WE, THE ARTISTS

Amplifying the Voices of Artists and Cultural Workers in Climate Action

A Report by the Arts & Culture Working Group
LAURA CARISA GARDEA
SOUND HEALING PRACTITIONER | USA

“Artists are stakeholders and leaders who help look over our collective spirit, you can trust in us to have a seat at the table”
The time for action is now! The urgency of the climate crisis has reached unprecedented levels. The world stands at a critical juncture, with the immediate need for dramatic climate action. From extreme weather events to rising sea levels, the consequences of climate change are no longer distant threats but tangible crises affecting communities worldwide.

The time for action is now.

This report, entitled “We the Artists: Amplifying the Voices of Artists and Culture Workers in Climate Action” was written to highlight the various and creative ways in which creative practitioners can contribute to raising awareness and sharing solutions to the growing climate crises. The report will be officially launched in digital format at the COP28 Conference held in Dubai, UAE from November 30 to December 13, 2023.

This report has been written in consultation with members of the newly formed, autonomous Arts & Culture Working Group. It has been written over the course of several Town Hall meetings held weekly virtually and has given members an opportunity to directly contribute to inputs for COP28’s four thematic focuses including Finance, Technology and Innovation, Frontline Communities and Inclusivity.

At the core of this report is the need for artist representation.

We are speaking directly to the UNFCCC, the wider UN/NGO community policy and program experts and civil society. We address you respectfully but emphatically as we believe we need a new system of engagement that promotes meaningful participation of creative practitioners in sustainable development and in the policies and programmes that affect us.

We welcome your feedback and invite artists and cultural workers to join us.
We, the Artists who are members of the newly formed Arts & Culture Working Group, an autonomous and self-governing group of creative practitioners, are sharing our thoughts, concerns and ideas for how we would like to engage with you, the climate movement.

Collectively, we represent members of a growing, international creative economy representing diverse creative industries including film, music, dance, poetry, illustration, photography, puppetry, fashion and more and understand our value as allies in the climate movement, not only as entertainers but creative thinkers and problem solvers.

We know many of you have good intentions for engaging us but that doesn’t always translate to responsible policies and programmes. By emphasizing the intersection of finance, technology, inclusion and innovation with the voices of frontline communities, this report advocates for increased support and collaboration to harness the transformative power of art in building a more sustainable and just future.

We hope you will use this guide to help form your decisions and actions on engaging artists in a way that is meaningful and responsible.

This report aims to present a comprehensive overview of the pivotal role artists play in climate action, aligning their contributions with the key themes of the COP28 conference. By emphasizing the intersection of finance, technology, and innovation with the voices of frontline communities and inclusivity, the report advocates for increased support and collaboration to harness the transformative power of art in building a more sustainable and just future.

Thank you.
OV ONYEKA
POET | NIGERIA

“With a poet’s pen or voice, we craft verses in the green whispers of hope. We spotlight inclusive and innovative elements of climate consciousness.”
THINGS TO NOTATE.
We want to start off by sharing three things to notate. We want to address this upfront so that we can be clear about the perspective we are writing from. We wanted to get this out of the way before diving into our focus on COP28 and our role in the climate movement.

WE ARE PROFESSIONALS.

Like other professionals, we take our work seriously. We sometimes spend years developing our craft. We have industry standards that help guide us on how we develop our career paths and support our livelihoods. It may look different than what policy and program experts experience in their own profession. This is why we believe we should have a voice in shaping the policies and programs focused on arts and culture.

WE THINK OUTSIDE OF THE BOX.

One of our greatest gifts to the climate movement is our ability to think outside of the box. Because of that, we ask you to keep an open mind when engaging with us. We use this talent in ways that amplify creative thinking and problem solving - two skillsets we desperately need in order to address the mounting climate crises. We ask for room to be creative, entrepreneurial, disruptive and at times, controversial. Remember, we are allies but we are also independent thinkers that can be a great gift to the climate movement.

WE ARE STAKEHOLDERS.

We, the artists represent the growing creative economy which is considered one of the fastest growing economies in the world. According to UNCTAD, the creatives make up a $985 billion economy that spans all sector divides, backgrounds and more which makes us important stakeholders in helping to accelerate progress of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs.)
“What can happen if we really feel the scale of our tiny bodies in relation to our enormous planet and the Seven-Tenths of it that is covered in ocean water?”
INTRODUCTION: THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF REPRESENTATION IN CLIMATE ACTION.

In the grand tapestry of climate action, it is imperative to recognize and celebrate the vibrant hues contributed by artists and cultural workers. Our report, "We, the Artists: Amplifying the Voices of Artists and Cultural Workers for Climate Action," embarks on a journey that places representation at the forefront of the discourse. Why? Because representation matters profoundly, and it is the keystone for developing responsible, impactful policies in the fight against climate change.

