

The background of the entire image is a dark grey, textured surface. Overlaid on this are numerous thin, white, hand-drawn lines. These lines are mostly circular or elliptical, creating a complex, web-like pattern that resembles a spiderweb or a series of overlapping orbits. The lines are more densely packed on the left side of the image and become sparser towards the right.

WORKSHOP & EXHIBITION OF VISUAL ARTS AND DESIGN STUDENTS
Faculty of Education, University of Primorska

ASH AS A CHALLENGE IN ARTISTIC PRACTICE

Publisher: Slovenian National Building and Civil Engineering Institute
Ljubljana, Slovenia, 2025

First electronic edition.
<https://www.zag.si/dl/katalog-ashcycle.pdf>

Funding: Activities were funded by EU ASHCYCLE project, grant number 101058162.

ISBN XXXXXXXXX

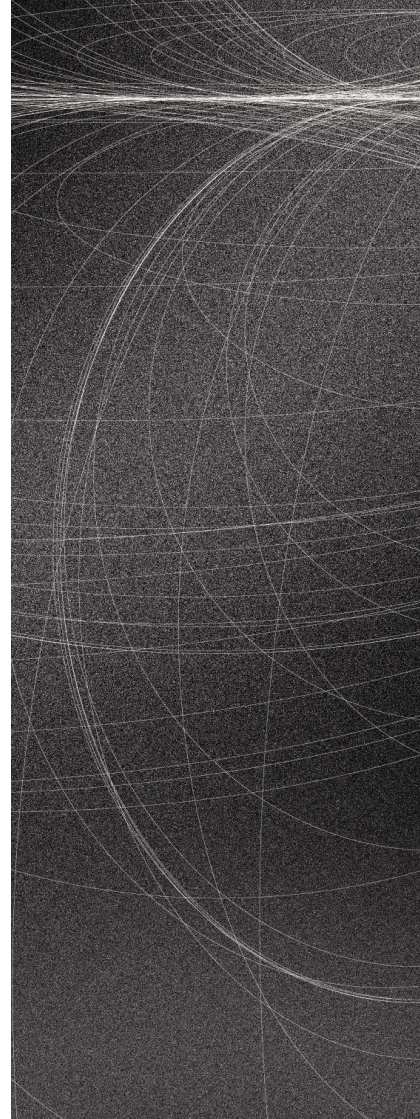
This publication is not intended for sale.

© 2025 Vizualne umetnosti in oblikovanje, Univerza na Primorskem
in Zavod za gradbeništvo Slovenije

This catalog is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NoDerivatives 4.0 International license. This means that sharing is allowed without modifications, but altering, adapting, or using it for commercial purposes is not permitted without the author's permission.

To view this license, visit: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/4.0/>

Kataložni zapis o publikaciji (CIP) pripravili v Narodni in univerzitetni knjižnici v Ljubljani
COBISS.SI-ID 229379587
ISBN 978-961-7125-16-0 (PDF)





Ash as a challenge in artistic practice

WORKSHOP & EXHIBITION OF VISUAL ARTS AND DESIGN STUDENTS

Authors- Artists:

Iva Gjorgjievska, Nika Oblak, Tician Tenei Patafta, Tilen
Prelič, Blažka Šifrar, Asja Turnšek

Texts:

Dr. Vilma Ducman, Prof. Dr. Tero Luukkonen, Assoc. Prof. Jiri Kočica

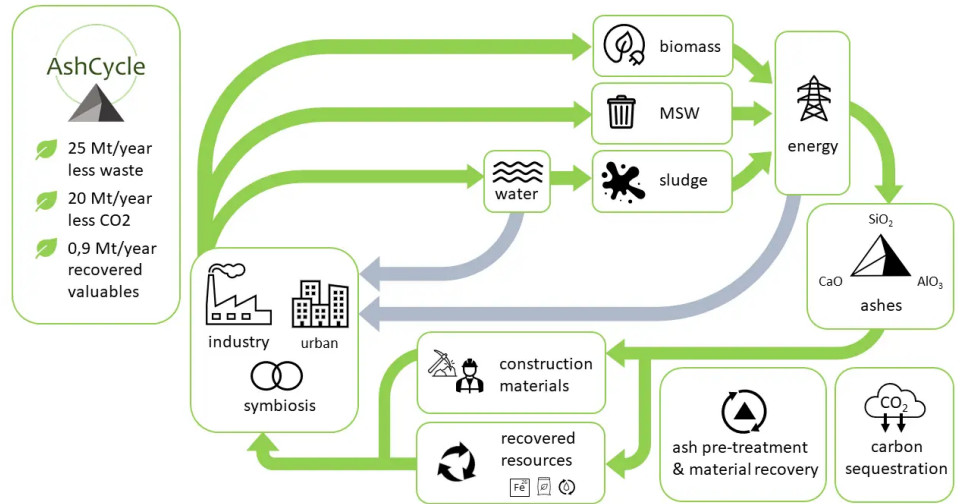
Design: Nika Oblak

All photographs by the authors of the works.

The Ash-Cycle project: Integration of underutilized ashes into material cycles by industry-urban symbiosis (2022-2026)

The AshCycle project (grant agreement number: 101058162) provides tools to reduce the amount of waste generated from the incineration of municipal solid waste, biomass, sewage sludge or combinations thereof by developing new utilization possibilities. The project will use exemplary pilot solutions of the Industrial-Urban Symbiosis concept by demonstrating novel methods to recover valuable elements from the ash. In addition, the aluminosilicate-rich minerals recovered from the ash will be tested as feedstock for companies in different value chains to obtain products for construction and wastewater treatment, leading to increased resource efficiency and circular economy.

