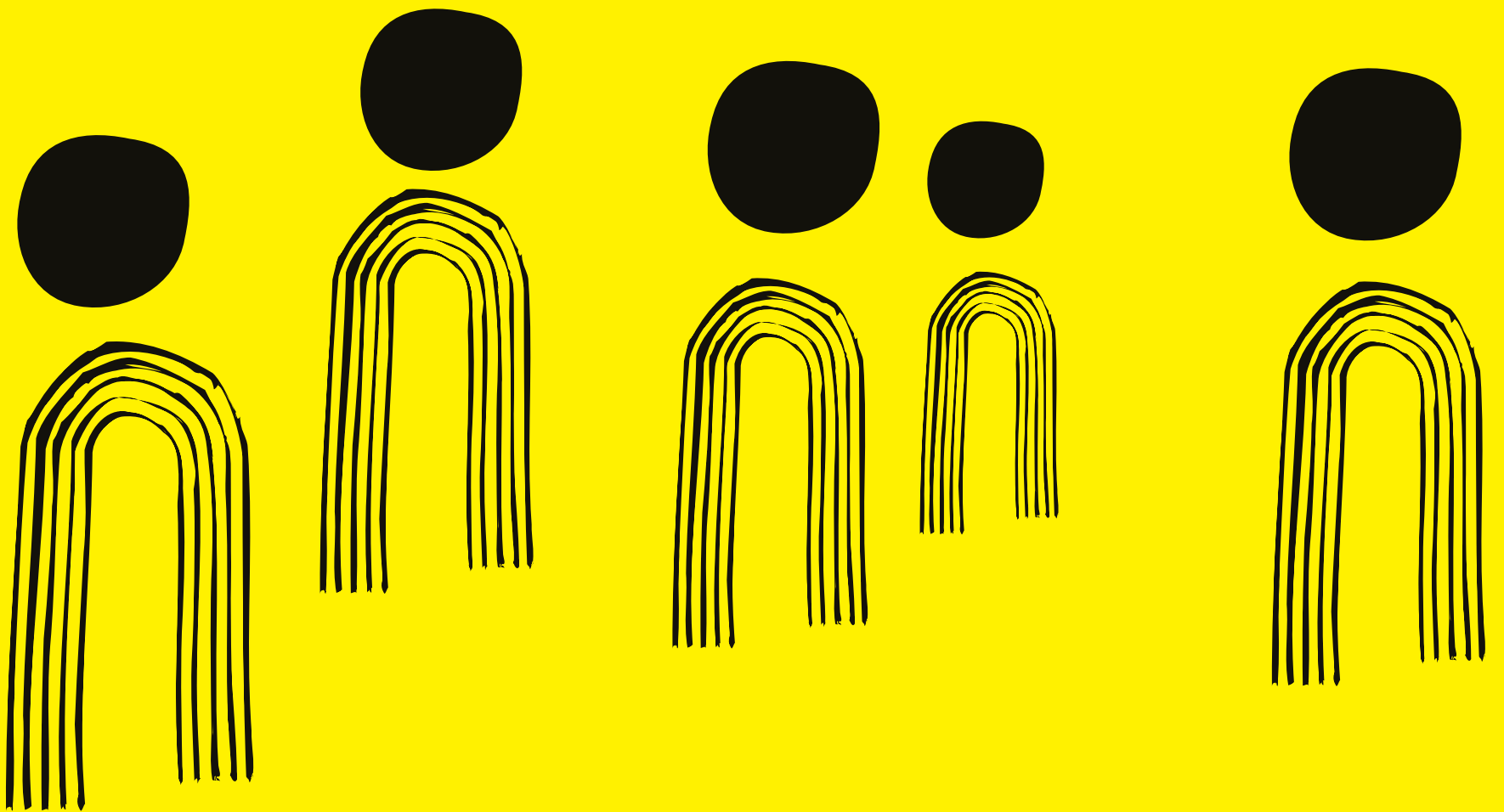


**Act now!**



GUIDE BOOK FOR REACTIVE

**ECO-CRISIS**

ART PRACTISE

GUIDE BOOK FOR REACTIVE  
**ECO-CRISIS**  
ART PRACTISE



1. edition, 2022

Association of Finnish Children's Cultural Centers

Guidebook layout: Hanna Nordström

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# Back-cover blurb

All possible people and means are needed to stop the eco-crisis!

Can frustration and concern about the eco-crisis be transformed into action and positive change through art? What is eco-crisis art action like? This guide explains how art can be used to change thinking and actions related to the eco-crisis.

Reactive eco-crisis art practice is a multidisciplinary method used in art education and when working with young people. This guide offers tools, tips and questions to steer action towards art activism. Everyone can use the guide and combine it with their own competences in a variety of environments. The guide encourages art, youth and educational professionals to cooperate, make use of experts from different fields and young people's experiences and views.

Reactive eco-crisis art practice is a way to affect your own opinions, choices and actions of yourself and others. In addition to influencing, the goal is to raise important issues, activate a debate and present arguments by means of art. Key elements of the method include collaboration skills and an openness to different views, feelings and experiences.

Start using the guide and help young people deal with eco-crisis subjects important to them by means of art!

This guide was made as part of the international Youth Learning through Arts (YLTA) project (2021–2022). The contents were created by the Art Centre for Children and Young People's Young Visual Art.

[Click here to use Finnish version of the guide.](#)

To learn more about reactive eco-crisis art and the Youth Learning through Arts project on social media with the hashtags **#YouthLearningThroughtArts** **#YLTA** and **#ReactiveEcoCrisisArt** kautta.

Wishing you an inspirational journey,

**Sonja Salomäki**  
**Anni Rupponen**  
**Päivi Venäläinen and**  
**Elina Katara**

Art Centre for Children and Young People

In Hyvinkää December 5, 2021





# Introduction

Young people are more concerned about the future of our environment and living conditions than ever before. We invite you, educator, teacher or instructor to support young people to process the eco-crisis through art. In reactive eco-crisis art practice, various eco-crisis period phenomena, problems and tensions are processed by experimentation, challenging, creativity and action.

