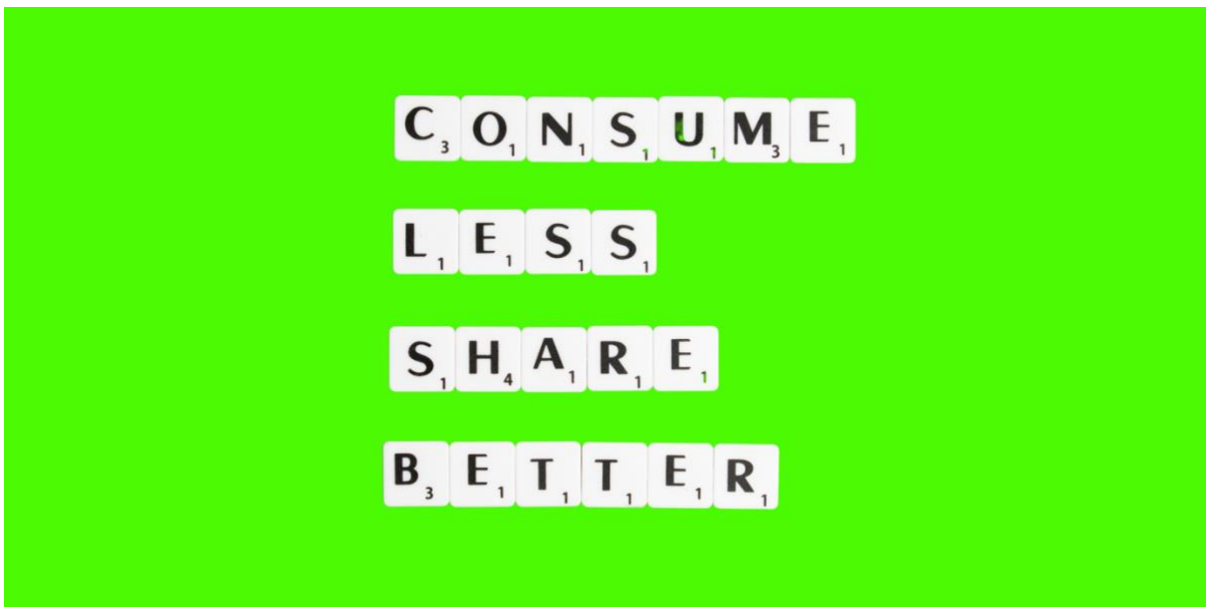


ROKBOX®

The Benefits of Circular Economy in the Art World



The art world is often praised and revered for its creativity and innovation. However, it is also criticised for its high levels of waste and environmental impact. In recent years, to address these issues and promote sustainability in the arts, there has been a growing interest in creating a circular economy.

A circular economy is an economic model that aims to reduce waste and promote the use of regenerated materials and systems by focusing on the reuse and recycling of resources as well as the reduction of waste and pollution. In other words, it is the 5Rs – “refuse, reduce, reuse, repurpose and recycle” – in action.

The circular economy and the 5Rs are particularly relevant in the art world due to the high volume of materials used in the creation and display of artworks, as well as the logistics involved in transporting and storing them. The circular economy promotes the idea of keeping materials in use for as long as possible and reducing waste by designing products with the end of their life cycle in mind. This model can easily be applied to the art world, where materials can be used in a multitude of ways and repurposed for future projects. This approach not only reduces waste and

environmental impact but can also save costs by reducing the need for new materials.

In this article, we explain the advantages of the circular economy in the art world and introduce some top brands and organisations that use this system in their daily operations.

Sustainable Practices for Artists

Art production can be resource intensive with a significant amount of waste generated in the creative process. Paint, canvases and paper make for perfect art supplies but often end up unused or discarded. Artists can start their green revolution by becoming aware of this waste and repurposing materials from previous works or using recycled ones in their creations, which may have the dual benefit of saving money as well.

In fact, this is hardly a new idea, with artists like van Gogh and Picasso often reusing canvases when money was tight. Louise Bourgeois and Phyllida Barlow were artists who championed the circular economy by using discarded household items, old furniture, and scraps of fabric in their work. They gave new life to these materials and promoted a circular economy mindset of reusing and repurposing rather than discarding. This approach can significantly reduce the amount of waste generated in art production and promote more sustainable, socially responsible art.

Conceptually, the circular economy has also influenced the business side of the art world. This includes challenging the art shipping industry to find more sustainable solutions that result in a reduced environmental impact as well as reduced costs.

Innovation in Sustainability - ROKBOX

ROKBOX is one of the best examples of a company pursuing innovation to create greener processes that save both material and financial resources. Designed in collaboration with conservators, registrars, artists, fine art technicians, shippers, environmental scientists, industrial designers, and specialist insurers, ROKBOX art shipping crates present a new way of conceiving art shipping by reusing crates and

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eliminating one-time-use plastics from the process. The patented design allows private collectors, artists, galleries, auction houses, museums, and anyone else who ships art to do so with superior safety and greatly improved cost efficiency through the ability to reuse the case time and time again. Plus, the materials used are both recycled and recyclable.

Circular Network - Gallery Climate Coalition

The circular economy can also be fostered through networking and the Gallery Climate Coalition (GCC), an international membership organisation providing environmental sustainability guidelines for the art sector, represents the perfect expression of this concept. The GCC, with over 800 members worldwide, provides a framework for art world organisations to become more sustainable, innovative, and resilient through a sense of community and collaboration. Members are expected to pursue sustainability goals and are incentivised to do so through special benefits. The GCC represents a meaningful change and a great example of how the art world can and should work together to find concrete solutions for reducing its environmental impact.

Free Exchange - Barder

Another interesting example of the circular economy and sustainable collaboration in the art world is the New York brand Barder, a fantastic tool that allows the free exchange of exhibition furniture and materials in the Big Apple, London, Los Angeles, and Berlin. Operating a peer-to-peer system, users store the items within their own facilities and then by posting or sourcing on the Barder website they can liaise with other users to arrange the exchange of items. This system of free exchange reduces waste, recovers valuable space, lowers operating costs, fosters industry connections, and truly invests in a circular economy.

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Sharing Resources - Circular Arts Network

Circular Arts Network (CAN) is a game-changing platform for recycling materials and sharing resources with the arts community of the UK. Connecting people and artistic organisations and providing a place where materials and resources can be exchanged, CAN gives access to materials typically used in creative projects at an affordable price, or even for free. The platform partners with other industries, such as construction and manufacturing, to help creative organisations access surplus materials while extending its impact beyond the art world to support other industries to become more sustainable as well. CAN also facilitates the sharing of transport, equipment, time, and other essentials, showing that the circular economy can be applied broadly and widely, bringing real change to the way the art industry operates.

Coming Full Circle

In conclusion, circular economy practices offer numerous benefits for the art world, including reduced waste, increased collaboration and innovation, new revenue streams, and the potential for addressing social and environmental issues through art. As more artists and art businesses adopt these practices, we can expect to see a more sustainable and socially responsible art world emerge, creating a more vibrant scene for future generations.

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