



**ART FOR CHANGE**

**BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN ARTISTS AND ORGANIZATIONS TO RAISE**

**AWARENESS AND EDUCATE ABOUT THE CLIMATE CRISIS INSIDE**

**ORGANIZATIONS:**

*HOW CAN ART SERVE AS A TOOL TO RAISE AWARENESS AND EDUCATE ABOUT THE  
CLIMATE CRISIS WITHIN AN ORGANIZATION?*

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## ABSTRACT

Countless studies reveal that human activities are having a devastating impact on Earth systems. Interdisciplinary collaboration is needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, framed by the UN in time, where organizations will be key players in combatting climate change. However, creating awareness and communicating about the climate crisis faces obstacles, such as the lack of narratives that get people motivated about climate action. This is where art comes in: art has the power to appeal to emotions and create collective transformative action. This study explores how art can serve as a tool to raise awareness and promote education within organizations about the climate crisis. To increase the forms of collaboration between academia, the arts, and practitioners, I conducted a focus group with participants from diverse sectors. This research revealed three findings: *(1) Artists and representatives of organizations feel personally responsible for combating the climate crisis, (2) Interdisciplinary and structural barriers hinder collaboration between artists and organizations, and (3) Artists are still seen as an untapped potential but involving artists in organizational work holds potential for Positive Social Change.* After presenting the results, I offered recommendations for practitioners as well as artists to move forward together.

**Keywords:** sustainability, transformation, sustainable development, art, environmental art, awareness-creation, change, imagination, Positive Social Change (PSC), collaboration.

## INTRODUCTION

*“The function of art is to do more than tell it like it is – it’s to imagine what is possible.”*

bell hooks

Human society is moving into a new epoch, from the Holocene into the Anthropocene (Steffen et al., 2015). Countless facts and studies reveal that human activities have threatening effects on the Earth System and that humans are changing the eco-systems to an extent so that earth will – in all likelihood - become inhospitable in many parts (Masson-Delmotte, IPCC, WMO, & UNEP, 2019; Steffen et al., 2015). A new paradigm is urgently needed to stay inside the safe limits of the planetary boundaries where one of those limits is climate change (Steffen et al., 2015). In response, combating climate change (Goal 13) is a top priority set by the United Nations through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (United Nations, n.d.).

The climate crisis is largely communicated as a technical problem that needs to be solved with more knowledge, expertise, and innovation (Tyszczuk & Smith, 2018). A fundamental challenge consists in the fact that climate change is difficult to grasp by individuals. The complexity that influences individual and collective human behavior cannot be captured by technical approaches alone (Ford & King, 2015). Providing scientific information when it comes to the communication of climate change is not enough and public polarization can increase when highly science-based messages are spread on controversial scientific issues such as climate change (Hart & Nisbet, 2012; Klöckner, 2015). To date, climate communication faces great challenges, such as the lack of narratives and storytelling that engage people in climate action, the lack of attention and constructive meaning, the lack of addressing individuals and their emotions, and the lack of inspiration, imagination, and positive outlooks for the future (Moore & Milkoreit, 2020; Roosen, Klöckner, & Swim, 2018).

*Weidinger* states: *“Without sustainable organizations, there is no sustainable development, thus, no future”* (Weidinger, 2014: 289). This underlines, that organizations must

contribute to bringing about *Positive Social Change (PSC)*. The urgency with which organizations must accept their responsibility is clearly documented in research (Allen & Craig, 2016; Frumhoff, Heede, & Oreskes, 2015; Kendall & Rich, 2019; Schaltegger, Freund, & Hansen, 2012; Stephan, Patterson, Kelly, & Mair, 2016). Effective education and communication about the climate crisis, or any other issue that requires behavioral change, must take into account the importance of leading by example and embracing the change (Blanchard, 2006; Pryor & Martinez-Saenz, 2001; Rich, 1997).

This is where art plays an important role. Studies show that art can provide spaces for creative imagination, perspective-taking, and experimentation since it has the power to tell stories and raise awareness about complex problems, and support transformation to more sustainability (Bentz & O'Brien, 2019; Dieleman, 2017). Creative practices can furthermore expand our ideas about the future and open our minds to new scenarios of change. The potential of art to transform society and its ability to support agency and inspire feelings of hope, responsibility, and solidarity, has long been recognized by academia (Boal, 2000; Roosen et al., 2018; Ryan, 2016). To move forward in the face of impending climate change challenges, interdisciplinary approaches are required (Allen & Craig, 2016).

This research identifies the following gap: there is only little guidance - in academia as well as in practice – on how art can be used in organizations to educate. By answering the question “How can art serve as a tool to raise awareness and educate about the climate crisis within an organization?” this study aims to investigate how artists and their ability to communicate effectively can be a – so-far untapped - potential for organizations to reach change on a deep level. Additionally, this research explores the barriers to collaboration and provides insights into how to overcome these barriers.

Conducting a focus group turned out to be the best approach to answer the research question since getting detailed insight into the participant’s perspectives and interactions is the main benefit. This research is relevant to a broad audience and of special relevance for decision-

makers and artists who want to create change by spreading messages in an organizational context.

In the following, I present theoretical frameworks which build the foundation for this research. These concepts could be of interest to practitioners since they could be reflected in their *Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)* strategies – or not at all. Furthermore, I elaborate on the methodology for this research in form of a focus group. The findings provide practical implications for artists and organizational representatives on how to involve artists in their work. Furthermore, the results show the transferability of a presented theoretical concept that has been applied so far in universities and schools in a new context. Lastly, I critically reflect, discuss, provide limitations, and end this research with a conclusion.

Above all, this research is an invitation to those who want to imagine what is possible.

## **ART FOR CHANGE**

In this section, I present and critically reflect on the relevant theoretical concepts for this research. *First*, I discuss art as a tool to educate and communicate about the climate crisis, followed by the *second* concept of awareness creation. The *third* theoretical concept addresses organizations' responsibility to create PSC inside their structures.

### **Art as a tool to educate and communicate**

#### ***The power of art***

The concept of art, which includes traditional forms such as theater, dance, music, literature, architecture, sculpture, television, film, photography, and painting constantly expands as shifting technology provides new ways for exploration (Thornes, 2008). Visual art includes all forms of contemporary art, such as installations, traditional processes, time-based media, and public art. Art is a valuable tool in communicating science in ways that engage audiences because it can create emotional responses and stimulate imagination which is something an excel sheet is far less likely to achieve (Lesen, Rogan, & Blum, 2016). By

translating complex scientific issues into a medium that reaches the emotional level (which erases the need for a rational understanding), art can support the audience to feel more motivated to engage in all kinds of problem-solving (Roosen et al., 2018). Climate change is seen as an abstract problem that is not easy to visualize in a way that touches the everyday lives of people. This fact can result in people's ignorance and failure to act adequately. Therefore, it is essential to make the phenomena of climate change more visible (Lorenzoni & Hulme, 2009; Roosen et al., 2018).

For the observer, art can be transformative and life-changing. *Pelowski & Akiba (2011)* introduced a five-stage model in their research that explains the process a viewer undergoes when experiencing a transformative piece of art. The first stage is the stage of *pre-encounter*, which expresses the human condition that influences the interpretation of the artwork. Secondly, viewers seek the meaning behind the artworks, which is described as *cognitive mastery*. The third stage is called the *secondary control*, where viewers try to deal with the discrepancies which mostly involve self-protection to avoid acceptance, or which lead to changing one's perception. The next step is the *meta-cognitive assessment* where viewers reconsider their own beliefs. The last stage is the so-called *schema-change*, where viewers reengage with the artwork with a new perspective (Pelowski & Akiba, 2011). Knowing this inner process can be beneficial to better understanding the impact of art on the human body.

According to bell hooks (2010), *critical thinking* is a way of approaching ideas to understand the underlying truth as well as an interactive process. Art can shape this critical thinking, as a study from *Galafassi et al. (2018)* concludes.

