

EN

2020—2024  
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HUMAN  
CITIES

# SMOTIES

CREATIVE WORKS  
WITH SMALL AND  
REMOTE PLACES

Co-funded by the  
Creative Europe Programme  
of the European Union



# SMOTIES

Creative works with small and remote places.

## WHY

We believe in transforming remote places into more liveable spaces by involving local residents in the development of cultural and creative activities.

## HOW

Meetings with locals, prototyping, co-design workshops, travelling exhibitions & talks, masterclasses & trainings, publications

## WHO

The **SMOTIES** partners network includes public institutions, design centres, creative agencies, national associations and research centres, located in 10 European cities. These places have been chosen for their particularity of location, cultural uniqueness, development potential and role as consolidators in their creative sectors.

# WHAT

**Human Cities** is a platform of interdisciplinary exchange, founded in 2006. It is examining the livability of public spaces by using participatory design as a tool to facilitate systems of process and innovation.

The **Human Cities** platform expanded its network and outreach to 10 small and remote European places that are affected by high rural depopulation. These places are depositories of material and immaterial culture at risk to be undervalued, not consolidated or handed down, and hence lost. This new **Human Cities** project is called **SMOTIES—Creative works with small and remote places.**

# PROJECT PARTNERS

in alphabetical order

Cieszyn, POLAND  
**Zamek Cieszyn**  
Design Center

Graz, AUSTRIA  
**FH JOANNEUM University**  
**of Applied Sciences**  
Institute Design & Communication

Milano, ITALY  
**Politecnico di Milano**  
Design Department

Tallinn, ESTONIA  
**Estonian Association**  
**of Designers**

Ermoupoli, GREECE  
**University of the Aegean**  
Department of Product and  
Systems Design Engineering

Ljubljana, SLOVENIA  
**Urban Planning Institute**  
of the Republic of Slovenia

Reykjavik, ICELAND  
**Alternance slf**  
Architecture and Urban Planning

Funchal, PORTUGAL  
**Universidade da Madeira**  
Art–Design

London, UNITED KINGDOM  
**Clear Village Trustee Limited**  
Charity for Community Building

Saint-Étienne, FRANCE  
**Cité du Design**  
Ecole Supérieure d'Art  
et de Design



# Basso Monferrato

Remote place, Italy

**Basso Monferrato** is a remote area located in the Piedmont region, in north-western Italy, between the cities of Turin, Alessandria, and Asti. The territory is a mixture of hills and plains, characterised by wine and rice cultivation, castles, and villages, with still unexpressed potential. In this area, there is a significant historical and cultural heritage of the Romanic period, with a high concentration of churches and chapels, such as the Santa Maria di Vezzolano Abbey in Albugnano, included in the Transromanica, one of the Culture Routes of the Council of Europe. The strong territorial dominance of green and non-anthropized areas is juxtaposed with cultivated fields and vineyards throughout the area.



SMOTIES PARTNER ITALY

# Politecnico di Milano

## Design Department

Founded in 1863, **Politecnico di Milano** is regarded as a leading research and educational institution worldwide, offering innovative programs at all levels within its schools of Engineering, Architecture and Design. Today it is worldwide among the top 10 in the QS ranking by Subject in Arts & Design. Its **Design Department** was founded as the first Italian Department for Research in Design. It promotes the significance of design as a key element of research and education, able to act within the various processes of production of tangible and intangible goods, focusing on the central role of individuals, communities, and society as a whole, and with a leader role in the interplay between industrial settings, public and private sectors, public administrations and universities.

The research team involved in the **Human Cities** project is part of the **Polimi DESIS Lab** within the international **DESIS Network – Design for Social Innovation and Sustainability**, a group of researchers adopting a strategic and systemic approach to design, with a specific focus on design for services and design activism.

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# Places in Polhov Gradec Dolomites Landscape Park

Remote place, Slovenia

**Polhov Gradec Dolomites Landscape Park** (KPPD) was declared in 1974 due to the characteristic topography, outstanding natural beauty, remarkable sacral and architectural cultural heritage as well as archaeological, ethnological and other historical assets. The whole area is predominantly characterised by the mixed forests, especially in the slopy parts, while next to traditional small villages grasslands, fields and orchards can be found. The area is not too far from the capital city of Ljubljana which on one hand makes it popular for the spare-time recreational activities (there are many hiking tracks spread all around the area), and on the other hand makes it attractive for the suburban living. However, the area stays remote due to the complete lack of public transportation and underdeveloped public facilities—besides the primary school, churches and local gastronomy services there are no other public functions.