“Activism art is done in collaboration, to reach a common target, sharing things, helping others and aiming for as much visibility and impact as possible,” says artist and researcher Sonja Salomäki, who took part in creating the guide.

The guide encourages you to reactive eco-crisis art action in groups and together with experts from different fields. The method is suitable for various groups of young people in different countries. You can work indoors, outdoors or in digital environments. The guide can be adjusted to suit your operating environment and the resources available to you.

The guide leads you towards working with art through contemplation, questions and discussion. Eco-crisis art action is carried out using artistic methods the instructor and participants are already familiar with. The guide does not teach art techniques. The target is to create an artivistic act to highlight a key phenomenon caused by the ecological crisis. The artistic act is linked to the implementation environment’s local and topical eco-crisis themes.



The [Instructor's guide](#) and [Cooperation](#) in a group parts prepare the group's instructor for eco-crisis art practice. The stages of reactive eco-crisis art practice are [orientation](#), [planning](#), [implementation](#) and **conclusions**. We recommend that you complete the stages in the above order. Work is done in either 4–5 intensive meetings or over several periods. The first meeting focuses on orientation. During 2–3 meetings, you plan a reactive eco-crisis artistic act and implement it in a physical space and/or social media. In the last meeting, you collect feedback and discuss what was learned during the working process.

**Eco-crisis, art and activism** are multilayered concepts. The Mini glossary contains keywords to help your work.

The cooperation is guided by equality, critical thinking and principles of safer spaces and areas of non-discrimination. Accessibility is taken into account in all work stages. Civic disobedience is discouraged.

We hope that the outcome is a feeling of wanting to make a difference. We want to see reactive artistic acts for a better future.



# Mini glossary

This glossary has been created as support material for eco-crisis art practice. The definitions given below are not always comprehensive.



## **Activism**

Activism means actions by citizens with the purpose of changing society. It expresses a view on something, for or against. There are many types of activism, such publishing material online, artivism, demonstrations and attempts to influence social and political decision-makers. Activism may be carried out by individuals and groups. (Oxford Dictionary)



## **Activist**

An activist is a person who campaigns to bring about political or social change. (Oxford Dictionary) Activists operate on the basis of their ethical and moral values



## **Artivism**

is a portmanteau word combining art and activism  
Artistic act or work of art making use of artivistic methods. (Oxford Dictionary)



## **Dystopia**

Dystopia is an imagined and undesired society in the future or parallel reality. Dystopia is the opposite of utopia. (Oxford Dictionary)



## **Eco-crisis (ecological crisis)**

An eco-crisis is an imbalance of organisms, the environment and the climate that leads to a fight for survival. It occurs as a result of events or sequence of action within a specific period.

Eco-crisis is a term often used for environmental problems caused by humans, such as climate change, loss of biodiversity and accumulation of plastic waste. A crisis is a new situation faced by an individual or a community that cannot be overcome with previously learned problem-solving methods. (Oxford Dictionary)

### **Climate anxiety**

Climate anxiety is a feeling caused by climate change phenomena. This may be combined with threats to individuals related to climate change. Fear and concern about the future is one aspect of climate anxiety. (Pihkala 2020)

### **Civic disobedience**

Civic disobedience is a peaceful and generally non-violent form of protest that breaks or opposes the law either actively or passively. The goal is to fix a perceived injustice. (Oxford Dictionary) We recommend that you avoid engaging in civic disobedience which refuses to comply with laws or causes physical damage.

### **Target group**

By target group we mean a group whose ideas and/or actions the chosen act is hoped to influence.



## **Criticality**

Criticality refers to the ability to observe received information or a phenomenon by evaluating and analyzing it.

This guide encourages critical thinking in relation to yourself, your own thoughts and operating models. We also encourage you to exercise source criticism, that is, evaluation the credibility and motives of your sources, how the material was created and by whom.



## **Media literacy skills**

Media literacy skills mean the ability to read and understand various media and to use the equipment to view and interpret them. Media literacy skills include the ability to see beyond the obvious meanings to find hidden meanings and to assess information critically. (Wikipedia)



## **Artistic act**

An artistic act is an act of artistic expression. It includes planned and process-like work leading up to specific act created in an artistic way. It can be a quick and spontaneous reaction to a topical issue, or the result of a long-term piece of work over a longer period. The result can be, for example, a work of art, performance, speech, social media publication, article or podcast. The implementation method can be a collage, meme, installation, performance, textile work, street art, video, sculpture, drawing, painting etc.



## **Art practice**

Art practice is work that involves some artistic work methods and techniques. It is typical that you use creative problem-solving skills, let the artistic inspiration guide you, and experiment freely. It involves getting out of your comfort zone and being open to any new ideas, your own or those of others.

It is difficult to say for sure how much time this process will take, because each process is different. What is important is the process and the outcome. In order to take part, you do not have to be an expert in any art form.



## **Future hope**

Future hope refers to a mental state or feeling used to maintain hope of a socially, economically, ecologically and culturally sustainable future.



## **Reactive**

Reactive means reaction to a topical issue, with the intention of creating a counter-reaction.



## **Utopia**

Utopia is an imagined and desired society in the future or parallel reality. Utopia is the opposite of dystopia. (Oxford Dictionary)



## **Influencing**

The goal with influencing is to change, develop or strengthen a person's perceptions and actions. The target may be the artist themselves, another person or a phenomenon. (Oxford Dictionary)



## **Environmental art**

Environmental art is used in this guide to mean art that refers to the environment and environmental phenomena. It can be implemented through various artistic means. In environmental art, humans are seen as part of the environment and nature.


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# Instructor's guide

The Instructor's guide helps to organizer of [reactive eco-crisis art practice](#) to become orientated with the theme and to plan the activity. We recommend that you go through the part in the suggested order.



