WHEN ART MEETS CLIMATE CHANGE

Towards a Model Involving Youth Actors in EU-funded initiatives

Research Paper, December 2019

Valenza - Domenico

Table of Contents

When Art Meets Climate Change.

Towards a Model Involving Youth Actors in EU-funded Initiatives

Introduction

"The world is on fire and our governments are letting it burn"[1]. As European leaders met in Brussels to agree on climate change targets for 2050, on 12 December 2019 Greenpeace staged a spectacular protest at the Europa building to pressure policy-makers and raise European Union's (EU) ambitions. The 61 activists scaled the building and covered it with images of fires, while a banner saying 'climate emergency' was installed and clouds of smoke were released to simulate a real fire. Member States' negotiations eventually led to an agreement on carbon neutrality by 2050, although unanimity was not achieved as a result of Poland's opposition[2].

As UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres bluntly put it in 2018, climate change is the "defining issue of our time" and a "direct existential threat" to humankind[3]. Together with a consolidated body of scholarship analysing the phenomenon from natural science and economics perspectives, recent policies have also been informed by studies looking at the connection between climate change and humanities. While art does not seek to obtain immediate results to address rising sea levels and desertification, it can nevertheless engage its public and become an all-embracing tool to communicate and shape ideas on climate change. In other words, according

[1] Rankin, J. (2019). EU leaders meet to try to agree on carbon neutrality by 2050. *The Guardian*. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/dec/12/eu-leaders-meet-again-to-try-to-agree-carbon-neutrality-by-2050 Retrieved on 14 December 2019.

[2] Strupczewski, S. & Baczynska G. (2019). EU leaves Poland out of 2050 climate deal after standoff. *Reuters*. Available at: https://www.reuters.com/article/us-climate-change-eu-eu-leaves-poland-out-of-2050-climate-deal-after-standoff-idUSKBN1YG01I Retrieved on 14 December 2019.

[3] United Nations (2018). *Secretary-General's remarks on Climate Change [as delivered].* Available at: https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2018-09-10/secretary-generals-remarks-climate-change-delivered Retrieved on 14 December 2019.

to these contributions climate change should escape "its scientific ghetto" and be used as "a creative stimulus for a more sustainable pattern of life"[4].

This nexus between art and climate change could not be successfully explored without addressing another emerging variable in the environmental struggle, namely the role and involvement of youth in climate change decisions and debates. On the one hand, youth are primarily affected by climate change hazards and will have the burden of coping with its impacts in the long term. On the other hand, despite calls for their increasing role as stakeholders they still lack voice to drive global action. The existence of this dilemma and the need to address it found its best example in the voice and actions of the young Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg.

Building on this extensive body of scholarship, this paper enquires into the growing field of climate change art. Firstly, it seeks to explore the nexus between art and climate change and discuss why art offers many potential advantages to reach people and increase public understanding. This is done in Chapter 2 through the review of existing literature and relevant climate change artworks across the world. Secondly, this paper seeks to assess the role and place of climate change art into EU present policies and initiatives. To this end, Chapter 3 analyses existing official documents on climate change and culture at the EU level, and provides an overview on projects on climate change art supported by the EU. Finally, Chapter 4 provides three case studies of climate change artistic initiatives involving youth in the framework of their activities, either as organisers, performers or audience. Building on these three chapters, the conclusion provides general findings on the role of climate change art and youth involvement. This study draws on interviews with cultural operators and the author's participation in an environmental documentary film festival that is discussed in Chapter 4.

Overall, this study confirms the role and value of art in addressing climate change and environmental issues. Although artists do not provide first hand climate change solutions, they can overcome some barriers of climate communication and bring the phenomenon closer in order to provide new understandings. Whereas the traditional framing of climate change has included obscure theoretical models and climate statistics, creative works such as documentary, videogames or virtual reality installations can make climate change emotional, visible, and visceral. The EU lacks today an explicit recognition of the role that culture and creativity have to address climate change. This should be corrected. At the same time, this paper shows that

---

[4] Hulme, M. (2013). *Exploring climate change through science and in society: an anthology of Mike Hulme's essays, interviews and speeches*. London: Routledge.

climate change artistic projects have received considerable financial support in the past years. The main example come from Creative Europe, which has funded 28 climate change-related projects between 2014 and 2019. Bearing in mind EU climate mainstreaming ambitions after 2020, future actions targeting climate change could be designed in the framework of the Cross-sectoral strand of the Creative Europe programme for the period 2021-2027.

Finally, the three case of studies provided more substantive evidence on the role of climate change art and the involvement of youth in such activities. Artistic initiatives become opportunities to include voices not usually heard, raise awareness and create engaged communities. The presence of constructive and solution-based framings become especially important at a time of global concern and dystopian narratives.

1. The Nexus between Art and Climate Change: Evidence from Scholarship and Artworks

The days of the scientific debate over the existence of climate change are long gone. Since its creation in 1988, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has strengthened consensus around its effects and provided an excellent example of mobilization of the scientific community. Its Fifth Assessment Report, which was released in 2015, provided unquestionable arguments that "human influence on the climate system is clear, and recent anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases are the highest in history"[5]. However, substantiated evidence and consolidated consensus have not translated yet into a strong and global political response. To challenge policy-makers' inaction, since August 2018 an international movement of school students has organized regular strikes for climate. Fridays for Future (FFF) was inspired and led by the Swedish young activist Greta Thunberg.

Perhaps more importantly, policy efficacy is not the only concern. For instance, climate change denial has long been an issue in the United States, where scientific consensus has been discredited through many different tactics, including a value-oriented approach calling on the protection of the American way of life[6]. In China, the global biggest emitter of carbon dioxide, public awareness on the fight against climate change has grown but the government struggles to find the appropriate balance between economic development and environmental protection. As for Europe, according to the special Eurobarometer 490 on Climate Change, almost a quarter of respondents believe that climate change is the single most serious problem[7]. Agreements on responsibility nevertheless vary greatly, as respondents believe the fight against climate change should primarily address national governments, business and industry, with reduced focus on personal responsibility to cut emissions. Around a third of respondents said that no personal action against climate change was taken in the past six months. Earlier in 2019, a YouGov studio for 10:10 Climate Action provided striking data on more specific issues like perception of air

---

[5] Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2014). *Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*. Available at: https://ar5-syr.ipcc.ch/ipcc/ipcc/resources/pdf/IPCC_SynthesisReport.pdf. Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

[6] Collomb, J. D. (2014). The ideology of climate change denial in the United States. *European journal of American studies*, 9(9 - 1).

[7] European Commission – Directorate-General for Communication (2019). *Special Eurobarometer 490: Climate change*. Available at: https://data.europa.eu/euodp/en/data/dataset/S2212_91_3_490_ENG Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

travels[8]. When asked to select one or two actions reducing an individual's carbon footprint, only 15 per cent of respondents identified "taking one fewer transatlantic flight" as the most appropriate choice. Interestingly, frequent flyers, taking seven or more flights per year, ranked 'upgrade to energy efficient light bulbs' above reduction of air travelling as a measure to reduce carbon footprint. Overall, this seems to confirm that the basic recognition of the phenomenon as true ("climate change is real and human-caused") does not always translate into deeper consciousness ("air travel deeply affects climate change") or *ad hoc* actions ("I am reducing my own number of flights").

Why bothering with arts?

Taken together, these examples suggest that awareness practices have a role to play to further tackle the issue of climate change, looking at more innovative ways to strengthen mobilization and commitment in the general public. This relies on the idea that climate change is not just a physical evolution but rather an "environmental, cultural and political phenomenon that is reshaping the way we think about ourselves, about our societies and about humanity's place on Earth"[9]. Among the many faces of the climate change prism, the cultural face has gained momentum[10]. Of course, dialogue between art and science is not a new topic. Many authors have contemplated their relations throughout history, and different eras have provided examples of universal talents. Although their contemporary methodologies and visions differ, both artists and scientists remain engaged to advance human knowledge.

Clearly, one could argue that artists do not provide instant and first hand solutions to solve the climate emergency. This is true. Contrary to hard science, and even politics or economy, the final aim of art is not to produce eco-batteries with low environmental impact, to break a political deadlock on international negotiations or to improve corporate social responsibility. And rightly so: art does not seek to obtain immediate tangible results or create persuasive propaganda. Rather, its contributions should provide, in Tyszczuk and Smith's words, "more expansive understandings of the many ways in which the world is being altered, or might be in future, not simply physically but also culturally and imaginatively"[11] (2018). By enhancing a dialogue with

---

[8] 10:10 Climate Action (2019). *Public attitudes to tackling aviation's climate change impacts*. Available at: http://files.1010global.org/documents/Aviation_briefing_Jan2019_FINAL.pdf Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

[9] Hulme, M. (2009). *Why we disagree about climate change: Understanding controversy, inaction and opportunity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 3.