The Unique Lens of Artists and Cultural Workers
Artists and cultural workers bring a distinct lens to the climate movement. Our lived experiences, industry standards, and livelihoods are unique, painting a canvas of perspectives that extends beyond the traditional realm of policy and program experts. The colors we add to this canvas are not only diverse but deeply rooted in the daily realities of our craft, making our voices crucial in shaping effective and responsible climate policies.

Why Target Leadership Roles and Funding?
To truly harness the transformative power of art and storytelling in the climate movement, we must direct attention to leadership roles and funding within the creative realm. Leadership roles and financial support must be channeled directly to creative professionals. Without this targeted approach, there is a risk of developing policies that lack the nuance and depth that only those embedded in the creative industry can provide.

The Risk of Poor Policies without Representation
Policy and program experts, while invaluable in their own right, operate within different livelihoods and frameworks. Without representation from artists and cultural workers, there is a genuine risk of developing policies that may be well-intentioned but fall short of addressing the intricate nuances of our unique industry. The consequence is a potential disconnect between the intended impact of policies and the lived experiences of those they are meant to serve.
Granting Artists and Cultural Workers a Seat at the Table

In advocating for representation, our report contends that by granting artists and cultural workers leadership roles and funding, we pave the way for a more responsible, effective, and impactful climate movement. Our voices bring authenticity, creativity, and a profound understanding of the human experience, amplifying the resonance of art and storytelling in driving meaningful change.

As we embark on this exploration, let us champion the cause of representation, recognizing its transformative potential in creating a climate movement that is not only powerful but genuinely reflective of the rich diversity that defines our collective human experience. The journey begins with giving artists and cultural workers the platform they deserve – a platform from which we can collectively paint a sustainable and just future.
PATRICK PAULUS
MUSIC PRODUCER + POET | USA

“Elevating the status of the independent storyteller is an important safeguard for the social well-being of communities.”
“"In our overheated planet marred by war and authoritarianism, artists working with communities are presenting creative, alternative visions for a sustainable and just future."
OUTLINE.

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   • B. Importance of translating climate information for broader public engagement
   • C. Connection to COP28 conference themes

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- A. Emphasizing the need for ethical collaboration between artists, organizations, and policymakers
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- A. Emphasizing creative facilitation by artists to engage with children and youth who will live with the world decisions which are made today.
- B. Understanding that arts at its best is democratic and gives space to ideas and voices that may be overlooked in traditional formal settings.

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- A. Summarizing the impact and potential of artists in climate action
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“I believe that arts is an effective medium of communication without language barriers and an effective image focusing on the SDG’s.”
“I strongly believe that art can do wonders if it represents the right message in the right space to the right audience. It can accelerate the thought process which can help in achieving the SDG’s.”
CHAPTER 1.
The Role of the Artist

Artists are not just creators; we are climate advocates, weaving narratives that transcend boundaries. Our unique perspective adds a dynamic layer to the dialogue, making climate action accessible, relatable, and downright inspiring.

In a world of data overload, artists act as translators, converting dense climate information into captivating stories. Through visuals, music, and performance, we bridge the gap between policy jargon and public understanding, fostering a connection that sparks engagement and action.

As we gear up for COP28, it's crucial to highlight the intersection of art with conference themes—finance, technology, and innovation, frontline communities and inclusivity.

Artists contribute a unique lens, translating these themes into narratives that resonate with diverse audiences, ensuring that the global conversation is not only informed but deeply felt.

In addition to translating, communicating, and expanding the sharing of essential knowledge, artists and culture workers are desperately needed in transdisciplinary processes that build and foster regenerative ecosystems (systems where everyone is needed and responsible for the wellbeing of the system). These processes go beyond traditional boundaries, breaking preconceived notions, actively including a radically inclusive set of stakeholders with disciplines that span across all sectors and walks of life, including the people with indigenous wisdom and those most affected by climate change—most often left out of the vital conversations. Transdisciplinary collaboration breaks down hierarchies and requires creative thinking, practices and structures.

Let's recognize the transformative power of art in amplifying climate awareness.

Our voices matter, and through creativity, we can paint a more sustainable future.
“As a public humanities artist and poet I strive to draw attention back to the land communities that we belong to and will, in the end, reclaim us for their own.”
CHAPTER 2.  
The Power of Art in Climate Communication

Art possesses a language all its own—one that transcends borders and speaks directly to the soul. It helps us to both learn about the world around us and unlearn the biases we are born into.

In the realm of climate action, artists have a unique ability to translate complex issues into vivid, relatable narratives. It’s the magic of storytelling through visuals, music, and performance that makes the daunting world of climate science accessible to all.

From breathtaking murals to immersive installations, artists are leaving an indelible mark on the climate movement. These campaigns not only captivate but also motivate, proving that art is a powerful catalyst for change.

