non-European-centric focus that dismantled geographical and cultural barriers, giving rise to diverse voices. This transformation was nourished by a sustained critical self-reflection on privileged and colonising Western artistic and academic practices, driving the institution's commitment to fostering a global and inclusive perspective.

In the late 2020s, the rise of the gig economy continued to reshape the nature of work. More people opted for freelance work or short-term contracts, providing flexibility and independence. Platforms that connect freelancers, professionals, and clients facilitated this trend.

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Scenario 1
Open Spaces

THE PATH

By 2030, novel transdisciplinary approaches in research and education had reshaped the landscape of higher arts education, leading to a radical diversification of practices and the dissolution of artistic specialisation within the arts university. This transformative shift allowed the institution to challenge conventions and critically examine what was once considered obvious.

As everything became increasingly interconnected and interrelated, new intersections emerged, expanding the core knowledge of higher arts education. Boundaries continued to fade, and a wealth of cross-sectorial and multilingual knowledge found its place within the institutions.

In the early 2030s, the arts university experienced a surge in interest as a vibrant work and learning environment. People from private and public sectors with specific (academic and non-academic) interests or missions gravitated towards the arts university, drawn by its reputation for embracing all sorts of complex issues and promoting transdisciplinary and co-creative work.

In the late 2030s and early 2040s, the evolving landscape necessitated a new and diverse range of working spaces within the higher arts education ecosystem. The arts university struggled to balance the need for change in response to emerging novelties and preserving the quality of its tradition. Finally, the institution recognised the importance of addressing intra-artistic and extra-artistic questions, acknowledging its role in broader societal contexts. This holistic approach ensured that higher arts education remained at the forefront of innovation while upholding its commitment to excellence and experimental methods. As such, the arts university began to merge into Open Spaces and developed an overall dynamic beyond the idea of a purely artistic or academic institution.

DESCRIPTION OF THE HIGHER ARTS EDUCATION LANDSCAPE

Open Spaces is an arts university model built upon collaborations grounded in project-driven, transdisciplinary, and co-creative work. It fosters an open and inclusive artistic creation, study, and research environment that can thrive in multiple settings. As a result, the Open Spaces model encompasses a diverse spectrum, transcending binary

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Scenario 1
Open Spaces

DESCRIPTION OF THE HIGHER ARTS EDUCATION LANDSCAPE

oppositions such as praxis vs theory, specialist vs generalist, inside vs outside, qualified vs incompetent, human vs non-human, or physical vs digital.

As society constantly changes, entailing increasingly complex issues, higher arts education remains flexible and agile to adapt to emerging challenges and opportunities. The arts university embraces this shift by fostering collaborative relationships with partners from both profit and non-profit organisations across various sectors and industries. These partnerships contribute to establishing dynamic work and learning environments in which individuals and ideas flow freely, centred around specific focal points within societal, sociocultural, ecological, or technological domains.

Image source:
FAST45 – Arts School Futures Labs

The arts university establishes an Open Space to foster a dynamic learning and research environment. It facilitates meaningful connections among individuals and communities, both locally and globally. The arts university cultivates an atmosphere of exploration and exchange by promoting enduring relationships between partners. It serves as a collaborative hub, uniting stakeholders from various domains and bringing together beginners, professionals, learners, and coaches. Central to the work ethos for these Open Spaces are flat hierarchies, solidarity, inclusive practices, porosity, and diversity, which serve as pivotal elements and driving forces.

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Scenario 1
Open Spaces

DESCRIPTION OF THE HIGHER ARTS EDUCATION LANDSCAPE

Inherently nurturing imagination, creativity, and joy, the arts university creates ample communication channels with society. It bridges art practice, artistic research, public and private life, work, and leisure, bringing them closer together. By assuming the role of a project-based organisation, the arts university facilitates the co-creation of dynamic learning communities that prioritise exploration and knowledge exchange. This transformation positions the arts university as a catalyst for innovation and integrating diverse fields.

The arts university prioritises flexibility and adaptability over rigid structures. It emphasises fluidity and elasticity, enabling easy access to learning and study. Central to this approach are the values of academic freedom and freedom of choice. Partners in the Open Spaces can navigate many options, discovering learning values along open and individual paths rather than being confined to a predetermined route or fixed path.

The arts university eliminates the need for entrance examinations and certificate verification. Instead, it focuses on facilitating individuals or groups with specific interests or intentions, providing them with the necessary time and space to share and nurture their work. The learning programmes embody the qualities of easy access and flexibility, allowing for a smooth transition in and out of the university's learning environment. Project assessment meetings are central to starting a project, structuring the work packages, or coordinating co-creative work in groups.

The arts university cultivates social harmony and horizontal solidarity by emphasising the importance of strong relationships within and between communities and actively engaging in mutual learning. This commitment to meaningful connections and shared learning elevates the value of collaboration and strengthens bonds within society.

An inherent result of promoting a friendly social atmosphere is that the arts university establishes equitable dialogues and supports inclusive learning environments. Recognising the significance of the social dimension, the arts university strongly encourages multicultural practices and intergenerational connections. In contrast to imposing hegemonic and overly dominant frameworks, the arts university in this scenario

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Scenario 1
Open Spaces

DESCRIPTION OF THE HIGHER ARTS EDUCATION LANDSCAPE

embodies a dynamic and evolving process, constantly adapting its conditions and structures to serve its community better.

The arts university facilitates multiple dialogues and collaborations in a bold effort to foster networked interactions and prioritise multidimensional connections. Various spaces within and beyond the university, such as multilingual collaboration zones, multidisciplinary resource centres, multicultural exchange corners, inclusive areas, informal chatrooms, and immersive celebration platforms, inspire individuals, foster connections, and help them stay abreast of trends and advancements. These new working spaces for multicultural practices help to overcome communication barriers, cultural differences, stereotypes and prejudices, or conflicting work ethics that can impede work in Open Spaces.

While blurring boundaries between institutions, organisations, and sectors, the arts university strives to maintain a critical relationship with its environment. This deliberate separation prevents the arts university from merging into the environment, ensuring its unique identity and critical impact. It is a struggle for which the arts university is continuously seeking a balance in its communication and collaboration strategies.

Image source: **FAST45 Learning Platform Image Bank**

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Scenario 1
Open Spaces

PERSONS

Person 1
Klara is a student at Open Space Mucial

Klara is a 21-year-old music and social sciences MA student inspired by a transdisciplinary project in a coworking space developed by Open Space Mucial. Tinkering as an alternative to specialism and doing it yourself are the two dynamics that orient Klara in her work. Instead of becoming an expert, Klara has learned to make small changes in her work to improve her skills. A long-term discipline of classical training in music does not work in her trajectory. Through specific iterations on aspects of her work, Klara finds solutions to particular problems and research questions (she works on nonverbal communicative behaviours in group improvisation). In dialogue and collaboration with her colleagues in the coworking space, Klara constantly (re)invents her practice, almost without any need for formal schooling or training.

Person 2
Alexander is a programme facilitator at ArtVerse Open Spaces

Alexander is a 38-year-old programme facilitator at ArtVerse Open Spaces. As a coach, he supports several groups of students in radically diversifying their practice. He assists them in choosing what variety of profiles or work contexts they want to visit. With his students' diverse backgrounds in mind, Alexander considers and discusses with students the specific conditions of access, follow-up, and exit from learning paths in projects and communities. Language barriers and cultural diversity challenge his work in ArtVerse Open Spaces. Alexander tries to solve this by using flexible meeting spaces and informal chat rooms to accommodate and facilitate communication among multicultural and diverse teams.

Person 3
Anna is a researcher at Open Spaces TechArts Insight

Anna is part of a group of young and dynamic researchers working at Open Spaces TechArts Insight who engage with questions of technological development and social justice. Anna's first ambition is to make her work more accessible to outsiders by developing her research in close collaboration with partners such as businesses, industry, community groups, activist groups, NGOs, or grassroots organisations. An increasing understanding of power hierarchies shifts the focus of her work. Anna engages in dialogues with groups of indigenous or allochthonous people and other species to understand their ways of perceiving the world. She identifies topics that have relevance for them and develops research with them on an equitable basis.

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Scenario 1
Open Spaces

PERSONS

Her work at Uniarts Open Space aims to create research-informed products, practices, and policy recommendations for sustainability, green growth technology, and a solidarity and repair economy aiming to transform society with others.

Person 4
Guillaume is an artistic director at Opéra Grand Anthéa

Guillaume is the artistic director at Opéra Grand Anthéa. He faces the same challenges as many of his colleagues in the sector: finding suitable candidates to fill new positions. Attracting and retaining talented singers, musicians, conductors, directors, dancers, and production staff is essential for the success of any opera house. However, demographic changes, changing career aspirations, and increased competition from other sectors where performing artists can work make recruiting and retaining top performers challenging. Therefore, developing strategies to stimulate and nurture emerging artists, create an appealing work environment, and offer opportunities for artistic exploration and individual growth is critical to Guillaume and his team's success.

