

# what is culture declares?

We are a growing global community  
of arts & culture practitioners declaring  
a climate & ecological emergency

We tell and face the **Truth**, and take  
**Action** to seek **Justice** in response to  
the emergency



# WIRED



# INFLUENCER

## why declare an emergency?

Declaring means you intend to make a **public statement** on how you will take action for yourself, your organisation and your **community**.

Your actions can include **encouraging** your local government to declare emergency, or your **peers & networks** in the **cultural sector**.

As a **movement**, we support each other to **learn & explore** how we can respond to the **emergency**.

# who is culture declares?

All those registered to declare are **equal members** of the **culture declares** community.

The **anchor circle** - who initiated the movement in March 2019 - include Bridget McKenzie, Ruth Ben-Tovim, Lucy Neal, Kay Michael, Dan Harvey, Heather Ackroyd, Polly Gifford, Kelly Hill, Julian Maynard Smith, Tamsin Omond, Will Skeaping, Shelley Castle, Eric Vu and others.

We invite individuals and organisations to join and grow the network.



## ACTIVIST ART

WHY ARTIST  
DUO ACKROYD  
& HARVEY ARE  
REBELS WITH  
A CAUSE

**CIRCUS CANVAS**  
HOW THE MAGIC OF  
THE BIG TOP LURES  
THE ARTIST'S EYE

**SLEEK DESIGN**  
WE MARK THE  
CENTENARY OF  
THE BAUHAUS

**PETAL POWER**  
PAINTERS CAN'T  
GET ENOUGH  
OF SUMMER'S  
SUNFLOWER



## advocating for culture declares

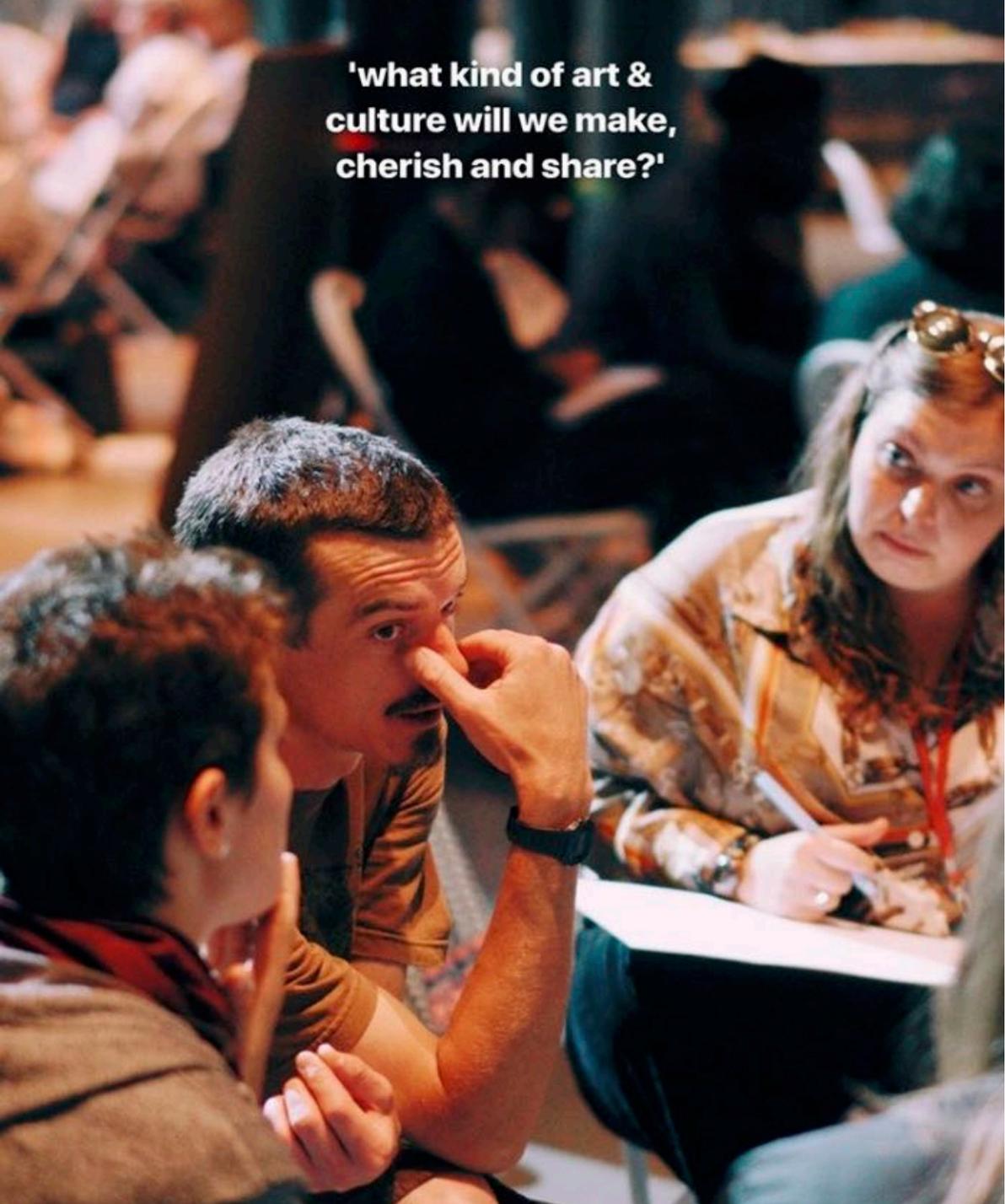
culture declares has grown rapidly, benefiting from mutual support with **Extinction Rebellion** and with its launch coinciding with the **April Rebellion**.

