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# Pop-up Art Hives

**Mobile, temporary community art  
studios that transform public spaces  
into inclusive creative third spaces**

engAGE Living Lab How-to Kit



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# What are Pop-up Art Hives?

Pop-up Art Hives are temporary, mobile community art spaces that appear in everyday public or semi-public locations for short periods of time. They turn places like parks, libraries, campuses, or community centres into informal art studios where people can gather for free to make art, share skills, and connect with each other.

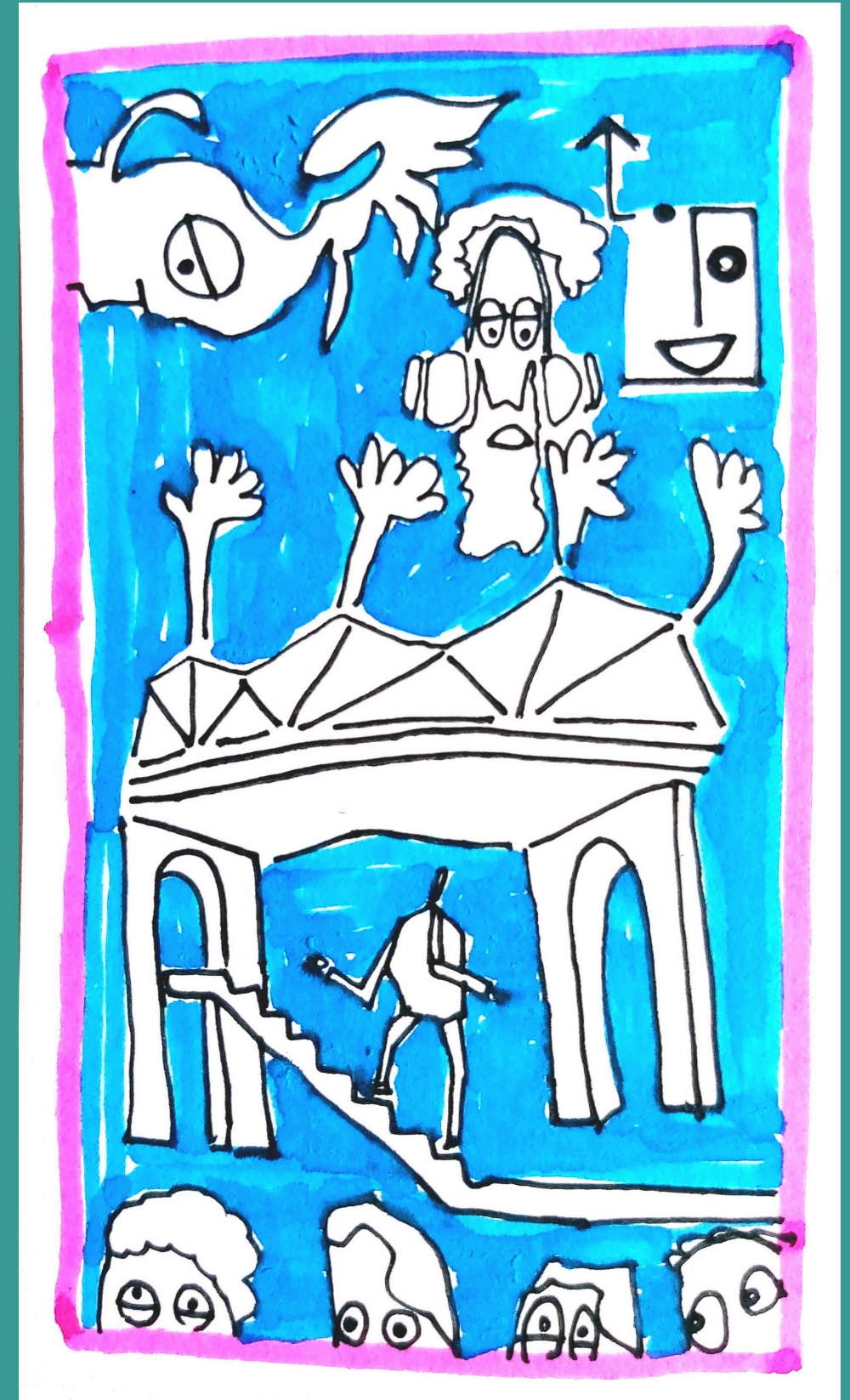
Unlike permanent Art Hives, they are intentionally flexible and short-lived. That mobility allows them to reach different groups of people and activate spaces that are usually not used for creative or collective activities.