Person 5
Elsie is a talent acquisition manager at Global.Clean

Global.Clean is an international partnership focusing on sustainable energy and clean technologies solutions. Elsie, the talent acquisition manager for Europe, works closely with various arts universities throughout Europe to recruit emerging talent and potential partners. Graduates from arts universities possess transferable skills and creativity that are valuable in the D&R department. Building relationships with these universities allows Elsie to hire talented individuals who bring fresh insights and artistic perspectives. Furthermore, to keep up with the ever-changing nature of work, Elsie collaborates with these universities' learning and development teams to identify skill gaps and implement training programmes that align with emerging technologies and changing job requirements in her industry.

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Scenario 1
Open Spaces

GUIDANCE TO SHAPE AN OPEN SPACE SCENARIO

Introduction

To advance the transformation of higher arts education in an Open Space future scenario context, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, internationalisation, and engagement with research and development partners in businesses and industry is crucial. Promoting a more transdisciplinary approach to reimagining educational programmes and research projects and supporting multidisciplinary infrastructure development will help arts universities achieve this.

Leveraging the following topics can contribute to transforming higher arts education, making it more responsive to the evolving needs and challenges of an Open Space future scenario.

Guidance 1
Promote interdisciplinary integration

The Open Spaces scenario focuses on eliminating traditional boundaries, promoting transdisciplinary work and integration of various fields. This is crucial for addressing contemporary complex challenges, the so-called wicked problems, and encourages a more holistic approach to learning and problem-solving.

Implementing decision strategies and policies that encourage a mixture of different disciplines within higher education institutions and providing financial resources and incentives for educational programmes and research integrating arts with technology, sciences, environmental studies, and more are crucial to shaping an Open Space scenario.

Guidance 2
Foster international and cultural exchange

The Open Spaces model thrives on internationalisation and cultural diversity. There is a clear need to dismantle geographical and cultural barriers to foster a global perspective. Working beyond the context of universities and research departments can help to build this diversity.

Developing international exchange programmes, scholarships, and partnerships for arts universities and emphasising cultural exchange and diversity in curriculum development are central to establishing an Open Space scenario.

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Scenario 1
Open Spaces

GUIDANCE TO SHAPE AN OPEN SPACE SCENARIO

Guidance 3
Enhance collaboration with non-art sectors

With the rise of the gig economy and remote work, there is a shift towards more flexible and project-based roles. Art graduates, known for their creativity, adaptability, and multidisciplinary skills, can play a significant role in this changing work landscape and the future of work.

Encourage collaboration between arts universities, local authorities, enterprises, and industries outside the traditional art sector. This will facilitate smoother transitions for students into various work environments, harnessing their unique skills and helping them to adapt to the future of work.

Guidance 4
Enhance access and flexibility in higher arts education

With diverse student populations and the importance of lifelong learning, there is a pressing need for more accessible and flexible learning environments. Open Spaces emphasises easy entry and exit without rigid examinations, allowing individuals to carve their unique educational paths.

Re-evaluate and modernise higher education admission criteria, assessment processes, and degree labels, particularly for arts universities. Support and incentivise institutions to prioritise accessibility, flexibility, and individualised learning paths within transinstitutional and transnational structures.

Guidance 5
Enhance access and flexibility in higher arts education

The physical environment in which Open Spaces operates must accommodate collaborative and transdisciplinary work while being aware of environmental impacts. Moreover, the demographic shift and economic pressures demand sustainable and cost-effective educational models.

Invest in infrastructure development for arts universities that support collaborative environments. This could involve digital platforms, hybrid learning spaces, and sustainable campus designs. Furthermore, provide grants or tax breaks for institutions incorporating green and sustainable practices in their infrastructure and operations.

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Scenario 2
Slow Eco-Life

Image source: **FAST45 – Arts School Futures Labs**

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Scenario 2
Slow Eco-Life

SCENARIO ABSTRACT

Arts universities are active actors in achieving sustainability goals and finding ways to deal with wicked problems such as ecological crises. They creatively use regenerative and indigenous practices and boldly experiment with interspecies collaboration to find new ways of being an artist and a citizen within planetary boundaries. Hierarchies are flat, and students actively participate in decision-making, aiming for consensus, flexibility, and community well-being. Slowness and degrowth are faced as positive challenges for creativity. What is essential is constantly asked. Renouncing, reducing, and the scarcity of resources are fundamental parts of growing as an artist.

MAIN DRIVERS AND TRENDS

- Ecological crisis (climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution)
- Strong sustainability as ecology framing practices and materials, circular and sharing economy, and strict national and international regulations (nature and natural resources)
- Slowness and degrowth
- Flat hierarchies in institutions

THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT IN 2045

Due to ecological crises, societies are in a condition of survival, fighting to keep global warming close to +2°C. Strong regulations limit emissions and consumption. Serious concerns are food and freshwater security and green energy self-sufficiency. Climate refugees bring new dynamics and tensions to societies, and local conflicts exist. In the Global North, living standards have decreased due to the necessary reduction of consumption and degrowth policies, as well as due to unemployment and turbulence in financial markets. Circular economy, lending, and sharing are highly valued when humanity learns to live within planetary limits. Repairing, do-it-yourself-mentality, and handicrafts are appreciated. Instead of materialism, immaterial ideals such as culture and education are valued.

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Scenario 2
Slow Eco-Life

THE PATH

In the middle of the 2020s, it became clear that the +1.5-degree limit of global warming would be exceeded and biodiversity loss progressed at an alarming rate. Rapidly advancing climate change was causing substantial damage to ecosystems and infrastructure due to extreme weather conditions (e.g., heatwaves, floods, and rising sea levels). The mass extinctions of pollinators caused losses in food production. During the 2030s, this led to stringent new regulations against emissions and pollution in most countries and to massive rapid global conservation actions aiming to save what was left to be saved.

Strong political movements against the market economy and exponential growth increased. Voluntary lowering of personal living standards became a megatrend in the Global North. Circular and sharing economies became dominant. Arts universities actively collaborated with universities and NGOs in promoting the degrowth and climate justice movements, being inventive in reducing energy consumption, reusing materials, and other sustainable practices.

In the early 2040s, the escalating number of climate refugees increased turbulence in societies, causing growing needs and pressures for intercultural communication and learning, employment policies, and social security. Arts universities supported social cohesion through mandatory studies and training periods in socially engaged art practices in nearby communities. Subsequently, their curricula increasingly included cross-disciplinary, multidisciplinary, and intersectional practices and diverse cultural perspectives.

Local self-sufficiency became a standard with distributed energy systems. This led to a movement where many arts universities moved to small cities or rural areas where self-sufficiency was easier and slow, and immersive/dedicated arts studies and local interaction were more successful.

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Scenario 2
Slow Eco-Life

DESCRIPTION OF THE HIGHER ARTS EDUCATION LANDSCAPE

The arts universities are mostly decentralised and are often situated in rural and peripheral areas. They are close to self-sufficient entities, providing their own energy, using circular and self-produced materials, producing their own food, and using local products due to ideological and economic reasons. The community is fed by a protein produced in a bioreactor, vertical farming, and, in rural areas, traditional ecological farming. Sustainability demands frame all the materials used and the modes of artistic practices. Technology is in use but constantly and critically questioned—what is indispensable and affordable?

