



Mediating Change; Culture and Climate Change

Anatomy: An Anatomy of Cultural Responses to Climate Change

Quentin Cooper

Hello, and welcome to what may be officially defined as a podcast but what I tend to think of as a radio programme that's being narrow cast over the internet. Classifying art forms can be tricky and it gets trickier still when those art forms are forms of cultural response. Not only do you have to stick a label on what the art form is, but there's also the business of what it's perceived as being a response to and whether or not that's what the artist consciously or unconsciously intended. And that in turn raises the question, if this whole process of corralling and categorising cultural responses is so complex, why bother? Why not just let the art forms of all kinds be what they are in their own right, rather than attempt to find the right box to put them in?

I'm hoping for answers to these and a few other questions as this third in our series of Mediating Change discussions is going to peel away some of the surface distractions to look at the anatomy and taxonomy of cultural responses to climate change, or at least that's the idea. It's a bit early to file this under successful podcast/radio programmes exploring aspects of cultural responses to climate change, as I've not even introduced our panel.

With me are Charlie Kronick, Senior Climate Advisor for Greenpeace UK; Bergit Arends, Curator of Contemporary Arts at the Natural History Museum, London; the artist Beth Derbyshire - that's one of the pluses of being an artist, there is no long title involved - and finally, the environment writer and theatre critic Robert Butler.

Can we start by trying to get a sense of the scale of this task? If we're looking right across the range of works about climate change, how far back does it go? Is this something that only begins with the wider world talking about climate change? Charlie -

Charlie Kronick

Most people don't think about art at all. They experience it. They don't try to fit it into a box. They have the experience of it and their personal reaction to it. The relationship of artists, certainly literary artists and visual artists to the environment certainly goes back to cave paintings because they're documenting the world that they're experiencing and the way that they experience it. And I suppose more formally and academically, the Romantic Movements both in Europe and North America, Transcendentalists, they love their environment and they

love talking about their relationship to it. I don't think it was so much about climate change as about the human relationship to the environment that they were in.

Quentin Cooper

Are we stretching a point slightly here between that which is art, which can be seen as a document to refer to in thinking about the change in climate, versus an artist who at some level, even if they are not aware of climate change, is dealing with the changes to the climate as they perceive it?

Charlie Kronick

I guess for me, at the risk of making it a very brief conversation, I don't think it matters at all actually. I have to say this as a punter, since what passes for my professional life is in the world of policy and the more technical and the drier end of the climate debate, if I'm looking at something that's created by an artist who is in some way moved or engaged with the change in climate, that's not the first thing I would think about. And I'd be surprised if there were many people out there who did.

Quentin Cooper

Bergit – how do you see it?

Bergit Arends

Well I suppose, working at the Natural History Museum there is this idea of classification systems of which there are many and also they do co-exist and I suppose we want to be a bit clear about what we want to classify. I think you can obviously start putting things into categories, but then I always think you can veer from one to the other and they are not mutually exclusive. I think it would be very good to ask where your question comes from because we've come to think about art as being something that we can classify into movements, "isms" as we call them: 'surrealism', 'modernism' 'da da' and so on. I don't really think that holds true any more, because also we've experienced something since the 60's/'70's – which, I think it is quite a marker point actually - more what we call visual culture, and I think we probably want to use that as an idea for thinking about where climate change fits in. I think we want to think about it much more as a cultural phenomenon rather than as a sort of art historical term. We want to somehow throw over this whole activity, which we see as happening with vigour.

Quentin Cooper

So it actually helps us - rather than actually try and adapt our existing taxonomy to deal with something like this - it actually helps us challenge our way of thinking not only about climate change but about other types of art as well.

Bergit Arends

Yes, and I think we would look into this activity a bit more thematically and we would think more about what is trying to be achieved with it. Is it something activist? Is it something much more contemplative? It is something that can act as a metaphor? Is it a collaborative venture? I think I would start looking at this whole area with those questions in mind.

