

Univ.-Ass. Dipl.-Rest. (FH) Dr. phil. Tanja Kimmel

DISSERTATION 2023 / ABSTRACT English

GAME CHANGER!

CO2 balancing as conservational management tool

for the ecological transformation in museums and depots

Summary:

Museums are important actors in the fight against climate change. In order to limit global warming to a maximum of 1.5 Celsius, they are also required to cut down on CO2 emissions and thus actively contribute to overcoming the climate crisis. The first step towards reducing a CO2 footprint is the gather knowledge about its current status. Acquisition and analysis of climate-damaging emissions is done by means of a CO2 balance; this evaluation identifies relevant action, indicates saving potential and facilitates a prioritisation of procedures. The effects of art on the climate is still a blind spot for the most part; setting up climate balances for the museum branch is something totally new and the necessary know-how is in dire short supply. First initiatives and insights in the German-speaking regions are focused on the portions of museums used as exhibition venues. Within the scope of her dissertation, the author started a pilot project in autumn 2021 with the Kunsthistorisches Museum Association, whereby, for the first time in Austria, the CO2 emissions of museum storage areas are scientifically documented during running operations. This paper presents the procedures, methods and results of the joint project with the BOKU (University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna) Competence Center for Climate Neutrality, meanwhile naming the challenges, but also chances inherent in the balancing process. With regard to Austria's targeted climate neutrality by 2040, intermediate objectives on the way to net-zero are defined and a road map created showing the effective measures to reduce CO2 emissions in the storage areas. In this way, the KHM Museum Association will acquire not only a reliable database for strategic environment management, but also a „climate-fit package” thus enabling the transition from knowledge to practical action. Against the backdrop of current sustainability debates, the paper reports on the development of awareness of this topic in the cultural sphere – especially museums – and on the basic legal conditions on international, European and national levels.