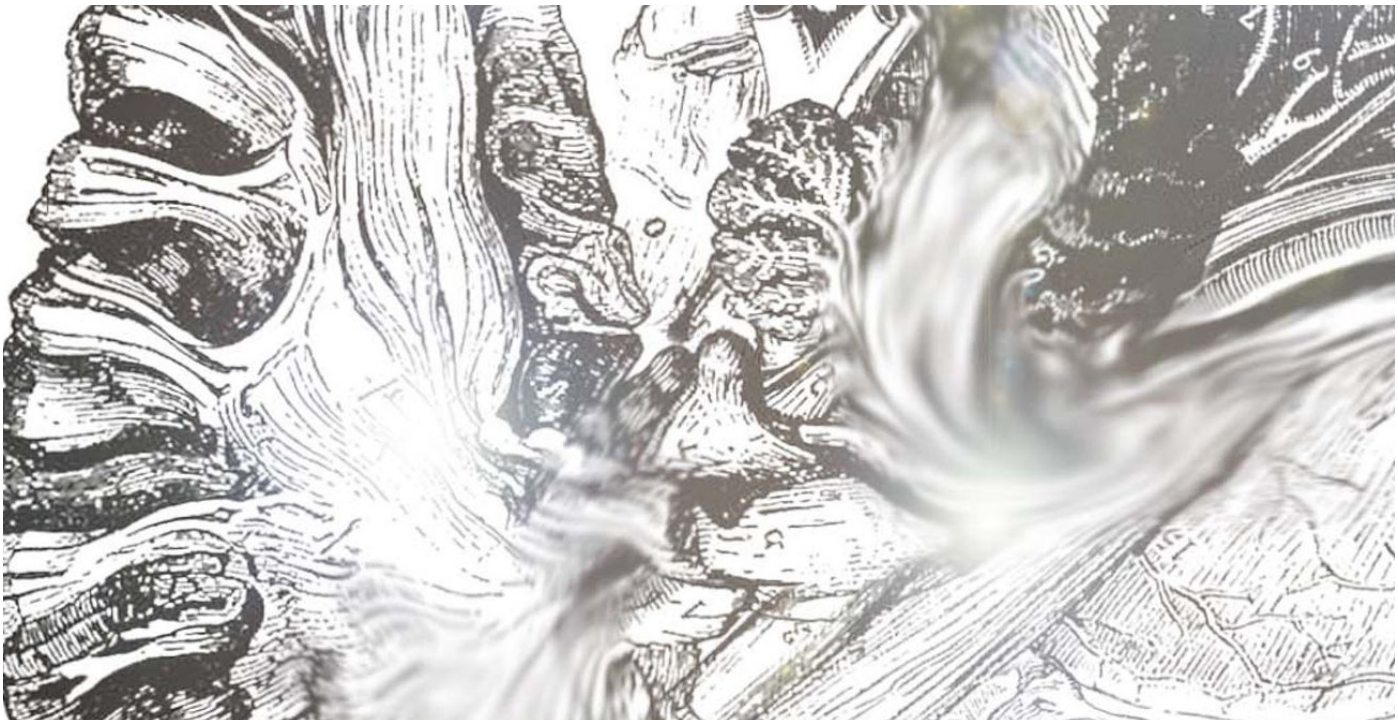

Image source: **0ct0p0s - Footnotes - FAST45 Summer School**

Responsible and sustainable arts universities have flat hierarchies and embrace diversity and students in decision-making positions. A board governs the arts universities with rotating roles, including students who participate actively in decision-making where their opinions are as valued as experts' opinions. Co-constructed processes allow the collective intelligence to operate in all possible dimensions. Consensus is aimed at all decision-making, making it slow and often unfocused due to endless discussions. This may run the risk of charismatic leaders taking over, providing easier, shallow, and ethically dubious solutions for complex issues and interesting but narrow perspectives for arts education.

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Scenario 2
Slow Eco-Life

DESCRIPTION OF THE HIGHER ARTS EDUCATION LANDSCAPE

Arts universities have a strong sense of community where art and life unite and people learn together. Sharing economy, sharing knowledge and holistic well-being, including planetary, social, occupational, and individual well-being, are emphasised. Working time for fighting concretely against inequalities, for ecological reconstruction, and self-sufficiency and governance in the institution is provided within the schedule. Institutions are flexible in career paths, job rotation, and knowledge management. The facilities support teamwork, informal encounters, immersive/dedicated quiet work, and safe data management.

The content of education deals with the complexities of the current situation. Pedagogies increasingly apply critical thinking, social and environmental awareness, collaborative practices, alternative perspectives, cross-disciplinary, multidisciplinary, and intersectional practices. Activism, protest, and problem-solving are part of the pedagogies both as content and means, and a critical self-reflection of the Western practices of exploiting nature is pursued. Studies provide a safe space for questioning, exploring, empathic imagination, and collaboration with diverse partners. Various voices such as indigenous artistic traditions, local artistic practices, non-European traditions, and intergenerational knowledge are in use. The arbitrary geographical, cultural, artistic, or generational borders are abolished. The necessity to focus on non-humans and less human-centred thinking leads to cutting-edge experimentations with interspecies communication and interactions. The binary human/non-human is replaced by interspecies and cross-species thinking and learning. Interspecies art is part of the curriculum, including the exploration of new collaborative practices, new ethical questions, and communication with and for new audiences.

Slow culture gives time for students, researchers, and teachers to engage in an in-depth relationship with their artistic or research interests and have thorough dialogues with peers, colleagues, research partners, and social interaction partners.

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Scenario 2
Slow Eco-Life

DESCRIPTION OF THE HIGHER ARTS EDUCATION LANDSCAPE

Researchers have time to disseminate and post-process their research results to benefit teaching, learning, social engagement, and innovation development, and their impact of research is measured by the in-depth quality of critical ideas and their relevance instead of quantity. Following the degrowth ideals, it is accepted and even encouraged to produce smaller quantities, less frequently, and to embrace scarcity and reduction. The art and science projects have strict sustainability guidelines. In addition, social accessibility and dissemination to demographically wide audiences are valued.

Even the neoliberal ideas of productivity and exponential growth are radically challenged by more sustainable values; there are artists who are driven by success, fame, and outstanding profit-making. Some artists have created celebrated stables where they operate, as in old master-apprentice systems, sharing their skills but utilising followers as a cheap workforce. In addition to questionable employment practices, some artists' stables have been revealed to be shameless utilisers of greenwashing, as sustainable means are essential in the market. This has raised strong ethical debates in arts fields. Many artists and arts schools fear that increased appreciation and value of arts in society is threatened by these actors in the last two decades.

PERSONS

Person 1
Taylan Kaden (24 years old, they/them) is a student and activist

Artistic freedom as a human right, climate justice, ecological reconstruction, and interspecies rights are the leading interests of Taylan, a passionate art student and activist. They have a heightened moral agency and critical contemplations concerning the ecological, social, and political consequences of one's choices and actions. They constantly ask: With what and with whom do I want to work? How do I work, and to whom do I address my work? These demands and absoluteness often hinder or increase the duration of Taylan's art projects, which makes their participation in collaborative projects a bit problematical. Regardless, their artistic work is uncompromising and innovative. They recently participated in a performative protest advocating that insects be given the same rights already held by humans, mammals, and birds.

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Scenario 2
Slow Eco-Life

PERSONS

Person 2
Samar Cushy (58 years old, he/him) is a lifelong student and caretaker

Samar Cushy never graduated but continues living in the institution as a caretaker and part of the artistic community, having united art and life in a slow and eco-friendly lifestyle. Money is of no value to him and communal sharing is of utmost importance. In addition to farming food for the school, Samar organises community arts and learning together happenings in public spaces, aiming to provide support and hope in uncertain times. Samar has an essential role in the local community by connecting people who want to give meaning to their lives, learn new things, and practice sustainability.

Person 3
Rebecca Sage (51 years old, she/her) is a professor and leading role model in sustainability issues

Rebecca Sage is a highly respected professor internationally, one of the leading figures in dealing with the world's wicked problems. She has proven the power of art and artistic thinking in collaboration with other disciplines and organisations. Recently, she collaborated with marine biologists and molecular biologists in exploring new methods for identifying and destroying pollutive particles in seawater with the help of eco-friendly colours. Another global project assessed the impact of humming on a population's well-being. The daily humming routine was based on indigenous traditions. She is also a member of a global network distributing art-based and scientific knowledge to individual citizens through artistic means. Professor Sage is a role model for artists who want to be change-makers in society via art and artistic practices.

Person 4
Kylin Nayati (38 years old, they/them) is a pioneer in interspecies research

Kylin Nayati is involved in several artistic interspecies research projects. They study communication with mycelium and insects via artistic methods and create structures and new artistic materials with nesting animals and spiders. They mainly participate in international research seminars and conferences using online tools. However, long-distance travel is accepted once a year when using short-haul flights with electric aeroplanes or travelling overland within working hours. Kylin has time in their work week not only to do research but also to be inactive, relax, rest, or drift without immediate objectives. This gives them time to be involved as a non-professional singer in a popular choir project with blackbirds and humans which is currently testing new species to get involved.

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Scenario 2
Slow Eco-Life

GUIDANCE TO SHAPE A SLOW ECO-LIFE SCENARIO

Introduction

To advance the transformation of higher arts education in a Slow Eco-Life future scenario context, some specific perspectives, such as fostering a comprehensive approach that integrates sustainability, regenerative and indigenous practices, and ethical considerations, are crucial. Arts universities should work on curricular changes and financial incentives to support this and develop standardised ethical frameworks to achieve it.

Leveraging the following topics can contribute to transforming higher arts education, making it more responsive to the evolving needs and challenges of a Slow Eco-Life future scenario.

Guidance 1
Integrate sustainability into curriculum development

Addressing ecological crises and ensuring sustainable practices requires educational institutions to coach students and staff about the importance of sustainability and how to implement that knowledge in their study and work.

Facilitate and support sustainability, regenerative and indigenous practices, and promote interspecies collaborations in arts universities. This ensures that every graduate has the knowledge and skills to contribute actively towards a sustainable future.

Guidance 2
Foster decentralisation and community engagement

Decentralised higher arts institutions can become focal points for community engagement and sustainability, as they are situated where local interaction and resource management are crucial.