Art is a beacon that illuminates public awareness and fuels advocacy efforts. It’s not just about conveying information; it’s about sparking emotions and fostering connections that drive meaningful change. The impact of art on public perception is undeniable—it inspires conversations, fosters empathy, and propels us towards a more sustainable future.

As we witness the blossoming of art in climate communities, let’s recognize and amplify the power of creative expression. It’s not just about creating beautiful works—it’s about transforming the way we think, feel, and act in the face of our climate challenges.

Let’s celebrate the success stories that showcase how creative minds are turning awareness into action.
“Through the lens of photojournalism and the stroke of a paintbrush I am able to capture the essence of humanity and the narrative of the planet.”
Case Studies

1. "An Inconvenient Truth" (Documentary, 2006):
   - Overview: This groundbreaking documentary, presented by former U.S. Vice President Al Gore, brought the realities of climate change to a global audience. It used a mix of compelling visuals, data, and personal narratives to convey the urgency of the climate crisis.
   - Impact: "An Inconvenient Truth" played a pivotal role in raising public awareness and sparking conversations about climate change. It won two Academy Awards and ignited a wave of environmental activism.

2. "Racing Extinction" (Documentary, 2015):
   - Overview: This documentary directed by Louie Psihoyos focuses on the mass extinction of species caused by human activity. It employs powerful visuals, undercover operations, and a mesmerizing light projection on iconic buildings to convey the urgency of conservation.
   - Impact: "Racing Extinction" successfully brought attention to the ongoing biodiversity crisis and the interconnectedness of species, urging viewers to consider their role in preserving the planet's diverse ecosystems.

   - Overview: Renowned artist and filmmaker JR collaborated with filmmaker Darren Aronofsky to create this large-scale public art installation during the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP21) in Paris. The installation featured giant portraits of individuals directly affected by climate change.
   - Impact: The Standing March visually highlighted the human faces behind climate impacts, making an emotional appeal for urgent action. The installation provided a poignant backdrop to global discussions on climate policy.

4. "Before the Flood" (Documentary, 2016):
   - Overview: Produced and narrated by Leonardo DiCaprio, this documentary explores the impacts of climate change and advocates for renewable energy solutions. It features interviews with experts, world leaders, and individuals affected by climate change.
   - Impact: "Before the Flood" reached a wide audience, leveraging DiCaprio's influence to convey the gravity of the climate crisis. It sparked conversations about environmental sustainability and prompted calls for policy change.
5. "Climate Clock" (Public Art Installation, 2020):
   - Overview: The Climate Clock, displayed on the Metronome building in New York City, serves as a visual countdown to the time remaining to take decisive climate action. It incorporates real-time data, including the carbon budget and current CO2 levels.
   - Impact: This dynamic installation, created by artists Gan Golan and Andrew Boyd, provides a constant, tangible reminder of the urgency to address climate change. It has sparked discussions and inspired activism on a local and global scale.

- Rulan Tangen: Showing That Renewable Is Practical (2020)
  - Overview: Dance exploring renewable energy from cultural, spiritual and practical viewpoints, including the eco-sustainable design of the production.
  - Impact: Communication directly to the public for climate repair action, rather than to legislators, regarding the American culture of disposability.

- The Climate Museum
  - Overview: Contending with the climate crisis at scale requires a transformation of our public culture. The Climate Museum mobilizes the power of arts and cultural programming to accelerate this crucial shift toward climate dialogue and action, connecting people and advancing just solutions. The popularity held by museums help us bring people together to learn and to join the fight for a brighter future through pathways that include interdisciplinary exhibitions, art installations, interactive panels, performances, science events, youth programs, and more.
  - Impact: Over the last five years, the Museum has presented eight exhibitions and more than 300 events; engaged 350+ high school students in leadership, advocacy, and arts programs; and welcomed more than a hundred thousand visitors in-person and many more online.

These examples showcase the diverse ways in which art, whether in the form of documentaries, installations, or public displays, can effectively communicate the urgent message of climate action.
"Having the courage to care is contagious. Having the courage to create vehicles for caring is our greatest strength."
CHAPTER 3.
Artists as Translators of Climate Policies

Climate policies can be intricate, dense, and, let’s face it, not always the most accessible. Artists, however, are the storytellers who can weave these policies into captivating narratives that resonate with a larger audience. From paintings to performances, our crafts bridge the gap between policy jargon and public understanding, creating a connection that sparks engagement.

From thought-provoking installations to captivating visual campaigns, artists have a proven track record of distilling complex policies into impactful messages that inspire action. These stories illustrate the power of art to elevate the conversation and drive meaningful change.

This is precisely why climate organizations and institutions should recognize and support artists with paid contracts. By providing artists with financial support, we not only value their craft but also acknowledge the critical role they play in translating policies for a broader audience. This support is an investment in both artistic expression and public engagement, ensuring a sustainable ecosystem for artists to thrive while contributing to the climate dialogue.

