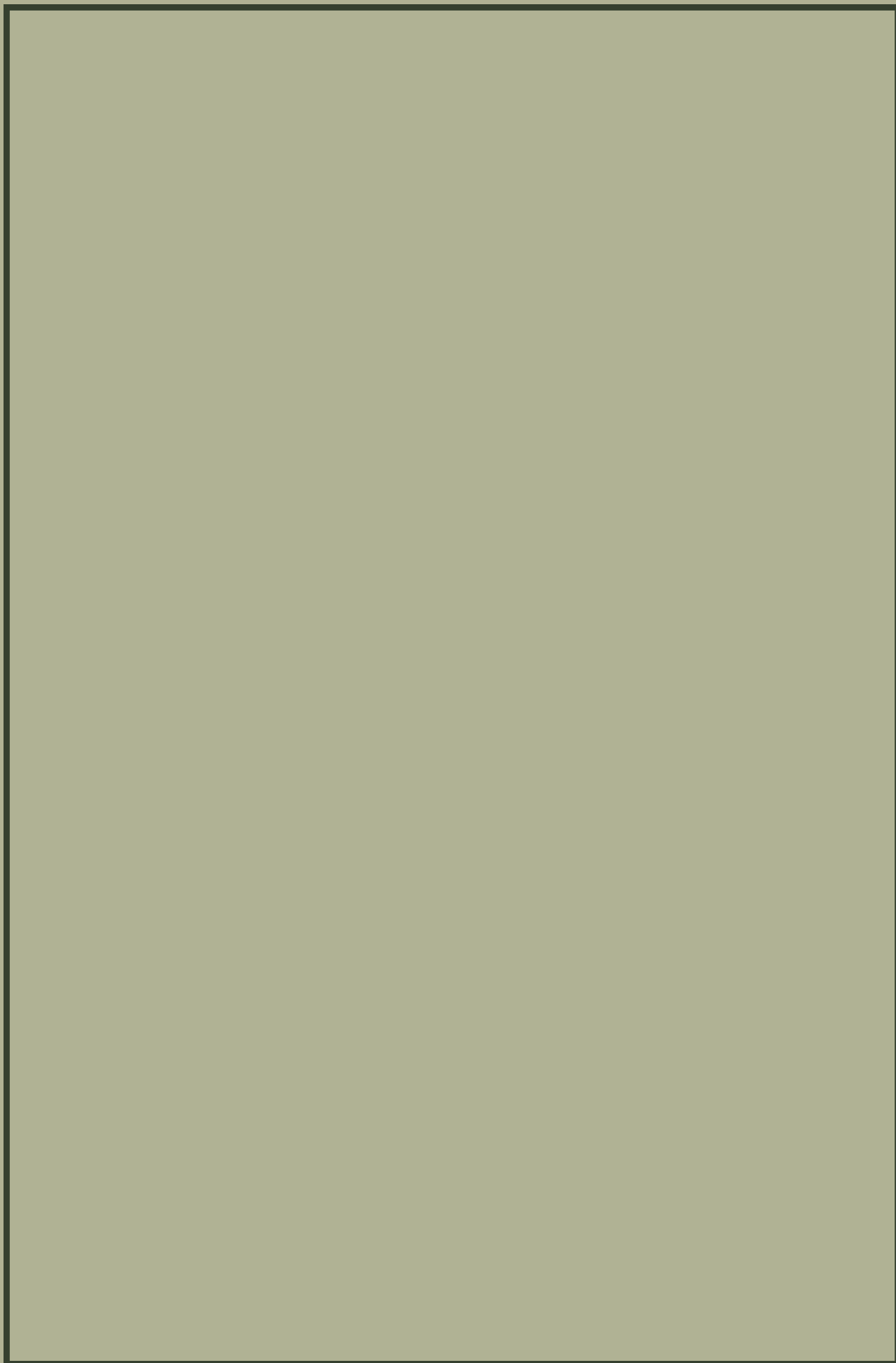




# REIMAGINING THE WETLANDS

Harnessing the Power of  
the Arts for Socio-  
Ecological Transformation









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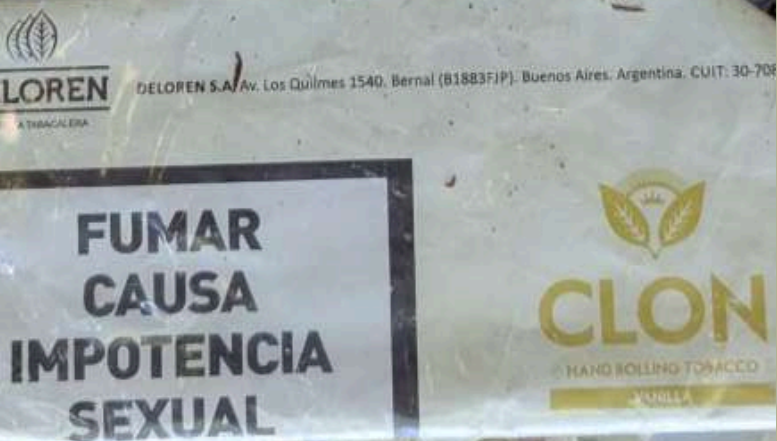
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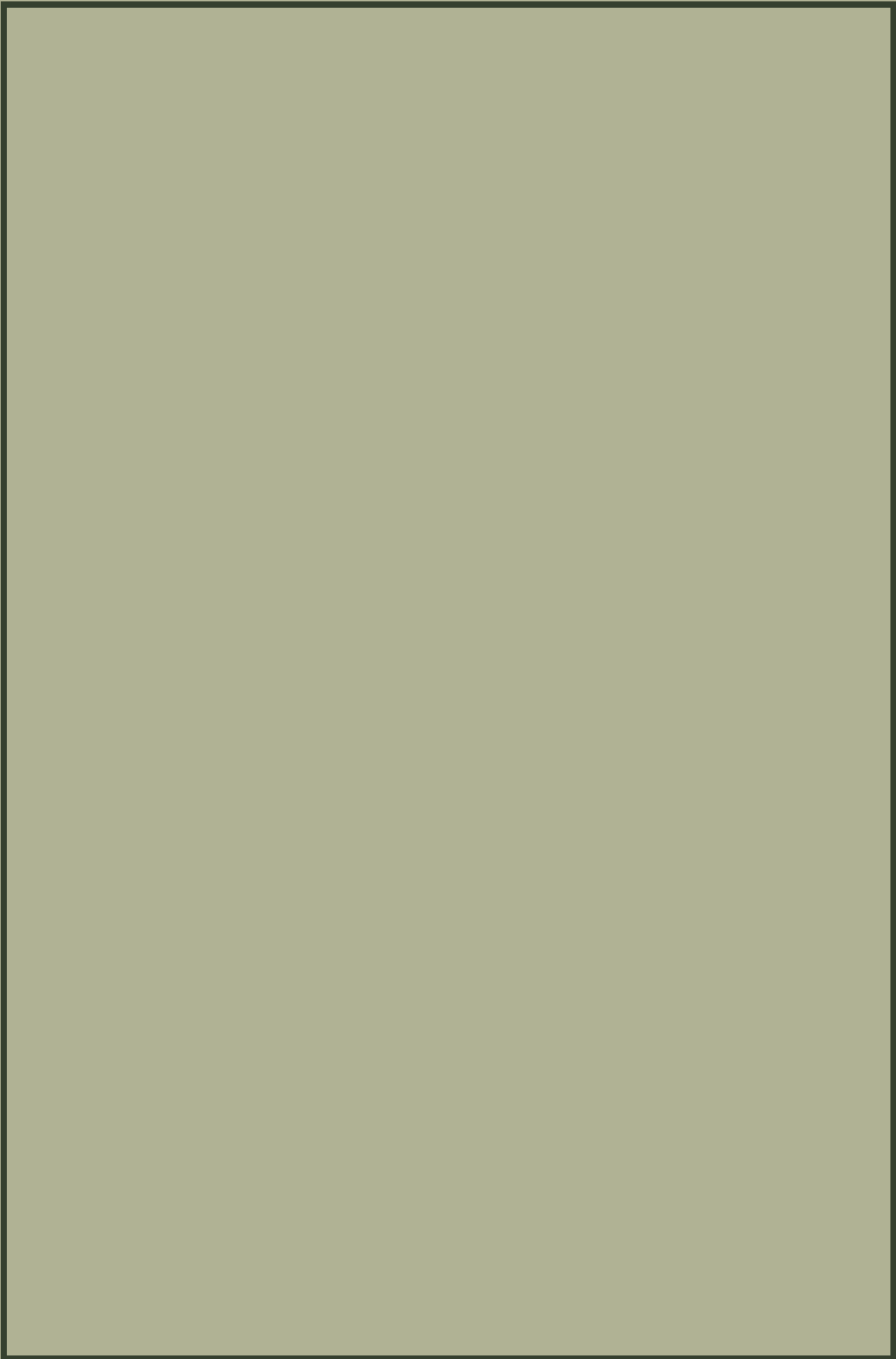


## ABOUT REIMAGING THE WETLANDS

This project seeks to harness the potential of the arts for socio-ecological transformation by fostering knowledge exchange between academic and non-academic partners. The territory of the Tigre Delta (Argentina) is an inhabited network of rivers and streams affected by socio-ecological problems and conflicts (i.e. waste, climate change, gentrification, pollution and mega-projects). These problems and conflicts affect human interaction with the ecosystem and the functioning of the wetland. Over the years, human-non-human living conditions have degraded.

The project focuses on supporting local actors addressing these challenges through knowledge exchange activities (i.e. creative workshops) that value and build on existing community knowledge and imagination to seek a more sustainable future for the wetlands. It combines ethnographically inspired research, participatory arts-based approaches and political ecology studies to discover how community-led knowledge creation for socio-ecological transformation occurs. The project is a collaboration between the University of Leeds, the University of Buenos Aires, the Instituto de Investigaciones Gino Germani - IIGG, the Centro Cultural Casa Puente (Tigre) and La Residuoetca (Tigre)

.Re-Imaging the Wetlands is funded by the University of Leeds' Global Impact Acceleration Awards (GIAA) and the School of Sociology and Social Policy