SMOTIES PARTNER SLOVENIA

# Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia

**The Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia** (UIRS) is the central Slovenian research organisation in the field of spatial planning and design and related disciplines. Founded in 1955, UIRS was transformed into a public research institute in 1993, a status which continues to apply to date. Its basic activities are research, education, publishing and policy advising. It also operates a public library with an extensive literature stock and a large collection of other references in the field of spatial planning.

The UIRS performs basic and applicative research projects at international, national, regional and local levels, addressing various issues and processes of the urban and spatial development of Slovenia and the wider area. Research activities also includes the advancement of methodological and practical solutions for the development of urban areas, as well as planning of settlements and the countryside.



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Photos: Boris Primožič & Peter Košenina,

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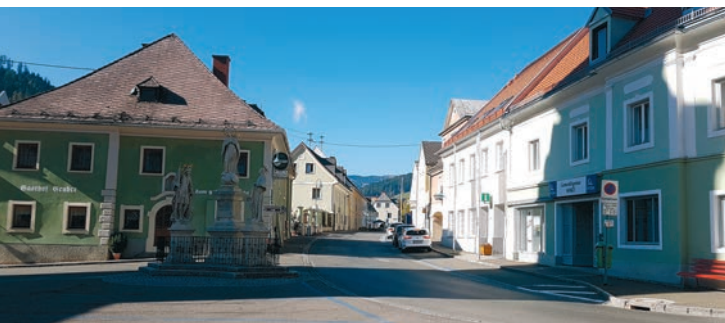




# Oberzeiring

## Remote place, Austria

**Oberzeiring** is located in Upper Styria at 930 meters above sea level in a side valley of the Mur Valley. The formerly important market town currently has around 830 inhabitants. Oberzeiring is known for its high medieval silver mining and the right to mint silver coins. There is evidence of brisk mining and smelting of silver in the 13th and 14th centuries. Numerous archaeological finds prove that the region was already settled in the Urnfield Period and that an old Roman main road, the 'Via Norica' passed by Oberzeiring. Today Oberzeiring lives, among other things, from tourism and is known for its show mine and its healing caves. In 2017, as part of the 750th anniversary celebration, a small museum with a shop was opened in addition to the historic mine.







SMOTIES PARTNER AUSTRIA

## FH JOANNEUM

University of Applied Sciences  
Institute Design and Communication

At the **Institute of Design and Communication**, we train designers, who are able to think critically, design effectively for society, inspire the community, and improve the world.

Design competencies and skills, user-centred methodologies, and fieldwork are important components of the education. In interdisciplinary group works, collaborations with businesses, design agencies and cultural institutions are lived. The success is proven by numerous awards and successful graduates. With these features, our degree programs are unique—not only in Austria.

In the field of information design in media and interaction spaces, the institute also offers competencies in the areas of visual communication, exhibition design and responsive environments. The focus is always on the user or the audience and the comprehensible experience.

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## Bobrek

Remote place, Poland

Cieszyn is a small town in Poland with about 32 thousand inhabitants, located on the border with the Czech Republic. Bobrek is a part of the town that used to function as an independent neighbouring village. Bobrek was intended to house 18 thousand people. However, the plans to build a housing estate there were only partially implemented — instead of one large complex, two smaller settlements were built. Moreover, there is no social infrastructure — no cultural centres or schools that could act as initiators for various activities. Public transport is also largely limited there, as is the range of cultural and sporting events.



SMOTIES PARTNER POLAND

## Zamek Cieszyn

### Design Centre

**Zamek** means 'castle' — and it is a unique castle with its function as a design centre. Castles symbolize stability and memory, whereas design embodies modernity and change. Could anything be more self-contradictory? And yet, Zamek has existed for 16 years now, in a small town on the Polish–Czech border, promoting good design and showing how to make good use of it. Zamek cooperates with companies, NGOs, and public institutions — wherever innovative thinking is in demand. It supports any activity that can improve the quality of life, also backing social innovators, who design solutions for elderly people and persons with disabilities. What is more, Zamek helps companies to adapt to ongoing changes and we accompany young people making the first steps on their career paths. By organising courses with experts it teaches how to use design thinking in practice. Zamek constantly searches for new areas of development in the fields of traditional handicraft techniques and natural materials.



#### ZAMEK CIESZYN

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# Penmachno

## Remote place, UK

**Penmachno**, in the Machno valley in Snowdonia National Park, North Wales, is set within a beautiful landscape with wonderful walks, wildlife and natural resources. The valley is the birthplace of the modern Welsh language, and has deep roots in Welsh industrial heritage, from slate mining to wool milling. It is also a significant tourist destination for mountain bikers, hikers, and adventure seekers.