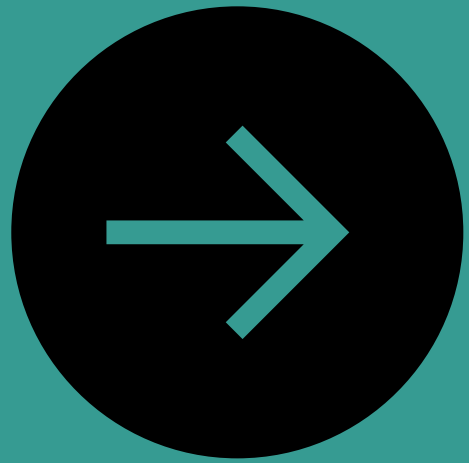


# What do pop-up Art Hives aim to do?

- **Create public homeplaces and third spaces :** They offer welcoming environments where people can gather informally outside of home and work, supporting belonging, social connection, and low-barrier participation in creative activity.
- **Disrupt dominant uses of public space:** They temporarily transform regulated or passive spaces into active sites of creativity and interaction, challenging how public space is normally controlled, used, and experienced.
- **Expand outreach to marginalized communities:** They intentionally bring art-making into accessible, everyday settings to engage people who may face social, economic, cultural, or institutional barriers to participating in traditional art spaces.
- **Explore possibilities for permanent Art Hives:** They function as experimental prototypes, helping organizers understand community needs, spatial dynamics, and facilitation practices before developing longer-term or permanent spaces.
- **Encourage outdoor artmaking and interconnectedness:** They support creative engagement beyond indoor institutions, often integrating outdoor environments and fostering a broader sense of connection between people, place, and lived experience.







# How to Run Pop-up Art Hives :

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## Choose a welcoming public space

Select a location where people already move, gather, or pause (parks, libraries, campuses, community events). The goal is low barrier entry—people should not need planning or prior intention to participate.

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## Bring simple, accessible art materials

Use basic, flexible supplies like paper, markers, paint, scissors, recycled and natural materials. The emphasis is on variety, openness and experimentation.

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## Set up an open, inviting layout

Arrange tables and materials in a way that feels visible and approachable. Clear signage and an uncluttered setup help signal that the space is free to enter, explore, and leave at any time.

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## Do direct outreach with respect

Gently invite people passing by, offering the activity without pressure or persuasion. Respect refusal, observe comfort levels, and ensure people feel safe saying yes or no without explanation.

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# Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Considerations :

- Free and open access reduces barriers to participation.
- Inclusive, respectful, self-directed facilitation ensures cultural safety and respect for diverse identities.
- Variety of materials and seating options support physical and sensory accessibility.
- Diverse forms of participation are equally valued.



Illustration: Momo Escobedo



# Examples of Pop-up Art Hives

- **Campus and institutional pop-ups** (universities, libraries, community centres) where people gather in existing shared spaces for open art-making.
- **Public outdoor activities** (parks, streets, festivals) that invite spontaneous participation from passersby in everyday environments.
- **Thematic or partnered events** (collaborations with organizations, food programs, or cultural events) that combine art-making with other community activities.





# Facilitation Challenges & Solutions :

- **Transportation and setup logistics:** Moving materials, tables, and supplies between locations requires planning, coordination, and efficient packing systems to ensure quick setup and breakdown in temporary spaces.
- **Weather conditions for outdoor events:** Outdoor Pop-up Art Hives are vulnerable to rain, wind, and temperature changes, requiring backup plans such as nearby shelter or flexible scheduling.
- **Creating truly inclusive environments:** Inclusion requires more than open access; it involves actively removing social, cultural, and accessibility barriers so diverse participants feel safe, welcomed, and valued.
- **Misconceptions about artistic skill requirements:** Some participants may believe art-making requires talent or training, which can limit engagement; facilitation must normalize experimentation and process over outcomes.
- **Balancing facilitation and community ownership:** Facilitators must support the space without controlling it too tightly, allowing participants to shape the experience while still maintaining care, safety, and flow.





# Highlights & Impact :

Pop-up Art Hives create accessible entry points for experimentation, allowing ideas to be tested in real community contexts while responding directly to local needs. They bring people together through collective art-making, where connection and shared experience matter as much as the artwork itself. These temporary spaces also open up opportunities for collaboration and networking between individuals, organizations, and community groups, often sparking relationships that continue beyond the pop-up itself. At the same time, they offer an informal yet meaningful platform for engaging with social issues through dialogue, creativity, and participation. In doing so, Pop-up Art Hives actively reimagine public space, transforming ordinary or underused environments into vibrant, welcoming places shaped by creativity and community presence.





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