

#DigitalArt4Climate

Co-Creation | Ideation Space

Environmental Advocacy Toolkit

DESIGN FACILITATED BY ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE

Emel Tabaku



Emel Tabaku's artist-in-residency is part of the FUTURES/forward community engaged arts mentorship program, funded by the McConnell Foundation. FUTURES/forward is run by the International Centre of Art for Social Change (ICASC) and Judith Marcuse Projects (JMP), an arts organization with a 40-year history in Canada and abroad and a pioneer in the field of art for social change (ASC). Special thanks to Seanna Connell for her mentorship.

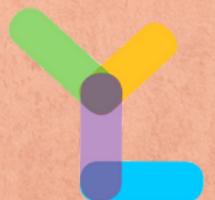




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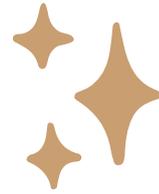
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Introduction

The **#DigitalArt4Climate** project brought together emerging youth creatives and dedicated environmentalists in an inclusive and collaborative space to advocate for sustainable futures through digital arts skills sharing and solutions-oriented dialogue over the course of four weeks.

We have co-created a digital media arts and environmental advocacy toolkit resource to help anyone, especially emerging environmental art activists, advocate for climate-resilient futures with more ease.

/Brought to you by Emel Tabaku, Mary Paquet, Bailike Edward Ma, Robin Gaudreau, Miéchèllè Ma, and Leonard Moliki.





Emel Tabaku is YCL's second featured Artist-in-Residence through ICASC FUTURES/forward program. She is an impact-driven and dedicated art-activist, social entrepreneur, and youth advocate. Emel strives to utilize the transformative power of art and design to advocate for progressive policies that empower youth groups across Canada.

Her work centres around the values of intersectional equity, collaboration, inclusivity and care as she continues to build creative resilient communities. Emel is the Founder of non-profit organization, RCAD Initiative.

Bailike (Edward) Ma is an environmental science graduate from U of T. He participated in many sustainability-related projects at university and organized a youth climate conference with a size of 600 participants in China. He can speak 3 languages (Mandarin, English, German) and traveled a bit around the world by himself. He likes nature, art and education.



Mary Paquet is a Master's student studying Environmental Education and Communication interested in understanding how we can shift narratives about the environment in the media, with the goal of slowing down and tuning in to build connections that help us take better care of each other and the planet.

She works primarily in graphic design but is more than excited when she gets the opportunity to work on a photo or video project. During her free time, Mary likes to go for a swim, or cooking a new recipe.



Robin Gaudreau is a trans-disciplinary artist, creating time-based experiences that reflect the intersections between Blackness, queerness, and community care. They perform in drag as Rye, and are a self-taught costume designer and videographer. They split their time between the territories of the Komoks Nation and Tkaronto, and can also be occasionally found doing burlesque or mathematics.



Leonard Moliki is a Johannesburg-based environmental advocate, multidisciplinary artist and co-Founder of Eco Clean Cycle helping local communities in the management of water and land. He was recognized for his photographs depicting garbage and other materials of consumerist culture. He combines photography with technology creating artworks that Leonard himself describes as "slow-motion apocalypse". His art reminds us how easily we destroy our planet.

Miéchéllè Ma

4 Ways Art-Activists Cultivate Eco-consciousness

by Emel Tabaku

UPCYCLE

(Making do with what you have)

Also known as creative reuse, transform by-products, waste materials or unwanted things into new art. Recycled art has been a form of environmental activism since the early 20th century.

EARTHING

(Ground yourself and your practice with the Earth)

Also known as Ephemeral Art, incorporate natural elements – earth, stone, trees, plants, even ice, to create an art work that dialogues with nature.

HONOUR

(Collaborate w/ Indigenous communities)

Seek to foster meaningful collaboration with Indigenous peoples and hold space for difficult conversations as you acknowledge, unpack and unlearn your connection to these unceded lands.

DARE

(Dare to imagine a better world)

Use your most provoking form of art expression to fulfill your vision of a better world. Use the power of art to inspire action and open conversations about environmental change.

Activist Protest Poster-Making

Resources & Tips by Emel Tabaku

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF POLITICAL GRAPHICS (CSPG)

“Posters give witness to a history of environmental struggles, prevent the issues from being forgotten by future generations, and show the vitality and importance of art in mobilising social change. They reclaim the power of art to educate, agitate and inspire action.”

Feel free to explore:

Collection > Browse Poster Records >
By Subject > Ecology

Exhibitions > Too Hot to Handle: Posters
on Climate Change, Pollution &
Environmental Justice

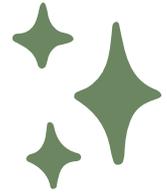
THE CENTER FOR ARTISTIC ACTIVISM

WHY ARTISTIC ACTIVISM: NINE REASONS

To browse examples of creative activist projects from around the world, create a free account with Actipedia – open-access, user-generated database of creative activism.

- Specifically on the environment, click here.

Digital Media Environmental Artists



Looking for inspiration? Take a look at the artists we've highlighted below.

Sharon Daniel

A media artist producing interactive and participatory documentaries focused on social, economic, environmental and criminal justice. She builds online archives and interfaces that make the stories of marginalised communities available across boundaries.

Sue Coe

Prolific painter and printer maker who has made brilliant graphic illuminations of political issues ranging from apartheid to factory farming to AIDS to the prison industrial complex.

