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Art for Earth's Sake: Fifty Years of Saving the Planet

Only One Earth

The felling of ancient oaks in the French forest of Fontainebleau was witnessed firsthand by the painters of the Barbizon School, who reacted with dismay to the intrusion of the industrial exploitation of timber into their beloved landscape. A petition condemning the destructive and ignorant forest administration was drafted by artist Théodore Rousseau and sent to Napoleon III, after which a decree was issued in 1861 proclaiming that areas of special interest for artists should be 'left unmanaged'.[1]

This episode of the partial protection of forest, considered a milestone in the emergence of nature conservation, reveals how closely art and ecology embraced from the onset of modern environmental awareness. A hundred years later, resource extraction and industrial pollution had accelerated to the extent that environmental degradation was recognised as playing out on a planetary scale, prompting artists to align their practice with a new wave of eco-activism.

Choosing the international spotlight of the Venice Biennale for his environmental action *Coloration of the Grand Canal, Venice*, Argentinian artist Nicolás García Uriburu released an organic non-toxic powdered dye from aboard a gondola to paint the city's principal waterway a vibrant green. Carried out on 19 June 1968, his disruptive gesture foregrounded the materiality and presence of water in the city and problematised the disjuncture between modern culture and the natural world. Colouring the canal also alluded to the chemical pollution of waterways, the global dimensions of which Uriburu went on to investigate by turning the East River in New York, the Seine in Paris and Rio de la Plata in Buenos Aires green in 1970, while in the graphic work *Portfolio (Manifesto)* (1973) he reflected on the primary responsibility of wealthy countries for environmental pollution across the world.

The thorny question of environmental justice was broached by Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in her speech to the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, the first global environmental summit, organised in Stockholm in 1972. In asking whether growing ecological awareness would also 'guide us to the concept of "one humanity",'[2] she shone a critical light on the conference slogan 'Only One Earth' and its theme of 'the care and maintenance of a small planet.' She went on to suggest that to re-establish a link with nature, the global community could learn from the ancient Indian wisdom that one can take from the Earth only so much as one puts back in.[3] Away from the official proceedings, a festival of alternative forums staged in the rebellious spirit of the age and dubbed 'Woodstockholm' voiced a plurality of environmentalisms that opposed ecocidal violence in

[1] Greg M. Thomas, *Art and Ecology in Nineteenth Century France: The Landscapes of Théodore Rousseau* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 172

[2] 'Looking back at Stockholm 1972: What Indira Gandhi said half a century ago on man & environment', *Down to Earth*, 31 May 2022, https://www.downtoearth.org.in (accessed 9 March 2023)

[3] Barbara Ward/René J. Dubos (eds.), *Only One Earth: The Care and Maintenance of a Small Planet* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972)

Vietnam, challenged mainstream faith in technological progress, drew attention to the suffering of victims of industrial pollution, celebrated hippy healing rituals and shared in the ecological wisdom of Indigenous peoples.[4] One of the most articulate temporary citizens of Woodstockholm was Barry Commoner, a scientist whose 1971 book *The Closing Circle* denounced modern society's 'rapid, short-term exploitation of the environmental system', proposing, much as the Indian Prime Minister had, that the only path out of the 'survival crisis' was to learn 'how to restore to nature the wealth that we borrow from it'.[5] For a few days in June 1972, Stockholm was the bridge of Spaceship Earth – not only as the epicentre of environmental diplomacy, but also as a conduit for the insurgent ecologies of the global revolt of 1968 and its world-altering concatenation of intersectional struggles for love, peace and liberation.

At the Hayward Gallery in London, in the disobedient spirit of the time, the participation of Newton Harrison with Helen Mayer Harrison in the 1971 show *11 Los Angeles Artists* provoked a national scandal when news broke of plans to electrocute and skin catfish as part of their installation *Portable Fish Farm*, culminating in a heated debate in Parliament and the throwing of a brick through the gallery window. Belonging to the Harrisons' series of *Survival Pieces*, which explored self-sufficiency in food production, the work was conceived as an affront to the hypocrisy of a consumer society that loudly objected to the gallery act but turned a blind eye to the mass slaughter of factory farmed animals and was, in the artists' view, equally indifferent to the brutality of the US military campaign in Vietnam.[6] In another work, *Meditation on the Great Lakes of North America* (1977–80), the Harrisons addressed the levels of chemical pollution that were spiralling, irrespective of national borders, in the watery expanses between Canada and the United States. Expressed through a series of modified maps, their proposal to the inhabitants of these cross-border watersheds was that they withdraw from their existing states and collectively form a 'Dictatorship of Ecology', in which cultures and ecosystems could thrive again by attending to the integrity of water and land. The radicalism of the artists' eco-political provocation lay in a readiness to think beyond existing political and economic structures to address intractable environmental issues, while their rejection of 'vacuous formalisms' and insistence on the need for 'complex, utilitarian art'[7] disrupted the modus operandi of the art world.