Art-based approaches are uniquely capable of fostering collective imagination and initiating collective transformative action. It is therefore obvious to attempt to bring together artists and large audiences for sustainability.

### ***Collaboration with artists as a source of fruitful cooperation***

To realize this potential, a broader and more intense form of collaboration between science, art, and practitioners is required. Fruitful collaboration emerges when artistic activities are seen not merely as communication strategies but as a vehicle for critically questioning fundamental assumptions about the nature of knowledge (Galafassi et al., 2018). Imaginative practices by using art can help recreate how conceptions of the world should be (Galafassi et al., 2018). Alliances with artists and the integration of art in education could support catalyzing scientific knowledge and innovation by enhancing associative thinking (Scheffer et al., 2015). Furthermore, art-based approaches may support the integration of knowledge, imagination, and intelligence (Leavy, 2020; Sullivan, 2010; Tengö, Brondizio, Elmqvist, Malmer, & Spierenburg, 2014).

A recent case study by *Jacobson, Seavey & Mueller* (2016) states that the participant's knowledge about climate change increased significantly during an interdisciplinary field trip. The inclusion of artists and art in the trip helped to engage multiple senses, promote social interaction, as well as support participants in their creative thinking. The engagement with art promoted peer learning and normalized participants' differing views when communicating about the impacts of climate change. Another study by *Bentz & O'Brien* (2019) displays how the arts and humanities can make an essential contribution to addressing and learning about climate change since art can integrate diverse bodies of knowledge through experiential learning and engage young people in deeper, embodied, and potentially transformative ways.

Depending on whether art is integrated into the climate change curriculum or taught alongside other climate science concepts in a participatory way, opportunities for greater depth of learning and transformative potential arise (Bentz, 2020). The question arises whether there is a particular message that a work of art must convey to appeal to people's emotions?

### ***“The awesome solution”***

Interestingly, the researchers *Sommer & Klöckner* (2021) found out that climate-related art displayed during the 2015 UN-Climate Summit in Paris changed people's feelings about the ecological crisis, but only if it contained a hopeful message. They build four categories for all the artworks: *the comforting utopia*, *the challenging dystopia*, *the mediocre mythology*, and *the awesome solution*. Only those artworks that fell under the “*awesome solution*”-category motivated people and made them feel like they can become active (Cascone, 2019; Sommer & Klöckner, 2021). The researchers stated that art has the “*potential to retell the stories of climate change in a way that activates the slumbering potential in our societies*“ (The Oxford Student, 2019).

To sum it up, art has the power to appeal to emotions and to create mind shifts. Critical thinking can be profoundly influenced by the inclusion of art in the educational setting. The collaboration with artists to visualize complex issues (e.g. climate change) emerges as a source of fruitful cooperation. It is important to appeal to the imagination of people to imagine a positive future and create positive approaches. All this requires the artist to gain the attention of the viewer. This is far from being an easy task and therefore the subject of the next part and the second theoretical concept.

### **Creating awareness to catalyze transformative action**

#### ***Awareness as a precondition***

The most important requirement to any form of communication is awareness since the message will be lost if people are not listening when someone is reaching out to them (Roosen et al., 2018). Awareness-raising is a vague term, but one that is widely understood intuitively. To enhance mutual understanding and cultivate skills necessary to facilitate changes in social attitudes and behavior, awareness-raising is a process that opens avenues for information exchange (Sayers, 2006). Creating awareness is a constructive and catalytic force that will lead



to positive change in people's actions and behaviors. Individuals, groups, organizations, communities, or societies can drive these changes. The most common approaches when aiming to create awareness are through personal communication, mass communication, education, public relations (PR), or advocacy work (Sayers, 2006). But how can initial awareness lead to transformative thinking?

### ***Transformative thinking***

To motivate transformative thinking and change in behavior the researchers *Leichenko & O'Brien* (2020) developed ground rules for integrative approaches to educating about climate change. I want to highlight that the *three axioms of the integrative approach* were primarily designed for climate education in schools and universities and not for companies. However, the authors' findings are highly relevant for this research.

*The first axiom* recognizes that worldviews, values, and emotions shape how people relate to climate change. Therefore, educating about climate change's emotional and subjective dimensions is vital. *Secondly*, the authors emphasize that the way in which the issue of climate change is framed influences the type of solutions that will be identified. A critical framing underlines the role of power, politics, the economy, and trade policies. Additionally, this approach acknowledges the legacy of colonialism, development policies, and inequalities based on factors such as gender, race, and class. Such a perspective challenges assumptions about economic growth, consumption, and increasing social inequality. The *third axiom* highlights that transformation to sustainability is possible and on its way. According to *Moore & Milkoreit* (2020), engaging in transformational processes necessarily requires imagination. They define transformations related to sustainability as "*the interdependent cognitive and comprehensive social processes that generate shared understandings of the present and visions of possible future states of the world*" (Moore & Milkoreit, 2020: 2).

To summarize, awareness creation is the pre-condition to catalyze transformative action. Organizations can play an important role in leveraging their reach internally and raising awareness. The application of the three axioms by *Leichenko & O'Brien (2020)* on an organizational level could support organizations to design appropriate solutions internally. Therefore, the question of how organizations perceive responsibility is of high relevance. This leads to the third theoretical concept.

## **Organizational Responsibility to create PSC**

### ***Responsibility from a Systems Perspective***

The concept of responsibility is central to the issue of commitment to action. Organizations will be the main actors in adapting society to climate variability and change (Berkhout, 2012; Frumhoff et al., 2015). As such, they have an enormous responsibility not only to their external stakeholders but first and foremost to their internal stakeholders. To make society fit for the future, all socioeconomic players must therefore play their part and commit to meaningful sustainability initiatives to tackle global challenges (Allen & Craig, 2016; Kendall & Rich, 2019). Rather than focusing on *CSR*, a system-level perspective should be applied. Over 25 years ago, the concept of the *Triple Bottom Line (TBL)* was invented to highlight the idea that business performance is not just about generating profit but about taking care of people and the planet (Elkington, 1998). However, to date, the author *Elkington* is critical of the *TBL* and issues a conceptual recall (Elkington, 2018). The authors *Kendall and Rich (2019)* argue looking at the *TBL* from a holistic systems perspective, where companies are embedded in and surrounded by society, and society is embedded in the environment. The three levels cannot be considered separately from each other (Kendall & Rich, 2019). This poses the question of how organizations can take deep, meaningful action?

## **PSC**

Organizations that strive for sustainability can get their employees to behave both efficiently and socially responsibly (Gond, El-Akreimi, Igalens, & Swaen, 2010). A recently conducted study by *Blanco-Gonzalez et al.,(2020)* shows that social responsibility significantly influences the organizational legitimacy perceived by the employees. Digging deeper into organizational responsibility, the authors *Stephan et al. (2016)* introduce the concept of *PSC*.

*PSC* defines “*the process of transforming patterns of thought, behavior, social relationships, institutions, and social structure to generate beneficial outcomes for individuals, communities, organizations, society, and/or the environment beyond the benefits for the instigators of such transformations*” (Stephan et al., 2016: 1252). To create *PSC* and deep social impact it is fundamental for an organization to implement the three levers of change namely *Motivation, Capability, and Opportunity* simultaneously (Stephan et al., 2016).

From an internal perspective, *motivation* refers to building intrinsic motivation, a sense of collective purpose, as well as communicating and raising awareness about a specific issue. Developing *capabilities* involves educating, building skills, and confidence inside the organization. Creating *opportunities* includes establishing empowering opportunity structures, rearranging the organizational environment, and introducing projects that facilitate collaboration and building bridges among formerly unconnected actors to access new resources and new perspectives. Deep social impact can occur only if these three levers are addressed simultaneously (Stephan et al., 2016). Studies in psychology underline that improving the motivation and skills of individuals and changing their decision-making environment will lead to greener, healthier, and socially more responsible behavior (Feiler, Tost, & Grant, 2012; Noar, Benac, & Harris, 2007; Osbaldiston & Schott, 2012).