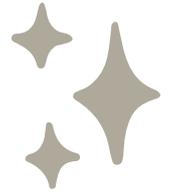
Sue Huang

A new media and installation artist whose work addresses collective experience. Her current projects explore ecological intimacies, human/nonhuman relations, and speculative futures.

Chris Jordan

Photographic arts depict the troubling scale and destructive impact of mass consumption, translating raw data into tangible images of environmental degradation.

Digital Media Environment Projects



Looking for inspiration? Take a look at the environmental art projects we've highlighted below.

Thought Leader presents Jeff Hong: Unhappily Ever After

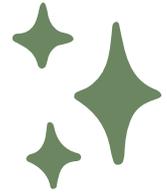
"I had earlier conceived an idea of putting Disney princesses into more photographic rough urban environments, something that is completely opposite of their fairy tale world...In part, the word became even more powerful and engaging and I was able to quickly realize that many other Disney characters could be used to shed light on messages that are important."
– Interview with Jeff Hong: Artist Behind Unhappily Ever After Project, Made In Shoreditch

Art Meets Environmental Activism in 'The Crossroads Project, composer Laura Kaminsky and painter Rebecca Allan

This feature-length cinematic performance fuses compelling science, evocative imagery, and powerful music in an exploration of nature, humanity, and the paths before us.

(edited by) Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel – Critical Zones, The Science and Politics of Landing on Earth

Critical Zones is a major exhibition at ZKM, providing a comprehensive look at climate change topics through a vast range of artistic perspectives.



Beehive Design Collective, The True Cost of Coal

A visually stunning graphic multi-tool for activists and ordinary folks seeking real solutions.

BRB! Digital Card Check

Provides a simple prompt for self care and regenerative activities that contribute to your own sustainability in social justice work.

Extinction Rebellion uses bold graphics in protest against climate change

"Climate change action group Extinction Rebellion has unveiled a "radically different" visual identity, including DIY protest posters that will allow activists to flypost cities."

Why the Activist Poster is Here to Stay?, Design Observer

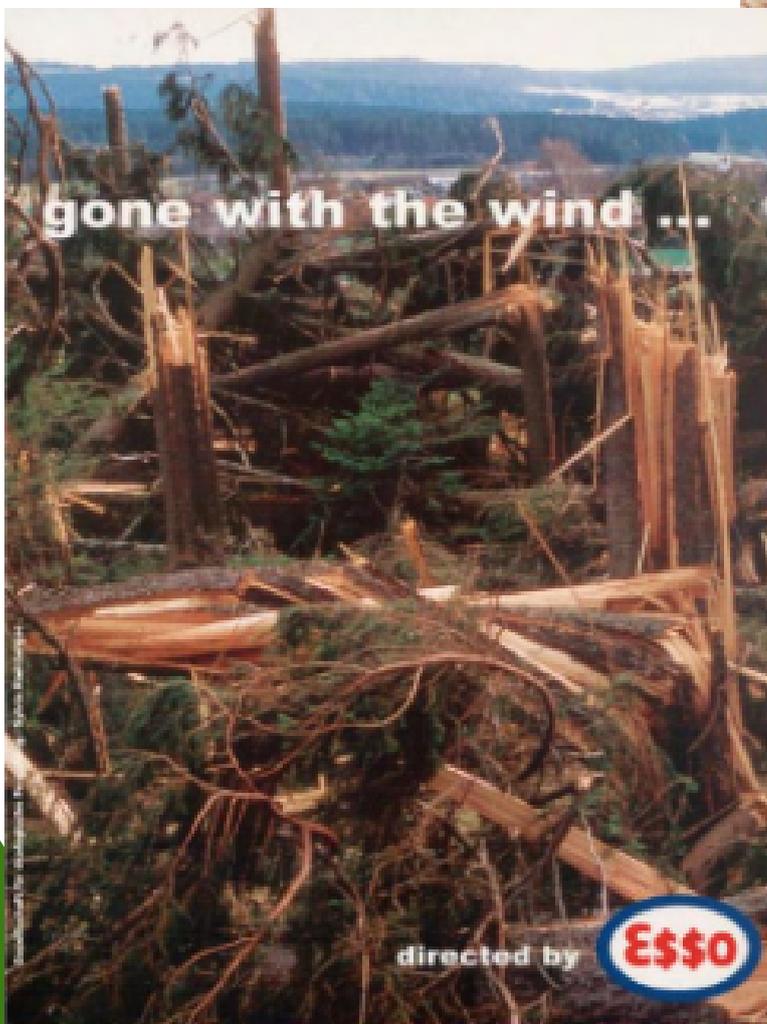
"...but they remind us that posters remain a succinct, popular and powerfully immediate form of public speech."

Activity



What makes these graphic posters effective?