The Penmachno community describes themselves as strong and caring, and believes that Penmachno is a great place to live for the young and elderly. The community's future visions include becoming a modern rural area. They aspire to increase their self-sufficiency and sustainability, create more affordable housing, and more visitor attractions.

# SMOTIES PARTNER UNITED KINGDOM

## Clear Village Trustee Limited

**Clear Village** is a London-based charity which helps communities build a better future through creative regeneration. We work together with landlords, municipalities and community groups to identify local challenges, build on existing assets, bring in external expertise as needed, and co-create solutions with local residents and other stakeholders. Since no two communities are the same, our projects are varied too. Our recent work includes running a co-working space in central London focused on supporting the local community; creating a series of online hackathons to develop circular approaches for the built environment; transforming a neglected walled garden on the fringes of London into a community food growing hub; and helping to establish a centre for agricultural technology in Malawi. What unites all our projects is our focus on empowering local communities and igniting resilience from within.

**Clear Village Trustee Limited**

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# Borgarnes

Remote place, Iceland

**Borgarnes** is a beautiful town with 2108 inhabitants, about an hour's drive from Reykjavík and is located on a peninsula in a Fjord (Borgarfjörður). The first settlers arrived in the area by boat in the 9th century, but the small town only began to emerge in the second half of the 19th century when it became a place for trading goods. The main park is named after the first settler (Skallagrímur) and there you can also find his burial mound. For most of its history, Borgarnes was mainly connected by sea to the rest of the country. The town grew around the harbour which was the town's center of gravity.



## SMOTIES PARTNER ICELAND

# Alternance Architecture and Urban Planning

**Alternance Architecture and Urban Planning** was created in 1999 and is based in Reykjavik. The scope of action covers practice and applied research. Regarding practice, Alternance field is very large in the project size way, which goes from urban planning to furniture events. Quality wise we essentially work on very challenging projects that ask for a lot of creativity. Alternance is currently developing “Hovering trails” – paths made out of aluminium that are especially made for the sensible natural reserves of Iceland.

Regarding applied research, **Alternance** is developing a project called **MAPS – multidisciplinary assessment of a public space**. It’s a methodology intended to assess the quality of public space and to provide recommendations for the public authorities to improve them. This methodology is developed by a multidisciplinary team specialised in urban planning: a historian, an architect, a social psychologist, and a planner. It’s a multidisciplinary methodology combining social sciences, architecture and planning that consider the environmental and social aspects of public space. Alternance joined **SMOTIES** and the European team of **Human Cities** with the **MAPS** project.

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# Joaveski

Remote place, Estonia

**Joaveski** is a small village on the banks of the Loobu River in Lahemaa National Park, especially known as a unique industrial village, where a hydroelectric power plant was built in 1898 to supply the newly established cardboard factory. Joaveski has great historical and architectural value: the original cardboard factory, designed by renowned architects, includes various architectural examples and several out-buildings, around which local cultural history has accumulated for over a century. The Joaveski factory building is also in the state register of cultural monuments. Approximately 30 people live in the village.

SMOTIES PARTNER ESTONIA

# Estonian Association of Designers

**The Estonian Association of Designers (EAD)** is a non-profit organisation governed by public law and representing 160 designers. EAD activities are focused on raising the society's awareness of the efficiency of design and developing user-friendly environments, organising competitions, seminars, workshops, and exhibitions. It collaborates in projects focused on issues like inclusive design, health care design, human cities, and design management.

The main design event of the year is the **International Tallinn Design Festival (DISAINIÖÖ)** which has received the European quality label EFFE. From 2006 EAD gives out the **Estonian Design Award BRUNO**. For promoting Estonian design abroad EAD has received an award from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. For helping to introduce local makers EAD has established an **Estonian Design House (2010)**. Estonian design has been exhibited in Scandinavia, Baltics, Central-Europe, UK, China, Russia, USA, Japan, etc.

On the initiative of the EAD a joint project was launched to develop and implement design policy. EAD has participated in European design policy projects. It is a member of BEDA, EIDD Design For All Europe and WDO, and has initiated projects dedicated to relaxing in wilderness and in the city like the Tallinn For All project, which received the DME Europe Award.