[10] See Tyszczuk, R., & Smith, J. (2018). Culture and climate change scenarios: the role and potential of the arts and humanities in responding to the '1.5 degrees target'. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, 31. 56-64; Adger, W. N., Barnett, J., Brown, K., Marshall, N., & O'brien, K. (2013). Cultural dimensions of climate change impacts and adaptation. *Nature Climate Change*, 3(2), 112-117.

[11] Tyszczuk & Smith, Culture and climate…, *op.cit.,* p. 57.

science, and with climate change science in particular, artistic productions can provide ways to think about past, present and future scenarios and thus enhance action.

Art is a(nother) channel of information

Besides its ornamental or emotional objectives, art also has an informative function. A documentary showing deforestation processes informs the audience as much as a scientific bulletin or a policy brief on the same topics. And whereas the last two tools require adequate scientific literacy or policy knowledge, images and sounds of a hurricane can grasp the audience's attention in a more immediate way. Visual arts serve better this objective. Probal Rashid, a Bangladeshi documentary photographer, has documented the climate emergency in his country and worked on a photo project showing 'the faces of climate survivors', people ending in refugees camps as a result of natural disasters that have shaken more and more frequently Bangladesh[12] (Picture 1).

Picture 1. Houses made of bamboo and plastic materials. Probal Rashid documented the use of these houses by people affected by flood in Satkhira, Bangladesh[13].

Perhaps the most recent and grandiose attempt to bridge the gap between scientific knowledge and mass information has been Before The Flood, the 2017 documentary produced by Leonardo Di Caprio and documenting the effect of climate change in different parts of the world. Similarly to other representations, this work has successfully reached a large audience and popularized up-to-date scientific knowledge on climate change[14]. Again, although pure information is not the

[12] Rashid, P. (2019). The Faces of Climate Survivors, *Probal Rashid Official Website*. Available at: https://probalrashid.com/portraits/faces-of-climate-survivors/ Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

[13] Rashid, P. (2019). Photo Stories, *Probal Rashid Official Website*. Available at: https://probalrashid.com/photo-stories/river-delta-crisis/ Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

[14] Wright, C., Nyberg, D., Rickards, L.. (2018). Organizing in the Anthropocene, *Organization,* 25. 455–71.

primary purpose of artistic creation, its role to advance human knowledge should be taken into account. While art should never be reduced to propaganda, some works have performed brilliantly in this informative function, as Rashid's climate faces tell us.

Art provides emotional activation

Of course, climate change literacy is not just about information. While education-based campaigns can become opportunities for activation[15], especially since abstract scientific information does not engage effectively general audiences, artworks provide alternative points of entry and change feelings and perceptions about climate change. Emotion literature has long suggested the importance of emotions in global decision-making. Roeser (2012) found that a theoretical debate on climate change, without any reference to concrete concerns for people's life, leads them to accept climate change as a fact but without any sort of practical engagement. Emotions can then serve a double purpose: they provide alternative 'routes' to successfully understand the impact and the risks of climate change; and as a result of that, they offer incentives for behavioral change. Thus, emotions could become the "missing link in effective communication about climate change"[16].

Roeser's suggestions are in line with those of other scholars. Weber observed that the statistical and abstract nature of dangers associated to global warming does not lead to "strong visceral reactions"[17], and that an emotion-based approach could lead individuals to change their environment or remove themselves from a dangerous state. In a case study on art for climate change, Sommer and Klöckner investigated perceptions of artworks at the ArtCOP21, a climate change art festival that was held simultaneously to the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris[18]. Interestingly, the authors found that the highest emotional activation could be observed for those works with colourful representations of nature and proposing inspiring solutions to environmental issues. Thus, the study seemed to suggest not just that emotions matter, but that positive emotions and insightful narratives matter even more.

---

[15] Rayner, T., & Minns, A. (2015). The challenge of communicating unwelcome climate messages. *Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research Working Paper*, 162.

[16] Roeser, S. (2012). Risk communication, public engagement, and climate change: a role for emotions. *Risk Analysis: An International Journal*, 32(6), 1033-1040, p. 1033-34.

[17] Weber, E. U. (2006). Experience-based and description-based perceptions of long-term risk: Why global warming does not scare us (yet). *Climatic change*, 77(1-2), 103-120.

[18] Sommer, L. K., & Klöckner, C. A. (2019). Does activist art have the capacity to raise awareness in audiences?— A study on climate change art at the ArtCOP21 event in Paris. *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*. Available at: https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2019-36639-001 Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

Art creates engaged communities

Beside individual activation, art also offers opportunities to connect people who are sharing the same experience. Community creation in public theatres has been observed in film literature, looking at participatory involvement and interaction between viewers[19]. This is even more relevant in the case of documentary movies, as projections are often followed by debates or round tables on the topics discussed. Clearly, community creation through art does not require that participants share the same views: rather, disagreement becomes an essential element to build the experience. An example comes from participatory media, through which a community makes its own productions and invites the audience to explore a topic and share ideas. Scholars have analysed participatory video as a driver for social change in youth groups[20]. More recently, Haynes and Tanner explored youth participatory video experiences in three communities in the Philippines and concluded that they were critical in empowering young people[21].

Community creation processes can also be spurred when cultural contents are not produced but rather consumed. In his 'Underwater Home Owners' Association' project, the environmental artist Xavier Cortada aimed at showing South Florida's vulnerability to sea level rise[22]. Cortada encouraged residents to plant painted signs with numbers, which would show how many feet of water must rise before the house would flood (Picture 2 and 3). Cortada also aimed to engage neighbours in a real association, advocating in order to address climate change in the community. On 9 January 2019, underwater HOA held its official meeting and elected an ocean scientist as the head of the organization.

Pictures 2 & 3. Examples of Cortada's numbered signs in South Florida[23].

[19] See Srinivas, L. (2002). The active audience: spectatorship, social relations and the experience of cinema in India. *Media, Culture & Society*, 24(2), 155-173.

[20] See Kindon, S. (2003). Participatory video in geographic research: a feminist practice of looking?. *Area*, 35(2), 142-153; Sandercock, L., & Attili, G. (2010). Digital ethnography as planning praxis: An experiment with film as social research, community engagement and policy dialogue. *Planning Theory & Practice*, 11(1), 23-45.

[21] Haynes, K., & Tanner, T. M. (2015). Empowering young people and strengthening resilience: Youth-centred participatory video as a tool for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. *Children's Geographies*, 13(3), 357-371.

[22] Cortada, X. (2019). *Underwater Home Owners' Association*. Available at: https://cortada.com/tag/underwater-hoa/ Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

[23] *Ibidem.*

Art makes climate change visible

Cortada's project, he argued, made "the invisible visible"[24]. This is connected to another powerful question that has kept busy the scientific community: To what extent can we perceive climate change by the naked eye? Conflicting answers have been provided in the debate. For some, while climate change would be unquestionably observable in the future, at present it would be hard to recognize its visible manifestations, and as a result a more careful approach should be preferred[25].

However, this vision was successfully challenged in recent times, becoming a minority position in the scientific debate. As Rudiak-Gould found, in some geographical areas there is no longer debate on climate change perceptions because changes have been painfully real[26]. Western activists have joined the voices of indigenous people in order to shape a new 'visibilist' vocabulary: thus, while 'greenhouse effect' does not have any meteorological implications, such expressions as 'global warming' or 'climate change' relate to visible manifestations[27]. Rudiak-Gould proposed to solve this "climate change visibilism/invisibilism dichotomy" by advancing a position of "constructive visibilism"[28]. This rests on the idea that most of climate changes are observed in remote areas, and that Western people rarely come across such manifestations. Thus, the question is no longer whether climate change is visible or not, but how climate change can become visible "through the teleportation of frontline images and testimonials"[29]. Mediated artistic representations can therefore provide means for ecologically unaware people to realise that, while change is perhaps not yet visible in everyday life, somewhere else already is, and will definitely be as Cortana's provocative project suggests.