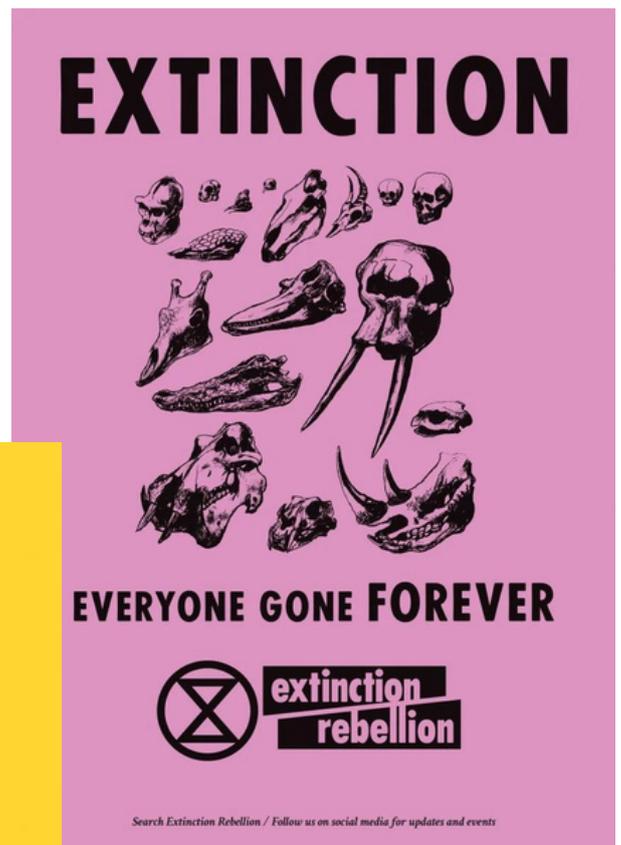
- Pop Cultural References
- Irony and Humour



Activity

What makes these graphic posters effective?

- Bold colors and font
- Orderly spatial arrangement of elements



Pop Cultural
References (as
we saw in the
previous
pages)



Things to Consider when Creating Your Own Activist Protest Poster

Bright Colors
(make it POP)

Serene Flat
Surfaces
(incorporate 2D
elements)

Contemporary
Polish

Graphic
Reduction

Well-Resolved
Forms (think of
your audience
and of the
purpose, then
tailor all graphic
elements
towards it)

EXPLORING THE IMPORTANCE OF FONTS & TYPOGRAPHY IN DESIGN

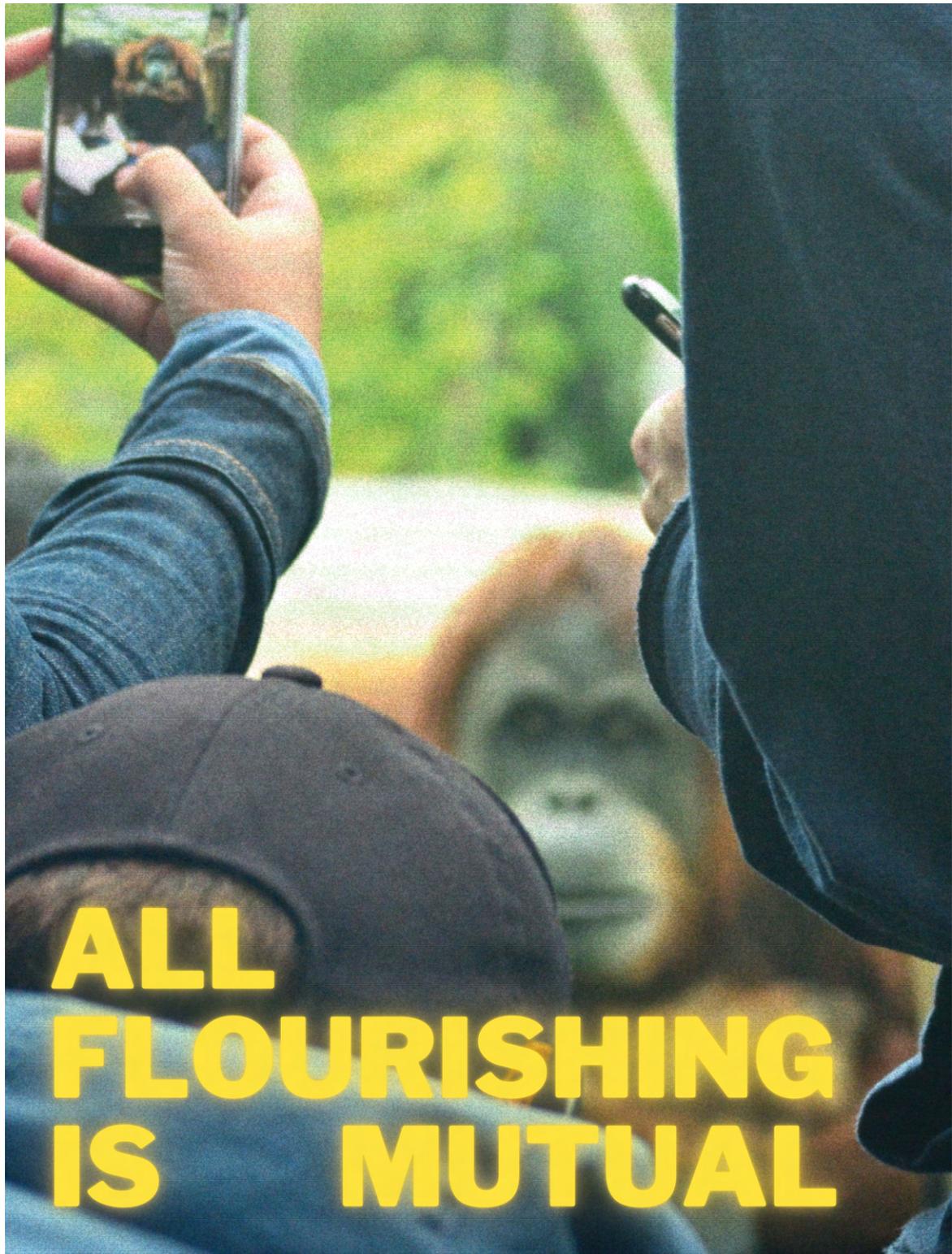


Strongly worded letters:
Typography and modern
protest.

