



# Creating Art to Understand and Promote Climate and Environmental Justice

"Life is a window of vulnerability" by Nancy Price

## What Is The Issue?

[Climate Justice Education](#) calls for approaches that balance personal reflection with a deep sense of collective responsibility. The [arts provide a unique and powerful medium](#) for processing emotions, sharing lived experiences, and envisioning creative responses to the climate crisis. Through artmaking, learners can [explore diverse perspectives, risks, and possibilities](#)—particularly those shaped by histories of racial, economic, and gender injustice. Learners' hopes, fears, and visions for the future become essential foundations for developing [meaningful and just responses to climate challenges](#). Art pedagogy is a powerful way to expand climate literacy.

## WHY IT MATTERS TO YOU

- **Students** should explore a [variety of ways](#) that art can amplify their understanding of climate science and just responses to climate and environmental crises.
- **Educators** can [use art and STEAM pedagogies](#) to both support student understanding of scientific knowledge and spark emotional connections that can motivate them to take action.
- **Artists** can collaborate with educators to [provide ways for students to connect with climate issues emotionally and creatively](#), while also laying out a framework for learning *in, with, and through art*.

## Things To Consider

- [Although it is difficult to pinpoint a specific instance when climate change art began](#), its presence has grown steadily in recent years. [Today, it appears in many forms—visual storytelling, maps, paintings and sculptures, performance and theater, film and media, street art, and large-scale installations](#)—each contributing to a richer cultural dialogue about climate, environment, and justice.
- Creating art supports young people in feeling more engaged, empowered, and prepared to respond to the challenges of a changing world. Art in this context should go beyond simple shock value. Its role is to help expand our sense of time, cultivate empathy, and [encourage visions of a hopeful, thriving future](#).
- At the heart of this work is the goal of helping individuals cultivate a personal stance that enables them to face climate realities with their best self. Because climate change is inseparable from issues of social and ecological justice, [the work requires both personal engagement and relational ways of interacting](#).

## Recommended Actions You Can Take

### Students can create and share climate art:

- [Take walks in nature to connect to the place](#) and foster emotional connection by using art to evoke empathy and connection with nature
- [Explore possibilities of hope](#) and [regeneration](#) to find inspiration for art
- [Translate scientific findings into compelling visuals and accessible formats to reach wider audiences](#)
- Use art as a platform to initiate conversations and deepen understanding across diverse groups

### Teachers can showcase powerful climate art and support art-making:

- [Help students integrate environmental themes into art](#)
- [Support students in organizing collaborative projects in the classroom and their community](#)
- [Highlight inspiring examples](#) that demonstrate how art can envision sustainable futures and raise climate awareness
- Help students find multiple ways of making art. For example: [Found Object Collages](#), [Storytelling](#), [Sketching](#), [Photography](#), [Music](#), or [Dance](#)

### Educational leaders can support transformative STEAM education:

- [Help classrooms use art as a tool for advocacy, pushing for sustainable practices and policy change](#)
- [Support teachers in educating about environmental advocacy](#)
- Support students and teachers in the [creation of art that mobilizes communities during marches, protests, or campaigns](#)

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- [How can art make the abstract or overwhelming aspects of climate change feel more personal, emotional, or urgent?](#)
- [Which art medium \(visual arts, performance, film, etc.\) is most effective in communicating climate issues, and why?](#)
- [How can art balance the urgency of the crisis with hope and inspiration for change?](#)

## Attending to Equity

- Art can highlight how climate change affects low-income and vulnerable communities as a tool for [raising awareness and building power](#). It can [carry the stories of people most affected](#).
- Art from global artists can [recognize diverse cultural contributions to climate art and amplify those voices](#).
- [Art can make environmental and climate science easier to understand](#), helping more people connect with climate issues.
- [Art in public spaces can make knowledge more accessible](#). Students can look for art on climate justice made by local artists.
- When artists, scientists & activists team up, [art projects can bridge divides and spark conversation across communities](#).
- [Climate art projects can be powerful teaching experiences](#), especially when access to climate education is limited.
- Creative projects that engage youth and community members [help them build confidence and power, making sure their voices are heard in climate conversations](#).

### ALSO SEE STEM TEACHING TOOLS:

- #10 [Indigenous Rights & STEM Ed](#)
- #61 [Socio-Ecological Caring](#)
- #80 [Reframing Eco-Anxiety](#)
- #87 [Environmental Justice Phenomena](#)

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