Provide financial incentives and grants to institutions establishing campuses in rural and peripheral areas. Encourage partnerships between these institutions and local communities to stimulate knowledge exchange and facilitate community service learning.

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Scenario 2
Slow Eco-Life

GUIDANCE TO SHAPE A SLOW ECO-LIFE SCENARIO

Guidance 3
Support slow culture and degrowth

Embracing slowness and degrowth allows for deeper understanding, innovation, and introspection, leading to holistic and sustainable solutions. This nature-oriented perspective helps to appreciate collaboration over competition, and well-being over consumption.

Develop policies that promote the valuation of quality over quantity in academic research and artistic outputs. Encourage institutions to have flexible project timelines for in-depth exploration, reflection, and critical assessment.

Guidance 4
Promote inclusive decision-making and flat hierarchies

Empowering students and staff to ensure that diverse voices are heard can lead to innovative solutions and holistic community well-being. This also helps to promote the highest standards of equality and equity in leadership and governance.

Introduce policies to promote and encourage diverse and equal representation in decision-making and provide training and resources for stakeholders to adopt consensus-based decision-making. Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of these models and adjust policies as needed to ensure they align with the needs of all diverse voices and the institution.

Guidance 5
Implement ethical standards for artistic practices

With the rise of greenwashing and questionable employment practices, it is crucial to have a strong ethical foundation in art practices.

Develop a standardised ethical framework for higher arts institutions to address sustainable means, employment standards, and fair representation. Regular audits of institutions ensure compliance with these standards and encourage institutions to evolve their practices in response to changing societal needs.

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Scenario 3
Phygital Frontiers

Image source: **FAST45 Learning Platform Image Bank**

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Scenario 3
Phygital Frontiers

SCENARIO ABSTRACT

By 2045, quantum cloud computing, artificial intelligence, and neurotechnology have revolutionised daily life, education, healthcare, and the arts. These advancements enable personalised learning and the seamless blend of physical and digital realities: the phygital environment. 'Cyborgification', with artists enhancing their bodies for artistic expression, challenges societal norms and ethics. AI-driven tools facilitate real-time learning analysis and guidance. Generative technologies revolutionise artistic research. Decentralised autonomous organisations manage educational institutes, supported by human bodies overseeing decision-making, solution proposals, and ethics. The rise of technology-driven art and art-driven technology challenges ethical norms and legal structures, necessitating fresh perspectives and legislation.

MAIN DRIVERS AND TRENDS

- Quantum cloud computing opened hitherto unfathomable frontiers in maths, science, and tech
- Generative and immersive technologies have become ubiquitous, also in learning technology
- Neurotechnology is impacting daily life, education, healthcare and the arts
- Physical and digital spaces have become more and more blended
- 'Cyborgification' advances in healthcare inspire early adopters in art scenes to experiment with enhancing their bodies 'for art's sake'
- Growing recognition of the role of arts and design in addressing industry and societal challenges

THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT IN 2045

We're in a world in which AI is so ubiquitous that it has become almost impossible to find technology that is 'AI-free'. Neurosciences have made impressive advancements and neurotechnology has become a huge economy, with more and more interfaces, tools, and gadgets becoming widely available. Since the 2030s, quantum computing has powered a new era in individual learning, enabled through the timely processing of huge amounts of student data for designing programmes that adapt to students' unique achievements and abilities.

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Scenario 3
Phygital Frontiers

THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT IN 2045

The domains of technology-driven art and art-driven technology keep pushing scientific developments, spawning new art domains and questioning and exploring ethical boundaries. For example, there's a worldwide underground art scene interested in exploring the potential of these new technologies to transform our understanding of what it means to be human. They experiment with combining generative AI and emerging multisensorial technologies to try and create new, uncanny experiences that manipulate human consciousness, alter perceptions, or induce altered states of consciousness. Needless to say, much of the art produced by this underground scene operates in a grey area, as it may be illegal or ethically questionable.

In a society that has widely accepted (and even promotes) the idea that the arts significantly contribute to business and society, the adaptive hybrid artist thrives. Creatives that can take on flexible job roles and find creative job opportunities in other professional fields, businesses, and governmental offices easily find jobs, also in highly valued positions.

THE PATH

Nineteen years ago, in 2026, the New European Arts School (NEAS) was the first pan-European higher arts initiative to respond to the unignorable trend of technology-driven art and art-driven technology. The end of the 2020s saw a few massively impressive artworks getting much worldwide media attention and igniting a broader belief that art and tech can save the world. Two famous examples are Studio Roosegaarde's Space Waste Fireworks and the desertification-reversing bioBomb artwork by Raw Land Collective. This translated to the growing recruitment of creative profiles both in the industry and the public sector.

Kids that were born in this period—and who are now the youngest people at the New European Arts School—grew up as 'AI natives'. As toddlers, they consumed media that were auto-generated by AI. While at primary school in the 2030s, they learned most subjects while being helped by quantum cloud-based AI assistants, saw news coverage of wars in which humans fight soldier bots, and became the first generation to have real conversations with their cat using the petChat gadget.

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Scenario 3
Phygital Frontiers

THE PATH

In the first half of the 2030s, neuroscience took a giant leap and neurotechnology became widely available at reasonable prices. That had an enormous impact on healthcare but also drastically changed the education and entertainment industries. The growing possibilities and availability of neurotechnology strongly accelerated the experience-oriented economy in these sectors.

The rapid advances in generative and immersive technology paved the way for digital space blending in with physical space more and more, to the extent that, around the turn of the decade, it was not always clear whether experiences were 'real' or 'virtual'. It sparked the need for clear international legislation concerning the creation and distribution of mixed-reality experiences, which led to a new field of scientific, philosophical, and legal research.

Today, in 2045, technology-driven art and art-driven technology have become standard practices, both in the industry and the arts. NEAS is still a beacon in the arts education landscape, offering a full-fledged *phygital* interdisciplinary learning environment that helps young creatives become adaptive, multi-skilled, confident, and self- and world-aware artists and designers.

DESCRIPTION OF THE HIGHER ARTS EDUCATION LANDSCAPE

The New European Arts School pioneered designing education that helps young creatives become adaptive, multi-skilled, confident, and self- and world-aware artists. As the result of a mid-2020s European Education Development project, it was quickly promoted as best practice in both the way it creates (often self-organised) interdisciplinary learning environments and how it is organised as a decentralised international horizontal and fluid structure. To cite the Commission's evaluation report: "A radical attempt to interact and collaborate within local, regional, and international networks, focusing on horizontal relations beyond monodisciplinary domains and paradigms."

AI algorithms perform real-time analysis of student progress and provide reliable feedback and ideas for the next steps in learning while also identifying areas where a student may need additional support or resources. Activities such as transferring bodily knowledge, exercising (hand)crafting skills, facilitating critique sessions, training (team) communication competencies, and confronting ethical challenges are usually organised in

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Scenario 3
Phygital Frontiers

DESCRIPTION OF THE HIGHER ARTS EDUCATION LANDSCAPE

similar ways as in the 2010s and 2020s. Educational staff with expertise in guiding international interdisciplinary teams in dealing with complexity have become increasingly important. These 'new lecturers' are skilled at inspiring value and vision-infused collaboration and creativity in these teams while also being well-trained meta-learning guides and good networkers and connectors. Moreover, they have a deep technical understanding of the generative and immersive learning tools, allowing them to make learners understand and reflect upon how these systems can help or mislead. The old hierarchical student-lecturer paradigm is outdated and abolished. Many learners earn money by giving workshops, coaching, or administering at NEAS, and most of the learning facilitators are enrolled in one or more classes.

Image source: **FAST45 – Arts School Futures Labs**

Working at NEAS means that you are part of an interdisciplinary team, operating as project consultants, learning facilitators, and individual and team coaches. Immersive technologies have solved most of the issues plaguing what people used to call 'hybrid learning environments' in the 2020s and 2030s. Working, learning, and socialising in phygital space feels very 'normal' and is valued almost as much as the local physical learning activities.

Generative technologies have revolutionised (artistic) research. Certified Research Assistant Services are accurate and reliable analytical and generative research tools widely adopted by the international research community. Contrary to the doom scenarios which were often part of the discourse in research communities in the first half of the 2020s, these services have drastically increased the originality, authenticity, variety, quality, and availability of research output. The erosion of the classic notion of authorship, which started a good decade ago, made way for broader interpretations of shared authorship and the blooming of more inclusive artistic research practices. This trend not only propels the diversification of 'ways of knowing' but also starts valuing the role of many research stakeholders in generating new knowledge.