Art creates experiential representations of climate change

Together with a potential of emotional activation, art can also engage audiences through experiential representations of climate change. General alienation from scientific data can be countered by new sensorial experiences that help people re-situate themselves in the environment and make visceral the climate experience. Evidence-based literature confirms this insight. Risen

[24] *Ibidem.*

[25] See Allen, M. (2011).Al Gore is doing a disservice to science by overplaying the link between climate change and weather. *The Guardian*, 7 October. Available at: http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2011/oct/07/al-gore-science-climate-weather Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

[26] Rudiak-Gould, P. (2012). Promiscuous corroboration and climate change translation: a case study from the Marshall Islands. *Global Environmental Change*, *22*(1), 46-54.

[27] Rudiak-Gould, P. (2013). "We have seen it with our own eyes": why we disagree about climate change visibility. *Weather, Climate, and Society*, *5*(2), 120-132.

[28] *Ibid*., p. 128.

[29] *Ibidem.*

and Critcher tested across seven studies whether visceral states (warmth and thirst) would influence individuals' beliefs on climate change[30]. The studies suggested that when individuals experienced a visceral fit, namely a match "between their own visceral state and a visceral state associated with an outcome they were judging"[31], this could significantly predict a belief related to the validity of global warming. As a result, the authors concluded that, whereas rigorous scientific research may not be sufficient to increase belief and engagement, simulations can help construct "more fluent mental representations"[32].

Experiential artworks on climate change have long found their public and spaces of representation. Already in 2007, the British artist Katie Paterson installed an underwater microphone in the touristic site of Jökulsárlón lagoon, near the Vatnajökull glacier in Iceland, and created a live phone line. Anyone in the world could call the number 07757001122 and hear the melting of the glacier in the lagoon[33]. In more recent years, some artists have successfully seized the opportunities offered by virtual reality (VR) applications. Perhaps the most interesting example comes from Marina Abramovic and her first VR project, Rising. "Whatever you can't do with your body, you, as avatar, can actually do it endlessly" she observed[34]. After wearing the VR headset, the player saw an avatar of Abramovic behind a glass tank. As water filled up in the tank, the avatar called for the player's help. Abramovic's work aimed to understand whether immersive play through VR "will increase empathy for current and future victims of climate change, and how this will affect a player's conscience and energy"[35].

Art makes imaginative scenarios and provides new narratives

Abramovic referred to her VR work as a "dystopian world", stressing the urgency of the topic and the fact that "in just one hundred years, the human race will no longer exist on this planet"[36]. While this narrative sets an unquestionable strong call for action, disagreements within the scientific community over the vocabulary have increased. More recently, Hulme has questioned the use of the word emergency, suggesting that meeting the challenge of climate change requires "a proliferation of diverse policy goals, the very opposite of what 'states of exception' bring into

---

[30] Risen, J. L., & Critcher, C. R. (2011). Visceral fit: While in a visceral state, associated states of the world seem more likely. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, *100*(5), 777.
[31] *Ibid*., p. 789.
[32] *Ibid*., p. 777.
[33] Paterson, K. (2019). *Vatnajökull (the sound of).* Available at: http://katiepaterson.org/portfolio/vatnajokull-the-sound-of/ Retrieved on 11 December 2019.
[34] Acute Art (2019). Acute Art presents: Marina Abramović discusses her first virtual reality project, Rising. *YouTube*. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lQ3Yxi6pCvc Retrieved on 11 December 2019.
[35] *Ibidem*.
[36] *Ibidem*.

being"[37]. This reasoning is in line with Sommer and Klöckner's findings on the role of positive narratives to fulfil the transformative potential of artistic representations.

Altogether, some authors suggest that it is fundamental to go beyond climate change as a physical phenomenon and to look at it as an inspirational stimulus. In this regard, one could mention the project 'Culture and Climate Change: Scenarios project', supporting artistic contributions on scenario-making in a 1.5 degrees future[38]. The project was launched at the 2015 COP21 and aimed at appointing four artists and developing scenario-based productions. Among the authors, Teo Ormond-Skeaping and Lena Dobrowolska explored scenarios through their project Anthropocenes. Building on field-based work in Lao, Bangladesh and the UK, they unveiled the topic of climate change adaptation and showed how those countries once helpless are now demonstrating leadership and capacity to develop adaptation and mitigation strategies.

This section attempted to highlight how and why art can provide opportunities for climate action. While a comprehensive review was beyond the reach of this paper, the section aimed at taking some roads that scientists and artists have traced in the past years. In fact, information, emotional activation, community creation, visibility, experiential representation and scenario-making are just some of the many ways in which art can open a window on the world and provide new understandings on its alteration. The next sections aim to complement this review and come back to the different possibilities offered by climate change artworks.

---

[37] Hulme, M. (2019). Climate Emergency Politics Is Dangerous. *Issues*, 36(1). 23-25. p. 23.
[38] This is discussed in Tyszczuk & Smith, Culture and climate…, *op.cit.*

2. EU support to climate change art

EU policy framework: climate change and culture as mainstreaming areas

Taking into consideration the cross-cutting nature of climate change, in 2013 the EU assumed the commitment to mainstream its policies in this field. Under the 2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), the EU engaged to dedicate at least 20 per cent of its budget to climate-related actions[39]. While there is no agreed definition of 'climate mainstreaming' at the EU policy level, official documents refer to a general integration of climate change into areas that do not target environment as such. However, the mainstreaming approach has been implemented only in certain policy areas, including cohesion, research, energy, transport, agriculture, and development cooperation[40]. More recently, in its communication of 2 May 2018, the European Commission raised its ambitions and put forward a new target for climate mainstreaming[41]. Building on the Paris Agreement and the commitment to the UN sustainable development goals, the European Commission proposed that 25 per cent of EU total expenditure within the MFF 2021-2027 should be devoted to climate objectives.

Within the cultural realm, in 2015 the European Commission adopted the new Agenda for Culture, a document that enhances Europe's shared and diverse heritage[42]. While the Agenda highlights the full potential of culture to support inclusiveness, sustainable job and growth, climate change and environmental challenges do not figure in the document. Interconnections between culture and climate change are mentioned within the EC and High Representative Joint Communication "Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations", supporting the mainstream of culture in EU external action through complementarities between EU delegations, Member States, cultural institutes and other relevant actors[43]. Within the document structured

---

[39] European Commission (2019). *Supporting climate action through the EU budget*. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/budget/mainstreaming_en Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

[40] D'Alfonso, A. (2019). Mainstreaming of climate action in the EU budget. Impact of a political objective. *European Parliament In-Depth analysis*. Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2019/642239/EPRS_IDA(2019)642239_EN.pdf Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

[41] European Commission (2019). *A Modern Budget for a Union that Protects, Empowers and Defends. The Multiannual Financial Framework for 2021-2027*. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/communication-modern-budget-may_2018_en.pdf Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

[42] European Commission (2018). *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. A New European Agenda For Culture*. Available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0267&from=EN Retrieved on 11 December 2018.

[43] European Commission (2016). *Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council. Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations*. Available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016JC0029&from=EN Retrieved on 11 December 2018.

territorial cooperation frameworks (for instance in the Baltic Sea and the Adriatic and Ionian Regions) and cultural city twinning are mentioned as examples of how cultural work can provide opportunities to preserve the environment and contribute to development. Finally, adaptation measures to climate change are mentioned within the Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022 as part of the priority "Sustainability in cultural heritage". The focus of the actions is on preservation and safeguard of heritage facing extreme climate circumstances[44].

Looking at the future, the Commission's proposal for 2021-2027 Creative Europe highlighted that the Programme would contribute to the mainstreaming of climate "and to the achievement of an overall target of 25 per cent of the Union budget expenditures supporting climate objectives"[45]. The document stressed that relevant actions would be indicated during the phases of preparation and implementation. Bearing in mind Creative Europe funding structure in previous MFF, climate change related actions could be proposed under the Cross-sectoral strand of the future programme for the 2021-2027 period.

Climate change art projects within Creative Europe

Climate change art has received EU financial support through several programmes and instruments. The most relevant one is Creative Europe, supporting EU cultural and creative sectors and encompassing the former Culture and MEDIA Programmes since 2014. Based on information available on 'Creative Europe Project Results' search engine[46], and building on data analysis of the author, between 2014 and 2019 Creative Europe has provided funding to 28 artistic projects in which climate change and environmental issues constituted the core or a significant aspect of the proposal. More specifically, Creative Europe has supported 14 cooperation projects, 1 development single initiative, 8 TV programming projects and 5 videogames. Some projects were under implementation at the time of writing. As a matter of fact, out of the 28 projects 10 were approved and launched only in 2019, suggesting an overall rise in this kind of environmental actions. The list of projects can be consulted in Annex 1 of this paper.

