Sustainability Statement

Our daily efforts towards a better world
A VISION FOR BEAUTY

Arte was born out of a vision for beauty. As a designer, producer and distributor of high-end wall coverings, Arte strives to instil craftsmanship and quality in every area of its activities. Its pure aesthetics – sometimes exuberant, sometimes understated – make Arte’s wall coverings a versatile element for creating a unique atmosphere in residential and public spaces, as well as in hospitality settings.

A SUSTAINABLE COMBINATION OF DESIGN, EMOTION, PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

From Zonhoven in Belgium, where it all began, across Asia and all the way to L.A., Arte shows off its edgy, extravagant, classic or exclusive look all over the world, but also knows that you can only truly shine if the ‘inside’ is clean too. Since its foundation in 1981, Arte has launched initiatives in various areas to ensure that the story behind its wall coverings is as pristine as they look on the wall. Arte is therefore rightly proud that its colourful interior world is now completely CO₂ neutral. All possible measures are taken to reduce the impact at the source, and the company compensates for residual emissions by investing in sustainable and 100% certified climate projects that are closely related to the product. You can read more about this in the penultimate chapter of this report, ‘Clean socially’.

In an ever-evolving world with a future that at times looks very promising, yet at other times can also be highly uncertain, Arte takes its social responsibility seriously. Day in, day out, it strives for a sustainable combination of design, emotion, people and the environment. In this report, you can read how Arte counteracts its impact on the climate and deploys its technological skills and inventiveness to ensure that your interior is both dazzling and contemporary.
A CLEAN PRODUCT

Arte’s wall coverings are known for their inspiring colours and intriguing patterns. These designs are the result of a range of printing and production techniques that exclusively use water-based ink. This means that no toxic and environmentally harmful solvents are used, either to produce inks or to clean the materials. In addition, Arte steers clear of all heavy metals and cadmium-based stabilisers, both in-house and when working with carefully selected suppliers. Furthermore, fully recyclable pots were chosen for the packaging of the adhesive.

Arte also continuously builds on its key asset: its blend of materials. A large proportion of its collections is based on natural materials such as water hyacinths, banana leaves, cotton, mica, silk, wool, jute, shells, grasses, etc. These are all raw materials from nature that combine a refined finish with a clean conscience.

Arte’s range also includes vinyl wall coverings. Thanks to its wear-resistant properties, this strong material has an average lifespan of 10 to 15 years. As a result, it is less likely to be damaged and therefore require replacement. Vinyl thus becomes a durable and valuable solution for wall decoration. This view is confirmed by Arte’s vinyl partners, who can present all the required product certificates.

Finally, when purchasing all of its support materials (paper and non-woven), only the best is good enough for Arte. Following a critical screening, years ago Arte decided to join forces with FSC-certified partners who are well known in the sector for their eco-friendly image.

Arte’s many efforts have been rewarded with several certificates, such as the CE label, which guarantees the products comply with the European safety and environmental standards, and the IGI Quality Mark, which is issued by the sector’s self-regulating body that strictly monitors the activities of its members. Another example is the label indicating emission levels to inform customers about the amount of harmful substances emitted by a product. In this regard, Arte earned top marks and was awarded the A+ label. And finally, Arte also complies with the European REACH regulations on the registration and use of chemical substances.
Arte's production site has its own waste and recycling unit, where the residues from the production process are sorted and subsequently collected by approved companies. The latter process the waste in the correct manner to ensure a minimal environmental impact.

In any case, surpluses and waste are kept to a minimum. The residual ink lost or left over during printing is collected and reused, for example. In addition, thanks to an innovative method, hardly any non-woven base material goes to waste.

It goes without saying that Arte is also very conscious of its energy consumption. This includes purchasing green electricity and gas from certified European sustainable sources, adopting a CO₂ compensation scheme and installing LED lighting in the production halls, warehouses and offices. In addition to this, Arte also tries to reduce its consumption where possible. A minor measure with major consequences in this respect is switching off the drying ovens and other machinery on the Arte production line once the production of a batch has ended. As a result, in between batches and at the end of the work day, no energy is wasted unnecessarily.

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CLEAN ON THE GO

For the transport of its wall coverings, Arte endeavours to work with partners whose vehicles meet the Euro VI standard. At present, Arte is proud to announce that no less than 80% of its vehicles meet this requirement. In the years ahead, Arte aims to further increase this percentage together with its partners.