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Scenario 3
Phygital Frontiers

DESCRIPTION OF THE HIGHER ARTS EDUCATION LANDSCAPE

The New European Arts School is run by an AI-driven educational DAO (decentralised autonomous organisation) service, which helps to align decision-making and budgeting in the different international on- and offline hubs. The service is extended with three 'human' bodies: one body that updates the agenda of issues that need decision-making; one body that researches these issues and proposes solutions that can be voted upon through the DAO service; and one body that functions as 'regulator' and ethical board. These bodies are composed of randomly drawn institution members (learners, learning facilitators, researchers, administrative and technical personnel, etc.) who are replaced every six months and are paid for their work as body members.

PERSONS

Person 1
Ro Ro (47 years old, born in 1998, Belgrade, SRB) is a highly acclaimed artist and founding member of Raw Land Collective

Born while their Afghan parents were fleeing to Europe, Rostam Muss Rojput entered higher arts education at the age of 17. Their sister was doing a PhD in biotechnology at that time, which greatly influenced how Rostam (who now uses the pseudonym Ro Ro) approached their art studies. In 2020 they formed Raw Land Collective (RLC) with their sister and two fellow art students. RLC's (often smile-inducing) bio-art-based guerilla actions did not go unnoticed. The collective quickly grew into an international interdisciplinary collective of engaged artists, scientists, lawyers, hackers, and educators with a mission to tackle climate change. In 2028, their work bioBomb astonished the world by combining an unseen aesthetic power with effectively reversing the desertification of the East African grasslands. In 2045, Ro Ro remains the artistic thought leader of RLC, which now operates as a 50-employee company based on a business model that combines activism with working for and with governmental bodies.

Person 2
Pita van Laethegem (23 years old, born in 2022, Lievegem, BE) is a student/lecturer at NEAS

Pita has been a NEAS student for five years. At the age of 15 she started hacking her body and later started using her art studies to explore further the practical and artistic possibilities of her ongoing cyborgification. Now, at age 23, she is experimenting with generative tech tools and neuroBots to generate unexpected and uncanny sensations. In 2042, she was drawn to be a six-month member of one of the NEAS governing bodies, a mandate she used mainly to bring special attention to the accessibility gap of some workshops and courses for those fellow students who cannot afford the newest immersive tech bots. For one year now, she combines her studies with teaching an experimental tech class.

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Scenario 3
Phygital Frontiers

PERSONS

Person 3
See-Jay (49 years old, born in 1996, Los Angeles, US) is a lecturer/researcher at NEAS, neurohacker, generative AI expert, and vintage death metal enthusiast

See-Jay is a much-respected lecturer/researcher. His colleagues and students admire his deep understanding of new technologies and his playful, artful explorations in misleading and 'abusing' these technologies. His artistic output is notable for ethically questioning the technologies with which his works are made. Cannibacchanal is probably the best-known example, using pikrosynth neurotech (generative virtual flavour synthesis) to induce an almost-real feeling of the experience of eating and actually *tasting* human meat.

Last week he was drawn to be a member of the NEAS Agenda Board, meaning he will have less time during the upcoming six months (until someone else is drawn to take his place) to work on his research project Lucida, which explores how the newest EarBots on the market can be used to induce and manipulate dreams.

Person 4
Cif Cif (41 years old, born in 2004, Bruges, BE) is an administrator and tech coach at NEAS

While rector of LUCA School of Arts (Ghent, Belgium), Cif Cif initiated the New European Arts School project in 2026 with five European and two Middle Eastern partner institutions. The main goal was to try to develop a new educational paradigm to tackle some of the long-lingering issues that plagued higher arts education: old-fashioned hierarchical governing structures, prolonged adaptation to new societal and technological evolutions, and an unmet student need for an interdisciplinary approach to arts education. Indeed, his last action as a rector was to make his function no longer needed. He is still passionately involved in the NEAS project, helping new students and colleagues understand how to best use the many available administrative and learning bots.

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Scenario 3
Phygital Frontiers

GUIDANCE TO SHAPE A PHYGITAL FRONTIERS SCENARIO

Introduction

Integrating advanced technology, multidisciplinary collaboration, and lifelong learning programmes are central to supporting the transformation of higher arts education in a Phygital Frontiers future scenario context. Arts universities should promote a multifaceted approach focused on technology infrastructure, ethical standards, and governance reform.

Leveraging the following topics can contribute to transforming higher arts education, making it more responsive to the evolving needs and challenges of a Phygital Frontiers future scenario.

Guidance 1
Embrace and invest in phygital infrastructure

The seamless blend of physical and digital realities (phygital environment) is foundational for the future of arts universities. This blended space might become central to learning, artistic expression, and research.

Allocate significant funding towards establishing phygital infrastructures in arts universities, encompassing hardware and software. Encourage and support the integration of quantum cloud computing set-ups, multisensorial technology, neurotech interfaces, AI-driven learning analysis tools, and generative technologies into the educational environment.

Guidance 2
Develop legislation for ethical and legal boundaries

The Phygital Frontiers scenario highlights numerous ethical dilemmas, from cyborgification to the creation of potentially disturbing sensory experiences. There is a need for guidance and standards that help stakeholders in cultural and creative industries align their work with existing legislation on the European and national levels.

Develop guidelines and ethical standards around technology-driven art and art-driven technology in cultural and creative industries. Regularly review and update these guidelines and standards to keep pace with rapid technological advancements. Ensure these guidelines and standards are implemented in curricula or critical explorations of ideas are developed within artistic research or arts educational practices.

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Scenario 3
Phygital Frontiers

GUIDANCE TO SHAPE A PHYGITAL FRONTIERS SCENARIO

Guidance 3
Promote interdisciplinary collaboration

Arts universities in this Phygital Frontiers scenario are deeply interdisciplinary and merge technology, arts, neuroscience, and more.

Advocate for policies and creative structures that intensify interdisciplinary studies and collaborations. This might include funding interdisciplinary research grants, facilitating partnerships between tech firms and arts institutions, and promoting curricula that blend art with science, technology, and ethics.

Guidance 4
Stimulate adaptive and continuous learning

The Phygital Frontiers scenario showcases an ongoing, lifelong learning approach where roles like student and lecturer have become fluid. It also shows a need for new procedures and innovative structures to align educational programmes continuously with societal developments and industry demands.

Endorse policies and financial resources supporting continuous learning, recognising that, in a rapidly changing technological landscape, higher arts education cannot be confined to three or five years. Promote financial incentives for adults returning to education and the development of platforms offering modular and on-demand learning tailored to individual needs.

Guidance 5
Empower decentralised governance

The Phygital Frontiers scenario promotes governance by a decentralised model, with AI-driven tools assisting human bodies in decision-making and ethics. This model promotes agility, responsiveness, and inclusiveness.

Encourage the adoption of more horizontal and decentralised governance models within arts universities. Provide guidelines, best practices, and tools for local decision-makers looking to implement such models. Advocate for transparency in decision-making processes and prioritise stakeholder involvement, diverse representation, and technology assistance.

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Scenario 4
Profitable Endeavours

Image source: **FAST45 – Arts School Futures Labs**

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Scenario 4
Profitable Endeavours

SCENARIO ABSTRACT

In the face of an increased neoliberal climate and right-wing politics, artists, arts organisations, and arts universities must adapt to a business-oriented environment and setbacks in academic and artistic freedom. While there are opportunities in customised education, university-business partnerships, and impact-focused research, economic challenges persist due to diverse needs and austerity measures. Cross-border mergers enhance competitiveness for some universities, but degree programmes in higher arts education remain accessible mainly to the privileged. Affordable micro-credentials address immediate employment needs but fail to bridge the opportunity gap in degree programmes, narrowing perspectives in artistic thinking, art-making, and research. Informal networks and agile alliances outside arts universities organise arts education and foster artistic inquiry at the grassroots level with increasing artistic and intellectual success.

MAIN DRIVERS AND TRENDS

- Economic recession
- Right-wing politics
- Neoliberalism
- Consumerism
- University-industry collaboration

THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT IN 2045

In the 2040s, within a neoliberal climate enforced by a rightward political shift, EU Member States prioritise austerity, market efficiency, deregulation, and privatisation. This results in limited public funding, a focus on industry-driven higher education, and a shift towards viewing the arts as a luxury. This climate threatens freedom of expression due to ideological polarisation and government interventions, including no-platforming, ostracism, and self-censorship.

Despite these challenges, some artists succeed within high-profile social networks, securing contracts in traditional artistic fields or offering innovative professional services to non-arts sectors. These collaborations provide opportunities for creative thinking and artful outputs, often with corporate partnerships contributing

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Scenario 4 **Profitable Endeavours**

THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT IN 2045

to their competitiveness. However, artists adhering to a traditional view of art may struggle to maintain their creative vision in such collaborations.

With reduced public funding, arts organisations face competition for external funding and donations. Their benefactors and partners expect measurable social and economic impact, and business partners seek content control to protect their image. As a result, many organisations opt for conservative programming over experimentation, leading to standardised, mainstream-focused arts services, limiting the diversity and vibrancy of the cultural landscape.

