

## **OpenLearn animation**

*Creating a climate for change*

### **Narrator, Derren Pih, Liz Jensen, Chantal Bilodeau:**

So let me just give you my definition of arts versus activism is that it's: Art plants the seed and activism runs with it.

### Creating a climate for change.

The word climate has two meanings a literal meaning and a metaphorical meaning.

The literal meaning is about the weather conditions in a particular place.

Whether it tends to rain constantly or is mostly sunny with scattered showers.

The metaphorical meaning is about public opinion, about prevailing attitudes in a community to an issue or situation.

Totalitarian governments might cultivate a climate of mistrust, for example as a way of manipulating people.

The shared attitude that people have is as much a part of the experience of living in a particular community as the weather is.

If we bring these two meanings together, we could say that at the moment there's a climate of both fear and complacency amongst the public about the climate crisis.

The physical environment is changing in extremely worrying ways but the world's mental outlook is mostly stuck in a rut.

To do something effective about the literal climate, we need to change the metaphorical climate, we need to change the prevailing attitudes people have, the way they normally think about things, to offer alternative visions of society and the world which will help us adapt our culture so that we can then adapt our relationship with nature and to do that we can look at the way that the arts and literature both reflect but also shape the way we see the world.

We interviewed a handful of people working within the creative industry across various disciplines and asked them what their thoughts were on the relationship between creativity and climate change.

The following are extracts from those interviews.

#### The importance of art and literature

Derren Pih: Art has the capacity to transcend, and you can express ideas um which cannot be simplified to slogans and words, and I think that's the key.

Liz Jensen: Scientists have been saying for years, warning us for years about what's happening and somehow or other those messages have been far too much ignored by anybody in power but also by the general public and it's in a way easy enough to do that because unless you can actually see it happening around you, very vividly on a daily basis uh it will pass you by which is why storytelling comes in.

#### Why storytelling is so essential

Chantal Bilodeau: You have an opportunity to learn the impact as opposed to just the science so you just something you can connect to personally; you can see how it affects somebody's life which is much more powerful because you have a more holistic understanding of the problem as opposed to just understanding the technical aspect of it or the science of it.

Liz Jensen: We're a storytelling species and that means we're a species that also wants to hear stories and for me they've always been my way into anything I'm curious about or don't understand or want to explore in more depth.

#### What impact can culture actually have?

Liz Jensen: The activism for me is part of a cultural shift which I feel is ongoing and involves lots of different people from lots of different disciplines so we're just part of a giant jigsaw.

Chantal Bilodeau: Activism is the closest way to go from A to B and the arts can't do that, but the arts can build the foundation that will then allow people to take action.