[44] Council of the European Union (2018). *Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022*. Available at: http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-13948-2018-INIT/en/pdf# Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

[45] European Commission (2019). *Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Creative Europe programme (2021 to 2027) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013*. 30 June. Available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:509e1bcb-63f0-11e8-ab9c-01aa75ed71a1.0003.02/DOC_1&format=PDF Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

[46] European Commission (2019) *Creative Europe Project Results*. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/projects/ Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

Climate change was often the core topic of cooperation projects on climate change art, or a significant aspect of more holistic initiatives targeting migrations, the role of nationalism and/or broader social challenges (Re-imagine Europe, Living 2060, Off Season Art Gardening, ACT: Art, Climate, Transition). For instance, projects supported stronger relations between art and science (Renewable Futures, STUDIOTOPIA), exchange of artists and residency programs (STUDIOTOPIA, GREEN, Imagine 2020) and proposed a conceptual change of vocabulary and practices (GREEN, Cultural Adaptations). TAKING CARE (2019-2023) aimed at re-shaping museums as spaces of care and places to reflect meaningfully on the state of the planet and on its future. Some projects also supported new sustainable practices that could more concretely contribute to the fight against climate change. For instance, Artcycling Coop (2015-2018) promoted the recycle of waste materials and their use for handcraft art. Similarly, Green Europe Experience (2019-2023) aimed at developing a sustainable model for music festivals and thus enhancing innovation practices in the whole cultural sector.

Under TV Programming Support, proposals showed trajectories of individuals and their engagement on climate change (Before the Flood, Little Yellow Boots), or provide in-depth reports from affected areas. Topics were extreme weather conditions, wildfires or forest destruction (Before the Flood, Incendies geants: enquête Sur Un Nouveau fléau, The Borneo Case) as well as environmental damage provoked by extraction and transport industries (Jozi Gold, Freightened). Some works also looked at the future: this was the case of Bugs (2014-17), a project led by the Danish documentary director Andreas Johnsen. Bugs analysed the practice of eating insects and its use in order to save the planet from intensive food production and rising population. Finally, Creative Europe also supported videogames with green themes. The environmental catastrophe was the lynchpin of the plot, either as a tragic past of a post-apocalyptic world (Journey to the New Atlantis, Earthlock 2) or a disaster that the gamer can still avoid (ICE, Fiete save the world). The videogames addressed the question of climate change and explored landscapes affected by human-made environmental hazard.

Climate change art initiatives within other EU programmes

Climate change art initiatives have been proposed and implemented as part of EU-funded projects within several programmes. A comprehensive account of these initiatives is beyond the reach of this paper, but some examples can provide a general overview. Within Erasmus+, some youth mobility projects have linked creativity with environmental concerns (N.A.T.U.R.E.+, Doğayı Sevmekle Başlar Herşey, Let's Save the Earth Together). N.A.T.U.R.E.+ aimed at increasing environmental awareness through the artistic use of modern technologies, and

explored the use of waste for artistic self-expression. Within the LIFE Programme, climate change art was included in the project CETACEOSMADEIRA II (2009-13), aiming to the conservation of cetaceans in the Madeira archipelago. In April 2013, the Madeira Whale Museum, coordinator of the project, organized BaleiArte, an arts exhibition with models of dolphins and cetaceans decorated by school students from Madeira. The exhibition was promoted in several spaces of the island[47].

Another example of climate change art initiative was URBACT III (2014-2020), a European Territorial Cooperation programme promoting sustainable urban development through exchange practices. The transfer network "C-CHANGE Arts and Culture Tackling Climate Change" (2018-2020) aimed to mobilise arts and culture in order to engage citizens and contribute towards climate change responsibility and action[48]. The project built on the experience of the Manchester Arts Sustainability Team (MAST), a network established in 2010 involving a range of activities to raise awareness on climate change and inspire people to act. Lastly, proposals with artistic initiatives could also be found within environmental-related Horizon 2020 projects. This is the case of CreaTures: Creative Practices for Transformational Futures, focusing on creativity as a means for social change and currently under implementation. Another example could be found in the framework of the European Climate Change Adaptation (ECCA) Conference, a biennial event convened by three Horizon 2020 projects. The art program of the conference is discussed in the next section of this paper.

Climate change art in EU External Action

The EU is also engaged in raising environmental awareness beyond its borders, and since 2016 Delegations and Member States' embassies have held various events to showcase best practices and inspire communities. These events have often taken place in the framework of the EU Climate Diplomacy Week and included exhibitions, shows, film screenings and arts competition. In Kosovo, the Climate Diplomacy Week organized by the EU office included a youth mural fest, movie screenings and photo exhibitions[49]. In Papua New Guinea, the EU Delegation

[47] Museu da Baleia (2013). *CETACEOSMADEIRA II: Annex D.13*. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=home.showFile&rep=file&fil=LIFE07_NAT_P_000646_LAYMAN.pdf Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

[48] Julie's Bicycle (2019). *C-CHANGE Arts and Culture Tackling Climate Change*. Available at: https://juliesbicycle.com/news/c-change-arts-culture-leading-climate-action-in-cities/ Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

[49] European External Action Service - EEAS (2019). *Launching of the Climate Diplomacy Week*. Available at: https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/kosovo/67678/launching-climate-diplomacy-week_mn Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

organized a bilum-making (traditional national bag) and movie competition for students[50]. Films screening were also proposed in Indonesia and Vietnam[51].

In Russia, the EU Delegation has supported ECOCUP, an international environmental documentary film festival taking place in several Russian cities. This initiative is further discussion in the next section. Finally, a climate change art initiative was selected among the 10 innovative ideas for the European 'Houses' of Culture, an EU-funded project managed by the European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC) network. The EUNIC cluster in Mongolia proposed to organise 'Nogoonbaatar', an Eco-Art Festival supporting critical engagement on environmental issues through arts. According to the calendar of the initiative, submitted proposals are further developed in the second phase and expected to be implemented between March and October 2020 in case of final acceptance.

---

[50] European External Action Service - EEAS (2019). *Climate Diplomacy Week Bilum Making & Movie Making Competition for Youth*. Available at: https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/australia/66408/climate-diplomacy-week-bilum-making-movie-making-competition-youth_en Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

[51] EEAS. *Launching of the Climate…, op.cit.*

3. Three Case Studies: climate change art at work with youth

This section aims to explore three case studies of projects and initiatives dealing with climate change art and involving youth in the framework of their activities. The selection of the case studies is based on the categorization proposed in the previous section, looking at climate change art initiatives 1) within Creative Europe, 2) outside Creative Europe, and therefore within non-artistic projects, and 3) in the framework of EU's external action.

3.1. Imagine 2020 (and beyond): a success story of an EU-funded creative network

Where would the world be in twelve years, and do arts have a paramount moral duty to fight against climate change? In 2008, a group of six European arts organisations rose up to the challenge and decided to build a network aiming to engage the cultural sector and its audience. Back at the time, 2020 seemed to be a realistic timespan to address climate change and the societal issues that were connected to. Funded by the Culture Programme, the '2020 network Thin Ice: Arts and Climate Change' (2008-2010) explored ways to combine artistic freedom and environmental sustainability, and solutions to involve European artists in climate change topics. Activities included films, performances, exhibitions and lectures. As an example, the Belgian organisation Kaaitheater launched the first edition of the Burning Ice festival, bringing together artists, scientists and cultural experts to explore connections between art and science.

The experience of the network continued and expanded in 2010 under the new EU-funded project 'Imagine 2020: art, ecology and possible futures' (2010-2015), involving eleven organisations from European member states. The project had two specific objectives: to explore the use of artworks to raise awareness among the general audience, and to look for new means to lower the environmental impact of arts. Imagine 2020, which is today an example of a success story for its contribution and impact on the questions raised[52], continued with a second edition until 2020. At the time of writing the project heads towards a new phase. The time horizon of 2020 was in fact reached and partners aimed to refresh their commitment and renew their cooperation. At a time of multi-faceted challenges, the network aimed to develop an inter-connected program that could

---

[52] European Commission (2019). *Creative Europe Project Results. Imagine 2020 – Arts and Climate Change*. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/projects/ce-project-details/#project/508030-CU-1-2010-1-BE-CULTURE-VOL11 Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

relate environmental issues to broader world realities. In other words, climate change was no longer just about melting icebergs, burning forests and endangered species. Rather, it was time to connect art and climate to more societal issues, including inequality, social inclusion and gender, and to support progress towards a just transition. Thus, the recently launched 'ACT: Art, Climate, Transition' (2019-2023) is expected to be a project "on hope", looking at the arts "as a strong designer of possible futures"[53].