In summary, organizations need to lead by example if they want to create a deep social impact. Responsibility starts internally. *PSC* can only occur if organizations create motivation among their employees, build internal capabilities and resilience, and create new opportunities

for collaboration. In the following figure, I present the relevant concepts to visualize how they interact with each other. The implementation of my research is to move in the middle of this figure shown below.



Figure 1: Theoretical concepts

## METHODOLOGY

In the following section, I will present the research method. To answer the research question “How can art serve as a tool to raise awareness and educate about the climate crisis within an organization?” I conducted a qualitative research method in form of a moderator-led focus group discussion.

### Research Design: Focus Group Discussion

I selected a qualitative approach to dive deeper into the intersection of art as a tool to educate about the climate crisis, the concept of awareness creation, and the responsibility organizations must bear to create *PSC*. I conducted a qualitative research strategy because it generally relies on the participant’s words rather than numbers in gathering and analyzing data

and applies an inductive view of the relationship between theory and research (Bell & Bryman, 2007).

The research strategy is derived from the research question. Here it becomes apparent that the best strategy is one that engages artists and organizational representatives in interaction. Since I am asking *how* art can play a role in change, discussions, and interaction is of great importance and key to identifying the participant's standpoints. A focus group is a group of individuals selected by the researcher to discuss the topic of the research from personal experiences. It addresses a specific topic in-depth, relies primarily on the exchange and interaction of the participants, and generates insights into the participant's perspectives, feelings, and ideas (Bell, Bryman, & Harley, 2018). The uniqueness of a focus group lies in its ability to provide data based on the synergy of group interaction and to combine artists with organizations, which is highly relevant for this research (Green, Draper, & Dowler, 2003). The focus determining the discussion engages the participants in a collective activity and interaction is the key to a successful focus group (Bell et al., 2018; Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008; Powell & Single, 1996).

To find adequate answers to the research question, it is necessary to bring together the organizations and the artists. In contrast to individual interviews, focus group discussions are much better suited at generating new ideas because they emerge in a social context (Bell et al., 2018; Breen, 2006). A major advantage consists in the fact that a focus group enables the identification of the full range of perspectives from the participants and the possibility for them to clarify their contributions (Powell & Single, 1996). Furthermore, this technique allows to dive into the *why*. Why do participants have certain opinions or not (Bell et al., 2018)? Additionally, a focus group varies in number between six and ten participants. When recruiting participants for these discussions, systematic biases must be avoided, which means that they should represent a diverse range of backgrounds, views, and experiences. The session should last 90-120 minutes (Powell & Single, 1996). At maximum the discussion should focus on five

to six questions, selected beforehand. They should be open-ended, phrased simply, and must illustrate clear concrete examples (Powell & Single, 1996).

### **Data Collection & Ethical Consideration**

The group will consist of eight participants. This number of participants is based on recommendations in the literature. I also believe that eight people are an appropriate size as it will enable a discussion while providing enough diverse perspectives to approach the research question comprehensively (Powell & Single, 1996; Tong, Sainsbury, & Craig, 2007). The participants were chosen according to the following criteria. The participant must (1) *have a profession in the field of sustainability, sustainable development or have an artistic background*, (2) *be in a decision-making position or self-employed*, (3) *currently working on solutions to tackle the climate crisis in their organizational context*, and (4) *openly express interest in new perspectives*. To benefit from different perspectives and following the call from Galafassi *et al.* (2018) to intensify the forms of collaboration between science, art, and practitioners, I have chosen participants from various sectors to ensure diverse backgrounds. They are representatives from a Multi-National Corporation (MNC), two Non-Profit-Organizations (NPO), an Advocacy Organization, a university, and artists. I provide more details about the participants in Appendix A.

<b>Participants (P)</b>	<b>Organization</b>
P1: <b>Environmental Artist</b>	Artist
P2: <b>Performance Artist</b>	Artist
P3: <b>Digital Artist</b>	Artist
P4: <b>Climate Scientist &amp; Artist</b>	State University
P5: <b>Founder</b>	Art For Impact (AFI) - NPO
P6: <b>Founder</b>	One Resilient Earth (ORE) - NPO
P7: <b>Manager</b>	Global Partnership for Education (GPE) – Advocacy Organization
P8: <b>Sustainability Manager</b>	Boehringer Ingelheim (BI) - MNC

*Figure 2: Overview of Participants*

I approached all participants through E-Mail with a request to participate and an introduction to the topic. After having expressed their interest, I sent them a calendar invite and more detailed information (see Appendix B). The focus group session took place on April 6th, 2022, in an online environment through Google Meet from 10:00-12:00 a.m. CET. To adhere to standards of academic integrity, I refer to the 2018 Code of Conduct for Integrity in Research as required by the University of Groningen (KNAW et al., 2018). Additionally, I sent an informed consent form to each participant before the focus group discussion (see Appendix C). Before the discussion began, I explained once again that the data will be anonymized and that I will record the session.

### **Focus Group Guide**

All questions I asked were based on a semi-structured focus group guide (see Appendix D). Different strategies for moderating a focus group session exist, but most lie between open-ended questions and more structured ones. (Bell et al., 2018). The participants received the guide in advance to familiarize themselves with the questions (Appendix B). The guide is chronologically based on the literature review. After a general overview of the topic, the introduction of the participants, and the presentation of the house rules, I asked a total of six questions. The first two questions were about personal experiences regarding art. The following questions addressed the *axioms of integrative approaches* to educating about climate change from Leichenko & O'Brien (2020). The last two questions referred to the model of PSC from Stephan et al. (2016). Finally, the participants were invited to reflect on the discussion.

### **Data Analysis & Quality of Research**

I recorded and transcribed the discussion. By using an inductive approach, I analyzed the data. The study followed an iterative process of developing first, second and third-order codes (Bell & Bryman, 2007). Therefore, I created initial codes in *Atlas.ti*, a computer-assisted

qualitative data analysis software to develop codes more efficiently and ensure transparency (Bell & Bryman, 2007). First, I built first-order codes, where I evaluated the collected data very specifically in terms of content and gave descriptive titles. I pre-defined some codes based on the presented theoretical frameworks, such as the *three axioms of the integrative approach* and the *PSC*. I then grouped the topics that fit together into a second-order structure. Lastly, I was able to derive three thematic blocks from this (Appendix E).

I ensured validity, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to guarantee the quality of the research according to *Bell & Bryman (2007)*. I assured *credibility* by adopting a focus group approach based on the participants' experiences and expertise. By carefully analyzing whether the research question, method, design, and data analysis are appropriate for the desired outcome I ensured *validity*. I profoundly researched the theoretical concepts and therefore ensured *transferability*. Additionally, I ensured *dependability* by offering an interview guide and an agenda to ensure replicability under similar circumstances. Lastly, I guaranteed confirmability because I acknowledge the risk of being biased. Therefore, I refused to ask suggestive questions during the focus group. Thus, I proved to act in good faith (Bell & Bryman, 2007).

## **RESULTS & DISCUSSION**

The following section presents the findings to provide answers to the research question "How can art serve as a tool to raise awareness and educate about the climate crisis within an organization?"