Working under a different kind of dictatorship, in the repressive atmosphere of Czechoslovakia in the aftermath of the crushing of the Prague Spring in 1968, Rudolf Sikora considered the discrepancies of an era in which, on the one hand, space travel was opening up new horizons, while, on the other, totalitarian regimes attempted to control individual freedom. Taking a defiantly cosmopolitan stance, the artist conceptualised the Earth – seen

[4] See also *Stockholm, 1972 – When Environmental Protection was Born* (2021), a film made for the New York State Education Department, available on the Youtube channel of the UN Environment Programme: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9zOSRqa-h3Q&ab_channel=UNEnvironmentProgramme (accessed 20 March 2023)

[5] Barry Commoner, *The Closing Circle: Nature, Man & Technology* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971), p. 288

[6] Helen Mayer Harrison and Newton Harrison, *The Time of Force Majeure: After 45 Years, Counterforce is on the Horizon* (London: Prestel, 2016), pp. 31–32

[7] Ibid., p. 23

for the first time in its cosmic fragility – as an ecological totality that transcended the political divisions of the Cold War. Sikora's analytical practice was informed by scientific findings, foremost among them the dire predictions of the groundbreaking study *Limits to Growth*, about the threat posed to the planet's ecological balanced by the depletion of its finite natural resources. In his work *The Earth Must Not Become a Dead Planet* (1972), consisting of a series of six graphic sheets, the artist created a spatial cross-section of the planet with inscriptions of the geological terms for the layers of the Earth's crust below and denominators of the atmospheric strata above, while the central part depicts the temporal dimension of civilisational development through the history of architecture. The narrative symbolically ends with an image of a nuclear mushroom cloud, pointing to the unpredictable consequences of human interference in the biogeochemical processes of the planet in an age of atomic uncertainty.[8]

The French theorist Françoise d'Eaubonne located the roots of an environmental crisis that threatened life on Earth in the structures of patriarchal oppression. In her uncompromising 1974 book *Feminism or Death*, d'Eaubonne coined the term *ecofeminism*, asserting that 'if male society persists, there will be no future for humanity'.[9] Ecofeminism as a concept challenged the privileging within environmental thought of rationalist approaches that rely on the dualistic opposition between reason and emotion, masculine and feminine, and culture and nature, going on to encompass interconnected 'transhemispheric' struggles around race, decoloniality, indigeneity, queer ecologies and the more-than-human.[10] Channelling reconnective principles in her series *Silueta* (1973–80), Cuban-born artist Ana Mendieta worked with silhouettes of her own body that she traced onto the surface of the Earth, variously cutting her outline into the ground, marking it with candles, setting it on fire, remaking it in flowers and floating it down the river, as well as covering her body in mud and rocks. Drawing on Afro-Caribbean and Indigenous rituals of nature worship, the artist described her practice as a way to 're-establish the bonds that unite me to the universe … and become one with the earth'.[11]

Artist, activist and poet Cecilia Vicuña was born in Santiago de Chile, but has lived in exile since 1973, following the military coup against the elected president Salvador Allende, whose radical programme of socialist transformation she supported. A connecting thread of her practice has been to reclaim the Indigenous traditions of the Andes as a tool of resistance against authoritarianism, patriarchy and ecological devastation. Between 1966 and 1981, Vicuña – who is herself of Indigenous heritage – made fragile assemblages she termed *precarios* from natural materials, including at the spot on the Chilean coast where the Aconcagua River enters the Pacific Ocean, a sacred site of 'ancient pre-Columbian cultures' which, in the artist's words, had been ruined by oil extraction and 'the greed of the

[8] See Maja Fowkes, *The Green Bloc: Neo-Avant-Garde Art and Ecology under Socialism* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2015), pp. 151–95