Arie Lengkeek, project content leader at the Dutch Theater Rotterdam, joined Imagine 2020 in 2015 moving away from the urban development field, where he found that the ecological transition was approached in a technocratic way. The art sector provided new opportunities to shape meanings and discussions around climate change. "The State sees you as a citizen or a consumer when it comes to ecology" he explained[54] - "Isolate your roof and get state subsides, this is the discourse". In his view, arts do a different thing: "you stop being an individual and start acting as an embedded individual: art frees you from being a consumer and invites you to have a shared experience". I asked Arie to provide examples of such embedding experiences. His memory went back to 'Conversations (at the end of the world)', a piece performed in 2017 at Theater Rotterdam in the framework of Imagine 2020. The play by Kris Verdonck and based on the works of the Russian writer Daniil Charms staged five individuals waiting for the apocalypse. "The piece had no ending" Arie remarked. "At a certain point the audience was just given the opportunity to leave. And the director removed the opportunity of giving an applause" he continued. "You could feel that the atmosphere was so tense because the show did not provide any solutions. And as a result, after the end this led to many conversations between people who attended the show".

Together with emotional activation, artworks also help situate people in their contemporary reality. This was the case of LIES, an interactive show about money made by the Belgian collective Ontroerend Goed. Participants were invited to play in a game as bankers and make decisions related to their economic wealth. According to the show director Alexander Devriendt the overall idea was to mirror the financial system and "create this beast that nobody controls"[55]. LIES was performed at Theater Rotterdam in the framework of the Imagine 2020 project. "This

[53] European Commission (2019) *Creative Europe Project Results. ACT: Art, Climate, Transition*. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/projects/ce-project-details/#project/607518-CREA-1-2019-1-NL-CULT-COOP2 Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

[54] Interview with Arie Lengkeek, project content leader at Theater Rotterdam, The Netherlands.

[55] Bowie-Sell, D. (2018). Alexander Devriendt: 'Lies puts you in charge of the financial system'. *WhatsOnStage*, 18 July. Available at: https://www.whatsonstage.com/london-theatre/news/alexander-devriendt-lies-almieda-interview-ontroerend-goed_47148.html Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

is something arts can do: connecting people to the reality, even to the abstractions of global capitalism" Arie said[56].

Young people's participation and engagement have been central since the early stages of the project. Back in 2008, UK project partner LIFT launched 'A Parliament for Climate Change', providing an opportunity to discuss environmental challenges with initiatives involving school students as both performers and target audience. As a founder of 2020 network, the Slovenian Bunker Institute (SL) has a long tradition of working with young people. Since 1998 it has organized the Mladi Levi (Young Lions) festivals, providing space for young performing artists from Europe and beyond. In 2016 and 2019 the festival hosted the works of Maria Lucia Cruz Correia, a Portuguese artist exploring environmental hazard and solutions through cooperative approaches involving scientists, activists and legal experts. Common dreams (2016) was co-produced by Bunker and received financial support from Imagine 2020 (see picture 4 and 5).
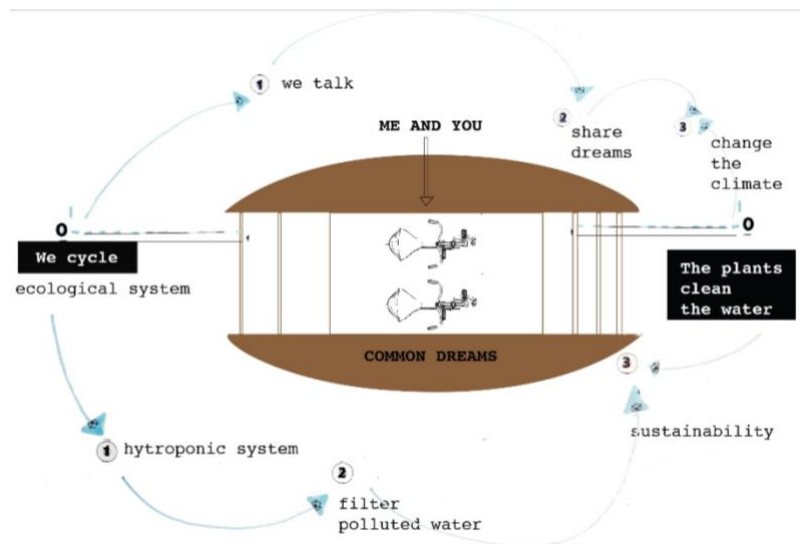
Pictures 4 and 5: Cruz Correia's Common dreams project[57].

Common Dreams was a one-to-one performance taking place in a pedal boat. Individuals pedalled together in what would become a prototype of survival event, which "reveals the reality of climate refugees, global warming, disappearance and displacement"[58]. Correia came back to Mladi Levi in 2019 with her performance "Voice of Nature: the Trial", raising questions on ecocide, the crime of damaging ecosystems, restorative justice practices and transformative

---

[56] Interview with Arie Lengkeek, *cit.*
[57] Cruz Correira, ML (2016). *Common dreams – floating garden*. Available at: http://mluciacruzcorreia.com/works/common-dreams Retrieved on 11 December 2019.
[58] *Ibidem.*

actions[59]. Mladi Levi also hosted Silke Huysmans and Hannes Dereere, a Belgian young duo working on political and environmental events that resonate with broader international issues. In 2018 they presented "Mining Stories", portraying a dramatic mining dam broke in Minas Gerais and its environmental and social consequences. The performance, in which the authors remained silent, aimed at showing the "cacophony of a disaster" [60]. Their artistic research was based on a long and rigorous fieldwork and interviews with people directly affected by the event.

The New Theatre Institute of Latvia was another Imagine 2020 partner with expertise and experience on youth involvement. In the framework of this project, the Theatre organized Kate McIntosh's installation-workshop Worktable[61]. Worktable invited audience members to take apart objects in order to make them gain a new life. The installation allowed individuals to free creativity and was recommended for kids and young people. Arie Lengkeek, who led the drafting process of the post-2020 process, clarified that youth would be again involved in future actions, starting from the abovementioned Parliament for Children. This was in his view a way to amplify "voices not usually heard in the environmental debate", and to relate "these big challenges to their everyday reality"[62]. In other words, by "enabling conversation in their communities, starting from their family"[63], youth could become powerful drivers of change.

3.2. Change as an experiment: The Art Program at the 2019 ECCA Conference

"Sometimes I feel so out of control when I think they could take away my right to have children"[64]. The voice and despair of this young girl were part of the video projected during the Closing Plenary of the European Climate Change Adaptation (ECCA) Conference, which took place in Lisbon, Portugal, between 28 and 31 May 2019. Building on the first global gathering on adaptation, which was organized in Australia in 2010 within the framework of the UN

[59] Cruz Correira, ML (2019). *Voice of Nature: The Trial*. Available at: http://www.mluciacruzcorreia.com/works/the-voice-of-natu Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

[60] Bunker (2018). *Silke Huysmans, Hannes Dereere: Mining Stories*. Available at: http://www.bunker.si/en/events/silke-huysmans-hannes-dereere-mining-stories/ Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

[61] New Theatre Institute of Latvia (2019). *Kate McIntosh's "In Many Hands" and "Worktable" come to Cēsis*. Available at: http://theatre.lv/eng/archived/kate-mcintoshs-in-many-hands-and-worktable-come-to-cesis/ Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

[62] Interview with Arie Lengkeek, *cit.*

[63] *Ibidem.*

[64] European Climate Change Adaptation Conference (2019). ECCA 2019: Call for action – young people's perspective on climate change. *YouTube*, 4 June. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=78mJQeUGzRg&feature=emb_logo Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

Programme of Research on Climate Change Vulnerability, Impacts and Adaptation (PROVIA), European participants attempted to realise a similar event with a European focus. The proposal was backed by the European Commission, which decided to adopt a rotating system and assigned the biennial organisation to different consortia of H2020 projects. The first ECCA conference took place in 2013 in Hamburg, Germany. Four years later, Glasgow event witnessed for the first time the inclusion of a youth dimension, with contributions coming from the local Youth Council, the Young Planners Network and the 2050 Climate group. A selection of short and medium films was also proposed in cooperation with the Glasgow Science Festival.