One of the key findings can be briefly summarized in the following statement: What hinders the implementation of such a tool are the current power structures. I identified barriers that prevent organizations and artists from collaborating because of their different approaches. Artists are endowed with deep intrinsic motivation to effect change, which presents great opportunities for organizations to capitalize on. Another finding was that out of the axioms



introduced by authors *Leichenko & O'Brian (2020)*, the participants considered *axiom two* (the way in which climate change is framed influences the type of solutions that will be identified) as the most important ground rule for effective awareness and education on climate change. Finally, this research provides examples and ideas for working with artists in the future and harnessing their potential to affect *PSC* within organizations. The findings are presented and compared to the literature review. By coding the text, I formed first and second-order codes and classified the content (Appendix E). Finally, I derived three core themes, which I will discuss in more detail below:

- (1) Artists and representatives of organizations feel personally responsible for combating the climate crisis**
- (2) Interdisciplinary and structural barriers hinder collaboration between artists and organizations**
- (3) Artists are still seen as an untapped potential, but involving artists in organizational work holds potential for PSC**

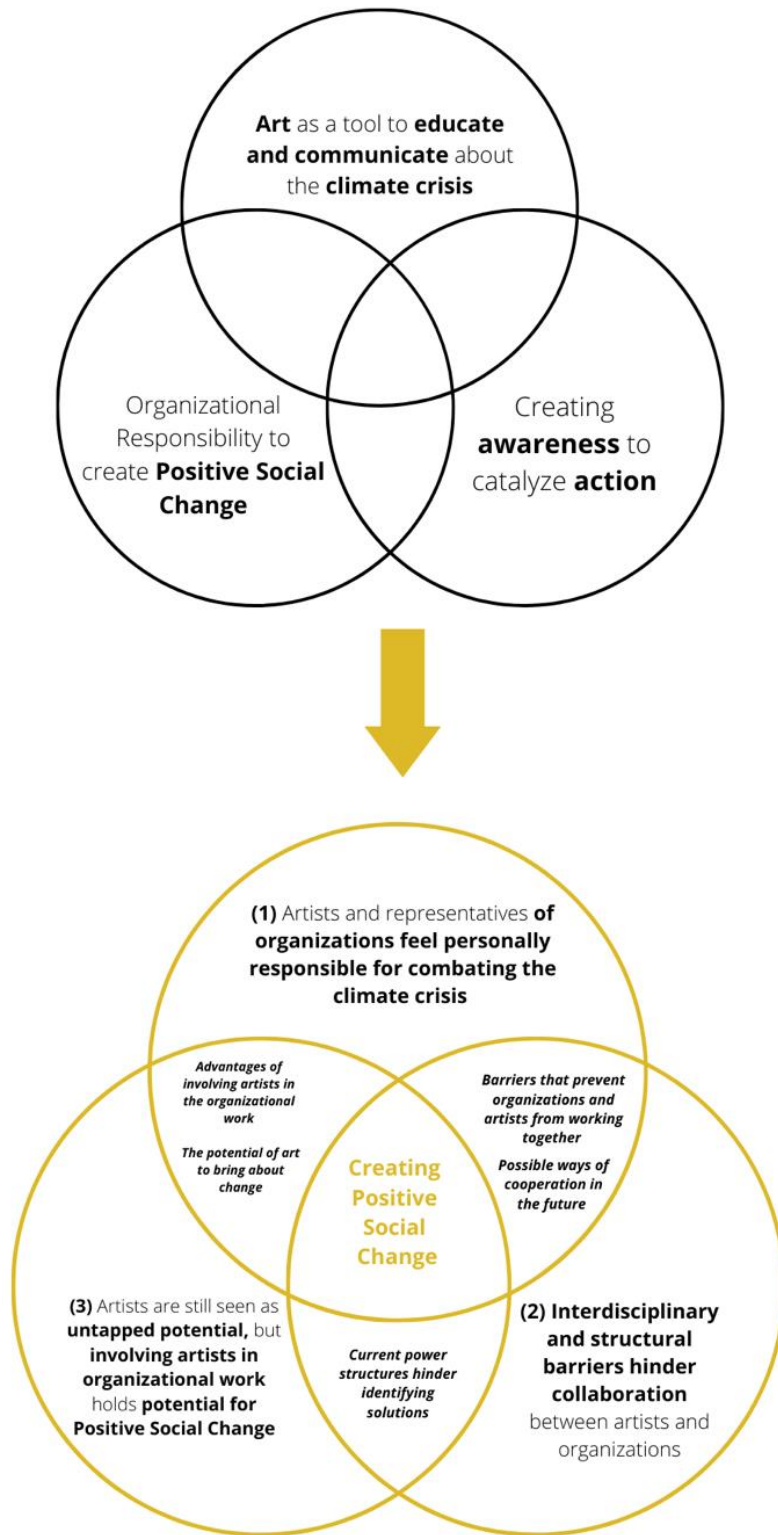


Figure 3: Relation between theoretical frameworks and findings

## **(1) Artists and representatives of organizations feel personally responsible for combating the climate crisis**

From an organizational perspective, the sustainability manager expressed he is "*being responsible to increase the rate of change*". The responsibility of the climate scientist is to give "*an accurate prognosis for the future and to put them into a format that is communicable, so to say, with policymakers*". Business as usual is not an option anymore and new ways must be found to "*make societal transformation irresistible*" (P6: Founder of ORE). These statements sustain what authors *Kendall & Rich (2019)* emphasize, seeing an organization from a holistic perspective in which it is embedded in society. The artists take on a special personal commitment to finding solutions to the climate crisis. The digital artist stated that "*everyone needs to do as much as possible*".

Education, hope for the future, and showing alternatives were seen as the most important tasks. They acknowledged that they cannot reach everyone with their messages but stressed the importance of trying (P2: Performance Artist). In addition, several artists mentioned how their vocation is to visualize better futures and show what climate mitigation and adaptation can look like:

*"[...] these are the futures that we can look towards, if we adapt, and as we have seen in the pandemic, humans are adaptable too, they can adapt to new lifestyles very quickly"* (P4: Climate Scientists & Artists).

The performance artist emphasized how creating hope motivated her to become an artist. The director of the Chilean National Theater said, "*[...] for messages like darkness, you have the world but for hope, you have the theater*". Art supports a change in perspective (P5: Founder of AFI). The sustainability manager mentioned not having many touchpoints with art, but that art allows him to have a change of perspective, a sense of "*it could be me*".

Moreover, the message of art was felt to be universal without having to share the same language or culture. Additionally, the founder of AFI shared his impression that people can feel overwhelmed and think it is impossible to change anything. Therefore, he strives to “*tell stories of the big picture, so [people] can relate and it helps the intrinsic motivation*”. ORE's founder conveyed how she was inspired to start her environmental nonprofit organization after organizing an exhibit on biodiversity loss at the United Nations. She was deeply inspired by how art was used to persuade people with more traditional mindsets and show them the benefits of acting. Several participants indicated how their knowledge and emotional response to climate change increased when they visited exhibitions or encountered art. When I asked them about the strongest messages and feelings participants received from art, their responses were: a sense of belonging, inspiration, liberation, empathy, and mutual understanding.

In summary, artists feel a strong inner responsibility for creating hope. Organizational leaders see themselves as "changemakers" within their structures. This finding supports *Jacobsen, Seavey & Mueller's (2016)* study who found that engagement with the arts normalized participants' differing views when communicating about the impacts of climate change. If both parties, see themselves as responsible for change: why are there so few collaborations?

## **(2) Interdisciplinary and structural barriers hinder collaboration between artists and organizations**

### ***Barriers that prevent organizations and artists from working together***

An unexpected but highly interesting insight emerging from the discussion was how companies and artists seem to speak different languages. From the various perspectives, I found that artists and organizations tend to describe their work using distinct approaches which the other party does not comprehend. This was highlighted by the sustainability manager when he said, “[*cooperating with artists is*] like going to a different country and speaking a different

*language*". He saw himself as an interpreter, bringing the message to the organization and ensuring the right form of engagement. The environmental artist mentioned using different phrases depending on the audience she is referring to. She spoke about her experience working with organizations where she did not get any responses when she introduced herself as a "climate artist," but the opposite happened when she changed her title to "climate communicator".