THE PATH

In 2025, EU countries facing economic challenges due to Russia's aggression in Ukraine embrace long-term austerity measures that reinforce the neoliberal trends in higher education. Neoliberalism continues to prioritise competition, unregulated markets, and university privatisation as the dominant discourse in European educational politics.

By the late 2020s, a rightward political shift, influenced by Russia's operations, lead some European nations towards authoritarianism. This shift results in censorship, declining freedom of expression, and an oppressive environment for dissent and critical discourses. In democratic states, increased political polarisation and the radicalisation of social and environmental activism have limited intellectual diversity and hindered the free exchange of ideas. This has resulted in self-censorship, restricting freedom of speech, diverse dialogue, creativity, and progress.

In 2035, EU Member States shift their focus from collective welfare to individual responsibility, favoring tax cuts and further eroding the welfare state. This shift leads to higher tuition fees, increased student debt, and greater societal inequality, exacerbating the opportunity gap. Additionally, in 2038, public funding for arts and humanities subjects is abolished, redirecting higher education investment towards areas aligned with immediate societal and economic needs. This transformation radically reshapes Europe's arts and higher arts education landscape.

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Scenario 4
Profitable Endeavours

DESCRIPTION OF THE HIGHER ARTS EDUCATION LANDSCAPE

In a competitive neoliberal climate, successful arts universities are engaging in international cross-border mergers to gain a competitive edge, combining resources and expertise. For example, Uniarts Nordic, founded in 2039, brought together six European arts universities, creating a virtual, interdisciplinary arts university focused on artistic thinking and innovation in the Nordic region. Similarly, Universidad de las Artes International, established in 2041, merged a Spanish arts university with several Latin American art and design schools.

These mergers foster competition, compelling arts universities to refine their strategies, develop unique programmes, and cater to cross-sectoral knowledge transfer and workforce demands. They collaborate with influencers to enhance their visibility, attracting funding, business partnerships, and affluent students. Due to their polished brand images, these universities are expected to deliver high-quality education and services.

Arts universities treat education as a market commodity, charging high tuition fees based on competency-focused, job-relevant curricula for individual student needs. They now employ mass customisation to combine the benefits of personalised learning paths with the cost efficiency of mass-produced micro-credentials and AI-enabled scalable educational support. In addition, they generate revenue through IP commercialisation, external grants for research and development, consultancy services, online lifelong learning programmes, commissioned research, and tailored education and development services for businesses. Moreover, they establish university-business partnerships to monetise student and researcher work. However, challenges persist in aligning the individual interests of students and researchers with particular project themes and objectives. Furthermore, reducing the cost of human instructors, who play a crucial role in emotional support, mentorship, and fostering critical thinking and creativity skills, remains an ongoing concern.

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Scenario 4
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DESCRIPTION OF THE HIGHER ARTS EDUCATION LANDSCAPE

Many arts universities have restructured research, focusing on externally funded projects and forming interdisciplinary teams with needs-based and impact-driven research objectives. Researchers dedicated to basic research often struggle to secure financing and infrastructure support. However, strategically designed interdisciplinary research initiatives with business partnerships can secure funding and produce high-quality, impactful results, benefiting selected artist-researchers. Nonetheless, navigating intellectual property rights and contractual issues can be challenging. Additionally, rising right-wing politics and societal activism impose threats to academic freedom, constraining freedom of expression for researchers and educators.

Narrowing their focus on university-industry collaboration and working life competencies, arts universities continue to disown Humboldtian values of holistic personal development and in-depth intellectual growth. This, together with the gentrification of higher arts education due to rising tuition fees, will expand the crisis in arts and humanities. Also, it contributes to the banalisation of Western civilisation by narrowing the diversity of perspectives, experiences, and interests voiced in and through the arts universities.

Amid these challenges, some talented artists, educators, and researchers resist neoliberal pressures by leaving arts universities to maintain their autonomy and creativity. They establish alternative arts education and research models through digital platforms, fostering experimentation, activism, and diversity. These efforts involve informal networks, alliances, sharing, and grassroots organisations supported by volunteers and philanthropy. Their bold initiatives attract high-calibre artists, researchers, and students, making it harder for traditional arts universities to secure top talent. The lack of dialogue between these innovators and universities hinders progress in higher arts education, leading to stagnant programmes and research that fail to embrace new modes of artistic thinking and interdisciplinary connections.

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Scenario 4
Profitable Endeavours

PERSONS

Person 1
Ever Halston (19 years old, ze/zir) is a virtual dream performance design student

Ever, a non-binary virtual dream performance design student at Uniarts Nordic, has been an influencer since birth. With over 100M followers on Hol-o-gram, 52.7M on VirtuMe, and zir witty comedic content, ze ranks as one of the most followed university brand ambassadors among teenagers and their parents in Europe. A recent deal with Ever has brought Uniarts Nordic positive publicity and tons of carefully segmented followers on many social media channels, which has boosted its international attractiveness by more than 300 per cent and brought in 3,200 new online students with a turnover approaching 16M euros during the past quarter.

Person 2
Rain Reed (43 years old, he/him) is a performance artist, entrepreneur, and real estate investor

Rain is a performance artist, entrepreneur, and real estate investor with much at stake. He has created a successful career as a hybrid artist, providing mass-customised artistic interventions to help businesses improve their performance with creative ecological and social sustainability campaigns. Currently, Rain's portfolio includes active projects with 16 businesses, and soon he will sign long-term contracts with two multinational corporations. He is seeking to hire two hybrid artists to work as project managers and liaisons for students at the local arts school as unpaid trainees. Rain will discuss with his lawyer Carla the upcoming lawsuit in which he accuses a technology company of copyright infringement. He aims to settle the dispute before the trial and get 3M euros in compensation from the company.

Person 3
Belen Alfaro (48 years old, she/her) is a HR director

Belen is a HR director at Universidad de las Artes International. Formerly the HR director of a large-scale business corporation, Belen joined UAI recently in search of a less stressful position. She has implemented a bonus system in the university. Now, she is busy introducing other best practices she has learned from the business sector to optimise all employees' economic performance. These changes have intensified competition and negatively impacted the university community, including relationships, everyday practices, atmosphere, and work culture. Consequently, there has been an increase in withholding information, silent quitting, sick leaves, quitting, and turnover. Belen finds it challenging to understand why recruiting talented artists, art educators, and researchers is so difficult. She finds their talk about artistic autonomy and academic freedom a sign of irritating, outdated ideologism. After all, everyone working at the university should understand the idea of value creation and profit-making.

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Scenario 4
Profitable Endeavours

PERSONS

Person 4
Arja Thurn (52 years old, she/her) is a self-employed visual artist

Arja is a self-employed visual artist. After graduating as a sculptor from the Fine Arts Academy in 2019, Arja's career has been slow to take up. Inspired by the works of artists such as Louise Bourgeois, Faith Wilding, and Rosemarie Trockel, Arja has employed crocheting as a material and a feminist approach to investigate politically charged themes. She has participated in exhibitions that address her interests. Money is tight for Arja, as her work doesn't generate significant income streams. She has been successful in receiving grants from private foundations. She works at a local bar between funding periods to make ends meet. She would benefit from continuing education programmes and micro-credentials to conceptualise her artistic competencies and earn more. Still, these options are out of reach due to her financial situation.

Person 5
Emmet Viera (32 years old, ey/em/eirs) is an artist-researcher

Emmet is an artist-researcher interested in the limits of freedom of expression. In 2043, ey created a controversial online performance that addressed violence and abuse in sexual behaviour seen from a pleasure point of view, creating moral turmoil at Uniarts Nordic. Ostracised and cyber-bullied by student activists fighting for a non-violent, sex-free university and censored by the university leadership to avoid reputational damage, Emmet left Uniarts Nordic in 2044. Ey now works on an open digital platform to defend artistic freedom and provide a space for radical creative content that induces stimulating debate and includes diverse perspectives to generate a broad and in-depth understanding of what freedom of art means. Since leaving Uniarts Nordic, Emmet's followers on social media have rocketed, and ey has established a career as a public speaker with five-figure fees.

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Scenario 4 **Profitable Endeavours**

GUIDANCE TO SHAPE A PROFITABLE ENDEAVOURS SCENARIO

Introduction

To advance the transformation of higher arts education in a Profitable Endeavours future scenario, fostering sustainable funding, freedom of expression, international collaboration, and artist-centric intellectual property in arts and higher arts education are crucial. Arts universities should advocate for a comprehensive approach that combines long-term financing and enduring financial support, academic freedom, intellectual property protection, and versatile collaborations.

Leveraging the following topics can contribute to transforming higher arts education, making it more responsive to the evolving needs and challenges of a Profitable Endeavours future scenario.