## Orientation for an instructor

[Eco-crisis](#), [art](#) and [activism](#) can be challenging. Few people are experts in all of them. Take a test first by answering the questions to see how your thoughts and actions are linked with the eco-crisis and activism themes. Allow yourself time to reflect on and process various viewpoints. Be prepared, when acting as the instructor, to encounter attitudes and feelings that may be in contrast to your own.

### Instructions for answering

The questions are for yourself. Try to pick one answer that reflects best your thinking at the moment. The questions will encourage you to take a critical look at your assumptions, opinions and actions. The alternatives presented are there to give you a general idea. Their purpose is to make you aware of issues from various angles.

### Eco-crisis questions

#### Can you define the eco-crisis phenomenon?

- a. Yes. I can define it from my own viewpoints to various target audiences.
- b. Yes, partly. I'm nevertheless somewhat uncertain if I have to present the definition to an audience.
- c. I wouldn't define the eco-crisis myself, but always use a definition by experts.



### **How reliable is information available on the eco-crisis?**

- a. The eco-crisis has not been studied enough to draw any reliable conclusions.
- b. There is plenty of information about the eco-crisis, but it is so contradictory that it is difficult to process.
- c. There is plenty of researched information about the eco-crisis that can be used for global decisions and measures.

### **Can an individual affect the eco-crisis?**

- a. Yes. Everyone can, through their own choices and behavior, [change](#) our current and future living environment.
- b. I don't know. It seems that individual actions have no effect on the big picture. In order to prevent an eco-crisis, the key changes must concern the global market economy, industry and political decision-making.
- c. No. The actions of an individual have no bearing on saving the world, because, for example, the world population will rise to unbearable and large countries will pollute the world beyond repair.



### **Is the eco-crisis too complex a thing to process?**

- a. Yes. The eco-crisis is caused by diverse and long cause-and-effect relationships that are difficult for an individual to understand.
- b. Yes and no. I can nevertheless try to understand it by obtaining information one piece at a time.
- c. No. Everyone should carry their responsibility, obtain information about the eco-crisis and act in a way that will stop adverse development.

### **Is the eco-crisis a political issue?**

- a. Yes. Talking about the eco-crisis is always political, because it is a matter that concerns all of us, and politics is about dealing with common matters. It also involves values and attitudes that are divided by party politics.
- b. Yes and no. The eco-crisis is made political by the situation and the place where it is discussed.
- c. No. In youth work and art education, the eco-crisis can be discussed as a matter free of politics.



## Art and activism issues

### Should art take a stand?

- a. Yes. The purpose of art is to make people think and see things from fresh viewpoints. Art is a force that can change things.
- b. Maybe. Art can be used to try to exert an influence, but not all art must strive for that.
- c. No. The purpose of art is to create beauty and pleasure.

### Can I create art?

- a. Yes. All people have the freedom to express themselves through art.
- b. I don't know. I can use materials, tools and methods used for art, but what I create can hardly be called art.
- c. No. Art is created by professional artists.



### **I think many of the methods used for modern art are...**

- a. interesting. They make you understand the issues expressed through art and works of art in new ways.
- b. so strange that it's difficult to call it art. It is difficult to define which form of art the works of art or performances represent. It's confusing that sometimes the audience is part of the work of art or performance.
- c. a waste of money. Not even all the artsy-fartsy nonsense can help with the serious stuff, such as stopping the eco-crisis.

### **What is impactful activism?**

- a. Art taking a strong stand on an issue, sometimes even resorting to [civic disobedience](#) for artistic end.
- b. Art that indirectly and cunningly affects decision-makers and influences without nevertheless breaking the law or infringing on human rights.
- c. Art using humor that gets a lot of attention on social media.

### **How do you go about activism?**

- a. By using work methods and techniques known during the history of art and modern art.
- b. By using methods used in demonstrations, such as signs, carnivalism or slogans.
- c. By using any artistic method. Only your imagination is the limit.

## **Acquisition of information**

Prepare for reactive eco-crisis art practice by finding the latest information about the eco-crisis and activism for the participants. Find out what kind of attitudes and views are related to them. Find information in printed and digital media. Also use more than one search engine.

**Be prepared to present a few sources to the participants to choose from as they seek more information about the eco-crisis and activism.**

Remember to exercise source criticism. Who provided the information? Where was it published? The subjects to be covered are extensive. It is enough that you are aware of various viewpoints and can guide the participants to find more information.

## Explore and learn more

Look for information from the sources listed below.  
For more tips, go to the Reactive eco-crisis  
art practice section.

nonfiction  
books

seminars

research articles

newspaper  
articles

See also the tips in the  
reactive eco-crisis art  
practice!

demonstrations  
(such as Fridays for  
Future)

Intergovernmental  
Panel on Climate  
Change (IPCC)  
reports

events (e.g.  
the Power Shift  
event in Finland)

lectures for the  
general public

political  
proposals  
and  
decisions

social media  
channels

podcasts

environmental  
action, activism  
and art by young  
people

activism (e.g. Extinction  
Rebellion, 350.org, POW –  
Protect Our Winters)

databases (such  
as ResearchGate,  
Google Scholar,  
universities and  
other research  
institutes)

videos

audiobooks

art exhibitions and  
events

archives



## Cooperation

Network and cooperate to enable different kinds of expertise and data to be made available for the group. Learn more about organizations, associations and persons working on these issues. The result is achieved when you can focus on your strengths and invite experts from other fields to work with you, such as artists, activists, influencers, decision-makers and researchers. Young people may also participate in the planning and act as instructors.

Agree among the collaborators on each person's area of responsibility and roles during the work.

### **There can be a number of roles:**

observer	adult
expert	visitor
facilitator	professional of another field
peer instructor	project coordinator
teacher	communicator
expert by experience	social media coordinator
instructor	sponsor
documenter	



## Adjustment to your operating environment

Reactive eco-crisis art practice can be applied to various situations, groups and purposes. You can work indoors, outdoors or in digital environments.

**Divide the work into 4–5 sessions. The recommended length for one session is three hours, which includes the breaks. This can be done intensively or during the course of several months.**

Adapt the work stages presented in the guide on the basis of the group and time available.