Quentin Cooper

Beth, you're doing a lot of vigorous nodding during that.

Beth Derbyshire

I second that. And the thing is, I was looking back into some of the work in the Seventies, which certainly in terms of my education as an artist, I remember us kind of looking at that area and it's very interesting what happened. A lot of those artists leaving the cities, leaving the galleries and actually wanting to go out and make work in the landscapes and it couldn't be solved. And in a way some of that was an expression about the gallery system at the time but some of that was also about man connecting with nature which is what I think is - you know, there's definitely a strand of artistic practice that is all about that and that goes back to cave men. And I think it's interesting to look at how people have used the symbol of nature and whether they've used it as a metaphor or even allegorically. So I think that's why when thinking about contemporary practice and contemporary responses, I don't know if you have climate change artists. I think you have artists that are working with the issues of their time and that they find a channel into this subject, their own way in.

Quentin Cooper

So although there are people out there who stick a label on an artist and say they are a climate change artist, do you think it would be very hard to find any artist who would go 'Yes, that's me.'

Beth Derbyshire

There are certainly artists working with issues where many of those artists are working with environmental issues. But really in a way climate change, global warming, whatever you want to call it, is so wide that the topic, you know, perhaps when you first came across it say as a practitioner fifteen or sixteen years ago it had a very different reading, whereas now because it's gone from the back of the newspaper to the front of the newspaper it has all sort of ways into it, be it social, political. I mean, I can think of a number of artist's works that sort of work with trading commodities, like Amy Balkin for example. And so there are people who are finding ways into it, so rather than perhaps somebody like James Turrell who is making land up, by making that crater, which is a very different practice, or Robert Smithson creating his jetty or any of those iconic works, you have people looking at - working with environment in a totally different way.

Quentin Cooper

It's less useful as a classification. It's more useful as a filter, the same as you wouldn't talk about, I don't know a paper artist or artist who does stuff about Iceland but you might occasionally want to look at just works about Iceland or works that are on paper? It's a way of putting things together but it's not useful as saying this is a type of art?

Beth Derbyshire

And I think what Bergit is saying, if you think, our technology has exploded in the last eight years and so the way that we interpret culture and the way we interpret ideas has changed radically. And so, in a way the impact that somebody has by climbing on the roof of Parliament that maybe best located on a blog or in the newspapers and there are many different people making in ways into this subject.

Quentin Cooper

Robert do you also find this climate change artist label somewhat of an awkward one?

Robert Butler

Yes, I mean I would approach it in a different way, in that theatre obviously already has an anatomy or taxonomy. It's got a lot of different genres and so any playwright working in writing a play that touches on climate change will either be writing a comedy or a tragedy or a farce so there are already existing genres for that. And that affects the way that they write the play and the meaning of what they're writing. So, a play like *The Contingency Plan*, Steve Waters' play at The Bush, part of the play is set in Westminster and Whitehall. And at one point a drink is spilt over the Cabinet Minister's trousers and he has to take his trousers off and hang them on the radiator to dry. Well, now we are then drawing on the Whitehall farce, kind of Brian Rix farce, of you know people walking around in their underpants and things. So the form of the play is also a part of the meaning of the play.

Quentin Cooper

I'm just delighted to find in a discussion like this that Brian Rix's name is coming in. It wasn't really expected.

Charlie as well, I mean to really kick at this label of climate change art, does anything that is labelled as climate change art automatically lose some of its effectiveness because it will appeal to those who are already interested in the subject and it will turn off those who are not interested in the subject, so it loses some of its power immediately?

Charlie Kronick

Well I think it loses its power first of all by becoming polemic. It can be great polemic but it loses its power to speak to a broader audience because it already will categorise and polarise the response to it.

Quentin Cooper

I'm not saying it's the artist who labelled it this way. It might be the media that labelled it this way.

