



SOCIAL ART AWARD 2025

# PLANETARY HEALING: BLUE TRIBES FOR OCEAN HEALTH

## Press Release

### Blue Futures Symposium II – Art for Systemic Change

Berlin, July 17, 2025. On July 16, 2025, the Institute for Art and Innovation (IFAI) hosted the Blue Futures Symposium II – Art for Systemic Change, bringing together voices from across five continents to explore the role of art in shaping sustainable, regenerative blue futures.

The three-hour, highly participatory event marked a key milestone in IFAI's 2025 program for the **Social Art Award**, themed *Planetary Healing: Blue Tribes for Ocean Health*. As an official contribution to the **UN Ocean Decade**, the symposium offered not only inspiration but actionable frameworks for cultural transformation.

In her opening remarks, **Nicole Loeser**, Director of IFAI, emphasized the urgency and opportunity of using social art as a lever for systemic innovation, linking ocean regeneration with imagination, equity, and collective action.

Co-moderator **Dr. R.M. Sánchez-Camus**, director of Applied Live Art Studio (ALAS) in London, framed social art as an effective intervention modality responding to the polycrisis through care, collaboration, and the re-imagination of power.

The event was co-hosted by emerging eco-social designers **Elpida Dalietou** and **Bruna Carvalho** of IFAI, who infused the gathering with intergenerational energy, guiding audience reflections and speaker engagement throughout.

The symposium welcomed 12 speakers from across five continents, with professional backgrounds spanning environmental science, public policy, speculative design, cultural infrastructure, and artistic practice. The event was designed not as a passive lecture but as a collaborative forum, one that included audience dialogue, thematic breakouts, and live reflections.

### Panel I: *Ocean as a Commons – Balancing Interests*

Through prompts on policy, community care, and myth-making, participants reflected in specific breakouts on how art can help us shift from extraction to relation, and how cultural memory and imagination can restore a sense of kinship with the ocean.

### Panel II: *Art as Catalyst – Social Art in Blue Innovation*

This vibrant round featured:

- **Giuseppe La Spada** (Italy), an interdisciplinary artist whose immersive works blend sound, video, and ecological poetics.

- **Serge Attukwei Clottey** (Ghana), known for his “Afrogallionism” works confronting global waste and water justice.
- **Fe Cortez** (Brazil), environmental activist and founder of **Menos 1 Lixo**, whose advocacy helped drive Brazil’s first plastic straw ban.

Their stories reminded us that innovation isn’t always high-tech—it can be tactile, spiritual, and people-powered. Art, they showed, can catalyze social movements, deepen ecological consciousness, and support place-based resistance.

### **Panel III: *Waves of Change – Ocean Sustainability as a Cultural Movement***

Here, the panel turned to public space, ocean memory, and speculative design:

- **Sena Başöz** (Turkey) presented poetic, multimedia reflections on healing and trauma through ocean metaphors.
- **Brandi Reddick** and **Colin Foord** (USA) of **The ReefLine** shared a 7-mile underwater art and coral regeneration project off the coast of Miami, blending marine science, sculpture, and accessibility.

From ancient grief to urban resilience, the panel explored how cultural practice can embody climate adaptation, challenge urban extraction, and design with the ocean at the forefront.

### **Panel IV: *The Intersection of Art, Policy, and Ecology***

The final discussion featured:

- **Christopher Coritsidis** (USA), CEO of the **Opus 1 Foundation**, emphasizing cultural finance and civic action.
- **Dr. Elissa Farrow** (Australia), a leading ocean futurist and policy strategist, who presented frameworks for anticipatory governance and systems change.
- **Kira von Heuer** (USA), artist, curator and educator, who introduced her project *Love Letters to the Ocean*, focusing on intimate interspecies dialogue and relational storytelling.

Together, the panelists invited the audience to consider how art can seed alternative governance models, shift paradigms, and act as soft but potent infrastructure for ecological policy.

### **Emerging Questions and Cultural Signals**

Throughout the symposium, themes of interconnection, storytelling, indigenous wisdom, and cross-sector collaboration surfaced again and again. Participants asked:

- How can ocean literacy move beyond science into lived experience?
- What does cultural resilience look like in the face of ecological collapse?
- How can small stories, rituals, and speculative tools influence big systems?

Many echoed the desire to build a networked ecosystem for social art—one that centers oceanic care, creative governance, and local-to-global solidarity.

## About the Host

**The Institute for Art and Innovation (IFAI)** is a Berlin-based think-and-do tank dedicated to systemic change at the intersection of art, science, technology, and society. The **Social Art Award**—launched in 2017—is its flagship program, offering a global platform for socially engaged artists. The 2025 edition received over 900 submissions from 70+ countries and will culminate in an international publication and exhibition tour. Social Art International is our growing network forum, co-founded with ALAS London, that meets quarterly online to support the development of social practice and systems change.

The Blue Futures Symposium Series is part of IFAI's engagement in the UN Ocean Decade, contributing to its cultural and civic dimensions by fostering transdisciplinary collaboration, ocean storytelling, and regenerative futures.

## Additional Information

Press Kit & Full Program: [Download PDF](#)

Event Page: <https://social-art-award.org>

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