[9] Françoise d'Eaubonne, *Feminism or Death: How the Women's Movement Can Save the Planet*, trans. Ruth Hottell (London: Verso, 2022), p. 221

[10] See Marsha Meskimmon, *Transnational Feminisms and Art's Transhemispheric Histories: Ecologies and Genealogies* (London: Routledge, 2022), p. 3

[11] Quoted in Olga M. Viso, *Unseen Mendieta: The Unpublished Works of Ana Mendieta* (Munich: Prestel, 2008), p. 297

Western Culture'.[12] Vicuña designed these works not to endure as artistic objects or interventions, but rather to be absorbed back into nature, reflecting her intention during turbulent times in Latin American history to honour the 'balance, complementarity and reciprocity of the natural world without submitting it to violence of any kind'.[13]

Our Common Future

Mediating between the planetary dimensions of ecological crisis and its manifestation in specific sites, artists have visualised the effects of incessant economic development on the natural world and memorialised the resistance of local communities at the advancing frontiers of destruction. Using embroidery as a medium for visual storytelling, Sámi artist Britta Marakatt-Labba historicised in *The Crows* (1981) the non-violent Indigenous campaign to stop the Norwegian state building a dam across the Áltá river in the Sápmi territories of the Nordic region.[14] Crows – which in Sámi mythology represent the rapaciousness of state authorities that plunder everything in their path – are depicted in the work descending ominously from the sky and metamorphosing into policemen, who march towards a group of defiant protesters seated in front of nomadic tents. Through her narration of the uprising to protect the unrestricted flow of the river and to safeguard ancestral lands, Marakatt-Labba revealed the entwined struggle of Indigenous peoples to maintain their cosmologies, histories and traditions. Similar Indigenous protests against neo-colonial devastation in the name of development were at the forefront of a wave of environmental movements that swept across the planet in the 1980s; galvanised by fears of nuclear radiation, acid rain, the destruction of natural habitats, soaring levels of air and water pollution, or mobilising against the building of motorways, this multitude of grassroots campaigns transcended single issues to pose a challenge to the entire system.

In 1982, Hungarian-American artist Agnes Denes staged a bold confrontation between the centralising power of financial capital and demands for social and environmental justice. The realisation of *Wheatfield – A Confrontation: Battery Park Landfill, Downtown Manhattan* (1982, pp.xx–xx) involved clearing debris from an unused parcel of Manhattan real estate, a landfill site close to what was then the World Trade Center, and bringing in more than two hundred truckloads of soil as preparation for the sowing of a two-acre wheat field, which, following a summer of careful irrigation, yielded both a thousand pounds of grain and striking images of amber wheat heads swaying against a backdrop of skyscrapers. The artist drew attention to the problems of 'mismanagement, waste, world hunger and ecological concerns' and their roots in the 'misplaced priorities' of economic policy in a world that, despite possessing the technical and financial means to do so, did not bring about an end to

[12] Julia Bryan-Wilson, 'Awareness of Awareness: An Interview with Cecilia Vicuña', in *Cecilia Vicuña: About to Happen*, exh. cat. (Catskill, NY: Siglio Press, 2019), p. 118

[13] Miguel A. López, 'Cecilia Vicuña: A Retrospective for Eyes that do not see', in *Cecilia Vicuña: Seehearing the Enlightened Failure*, exh. cat. (Rotterdam: Witte de With, 2019), p. 30

[14] See Katya García-Antón et al. (eds.), *Let the River Flow: An Indigenous Uprising and its Legacy in Art, Ecology and Politics* (Oslo: Office for Contemporary Art Norway, 2020)

hunger and poverty.[15] The harvested grain travelled to twenty-eight cities across the world between 1987 and 1990 as part of the exhibition *The International Art Show for the End of World Hunger*, extending the ecological critique to the global impact of agribusiness on farming, nutrition and rural lifestyles. Laying responsibility for the malnutrition and starvation of half a billion people at the doors of the dominant growth-oriented economic model, Vandana Shiva in her 1988 book *Staying Alive* observed that 'there must be something seriously wrong with a concept of progress that threatens survival itself'.[16]