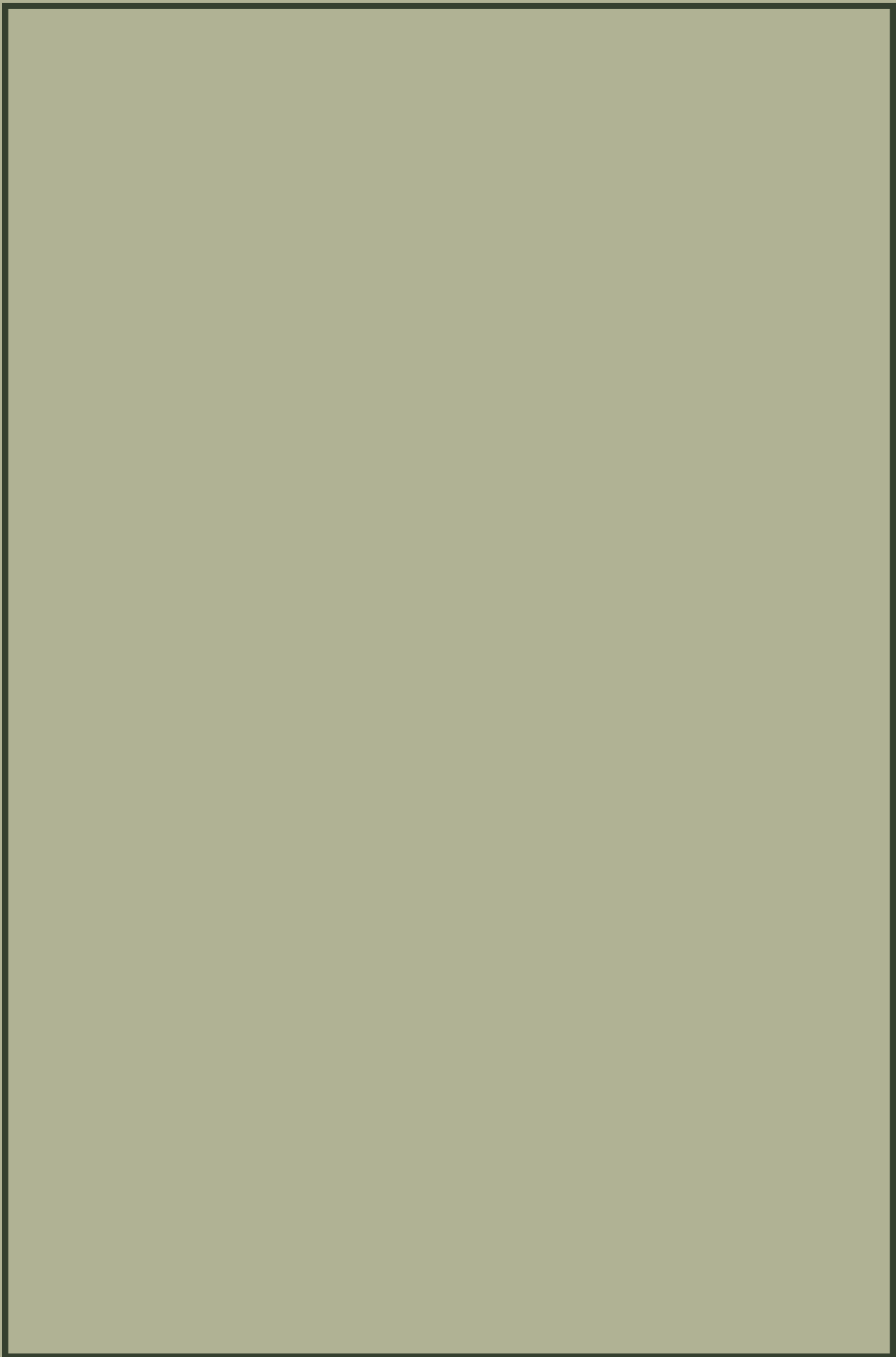
# CÓMO USAR ESTE RECURSO



The toolkit draws on the experiences and insights gained during a six-month knowledge exchange project - Re-Imagining the Wetlands: Harnessing the Power of the Arts for Socio-Ecological Transformation - which ran from January to June 2025. This collaborative project brought together artists, academics, and local organisations at the Tigre Wetlands in Argentina. Together, they co-created and facilitated three arts-based workshops with local residents, using creative methods to engage with the socio-ecological challenges facing the Delta region. The toolkit offers creative methodologies used during the workshops—such as mapping exercises, storytelling practices, collective drawing, and material re-use and installation-making—that support community engagement, reflection, and action.

This toolkit is intended for activists, artists, educators, and community organisers who are looking for creative and participatory ways to engage their communities in socio-ecological transformation. Whether you are working in Wetlands or other vulnerable ecosystems, this resource offers flexible, replicable methods that can help build stronger and more imaginative community-led responses to environmental challenges.