*"[...] and suddenly, everyone is excited to talk to me, which makes me think that the people have a poor opinion of artists [...] and it is like the absolute worst way that I could introduce myself, which is crazy because it is one of the hardest jobs I have had"*  
(P1: Environmental Artist).

The statement emphasized the second barrier preventing organizations and artists from collaborating: the lack of respect artists receive. All artists expressed their work is not valued, especially when the result is not a product but an experience. This was supported by quotes such as:

*"Organizations underestimate how connected we are to our artwork, and how incredibly painful it is when it is just completely disregarded as something important or personal"* (P4: Climate Scientist & Artist), or *"there is the lack of respect and the belief that it is a real job is low, unfortunately, terrible reputation"* (P1: Environmental Artist).

According to the sustainability manager, most of the employees in his organization have never worked with creatives and therefore do not value the work accordingly. Moreover, art and its impact are difficult to measure, leading to the impression that an artistic approach in organizations is still a risk. He underlined this by stating, *"[my organization] would not be very,*

*very open to using artistic approaches and alternative methods without them being tried and tested” (P8: Sustainability Manager).*

A third barrier consists of the gap between artistic practices and business. Practice around arts is primarily associated with the cultural sector rather than the "business world". According to the participants, art is still not considered equal to other works. The founder of ORE shared that her projects *“are funded through more cultural rounds, or artistic funds, where there is a strong artistic component, even if the environmental part [...] is as strong as the cultural creative artistic part”*.

The lack of consistent terminology, the communication in “different languages”, the lack of respect for artists, and the assumption that art is part of the cultural rather than the economic world has led to barriers to collaboration. But what else is preventing finding solutions?

### ***Current power structures hinder the identification of solutions***

The next findings section focuses on the three axioms of integrative approaches developed by *Leichenko & O'Brian (2020)* which were explained in detail in the theoretical framework and introduced in the focus group. The discussion revealed that most of them considered these three axioms essential to addressing the climate crisis. However, they emphasized that the second axiom is the foundation for the other two axioms. Most participants agreed on the impact of current power structures and patriarchy playing a key role in reframing the problem of climate change. When participants shared their experiences working with organizations, they emphasized the lack of diversity in decision-making positions: *“98% of the organizations that I have come across, and I've come across a lot, are all run by white men” (P1: Environmental Artist)*. Without addressing the root problem of the climate crisis, namely an extractive, postcolonial, patriarchal worldview, appropriate solutions will be lacking. This was underscored by the environmental artist: *“That is really troubling to me. I am like, how are we*

*going to be solving the problem with the same exact mentality that got us into it.”* The sustainability manager mentioned gaining new insights during the discussion that he had not heard of before. He first thought axiom three is the most important one. But during the discussion he realized that without addressing the second axiom, humanity could move in the wrong direction or stay within the existing framework: *“As you said, there are the same kind of people, the white people, who are male and have their background, who just keep going in the same direction.”*

The manager of GPE shared how those who are in positions of power will defend the structure, *“The longer something exists, the more people will defend the structure. And I think it's really the role of power, which has to be tackled at all elements.”* To change these power structures, ORE's founder proactively advocates for a more creative, regenerative, and inclusive approach, seeing a bright future in collaborating with artists to engage more people in these discussions. As the GPE manager pointed out, *“[...] they will recruit the same sort of people who will not challenge the frame they are in obviously.”* Deconstructing power structures and ensuring that voices from marginalized communities are heard would be crucial. There was an intense discussion about climate change being a symptom, not the problem. The climate scientist communicated how current power structures disproportionately disadvantage women, people of color, and the global south:

*“Focusing and framing climate change through art, through conversations in organizations, is one of the only ways to really also involve the people who are disproportionately impacted, while not being the main contributors to climate change, to actually get their voices onboard.”*

These findings supported *bell hooks'* (2010) assertion that art helps people understand fundamental truths, what she refers to as *critical thinking*. They also sustain *Galafassi et al.*

(2018) study, which found that fruitful collaboration occurs when artistic work raises fundamental questions about the essence of knowledge.

Especially the artists acknowledged that a critical framework is urgently needed to frame the climate crisis not as the problem itself, but as a symptom of an extractive and patriarchal worldview. Marginalized groups are most affected by the climate crisis. Recognizing power structures is critical to tackling the climate crisis.

### **(3) Artists are still seen as untapped potential, but involving artists in organizational work holds potential for PSC**

#### ***Advantages of involving artists in organizational work***

One artist shared her work experiences with schools and realized how many educational institutions appreciate her inspiring young people. Another participant highlighted the excellent feedback she received while working for the United Nations, which she still uses as a reference for her current and future projects. Both emphasized the fact that involving artists in organizational practices “*feels like you’re pioneering*” (P6: Founder of ORE).

#### ***The potential of art to bring about change***

When asked about the potential of art to enable change, the answers highlighted its ability to visualize the future: “*We as humans, [...] we need to see the solutions, otherwise we lose focus. In a positive way. We need imagination to visualize the future*” (P3: Digital Artist). The performance artist said creating hope through art is a talent that requires the right timing, and the right way to tell the story - especially when it comes to dark messages: “*Like telling a joke in dark times*”.

This resonates with *Sommer & Klöckner's (2021)* assertion that art can have a significant impact on people coping with the climate crisis when it contains a hopeful message. The founder of ORE argues that art should be recognized as equally important to the dissemination



of knowledge as science, ancient wisdom, and new technologies, and *“there is not one that is higher than the other”*. She emphasized that the artist’s perspective is no less valid than those of science when it comes to designing new transformed and regenerative futures.

### ***Possible ways of cooperation in the future***

The participants reported how they realized artistic projects in the past. The founder of ORE explained how it was very important for them to create their projects together with artists and involve them in the decision-making process. The environmental artist mentioned the "Shine Theory," which focuses on the principle of *“lifting each other up and sharing opportunities and working collaboratively instead of competitively [...]”*

One way to collaborate is to include marginalized voices through art and bring them into organizations (P7: Manager GPE). The sustainability manager emphasized his interest in visualizing voices from his organization from different parts of the world to support a shift in perspective and increase corporate accountability in an artistic way. He elaborated on how he envisions engaging local offices and affected communities who are already deeply impacted by climate change and doing so, people within the organization feel connected: *“[...] if it is someone far away, you still sort of don't feel that connection.”*

### ***Creating PSC***

When I asked the participants how PSC could be achieved referring to *Stephan et al. (2016)*, they stressed the importance of education and long-term investments: *“Educating today's generations means having an opportunity to steer the ship in the right direction before it is too late”* (P3: Digital Artist).

The performance artist shared how her art needs to be educational: *“if you don't work really to the roots and with the future, with the kids, for me it is like my art is not complete.”* If organizations focus on profit, PSC cannot be achieved. The environmental artist expressed

artists deserve a "seat at the table" when decisions are being made. The performance artist related how she was asked by people from Chile why she left her country to work in Germany, saying, "*the real work is here in the third world*". But she realized that "[...] *the work is everywhere you go. And every person [...] can make the change.*" By working together, "*we don't just have the chance to clean up a mess or solve a problem, we have a chance to build a better world that is more just and more equitable*" (P2: Founder of ORE).

They acknowledged the work that needs to be done is happening everywhere. The discussion provided clear support for the presented framework on PSC by *Stephan et al. (2016)*, in which motivation, skills, and opportunities must be created simultaneously to effect profound change. Engaging artists to work on artwork visualizing issues related to climate change can build internal *motivation* within organizations. Educating organizational members through artwork sustains the organization's *capabilities*. Building long-term connections with artists could introduce projects that build bridges between previously disconnected stakeholders and open new possibilities and perspectives. *Opportunities* can be created when artists are trained in how to approach organizations (P1: Environmental Artist). On the other hand, the sustainability manager felt that people working in a large organization need to be trained to value creative work and that they should be allowed to work with artists on a broader scale. This was evident when he said, "*you will require people to try and create some change in corporate organizations to how to work with artists, [...]*".