Building on this experience, the new organisers[65] of the 2019 ECCA conference convened in Lisbon and decided to launch an art program that would run during three days of the festival[66]. Julia Bentz, Postdoctoral Researcher at the Centre for Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Changes in the University of Lisbon, curated and organized the program, involving live performances, exhibitions and screenings of documentaries and animated films on climate change. The opening act of the conference was an art and science collaboration project inspired by the scientific article "Trajectories of the Earth System in the Anthropocene"[67]. Marten Scheffer, musician, scientist and co-author of the article, and the artist Tone Bjordam set up a performance unveiling the fundamental role of human activity in the world and picturing its three possible destinies: a frozen planet, a hothouse planet, and a "fragile state in between", corresponding to a "stabilized Earth System" [68]. Building on a suggestive music concert, Tone Bjordam's video attempted to re-create the colours and the shapes of these three microcosms. Bjordam's paintings were also presented in a separate exhibition during the conference. Her works aimed to communicate science through artworks and analysed transitions and transformations in the natural system.

The 2019 ECCA conference also hosted 'Art for Change', an exhibition of artworks created by young artists. The project was the result of a collaboration with Julia Bentz's Art for Adaptation Project and the Artistic Secondary School Antonio Arroio. By approaching "change as an

---

[65] The three H-2020 projects PLACARD, BINGO and RESCCUE were in charge of the organization of the 2019 ECCA Conference.

[66] European Climate Change Adaptation Conference. (2019). *Art Programme*. Available at: https://www.ecca2019.eu/programme/art-programme/ Retrieved on 11 December.

[67] Steffen, W., Rockström, J., Richardson, K., Lenton, T. M., Folke, C., Liverman, D., ... & Donges, J. F. (2018). Trajectories of the Earth System in the Anthropocene. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 115(33), 8252-8259.

[68] Bjordam, T. (2019). Trajectories Live Performance. *Vimeo*. 25 June. Available at: https://vimeo.com/344427463 Retrieved on 11 December.

experiment"[69], students had the opportunity to develop critical thinking around the topic and uncover new climate narratives. An example was Madalena Jorge's work (picture 6). The story Masks by Stirling Davenport, showing a dystopian Beijing in which everyone had to war an air-filtering mask to survive, served as a basis to develop her idea. Her magazine advertisement was meant to attract the audience by presenting a new collection of masks with improved air filters and a visor. The artwork criticized current approaches to address climate change through individual devices (the mask) instead of tackling its root causes (air pollution). Another artwork, 'Do You Smell the Problem?' from Laura Reis (picture 7) attempted to address the issue of methane gases produced by cows. The poster portrayed a cow wearing a gas mask and highlighted the contradiction of the situation, as the cow both breathed and released methane at the same time.

Pictures 6 and 7: Madalena Jorge's and Laura Reis's posters artworks in the framework of the Art for Change initiative[70].

ECCA Conference Closing Plenary displayed the short film that was mentioned earlier in the introduction. The curator of the art program co-produced it together with Johanna Bentz. In the video, students from two schools in Lisbon were interviewed and asked to share their perceptions on climate change. Julia Bentz argued that the engagement and empowerment of youth as stakeholders has become crucial today. As they are about to inherit the consequences of current political inaction, it would become important to hear from them and give them an opportunity to

---

[69] Art for Change (2019). *Home*. Available at: https://sites.google.com/antonioarroio.edu.pt/artforchange-ecca2019/home Retrieved on 11 December 2019.
[70] Art for Change. *Home, op.cit.*

exchange views on this topic. By working close to young people, Julia realised that many of them share a dystopian image of the future. "This is alarming" she observed[71]. She added that this was the result of current communication on climate change, which is largely "problem-focused". While it remains fundamental to raise awareness on environmental dangers, there is also a need to address "real possibilities of engagement" that could provide "positive ideas about the future". Emergency narratives should then be coupled with exchanges on the future young people would like to build, and imaginative societies in which they would like to work and mitigate the effects of climate change. This would also be a way to counter-balance the "overwhelming sadness and anger" that is present among young people, Julia said.

Another youth event closed the 2019 ECCA Conference. The children's choir of Santo Amaro de Oeiras, Lisbon was invited to close the plenary with an exhibition including "My blue planet", an ode to the beauty of Earth. The song was awarded the first place at the 2012 Global Rockstar competition and represented Portugal during the Rio+20 Summit in Rio de Janeiro[72].

3.3. 'Movies that change the future': ECOCUP and the importance of green ties[73]

"*S chego nachat'*?" asked a participant in Moscow after the projection of the documentary 'Youth Unstoppable: My Decade in the Youth Climate Movement'. "Where to start? Where can I find relevant information?" she wondered. In Saint Petersburg, where the 2019 edition of the ECOCUP environmental documentary festival started in November, viewers shared similar questions during the debate. More than a hundred attended the night screening of 'Anthropocene: The Human Epoch', a Canadian documentary film exploring this emerging concept. Projections were followed by Q&A sessions with authors, experts or consultants on environmental issues. "I need to understand what I can do concretely in my everyday life" a participant remarked. "How could I stop using plastics for instance?". ECOCUP long-lasting partnerships allowed them to broaden its scope. They include at present the EU Delegation, The Heinrich Boll Foundation,

---

[71] Interview with Julia Bentz, Postdoctoral Researcher at the Center for Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Changes in the University of Lisbon, Portugal, and curator of the Art Program at the 2019 European Climate Change Adaptation (ECCA) Conference.

[72] Bentz, J. (2019). *Art at the European Climate Change Adaptation conference*. Available at: https://artforadaptation.com/2019/06/06/art-at-the-european-climate-change-adaptation-conference/ Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

[73] This section draws on the author's participation and observation in the 2019 Environmental Documentary Film Festival ECOCUP.

Institut Français, and the US and Canadian Embassies. Partners provide support for screening fees and travel costs of artists and experts among others.

In both Moscow and Saint Petersburg, the theatres were filled with young people. This feature of ECOCUP can also be explained by the biographies of its staff. As a youth-led project since its early days, at the beginning the festival gathered mainly young people, who were the closest group and the easiest to reach out. The more ECOCUP increased its reputation, the more it diversified its target group over the years, but young people have remained so far its largest audience.

Moving from the table of a cafeteria where the project was discussed for the first time, and emerging as a breakfast gathering around a movie and a cup of coffee, since 2009 ECOCUP has toured in many cities in Russia and in the post-Soviet space. Aside from Moscow and Saint Petersburg, screenings also took place in Sochi, Kazan, Krasnoyarsk, Ryazan, Petrozavodsk, Arkhangelsk, Volgograd and many other cities. Outside Russia, its staff also organized projections in Belarus, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and more recently in Georgia. What makes ECOCUP work relevant in the post-Soviet space is the popularization of environmental topics through Russian-language content. This is a niche that ECOCUP has cultivated since its existence, back when the same staff translated English-speaking movies sentence by sentence. While English language environmental-related content is easily available on the internet, Russian language documentaries and short films are more challenging to find. Of course, Russia's mixed public attitudes and awareness around climate change do play a role on this. It is true that back in 2015 Russian President Vladimir Putin defined climate change as "one of the gravest challenges humanity is facing"[74]. Although this came as a surprise in the international debate, leading the New York Times to define Putin's speech as "a change in tone", Russia's green ambitions have mainly remained declarative[75].

Following its main motto, ECOCUP has sought to show 'movies that change the future'. This is why since 2009 its primary purpose has been informative, relying on the idea that problems cannot be solved if they do not enter the public debate. Screenings became therefore the best alternative source of information and an opportunity to engage in discussions after the movie. This also explains why over the years, together with films, ECOCUP also expanded the reach of its activities, including discussions, round tables, quizzes on environmental topics and even

---

[74] Davenport, C. (2015). A Change in Tone for Vladimir Putin's Climate Change Pledges. *New York Times*. 1 December. Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/projects/cp/climate/2015-paris-climate-talks/vladimir-putin-climate-change-pledges-russia Retrieved on 11 December 2019.
[75] *Ibidem*.

theme parties. In 2019, the program involved exchanges on sustainable consumption, waste management and Greta Thunberg's rising movement[76].

Starting as an information-sharing platform, ECOCUP also challenged the viewers' emotional attitude towards the environment. This is often the case of green festivals, as images of a ruined environment might be easy to scare and doom. After some screenings, participants did not hesitate to share their feelings of frustration and anger: "I do not understand what I can do, I feel powerless" said a viewer in Saint Petersburg. The emergence of emotions reinforces the importance of a frame in which screenings take place, as debates become an opportunity to provide concrete solutions and to fight against both climate change and individual despair.

Perhaps more importantly, this frame was also what participants saw as ECOCUP added value. In other words, the festival became a physical space allowing people to meet and share this sense of urgency on environmental change. ECOCUP theatres provided a safe space for emotional activation, as participants knew to be surrounded by people sharing the same concerns and hoping to bring change in their close circles. And while this was perhaps less urgent in Moscow, where environmental activities have been on the rise and important actors have engaged in

climate change causes[77], this need has remained significant in smaller urban centres and more isolated rural areas in Russia. Overall, community engagement has led participants to organize a number of projects as a follow up of ECOCUP, including food sharing activities and zero waste shops. Overall, the festival provided audience members with ideas on how to seek a greener lifestyle.

