# Our conclusions:

There is a common misunderstanding of artists’ communal practices as being project-based. That misunderstanding even exists in the arts themselves and terms such as “project spaces”, “artists projects” or “project art” in conjunction with multidisciplinary, collective and non-museum/non-gallery art practices. This is a problematic legacy of the Western conceptual arts of the 1970s and the critical perception of their work as mobile, temporary, and “dematerialized”.[[1]](#footnote-20) In reality, the artist collectives we worked on, and with, do not merely create (temporary) projects, but do long-term community work. Unlike projects, they have no defined end. They are trajectories, not projects, or more precisely: (self-built) infrastructures into which most contributors have long-term (often lifelong) investments.

While the knowledge gathered and shared in this communal work can transcend generations of people, it typicall exists in alternative, non-public archives, depends on person-to-person sharing and transmission, and is therefore fragile and prone to loss.

Cultural heritage institutions, on the other hand, are often not equipped to host these communities and safeguard their knowledge, because of their often traditional ways of working, and because of cultural and organizational differences with artists’ self-organization.

The misperception of artists’ community knowledge as being project-based results in precarity of these practices; while they are long-term infrastructural endeavors, they typically live from no institutional support at all, or from temporary project funding to temporary project funding. A follow-up to our research could be to investigate how new infrastuctures and institutions could be built that do justice to artists’ community knowledge and long-term community engagement.

1. Lippard, Lucy R. Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972; Praeger, 1973. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)