# 1

## RONDA WORKSHOP

Collaborative  
Drawing



# 2

## FROM SHORE TO SHORE WORKSHOP

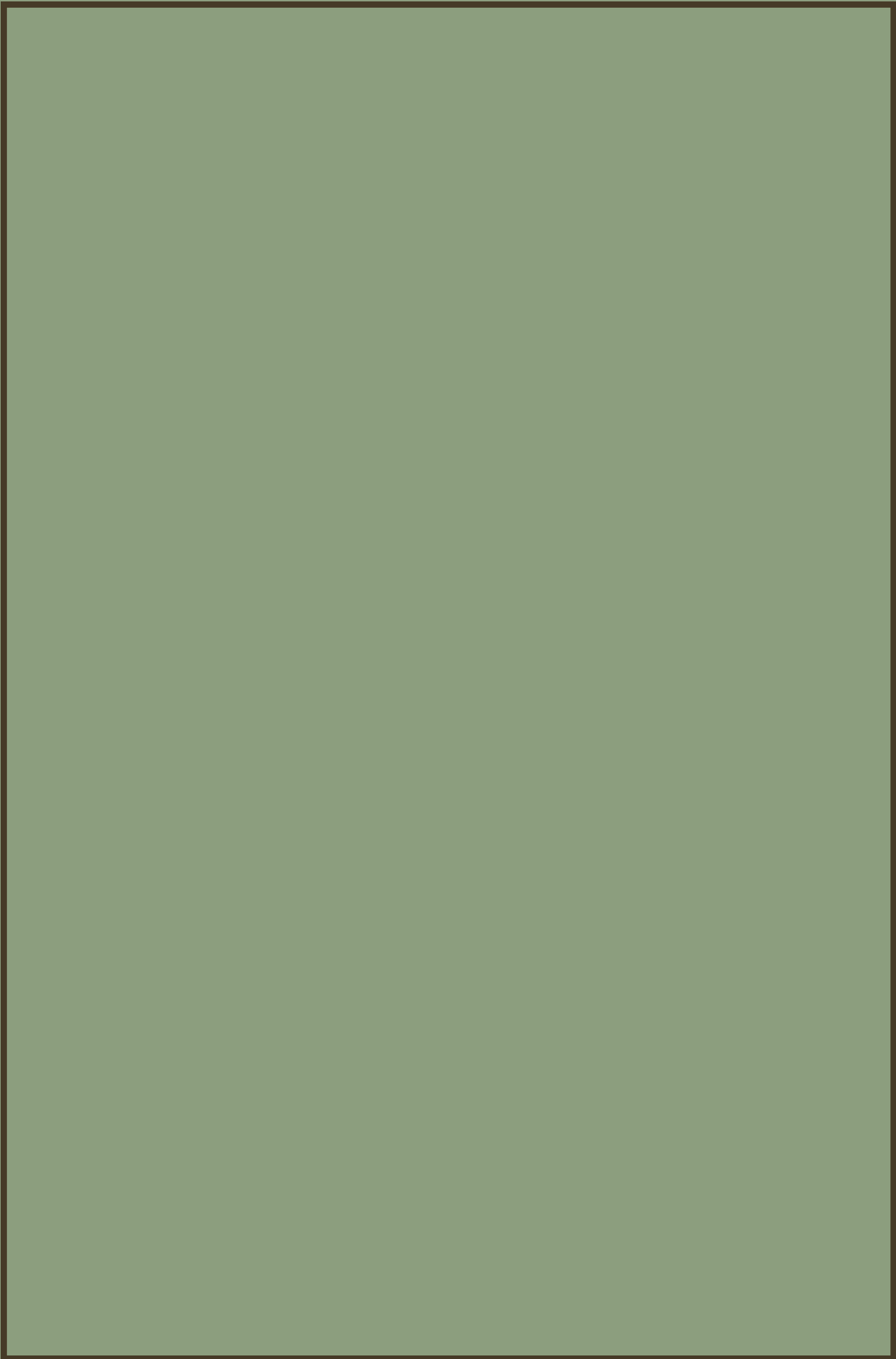
Sensory Mapping

# 3

## FLYING DREAMS WORKSHOP

Artwork Creation







A person is shown from the waist down, sitting on the floor and drawing a large botanical illustration on a white sheet of paper. The person is wearing a black skirt, a red string bracelet, a gold ring, and a gold woven bracelet. They are using a thin stick or brush to draw dark, intricate lines on the paper. The drawing depicts a plant with many small, dark, oval-shaped leaves or seeds arranged in a dense, branching pattern. The background is a light-colored surface, possibly a table or floor. The overall tone is artistic and focused.

# T R O N D A W O R K S H O P

GUIDED BY:  
LAURA ANDREA DEL  
ARBOL

# RONDA WORKSHOP

Duration : 3 hours

Ronda is a large-scale collective drawing workshop focused on key concepts such as identity, solidarity or tolerance in specific ecosystems. This experience was initially carried out in the Tigre Delta (Buenos Aires, Argentina) and worked on the concept of 'Wetland Identity'.

Sitting around a circle on a piece of paper 1.5 to 2 metres in diameter placed on the ground, the participants were invited to paint with a brush and black ink how they represented the identity of the wetland.

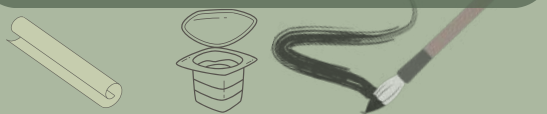
The dynamic is based on the exchange of positions, for which the participants rotate around the support and intervene in each other's drawings, blurring the boundaries between the individual and the collective.

Participants are invited to incorporate brief phrases to visually and verbally re-signify the work, culminating in a group reading and reflection.

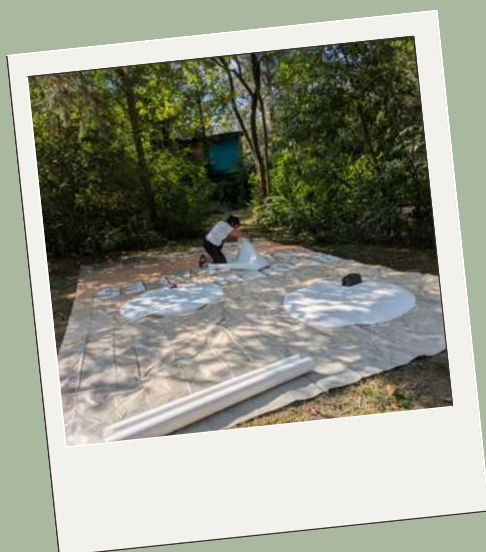




# MATERIALS

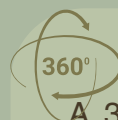


- 1 roll of heavyweight paper (10 meters x 1.5 meters, 200mg). For 3 or 4 Rounds
- 12 to 24 Brushes
- 500ml Black ink, any other ink
- 5 to 8 jars, yoghurt pots or any other pot distribute the ink
- Pastel colours from 4 to 6 sets
- Crayons from 2 to 3 sets
- Tarpaulin



At the event:

- Place the paper cut-outs on the floor and spread out the materials you are going to use. If the floor is not suitable, or if it is raining or wet and cannot be dried, place them on a table.
- Up to 8 people can participate per paper circle. Each workshop can have several circles, although we suggest no more than four.