Picture 8: Extract from 'Colors of Change', a documentary projected at the 2019 ECOCUP film festival on Zaria Forman's art and travel to Greenland in 2017.

---

[76] ECOCUP (2019). *Moscow Programme*. Available at: http://www.ecocup.ru/en/moscowen/ Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

[77] An example is 'The Coming World: Ecology as the New Politics 2030–2100', an environmental exhibition organized by Garage Museum in Moscow. Available at: https://garagemca.org/en/event/public-program-for-the-coming-world-ecology-as-the-new-politics-2030-2100 Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

Moving from more general environmental concerns, in recent times ECOCUP has started thinking outside the green box. The 2019 festival witnessed this change as part of an attempt to develop a more holistic approach to climate change. Unlike many ecology festivals focusing solely on natural disasters and species disappearance, ECOCUP started looking at climate change as a social and cultural problem. Going beyond white bears and icebergs, it highlighted the coming societal impact of the ecological crisis, including migrations, misery, and famine, and discussed adaptation and transformation measures. As climate change is also furthered by isolation and inaction, ECOCUP has worked to create ties and make sustainable communities across Russia and beyond. This is in the end what happened during a post-screening debate in Sochi, when a man stood up and expressed its surprise : "I did not know that there were so many people engaged into waste in this city! Do you want to exchange phone numbers?".

Concluding remarks: paths to a climate victory

This paper sought to explore the role and place of artistic productions in addressing climate change. As stated in the introduction, it did not aim at a comprehensive mapping in the field of climate change art. Rather, it attempted to delve into recent assessments from scientific literature and current trends in the artistic sector. Although artists do not provide instant solutions to tackle concrete problems, the author argued that climate change should go beyond the scientific ghetto and be discussed through cultural lenses. Substantiated scientific evidence and consolidated consensus among scientists have not translated yet into a strong and global political response, and climate deniers have successfully discredited academia in many occasions. Whereas hard science and top-down communication techniques proved to be deficient, alternative forms of engagement should be explored. Climate change art is one of those. Of course, arts and humanities should not be seen just as another communication arm of climate science. When it comes to scenario-making, Tyszczuk and Smith argued that art should not illustrate "an alternative account of those futures considered plausible", but rather enrich "scenarios work, even if that enrichment may arrive studded with challenges and provocations"[78]. To recall Cortana's insightful argument, art provides then the opportunity to make the invisible visible.

Chapter 3 of this study attempted to provide a more in-depth exploration of EU policies and funding instruments addressing this nexus between art and climate change. At the policy level, the EU has mainstreamed climate change in its policy and more recently put forward a more ambitious target, proposing to devote 25 per cent of total expenditure to climate objectives within the MFF 2021-2027. However, at present EU policy documents fail to recognise the role of arts and creativity in addressing climate change. This should be addressed in future communications dealing with culture and creativity. At the same time, this paper found that funding initiatives on art and climate change have multiplied over the past years. This paper accounted for 28 projects tackling art and climate change funded under Creative Europe, with a spectacular rise in 2019. Also, an exploratory overview of similar actions in the framework of other programmes or within EU external action was provided. Looking at the future, the Commission's proposal for 2021-2027 Creative Europe highlighted that the Programme would contribute "to mainstream climate actions" and that relevant initiatives would be indicated during the phases of preparation and implementation[79]. Bearing in mind EU climate mainstreaming ambitions after 2020, future

---

[78] Tyszczuk & Smith, Culture and climate…, *op.cit.,* p. 60.
[79] European Commission (2019). *Proposal for a, op.cit.*

actions targeting climate change art could be designed in the framework of the Cross-sectoral strand of the Creative Europe programme for the period 2021-2027.

Finally, three more in-depth case studies attempted to highlight the nexus between art and climate change by looking at the involvement of youth as organisers, performers and audiences in artistic initiatives. In spite of their considerable differences, these initiatives provided opportunities to hear voices that the environmental debate has long neglected and to raise awareness. At a time of gloomy narratives about the future, artistic events and framings provide opportunities for emotional activation and to re-connect with other individuals. The commitment to create ties was a common feature of the three case studies, and so was the need to shape positive and constructive ideas about the future. This is a point that goes even beyond the role of climate change art, and tackles the more fundamental issue of successful awareness-raising. At a time of policy inaction, this paper does not question the need to rise up to the challenge and use a more compelling vocabulary and narrative. However, climate awareness campaigns over-emphasizing apocalyptic scenarios and dystopian futures would perhaps pressure politicians to adopt *ad hoc* decisions but might fail to engage more passive audiences in climate change topics, leading to feelings of despair and uselessness. It becomes then important to complement 'emergency' narratives with constructive approaches and to create opportunities to engage audiences with way-out solutions to climate change, thus offering paths to a climate victory.

Bibliography

10:10 Climate Action (2019). *Public attitudes to tackling aviation's climate change impacts*. Available at: http://files.1010global.org/documents/Aviation_briefing_Jan2019_FINAL.pdf Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

Acute Art (2019). Acute Art presents: Marina Abramović discusses her first virtual reality project, Rising. *YouTube*. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lQ3Yxi6pCvc Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

Adger, W. N., Barnett, J., Brown, K., Marshall, N., & O'brien, K. (2013). Cultural dimensions of climate change impacts and adaptation. *Nature Climate Change*, 3(2), 112-117.

Allen, M. (2011).Al Gore is doing a disservice to science by overplaying the link between climate change and weather. *The Guardian*, 7 October. Available at: http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2011/oct/07/al-gore-science-climate-weather Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

Art for Change (2019). *Home*. Available at: https://sites.google.com/antonioarroio.edu.pt/artforchange-ecca2019/home Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

Bentz, J. (2019). *Art at the European Climate Change Adaptation conference*. Available at: https://artforadaptation.com/2019/06/06/art-at-the-european-climate-change-adaptation-conference/ Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

Bjordam, T. (2019). Trajectories Live Performance. *Vimeo*. 25 June 2019. Available at: https://vimeo.com/344427463 Retrieved on 11 December.

Bowie-Sell, D. (2018). Alexander Devriendt: 'Lies puts you in charge of the financial system'. *WhatsOnStage*, 18 July. Available at: https://www.whatsonstage.com/london-theatre/news/alexander-devriendt-lies-almieda-interview-ontroerend-goed_47148.html Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

Bunker (2018). *Silke Huysmans, Hannes Dereere: Mining Stories*. Available at: http://www.bunker.si/en/events/silke-huysmans-hannes-dereere-mining-stories/ Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

Collomb, J. D. (2014). The ideology of climate change denial in the United States. *European journal of American studies*, 9(9 - 1).

Cortada, X. (2019). *Underwater Home Owners' Association*. Available at: https://cortada.com/tag/underwater-hoa/ Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

Council of the European Union (2018). *Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022*. Available at: http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-13948-2018-INIT/en/pdf# Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

Cruz Correira, ML (2016). *Common dreams – floating garden*. Available at: http://mluciacruzcorreia.com/works/common-dreams Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

Cruz Correira, ML (2019). *Voice of Nature: The Trial*. Available at: http://www.mluciacruzcorreia.com/works/the-voice-of-natu Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

D'Alfonso, A. (2019). Mainstreaming of climate action in the EU budget. Impact of a political objective. *European Parliament In-Depth analysis*. Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2019/642239/EPRS_IDA(2019)642239_EN.pdf Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

Davenport, C. (2015). A Change in Tone for Vladimir Putin's Climate Change Pledges. *New York Times*. 1 December. Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/projects/cp/climate/2015-paris-climate-talks/vladimir-putin-climate-change-pledges-russia Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

ECOCUP (2019). *Moscow Programme*. Available at: http://www.ecocup.ru/en/moscowen/ Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

European Climate Change Adaptation Conference (2019). ECCA 2019: Call for action – young people's perspective on climate change. *YouTube*, 4 June. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=78mJQeUGzRg&feature=emb_logo Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

European Climate Change Adaptation Conference. (2019). *Art Programme*. Available at: https://www.ecca2019.eu/programme/art-programme/ Retrieved on 11 December.

European Commission – Directorate-General for Communication (2019). *Special Eurobarometer 490: Climate change*. Available at: https://data.europa.eu/euodp/en/data/dataset/S2212_91_3_490_ENG Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

European Commission (2016). *Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council. Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations*. Available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016JC0029&from=EN Retrieved on 11 December 2018.