Guidance 1
Re-evaluate public funding models

A stable funding model ensures that arts universities can maintain operations despite economic downturns or political shifts. Accessible and quality higher arts education for all citizens, regardless of socio-economic background, can drive cultural enrichment, innovation, and societal cohesion.

Develop and implement legal frameworks and establish public funding models for arts universities prioritising sustainability. Introduce grants and financial incentives for staff and students to promote equal opportunity in arts education and artistic research.

Guidance 2
Reinforce academic and artistic freedom

The arts have historically been a platform for diverse voices, critical thinking, and societal reflection. Protecting the freedom of expression in these institutions is crucial for a society's cultural and intellectual growth.

Implement national and European policies protecting freedom of expression, opinion, and artistic creation in professional and academic contexts. Ensure these policies shield educational institutions, educators, researchers, and students from undue political or extremist influences.

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Scenario 4 **Profitable Endeavours**

GUIDANCE TO SHAPE A PROFITABLE ENDEAVOURS SCENARIO

Guidance 3
Promote cross-border collaborations and partnerships

In a fragmented landscape marked by austerity and varying regional challenges, collaboration can pool resources, foster innovation, and ensure the resilience of the arts sector.

Provide financial resources and legal frameworks for facilitating cross-border alliances and networks in higher arts education to enable resource sharing, knowledge exchange, and unified resistance against prevailing challenges. Support institutional collaborations with grassroots entities to tap into the vibrancy of informal networks and local expertise.

Guidance 4
Enhance adaptability and resilience

In an ever-evolving sociopolitical and technological landscape, higher arts education should remain relevant and adaptive, offering students tools for personal development and practical applicability.

Endorse university-industry-business collaboration and prioritise holistic educational models. Encourage the integration of modern technology to foster scalable, customised, and relevant programmes while ensuring a diverse and critical curriculum.

Guidance 5
Strengthen intellectual property rights and support structures

With increasing collaborations between artists, researchers, and the corporate sector, there is a heightened risk of exploitation and ambiguity around rights and responsibilities.

Establish and implement clear, artist-centric intellectual property guidelines and collaboration frameworks to protect artists and researchers from exploitation. Provide training resources and support structures to help artists and researchers navigate contracts and collaborations with corporate entities.

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FAST45 Policy Recommendations

Image source: **FAST45 Learning Platform Image Bank**

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FAST45 Policy Recommendations

INTRODUCTION

The four Future Scenarios outlined above stem from the collaborative efforts in the Arts School Futures Labs. As highlighted earlier, these four scenarios serve as a cornerstone and integral feature in developing a dynamic agenda for strategic planning, shaping the future of the higher arts education landscape.

The guidance for each scenario is derived from analysing the scenarios and offering policymakers and decision-makers tools to transform higher arts education. Likewise, the guidance helps to align higher arts education with the evolving needs and challenges identified during the project.

The policy recommendations presented in this chapter are the next iteration and synthesis of the guidance extrapolated for each scenario. During the FAST45 closing event Futures (Un)known (7 December 2023), a panel of experts in policy and leadership in the domain of arts and education in Europe gathered to discuss these policy recommendations. Key takeaways from this panel conversation are included at the end of this chapter.

FUTURE THINKING FOR POLICYMAKING

The FAST45 project implemented future thinking methodologies to envision possible futures for higher arts education institutions. Further reflection on the valuable insights gained from this exercise raises two important questions. First, how can we use the new input generated through future thinking methodologies to benefit policy and strategy development in the 'now'? Second, does future thinking offer techniques through which long-term perspectives can effectively be integrated into policy and strategy development?

The starting point to answer these questions is based on Roy Amara's three principles, stating that the future is unpredictable and not predetermined but still can be influenced (see p. 8). That is why it can be assumed that the actions of policymakers and leadership of higher arts education institutions today will impact the future resilience of the higher arts education sector and, therefore, really matter.

As described in a paragraph below, the panel of experts confirmed this potential of futures thinking as a possible starting point for developing long-term political and institutional strategies in

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FAST45 Policy Recommendations

FUTURE THINKING FOR POLICYMAKING

changing contexts. Higher arts education institutions are navigating a world in a state of constant flux. Consequently, it is crucial that higher arts education institutions adapt to transitions, anticipate futures, and build their resilience as part of a larger knowledge and innovation ecosystem and policy framework.

The four futures scenarios and the guidance related to each scenario reflect multiple global developments that challenge the leading structure and narrative on which higher arts education institutions operate. These include digital and technological developments, societal and political transitions, and climate and environmental change. However, the future could unfold in many different ways, further influenced by the variety, speed, and asynchrony of these developments. Therefore, it is key to strengthening the resilience of the sector by anticipating future needs and creating policy that supports the sustainability and flexibility of the sector and its capacity to adapt promptly to changing political, societal, or economic circumstances.

Following this, the overarching goal of developing future scenarios is to create an environment for futures thinking that is open to the idea of continuous change. It anchors the spirit of adaptive transformation and sustainability in which political decision-making welcomes and values long-term perspectives and future-oriented thinking.

The four scenarios stimulate reflection and discussion by offering different 'What if?' settings (cf. Arts School Futures Labs Guidelines, p. 9). These 'What if?' settings raise a set of follow-up questions:

- How can discussions around future scenarios be structured to facilitate political decision-making and strategising processes that include long-term, future-oriented thinking? In what contexts should these discussions occur, and which actors should be involved?
- Are the current governance models and policymaking processes equipped to facilitate this exchange and futures thinking? Or are they too focused on the short term? If so, how could we update them to support futures resilience?

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FAST45

Policy Recommendations

FUTURE THINKING FOR POLICYMAKING

Photo by **Jaan Heinmaa** / Used with permission

- How can discussion outcomes be documented to be useful for policymakers and leadership of higher arts education institutions? How can we bridge the work of the futures researchers and actions in 'the now'?
- Can it be useful to invite more people to develop scenarios, which are then brought into relation or conversation with the scenarios presented above?
- What do the scenarios mean for educational programmes and curriculum development? Is the model of organising learning programmes through curricula suitable for integrating future perspectives? And, are the current governance structures around developing educational programmes and curricula equipped for it?
- What would the timeline for a mid-term and long-term agenda look like?
- How can we deal with the complex challenges of rather short political mandates and their relation to long-term planning? How can strategy and policy outlast the mandate period?

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FAST45 Policy Recommendations

KEY THEMES EMERGING FROM THE SCENARIOS

Some common threads and recurring themes can be derived directly from the scenarios and the guidance related to each scenario. The eight policy recommendations below cluster these themes to make them easily translatable into key features for policy and strategy. Consequently, the policy recommendations can be a starting point for making the sector resilient, future-oriented, and future-proof.

Recommendation 1
Increased flexibility and adaptability in higher arts education sector governance

This applies to:

- governance models (e.g., implementing and experimenting with more participatory governance models);
- institutional administrative processes;
- reviewing the funding infrastructures to allow for more innovation and flexibility;
- regular evaluation of strategic goals within a system of recurring cycles (such as the PDCA cycle or triple-loop learning).

Recommendation 2
Increased flexibility and adaptability in curriculum development

This includes:

- support for the development of interdisciplinary curricula and curricula with a more holistic view on education (possibly side-by-side with more traditional curriculum elements; the one does not necessarily exclude the other);
- pening up curricular concepts towards student-centred and self-directed learning;
- pursuing comprehensive strategies for lifelong learning;
- fostering international and cultural exchange;
- taking into account issues of digital and environmental transition.

Recommendation 3
Strengthening the interaction between arts and society

This includes:

- promoting a concept of Cultural Citizenship based on the recognition of the multiplicity of voices and the valuing of differences;
- strengthening the ethical aspect of the arts and dealing with arts;
- protecting freedom of (artistic) expression.

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FAST45 Policy Recommendations

KEY THEMES EMERGING FROM THE SCENARIOS

Recommendation 4
Making higher arts education more diverse and accessible

This includes:

- reconsidering the sector's common understanding of quality;
- broadening access to higher arts education;
- empowering students and staff to ensure diverse voices are heard.

Recommendation 5
Support slow culture and (self-)reflective approaches

This includes:

- promoting the valuation of quality over quantity in academic research and artistic outputs;
- encouraging institutions to have flexible project timelines for in-depth exploration, reflection, and critical assessment.

Recommendation 6
Stimulate adaptability towards generative and immersive technologies

This includes:

- making sure that ethical standards are met around technology-driven art and art-driven technology;
- allocating funding towards establishing infrastructures and training.

Recommendation 7
Re-evaluate public funding models to promote artistic research

This includes:

- recognising higher arts education institutions as key players within the knowledge and innovation ecosystems;
- fully recognising artistic research as a driver of innovation, one that is constantly pushing the boundaries of the field, and supporting the artistic research infrastructure;
- providing more funding for interdisciplinary research and joint research projects, bringing together higher arts education institutions and external research and innovation partners.