Because of this growing interest, the **Working Group** is overwhelmed with requests to speak or to partner on projects, so this briefing aims to provide the basics for any declarer to **advocate for the movement**.

# what does culture declares offer?

- A sign-up form which generates a public list of declarers
- An online toolkit to inspire & support pledges, declaration announcements and follow-up actions
- Designed kitemarks, banner, leaflets and sash designs
- Community networking on social media and in events for declarers to share, grow & learn



A photograph showing a group of people in a workshop or meeting. In the foreground, a man with a mustache is looking intently at another man whose back is to the camera. To the right, a woman with glasses on her head is looking towards the camera. They are all seated around a table, and the background is filled with other people, suggesting a large gathering or event.

'what kind of art &  
culture will we make,  
cherish and share?'

## and more ...

- Creative and participatory projects such as the April 3rd launch procession, **Letters to the Earth**, an **Assembly at the Roundhouse**, and the **Festival of Change** coming in October 2019
- Strategic advocacy e.g. co-ordinating links between other **declaration initiatives** and the wider environmental justice movement

# april 3<sup>rd</sup> launch case study

'Green Horsewoman of the apocalypse declares emergency at Tate

'A woman wearing a **living grass coat** sat atop a white horse stopped central London traffic yesterday. She was at the head of a procession to mark the launch of **Culture Declares Emergency**, an initiative that calls for individuals and organisations across the UK's cultural sector to **declare** a "climate and ecological emergency", and to **pledge immediate action** in combating the devastation of the planet.

Among those who have already declared and pledged are London's **Royal Court Theatre**, HOME in Manchester and **Somerset House**, where its director Jonathan Reekie saw the march off and stated his commitment to "harnessing the transformative powers of the arts and culture" to the cause.'

Louisa Buck, The Art Newspaper, 4th April 2019





"Culture Declares Emergency is about **revelation of truth** and **declaration of our intentions**. It is coming together in **one sound with and for many voices**, in solidarity with all those affected by the Climate and Ecological Emergency.

It is the **first of many waves** of artists and cultural organisations announcing their intentions. **It begins in London**, a place implicated with the extractive and colonial histories that have led us to this Emergency but it is also a place **rich with culture** that can be turned towards the **task of reimagining** how we **relate to one another and the living planet.**"

Bridget McKenzie, cultural consultant

# letters to the earth

## case study

Letters to the Earth launched in April 2019 on a 'day of joint action' in arts venues and community spaces across the world, from Zambia to Canada, from Latvia to New Zealand.

The invitation was open to all – to think beyond the human narrative and **bear witness** to the scale of the crisis. Up to 1000 letters from 7 year olds to grandparents were received from all walks of life.

The letters and their reading constituted the largest **creative response to the climate crisis** the world has yet seen. The campaign lives on with the people still writing and presenting their ideas.





**But what words describe this crisis?** What words can help our children come to terms with the future they will inherit?

Now published as a collection, **Letters To The Earth** brings together the voices of children and the public with authors, scientists and playwrights in the first creative project of its kind.

With an introduction written by **Emma Thompson**, other notable contributions include submissions from artist and peace activist **Yoko Ono**, actor **Mark Rylance**, writer and illustrator of *The Lost Words* **Jackie Morris**, novelist **Anna Hope**, environmental writer **Jay Griffiths** and Green Party MP **Caroline Lucas**.