Let’s champion the idea that a thriving arts community is integral to effective climate communication. By nurturing this symbiotic relationship, we amplify the impact of climate policies, making them not just understood but deeply felt.

Let’s explore inspiring case studies of artists effectively conveying policy messages.
Case Studies

1. "Climate Art for Policy Change" by Zaria Forman:
   - Overview: Renowned artist Zaria Forman uses hyper-realistic pastel drawings to depict the impacts of climate change, particularly the melting ice in polar regions.
   - Impact: Forman's work has been featured in the "Climate Art for Policy Change" campaign, leveraging her powerful visuals to advocate for policies addressing climate-induced environmental changes.

2. "Red Lines" by Mary Mattingly:
   - Overview: A series of massive ice installations in public spaces, each representing the "red line" beyond which climate change becomes irreversible.
   - Impact: The installation serves as a visual metaphor for the urgency of climate action, encouraging viewers to consider the consequences of crossing critical thresholds.

3. "Waterlicht" by Daan Roosegaarde:
   - Overview: Roosegaarde's light installation, "Waterlicht," uses LEDs, lenses, and steam to simulate the experience of a virtual flood, highlighting rising sea levels due to climate change.
   - Impact: By creating a mesmerizing and immersive experience, Roosegaarde prompts viewers to reflect on the consequences of inaction and advocate for policies addressing sea-level rise.

4. "Dear Climate" by Andria Teather:
   - Overview: The "Dear Climate" project features handwritten letters from people around the world expressing their concerns about climate change. The letters are turned into art installations and performances.
   - Impact: By translating personal messages into visual art, Teather humanizes the impacts of climate change and encourages policymakers to consider the emotional dimensions of their decisions.

5. "Climate Signs" by Justin Brice Guariglia:
   - Overview: Guariglia collaborated with NASA to integrate climate change data into art installations displayed on digital billboards in Times Square.
   - Impact: The project visually communicates real-time climate data to the public, making complex scientific information accessible and engaging.

These case studies showcase the diverse ways in which artists use their creativity to convey powerful policy messages, contributing to a deeper understanding of climate issues and inspiring action on a global scale.
“By fostering collaboration, providing learning opportunities, and addressing the needs of artists, we unlock a powerful force for change.”
CHAPTER 4.
Advocating for Climate Action: The Crucial Needs of Artists

Engaging in climate advocacy as an artist is a thrilling journey, but it comes with unique challenges.

The path to climate advocacy as an artist is laden with unique challenges. From deciphering complex scientific data to translating environmental urgency into creative expressions, artists face barriers that demand thoughtful consideration. Our dialogue will delve into these challenges, offering insights and strategies to empower artists in navigating and overcoming them.

To truly amplify our impact, artists need more than just inspiration—we require robust resources and unwavering support. Without adequate funding to support work that goes against popular notions, artists often are forced to abandon projects that hold the potential for positive impact.

Highlighting the importance of financial and technological support is paramount. Financial backing provides artists with the freedom to dedicate time and energy to meaningful projects, fostering a sustainable and impactful engagement with climate advocacy. Moreover, technological support equips artists with innovative tools to enhance the reach and effectiveness of their messages. Together, these pillars create a robust foundation for artists to thrive as advocates for positive environmental change.

As we advocate for climate finance, let’s expand the conversation to ensure that financing for artists and climate communications is an integral part of the focus. Recognizing the vital role artists play in translating complex issues and fostering public engagement, allocating resources to support their endeavors is a strategic investment in the broader climate movement.
“Art bridges data to emotions, transforming the climate crises from facts to heartfelt connection.”
CHAPTER 5.
Unlocking Climate Finance: A Call for Collaboration with Artists at COP28

As we delve into the pivotal theme of finance for COP28, let’s shine a spotlight on the invaluable partnership between financial initiatives and the creative realm.

Imagine the transformative power of collaboration between financial initiatives and artists! We’re committed to advocating for partnerships that go beyond traditional fundraising models. By engaging with artists on fundraising initiatives, we not only tap into our creative networks but also infuse a fresh, dynamic perspective into climate finance efforts.

The climate movement benefits immensely from the creative endeavors of artists dedicated to addressing environmental challenges. As we discuss finance at COP28, let’s explore innovative funding mechanisms tailored to support artists working on climate issues. By identifying and implementing these mechanisms, we create a sustainable ecosystem that nurtures artistic contributions, ensuring artists have the financial backing they need to make a meaningful impact.

This COP28, let’s recognize the power of collaboration between financial institutions and artists. By marrying financial expertise with creative ingenuity, we unlock new possibilities for funding, amplifying the impact of the global climate movement.