The inseparability of environmental and economic questions was at the core of the 1987 UN study *Our Common Future*, which put forward the notion of sustainable development, broadly defined as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.[17] The Brundtland Report, as it was widely known, was a cornerstone of the UN Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Acknowledging that the 'hopes ignited at Stockholm remain largely unfulfilled', the Secretary General of the conference, Maurice Strong, proposed to rekindle its ambitions by organising a 'parliament of the planet' since 'in our negotiations with each other, nature must have a place at the table'.[18] The fact that it might already be too late for such a conversation also hung in the air, with environmental writer Bill McKibben proclaiming in his 1989 book *The End of Nature* the 'extinction of the idea of nature as a separate and wild province' due to the all-pervasive effects of anthropogenic carbon dioxide production in altering the planet's climate.[19] The moment in history during which the summit took place – just before the onset of divisive economic globalisation – could be considered a brief interlude of renewed internationalist aspirations for global solidarity following the dismantling of Cold War political structures that saw the abandonment of the developmentalist tripartite division of the world.

A reawakening of the values of kinship and solidarity, empathy, interdependence and interconnectedness were for art critic Suzi Gablik a sign of a 'change in the general social mood towards a new pragmatic idealism' and were, as she further noted in her 1991 book *The Reenchantment of Art*, symptomatic of the emergence of 'an ethic of care, as part of the healing of the world'.[20] A similar reorientation of artistic sensibilities was suggested by the 1992 exhibition *Fragile Ecologies* at Queens Museum of Art, New York. Taking a critical position towards the environmental shortcomings of modern art, considered as an expression of the individualistic ethos of the industrial age, the exhibition instead showcased North American artistic practices that were frequently collaborative, community

[15] Agnes Denes, *Wheatfield – A Confrontation*, artist text (1982), www.agnesdenesstudio.com/works7.html (accessed 21 March 2023)
[16] Vandana Shiva, *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Survival in India* (London: Zed Books, 1988), p. xiii
[17] World Commission on Environment and Development, *Our Common Future* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987)
[18] Maurice Strong, opening statement to the Rio Summit (3 June 1992), http://www.mauricestrong.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=165&Itemid=86 (accessed 2 March 2023).
[19] Bill McKibben, *The End of Nature: Humanity, Climate Change and the Natural World* (New York: Random House, 1989), p. 48
[20] Suzi Gablik, *The Reenchantment of Art* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1991), p. 11

based and dedicated to ecological restoration. Guided by the principles of environmental ethics, and emphasising artistic proposals for practical 'solutions' to ameliorate ecological degradation, the show was motivated by the ecocentric understanding that 'since intensive agriculture, urbanization and industrialization have fragmented or ravaged ecosystems, biodiversity has become ecology's greatest concern'.[21]

System Change not Climate Change

The crisis of biodiversity loss and the crystallisation of the magnitude of 'a mass global extinction caused by habitat degradation, over-exploitation, agricultural monocultures … and human-induced climate change' formed the background for British artists Heather Ackroyd and Dan Harvey's project *Beuys' Acorns* (2007–). In a gesture of tribute and allegiance to Joseph Beuys's work *7000 Oaks*, they travelled to Kassel to collect acorns from the oak trees that the German artist had planted for Documenta 7 in 1982 as a catalyst for social and environmental change. Their growing of several hundred oak saplings from the acorns was accompanied by artistic research into the cultural, biological and climatic significance of trees. While Beuys's oaks, each of which was planted next to a basalt rock, stand as symbols of longevity and rootedness, the displays of Ackroyd & Harvey's saplings appear fragile and temporary, reminders of shared vulnerabilities to climate change, and of uncertainty over whether these arboreal beings will have the chance to reach maturity in a rapidly heating world.

The destabilisation of natural and cultural systems brought by global warming was also investigated by Bahamian artist Tavares Strachan. His *The Distance Between What We Have and What We Want (Arctic Ice Project)* (2004–08) entailed the transport of a block of Arctic ice from a frozen river in Alaska to the artist's birthplace in the Caribbean. By using solar panels to power a refrigerated chamber, the heat of the sun kept the ice in a frozen state, interrogating the pyrrhic appeal of technological fixes to climate change that leave the economic order untouched.

