

Agricultural Art Initiatives in Austria

An explorative study on their transformative potential in rural regions

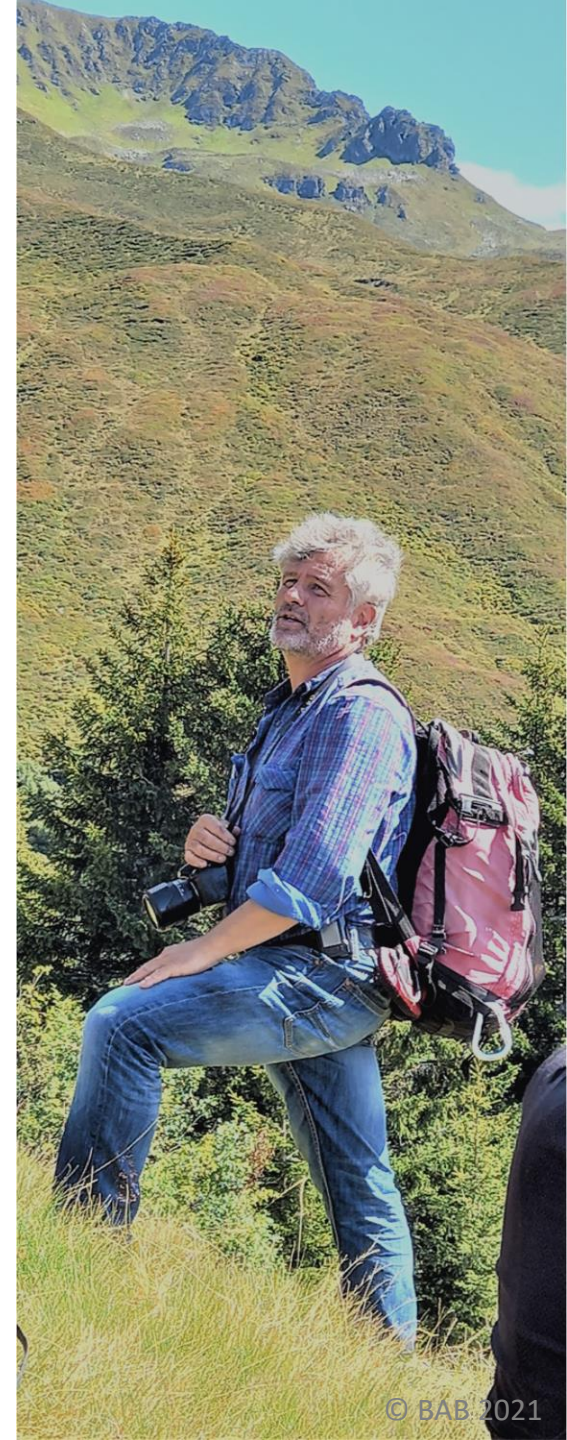
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Federal Institute of Agricultural Economics, Rural and Mountain Research

**XXIXth European Society for
Rural Sociology Congress
Crises and the futures of rural areas
Rennes, France. July 3 – 7, 2023**

Project design

- **Background**
 - Rural areas face structural transformation
 - Agricultural arts initiatives contributing towards lively, sustainable rural areas
- **Aim**
 - Diversity and characteristics of agricultural arts initiatives in Austria
 - Impact of selected art initiatives on individuals, farms, regions (5 case studies)
 - Given environment and funding opportunities for art
- **Methods**
 - Review of literature and other media
 - Semi-structured qualitative interviews with artists and regional stakeholders
 - Photo and video documentation