It became clear that art has the potential to create hope. Recognizing artists as having untapped potential brings several benefits and opportunities to change the status quo.

## CONCLUSION

First, I offer a summary of the findings. Second, I give suggestions for managers and artists to act, followed by the limitations of this research. I conclude with an outlook for further investigation.

The findings demonstrated how artists are an extremely important - but still underappreciated and underutilized source of transformation with a deep intrinsic motivation. This presents great opportunities for organizations to tap into this potential. However current power structures tend to hinder the empowerment of artists to spread their messages in an organizational context. Framing climate change through art, the experiences of artists, and conversations inside organizations may be one of the few ways to truly engage affected voices that are disproportionately impacted by the climate crisis and make them more visible.

The goal of this research was to explore how art and collaboration with artists can help organizations educate and raise awareness about the climate crisis internally. The *three axioms of the integrative approach* were developed for climate education in schools and universities rather than businesses and organizations. However, the findings of *Leichenko & O'Brien (2020)* are highly relevant for other sectors as well. This research brings theoretical knowledge into practice and provides action statements derived from discussions with artists and organizations. I showed the relevance of the *axioms* in a new context. Not only schools and universities should devote themselves to these approaches, but other types of organizations as well such as business enterprises. Various authors such as *Moore & Milkoreit (2020)* and *Roosen et al. (2018)* have noted the lack of appealing to people's emotions through storytelling, inspiration, and imagination to motivate them to engage in climate discussions. Proactively engaging marginalized voices through artistic approaches could be a solution to the authors' concerns. It became clear that artists, due to their ability to visualize their messages in a way that supports critical thinking, are changemakers that need and want to be recognized by organizations. To achieve *PSC*, engaging the arts in businesses and organizations has proven to be an effective strategy to educate people about the complexities of a changing world.

By critically reflecting on the process of this research I learned a lot. When I organized the focus group, I expected to receive detailed suggestions for collaboration. Examples of events or step-by-step instructions that I could then share with readers. Instead, I received

several deliverables that I think are even more enriching than detailed examples of collaboration.

## **Recommendations**

Since it became evident that organizations and artists tend to speak different languages, people need to be trained to act as interpreters between organizations and artists. On the one side, artists should be trained on how to engage with companies. On the other side, organizations should focus more on creative approaches within their structures and train those responsible to act as interpreters to emphasize appreciation and respect for artistic work. Marginalized groups such as women, Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), and members of the LGBTQI+ community should be proactively given access to power. Working with artists from marginalized groups is, therefore, an effective way to communicate the impacts of climate change within an organization. A key step in tackling the climate crisis is supporting artists who address and visualize the roots of climate change, namely the impact of patriarchy, colonialism, and capitalism.

In the following, practical implications for managers and artists are highlighted based on the findings of this study.

## **Implications for Action**

### ***Steps for people in decision-making positions***

*a) Collaborate and empower marginalized groups.* Proactively support the integration of arts into organizations. Rather than talking about those most affected, they should be brought to the table in decision-making. Acknowledging the legitimacy of ancient indigenous wisdom and the fact that artistic approaches are as important as scientific approaches, is an important step to creating awareness of the root issues of the climate crisis.

***b) Connect with organizations that focus on interdisciplinary approaches.*** Since the work needs to be done everywhere, organizations and decision-makers don't have to start from scratch. Turn to environmental organizations that have creative, interdisciplinary solutions in their DNA, such as the NGOs featured in this research.

***c) Proactively contribute to PSC.*** Company representatives should be responsible for not only doing as much as needed internally but proactively contributing to PSC. Motivation to become active could be achieved if both parties jointly co-create projects and are involved in decision-making processes. To create internal motivation, artists and sustainability officers could design projects together to visualize the voices of the organization's members, thus creating an emotional connection. Further education of organizational members could be accomplished by having artists offer additional workshops or programs related to their artwork. While this could assist in skill-building, new opportunities could be created through more diverse collaborations with creatives from marginalized groups and by offering workshops to improve empathy in collaborations.

***d) Introduce programs for sustainability managers to make them aware of the axioms of integrative approaches.*** Use the framework (figure 3) presented in this study to support narrative change and provide meaningful training for sustainability managers and apply it in an organizational context.

***e) Conduct internal advanced training and enhance them with art.*** When internal training is offered, it could be supplemented by artistic work. This promotes a critical examination of the relevant topic.

### ***Steps for artists***

***a) Attend training on how to approach organizations.*** As several artists have pointed out, learning how to use the right wording to target the right people in organizations can be

critical. Partner with organizations or other artists who can offer insights on how to approach people from other sectors.

*b) Know your value.* As an artist, you should know your value and not undersell yourself. The results of this research show that organizations are still in the very early stages of working with artists.

*c) Human stories inspire human beings.* Tell human stories through art that draw attention to the impact of the climate crisis. Seeking out these opportunities can be very rewarding for artists.

*d) Seek out organizations that support you in your activist art.* You do not have to start from scratch. Organizations and associations that focus on supporting, training, and offering resources to artists in their activist work exist.

In the following, I will present limitations and give outlooks for further research.

### **Limitations**

I am aware that there is a risk of bias since I selected participants from my network. Moreover, I note that neither I nor all participants spoke in their native language. Therefore, language barriers must be considered. Additionally, this research took place in an online environment. Due to its qualitative nature, this research is based on the experiences and perspectives of a few individuals. These limitations lead to a call for further research.

### **Future Research**

Generally, the development of a practitioner's guide with examples for incorporating artists into organizational activities could be of significant benefit. I recognize that this research has started a discussion on multiple issues that should be explored in more depth. While participants emphasized that creating hope is essential, hope alone will not lead to the necessary changes in people's minds.

Important questions remain: are the highlighted structures so deeply rooted in our society that they cannot be changed in the time we have left? Even if the will for new approaches in organizations is recognizable, are the traditional structures stronger than the actual implementation of innovative ideas? Big questions require big answers. The SDGs provide the direction.

This research has shown that there is a curiosity for exchange and a willingness to build bridges. It is imaginable and possible.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A – Overview of focus group participants