Charlie Kronick

Absolutely. No, it doesn't matter who labels it actually. That will still have the same affect. But I mean it's interesting having worked for the last ten years or so with a variety of not just policy bods but also with Cape Farewell and other artists and people who describe themselves as artists and activists, sort of hyphenated simultaneously. It sounds like a chimera. It has a divisive effect not just on the viewer but also on the makers because I've met artists who are really profoundly moved by the impacts of climate change and are very, very worried about what the implications of a change in climate are for, not just for their own family but for society at large but the last thing they want is to be described as a climate change artist because for whatever other reason they feel quite strongly that it undermines something like the integrity and authenticity of their own work. And who would we be to argue with them and that's their call. But it's the composite societal impact that interests me. It's what people like me do to try to make, that somehow brings the work into that wider conversation, to the wider political reaction you have as a viewer, as a voter, as a citizen as a consumer.

Quentin Cooper

Beth, that's a tricky one isn't it because just as there will be scientists who sometimes choose to step beyond just the science and towards activism because they see climate change as a clear and present danger and they want to alert people around the world there may be artists who choose to go beyond simply being an artist and step towards activism as well but they risk exactly the kind of negative categorisation Charlie has just described.

Beth Derbyshire

Yes, but I think that's fine. I mean the thing about this issue is that it is emotional and it's human, and you may as an artist or a scientist have a very particular discipline but this is something that affects us all and it's emotional because it questions our future. So therefore I think that when people respond to this they respond to it in very human ways and I think that's what's really interesting -

Charlie Kronick

But one of the things in this whole debate that's been going on with these sorts of institutions that want to bring artists and scientists together, is that it feels like first of all they make a distinction about what kind of person you are and what box you fit in and then once you're placed in that box you then have the opportunity to meet someone who is not in your box. And that's great. But I think this is the danger of taxonomy, you know to use it in a much more common parlance way, it puts you in a silo and you have to climb your way back out of the silo again.

Quentin Cooper

Robert -

Robert Butler

I was just going to say in a way I think the idea of anatomy is to show there are many different boxes and so climate and discussion about climate will percolate all through different artists lives and the way they think. I mean, impossible not to think about it. So it will surface in many different ways and we can see it in different – in very different genres.

Quentin Cooper

Isn't there a risk here that we end up with a kind of High Fidelity problem that we are so obsessed with classifying the record collection we are not actually listening to the music?

Robert Butler

No I think, you don't want people to go and see a work of art and think because it's about climate or climate change it's therefore part of a very small group of works. You want to think that it's more like the impact of Darwin in the Nineteenth Century that it impacts right across the range.

Quentin Cooper

Bergit –

Bergit Arends

Yes, this idea of boxes I am not really happy with. I think this whole idea of classifying is –

Quentin Cooper

Silos as well -

Bergit Arends

You know if we take apart this idea of what we think climate change art is, it's looking at systems isn't it because climate change is understanding systems. It's looking at our relationship to nature. It's looking at our observation of nature. It's then also looking at what

the impact is of climate change, what caused it all in the first place. It's looking at energy uses and how we can address that. And so it's all of these – it's a term that needs so much unpacking that it's really not very helpful to just call something climate change art in a way, because you want to look at all these different aspects. And I think obviously we can trace over our cultural evolution, we can look at what our place in nature is and that's a start, that's a beginning. Where do we think we are within the natural environment? And as we have been considering ourselves outside of nature for quite some time, particularly since the Eighteen-Century you know, Nineteenth Century, we are outside of that? That's the problem we want to address. What is the perspective we have and what is our position within nature? And that's the important question you know.

Robert Butler

I agree that there has been a long tradition of work about nature obviously, but this is a new moment I feel and so the work, any work about nature is dealing with it in a very different way. Seamus Heaney said that, you know, all poems now, any reference to nature, comes with a sense of nostalgia and loss because of this level of extinction that's going on. So it's more acute - it's a more acute moment.

Quentin Cooper

Beth used the phrase that we are all affected by climate change, but are we all equally effective in drawing attention to it? Are there some art forms, some areas of creativity where there just is a narrower range of response than others?