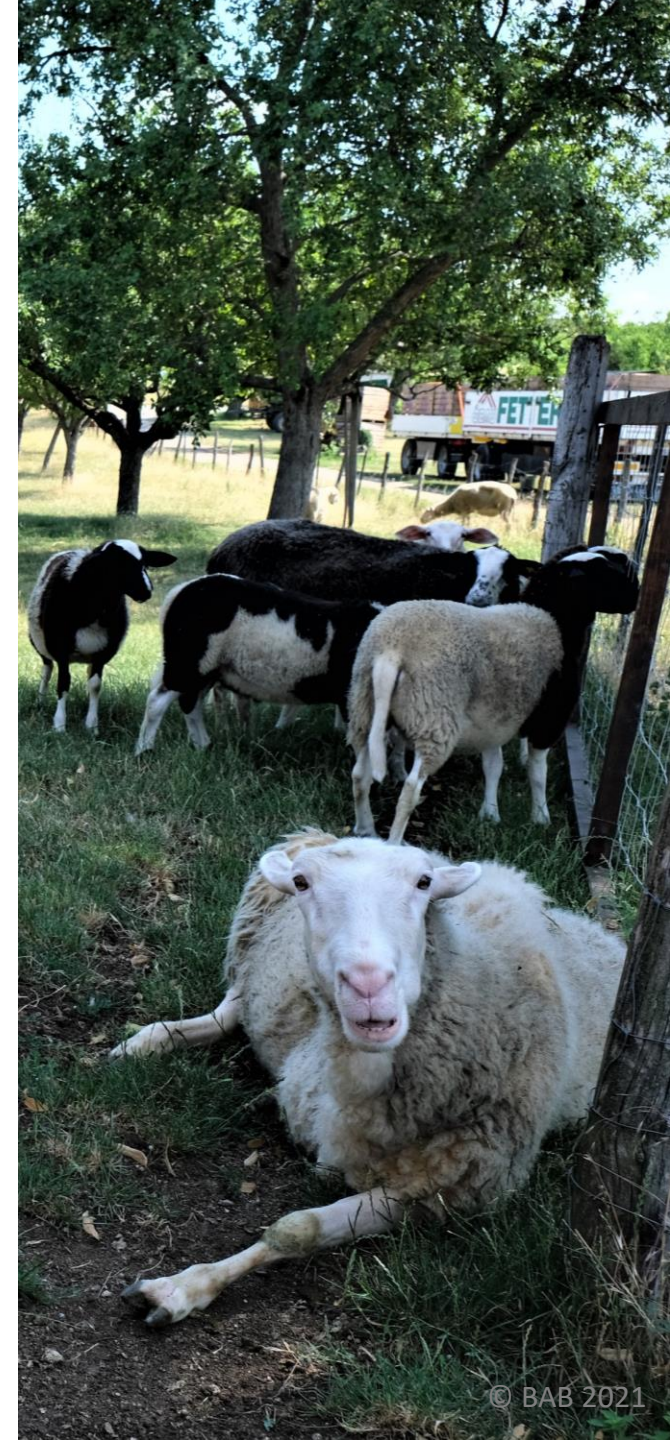


Agricultural Art Initiatives

Definition (in the project): Individual artists, artists' collectives and art groups with an agrarian context who deal with contemporary art

Types of agricultural arts initiatives

- **Art farms:** Art work and studios on own farm
(e.g. *Gut Gasteil*, *Weiberhof*, *Heinrich Untergantschnig*)
- **Art collectives:** Groups of artistically active farmers
(e.g. female farmers cabaret *Die Miststücke*)
- **Artist doing agricultural activities without owning a farm**
(e.g. „Almszene“ – arts at alpine pastures /author: Bodo Hell)
- **Artists with a strong agricultural context**
(e.g. Barbara Maria Neu: „new agricultural music“, „barn dances“)
- **Artistic use of agricultural buildings and agricultural areas**
(e.g. *Montafoner Theaterwanderungen*)



Five Case Studies of agricultural art initiatives in Austria



© Bundesanstalt für Agrarwirtschaft und Bergbauernfragen (2021)

Selection criteria:

Diversity of art activities and content, agricultural and regional context

Case Study: Heinrich Untergantschnig

Artistic exploration of tradition and new perspectives



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Interviews

- Heinrich Untergantschnig, artist and mountain farmer in Carinthia

► [Kurzvideo](#)

- Edith und Max Lesnik, „Kunstraum Obervellach“ art gallery

Case Study: Weiberhof (Women's farm)

Symbiosis of agriculture, art, nature and guest house



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Interviews

- Erika Hütter and Nina Riess, artist and organic farmers and in Styria

► [Kurzvideo](#)

- Christoph Zirngast, mayor, municipality of Großklein

Case Study: Die Miststücke (The Bitches)

From agricultural policy to farmers cabaret



Interviews

- Maria Vogt,
organic farmer and cabaret
artist, Lower Austria

► Kurzvideo

- Hannes Schwarzenberger,
babü – Bar and Stage,
municipality of Wolkersdorf

© Via Campesina (www.viacampesina.at/aktiv-werden/kabarett-miststuecke/, accessed on 10.05.2022)

Case Study: Gut Gasteil

Adapted country estate for an education-oriented synthesis of arts



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Interviews

- Charlotte Seidl,
artist and organic farmer,
lower Austria

► [Kurzvideo](#)

- Alexandra Farnleitner-Ötsch,
regional manager:
UNESCO world heritage region
Semmering-Rax

Case Study: Montafoner Theaterwanderungen (Theater walks)

Alpine open air theater on a historic escape route (WWII)



© Herbert Gmeiner 2017

Interviews

- Katharina Grabher und Andreas Kosek, actors of „teatro caprile“, Vienna
- Friedrich Juen, cultural mediator and mountain farmer, municipality of Gargellen (Vorarlberg)
- Michael Kasper, Regional museum Montafon, Schruns
- Roland Fritsch, Touristics Montafon, Schruns

Conclusions

- Aesthetic experience: Relating art work to cultural landscape and nature
- Strengthening social relations and local/regional networks, sense of identity in rural areas, communication and mediation
- Income for artists, economic benefits for region (e.g. tourism)
- Education and awareness raising of a more holistic perspective including linkages between arts and agriculture/nature/resources/animal welfare, etc. through art work, seminars, teaching in schools, exhibitions, etc.
- Consolidation and development of small-scale agricultural structures
- May be part of a strategy for sustainable rural regions

KUNSTdünger
Potentiale agrarischer Kunstinitiativen
in ländlichen Regionen

KUNSTdünger
Potentials of agricultural art initiatives in rural regions

BAB Report 003
Wien, Mai 2022

Thank you!

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Link to final report on <https://bab.gv.at/>:
[BAB report 003 \(in German\)](#)