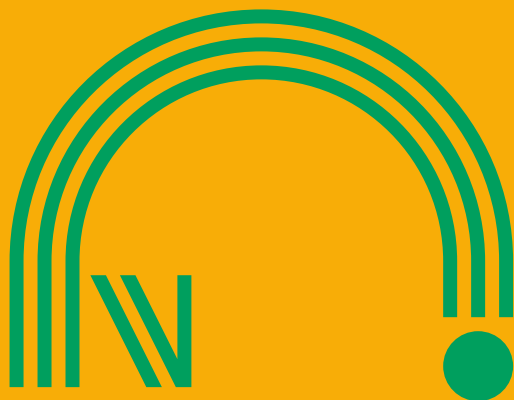
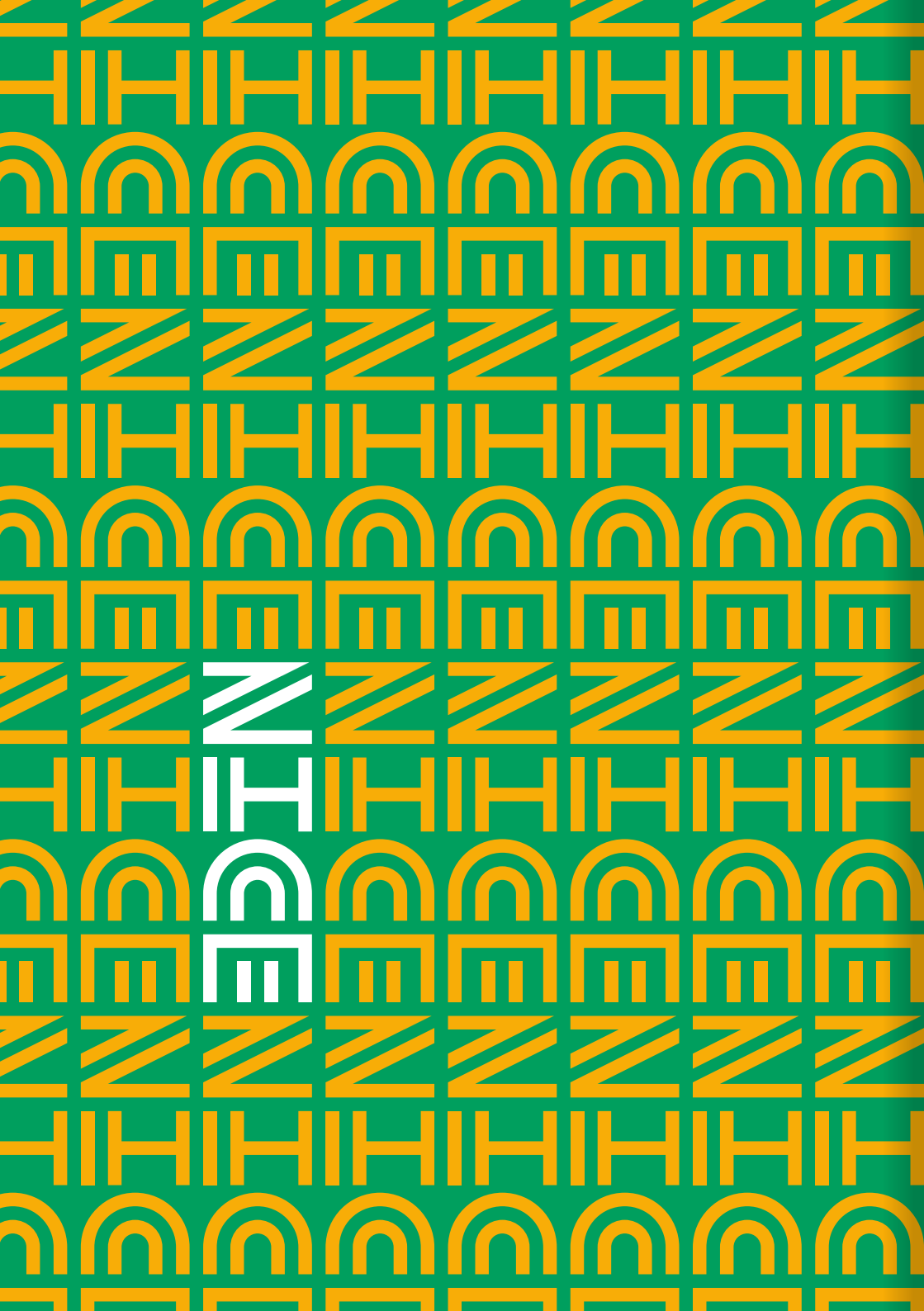