Take also into account your own resources in terms of time and energy. The eco-crisis is a theme that may create conflicting feelings.





# Cooperation in a group

Working in a group requires openness to various opinions and ideas. Agree with the team on cooperation principles.

## Principles of good cooperation

- Create an atmosphere that respects other people and their views. Be open to different opinions, ideas and experiences.
- Be **critical** about your own actions and prepared to develop them during the collaboration and any follow-up work.
- Be curious and ask many 'why' questions.
- Everyone is treated equally regardless of their age, nationality, gender or other personal characteristics.
- Retain a constructive and critical attitude towards information and power structures.
- Avoid civic disobedience.
- Follow the principles of non-discrimination and safer space.
- Try to use working and communication methods that are accessible to all participants.
- Agree in the beginning how any conflicts will be resolved in the group.



## **Instructor's responsibility**

The goal is to make eco-crisis art practice interesting for the individual participants and as a group. As the instructor, you will be in charge of the group's overall operation. Work at least on improving group cohesion, the working stage and end discussion. Wherever necessary, have the participants work individually, in pairs or in groups. Pay attention to what kind of roles there are in the group. Offer the participants the opportunity to change roles within the group.

## **Building a group**

Eco-crisis art practice is suitable for a range of youth groups. The participants may know each other already, or the group has been created for this activity and so may not know each other. The participants may have a different amount of advance information and experience about eco-crisis, art and activism. By engaging the young people in all work stages, you can better meet their needs and wishes. Cooperation partners are always involved.

You should start your search for your people interested in eco-crisis art practice with your own networks. Invite them to join, send open invitations or contact a group that already exists. Target your marketing to media and locations frequented by young people. Consider whether you want to have people who have already worked on the subject and/or those who are new to it.





When you are the only instructor, the recommended group size is 5–8, or a larger group can be divided into smaller groups or pairs. When more instructors are available, the group size can also be increased.

**Where to contact young people:**

young community center	volunteering
seminar	library
school	social media
festival	working in associations
art school	various hobby groups
education	demonstrations
cultural center	social work groups
camp	
environmental or climate action	



## Improving group cohesion

### Learn about each other

Use resources to improve group cohesion, regardless of whether the members already know each other or may never have met before. Reserve time for the participants and the experts working with them to learn to know each other and to create a sense of trust among them.

Find out what kind of knowledge, skills, areas of interest and experiences the participants have about the eco-crisis, art and activism. Tell about your own competences and areas of interest related to eco-crisis art practice. Try to present facts about the matter. However, avoid transferring your own ideas to the young people. Instead, encourage them to think critically and to contemplate on the themes at hand.

### Make the most of the participants' knowledge and skills

Young people often have plenty of competences and knowledge. They are often better informed than adults. Although young people may not yet know much about the eco-crisis or activism, they know what it's like to be a young person during the eco-crisis era. It is important that every participant feels safe in the group and that their contribution is appreciated.



## **Learn together**

Embark on a common learning journey and see what comes out of it. It is important to ponder issues together. You don't have to find an answer for everything. Give all the participants (young people, instructors, guest experts and partners) the opportunity to present their knowledge and skills and to develop their collaboration skills.



## **Take account of feelings evoked by the work**

Eco-crisis art practice may evoke conflicting feelings that should be discussed. Everyone probably feels some kind of uncertainty about the future and what the world is becoming like.

The instructor will lead the discussion about these emotions. This is a key part of the work, but it is not supposed to be therapy.



## **Raise some hope**

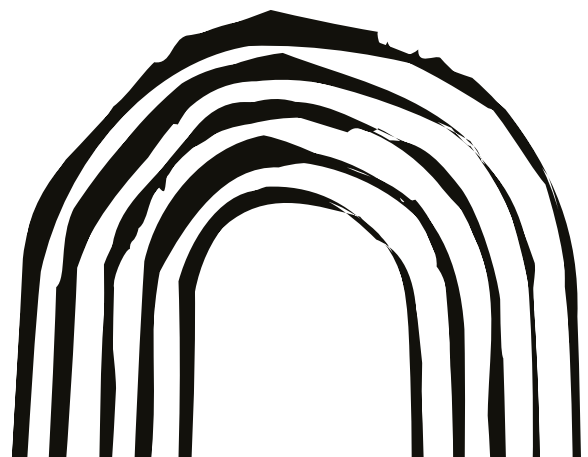
Changes are taking place around the world all the time, and everyone can do something about the speed and extent of which they occur. Hope can be seen in minor positive changes. Put together, they can result in something bigger.

## How to get a group discussion going

1. Tell me about yourself: Who are you? Which eco-crisis theme are you interested and touched by? What gives you hope despite the eco-crisis?
2. What is the most urgent eco-crisis in your living environment?
3. Do you know of any cases of activism performed to stop an eco-crisis and to raise **hope about the future**?

Try out various discussion models in group conversations, such as the Timeout method. For additional information, go to [www.timeoutdialogue.fi](http://www.timeoutdialogue.fi)

**Collect keywords and make a word cloud out of them. You can collect them on a wall, piece of paper or use some online application (such as Mentimeter).**







# Reactive eco-crisis art practice

A method of working with environmental art that implements artistic acts in the group, influencing how people think about the eco-crisis. The artistic acts are reactive acts in physical spaces and online.

## What is reactive eco-crisis art practice?

Reactive eco-crisis art practice plans and implements activist artistic acts together. These take a stand on a current issue, trying to influence a chosen target group. Activism aims for visibility and effect. Work can be carried out in a single group or by dividing into smaller groups.

Work is done in either 4–5 intensive meetings or over several periods. The first meeting focuses on orientation. During 2–3 meetings, you plan a reactive eco-crisis artistic act and implement it in a physical space and/or social media. In the last meeting, you collect feedback and discuss what was learned during the working process.