Together they are an invitation to consider how this existential threat affects the way we live our lives and the action we take.

Lots of books consider the climate and ecological crisis from a political or scientific perspective, but **Letters To The Earth** is the first book to chronicle how humankind is collectively processing planetary crisis.

# roundhouse assembly

## case study

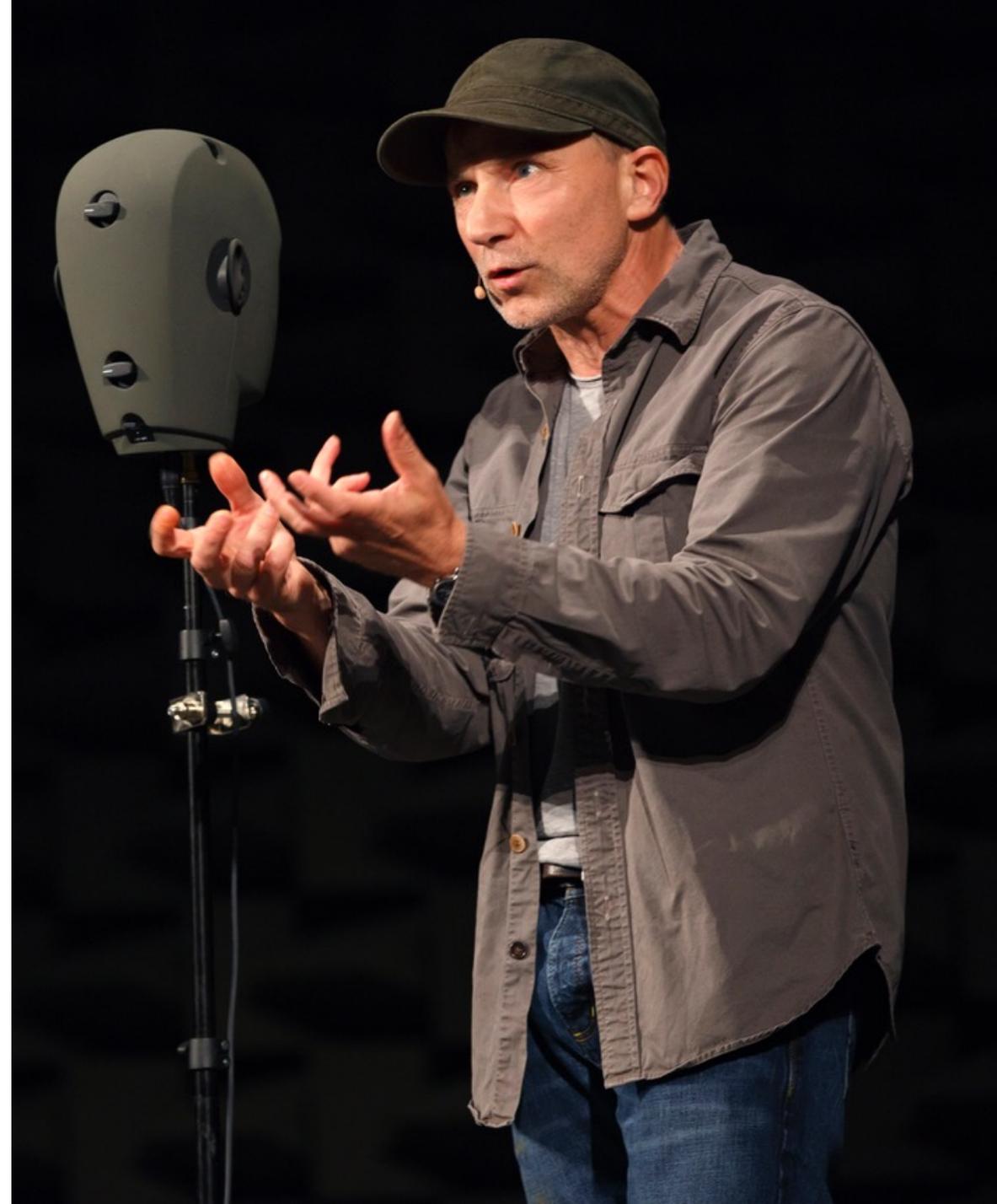
'The world is on fire.

Culture now must give **voice** to those at the **heart of the flames**. Declaring an emergency is only the beginning.

Now we need to act.'