POP-UP store for circular products in Ptuj, SLOVENIA

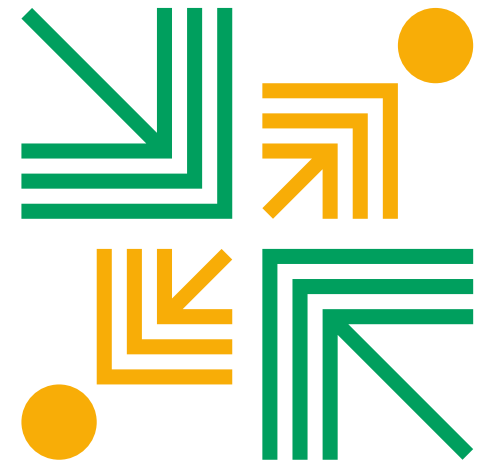


In the heart
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PEREX

In the heart of Ptuj's old town centre, a once-forgotten storefront has found new life. The pop-up store Art Kolektiva "Pri Zamorcu" opened its doors as a creative experiment in circular living—where old furniture was reborn, discarded materials became art, and the community rediscovered the joy of making things last. For a few inspiring months, this small shop buzzed with workshops, exhibitions, and conversations about reuse and sustainability. What started as a temporary idea quickly turned into something bigger: a symbol of how even the smallest urban spaces can spark creativity, connection, and change.



THE PILOT IDEA



The Art Kolektiva “**Pri Zamorcu**” pop-up store began with a simple but powerful idea: to show that sustainability can be creative, local, and beautifully human. Ptuj, Slovenia’s oldest town, wanted to breathe new life into its historic centre while helping residents rethink consumption through the lens of the circular economy.

The chosen space—a centuries-old house at Prešernova Street 1, once home to a small art gallery—offered the perfect stage.

Under the NiCE project, the team at ZRS Bistra Ptuj transformed the empty storefront into a lively, multifunctional hub where artisans, designers, and citizens could meet, learn, and create.