### **Eco-crisis art practice proceeds in stages:**

#### **Orientation**

1

- Find out what the participants' view of the eco-crisis and activism.
- Think of an angle from which the eco-crisis is dealt with.
- Discuss which type of artistic acts can be used to influence people.
- Learn about phenomena related to the eco-crisis.
- Learn about activism and artivism related to the eco-crisis.

2

## **Planning**

- Choose a phenomenon that is created by artistic means.
- Choose a target group for the artistic act, that is, a group you want to influence.
- Think of the most efficient implementation and technique to deliver the message.
- Plan an act.
- Select where it is going to be implemented.

3

## **Implementation**

- Draw up a social media strategy for the artistic act to increase its impact.
- Carry out the eco-crisis artistic act in the chosen location or locations.

4

## **After the eco-crisis artistic act**

- Go through the work process and the eco-crisis artistic act.
- Analyze what kind of impact the eco-crisis artistic act and its planning left in the participants.
- If possible, ask people who saw and experienced the artistic act how they experienced it.



## Tips for working

Make sure that all artistic act participants feel safe all the time. A pleasant work atmosphere can be helped by agreeing on the principles of working, having enough breaks and offering light snacks during work. See this [link](#) for creating constructive cooperation.

Share your experiences in the group about the eco-crisis, art and activism.

Document the work process. Take photos, record discussions, make videos, take notes or keep a project diary.

Share your feelings about reactive eco-crisis art practice on social media.

## Orientation

Before starting actual work, it is a good idea to find out what kind of views the participants have about the eco-crisis and activism.

The orienting questions in the box below and answering them will help you select an eco-crisis phenomenon you will process through artistic means. They also give an idea on the participants' conception of art. You can also make use of the questions in the [Instructor's guide](#).

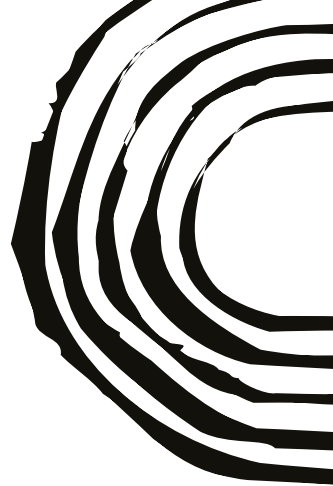
Questions and answers can be recorded during a discussion, by writing them down, using pictures and/or with an electronic mood board tool. The implementation method decides to what extent the participants will be able to view each others' answers during and after the questions and answers.

Choose questions that apply to the group. The instructor should answer the questions first, before asking the questions from the participants.

The questions can be asked as part of a group meeting or be given as a preliminary assignment to the participants. Regardless of how the questions were answered, the answers will be discussed together in the group.

Key concepts in the questions are explained in the [Mini glossary](#).

- Which eco-crisis phenomenon or problem do you want to influence through art?
- What kind of art can change thinking and behavior?
- What kind of art can influence politicians, decision-makers and other influencers?
- Have you come across or been part of activism? What insights have you obtained through it?
- How would you describe your artistic competence?
- Is [dystopia](#) and/or [utopia](#) a valid stylistic tool in activism? Give grounds for your answer.
- How can a work of art express the privileged viewpoint of a person living in the West? Is such a person a destroyer or a savior?
- Can an artistic act be implemented from other than an human-centered viewpoint? Give grounds for your answer.



## Gather background information

Learn about factors and events about the eco-crisis in various media. There are plenty of factors and actions. You can get started with the following sources and factors.

### Media

Internet

newspapers

magazines

social media

literature

podcasts

### Art and research

International Fridays for the  
Future demonstrations

Artist group  
Suophanterror

Research and artists  
community Climate Whirl

Art project Sea walls –  
Artists for Oceans

Art project  
Julie's Bicycle

Art projects by  
Terike Haapoja and  
Laura Gustafsson



Search words

activism, art activism  
activism  
craftivism  
craft activism  
artivism  
performative activism  
ilmastomeemit

anthropocene  
biodiversity  
impact of animal production on climate  
eco-crisis or ecological crisis  
ecosocial education

giving up fossil fuels  
climate crisis  
climate memes  
climate change  
climate activism  
greenhouse effect  
sustainable development

species loss  
biodiversity loss  
extinction  
small-scale activism  
counter advertising  
cultural harassment  
guerrilla gardening  
solastalgia

## Planning

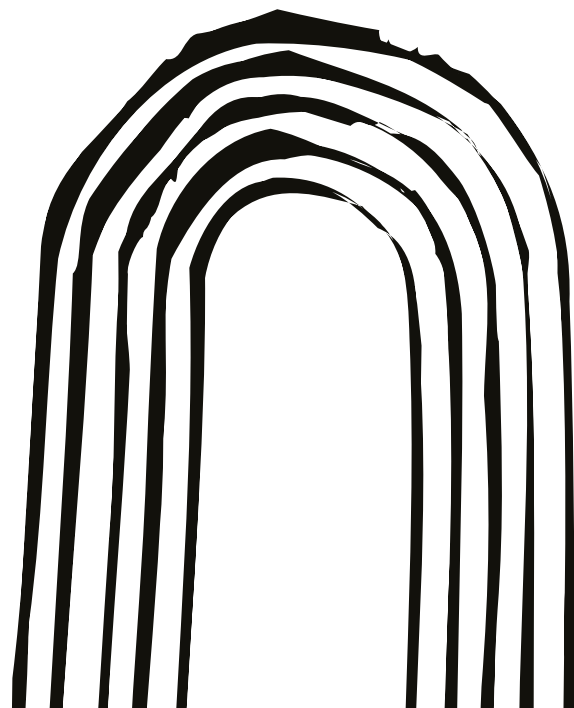
The planning stages consist of limiting the scope, clarifying the purpose of the reactive eco-crisis artistic act, choosing a [target group](#) and making a draft of an eco-crisis artistic act.

### Limit the scope

The eco-crisis is a big, global thing. List phenomena that interest the participants and select a phenomenon or problem for the group that you will process through your artistic act.