Simon McBurney

As part of London Climate Action Week, the CDE community gathered at the **Roundhouse** to explore how **artists**, makers, curators, **writers**, performers and **creators** plan to respond to the truth of the current **environmental crisis**.





At the Assembly over 200 **new declarers** were announced, including **Cornelia Parker**, Akram Khan Dance Company, **Complicite**, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and the **Roundhouse**. Joining the **Royal Court Theatre**, the Gate Theatre, Somerset House, ArtsAdmin, Battersea Arts Centre, Cardboard Citizens, Climate Museum UK, HOME, **Jerwood Arts**, London National Park City and many more.

**Presentations and provocations** were offered by Rupert Read, Farhana Yamin, Paul Allen and **Sholeh Johnston**, in addition to **young poets** and performers who responded with their **own voices** to the crisis.

**Marcus Davey**, chief executive and artistic director, Roundhouse said 'We are proud to host this event and **stand alongside** Culture Declares and the many other organisations in our sector who are trying to make a change as we must act now.'

# what are the limits?

This is a **global movement**, inclusive of all kinds of culture and creative practice, including arts, design, craft, natural heritage conservation, intangible heritage, **creative activism**, socially-engaged practice and more.

Declarers could be **individuals** e.g. artists, teachers, curators, journalists etc.

Or they could be arts venues, civic organisations, museums, faith groups, charities, libraries, schools or creative universities.





## more in common

**culture declares** is less about limits and more about commonality.

All declarers are inspired by the power of imagination and shared creativity to respond to the planetary emergency in ways that promote **justice, truth and compassionate action**.

Together we hope to explore the possibilities of a more **regenerative culture**.

# what is involved?

Under our the banner people could organise:

- a **local or national** group e.g. 'Culture Declares [your city]'
- an initiative to encourage a particular form of practice or **identity** group to declare and respond e.g. 'Museums Declare'
- a staff group within a large organisation, to encourage board/management to declare the emergency, or to **support individuals** who sign up with us after the organisation has done so
- a creative participatory project to **raise awareness** of the emergency and invite ideas.





## shared values

Declarers share values of **non-violence** and **collaboration**, so we (the anchor circle) ask that:

- You encourage declarers to complete our form to register their own declaration, to add to a single growing list
- You can use any of our **toolkit** texts/resources and create your own web page/social media profile, but ask that you link to ours
- You can talk with us about adapting the **kitemark** or leaflet designs to add your own detail
- If you organise public events using **culture declares** branding, let us know about your plans and any text that describes **culture declares** before putting out publicity
- **culture declares** will not co-host or support organised disruptive actions that target or confront individuals, institutions or businesses, and if they have not been given **notice of the action**.

# connection with extinction rebellion?

culture declares arose from conversations between sector practitioners supportive of, or involved in, Extinction Rebellion (XR).

The culture declares **anchor circle** is separate from XR but is an ally, and XR offers **mutual support**.

culture declares sits within a mutually supportive and broad movement of activism that includes Music Declares, Architecture Declares and Green New Deal, Fridays For Future, Campaign for Climate Change, Youth Strike 4 Climate, Global Climate Strike, Birth Strike, Stop Ecocide, Reclaim the Power as well as Extinction Rebellion.





## our pledges

The following summarises our **pledges**, and we hope that everyone declaring with us can agree broadly with them:

- We will seek, demand and tell the **Truth** about the Emergency, and will support citizens to do the same
- We will take **Action** working towards reducing our footprints to net zero by 2025, and will support citizens to collaborate in regenerating the planet's resources
- We are committed to **Justice**, supporting demands for more **democracy** and **equality**, and this **value** will underpin all our work with citizens for **Truth** and **Action**

# does declaring emergency mean promoting illegal activity?

These pledges do not include taking Non Violent Direct Action (NVDA) although some individual declarers will feel this is an essential part of living with their pledges.

Our legal advice (in UK law) is that making a declaration of climate emergency is not a criminal act.

Individuals within an institution can be seen as breaking the law (e.g. if they carry out an 'arrestable' action as part of a response to making a declaration) but this does not implicate anyone else in the institution, or the institution itself.



culture  
declares  
emergency



## where can you discover more?

- [www.culturedeclares.org](http://www.culturedeclares.org)
- twitter @CultureDeclares
- instagram @CultureDeclares
- facebook @CultureDeclares
- [www.letterstotheearth.com](http://www.letterstotheearth.com)
- mail [culturedeclares@gmail.com](mailto:culturedeclares@gmail.com)