Let’s explore the potential for artistic collaboration to elevate fundraising strategies, making them not just effective but truly inspiring.
“Art and climate justice are inseparable. The destruction of nature is antagonistic to the creative nature of art.”
A Creative Example

Example: "EcoHarmony: A Symphony for Climate Action"

In a visionary collaboration between a renowned environmental foundation and a world-famous composer, "EcoHarmony" was born. Recognizing the power of art to inspire change, this initiative aimed to elevate climate fundraising efforts through a captivating musical experience.

1. Concept: World-class composer Harmony Greenway partnered with the environmental foundation to create an original symphony inspired by the urgency of climate action. Each movement of the composition reflected a different aspect of environmental stewardship, from melting glaciers to the resilience of ecosystems.

2. Visual Art Integration: Simultaneously, visual artists collaborated to create stunning projections that mirrored the emotional crescendos of the music. These visuals transformed concert venues into immersive environments, transporting the audience through the beauty of nature and the stark realities of climate change.

3. Fundraising Gala: The grand culmination was a fundraising gala where the symphony was performed live, accompanied by the immersive visual projections. High-profile philanthropists, art enthusiasts, and climate advocates attended, with a significant portion of the ticket sales and donations earmarked for climate initiatives supported by the foundation.

4. Online Auction: To expand the reach, an online auction featured exclusive art pieces inspired by the symphony, created by artists from various disciplines. Bidders had the chance to own unique works of art while contributing to the climate cause.

5. Impact: "EcoHarmony" not only raised substantial funds for climate initiatives but also ignited a global conversation about the intersection of art and environmental advocacy. The collaboration demonstrated that artistic experiences have the potential to evoke emotions, drive action, and, in this case, significantly contribute to climate fundraising efforts.

This imaginative collaboration serves as a testament to the transformative power of art in amplifying climate action and fundraising endeavors.
SAHIL LAUL
FILMMAKER | USA

"Artists possess the unique ability to creatively problem solve across disciplines, ground data in human stories, translate complex policies into a universal language that transcends borders, and evoke emotion to inspire meaningful action."
CHAPTER 6.
The Nexus of Art, Technology, and Innovation for Climate Action at COP28

In the ever-evolving landscape of climate solutions, artists stand as innovators, not just interpreters. From immersive installations to interactive experiences, artists are at the forefront of translating complex data into accessible narratives, harnessing the potential of technology to drive sustainable change.

Imagine the magic that happens when artists collaborate with climate scientists and tech innovators. This COP28, let’s advocate for providing opportunities for artists to learn from the minds behind cutting-edge technologies. By fostering trans-disciplinary collaboration, we not only elevate artistic expression but also create a dynamic platform for knowledge exchange. Artists learning from scientists, scientists learning from artists—it’s a harmonious blend that propels us towards innovative climate solutions.

Art is technology. A pencil is technology, graphite is technology, paint and film and physical dynamics involved in dance are all types of technology.

Recognizing that effective translation of climate issues requires access to the latest technologies, let’s highlight the needs of artists in this realm. Ensuring artists have access to state-of-the-art tools and technologies is integral to their role as effective translators. From virtual reality to data visualization tools, let’s advocate for the support systems that empower artists to weave technological innovation into their narratives.

By fostering collaboration, providing learning opportunities, and addressing the needs of artists, we unlock a powerful force for change.

Let’s delve into how artists are shaping the future through their creative use of technology!
A Creative Example

Example: "Virtual Canopy: A Digital Oasis for Climate Awareness"

In this visionary collaboration between environmentalists, artists, and tech innovators, "Virtual Canopy" emerged as a groundbreaking project leveraging the fusion of art and technology to raise climate awareness.

1. Concept: "Virtual Canopy" aimed to transport users into a digital oasis, an immersive virtual rainforest created by a team of artists and virtual reality (VR) developers. The project was designed to provide an experiential journey through the lush biodiversity of a rainforest, highlighting the beauty at stake due to climate change.

2. Artistic Integration: Renowned visual artists contributed to the project by creating vibrant and realistic digital representations of flora and fauna. These digital artworks were seamlessly integrated into the VR experience, ensuring that users felt as though they were exploring a living, breathing rainforest.

3. Technological Innovation: Tech innovators worked on incorporating real-time climate data into the experience. Users could witness the impact of climate change on the virtual ecosystem, from temperature fluctuations to the consequences of deforestation. This dynamic integration of art and technology aimed to evoke a visceral response and foster a deeper understanding of the environmental challenges we face.

4. Public Engagement: "Virtual Canopy" was made accessible to the public through VR headsets at public exhibitions and online platforms. The project not only served as an artistic masterpiece but also as an educational tool, sparking conversations about climate change and encouraging users to take real-world actions.

5. Impact: "Virtual Canopy" demonstrated how artists, by creatively using technology, can transcend traditional boundaries to communicate complex issues. The project served as a powerful testament to the potential of immersive experiences in generating empathy and driving meaningful action for climate resilience.