#### Some question to help you select an eco-crisis phenomenon:

- Why does this phenomenon touch you?
- Why should you stick your neck out for this phenomenon?





## **Clarify the purpose of the reactive eco-crisis artistic act**

Clarify to yourselves the purpose of the artistic act describing the eco-crisis phenomenon by answering the following questions:

- Why do you need an eco-crisis artistic act?
- What is the objective with your artistic act?
- What kind of change do you want to create with your artistic act?
- What solution does the artistic act propose to the problem presented?
- How does an artistic act create hope?
- From whose viewpoint is the artistic act presented?
- How is the artistic act linked to local reality?
- How is the currency and urgency of the subject expressed in the artistic act?
- Why is this artistic act important?

## **Choose a target group**

Select a target group for your eco-crisis artistic act. The influencing may target the group's perceptions and acts. Keep the target group in mind at every stage of planning, implementing the artistic act and also when drawing your conclusions.



Using the questions below, define a target group for the artistic act, and matters that must be taken into account to achieve it:

- Who is the target of your communication, that is, the target group?
- Where does the target group move?
- How does the target group behave?
- With whom does the target group spend time?
- Which media does the target group use?
- Which matters could the target group be interested in?
- Which eco-crisis phenomena could the target group be worried about?
- What is the target group's position in society?
- What kind of influence does the target group have?
- What kind of artistic act could appeal to the target group?
- How could the target group be addressed in an equal way and with style?
- How can you follow and find out whether the artistic act actually reaches the target group?
- Which methods should not be used to reach this target group?



## **Make a draft of an eco-crisis artistic act**

Transform your chosen phenomenon into a pictorial or other condensed form by means of the work stages below, and their related questions. When making a draft, use the tools and working methods that come naturally to you. This draft will be your 'recipe' for implementing the artistic act.

### **Simplify**

Crystallize! Select details to make your message loud and clear.

Polarize! Pick the key element in your theme and highlight it.

### **Imagine**

Use your imagination! Imagine things, situations and visions related to the phenomenon. Is your vision realistic, utopian or dystopian? Do you want to present an alternative reality?

Make a story out of your artistic act! Stories are an effective way to influence the target group. It can be either a short or a long story. It can be based on facts, or fiction. At least think of a good start to the story, and a high point and an end.

### **Visualize**

Make use of the diversity of the visual culture! Which visual elements, such as colors, shapes, textures and fonts describe best the phenomenon or problem and the solution suggested by the artistic act?

Study symbolism! What kind of symbolism do the colors and shapes you choose carry? Does the artistic act include hidden meanings?

Remember the power of esthetics! Beauty can also be used to highlight something. It can also highlight difficult and conflicting issues.

Condense the draft! Can the phenomenon or problem be brought down to a single picture or two pictures, to movement or sound?



### **Consider the reception**

Evoke a need in the target group to take action! The first impression created by a reactive eco-crisis artistic act is crucial. Try to earn the trust of the artistic act's target group and to allay their fears. Avoid accusing them and instead use encouragement and empathy.

Humor is a powerful tool! Use interesting content to make the target group laugh. Be prepared for various reactions to humor.

Contradiction speaks volumes! Consider whether the chosen phenomenon or problem contains contradictions.

How can they be utilized? Note that contradictions may also create adverse problems to your artistic act, and you must solve them. If such problems seem insurmountable, divide them into smaller pieces and try to see which of them you can solve with an artistic act.





## Implementation

A reactive eco-crisis artistic act may be implemented in a variety of ways.

The same idea can be implemented using different methods and techniques. An artistic act may be short or long in duration. It can be a one-off or repeated many times in different situations.

Next choose an implementation method, place and time.

### Select implementation method

Consider which type of art is best suited for implementing your idea. Study how similar ideas were implemented previously.

#### **Examples of artistic act implementation methods:**

sculpture, collage, meme, installation, photo or series of photos, performance, dance show, musical performance, speech, improvised theater, street art, drawing or painting (on paper, skin, street or with water on wall), poster, video, animation, cartoon, graffiti, craftivism, environmental art, demonstration, social media publication, sound art, podcast.

Select the type of implementation which your group is able to implement, or try out a type of expression or art form that is new to you.



### **Find out what material and tools are available**

Find out what material and tools are available, how much time you have and where you can work on it. Remember to factor in the time it takes to get going and finalize your work.



### **Remember ecological aspects!**

Favor ecological and recycled materials so that the message of the artistic act and its implementation do not contradict each other. Plan the artistic act to be such that it creates as little waste as possible or traces in nature, and that the materials can be reused or recycled afterwards. Sometimes your own body is enough to implement an artistic act. If you use natural materials, follow local guidelines on material handling.



### **Practice!**

Make a plan of the implementation and the presentation technique in the space where the act will be presented. If possible, practice presentation.



### **Give the artistic act a name!**

A name is an effective means of communication, evoking feelings and impressions. Choose a name that highlights the artistic act's purpose.



### **Write a presentation text**

A concise presentation text describes the artistic act and its message. Remember to check the facts in the presentation text.



## Select the implementation place and time

A reactive eco-crisis artistic act can be implemented in a variety of spaces and environments. It can be temporary or permanent. The implementation can be one-off or repetitive.

### Examples of implementation places and times

natural environment, built environment, different seasons, days of the week, times of day, media, events, private space, public space, indoors, outdoors

Select the most suitable implementation place and time for the artistic act by answering the following questions:

- Where do you think the artistic act belongs to?
- Where will the artistic act be visible in the best way, with the greatest impact?
- When can the artistic act be implemented?
- When is the best time for the artistic act to be implemented?
- What is the artistic act's size?
- What is the artistic act's duration?
- Which permits are needed to present the artistic act in a public place?
- Take account of everyman's rights, permits from landowners, permits concerning use of public spaces, permits for organizing an event, etc.

Study the artistic act's implementation place! Take into account the local attitudes and cultural environment.

## Create a social media strategy

In terms of visibility and impact, it is important to create a social media strategy for the artistic act, that is, a plan of what, where and where content related to the eco-crisis artistic act will be shared.