European Commission (2018). *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. A New European Agenda For Culture*. Available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0267&from=EN Retrieved on 11 December 2018.

European Commission (2019) *Creative Europe Project Results. ACT: Art, Climate, Transition*. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/projects/ce-project-details/#project/607518-CREA-1-2019-1-NL-CULT-COOP2 Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

European Commission (2019) *Creative Europe Project Results*. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/projects/ Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

European Commission (2019) *Creative Europe Project Results. Imagine 2020 – Arts and Climate Change*. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/projects/ce-project-details/#project/508030-CU-1-2010-1-BE-CULTURE-VOL11 Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

European Commission (2019). *A Modern Budget for a Union that Protects, Empowers and Defends. The Multiannual Financial Framework for 2021-2027*. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/communication-modern-budget-may_2018_en.pdf Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

European Commission (2019). *Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Creative Europe programme (2021 to 2027) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013*. 30 June. Available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:509e1bcb-63f0-11e8-ab9c-01aa75ed71a1.0003.02/DOC_1&format=PDF Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

European Commission (2019). *Supporting climate action through the EU budget*. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/budget/mainstreaming_en Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

European External Action Service - EEAS (2019). *Climate Diplomacy Week Bilum Making & Movie Making Competition for Youth*. Available at: https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/australia/66408/climate-diplomacy-week-bilum-making-movie-making-competition-youth_en Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

European External Action Service - EEAS (2019). *Launching of the Climate Diplomacy Week*. Available at: https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/kosovo/67678/launching-climate-diplomacy-week_mn Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

Haynes, K., & Tanner, T. M. (2015). Empowering young people and strengthening resilience: Youth-centred participatory video as a tool for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. *Children's Geographies*, 13(3), 357-371.

Hulme, M. (2009). *Why we disagree about climate change: Understanding controversy, inaction and opportunity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hulme, M. (2013). *Exploring climate change through science and in society: an anthology of Mike Hulme's essays, interviews and speeches*. London: Routledge.

Hulme, M. (2019). Climate Emergency Politics Is Dangerous. *Issues*, 36(1). 23-25.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2014). *Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*. Available at: https://ar5-syr.ipcc.ch/ipcc/ipcc/resources/pdf/IPCC_SynthesisReport.pdf. Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

Interview with Arie Lengkeek, project content leader at Theater Rotterdam, The Netherlands.

Interview with Julia Bentz, Postdoctoral Researcher at the Center for Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Changes in the University of Lisbon, Portugal, and curator of the Art Program at the 2019 European Climate Change Adaptation (ECCA) Conference.

Julie's Bicycle (2019). *C-CHANGE Arts and Culture Tackling Climate Change*. Available at: https://juliesbicycle.com/news/c-change-arts-culture-leading-climate-action-in-cities/ Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

Kindon, S. (2003). Participatory video in geographic research: a feminist practice of looking?. *Area*, 35(2), 142-153; Sandercock, L., & Attili, G. (2010). Digital ethnography as planning praxis: An experiment with film as social research, community engagement and policy dialogue. *Planning Theory & Practice*, 11(1), 23-45.

Museu da Baleia (2013). *CETACEOSMADEIRA II: Annex D.13*. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=home.showFile&rep=file&fil=LIFE07_NAT_P_000646_LAYMAN.pdf Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

New Theatre Institute of Latvia (2019). *Kate McIntosh's "In Many Hands" and "Worktable" come to Cēsis*. Available at: http://theatre.lv/eng/archived/kate-mcintoshs-in-many-hands-and-worktable-come-to-cesis/ Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

Paterson, K. (2019). *Vatnajökull (the sound of)*. Available at: http://katiepaterson.org/portfolio/vatnajokull-the-sound-of/ Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

Rankin, J. (2019). EU leaders meet to try to agree on carbon neutrality by 2050. *The Guardian*. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/dec/12/eu-leaders-meet-again-to-try-to-agree-carbon-neutrality-by-2050 Retrieved on 14 December 2019.

Rashid, P. (2019). Photo Stories, *Probal Rashid Official Website*. Available at: https://probalrashid.com/photo-stories/river-delta-crisis/ Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

Rashid, P. (2019). The Faces of Climate Survivors, *Probal Rashid Official Website*. Available at: https://probalrashid.com/portraits/faces-of-climate-survivors/ Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

Rayner, T., & Minns, A. (2015). The challenge of communicating unwelcome climate messages. *Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research Working Paper*, 162.

Risen, J. L., & Critcher, C. R. (2011). Visceral fit: While in a visceral state, associated states of the world seem more likely. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, *100*(5).

Roeser, S. (2012). Risk communication, public engagement, and climate change: a role for emotions. *Risk Analysis: An International Journal*, 32(6), 1033-1040.

Rudiak-Gould, P. (2012). Promiscuous corroboration and climate change translation: a case study from the Marshall Islands. *Global Environmental Change*, *22*(1), 46-54.

Rudiak-Gould, P. (2013). "We have seen it with our own eyes": why we disagree about climate change visibility. *Weather, Climate, and Society*, *5*(2), 120-132.

Sommer, L. K., & Klöckner, C. A. (2019). Does activist art have the capacity to raise awareness in audiences?—A study on climate change art at the ArtCOP21 event in Paris. *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*. Available at: https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2019-36639-001 Retrieved on 11 December 2019.

Srinivas, L. (2002). The active audience: spectatorship, social relations and the experience of cinema in India. *Media, Culture & Society*, 24(2), 155-173.

Steffen, W., Rockström, J., Richardson, K., Lenton, T. M., Folke, C., Liverman, D., ... & Donges, J. F. (2018). Trajectories of the Earth System in the Anthropocene. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 115(33), 8252-8259.

Strupczewski, S. & Baczynska G. (2019). EU leaves Poland out of 2050 climate deal after standoff. *Reuters*. Available at: https://www.reuters.com/article/us-climate-change-eu/eu-leaves-poland-out-of-2050-climate-deal-after-standoff-idUSKBN1YG01I Retrieved on 14 December 2019.

Tyszczuk, R., & Smith, J. (2018). Culture and climate change scenarios: the role and potential of the arts and humanities in responding to the '1.5 degrees target'. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, 31. 56-64.

United Nations (2018). *Secretary-General's remarks on Climate Change [as delivered].* Available at: https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2018-09-10/secretary-generals-remarks-climate-change-delivered Retrieved on 14 December 2019.

Weber, E. U. (2006). Experience-based and description-based perceptions of long-term risk: Why global warming does not scare us (yet). *Climatic change*, 77(1-2), 103-120.

Wright, C., Nyberg, D., Rickards, L.. (2018). Organizing in the Anthropocene, *Organization,* 25. 455–71.

Annex: Environmental and Climate Change-Related Projects Funded in the Framework of the Creative Europe Programme (2014-2019)

Project Name	Year	Action
Changing Wathers	2014	Cooperation Projects
The Borneo Case	2014	TV Programming Support
Little Yellow Boots	2014	TV Programming Support
Renewable Futures	2015	Cooperation Projects
Imagine 2020	2015	Cooperation Projects
Artcycling Coop: Sustainable and Inclusive Decorative Arts	2015	Cooperation Projects
Bugs	2015	TV Programming Support
Creative Climate Leadership	2016	Cooperation Projects
Volative Earth	2016	TV Programming Support
Before the Flood / Thank you for the Rain	2016	TV Programming Support
Journey to New Atlantis	2016	Video-Games Development Support
Re-Imagine Europe	2017	Cooperation Projects
Freightened	2017	TV Programming Support
Ice	2017	Video-Games Development Support
Off Season Art Gardening	2018	Cooperation Projects
Cultural Adaptations	2018	Cooperation Projects
EARTHLOCK 2	2018	Video-Games Development Support
A Minute of Islands	2018	Video-Games Development Support
ACT: Art Climate Transition	2019	Cooperation Projects
Living 2060	2019	Cooperation Projects
STUDIOTOPIA - Art meets Science in the Anthropocene	2019	Cooperation Projects
Green Europe Experience	2019	Cooperation Projects
Green Revisited: Encountering Emerging Naturecultures (GREEN)	2019	Cooperation Projects
Taking Care_Ethnographic and World Cultures Museums as Spaces of Care	2019	Cooperation Projects
Martin And The Forest Secret	2019	Development Single Project Cinema/Television/Digital platform
Incendies Géants: Enquête Sur Un Nouveau Fléau	2019	TV Programming Support
Jozi Gold	2019	TV Programming Support
Fiete Save The World	2019	Video-Games Development Support