The mineral residues of the ash that remain after the recovery of the valuable elements will be used for the development of low-carbon recycled building materials and products. Another utilization perspective for the mineral residue is the development of alkali-activated composite adsorbents. The various recycling options are validated through laboratory-scale tests and product optimization. Subsequently, each product will be demonstrated on a large scale. The pilot projects will take place in three main EU areas: Croatia and Slovenia, the Netherlands and Belgium, and Finland and Denmark, but also South Africa and Switzerland. A schematic presentation of the AshCycle project activities is given in the figure below.



Schematic presentation of AshCycle project (<https://www.ashcycle.eu/en/project/>)

The following pilots are foreseen:

- extraction of phosphorus and rare metals from ashes,
- utilization of ashes in clay brick sector, concrete industry and alkali activation technology, and as SCM,
- carb-stone technology,
- use of ashes for earth construction,
- up-scaling of aggregate production from ashes.

The demonstration projects serve as models for successfully introducing new solutions to the market and as tools for raising public awareness of new concepts, technologies, and processes. Activities to familiarize the public with the project include a workshop by PEF VUO students on “Ash as a challenge for artistic practice”. Namely, in addition to its material value and potential, ash also has a strong metaphorical connotation, as it symbolizes both transience and the possibility of transformation, which is also depicted in the exhibition.

Dr. Vilma Ducman, ZAG, Slovenia

Prof. Dr. Tero Luukkonen, coordinator of
AshCycle, University of Oulu, Finland



From the AshCycle workshop with students from
department of Visual Arts and Design in Koper 2024



Ash as a challenge in artistic practice

Art is frequently interwoven with materials and their physical, visual, and symbolic properties. Some materials inherently shape iconography even before any formal artistic intervention. Ash, the central theme of the Ashcycle project—where we have also engaged students of visual arts and design from the University of Primorska—is one such material. The very mention of ash evokes a vast array of associations, which, through their symbolic connections, immediately bring forth fundamental existential questions. In this context, the current exhibition of young artists explores these themes.

In the work of **Nika Oblak**, a first-year master's student at VUO, we encounter complex themes of contemporary art, where the very carriers of images, their influences, and their connection to intimate personal narratives are explored in a world that can be replicated on nearly every level. Through this exploration, Nika overlays video-memory images with a traditional painter's canvas, upon which a robot—resembling a robotic vacuum cleaner—systematically disperses ash from a single pile across the entire surface. In this act, the world of our memories becomes obscured, as if art itself were being symbolically shrouded in ash.

Tilen Prelič, a second-year student at VUO, explores the issue of the imprints we leave behind and the transformations we are, in a sense, compelled to undergo in our lives to navigate transitions—whether leaving things behind as a scorched aftermath or as remnants of all that we once passionately and fervently advocated for and brought to life.







Many times, nearly shattered and barely resembling ourselves, we piece together the world of our perceptions—and even our very being as "vessels of existence"—solely through the remnants we find in the scorched fields of broken illusions. The work of **Asja Turnšek**, a second-year student at VUO, almost directly illustrates such states, revealing the immense difficulty of reconstructing life and our trust in it once it has already been shattered.

Blažka Šifrar and **Iva Gjorgjievska** each, in their own way, engage with nearly explicit references to death and the post-mortem decomposition of the body. Iva draws on a modernist, partially surrealist transformation of the body into a metaphorical, Jungian-inspired process of alchemical putrefaction, which, according to Jung, enables decomposition as a foundation for a new cycle. In her work, Iva quite literally leaves openings filled with seeds—seeds that may, in time, sprout and grow.

Blažka approaches these final states through preparations and formalized rituals, akin to those in contemporary funerary practices, where the deceased are cremated, their ashes transferred into urns, and these urns await the funeral ceremony in a chapel. The installation Blažka presents for our exhibition as a model is a preparatory piece for a larger presentation, which also includes the possibility of an artistic performance in which visitors would be invited to place their hands into the ash. Although this ash is industrial, the overall setting places the visitor in an intensely tense and unsettling position. At the center of the installation is water, where visitors are meant to symbolically "wash their hands."



Asja Turnšek, Careful

Tician Patafta, a first-year student at VUO, uses ash as a material for sculptural work that borders on design. Throughout history, small-scale sculptures with a cultic function have often been used as amulets, shaped to be held in one's hands or worn as jewelry. Tician plays with this boundary, seeking lines that are, on the one hand, entirely abstract, yet on the other, follow the main veins found in our hands.

As a curator and educator, I find it especially intriguing that students can engage in a project structured in this way, allowing them to explore questions from their own perspectives—questions that, in many ways, are surprisingly similar to those posed by researchers.: What properties does a given material have? How does it "function" in relation to others, and why? Can it be utilized, and if so, how, within technological processes?



Blažka Šifrar, *And then they washed their hands*



Iva Gjorgjievska, Spontaneous generation



Yet, the answers to these questions differ significantly from the conclusions drawn by scientific researchers in their investigations. For students of art and design, material properties are linked to our perceptions of their symbolic, tactile-haptic, and visual qualities, their historically conditioned meanings, and their functions in composition, psychological perception, spatial placement, and the design logic of material interaction and form.

In this sense, the artistic-research approach within such a scientific framework may offer a contribution that sheds light on a dimension of human experience—one that we all inevitably encounter when faced with new technological solutions and shifts in our everyday interaction with the world.

Assoc. Prof. Jiri Kočica

Info: vilma.ducman@zag.si jiri.kocica@pef.upr.si





ZAVOD ZA
GRAĐENIŠTVO
SLOVENIJE

SLOVENIAN
NATIONAL BUILDING
AND CIVIL ENGINEERING
INSTITUTE



Funded by the
European Union