"At its core, type is a storyteller. Letterforms deliver a message. And such messages are perhaps at their purest in the form of community-led designs for protest."

Fonts in Use: Activism

"Climate changed and all I got was" poster for Mate Act Now



**ALL
FLOURISHING
IS MUTUAL**

By Mary Paquet



I HATE THE WAY I SPEND MY TIME
I HATE THAT WORK WON'T STOP
I HATE CAPITALISM PLAYING WITH MY MIND
I HATE IT WHEN I SHOP
I HATE THE WAY PEOPLE FLIP HOUSES
AND DON'T CARE FOR THEIR HOUSELESS NEIGHBOURS
I HATE THE WAY WE'RE MADE TO CARE
FOR THE ANTICS OF THE RICH AND FAMOUS
I HATE THE WAY I LIVE THIS LIFE,
BUT MOSTLY I HATE THE WAY I DON'T HATE LIFE,
NOT EVEN A LITTLE BIT, NOT EVEN AT ALL.

By Robin Gaudreau

NOW IS THE TIME TO WAKE UP

“This is not about the environment, it’s about the community, it’s about jobs, it’s about justice.”
– Eddie Bautista, Executive Director for the New York City Environmental Justice Alliance

Our collective fight against climate change starts with us prioritizing the health of the most vulnerable communities.



By Emel Tabaku

Image Descriptions, Captions, and Accessibility

A Primer
by Robin Gaudreau



“

The social model of disability is a way of viewing the world, developed by disabled people. It says people are disabled by barriers in society, not by their impairment or difference.

ABILITY VS ACCESS

Ability = possession of the means or skill to do something

Accessible = of something that can be reached, possessed, or entered

We focus on access to information.



Concerns for art/media

VISUAL ACCESSIBILITY:

For information communicated using text and images (still or moving).



People with low sight or visual processing issues benefit from images having high contrast.



People with no sight (or people who are browsing without downloading images) benefit from plain text description or audio descriptions.

AUDITORY ACCESSIBILITY:

For information communicated using sound.

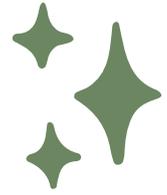


Listening to sound isn't an option for everyone at all times.



Perfect captions aren't always needed, it is sometimes enough to give a short written summary.

What is an image description?



Read what we have to say below to find out.

1.

An image description is a written caption that describes the essential information in an image.

2.

Image descriptions can define photos, graphics, gifs, and video — basically anything containing visual information.

3.

Use the subject-action-context technique. Focus on what the image is trying to communicate. Stay concise and objective. Include the information about the medium and the quality of the image (e.g. if it is a painting, or film photography, or a collage).

4.

Avoid using the word “see” or injecting meaning into the description.

Example from Quiplash

After reading the passage, what would you add? Is there anything missing? Hint: stage & mic



Birdie, a slim, heavily tattooed white woman, is your resident drag historian. She glares at you sternly through her retro cat-eyed spectacles and heavy eye makeup. She has one hand on her hip, and the other pointing emphatically at something out of the frame. She wears a little black dress and a flamboyant, pink patterned scholar's robe with a flash of bright red lining showing through in her oversized sleeves. Her pastel pink hair is perfectly coiffed underneath a black graduation cap with a pink rim (lol).

Activity

Let's practice image descriptions



Pick one image, write down a short description of it in two minutes. We'll share the description of the image in turn and guess which image was picked.



**PRACTICE WITH A
FRIEND**



Stock Photo Backstabber | Know Your ...
knowyourmeme.com



Weirdest And Darkest Stock Photos ...
buzzfeed.com



How to Unstock Your Images: 5 Mistak...
atomix.com.au



Stock Photos in Ads
wordstream.com



Definition: What Is Stock? - NerdWallet
nerdwallet.com



Upload images to Adobe Stock | Ad...
helpx.adobe.com



15 Terrible Military Stock Photos We ...
military.com



177 Completely WTF Stock Photos You ...
boredpanda.com



weird world of stock photos ...
bbc.com



Weird Stock Photos
weirdstockpictures.tumblr.com



Violated Stock-Trade Rules



Scientifically Inaccurate Stock Photos ...



Stock Photos are Hilarious



r/wtfstockphotos | Sto...



Is Bumble Stock a Buy? | The Motley Fool

Activity

FOR INCLUSIVE
MEETINGS

Let's practice self descriptions



Thumbnail sketch: 1–2
sentences at most

Some things to mention: hair,
skin, height (optional), clothes
and Zoom background



i.e. I am a white woman with dark
brown hair. I have side bangs and I
am wearing a white t-shirt. In the
background, there is a window to my
left, and the lights in the space I am in
are currently dim.

EXPLORING ALT-TEXT

Some alt-text is generated automatically, but it is better not to rely on this.

Alt text is the written copy that appears in place of an image.

Feature on some social media (e.g. Facebook and Instagram) where users can request an image-free experience. Alt-text is the best place to upload the description of an image.

Screen readers are made to work with alt-text.