Although scientists had been consistently warning about the danger to life posed by global warming since the 1960s, it was only in the first decade of the new millennium that climate change moved from one environmental issue among many to become the overriding concern of planetary ecology. The United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Copenhagen in December 2009 brought together the international community to take decisive steps to reduce carbon emissions; although branded 'Hopenhagen', the conference ended without a binding agreement on targets for limiting global temperature rise. An alternative People's Climate Summit, which was attended by 50,000 people and addressed by environmental activists such as Vandana Shiva and Naomi Klein, presented the official conference with a declaration calling for 'System Change, not Climate Change', demanding fossil fuels be kept in the ground, a radical reduction in wasteful consumption, respect for

[21] *Fragile Ecologies: Contemporary Artists' Interpretations and Solutions*, exh. cat. (New York: Queens Museum of Art, 1992), p. 58

Indigenous land rights and sustainable and sovereign food production.[22] Protest marches by a coalition of eco-activists were met with a heavy-handed police response which resulted in hundreds of arrests. In other words, those who had come together in a 'parliament of the planet' for the sake of 'our common future' were now excluded from negotiations, which were dominated by the wealthiest of countries, and who, rather than transforming the system, focused on technological panaceas that would ensure the continuation of business as usual.

Organised to coincide with the summit, the exhibition *Rethink: Contemporary Art and Climate Change*, which was held in three venues in Copenhagen before travelling across the Nordic region, could be considered as inaugurating 'climate summit art' as the de rigueur accompaniment to intergovernmental climate panels. The starting point for the project was the understanding that 'global warming is no longer a discipline reserved for politics or science; it now reaches far into the cultural and social spheres of society'.[23] The exhibition gathered mostly Nordic and several international artists, who presented works on the interface of art and science, the aesthetic experiences of physical phenomena, the melting of ice, and the manipulations that govern consumerism and political choices, showing the far-reaching ramifications of the climate crisis.[24] It also unwittingly shed light on the limits of institutional tolerance of radical ecological engagements in contemporary art, when the curators first invited, then excluded, the art-activist project Bike Bloc proposed by British artist Jay Jordan, once it became clear that the project's pedal-powered revolutionary machines were designed for street action, not gallery representation.[25] African American writer and black feminist activist Toni Cade Bambara's enjoinder from the 1960s that 'the role of the artist is to make the revolution irresistible' was reformulated for new times in Jordan's insight for the creatives of the environmental protest movement: 'In a time when capitalism has hijacked our desires and wants, we must make rebellion more beautiful than capitalism can ever dream of.'[26]

Climate Emergency

In her 2014 book *This Changes Everything: Capitalism versus the Climate*, which articulated the environmental critique of neo-liberal capitalism in the era of globalisation, Naomi Klein succinctly defined extractivism as a 'non-reciprocal, dominance-based relationship with the earth, one purely of taking'.[27] What transpires is that extractivism is not just a matter of the removal of minerals from the Earth's crust, but also extends to the one-way exploitative

[22] *System Change, not Climate Change: Declaration of the People's Climate Summit, Copenhagen* (December 2009), http://klimaforum.org/declaration_english.pdf (accessed 2 March 2023)
[23] *Rethink: Contemporary Art and Climate Change*, exh. cat. (Århus: Alexandra Institute, 2009), p. 9
[24] Ibid
[25] See Gavin Grindon, 'Art and Activism', in *Art Monthly*, no. 333 (February 2010), p. 10
[26] *68 Revolution I Love You: 1968 in Art, Politics and Philosophy*, exh. cat. (Manchester: Manchester Metropolitan University, 2008), p. 234
[27] Naomi Klein, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism Versus the Climate* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014)

mindset that has defined economic and social relations in the modern era, in contrast to the ancient principle of reciprocity in conduct towards the natural world.

Bridging the spheres of consumerism and extractivism, and investigating their detrimental consequences for communities, Nigerian-born Belgium-based artist Otobong Nkanga's work *In Pursuit of Bling* (2014, pp.xx–xx) dealt with the colonial and postcolonial extraction of minerals on the African continent, epitomised by the impact of aggressive mining on the crystal-rich micro-region of Tsumeb, Namibia. The complex installation centred around two tapestries, one of which depicted the piercing of a gemstone and the other two pairs of human legs topped with images of mining landscapes, surrounded by display benches with geological samples including green malachite, historical photographs, and videos of the artist's performances, to deliver the sense of the inextricably entangled relations of bodies, commodities and minerals in the contemporary world. Conceiving the work as a sketchbook of things coming together, the artist asked how far localities extend beyond their regions and whether we are 'even thinking of these spaces in the world as interconnected',[28] pointing to the invisible threads between sites and peoples exposed to colonial extractivism and the transformative potential of care to activate solidarities.

