

MIZELIOAK

Art to Raise
Awareness of
Soil Biodiversity

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THE CHALLENGE: SOIL IS "JUST DIRT"

Soil biodiversity is rarely understood by the public. For many citizens, soil is simply "just dirt" – something to walk on, not a living, breathing ecosystem essential to life. This lack of awareness limits public engagement in soil protection and undermines efforts to address environmental challenges.

The Basque Soil Living Lab, coordinated by GAIA and its partners, identified **soil literacy as a priority for action**, seeking innovative ways to help people see soil differently.

SOIL LITERACY COMBINES BROAD AWARENESS WITH SPECIALISED UNDERSTANDING, ACROSS A RANGE OF DISCIPLINES, THROUGH COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES THAT BRING SOIL CLOSER TO PEOPLE'S LIVES.

ARWYN JONES, EUSO



SOIL LITERACY IS A TOOL TO RAISE AWARENESS

Awareness raising refers to the increase in public understanding and encouraging actions about the importance of soil and its role in their daily lives.

Let's see an example



MISSION

The Mission

Present and celebrate outcomes of a collaborative process linking science, art, and community engagement around soil health and biodiversity. The interaction was designed as both an exhibition of artworks and an interactive learning experience.



Location

Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve and Bilbao, Spain



Duration

One month exhibition following collaborative creation process



Participants

30 fine arts and pedagogy students from UPV/EHU

IMPACT GOALS



Lasting Artwork

Create permanent art pieces celebrating soil



Change Perception

Transform public understanding of soil



Educational Materials

Develop soil literacy resources



Intergenerational Dialogue

Connect citizens, artists, and experts

THE CREATIVE PROCESS



Field Immersion

Students visited Urdaibai to observe biodiversity indicators: dragonflies, beetles, butterflies, migratory birds, and soil organisms like mycelium networks.



Documentation

Students captured textures, colors, and forms through photographs, sketches, and notes as creative inspiration.



Artistic Creation

Teams created thematic artworks using multiple techniques: graphite, ink, mixed media, acrylics, oils, watercolors, and natural pigments.



Exhibition

Final artworks displayed at BBF Bilbao for one month, attracting hundreds of visitors.



FIELD IMMERSION

Contact with UPV teachers to bring art students to Urdaibai and present them iCOSHELLs, soil health and biodiversity



Nature-based
Solutions



Technology
and
Sustainability



DOCUMENTATION

BIODIVERSITY AS ART: THEMATIC FOCUS



Dragonflies

Representing water quality and ecological balance



Beetles

Symbolizing habitat health and environmental sensitivity



Butterflies & Moths

Indicators of ecosystem diversity and plant health



Migratory Birds

Reflecting habitat connectivity and seasonal patterns

Each student team focused on one ecological indicator, creating detailed anatomical studies and abstract compositions that combined realism with symbolic expression.

ARTISTIC CREATION

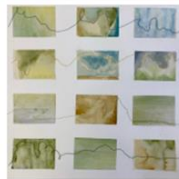
Monthly progress meetings of the Basque LL lead to first drafts of the paintings and drawings (according to the methodologies selected)



por Alejandra Aurrecoechea



por Maria Ioana Coldea



por Ángela Castro



por Carlos Xiaofeng



por Silvia Ortiz



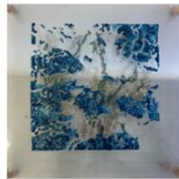
por Ángela Rincón



por Álvaro Moreno



por Anne Martínez



por Marta Echeverría



por Brihana Esparragoza



por Alba Gimeno



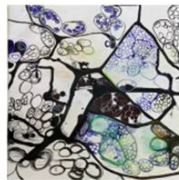
por Marina Salazar



por Adrián Gutiérrez



por Raquel García



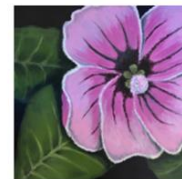
por Aduna Lopetegi



por Rodolfo Romero



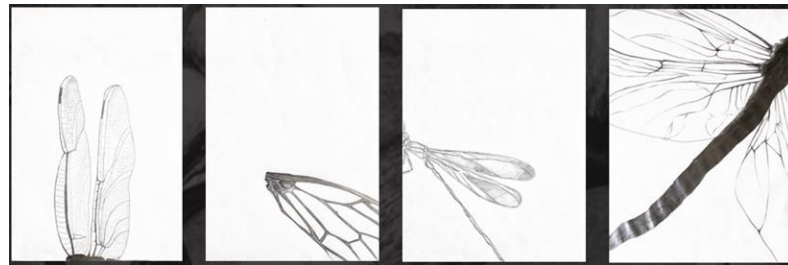
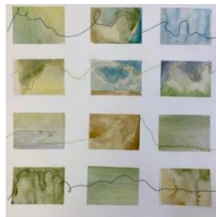
por Alazne Larruscáin



por Haizea Acevedo

ARTISTIC CREATION

Second and final iteration of artworks complete by end of May 2025. Selection of paintings and drawings to be exhibited. Soundscape is created.



ARTISTIC CREATION

Decorating the venue with San Fidel children's art items



Containers for soil samples



Protective gear and hammer for soil sampling

EXHIBITION

The process is complete.

- The venue is ready
- The invitations have been sent out
- Speakers have been confirmed
- Sound system and presentations are ready for the inauguration

Let's see how it went!



EXHIBITION

Inauguration: welcome, presentations, round tables, art and soundscape



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EXHIBITION



EXHIBITION

Printed Fanzine as a gift for participants: a compilation of the art and other knowledge gathered during the process



THE EXHIBITION EXPERIENCE

OPENING EVENT – JUNE 18, 2025

The exhibition opened at BBF Bilbao with representatives from the Basque Soil Living Lab introducing the connection to the EU's Mission Soil. Round table discussions featured experts, local stakeholders, and student-artists sharing their experiences.

Pedagogy students presented a unique **auditory art piece** – a soundscape capturing Urdaibai's natural sounds, translating ecological richness into an immersive sensory experience.

VISITOR ENGAGEMENT

Visitors walked through thematic zones representing the soil biodiversity story, listened to the soundscape, and interacted with artists. The exhibition became a shared space for reflection and co-learning.

Hundreds of visitors engaged during the one-month display period, discussing links between soil, biodiversity, and community well-being.

MEASURABLE IMPACT

30+

Artworks Created

Visual pieces reflecting biodiversity indicators through paintings, drawings, and mixed-media works

50

Opening Attendees

Participants engaged during the exhibition launch event

100s

Total Visitors

People reached during the one-month exhibition at DOCK Bilbao

70%

Women Participants

Strong emphasis on youth and gender inclusion among student artists

The interaction generated lasting educational resources, including the "Mizelioa" fanzine documenting the creative process, now available for use in schools, communities, and Living Lab outreach initiatives.



Thanks!

DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS?

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