Create your social media strategy by answering the following questions:

- Which parts of the artistic act are shared on social media?
- Which social media channel or channels are used? Remember each channel's potential and limitations.
- Which type of publication forms are used (e.g. image, text, or video)?
- When is content related to the artistic act shared?
- How much is published and how often?
- Who is sharing the content?
- Whose social media account is used to publish it?
- Which hashtags and tags are used?
- How will reactions to the social media publication be responded to?

Use at least the hashtag ***#ReactiveEcoCrisisArt***



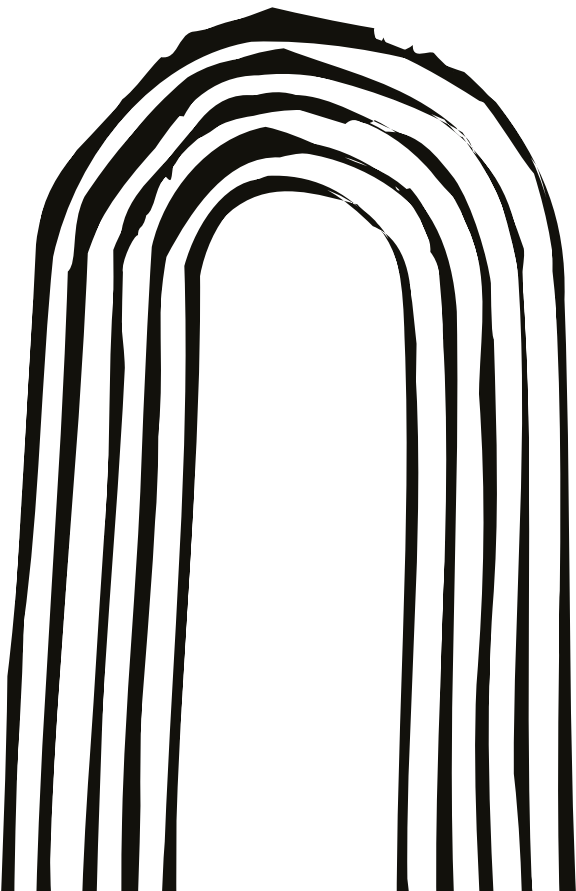
## **Implement your artistic act!**

Make sure that the participants have a clear idea of their role and responsibility regarding the implementation of the reactive eco-crisis artistic act. A person or persons will carry the main responsibility for implementing the artistic act. Agree in advance what is done if things do not go according to plan.

Have a clear plan on how the artistic act will begin and end. Follow your plan, but be prepared for unexpected changes. Change the plan if necessary.

Make sure that the artistic act will not cause damage to anyone or anything. Avoid civic disobedience.

Be open to new experiences and try to learn something new.



## Conclusions

Once you have implemented your reactive eco-crisis artistic act, it is important to collect feedback from the person who took part in planning and implementing it, and to discuss it together. Feedback can teach you about the group's strengths, why the artistic act was effective and what should be taken into account in future when dealing with the eco-crisis through activism.

### Collecting and processing feedback

The instructor will ensure that each participant has an equal opportunity to share their experiences, thoughts and feelings about the artistic act. Feedback is collected on the planning and work processes. Also take a look at the impact the artistic act had.

Reserve a quiet space for the discussion and enough time so that everyone has a chance to contribute. Try to keep the atmosphere open and accepting.

Feedback can be collected by talking and in writing, and using, for example Post-it notes or the Mentimeter application. Save the feedback for analysis and possible further workshops.






Questions to facilitate the feedback discussion.

- What were you successful in?
- What did you learn?
- What things facilitated cooperation?
- Did you have any challenges in your work? What kind? How did you overcome them?
- How well did you reach the target group you had specified for the artistic act?
- What kind of reactions did the artistic act create?
- What made your eco-crisis artistic act effective?
- Did working on the artistic act change your ideas about the eco-crisis, art or activism?
- What kind of ideas did you get for reactive eco-crisis art practice?

The instructor can utilize the feedback with future workshops. Areas of development for new implementations can be found by, for example, grouping the feedback.



# Youth Learning through Arts (YLTA) project

A two-year project in Finland, Poland and Slovenia,  
where youth workers and art professionals  
collaborated with young people to create artistic  
methods suitable for youth work.



## YOUTH LEARNING THROUGH ARTS

This guidebook was made as part of a two-year Youth Learning through Arts (YLTA) project (2021–2022), coordinated by the Association of Finnish Children’s Cultural Centers. Finnish contributors were the Finnish Nature League and the Art Centre for Children and Young People. Partners from Slovenia were the Centre for Youth Culture Pionirski Dom and the IMPRO Association for Culture and Education, while Poland contributed through the Małopolska Institute of Culture and art center Cricoteka.

The project combined artistic methods with youth work and brings the creative sector as a tool for youth workers discussing issues that are important to them. During the project, the youth participants learn from the art instructors and vice versa. As always, learning lies at the core of Erasmus+ projects. In addition to learning with youth organizations and young people, the project focused on environmental art in Finland, improvisation in Slovenia and accessibility in Poland.

The project resulted in six art workshops for young people in three countries, two in each country. The project also organized training courses for art educators and youth instructors in Finland, Slovenia and Poland. The training focused on each country’s theme with the art educators and youth workers, finding new viewpoints about their work.

[Use this link to get to the YLTA project’s website.](#)

## Implementation of the environmental art guidebook in Finland

The Association of Finnish Children's Cultural Centers chose, following an application directed at its members, the Art Centre for Children and Young People to create the guide for environmental art, to organize art workshops and to participate in the YLTA training. The Art Centre for Children and Young People invited artist and researcher Sonja Salomäki for the work, and the guide and workshops are based on her development work.

Pilot workshops for reactive eco-crisis art workshops in Helsinki and Jyväskylä were participated in by 13 young people interested in environmental themes, art and influencing. In the YLTA training, 14 youth work and art education professionals from Finland, Slovenia and Poland took part in the development of eco-crisis art practice and the related guide. Feedback from youth workshops and international training were utilized in the creation of the guide.