DESCRIBING VIDEOS

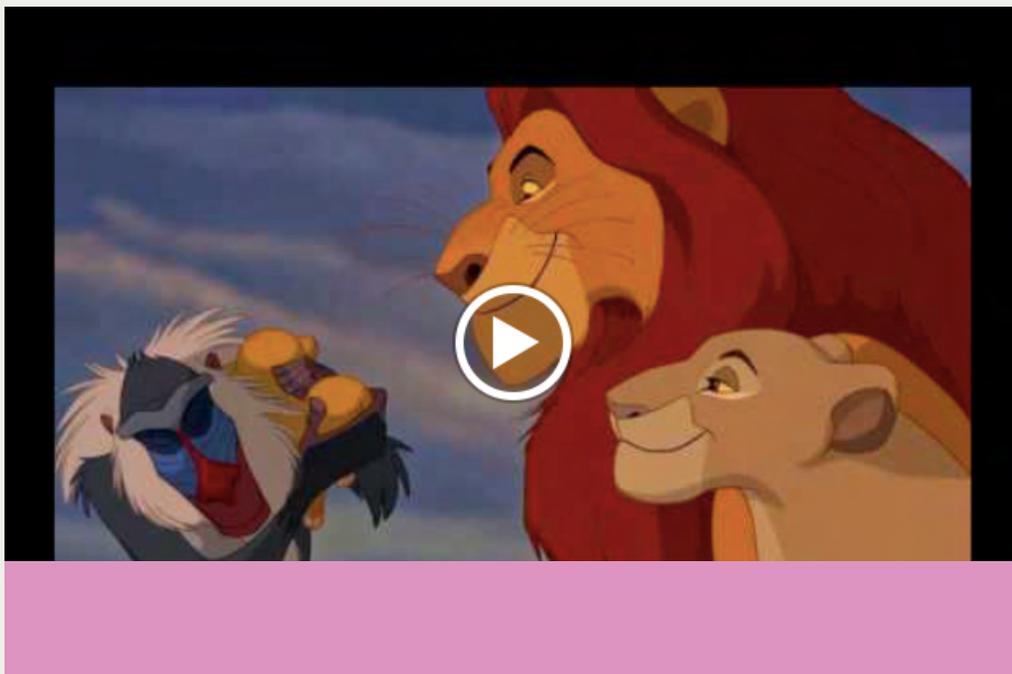
Similar to describing an image, however, it might make more sense to start with the context, then describe the subject and action. Make sure to be objective in the description. An "audio description" is an audio feature often found on tv programs or dvds which describes a video as the story unfolds. See an example on the next page.



CAPTIONS

- Captions are written text that expresses all of the sound in an audio-video file.
- Subtitles only capture the dialogue.
- A caption is opened if it is a part of the video file. It is closed if it is an additional data stream that can be opted in and out of.
- Captions are not a substitute for sign language interpretation.
- Instagram and tiktok have automated open captions.

Audio Description – Full Clip



[CLICK HERE](#)



Moving Forward

ADDITIONAL TIPS

Make access a part of your everyday interpersonal interactions.



Use emojis sparingly.



Avoid ableist language like "I stand with" and "insane/crazy."



Avoid sharing or creating inspiration porn.



Use trigger warnings.



Write your hashtags in camelcase (#CamelCase).

REFERENCES

<https://www.shondaland.com/act/a26294966/make-your-social-media-more-accessible/>



<http://www.vocaleye.ca/>



<https://www.quiplash.co.uk/>



<https://uxdesign.cc/how-to-write-an-image-description-2f30d3bf5546>.

Disability Justice & Intersectionality in Climate Action

by Miéchèllè Ma

**PANTEHA
ABARESHI**

HIPAA
VIOLATION

While the exhibition illustrates the complex juxtapositions of the artist's relationship to their body, and the medical system it is framed within, it resolves to simply state one thing- to be alive is to be dying.



JOSEPH GRIGELY

Inventory of Apologies

"Joseph—our apologies, as it's a live event and we don't have closed caption capabilities." "Unfortunately no captions for this program. But we hope so soon for a future event!"



JAMEISHA PRESCOD

Untangling

"Shame is a powerful emotion. Sometimes it takes sharing stories, sharing art or sharing images for us, as human beings, to overcome it."