Robert Butler

Well in my area of theatre there have been probably only a dozen plays about climate change, which if you think of how long it's been an issue – twenty years really – it's amazing because there have been plays that have responded to the credit crunch and those sorts of issues and Enron and things like that. So there is something actually within theatre and the way it's currently presented that I think works against climate change as a subject.

Quentin Cooper

Is that partly maybe a limitation of the media that you don't get many plays about life underwater but you get films and poems and things because you can do it there and you can't do it on the stage so easily?

Robert Butler

Yes, but there are such profound philosophical questions that are raised by climate change that I can't believe that theatre wouldn't want to address it. I mean they wouldn't want to write a history of the theatre in the 2000's and say well 'Where were the plays about climate change? How were you thinking this through?' And I don't mean in a campaigning way, I

mean, just how in society, how are people sitting in an audience and thinking about this and thinking about what their values are?

Quentin Cooper

One of the things I thought might emerge from this is there's that line from Tony Kushner that as soon as you personalise climate change and begin to try to make it intimate you lose what it's all about. So he was actually trying to say there are things you cannot do in dealing with climate change.

Charlie Kronick

There is a continuum – to me anyway – of your expression of your response to climate change and your experience of it as an inhabitant of the modern world. If you live in sub Saharan Africa you've been in a generation long drought. I would suggest that is an experience of climate change. Equally somebody in the one of the privileged rich in the developed countries can make all kinds of consumer choices. That's also an experience of the way they buy a Prius or change their light bulbs, or don't – all those things are conscious – in the developed world's case anyway – are conscious engagement with it. But there is no doubt about it you have a valid authentic individual experience of climate change and I think it's perverse and kind of really unhelpful to say sorry can't talk about it just as a personal experience because that doesn't include the multitudes. The multitudes are included whether you know Tony Kushner decides to do it or not. That's not a choice that they get to make. And I think it is that range of experience that makes it important. That's the range of experience that makes it important for different people in their different boxes or silos or other you know categorisations that to me makes it important for them to engage with it. It is a massively inert object. If you try to just describe climate change as one big block and every time you push on it in one place it just doesn't move. To me that's why it's important that we experience it and engage with it across a range of activities and not just say 'Oh, it's got to be big' or 'It's got to be small.'

Quentin Cooper

Bergit, one thing that seems to be lurking in here that we haven't made too explicit is rather than the artist bringing climate change to the wider public, the public bringing the climate change to the art work. The timing, the context, coming from the individual, looking at what's already out there and thinking about something again in that context. I'm also thinking just as a concrete example, something like The Ship exhibition that you did at the Natural History Museum. Ten years earlier or ten years later, I imagine there would have been a very different reaction to it

Bergit Arends

Well it was very interesting timing actually. The exhibition happened in Summer 2006 and a few months before people didn't talk about climate change. But all of a sudden energy prices went shooting up and all of a sudden it was on everybody's mind. You would turn on the radio and you would hear somebody talking about climate change. And that's when the exhibition happened as well so it was fantastic timing. You couldn't quite have predicted it. It was very interesting times. It was 2006 and you know 2007 was the Stern report as well so it was a very interesting time for bringing climate change into popular thinking and it was also enabled by the economic factor very clearly. And so we had for this exhibition round about twelve or thirteen weeks or so we had over a hundred thousand visitors who came to the museum. And obviously a museum, the Natural History Museum, becomes a place which you trust because there are lot of people particularly in this debate that you don't trust you know. We've seen that with this East Anglia University debate and so on, and so wherever you can you shoot things down. People say 'Oh, you don't want to know. And it's more convenient actually that you find flaws in it.' But, people wanted to genuinely find out and we had the exhibition format, we printed a newspaper because you know it's got the sense of this is happening now – come and get – inform yourself. And people want to know.