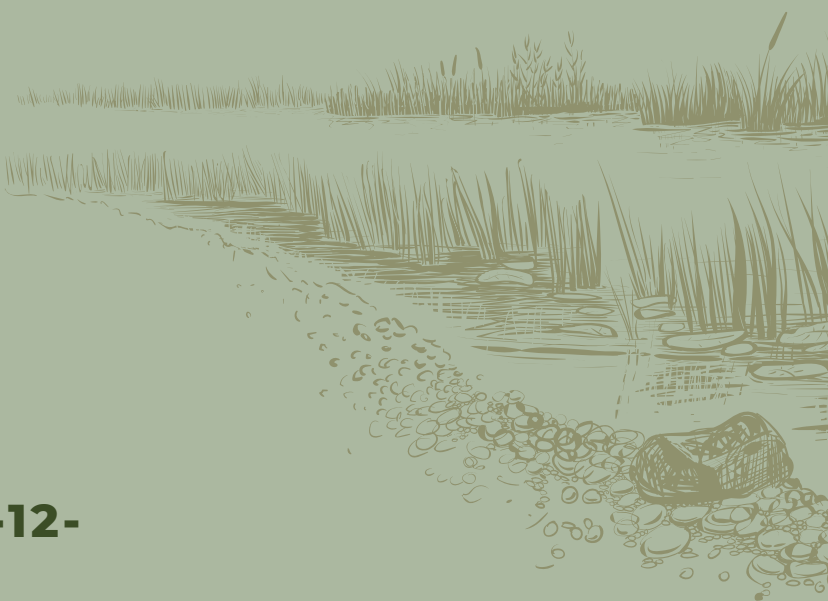
## OPTIONAL

A 360° camera can be used and positioned in the centre of the round, equidistant from the participants and at the height of the paper. Being small, the camera is not intrusive and allows people to move freely. In this way, a circular record is achieved that can be viewed flat or with a VR headset.



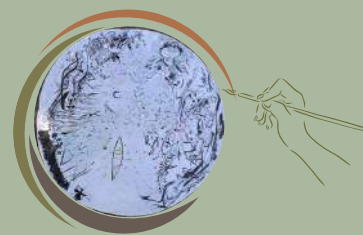
# PREPARATION

- Buy paper and cut out the circles manually.
- Prepare the situated concept by:
  - Identifying the ecosystem to work with: wetland, desert, peatland, forest, etc.
  - Identifying the concept: identity, solidarity, relationality, etc.





## FIRST PART 30 TO 45 MIN



Orally, the participants are asked to sit in a circle and draw on the canvas what the 'situated concept' means to them, without sketching first.

To begin the discussion, they could be asked questions such as:

What does living on the islands or in the valley mean to them? Which objects represent them? What sensations? What memories? Which childhood memories are associated with wetlands, deserts or forests? How do they identify with these places? What do they remind them of?

Please leave spaces on the sheet of paper where there is no painting, to give another participant the chance to build on the previous painting during the second part of the workshop.

## SECOND PART 30 TO 45 MIN



- After the first 30 minutes, rotate the paper and intervene in the drawing of the person next to you.
- Start using colours and you can include words or phrases that are related to, appear or resonate from the drawing of the person next to you..

## THIRD PART 60 TO 80 MIN

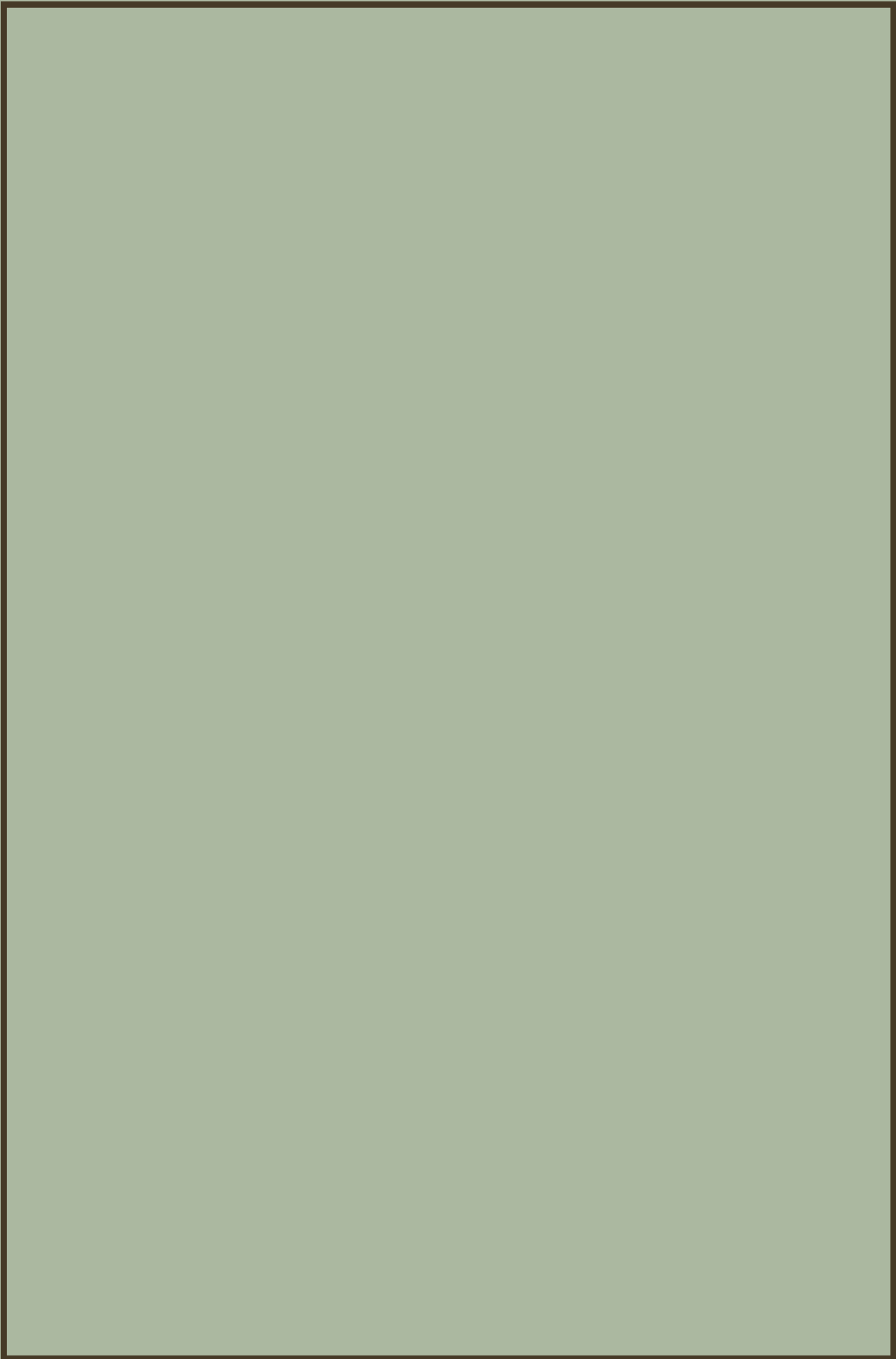
- Once the participants have finished drawing and writing, they stand up and turn around to read the sentences collectively (20–30 minutes). They read the words they recognise (their own or others') randomly, in the drawings.
- Once they have finished reading, they sit in a large circle and reflect on their experiences. This takes 30–40 minutes.



