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## Culture of Sustainability Culture della Sostenibilità

International Journal of Political Ecology

ISSN 1972-5817 (print) 1972-2511 (online) web: [culturesostenibilita.it](http://culturesostenibilita.it)

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To cite this article: Bettelli G., Dibattista I. (2024). Art and climate change communication: a promising synergy. *Culture della Sostenibilità*, 33. DOI 10.7402/CDS.33.07



2024 · Istituto per l'Ambiente e l'Educazione Scholé Futuro Onlus



Published on line: Giugno 2024



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# Art and climate change communication: a promising synergy

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## Abstract

This paper recollects the main points supporting the view that the arts could contribute significantly to the communication of climate change – and of scientific matters in general. Climate change has faced significant scepticism and denialism for decades, delaying its prioritization on government agendas. Influential lobbies promoting a fossil fuel-intensive system have contributed to this dissent, countering the scientific community's extensive empirical and theoretical evidence for climate change and the need for mitigation. Despite these efforts, science requires more effective communication strategies to convey its findings and motivate collective sustainable action. This paper explores how the arts can enhance the communication of climate change and scientific matters. It argues that art, known for its ability to capture attention and provoke reflection, can play a crucial role in motivating sustainable collective action. By leveraging artistic expression, this paper aims to highlight new avenues for engaging diverse audiences and fostering a deeper understanding of climate issues. It does so through providing existing examples of recent projects resulting from a synergy between art and science.

**Keywords:** Climate change, Art, Climate change communication, Science Communication, Culture, Social Change

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## Riassunto

Il presente documento ricorda i punti principali a sostegno dell'idea che le arti possano contribuire in modo significativo alla comunicazione del cambiamento climatico - e delle questioni scientifiche in generale. Il cambiamento climatico ha affrontato per decenni un significativo scetticismo e negazionismo, ritardando la sua priorità nelle agende governative. Lobby influenti che promuovono un sistema ad alta intensità di combustibili fossili hanno contribuito a questo dissenso, contrastando le ampie prove empiriche e teoriche della comunità scientifica sul cambiamento climatico e sulla necessità di mitigazione. Nonostante questi sforzi, la scienza necessita di strategie di comunicazione più efficaci per trasmettere le sue scoperte e motivare un'azione collettiva sostenibile. Questo articolo esplora come le arti possano migliorare la comunicazione dei cambiamenti climatici e delle questioni scientifiche. Sostiene che l'arte, nota per la sua capacità di catturare l'attenzione e provocare la riflessione, può svolgere un ruolo cruciale nel motivare un'azione collettiva sostenibile. Facendo leva sull'espressione artistica, il presente documento si propone di evidenziare nuove strade per coinvolgere pubblici diversi e favorire una comprensione più profonda delle questioni climatiche. Lo fa fornendo esempi di progetti recenti nati dalla sinergia tra arte e scienza.

**Parole chiave:** Cambiamento climatico, Arte, Comunicazione del cambiamento climatico, Comunicazione scientifica, Cultura, Cambiamento sociale

### ■ 1. Introduction: the complexity of climate change

Climate change represents one of the most formidable challenges facing the global community today, impacting economic, social, cultural, and organizational dimensions of life. The economic repercussions are profound, with climate-induced disruptions affecting agriculture, industry, and infrastructure, leading to significant financial losses and necessitating substantial investment in mitigation and adaptation strategies. Socially, climate change exacerbates inequalities, disproportionately affecting vulnerable populations and contributing to displacement and migration. Culturally, it threatens the heritage and practices of communities, particularly those whose livelihoods are closely tied to natural environments. For these reasons, it demands a coordinated response from governments, businesses, and civil society, posing a complex governance challenge.

Despite the widespread dissemination of information on climate change, communication on this issue often remains ensconced in scientific discourse. Scientific reports and data are crucial for understanding the phenomenon, but their technical nature can alienate non-scientific audiences. This communication gap is a significant barrier to broader public engagement and action on climate change. Effective communication on climate change requires not