

ECO Solidarity

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ECO Solidarity returns to WantedDesign Manhattan, uniting European designers in response to environmental and global war crises

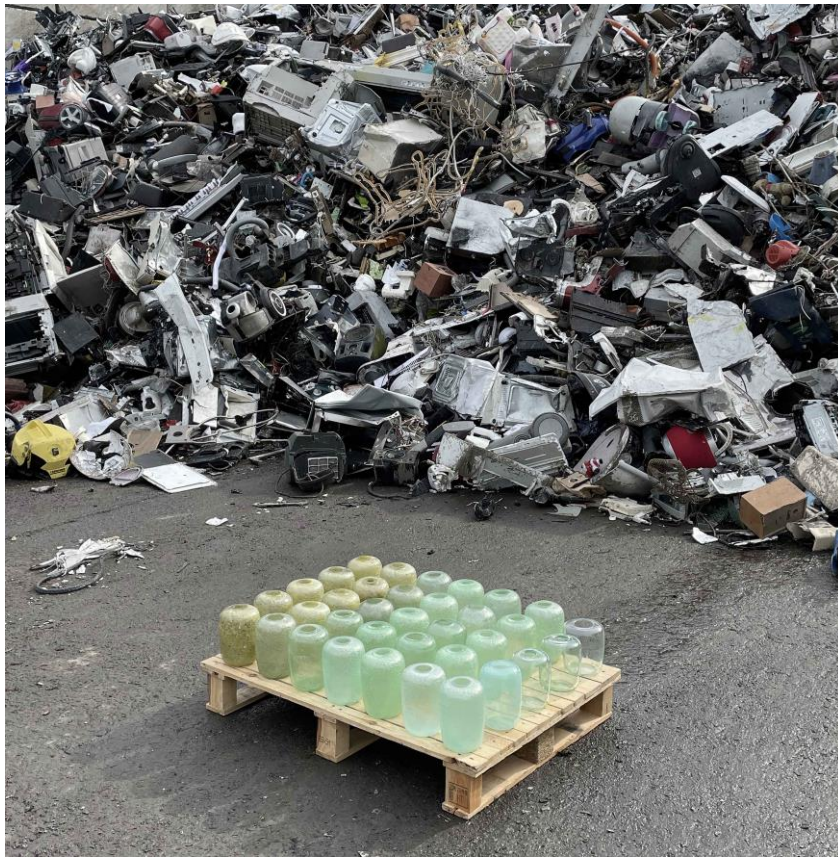


Photo courtesy of Studio Plastique.

NEW YORK –ECO Solidarity, a collaborative initiative bringing together leading European designers and studios represented by [EUNIC NY](#), the European Union National Institutes for Culture, returns to New York's Javits Center May 21-23, 2023, as part of [ICFF + WantedDesign Manhattan](#). Responding to the environmental and humanitarian crises, this year's edition focuses on design with empathy, addressing some of the world's most pressing conditions of human health and wellbeing.

Showcasing designers and design studios from nine European countries, ECO Solidarity 2023 includes a design exhibit, two panel discussions, workshops, and more. The goal of ECO

Solidarity 2023 is to reexamine the roles of designers and architects, finding more ways to offer vital skills and deliver practical support for individuals and communities affected by environmental disasters, war, and violence. This year's projects explore ways to improve urban domestic infrastructures, preserve and restore natural habitats, protect the health and wellbeing of people, and accommodate displacement of the most vulnerable members of the community.

The 2023 program is organized around two themes. The first focuses on **prevention and research, new sustainable materials and methods** of implementation that improve **durability, circularity, recycling waste, carbon-neutral and low-emission productions**, with the goal of improving human and environmental habitats.

The second focuses on **ethical issues** that surround design and architecture, **reconstruction, recuperation, and healing** in response to environmental and humanitarian crises resulting from military conflicts. The emphasis is placed on repositioning architects and designers to address critical issues through community engaged design process via interactive initiatives, city walks and site-specific interventions.

Through sharing research and resources on the newest sustainable design solutions, as well as engaging in participatory actions and interventions, ECO Solidarity 2023 aims to contribute to the re-envisioning of future post-war public spaces, living spaces, and shared environments.

"We are proud to bring ECO Solidarity back to WantedDesign Manhattan," said Odile Hainaut and Claire Pijoulat, Brand Directors for ICFF + WantedDesign Manhattan. "After the great response it received last year, we are confident that the selected nine European studios for 2023 will continue to inspire, educate and create meaningful conversations. The notion of Empathy and Solidarity brought by the project's collaborative approach and the support of nine cultural organizations and EUNIC is critical to developing responses. At the heart of the show, ECO Solidarity delivers a statement of what design can do and how it can serve a greater cause."