## CLOSING

- Once the reflection is over, photographic records can be made of the papers and these can be kept for the community and/or group that worked on them.
- The photographs can be digitally retouched and/or remain as an archive for social media.







A group of people are gathered around a large map spread out on the ground. They are looking at the map with interest. The map shows a network of lines, possibly representing a river or a road system. The people are dressed in casual clothing. The scene is outdoors, with sunlight filtering through the trees.

## ***'FROM SHORE TO SHORE'*** **CARTOGRAPHIC EXPERIENCE WORKSHOP**

GUIDED BY:  
TALLER DE ECOLOGÍA  
POLÍTICA EN  
HUMEDALES

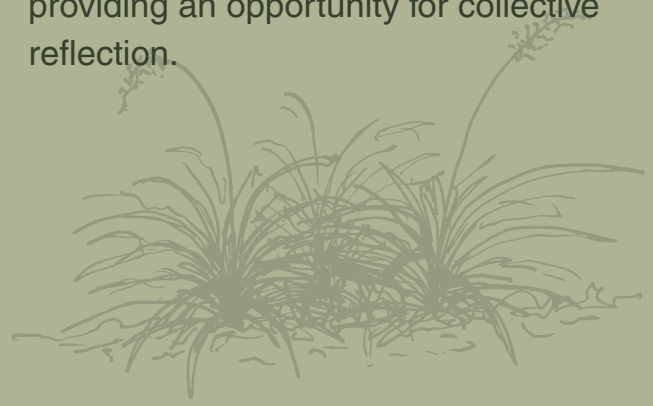


# 'FROM SHORE TO SHORE' CARTOGRAPHIC EXPERIENCE WORKSHOP

Duration : 4 hours

The activity consists of collectively mapping the conflicts, issues, and networks of good living and habitation related to the shores, coasts and banks of wetlands and rivers. The 'From Shore to Shore' Mapping Experience Workshop was carried out with the participation of members of the local community of the Tigre Delta and the surrounding metropolitan area of Buenos Aires (Argentina).

Participants first create a body map through sensory-perceptual activation, such as walking and body movements. They then create a cartographic map where conflicts, problems and interlaced networks are drawn up. Finally, the groups share their maps and the discussions they have had, providing an opportunity for collective reflection.



# MATERIALS

## SENSORY-PERCEPTUAL DYNAMIC



- 6 -10 black markers and 6-10 coloured markers.
- Crayons
- Whisperers (cardboard cones, rolls of paper)
- Whistle
- 2-3 sheets of paper to mark a life-size silhouette of a human body (one silhouette per group Max 4)
- Something to cover the floor (Carpet/tarpaulin)



## CARTOGRAPHIC MAPPING

- 2 to 3 maps of the area to be mapped equivalent to the number of groups you have and according to the number of people expected.
- 3 sheets of paper per group in suggested A3 size. Required to write the mapping: 1 for conflicts, 1 for issues and 1 for networks.
- Signage: coloured dots or elements to differentiate between: issues, conflicts and interlaced networks.

### For Example:



Problems



Interlaced  
Networks



Issues



**No more than four groups of six to eight people, should be considered for each geospatial map.**

**One person can moderate, but two to three are recommended.**



# PREPARATION

- Identify the area or territory and prepare the question relating to the banks, coasts, riverbanks or ecosystem on which you will be working.
- Bear in mind that, in order to map the conflicts and issues, you must first understand the territory's history and current situation, including its conflicts and relevant issues.
- You can do this by:
  - Looking for common elements in the area.
  - Identifying where participants come from and their relationship with the territory.
  - Researching local history.
- Elaboration of key concepts.
- Elaboration of a paper sheet containing their own definition of:
  - A socio-environmental conflict.
  - Socio-environmental issues
  - Interlaced networks
- In addition, we will map the types of conflict and problems.

In this case, the activity and questions focused on the river. However, depending on the ecosystem being addressed, the questions could also focus on the desert, forest or wetlands.

## EXAMPLES OF KEY CONCEPTS:

**CONFLICT:** Filling in wetlands to make way for real estate developments; River pollution; Privatisation of the coastline.

**PROBLEMS:** waste in the river and difficult access to the coast.

**INTERLACED NETWORKS:** Social, cultural and environmental organisations; producers; and schools.

# SENSORY-PERCEPTUAL DYNAMIC

Duration : 80 to 90 min

## FIRST PART 25 TO 40 MIN

The dynamics and instructions of the workshop are explained orally, and the space is opened up for consultation and dialogue.

The sensory-perceptual dynamic begins with the activity “Awakening the body”:

- In a circle, the participants have to make movements with their bodies, walk around the space, practice observation and activate their senses.

- As they walk, the moderating team activates the Whisperers by asking them questions such as:

- What connection does the body have with the river? What contact does the body have with the river?
- What is your body's connection with the river?
- What do you feel? How does the river affect you?
- How would you take care of it from your place and position?
- How do you keep the flow of the river alive?
- How do you imagine the river's future?
- And your future with the river?