Name of Organization	Type of Organization	Description of Organization	Position of Participant
<b>Participant 1: Environmental Artist (P1)</b>	Self Employed	The artist is not only an artist but an environmentalist. She works with thousands of hand-cut images of flora and fauna to create immersive installations that are evocative of our planet's threatened biodiversity. The artist is dedicated to raising awareness and action around the ecological and biodiversity crises. She is from Los Angeles and currently resides in Berlin. She holds a Master's in Public Policy from UCLA and brings together art and environmental advocacy.	<b>Artist</b>
<b>Participant 2: Performance Artist (P2)</b>	Self Employed	She is a performance artist with a Chilean background. Her artistic work is focused on the search for new performative formats that reflect, modify, and question the habitual reality of the participants and spectators in its their co-existence. As a co-founder of the performance collective "Pink Valley" she has been able to focus on deepening existential and socially relevant themes such as migration, gender, and empathy. For this purpose, she uses different tools and formats like audio walks, live performances, and video installations.	<b>Artist</b>
<b>Participant 3: Digital Artist (P3)</b>	Self Employed	He is an Italian artist, photographer, and digital artist, focusing on climate change artworks. In addition, he is the founder of "earth-based", a climate change news platform. He started a project called Climate Change Countdown, which has the main object of spreading as much as possible awareness as possible on climate change. He is based in the US but operates all over the world.	<b>Artist</b>
<b>Participant 4: Leibniz University Hannover (P4)</b>	State University	As one of the nine leading technical universities in Germany, Leibniz Universität considers itself responsible for contributing to the sustainable, peaceful, and responsible solution of central tasks for the future. The participant is a glacier scientist from the Netherlands based in Berlin. She works in Hanover and is currently finishing her PhD on glacier mass balance under the influence of climate change. Her art focuses on creating awareness and having people feel an emotional connection to what often seems to be perceived as a very abstract problem, namely climate change.	<b>Climate Scientist &amp; Artist</b>
<b>Participant 5: Art for Impact (AFI) (P5)</b>	Non-Profit-Organization	The participant is from the US and currently based in Brazil. The artforimpact.org collective was founded in Colombia which is a social project that started to call attention to the marginalization of different groups, destruction of our planet's ecosystems, and other social issues. Their main goal is to use art as a vehicle for change within the international community. They believe in the power and freedom of art and are always looking for other artists who want to make a difference.	<b>Artist &amp; Co-Founder</b>
<b>Participant 6: One Resilient Earth (ORE) (P6)</b>	Non-Profit-Organization	One Resilient Earth is a non-profit that empowers people to become resilient to environmental change. Their focus is on collaborative learning through art, science, ancient wisdom, and new technologies to regenerate people, communities, and ecosystems in a world impacted by climate change.	<b>Founder &amp; Director</b>
<b>Participant 7: Global Partnership for Education (GPE) (P7)</b>	Initiative from the World Bank	The participant is based in Brussel and has a German background. GPE is an international organization. It is the largest global partnership and fund focused on providing quality education to children in lower-income countries. GPE supports governments to transform their education systems by drawing on the breadth and strength of their partners.	<b>Lead Donor Relations Germany</b>
<b>Participant 8: Boehringer Ingelheim (BI) (P8)</b>	Multi-National-Corporation	The participant is based in Germany with an Irish background. Boehringer Ingelheim is a pharmaceutical company founded in 1885 by Albert Boehringer in Ingelheim am Rhein. It is the largest research-based pharmaceutical company in Germany. Boehringer Ingelheim's core business is the research, development, manufacture, and sale of pharmaceuticals for humans and animals and currently on its transition to become climate neutral.	<b>Senior Sustainable Development Manager</b>



## Appendix B – E-Mail with Agenda

### Agenda // Focus Group 06.04.22 // Research: art for change.

1 Nachricht

Sunniva Ferri <sunniferri@gmail.com>

31. März 2022 um 12:38

An [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

As promised, I will send you an **overview of the agenda** with more details for the focus group for next week, **april 6th from 10-12 am**.

I will moderate and guide you through the session. 😊

Just wanted to send the brief overview of the content & the 6 questions (in bold yellow fond) we will be discussing, ahead of time.

Time	Agenda
10:00-10:20	<p><b>1) Introduction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I will introduce myself &amp; the topic</li><li>• My research question is: <b>How can visual art serve as a tool to raise awareness and educate about the climate crisis within an organization?</b></li></ul> <p><b>2) Introduction of participants &amp; their organizations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• everyone is going to introduce themselves in a few sentences</li></ul> <p><b>3) Introduction into the topic and aim of the Focus Group</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Research question: <b>how can visual art serve as a tool to raise awareness and educate about the climate crisis within an organization?</b></li><li>• The climate crisis is largely presented as a technical problem that needs to be solved with more technical innovation, management</li><li>• The crisis is difficult to grasp by individuals and climate communication faces great challenges, such as the lack of narratives and storytelling that engage people in climate action, the lack of attention and constructive meaning, the lack of addressing individuals and their emotions, and the lack of inspiration, imagination, and positive outlooks</li><li>• This is where art comes in. Art has the power to enhance imagination, perspective-taking, and experimentation since it has the power of telling stories and raising awareness about complex problems and supporting transformation to more sustainability.</li><li>• Organizations urgently need to take on responsibility and contribute to positive social change.</li></ul> <p>This research aims to get insights into your perspectives, experiences, and feelings about art, the climate crisis, and organizational responsibility. I am very much looking forward to exchanging with you in a round of artists, representatives of companies &amp; NGOs and to benefit from different points of view.</p> <p><b>4) Housekeeping Rules</b> So, before we start, I want to introduce some housekeeping rules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Please let each other finish their sentences and communicate in an honest &amp; respectful way</li><li>• I will try to stay out of the discussions and only intervene if necessary</li><li>• This session will be recorded and anonymized in the research.</li><li>• everyone agrees to the recording and processing of anonymized data</li></ul>
10:20-11:40	<p><b>5) Discussion</b> In the following I prepared 6 questions that I would like to discuss with you.</p> <p><b>Block 1: Art as a tool to educate and communicate about the climate crisis</b></p>

	<p><b>1. What was the most powerful message you ever received from art?</b></p> <p>Science showed that fruitful results emerge when artists are involved in projects that aim to create awareness and educate. For both, artists, and organizations:</p> <p><b>2. If you have ever collaborated with artists/organizations what was your experience?</b></p> <p><b>Block 2: Creating awareness to catalyze transformative action</b>          Researchers developed three principles to educate about climate change.  <i>The first principle</i> recognizes that worldview, values, and emotions shape how people relate to climate change, so educating about the emotional dimension of climate change is therefore vital.  <i>The second principle</i> acknowledges that the way the issue of climate change is framed, influences the types of solutions that will be identified.  <i>The third principle</i> recognizes that transformation to sustainability is already on its way, therefore we need imagination.</p> <p><b>1. How could you envision art to play a role in educating your employees or members of your organization to educate them about the impact of climate change?</b></p> <p><b>2. Regarding the three principles I just mentioned: which one do you personally think would work best to raise awareness within your organization or (as an artist) through your art?</b></p> <p><b>Block 3: Organizational Responsibility to create Positive Social Change</b>          According to researchers: Positive Social Change is only reached if organizations create motivation among their employees to engage in climate change, build internal capabilities &amp; resilience and create new opportunities for collaboration <u>simultaneously</u>.  <b>Side note:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Motivation</b> refers to building <i>intrinsic motivation, a sense of collective purpose, as well as communicating and raising awareness about a specific issue.</i></li> <li>• Developing <b>Capabilities</b> involves educating, building skills, and confidence inside the organization.</li> <li>• Creating <b>Opportunities</b> includes establishing empowering opportunity structures, rearranging the organizational environment, and introducing projects that facilitate collaboration and building bridges among formerly unconnected actors to build social capital that allows targets to access new resources and new perspectives.</li> </ul> <p><b>1. To everyone: what are you taking on as your responsibility as artist or member of your organization in the discussion about climate change?</b></p> <p><b>2. We have wonderful individuals in this call – what do you think: how could you, as artists and organizations come together to create Positive Social Change?</b></p> <p><i>(How could you create motivation?          How could you create capabilities?          How could you create opportunities?)</i></p>
11:40-12:00	<p><b>6) Summary of the Session</b></p> <p><b>7) Key Takeaways</b></p> <p><b>8) Follow up Information</b></p>

If you have any questions, please reach out to me!

I am very much looking forward to meeting you! 😊

Best,  
Sunniva

**Sunniva Ferri**  
[sunniferri@gmail.com](mailto:sunniferri@gmail.com)  
[Instagram - sunniva.ferri](#)



## Research Informed Consent

### TITLE OF STUDY

**ART FOR CHANGE:** building bridges between artists and organizations to raise awareness and educate about the climate crisis inside organizations

*How can visual art serve as a tool to raise awareness and educate about the climate crisis within an organization?*

### PRIMARY RESEARCHERS

Sunniva Ferri (s.ferri@student.rug.nl)

#### **Why am I being asked to review this form?**

You are being asked to take part in a research study. This form is provided so that you may read and understand the reasons why you might or might not want to participate in the research. Your participation is voluntary.

#### **What is the purpose of the study?**

This study aims to investigate how more internal awareness creation on the climate crisis could be gained when organizations collaborate with artists.

I want to better understand how visual art can serve as a tool to raise awareness and educate about the climate crisis within an organization and how concrete forms of collaborations could look like between organizations and artists.

#### **What is the goal of this interview?**

The research conducted within the framework of this interview is of exploratory nature.