## Erasmus+

Erasmus+ is a European Union program that supports teaching, education, youth work and sport in Europe. During 2021–2027, the program will emphasize social inclusion, transition to sustainable development and digitalization and increasing the participation of young people in democracy.



# Acknowledgments

The gratitude for people's reactions to fight against the eco-crisis through reactive artistic acts and the ability of the environment to recover have been the prime forces behind the creation of this guide. Thank you for using this guide, which we hope will utilize art practice to influence people and their thinking during the eco-crisis.

We want to thank the children and young people involved and those working with them and with art, whose experiences, ideas and feedback have brought us to this point.

We also want to thank the young people interested in the eco-crisis who took an active part in the reactive eco-crisis art workshops in Helsinki and Jyväskylä and by asking questions, challenging things and coming up with ideas to encourage eco-crisis artistic acts directed at decision-makers and influencers.

We want to thank artist and researcher Sonja Salomäki whose expertise about activism and the eco-crisis has helped us to understand better how widespread the eco-crisis is and the creative power that activism can have in combating it. The development of Sonja's methods guide and the content of the pilot workshops she created for eco-crisis art practice form the core of this guide.

*Sonja Salomäki*  
*Photographer: Hiski Rapi*





We want to thank the participants of the Youth Learning through Arts (YLTA) project from Finland, Slovenia and Poland to the eco-crisis art practice workshop pilot and for their contribution to and creative ideas for the development of the methods guide.

Thanks to the Finnish Nature League's climate group's instructors Laura Haikko, Sami Säynevirta and Ville Laitinen for their enthusiastic work with young people against the climate crisis.

Thanks to the Association of Finnish Children's Cultural Centers for its choice for creating the content of the methods guide and the international training implementation, and for the cooperation trust in the production process.


Thanks to the international partners of the YLTA development project, the Centre for Youth Culture Pionirski Dom and the IMPRO Association for Culture and Education from Slovenia, and the Małopolska Institute of Culture and art center Cricoteka from Poland.

Thanks to the young visual artists taking part in the Young Visual Art activities of the Art Centre for Children and Young People and others interested in art for their cooperation which taught us over and over again why, where and how young people want to fight against the eco-crisis through art and activism.



Thanks to the European Union's Erasmus+ program that has funded the YLTA project and thereby supported young people's opportunities for influencing through artistic work.

*Participants to the international YLTA training*



# About the authors of this guide

**The Art Centre for Children and Young People** is a Finnish expert in art education and cultural youth work. The foundation operates from Cultural Centre for Children and Youth Villa Arttu in Hyvinkää. The Centre has local, national and international operations.

Cultural youth work is carried out through **the Young Visual Art** activities that were launched in 2018.

Young Visual Art works actively online, organizes both nationwide events and regional and local activities with various partners and young people. The target group is the age group from 13 to 28 years, varying in different forms.

The emphasis is on the visual arts. Children and young people are given an opportunity to present their art and activities and to work with professionals, getting feedback from them.

From the Art Centre for Children and Young People, the following took part in creating this guide: Anni Rupponen (Master of Arts), Sonja Salomäki (Master of Arts, Doctoral candidate at the University of Lapland), Päivi Venäläinen (Doctor of Philosophy, Master of Education) and Elina Katara (Master of Arts).

English links:

[Read more about Young Visual Art's home page](#)

[Read more about Young Visual Art's Instagram](#)

[Read more about Young Visual Art's Facebook](#)

[Read more about Young Visual Art's Taide\Folio website](#)

[Read more about Art Centre for Children and Young People's home page](#)

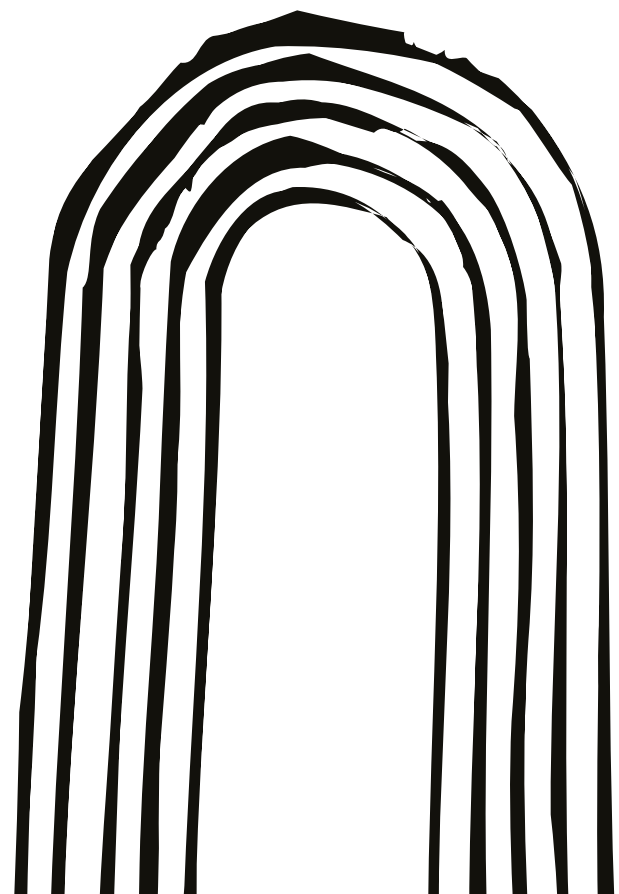
## Send us feedback!

The guide for reactive eco-crisis art practice is ready, but we want to learn more about the potential impact of activism during the eco-crisis period. We also want to hear what kind of eco-crisis artistic acts you created. What we have learned will be applied for cultural youth work in the work done by Young Visual Art.

Email your feedback to:

[nuoritaide@artcentre.fi](mailto:nuoritaide@artcentre.fi)

Tag your posts in Instagram with @nuoritaide and use the *#ReactiveEcoCrisisArt*.



*In cooperation:*

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