The unprecedented rate of global warming, with the last eight years the hottest ever on record, is starkly reflected in changes to the cryosphere, the cold zone of the planet where water is frozen into ice or snow. Concern at the rapid melting of the permafrost is compounded by its unpredictable effects on the stability of Earth systems, which threatens to dramatically accelerate climate change by releasing vast quantities of carbon into the atmosphere. Field recordings of colliding ice sheets inspired the score for the string quartet in London- and Delhi-based artist Himali Singh Soin's film *we are opposite like that* (2019, pp.xx–xx), a soundscape that reverberates with alarm at the ice's demise. The sense of the endangerment of life in the hostile conditions of a climate-altered world coalesces in the film around an otherworldly figure, wrapped in silver foil, who emerges from a block of ice to narrate a story about her non-human origins in a fossilised past. The artist also investigated the opposite anxiety of the Victorian era – that advancing ice would obliterate familiar landscapes – with period drawings revealing the projection of colonial fears of an invasion from the periphery onto the imagined return of glaciers to the British Isles.[29] The shrinking of glaciers and melting of polar ice are conjured in the work as epitomising the cultural, psychological and emotional dimensions of a planetary crisis now witnessed in real time by a generation of terrestrials whose experience of nature is being altered by climate disorder.

The long-burning aftermaths of colonialism and the most acute effects of climate disruption envelop the work of artist Aruwai Kaumakan, a member of the Paiwan tribe in southern Taiwan. Her soft sculptural works draw on the traditional technique of *lemikalik* – which entails hooking and weaving organic materials to create concentric forms – to express the entangled memories, cultural legacies and political views of the tribe. Her large-scale woven installation *The Axis of Life & Vines in the Mountain* (2018, pp.xx–xx) problematised the

[28] Claire Molloy (ed.), *Otobong Nkanga: Luster and Lucre* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2017), p. 176
[29] See also Maja and Reuben Fowkes, *Art and Climate Change* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2022), pp. 101–12

experience of dwelling in a disturbed environment, reflecting specifically on the dislocations of the Indigenous community following the deadly typhoon that struck Taiwan in 2009, an extreme weather event that arose from the altered climatic patterns of Earth's atmosphere. The work was realised for the 2020 edition of the Taipei Biennial co-curated by theorist Bruno Latour, whose title *You and I Don't Live on the Same Planet* pointed to the inequalities of the existing social and political order. Latour emphasised the essentiality of the climate crisis in what he termed the 'New Climatic Regime', a political reordering of planetary priorities which demands the redefinition of 'older questions of social justice, identity, subsistence and attachment to place'.[30]

The insistence on the centrality of climate emergency to the political realm by artists, theorists, environmentalists, as well as engaged citizens worldwide, can be contrasted with the indolence of governmental actors. Commenting on the increasingly formulaic parade of recent intergovernmental climate meetings, environmental radical Andreas Malm observed that so far only 'the irresponsiveness to the crisis has exceeded expectations'.[31] It is telling that reports from the 1972 Stockholm conference about delegations consisting of 'an environmental minister, and behind him a scientist telling him what to say, and a diplomat telling him not to say it', still appear to be the modus operandi of today's negotiations.[32] After fifty years of accumulated wisdom, an abundance of knowledges, histories and practices, and the bringing to the table of robust scientific evidence and viable action plans, political leaders remain seemingly immune to the voices for change. Resisting the inertia of the system by taking action into their own hands, 2019 saw a wave of independent declarations of a 'climate emergency' by hundreds of national and local governments and cities, as well as art institutions, in recognition of the need for urgent action to reduce emissions and address the underlying causes of the crisis.[33] In alliance, the diverse practices of art for Earth's sake continue to disrupt systems, crosspollinate knowledges and model solutions, with artists treading paths to ecological transition and the restoration of a planetary ethics of reciprocity and care.

[30] Bruno Latour, 'We Don't Seem to Live on the Same Planet: A Fictional Planetarium', in Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel (eds.), *Critical Zones: The Science and Politics of Landing on Earth* (Karlsruhe: ZKM/Center for Art and Media, 2020), p. 276

[31] Andreas Malm, *How to Blow Up a Pipeline: Learning to Fight in a World on Fire* (London: Verso, 2021), p. 65

[32] 'Environment: Woodstockholm', in *Time* (19 June 1972), https://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,877774-1,00.html (accessed 21 March 2023)

[33] See, for example, the website of Culture Declares Emergency: http://culturedeclares.org (accessed 21 March 2023)