**Estonian Association of Designers (EAD)**

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# From the Dorlay Valley to the Carthusian monastery of Sainte-Croix-en-Jarez

Remote place, France

In the heart of the Pilat Regional Nature Park, 40 minutes from Saint Etienne and 40 minutes from Lyon, the **Dorlay Valley** has developed a know-how around the textile industry since the 18th century. These traditional skills are associated with a rich heritage of industrial buildings and infrastructure linked to the use of the river's water as a source of energy—water milling. In the **Dorlay Valley**, there are some villages that still preserve the vestiges of this past textile industry and try to valorise this heritage.

Nearby this area, **Sainte-Croix-en-Jarez** is famous for a Carthusian monastery that has become a village centre. The inhabitants want to safeguard and promote this historic building and intangible heritage not only for tourism but also for intergenerational transmission.



SMOTIES PARTNER FRANCE

# Cité du Design

Ecole Supérieure d'Art et de Design

**Cité du Design of Saint-Étienne** is a platform for research, higher education, economic development and promotion of art and design, supported by the city of Saint-Étienne, the metropolitan government (Saint-Étienne Métropole), the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region, the State (Ministry of Culture) and private partners. Since 2010 the Cité du Design has formed a single institution with the Saint-Étienne Higher School of Art and Design.

Led by the **Cité du Design**, Saint-Étienne and its agglomeration are relying on design as a driving force for the development of the territory. Saint-Étienne was designated in 2010 as a UNESCO creative city of design.

Every two years, **Cité du Design** organises the **Biennale Internationale Design Saint-Etienne**. Since 1998, designers from all over the world, French and international design enthusiasts, as well as the public of the Saint-Étienne Métropole get together to discover emblematic examples of design production and innovation. The chosen themes, openness to the world and access to creative works characterize the Biennale, recognized by all experts.

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# Estreito da Calheta

Remote place, Portugal

**Estreito da Calheta** is a small village on the southwest coast of Madeira Island, founded in the second half of the sixteenth century. It owes its name to the orthography of the land, as it is located between two valleys in a narrow area bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the south and the central mountains of the island to the north. In Portuguese, 'estreito' means 'narrow'. With about 1600 inhabitants (2011), it has a considerable foreign community that has found an interesting place to live in the fertile and sunny slopes.

SMOTIES PARTNER PORTUGAL

# Universidade da Madeira

## Art & Design

**The University of Madeira (UMA)** is a state university established in 1988, organized into 4 faculties and 2 schools: Exact Sciences and Engineering, Life Sciences, Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities as well as Health Higher School and Technologies and Management Higher School.

The mission of the **University of Madeira** is to be a university of international level, achieving excellence through education, research and service to its regional, national and international communities.

Considering that a vital aspect of the mission of a university is the transmission of knowledge, research is crucial for the quality of the teaching/learning process. Thus, a university can only ensure the pursuit of knowledge by promoting fundamental and applied scientific and cultural research, enhancing its ability to establish strategic partnerships with other universities.

Scientific research activities have been developed at two levels of organisation: in structured research units and in self assembled groups, which in some cases can be seen as embryos of future units.

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# Apano Meria

## Remote place, Greece

Not far from Ermoupolis lies a remote and inaccessible area of Syros. **Apano Meria** occupies the northern part of the island and offers a landscape of overlapping shrubs, marble and ancient dry stone wall formations created its first inhabitants. In 1997, a permanent nature reserve was established on Syros, with 190 hectares of agricultural, grassland and partially forested areas, meeting the needs of fauna for rest, food and water in **Apano Meria** in the municipality of Syros. Furthermore, the entire area was declared a NATURA2000 protected area in 2010.



**Apano Meria** combines archaeological, geological and biological wealth that have remained untouched by human development over the last century.





SMOTIES PARTNER GREECE

# University of the Aegean

## Department of Product and Systems Design Engineering

The focus of the **Department of Product and Systems Design Engineering** is on the integrated design of modern and emerging products, systems, and services. It is part of the **Polytechnic School of the University of the Aegean**, based on the island of Syros. It is the only department of Design Engineering in Greece. The department is a pioneer academic unit in Greek higher education in the field of Design Engineering.

Its educational operation began in the year 2000 and is aligned to the most modern practices and programs of study offered by international accredited institutions in the field of design of products and systems.

At the same time, the department produces high level research results that enjoy wide recognition from the international scientific community. This leading-edge research is referenced and incorporated into the educational material of the various scientific and technological courses offered, so that student teaching is always up to date with the latest advances in the field.

### **UNIVERSITY OF THE AEGEAN (UoA)**

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-  **Universidade da Madeira**  
Estreito da Calheta, PORTUGAL
-  **FH JOANNEUM**  
Oberzeiring, AUSTRIA
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