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Climate Creativity

Narrator:

'Climate creativity' refers to the vital role that creativity can play in dealing with the climate crisis.

There's nothing in any way ambiguous about the science of climate change.

There are four fundamental truths that we know, beyond any doubt, about the impact that human behaviour is having on the environment.

We know there's a problem;
we know the nature of that problem;
we know what's causing that problem.
And we know, pretty much, what we need to do about it.

And these four fundamental truths have been knocking around now for at least three decades

But despite all this, we're still struggling to do anything significant about addressing the issue.

All too often there's a mismatch between scientific consensus and political will,
which is why the climate crisis shouldn't be seen simply as a scientific problem.

It's also a cultural problem: and one which lends itself perfectly to the power of creativity.

Before we look at why creativity can help with the climate crisis, it's worth trying to pin down what creativity actually is

Put simply, it's something which provides us with new ways of seeing the world

It's what we use to transform our interpretations of the world into something of value

And it's a way of capturing people's attention and imagination

Or, to put it another way, creativity is the engine of culture – something that helps us make sense of the world and engage with ideas on both an emotional and rational level.

There are a host of reasons why we need creativity to help tackle the climate crisis

For simplicity, we can break these reasons down into five main categories

The first category is persuasion

That's to say, translating the facts of climate change into prompts for action –

action by those in power who have the ability to legislate for change,

and action by the general population in terms of adapting their everyday behaviour into more sustainable ways of living.

The use of storytelling, poetry and art, for example, can help transform facts and data into emotionally felt experiences,

and turn abstract notions into issues that people relate to on an individual, human level.

Equally important is participation –

This is the opportunity for everyone to get involved on a creative level in shaping the world we want to live in.

By participating we become active rather than passive agents in the process of change.

So, this is creativity as a grassroots, democratic practice.

Third, we come to creativity as a form of exploration: as a prompt for engaging our imaginations with the consequences of climate crisis.

Creativity can help people reflect on their own reactions, and explore and express their feelings. It's a way of seeing the world anew, of uncovering questions and generating thought.

Next up there's innovation.

Addressing the climate crisis requires a creative approach at all levels of human endeavour, from science, through design, to social organisation.

It involves creative speculation and planning so that we can prepare now for the effects of the future that's to come.

And finally, there's cultural transformation.

Culture is the equivalent for our imaginations to what the physical environment is for our corporeal beings.

Culture is the shared set of beliefs, values and expectations we have as a community. And if we want politics and society to change, we first need to redesign this culture, to re-'create' it.

This may all sound a little abstract, expressed like this.

But the point is that engaging our creativity is a way of getting involved in the issues. A way of doing something practical about changing the way we perceive the world, and through this, changing the world itself.