



STATE OF THE ARTS

MALTA NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM 2024

RENEWING COMMON PATHWAYS

24TH & 25TH OCTOBER 2024
UNIVERSITY OF MALTA - VALLETTA CAMPUS



The State of the Arts Symposium is back in October and, as we look back at and critically engage with what has been achieved in the past editions, we would like to **renew our common pathways** adopting a hands-on and solution-oriented approach. The aim of the symposium is to co-create a safe space that can reshape individual and collective efforts, leading to a more thriving artistic and cultural sector. Earlier this year, Arts Council Malta published a post on its social media channels, inviting the public to share their thoughts on what themes feel urgent and crucial to discuss at the Symposium. This has informed and inspired the content thematics and development of the Symposium's programme.

In our making and organising of creative and cultural processes:

- **How can we transform ourselves as individuals to transform the wider system?**
- **How can the transformed system transform our individual realities?**

The commons are all around us, quietly shaping our lives. These tangible and intangible assets exist in our Maltese neighbourhoods, in Mediterranean cities and in the wider European and international context. But what exactly are they? The commons are the natural, cultural and social resources held in common by a community and accessible to all members of a society, supporting the quality of life. Practical examples of the commons include: air, forests, rivers, the sea and a liveable Earth; local parks and community gardens; a local language and shared knowledge; user generated contents on the web and open source software; an artistic movement and public art; security and justice.

Sometimes the understanding and engagement of the commons emerge from cooperation, other times from conflict. At its core, the commons benefits society as a whole, transcending individual, sectoral or generational interests, recognising planet Earth not as a mere shared treasure but, moreover, as an equal co-player. The concept of the commons invites us to act as citizens within interconnected social webs. However, in our contemporary political landscape, scepticism looms. Individual freedom in private markets often overshadows the role of citizens serving, engaging with and passing on the commons in good condition - a responsibility called commoning.

Art and culture provide tools to dream and reimagine ways of doing and being, allowing people to connect and share. How can art and culture keep the commons alive and how can the commons sustain art and culture? As inspired by the thoughts that the public shared, the Symposium aims to interrogate and debate on:

- **How can a practice of commoning sustain the socio-economic status and working conditions of creatives?**
- **How can commoning processes challenge the current limiting and limited art funding structures?**
- **How can spaces and infrastructure become more available, accessible and affordable through commoning practices?**
- **How can shared values and an ethics of care open up access to a wider group of practitioners with different needs and experiences, leading to better equity?**
- **How can a process of commoning provide a wider variety of artforms and practices, relevant to more diverse audiences?**
- **How can a practice of commoning unify and consolidate efforts towards the development of formal and non-formal learning?**