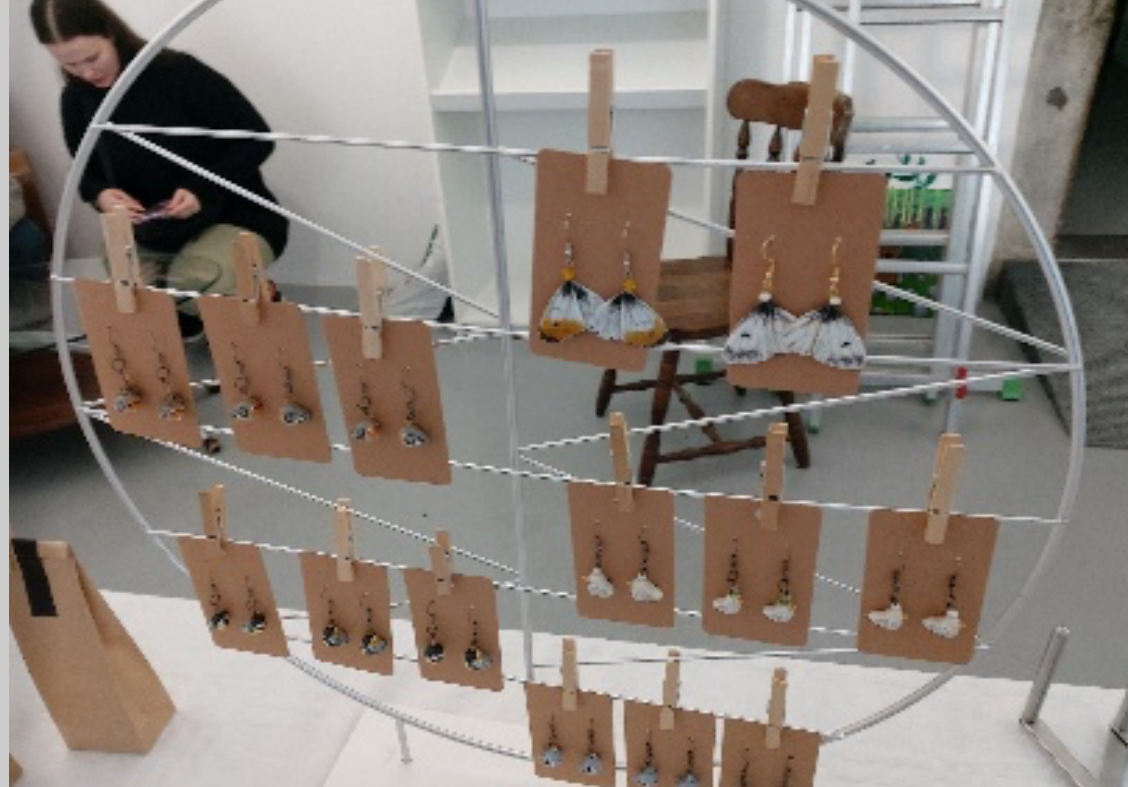
From October 2024 to July 2025, the shop hosted local makers who shared one common vision: giving materials a second life.



Ten artists and craftspeople joined forces, turning waste wood, textiles, and paper into unique pieces of art and design.



Together with workshops, a Christmas stand, and an upcycled art exhibition, the space became a living laboratory for circular thinking—an open invitation for everyone to experience sustainability in action.



How it started



Before it became a hub of creativity and circular ideas, the little shop on Prešernova Street had been silent for years.

Once known as the Salon umetnosti gallery, the space stood empty, its windows gathering dust in one of Ptuj's oldest corners. Yet behind its quiet façade lay a story waiting to be retold.

When the team at ZRS Bistra Ptuj began exploring how to bring circular economy principles closer to everyday life, the idea of reusing a vacant urban space felt like the perfect fit. Why build something new when you can breathe new life into what already exists? Partnering with local designer David Kukovec (DM Design) and the Municipality of Ptuj, they set out to turn the empty storefront into a pilot space where creativity and sustainability could meet.

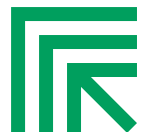


The preparation phase was anything but ordinary. Furniture was borrowed from the local Reuse Centre Ptuj, wiring and lighting were repaired, and every detail—from signs to shelves—was made using repurposed materials. Slowly, the place transformed from forgotten to inspiring.

The name “Pri Zamorcu”—taken from the historic black mask sculpture embedded in the building’s façade—became both a tribute to Ptuj’s heritage and a symbol of transformation.



By the time the doors opened in October 2024, the community was already curious. A space that once represented absence now stood as a vivid example of how circular thinking can turn emptiness into opportunity.



Implementation PHASE



Once the doors of Art Kolektiva “Pri Zamorcu” opened, the old house came alive again. Every corner of the shop told a different story—of reused wood, hand-dyed fabrics, repurposed ceramics, and the patient work of people who believe that waste can be beautiful.



Ten local artisans and designers joined forces, each bringing their own craft and imagination. Together, they created a colourful mosaic of sustainable design right in the heart of Ptuj.

The shop wasn't just a place to sell—it was a place to share. Throughout the months, visitors could drop by not only to browse handmade products, but also to take part in workshops on reuse, repair, and sustainable living. Conversations often spilled out onto the cobbled street, where curious passers-by stopped to peek in and stayed to talk about new ways of creating and consuming.



The team at ZRS Bistra Ptuj worked closely with the Municipality, local NGOs, and schools to make sure the project reached as many people as possible. A strong social media presence—especially through the Art Kolektiva “Pri Zamorcu” Facebook and Instagram pages—helped spread the word and attract visitors from beyond Ptuj.