This example showcases the transformative role of artists in shaping the future through their creative use of technology, providing an innovative lens through which to engage and inspire a global audience in the fight against climate change.
“As an artist working in multiple media, I have a great appreciation for exploring stories. This ever-renewed passion stems from co-creating in communities on four continents.”
CHAPTER 7.
Empowering Frontline Communities: The Crucial Role of Artists at COP28

As we approach COP28, let's turn our attention to the theme of frontline communities and the transformative impact artists can have in addressing their unique challenges.

"Frontline communities are the heartbeat of climate resilience, and artists serve as storytellers who uplift and amplify their voices. Through visual arts, music, film, performance, and other creative tools, artists have the power to center community, support healing, and aid those who have experienced climate displacement. Artists elevate their stories and act as vehicles for others' stories, fostering shared understanding and empathy.

In the spirit of collaboration, let's champion the partnerships between artists and frontline advocates. Artists can work hand-in-hand with community leaders to visually represent their struggles, resilience, and aspirations. By integrating these perspectives into the global dialogue, we ensure that frontline communities are not just heard but actively shaping the narrative around climate action.

Art has an unparalleled ability to evoke emotions and inspire action. At COP28, let's celebrate the potential of art as a catalyst for change in frontline communities. Whether through community murals, interactive installations, or storytelling events, artists play a pivotal role in fostering resilience, empowerment, and unity.

By giving artistic expression to the experiences of those on the frontlines, we pave the way for a more inclusive, empathetic, and impactful approach to global climate action.
JOSHUA WIDDICOMBE
VISUAL AND IMMERSIVE PROJECTION ARTIST | USA

“Amidst this spectral play, we explore the labyrinth of perception, unraveling the enigmatic threads that form the complex tapestry of our existence.”
ZHENG GUAN (SANKUANZEN)
CONTEMPORARY DIGITAL AND INSTALLATION ARTIST | CHINA

“Do something that makes you proud of being a human being.”
CHAPTER 8.
Artists at the Heart of Inclusivity: Unveiling the Power of Expression at COP28

As we eagerly anticipate COP28 and its theme of inclusivity, let’s celebrate the integral role of artists in shaping a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive climate narrative.

Inclusivity thrives on diverse voices, and artists are the eloquent translators of these varied perspectives. At COP28, let’s explore the profound impact artists can have in bridging cultural divides and amplifying the stories of underrepresented communities. Through their diverse mediums, artists become catalysts for understanding, breaking down barriers among and between artists, and fostering a sense of shared humanity.

Championing the collaborations between artists and inclusivity advocates to co-create regenerative ecosystems, artists can work alongside community leaders, activists, and diverse voices to co-create narratives that reflect the richness of our global community. This integration ensures that the global conversation on climate action is not only inclusive but authentically representative.

Art has the unique power to celebrate diversity in all its forms. From vibrant murals reflecting cultural heritage to performances that weave together various artistic traditions, artists contribute to the visual and emotional tapestry of inclusivity. Their creations serve as invitations to dialogue, fostering a sense of belonging and unity.

By embracing the diverse talents and perspectives of artists, we carve a path toward a climate movement that truly represents the mosaic of our global community.
LISA KIBUTU
CREATOR  |  KENYA

“The "sustainable" future of fashion is regenerative!”
“Artists are some of our greatest creative thinkers and problem solvers. Why wouldn’t you want us at a table helping to create solutions to our world’s biggest problems?”
As we approach COP28, let's spotlight the transformative potential of collaborations and partnerships in driving climate action.

The need for ethical collaboration has never been more critical. Artists, organizations, and policymakers bring unique strengths to the table, and when we collaborate with respect, transparency, and shared values, the impact is profound.

From groundbreaking art installations to impactful campaigns, these collaborations exemplify the power of creativity to drive environmental awareness and change. Let's learn from these success stories and celebrate the potential that lies in strategic partnerships.

As we embark on collaborative endeavors, let's align our efforts with the overarching goals of COP28. By weaving together the strengths of artists, organizations, and policymakers, we can contribute meaningfully to the global conversation on climate action. Let's explore how these partnerships can serve as catalysts for change, amplifying the impact of COP28's initiatives.

By fostering synergy between diverse entities, we pave the way for a more united and effective climate movement.

Let's dive into discussions on the principles that guide ethical collaborations, ensuring that every partnership contributes positively to the climate movement.
Case Studies

1. "Climate Positive" Campaign with Shepard Fairey:
   - Overview: Renowned street artist Shepard Fairey collaborated with climate initiatives to create a series of visually striking posters for the "Climate Positive" campaign. The art aimed to raise awareness about individual actions that contribute to a positive impact on the environment.
   - Impact: Fairey's iconic style drew attention to sustainable practices, inspiring communities to adopt climate-positive behaviors and reinforcing the message that everyone can play a role in addressing climate change.