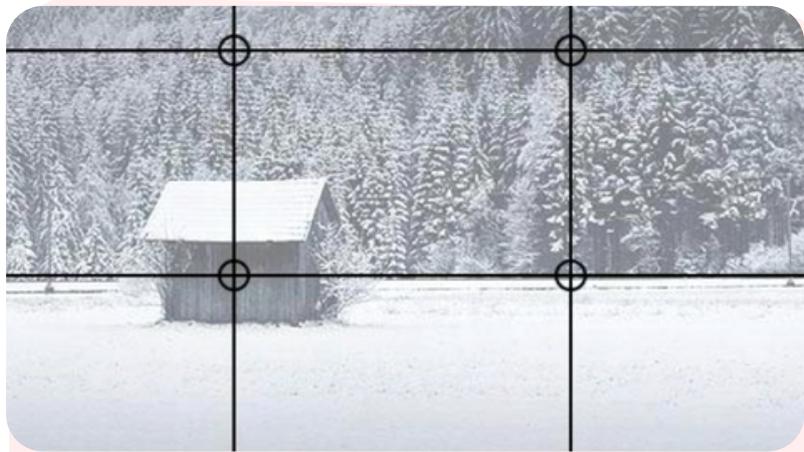


Environmental Photography

(5 Easy Steps) by Bailike Edward Ma

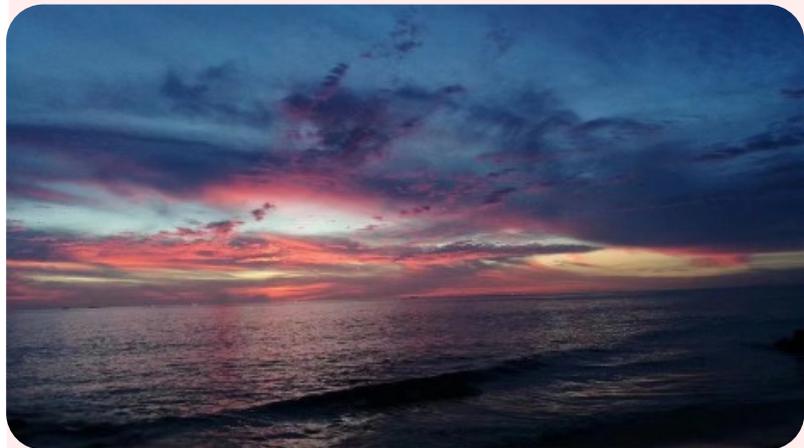
1. KNOW HOW TO USE GRID

Very important
to level your
image using
horizon.



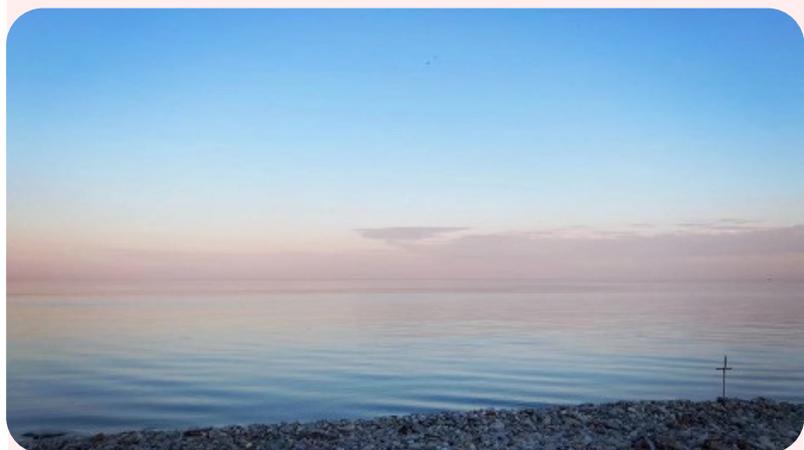
EXAMPLE

Padang,
Indonesia -
notice the
horizon



2. ADD EYE- CATCHING ELEMENTS

To add visual
flavor to
sceneries





EXAMPLE 2

Scarborough,
ON



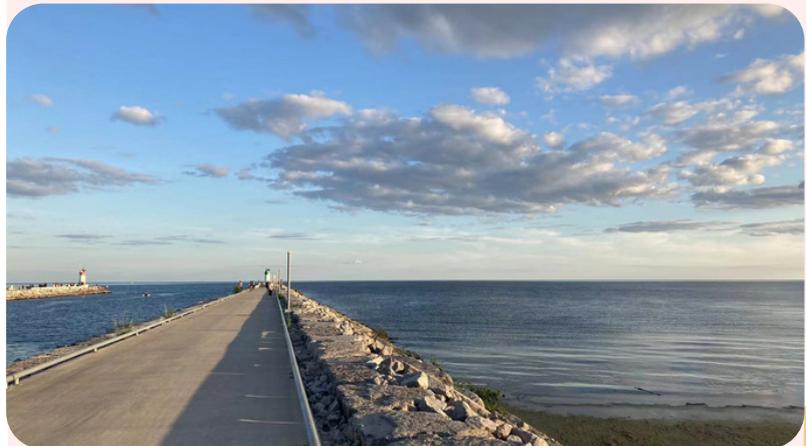
3. TUNNEL VIEW

("empty" at
the center of
photo)



EXAMPLE 3

Pickering, ON



4. CONSIDER BOTH ANGLES AND LIGHT

(Note the difference in the photos below)



5. AND THE MOST IMPORTANT POINT; GO OUT AND TRY!

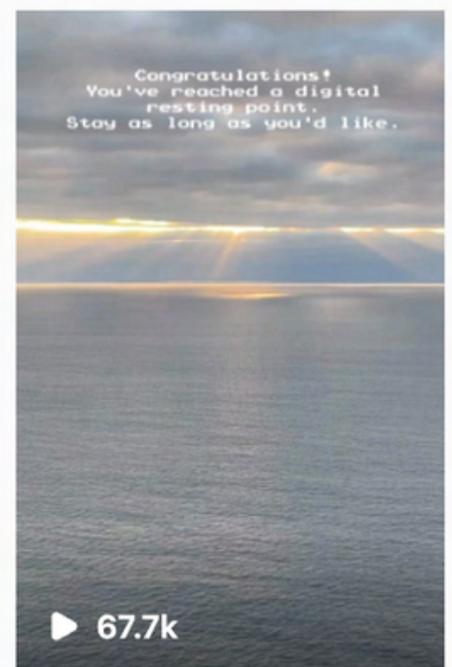
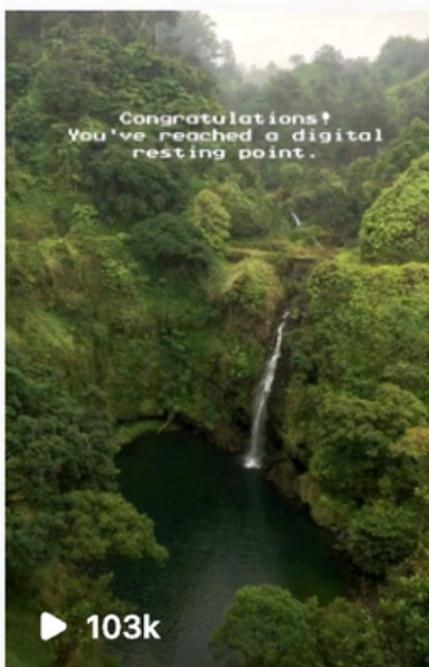