- After the first 15 minutes from the beginning of the activity, participants are asked to walk to a river bank to connect, listen, feel and observe the river. They should then return to the circle at the sound of the whistle.



# SENSORY-PERCEPTUAL DYNAMIC

## SECOND PART 30 TO 45 MIN

- After this sensitive experience, the participants should lie down on the tarpaulin on the ground and reflect on the information they have recorded and perceived.
- *Feeling-thinking* the body-territory:
  - What does my body map look like? Where are the edges of my body?
  - How do we register or sense them?
  - What does the skin at the edges come into contact with and connect to?
  - What sounds do we hear or feel at the edges of our body?
- After 10–15 minutes, spread out sheets of paper on the floor so that one participant can lie down on them while the others draw their silhouette.
- Once the silhouette is ready, write the resonances of the sensory-perceptual activity on the silhouette or a post-it note and place it somewhere associated with the concept or feeling to create a body map of perceptions. 30–45 min.
- For example:  
Contamination in the hands, energy in the heart.





# CARTOGRAPHIC MAPPING

Duration : 90 to 120 min

## FIRST PART 30 TO 40 MIN

With a map in hand, participants are divided into groups to do the mapping. Each participant works on the map of the place where they live.

Participants are asked the following (20 - 30 min):

- Map the riverbanks that people know or would like to know about.
- Find out which other rivers and streams join up or connect these banks.

In addition, the following questions are posed:

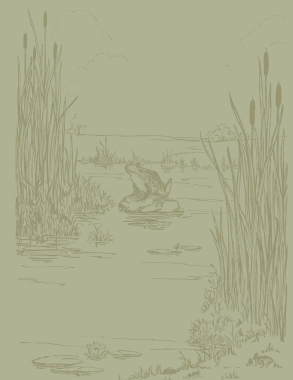
- What environmental problems do they know about on these banks, shores or riverbanks?
- What environmental conflicts do they know about on these banks, shores or riverbanks?
- What networks of good living-well and inhabiting do they know about on these banks, shores or riverbanks?

At this stage, the references of the conflicts, problems and networks are written on a sheet of paper and located on the map.



## SECOND PART 30 TO 40 MIN

- The group is opened up by asking what they have mapped, and reflection and discussion is encouraged through questions (approximately 10 minutes per group).
- Each group can show what they have been working on the map, while the group reflections are discussed and shared in a circle.