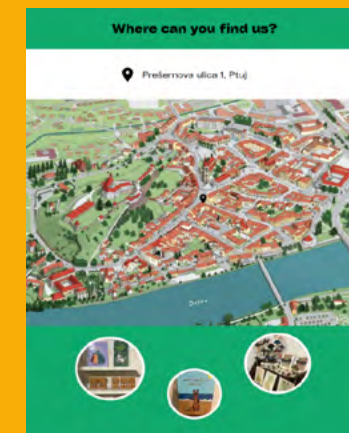
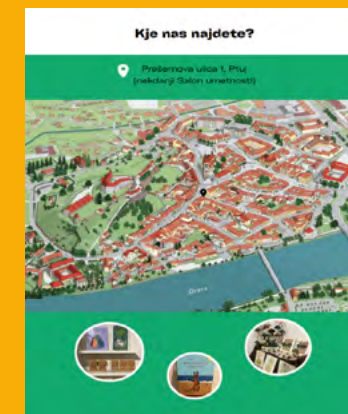
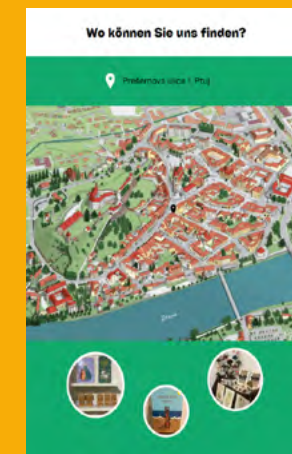
As winter approached, the spirit of the project extended outside. In December 2024, the artisans set up a Christmas stand in front of the shop, offering upcycled gifts and locally made decorations. At the same time, an art exhibition filled the interior with works made from discarded materials—proof that creativity truly knows no limits. Later, in July 2025, the pop-up hosted an inclusive workshop with ZUDV Dornava, where participants with disabilities worked alongside visitors to create new products from recycled textiles and wood.



For 104 days in total, the pop-up store buzzed with life—five public events, dozens of visitors, and countless conversations about sustainability.



It became a living example of how small urban spaces can connect people, inspire creativity, and make circular ideas tangible.



Outcomes and learnings



By the end of the pilot, it was clear that Art Kolektiva “Pri Zamorcu” had become more than just a temporary shop—it had become a small movement.



Over a hundred days of activity, it brought together artists, citizens, students, and visitors who discovered how creativity and sustainability can go hand in hand.



The response from the community was overwhelmingly positive. People loved the authenticity of the space—its handmade furniture, its mix of old and new, and the welcoming faces behind the counter. Teachers brought their students to learn about reuse; local NGOs used the shop as a meeting point; and even tourists stumbled in, pleasantly surprised to find such an inspiring corner in Slovenia's oldest town.

The workshops and exhibitions didn't just showcase circular ideas — they sparked change. Some visitors later said they began buying second-hand instead of new, or started small repair projects at home.

The collaboration with the Reuse Centre Ptuj helped spread awareness of how furniture and everyday items can be given a second life, while the partnership with ZUDV Dornava proved that social inclusion and environmental awareness truly belong together.

Of course, the journey wasn't without challenges—keeping a volunteer-run shop open for months required constant coordination and creativity. But these lessons became part of the story, shaping how future editions will run. The city of Ptuj and ZRS Bistra Ptuj now plan to continue the pop-up model on a seasonal basis, opening new spaces, inviting new artists, and keeping the idea of circular living alive.





In the end, the project showed that change doesn't always need grand gestures. Sometimes, it starts with a single open door, a few reused chairs, and a group of people who believe that even the smallest spaces can make a big difference.



Further Information



NiCE Project Websites

ZRS Bistra: <https://bistra.si/en/>

Interreg: <https://www.interreg-central.eu/projects/nice/>

Knowledge Platform <https://circularlifestyle.eu/>

Pilot video: <https://www.youtube.com/>



Pop-up store for circular products in Ptuj, Slovenia





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NiCE





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