"In a time when we are facing wars around the globe, extreme humanitarian crises and climate emergency, the role of cultural diplomacy is essential to address the needs of the next millennium," added Izabela Gola, Visual Arts and Design Curator at the Polish Cultural Institute New York, initiator and co-curator of ECO Solidarity. "Echoing the spirit of the Polish Solidarity movement established in 1980, we call for unity among emerging designers, architects and thinkers from different countries to inspire change, to help re-envision the reconstruction of damaged public spaces, creating more resilient and safer human habitats, and protecting natural habitats."

Participating designers and design studios include: Archibald Godts and Theresa Bastek, [Studio Plastique](#) (Wallonie-Bruxelles) ; Filip Mirbauer, [Balance is Motion](#) (Czech Republic); Dorian Cani, Luise Leon Elbern, Ole Meergans, Katrin Schubert, Edda Zickert, [COLLCOLL](#) (Germany); Aušra Česnauskytė and Goda Verikaitė, [Neo-futuristic Walks](#) (Lithuania); Kamila Szatanowska and Paulina Rogalska, [FALA Architektura](#) (Poland); Pepe Peralta Guerrero, [FOR](#) (Romania); Otto

Nagy, [Terratico](#) (Slovakia); Angel Mombiedro, [Armombiedro Studio](#) (Spain); with a special guest, Victoria Yakusha, [FAINA Design](#) from Ukraine.

Since its founding in 2020, ECO Solidarity is co-curated by Odile Hainaut, Brand Director of ICFF + WantedDesign Manhattan and co-founder of WantedDesign, and Izabela Gola, Visual Arts and Design Curator at the Polish Cultural Institute NY. The exhibition is designed and curated by Deborah Wang, architect and artistic director of [DesignTO](#), Toronto. ECO Solidarity 2023 Advisory Committee includes Cynthia E. Smith, Curator of Socially Responsible Design at Cooper-Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum; Jonsara Ruth, co-founder and Design Director, [Parsons Healthy Materials Lab](#); Paul Clemence, photographer, writer and curator exploring the cross-sections of design, art and architecture; and Tomek Rygalik, industrial designer, educator and founder of [Studio Rygalik](#), which promotes a sensible, holistic approach towards design.

ECO Solidarity 2023 is presented in partnership with [EUNIC NY](#), the European Union National Institutes for Culture, including [Wallonie-Bruxelles Design Mode](#), [Czech Center New York](#), [Goethe-Institut New York](#), [Consulate General of Lithuania in New York](#), [Lithuanian Culture Institute](#) and [the Architecture Fund](#), [Polish Cultural Institute New York](#), [Romanian Cultural Institute New York](#), [Consulate General of Slovak Republic in New York](#), [Consulate General of Spain New York](#), [Consulate General of Portugal New York](#), and the [European Union Delegation to the United Nations](#). ECO Solidarity had been fueled for two consecutive years by the EUNIC Cluster Grant Award granted by [EUNIC Global](#) cultural organization, European Union. This year's special guest representing war-torn Ukraine, [FAINA Design](#), is invited as an expression of solidarity with Ukrainian nation. FAINA Design participation is supported by EUNIC, Polish Cultural Institute New York, [Adam Mickiewicz Institute in Warsaw, Poland](#), and [Ukrainian Institute of America, New York](#).

ECO Solidarity was initiated by the Polish Cultural Institute New York in partnership with WantedDesign and a group of [European Union National Institutes for Culture \(EUNIC\)](#) organizations to address the imperative need for human-centered design in response to humanitarian and public health crises by focusing on ecology, the climate emergency, public health, wellbeing in public spaces.

The name of this initiative was inspired by the Solidarity (Polish: Solidarność) social and political movement which led to the collapse of the Soviet Union, setting the nations on a course toward democracy. The year 2020 marked the 40th anniversary of its formation.

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WantedDesign is an NYC-based platform dedicated to promoting design and fostering the international creative community throughout the year. Founded in New York City in 2011 by Odile Hainaut and Claire Pijoulat, WantedDesign has established itself as a constant and staunch supporter of U.S. and international design. Focusing on emerging and new ideas in design, its main trade event WantedDesign Manhattan was acquired by Emerald in 2019 and is now co-locating with ICFF at the Javits Center. [wanteddesignnyc.com](https://www.wanteddesignnyc.com)

The International Contemporary Furniture Fair (ICFF) is where designers, retailers, developers, and architects converge to exchange inspiration and ignite a competitive drive for contemporary residential and commercial interiors. With a selection of both established and emerging designers, ICFF delivers a selection of the globe's finest, most creative, individual and original avant-garde products showcased in one venue. Exhibitors from around the world come to ICFF each year to showcase the newest frontier of high-end, contemporary interiors.

icff.com

European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC) is the European network of organizations engaging in cultural relations. Together with their partners, they bring to life European cultural collaboration in more than 100 countries worldwide with a network of 133 clusters, drawing on the broad experience of the members from all EU Member States and associate countries. EUNIC advocates a prominent role of culture in international relations and is a strategic partner of the EU, actively involved in the further definition of European cultural policy. EUNIC is a platform for knowledge sharing and for capacity building amongst its members and partners. eunicglobal.eu

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