Therefore, the goal of this focus group is to gain insight into the perspectives of representatives from different sectors regarding art as an educational tool in organizations and to give recommendations for future collaborations with artists. The questions during the focus group are semi-structured to receive as much input from your side as possible. Accordingly, the question blocks that are sent beforehand are a guide, but not ultimately binding.

#### **What will happen before the interview?**

You are allowed to withdraw from the study without justification and without negative consequences until 31.03.22.

I will review this form before the beginning of the interview.

#### **What will happen during the interview?**

- You will be asked multiple questions in the focus group;
- The interview will be recorded,
- You have the right to decline answering particular questions.

#### **What will happen after the interview?**

- The recordings of the interview will be transcribed and analysed by the researcher;
- Upon request, I will send you the transcription, which is allowing you to correct, review and approve it;
- This reviewed transcription will be integrated to the final thesis;

- Quotes from the transcription will be used as verbatim in the thesis;
- on request, you will have access to the final thesis and the transcription;
- For confidentiality purposes, you have the right to ask to be anonymous.

#### CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions at any time about this study, or you experience adverse effects as the result of participating in this study, you may contact the researcher whose contact information is provided on the first page. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, or if problems arise which you do not feel you can discuss with the Primary Researcher directly.

#### VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION


Your participation in this study is voluntary.

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part in this study. If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign this consent form. After you sign this consent form, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. Withdrawing from this study will not affect the relationship you have, if any, with the researcher. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

#### CONSENT

I have read and I understand the provided information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without cost. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

Participant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Researchers' Signature  \_\_\_\_\_ Date 15.03.2022

## Appendix D – Agenda and Focus Group Guide

Time	Agenda
10:00-10:20	<p><b>1) Introduction</b>  Hello everyone. I am delighted to have you all in the focus group today.  Thank you so much for participating. Most of you know me already, but I will of course quickly introduce myself. My name is Sunniva, I am currently studying at the University of Groningen and writing my master’s thesis.  My research question is: <i>How can art serve as a tool to raise awareness and educate about the climate crisis within an organization?</i>  I am very excited to have you here today to discuss potential answers. Before we start and I give some introduction into the topic I wanted to ask you if you quickly want to introduce yourself.</p> <p><b>2) Introduction of participants &amp; their organizations</b></p> <p><b>3) Introduction into the topic and aim of the Focus Group</b>  The climate crisis is largely presented as a technical problem that needs to be solved with more technical innovation, management. The crisis is difficult to grasp by individuals and climate communication faces great challenges, such as the lack of narratives and storytelling that engage people in climate action, the lack of attention and constructive meaning, the lack of addressing individuals and their emotions, and the lack of inspiration, imagination, and positive outlooks. This is where art comes in. Art has the power to enhance imagination, perspective-taking, and experimentation since it has the power of telling stories and raising awareness about complex problems and supporting transformation to more sustainability. Organizations urgently need to take on responsibility. They have the responsibility to contribute to positive social change. This research aims to get insights into your perspectives, experiences, and feelings about art, the climate crisis, and organizational responsibility. I am very looking forward to exchanging with you in a round of artists, representatives of companies &amp; NGOs and to benefit from different points of view.</p> <p><b>4) Housekeeping Rules</b>  So, before we start, I want to introduce some housekeeping rules:  Please let each other finish their sentences and communicate in an honest &amp; respectful way. I will try to stay out of the discussions and only intervene if necessary. This session will be recorded and anonymized in the research.</p>
10:20-11:40	<p><b>5) Discussion</b></p> <p><b>Block 1: Art as a tool to educate and communicate about the climate crisis</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. What was the most powerful message you ever received from art?</b></li> </ol> <p>Science showed that fruitful results emerge when artists are involved in projects that aim to create awareness. For both, artists, and organizations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>2. If you have ever collaborated with artists/organizations what was your experience?</b></li> </ol> <p><b>Block 2: Creating awareness to catalyze transformative action</b>  Researchers found three ground rules of integrative approaches to educate about climate change.  <i>The first axiom</i> recognizes that worldview, values, emotions shape how people relate to climate change, so educating about the emotional dimension of climate change is therefore vital.  <i>The second axiom</i> acknowledges that the way the issue of climate change is framed, influences the types of solutions that will be identified.  <i>The third axiom</i> recognizes that transformation to sustainability is on its way, therefore we need imagination.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. How could you envision art to play a role in educating your employees or members of your organization to educate them about the impact of climate change?</b></li> <li><b>2. Regarding the three axioms I just mentioned: which axiom do you personally think would work best to raise awareness within your organization or (as an artist) through your art?</b></li> </ol> <p><b>Block 3: Organizational Responsibility to create Positive Social Change</b>  According to researchers: Positive Social Change is only reached if organizations create motivation among their employees to engage in climate change, build internal capabilities &amp; resilience and create new opportunities for collaboration simultaneously.  <i>Motivation</i> refers to building <i>intrinsic motivation, a sense of collective purpose, as well as communicating and raising awareness about a specific issue.</i>  Developing <i>Capabilities</i> involves educating, building skills, and confidence inside the organization.  Creating <i>Opportunities</i> includes establishing empowering opportunity structures, rearranging the organizational environment, and introducing projects that facilitate collaboration and building bridges among formerly unconnected actors to build social capital that allows targets to access new resources and new perspectives.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. To everyone: what are you taking on as your responsibility as artist or member of your organization in the discussion about climate change?</b></li> </ol>

	<p><b>2. We have wonderful individuals in this call – what do you think: how could you, as artists and organizations come together and collaborate to create Positive Social Change?</b></p> <p><i>(How could you create motivation? How could you create capabilities? How could you create opportunities?)</i></p>
11:40-12:00	<p><b>6) Summary of the Session</b>  <b>7) Key Take Away's</b>  <b>8) Follow up Information</b></p>

## Appendix E – Codes

Themes	Secod order Codes	First order Codes
(1) Artists and representatives of organizations feel personally responsible for combating the climate crisis	Self-awareness of responsibility for addressing the climate crisis	Responsibility as an Organization
	Artist perspective	Responsibility as an Artist
		Motivation to become active to fight the climate crisis
		Experiences when integrating art in events and business
		Challenges when being an artist
		Motivation to be an artist
		we need to show that every step matters
		"Once you see it you can't unsee it anymore"
	Organization representatives perspective	Most powerful message received from Art
		Switch of perspectives through art
Interpretation of Art		
Organizational perspective on art		
	Most powerful message received from Art	
	communication through art	
	Interpretation of Art	
(2) Interdisciplinary and structural challenges hinder collaboration between artists and organizations	Barriers that prevent organizations and artists from working together	Business & Artists speak different languages
		Climate artist vs. Climate communicator
		Lack of respect for artists and their work
		Barriers for collaborating
		Negative experiences with collaborating
	Current power structures hinder identifying solutions	Give art for free because of the bigger picture
		Art primarily connected to "culture" and not to "business"
		Patriarchy plays a big role in reframing the issue of climate change
		Axiom two is the most important
		Change power structures
	Climate change is a symptom, not the problem	
	Decision making position	
	Lack of representation	
	Saving the planet seen as a "restriction"	
(3) Artists are still seen as untapped potential, but involving artists in organizational work holds great potential for Positive Social Change	Potential ways of collaboration in the future	Examples for cooperation between artists and organizations
		Ideas on how to collaborate
		Potential ways to collaborate
		Find similarities despite the differences
	The potential of art to bring about change	How to achieve Positive Social Change?
		"The work that needs to be done is everywhere"
		Art gives hope
		Visualizing the situation as the best way to raise awareness
		Education about the Climate Crisis through art
	Importance of visualizing the future	
Advantages of involving artists in organizational work	Benefits of working with artists	
	Positive experiences when artists and organizations collaborate	
Creating Positive Social Change	Positive Social Change	

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