Arte is quite satisfied about its employees' use of bicycles, public transport, electric vehicles and carpooling. A large proportion of them already choose to leave their cars at home and commute using alternative means of transport. The introduction of more remote working also has a positive impact on the company's overall emissions. For those who are still commuting by car, only vehicles with limited emissions will be eligible as new company vehicles. Arte and its employees are working to increase these percentages even further in the coming years.
At the Arte offices in Zonhoven, only FSC-certified (Forest Stewardship Council) paper is used for printing. This paper is sourced exclusively from sustainably managed forests. Most of the promotional materials, such as brochures and sample cards, but also the collection books, are also printed on FSC paper.

Printing for daily use is kept to a minimum through digital organisation and by giving each administrative employee two computer screens so they have a better overview of multiple documents simultaneously. Any paper that is discarded is sorted into the designated container. The same goes for residual waste and PMD waste (plastic bottles, metal packaging and drink cartons). Moreover, the company’s premises are always cleaned using biodegradable products.

Arte has also extended its sustainability efforts into the kitchen. Instead of coffee capsules or pads, it uses freshly ground coffee beans and cardboard cups rather than plastic. Employees can drink water from the tap, from the dispenser or from a glass bottle. Not only the bottles, but the glasses and cups too are washable and reusable. No polluting plastic cups or forks can be found in the cabinets of the Arte kitchen.

All these great initiatives and good will are found under a roof with no less than 2038 solar panels, representing an area of almost 4000 m² of green energy. Producing 500,000 kWh/year, this solar installation meets 30% of Arte’s annual electricity consumption needs. For the remaining 70%, Arte uses other green energy sources.
Working towards a liveable planet for the future also means taking account of its human inhabitants. In its change process, Arte has developed a set of key measures that focus on both the integrity and the quality of life of people.

In all aspects of its day-to-day business, Arte acts according to the rules of common sense and good conscience. This means adopting a conscientious approach in which transparency, legality and honesty take centre stage. Thus Arte can continue to grow as a successful company, whilst respecting the well-being of other parties.

After all, behind the name of a company or product are the people who work hard every day to keep the business up and running. Arte respects each one of them by never losing sight of the universal human rights. It does not discriminate between employees and customers/suppliers on the basis of gender, ethnicity, nationality, religion, disability, sexual orientation, political views or any other reason. This vision is reflected in the composition of the workforce, among others. 44% of employees are female and at least 10 different nationalities (1st generation) are part of the large Arte family. Furthermore, Arte recognises its employees (both internally and externally) by not forcing them to work. It also excludes any form of child labour, has adopted respectable working hours and salaries, and respects the principle of freedom of association in trade unions.

For everyday wellbeing, Arte has set up a team that organises all kinds of in-company activities to improve the mental and physical health of all its employees. For example, they regularly plan walking sessions and sports workshops, raise awareness of healthy food and develop all kinds of creative initiatives to keep the team spirit high.
Arte also tries to make a difference further from home. Although major progress has already been made in a short time, a complete transformation to carbon neutrality will of course take a little longer. Internally, Arte continues to work with a huge amount of idealism and enthusiasm on cleaning up its own products and operations. Externally, however, there are still residual emissions as the company does not always have control over the efforts of its partners and suppliers. Arte is therefore committed to compensating for these residual emissions by supporting impactful, certified climate projects. The company has chosen to support the ‘Safe Water Supply’ project in Rwanda and the ‘Reforestation & Forest Conservation’ project in Guatemala.

The ‘Safe Water Supply’ project in Rwanda provides wells for communities that would otherwise not have access to safe drinking water. The project not only greatly benefits the health of the local population as a result, but also the local nature.

On the other side of the world, the Sierra del Lacandón National Park in Guatemala loses forestation every year due to poor agricultural techniques, forest fires caused by cutting and burning methods and other illegal practices. The ‘Reforestation & Forest Conservation’ project works to protect both the local fauna and flora and the indigenous population through frequent patrols and clear legislation.

**ARTE IS COMMITTED TO COMPENSATING FOR THESE RESIDUAL EMISSIONS BY SUPPORTING IMPACTFUL, CERTIFIED CLIMATE PROJECTS**
Arte’s efforts on multiple fronts ensure that its wall coverings have more to offer than merely high-quality decoration. As an important player in the world of interior design, Arte also keeps track of what is happening outside of its business, and plays its part as a modern and innovative company. Arte’s efforts on multiple fronts ensure that its wall coverings have more to offer than merely high-quality decoration. It is a company with a heart for beauty, and you can rest assured that at the heart of your Arte product, there is beauty too.

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