Exploring Instagram trends & meme culture

Digital Influences
by Mary Paquet



GABI ABRÃO @SIGHSWOON



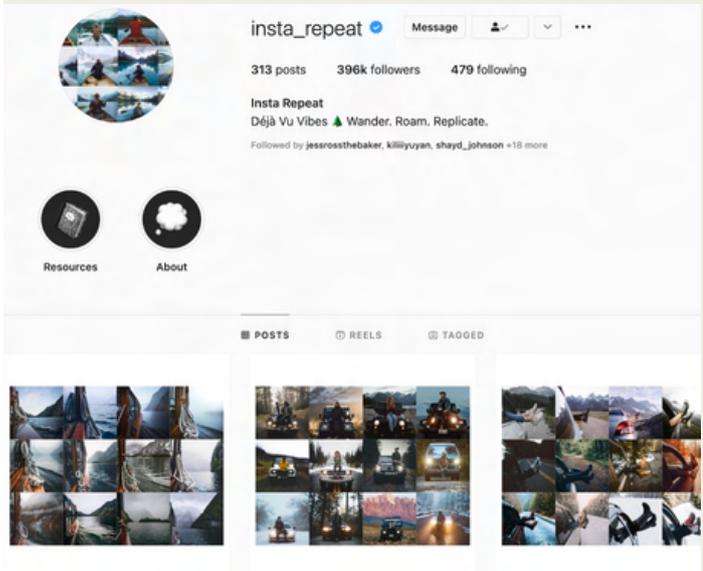
"Congratulations! You've reached a digital resting point."



Environmental Communication

INSTA_REPEAT

The images posted on this account are curated collections of photos found on Instagram that show the same imagery, shot by different photographers.



This is a great starting point to reflect on how we frame our relationship with the environment on social media, and how our experience in nature is sometimes shaped by our social media use.

These popular trends and images are often very anthropocentric and showcase an experience of privileged access to nature. Let's work to make diverse experiences in nature more mainstream.



BESIDE Magazine

Rethinking environmental consciousness
amidst contemporary wave of digital presence



Image description: a screenshot from the heading of an article by Beside Magazine. The image shows a group of people at the waters edge of a blue-green lake. The group is waiting to have their photo taken on an old weathered log that reaches out into the lake. There is a person in a big black jacket and jeans with their arms outstretched standing on the log having their photo taken. There are coniferous trees at the edge of the lake that indicate the photo might have been taken in a colder climate. Image text reads "Spoils of #nature on Instagram. Natural sites are being overrun by a new wave of tourists just "doin' it for the 'Gram." And the consequences are far from harmless: threatened fauna and flora, exhausted staff, competitive jockeying for framespace. When our call of the wild rings false.



bigdawgsocialism

Message

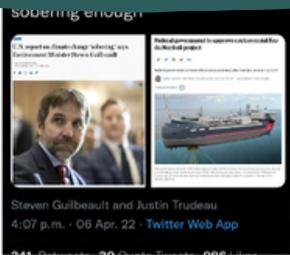
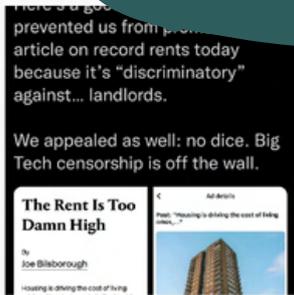


5,797 posts

31.7k followers

545 following

Are meme pages digital art?



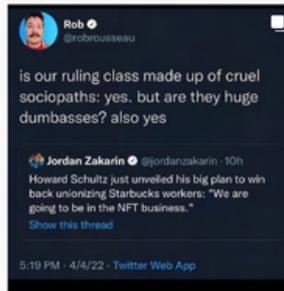
gaia.euphoria

124 posts

8,976 follow

Gaia 🗿 he/they
Eco-Anarchist 🌿
Animistic Ecology 🌱
Mycophile 🍄🍄

Followed by jingle.jangle.jester



reading list



infographics



account in...

Memes are a great tool for presenting new information, different perspectives, and shared experiences in an easily digestible format that can be engaging, nuanced, and personal.



503 posts

955k followers

51 following

Global Self Hypnosis

Writer

🌈🌈🌈 WELCOME 🌈🌈🌈

🌊 Daily Refill of Positive #A

💙 #Inspiring #Quotes for t!

📄 OFFICIAL MERCH 📄

globalselfhypnosis.com

Followed by jessrossthebaker, jes



MERCH



#fanLove



NEW

Support for the environmental movement through meme culture can take many forms, whether it is a curation of tweets, pithy illustrations, infographics, or accounts of personal experiences and stories.