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FAST45 Policy Recommendations

KEY THEMES EMERGING FROM THE SCENARIOS

Recommendation 8
Collaborations with third parties, partners, and other actors

This includes:

- strengthening transdisciplinarity;
- collaborations with industries;
- collaborations with citizens and grassroots initiatives;
- collaborations with sectors beyond arts and cultures, including as part of multi-actor approaches.

TAKEAWAYS FROM THE FUTURES (UN)KNOWN PANEL

The Futures (Un)known Panel took place during the final event of the FAST45 project and aimed to advance the conversation about implementing future thinking methodologies in policymaking and to disseminate policy recommendations.

The panel was facilitated by Lars Ebert, Secretary General of Culture Action Europe, and brought together a group of experts from higher arts education institutions and the European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture:

- Simon van Damme, Dean of LUCA School of Arts
- Susanne Stürmer, President of ELIA and President of Film University Babelsberg Konrad Wolf
- Deborah Kelleher, President of AEC and Director of the Royal Irish Academy of Music
- Barbara Stacher, Senior Expert, Cultural Policy Unit, Directorate-General for Education and Culture, European Commission
- Svein Hullstein, Policy Officer, Higher Education Policy, Directorate-General for Education and Culture, European Commission

From the point of view of the FAST45 project partner organisations, the key takeaways from the panel discussion can be summarised as follows.

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FAST45 Policy Recommendations

TAKEAWAYS FROM THE FUTURES (UN)KNOWN PANEL

The panel discussion was rich and confirmed the potential of futures thinking as a possible starting point for developing long-term political and institutional strategies in different contexts. To be effective, this effort cannot happen in closed bubbles. Therefore, the representatives of higher arts education institutions and policymakers at the national and European levels need to collaborate on future thinking to achieve long-term results.

This collaboration should build on a shared understanding of the following points:

- Respect for the autonomy and independence of higher arts education institutions to set the content of their curricula and research.
- Recognition that higher arts education is well placed to prepare alumni for future working opportunities because of the creative skills they acquire during their studies.
- There is a need for higher arts education institutions to diversify, digitalise, adapt to societal developments, and commit to environmental sustainability.
- The key role of funding from the European Union (and other public funding) in supporting higher arts education institutions in fulfilling their role in knowledge and innovation ecosystems. This funding should be made as accessible as possible.
- Nurturing and further developing the important role European frameworks play in facilitating international collaboration. This work should be rooted in ongoing dialogue and exchange with representatives from the higher arts education sector.
- There is a need for strong and accessible network organisations (in the FAST45 project represented by AEC and ELIA). These organisations help higher arts education institutions connect to European policymakers, ensure representation in European debates, and support capacity building within higher arts education institutions for long-term strategising.

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FAST45 Policy Recommendations

TAKEAWAYS FROM THE FUTURES (UN)KNOWN PANEL

- The importance of improving communication between different stakeholders and actors. Higher arts education institutions and policymakers often speak a different language. The same could be said of industry stakeholders or the general public. Working on communication and understanding each other is a key stepping stone to sustainable collaboration.

TAKEAWAYS FROM THE DISCUSSION WITH THE AUDIENCE

During the panel discussion, the experts also briefly reflected on and entered into conversation with the audience on the key themes outlined in the eight policy recommendations. Many panellists highlighted participation and representation as important themes to tackle through policy and strategy initiatives for higher arts education institutions. To a different extent, this conversation related to various policy recommendations (see 1, 2, 3, 4, and 8).

Starting with reflections on governance, the discussion between the panel and audience members soon also touched on student engagement, intergenerational approaches, outreach to heterogeneous communities, and grassroots involvement. Capacity-building for organisational change and change management for higher arts education was suggested as one of the means to facilitate the achievement of the envisioned levels of participation and representation.

Additionally, the importance of public funding for and recognition of artistic research was a central topic that came up in this discussion with the audience. It refers to finding common ground between sector representatives and policymakers on artistic research as a knowledge and innovation domain in its own right—a domain that contributes considerably to achieving resilience for the ecosystems in which higher arts education institutions operate and beyond.

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FAST45 Policy Recommendations

CLOSING REFLECTIONS

Image source: **FAST45 Learning Platform Image Bank**

The questions and key themes outlined in these policy recommendations aim to spark dialogue and reflections on applying future thinking methodologies and long-term thinking in policy- and strategy-making. This dialogue was started during the Futures (Un)known Panel. In current governance structures, it often remains challenging to find ways to break the barriers created by short-term mandates (two, four, or six years) or language use, to work together beyond silos and disciplines, and to facilitate constructive collaborations between stakeholders and policymakers on envisioning shared futures. However, the panel discussion and the exchange with the audience at the Futures (Un)known event showed a strong will to find new pathways for future(s)-oriented collaboration and policymaking. The FAST45 partners hope these Policy Recommendations will be a stepping stone in this direction.

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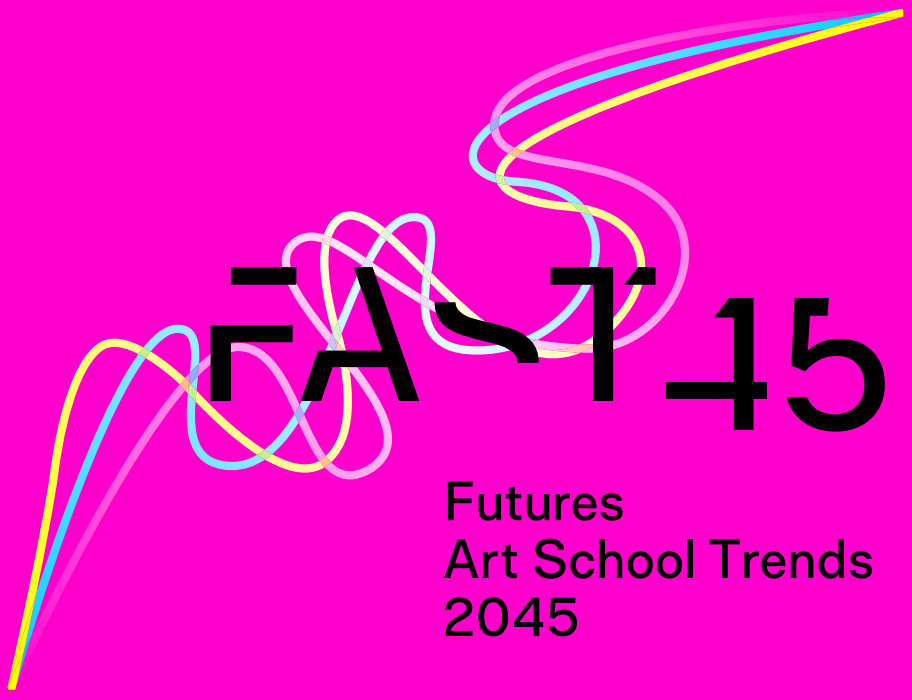

Futures
Art School Trends
2045

Glossary

co-creation	Co-creation is a form of collaborative innovation: ideas are shared and improved together, e.g., with different stakeholders such as students, staff members, NGOs, and government agencies.
foresight	A practice-oriented field of futures studies often referring to different planning methodologies.
future jump	An imaginary leap in time to the future (target year) during a workshop/lab.
futures consciousness	The capacity to understand, anticipate, and prepare for the future.
futures image	A systematic description of the future that is influenced by perceptions, concepts, and beliefs, framed by a scientific and cultural understanding of the world, and can include both realistic and imaginative elements.
futures orientation	A mindset that cares about the future, anticipates consequences and plans before acting.
future path	A narrative that describes how the image of a possible future can be realised step by step (causal processes and e.g., decision and actions points).
futures sign	A weak signal consisting of three dimensions: the signal, the issue, and the interpretation.
futures thinking	The way of creative and divergent thinking that is interested in futures-related phenomena based on the need for understanding futures possibilities, interconnections, and reasons for choice making.
PESTEC	A research method applied to study political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and cultural drivers in an operational environment supporting, e.g., environmental and horizon scanning.

scanning

A process of identifying trends and weak signals:

- *environmental scanning* focuses on change drivers in the operational environment;
- *horizon scanning* focuses on weak signals and their disruptive possibilities.

strategic planning

A process in which an organisation's leaders identify their organisation's goals and objectives and the needed actions for their vision for the future.

trend

A clearly visible phenomenon that causes change – development of change:

- *megatrend* – a slowly changing phenomenon with a clear developmental direction forming the future; often complex and connected to many variables;
- *emerging trend* – a new strengthening trend that is not yet common;
- *counter trend* – opposing existing trends or megatrends.

trigger

An event/thing that is stimulating actions, processes, or situations used in futures labs to encourage futures thinking.

weak signal

An indication of an emerging issue; an early sign of a change that may be meaningful in the future; often random, local, or seemingly ridiculous piece of information (e.g., local food waste refrigerator, robot strippers).