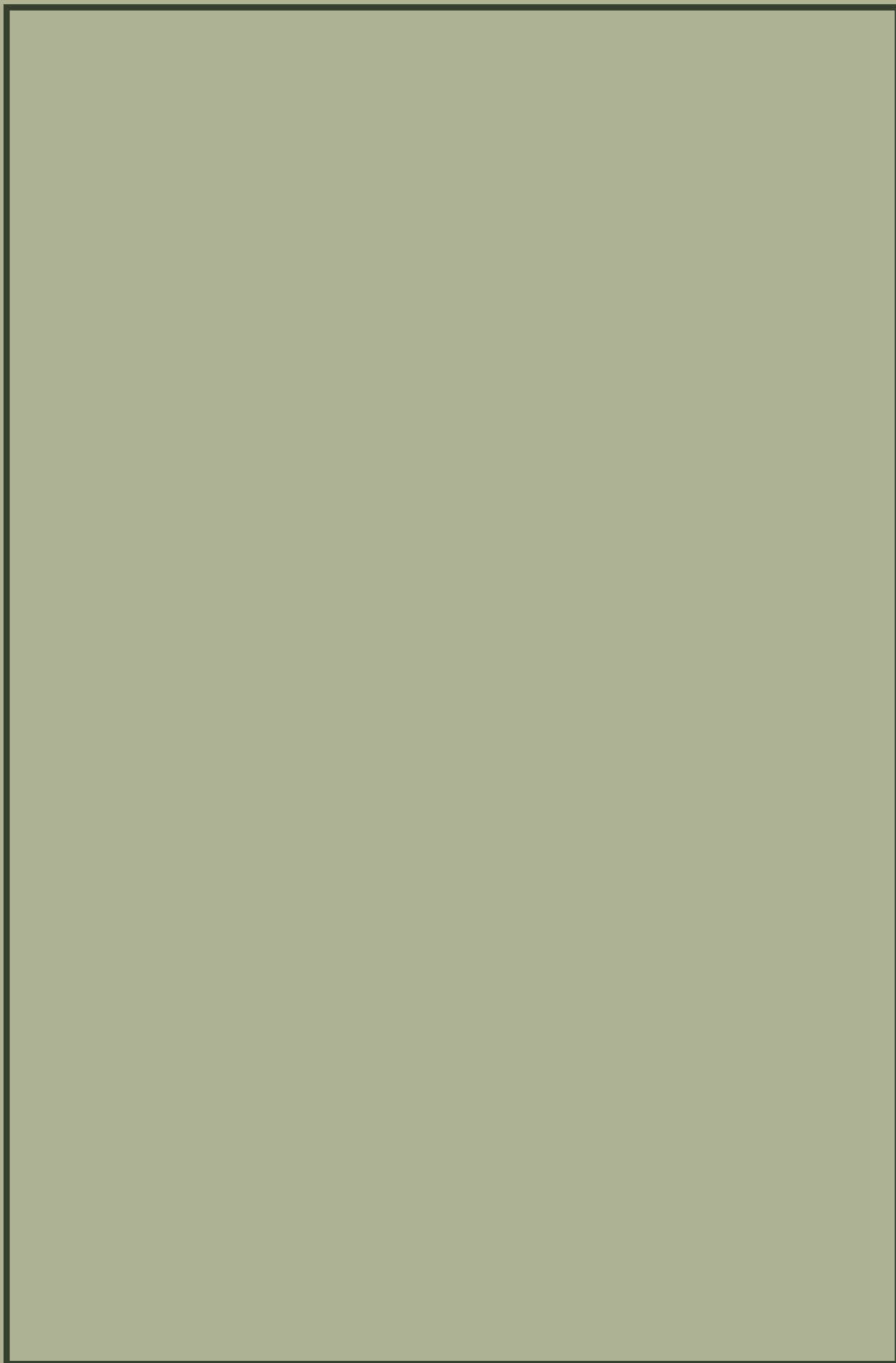


# CARTOGRAPHIC MAPPING

CLOSING  
20 TO 30 MIN

- A discussion is held on what is common and what has been worked on in the groups, with a final reflection.
- To end the activity, it is suggested that everyone writes a poem together, using the 'exquisite corpse' technique.
- The people taking part must each say a word or two about the experience. The words added together make a collective poem, which is created in the 'exquisite corpse' style.









# 3 FLYING DREAMS WORKSHOP

GUIDED BY:  
GUADALUPE BOADO &  
INÉS MENGIDO  
(ACTIVISTS), AND JUAN  
DELGADO (ARTIST)



# FLYING DREAMS WORKSHOP

Duration : 5 hours

It is a full day of reflection and creativity around the concept of fragility and the creation of hanging works with plastics and recovered materials. The activity aims to bring together participants from the local community. This activity was originally organised for the communities of the delta islands and the mainland of Tigre, Buenos Aires (Argentina).

The day began with an introductory talk by the Residuoteca, a collective waste management, learning and research project in the Tigre Delta, created by Guadalupe Boado and Inés Mengido.

The workshop consists of two parts:

The first section is a playful activity that integrates the educational part of the method of sorting and classifying materials, and generates a space for theatrical creativity and relaxation among the participants.

The second part consists of creating a new object from the selected and classified materials.

Finally, a space for exchange and reflection is generated in which personal experiences and concerns about the future of the ecosystem are shared.

This workshop was originally held at the Residuoteca space.



# MATERIALS



- Inorganic materials (plastics, packaging) and organic materials (branches, leaves, cans).
- Ropes (fishing line).
- Scissors.
- Big-bag to transport the recycled elements or boxes.
- The number of participants admitted will depend on the amount of materials available and the artistic proposal to be developed.
- For a group of four or five people, at least one vegetable crate full of materials is required.



## PREPARATION

To prepare for the workshop, it is recommended to consult the **GROS** Manual, on the residuoteca website. This document provides information on the different materials, their origins and their correct final disposal. Thanks to this information, it is possible to distinguish the material flows that have value in the recycling chain from those that do not. Finally, materials that have no value in the market can be reinserted for educational and artistic purposes in this proposal/workshop.

It is also recommended to accumulate and sanitise the materials.



## FIRST PART 120 TO 150 MIN

- An introductory talk on local waste issues is given (15–20 minutes).
- Based on the GROS manual, there is then a 30-35 minute session on how to sort and classify waste.
- Afterwards, each participant has the opportunity to share their views on the waste problem in their ecosystem (15–20 minutes).
- Once the talk is over, participants are given a bag in which to collect all the materials that will be used during the activity.
- Participants should then be divided into groups, with each group being given one box.
- Participants are instructed to sort and classify the materials they take out of the bag. While doing so, they are invited to make up a story to accompany their selection of materials and justify their consumption and sorting criteria. (30–45 minutes)
- **For example, microwavable food packages, plastic items and cans may belong to a household of students who do not have the time or knowledge to cook.**
- Thirty minutes after the sorting and story creation begins, the groups are invited to share their stories and explain how they arrived at them (30–45 minutes).

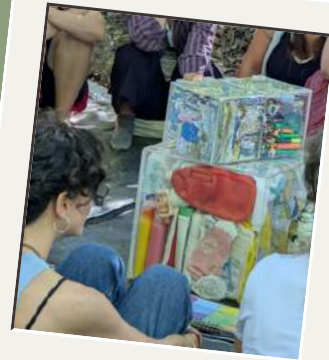


## SECOND PART 60 A 75 MIN

- Participants are asked to engage with waste as a material and to consider and experience the activity accordingly.
- They are invited to use the sorted and removed materials from the bag to create an artistic mobile. These materials can be transformed through handicrafts involving cuts, folds and creases, or anything else the participants can imagine.
- The idea is for the group to transform these materials into a 3D object suspended in the air, representing fullness and emptiness and the fragility of equilibrium.
- After 45–60 minutes from the start of the second part, the materials should be hung from a branch using rope or transparent thread.

## CLOSING 45 TO 60 MIN

- To close the workshop, there is a tour of each artistic mobile created with the groups, in which each group comments on their search and why they arrived at that particular work. Once this stage is finished, they return to the round and share their personal reflections on the workshop.



# RESOURCES



REIMAGINING THE WETLAND

RESIDUOTECA

COLECTIVO DE ECOLOGÍA POLÍTICA



This toolkit has been co-created through a collaboration between artists, activists, academics, and local community members working together to expand knowledge, recognize and record different personal narratives, imaginaries, and experiences about inhabiting the wetlands. It was developed by Dr. Victoria Vargas Downing in close dialogue with Colectivo Ecología Política en humedales (Ana Mossini, Ana Victoria Pérez, Erica Schejtman, Gisel Denise Cáceres, Sofía Astelarra), interdisciplinary artist Juan Delgado, La Residuoteca (Guadalupe Boado and Inés Mengido), multimedia artist Laura del Arbol, and researchers Dr. Maria Rovisco (University of Leeds), Dr. Lorena Verzero (University of Buenos Aires), and Dr. Sofía Astelarra (University of Buenos Aires)