POSTS

REELS

TAGGED



On Collective Futures of Care

Instagram Accounts to Follow

**MOLLY
COSTELLO**
[@mollyccostello](https://www.instagram.com/mollyccostello)

Image description: Two pieces of art by Molly Costello. On the right is an illustration that says “The future is mutual aid” and there are a diversity of people drawn in different outfits, skin tones, And abilities interwoven among the words. There are shooting stars among the people, and it’s on a dark blue background.



The illustration directly above reads “small acts of care... make our world... more survivable.” A white and pink drawing on a black background shows a person with glasses wearing a mask, seemingly smelling some cherry blossoms.



Exploring interconnectedness...imagining emergence.

[@mollyccostello](https://www.instagram.com/mollyccostello)

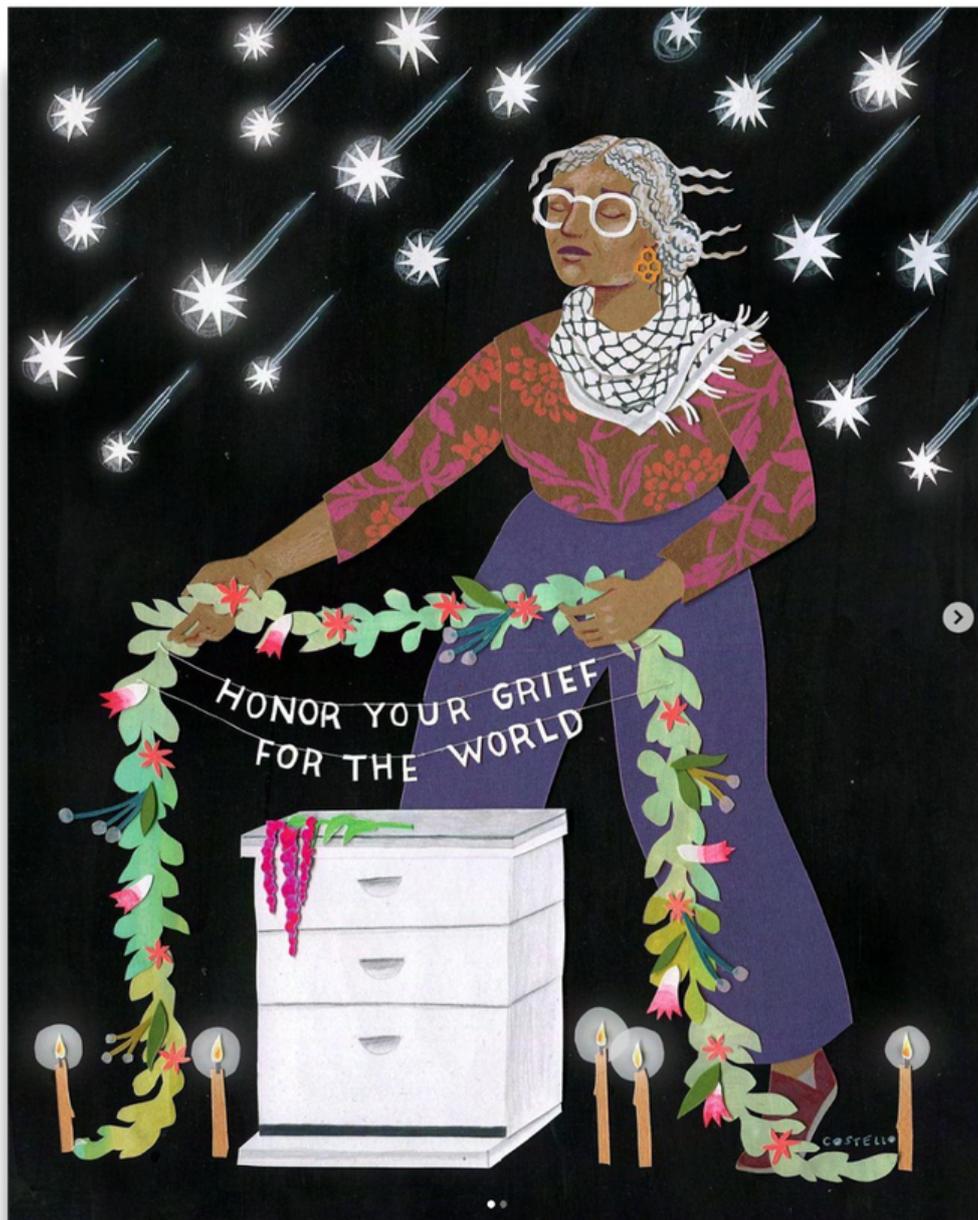


Image description: The image shows an older person with dark skin holding a garland of plants over a beehive, surrounded by candles. From the garland hang the words "honour your grief for the world", there are shooting stars behind the woman holding the garland.

ARE THERE INSTAGRAM ACCOUNTS THAT YOU FOLLOW WHO FRAME SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IN A WAY THAT INSPIRES YOU?

Meech Boakye [@ghostyboi](#)



"THEIR PRACTICE IS ROOTED IN RELATIONSHIPS WITH FLORAL, FUNGAL, AND MICROBIAL KIN AS ARMATURES FOR LEARNING HOW TO BE IN COMMUNITY."

Conclusion

Meech Boakye,
01 AFTERWORDS
COLLECTIVE OFFERINGS
2.15.2022

Thank you for reading, and we hope that you found this creative resource inspiring as you continue your vital work in environmental advocacy!

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/Brought to you with gratitude,
love and care