2. "Washed Ashore" Sculpture Project:
   - Overview: Environmental artist Angela Haseltine Pozzi initiated the "Washed Ashore" project, collaborating with climate initiatives and coastal communities. The project involved creating large-scale sculptures from plastic debris collected from beaches, serving as a powerful visual commentary on ocean pollution.
   - Impact: The sculptures toured globally, shedding light on the urgent need for ocean conservation and inspiring collective efforts to reduce plastic waste.

3. "Human Sensor" Project by Kasia Molga:
   - Overview: Media artist Kasia Molga collaborated with climate scientists for the "Human Sensor" project, where individuals wore wearable technology that changed colors in response to air quality. The project aimed to visualize the impact of air pollution on a personal level.
   - Impact: The interactive art installation engaged communities in monitoring and addressing air quality issues, contributing to a broader understanding of the immediate consequences of environmental challenges.
Case Studies

4. "Rain Room" Installation by Random International:
   ○ Overview: The art collective Random International created the "Rain Room," an immersive installation that responds to human movement by controlling rainfall. The installation draws attention to water scarcity and the importance of responsible water consumption.
   ○ Impact: Beyond its artistic acclaim, the "Rain Room" prompted discussions on water conservation and resource management, aligning with climate initiatives focused on sustainable water practices.

5. "Artists 4 Amazonia" Collaboration:
   ○ Overview: A collective of artists, including indigenous artists from the Amazon, collaborated to raise awareness about deforestation and indigenous rights. The collaboration involved murals, performances, and virtual exhibitions to convey the cultural and ecological significance of the Amazon rainforest.
   ○ Impact: The initiative garnered global attention, fostering support for policies that protect the Amazon and indigenous communities. It showcased the power of art to communicate urgent environmental issues with cultural sensitivity.

These examples illustrate how artists, through collaboration with climate initiatives, can use their creativity to amplify messages, evoke emotions, and drive meaningful action in the face of climate challenges.
OLIVIER MAYANGE
ARTIST ARCHITECT AND DESIGNER | DR CONGO

“I hope that the UN will consider our request favorably. The planet is going to die if we don't take action.”
“We are creators and tellers of stories and are a crucial part of writing the story for humanity’s future. Because it is a privilege being human with you.”
CHAPTER 10.
Children and Youth and Facilitation of Artistic Practice

Artists are invited to share their practise in a range of environments; galleries and museums, stages and pages, schools and colleges. It is here that they engage with children and youth who will live with the world decisions which are made today. This working group recognises the significance of the responsibility to equip our young people with the tools and information to bring about the behaviour change necessary to fulfil the sustainability goals.

Creative facilitation can serve as an access point and a counter to gatekeeping. Artists transcend all classes and societal structures disseminating ideas and insights which hold the fabric of society together. The arts at its best is democratic and gives space to ideas and voices who may be overlooked in traditional formal settings. As creative facilitators/practitioners we demystify the craft of storytelling. We offer practical experience of how to generate ideas and assemble a team or practise around them to bring them into the world to effect change.
“Artists as changemakers have the skills to gather disparate and often conflicting ideas and re-configure them in unique ways to create new paradigms and lay out innovative pathways for the future.”
"What do you notice? What patterns do you sense in the busyness? Do you feel the melody in the mundane? How do you treasure the dust?"
CHAPTER 11.
"We, the Artists" Report Summary: Unleashing the Creative Force for Climate Justice

In the spirit of collaboration and creativity, "We, the Artists" report presents a compelling narrative on the transformative impact and untapped potential of artists in the realm of climate action. Here's a brief summary highlighting key points:

A. Impact and Potential of Artists in Climate Action: This report underscores the pivotal role of artists as agents of change in the climate movement. Through their unique ability to translate complex environmental issues into emotive expressions, artists emerge as powerful storytellers and advocates. The impact of art in fostering public engagement, driving awareness, and inspiring action is not only recognized but celebrated as an indispensable force for positive change.

B. Importance of Supporting Artists for a Just, Inclusive, and Sustainable Planet: Central to the report is the advocacy for supporting artists—financially, technologically, and through collaborative platforms. By acknowledging artists as essential stakeholders in a just, inclusive, and sustainable planet, the report emphasizes the need for ethical collaboration, representation, and access to resources. It calls for the integration of artists into leadership roles within UN/NGO agencies, recognizing the unique perspective they bring to policy and program development.

C. Encouraging Continued Collaboration: The report resonates with a call to action, encouraging sustained collaboration between the artistic community and climate advocates. It recognizes the dynamic potential that arises from partnerships between artists, organizations, policymakers, and frontline communities. By fostering an environment where diverse voices converge, the report envisions a collective effort that transcends boundaries, amplifying the impact of the global climate justice movement.

In essence, "We, the Artists" is a rallying cry for the integration of art into the fabric of climate action, celebrating its potential to drive positive change. It invites stakeholders to recognize, support, and collaborate with artists to create a world where justice, inclusivity, and sustainability flourish.
Case Studies

1. "Climate Art for Policy Change" by Zaria Forman:
   ○ Overview: Renowned artist Zaria Forman uses hyper-realistic pastel drawings to depict the impacts of climate change, particularly the melting ice in polar regions.
   ○ Impact: Forman's work has been featured in the "Climate Art for Policy Change" campaign, leveraging her powerful visuals to advocate for policies addressing climate-induced environmental changes.

2. "Red Lines" by Mary Mattingly:
   ○ Overview: A series of massive ice installations in public spaces, each representing the "red line" beyond which climate change becomes irreversible.
   ○ Impact: The installation serves as a visual metaphor for the urgency of climate action, encouraging viewers to consider the consequences of crossing critical thresholds.

3. "Waterlicht" by Daan Roosegaarde:
   ○ Overview: Roosegaarde's light installation, "Waterlicht," uses LEDs, lenses, and steam to simulate the experience of a virtual flood, highlighting rising sea levels due to climate change.
   ○ Impact: By creating a mesmerizing and immersive experience, Roosegaarde prompts viewers to reflect on the consequences of inaction and advocate for policies addressing sea-level rise.

4. "Dear Climate" by Andria Teather:
   ○ Overview: The "Dear Climate" project features handwritten letters from people around the world expressing their concerns about climate change. The letters are turned into art installations and performances.
   ○ Impact: By translating personal messages into visual art, Teather humanizes the impacts of climate change and encourages policymakers to consider the emotional dimensions of their decisions.

5. "Climate Signs" by Justin Brice Guariglia:
   ○ Overview: Guariglia collaborated with NASA to integrate climate change data into art installations displayed on digital billboards in Times Square.
   ○ Impact: The project visually communicates real-time climate data to the public, making complex scientific information accessible and engaging.

These case studies showcase the diverse ways in which artists use their creativity to convey powerful policy messages, contributing to a deeper understanding of climate issues and inspiring action on a global scale.
"Art is my language, a visual anthem of hope, translating the collective call for climate action."
ADDENDUM
What We Can Offer vs What We Need

As we draw the curtain on this transformative report, the collective power of artists and allies in the pursuit of climate justice resonates deeply. Our journey has illuminated pathways for collaboration, and now, let's articulate what we can offer and what we need to be effective partners in the climate justice movement.

- Creative Vision: Artists bring a unique lens to climate justice, translating complex issues into emotive and accessible narratives that resonate with diverse audiences.
- Collaboration: By fostering partnerships with organizations, policymakers, and frontline communities, artists amplify voices and co-create solutions for a more just and sustainable future.
- Global Perspective: Artists possess the ability to transcend borders, creating a global dialogue that unites us in the pursuit of climate justice. Our art knows no bounds.
- Innovation: Through the integration of technology and innovation, artists contribute groundbreaking ideas and solutions, pushing the boundaries of how we engage with and address climate challenges.

What We Need to Be Effective Partners and Allies:
- Access to Resources: Providing artists with the necessary financial support, technological tools, and collaborative platforms empowers us to unleash our full creative potential.
- Ethical Partnerships: Upholding ethical collaboration principles ensures that our partnerships are rooted in respect, transparency, and shared values, fostering a collective commitment to climate justice.
- Representation: Recognizing and valuing the diversity of artists and voices ensures a more inclusive and authentic representation in the climate justice movement.
- Advocacy and Support: Advocacy from organizations, policymakers, and fellow allies is crucial. By championing the importance of art in climate justice, we amplify our collective impact.
ADDENDUM
What We Can Offer vs What We Need

- Continued Learning: Opportunities for artists to learn from climate scientists, policymakers, and frontline communities enhance our understanding and enrich our work, fostering a holistic approach to climate justice.

Additionally, let us advocate for:
- Artist Leadership in UN/NGO Agencies: Acknowledging the vital need for experienced creatives to lead in UN/NGO agencies focusing on arts and culture-related climate issues. Let artists step into leadership roles, infusing these critical organizations with the unique perspective, creativity, and passion needed to drive meaningful change.

Together, let’s carry forward the spirit of collaboration and advocacy ignited by this report. By embracing our strengths, addressing our needs, and advocating for artist leadership, we stand poised to be formidable allies in the global climate justice movement.

Let’s “create” a better world, together!
SAMUEL ODUOR
DOCUMENTARY CINEMATOGRAPHER | KENYA

"We create, not because it is fun, but we create to share our gifts with the world."
ANDREW ‘ANDI’ IRVING
INSTRUMENTALIST, SOUND DESIGNER AND SONGWRITER | USA

“Create inspiration, inspiration creates.”
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TO ADD INPUT TO THE REPORT, VISIT:

https://forms.gle/jRMzEq22yNdyhtMv5