Quentin Cooper

And that trust has to shoot in both directions because the people who run the Natural History Museum have to trust this is an important enough issue to do it in the first place. They've done the Piltdown Man. They don't want to do it again

Bergit Arends

And they've done the dinosaurs. So you know they also had to understand this is a really important subject and I think that also brought the museum to re-think what do we actually stand for and it was the first time actually the Natural History Museum issued a statement on climate change and then the second one that followed was on biodiversity. So, it realises that institutions like that can play a really important role because they have scientific information, they've got a more sort of neutral position within society. People will actually come to them for factual information and they have to take that role on because people are quite hungry for information. They want to know. And I think they also want to know what to do. And I'm not sure if we could deliver that.

Quentin Cooper

Does this apply to individual artists as well, you're kind of sensitive to the mood of the times and the zeitgeist and a piece of work that you might want to do will go in one direction or another partly because you're just picking up on the vibes?

Beth Derbyshire

I think that does happen. I want to answer that but I think you've made a really interesting point which is you said it was the first time the Natural History Museum had made a statement on climate change and I think that is brilliant. And what you are actually seeing is you're seeing institutions all over the country, well all over the world, making issues, their stance on climate change on their carbon emissions and you would never see them doing that about other subjects. So I think this is where the power of culture can be really interesting and can you know I think that's fascinating. So I think that's a really important point. Yes, I think it does and it's happened in my own experience, in the sense that I have naturally come to this subject through my practice of fifteen years and am now developing current works which I wouldn't say are about the environment or climate change but more to do with issues that I'm interested in at this time and things that I think that we need to be thinking about. But that is probably in relation to reading the newspapers, or seeing the news, which is where a lot of my work comes from anyway.

Bergit Arends

You would also add to that the importance of culture, the Natural History Museum realises that it's not just science telling us what our relation with nature is. It's cultural. So that's where we are back to art and where we are back to climate change art if you want to.

Charlie Kronick

But also I think there is a really interesting institutional response just up the road at your – is it a sister institution? – at the Science Museum. There was a very interesting gallery there that was about the importance of the change in climate and responding to it, which has recently been re-branded as the Shell climate change gallery which funnily enough is now a lot less forthright about the need to respond to climate change. Not just – I would suggest not just because of scientific uncertainties that have emerged as a result of Climategate - but because of the institutional relationship between Shell as a sponsor of a cultural institution and the institution itself.

Quentin Cooper

It's just a shell of what it once was.

Charlie Kronick

That might well be the case. But, so there are all these institutions you know, artistic or pedagogical or instructive, whatever the role of these institutions, of course they are going to cross over the boundaries of climate change and the other institutions that bring pressure to bear on them are going to have similar affects.

Quentin Cooper

Robert, let's go down a different London Road and take you to the British Library or some even larger cultural repository. If we are talking about taxonomy and anatomy here and you are having to try and shove some of the cultural responses to climate change into this cultural repository how would you begin to categorise it? What would be the most useful distinctions and classifications to have?

Robert Butler

Well, I think a very important one is the motive of the work of the artist because I speak as a critic and it's very important always to judge a work on it's own terms and you know not to bring your own values to bear. So if you're judging a piece that's essentially a campaigning piece that has very particular objectives, whereas if you're judging a piece that is say more educational, is asking many more questions and is opening the subject up. Now, I imagine with a campaigning piece you want to close the subject down, so that it boils down to a sentence that people can take home. Whereas, it should be possible to have a wonderful work about that touches on climate change in various ways but you don't leave thinking you have to do anything. It was just absorbing. It was just a very fascinating topic. And that's something that I think we really need to go much further towards, is revealing how, the fascination of this. I mean many of the works being done, the ice cores and the tree rings and all these things, these are things of a kind of beauty.

Quentin Cooper

Bergit?

Bergit Arends

I think picking up on what Bobby said you have to judge a work on it's own terms, okay, so the film *An Inconvenient Truth* – a climate change work. I think it's very clear. That's what it sets out to do. That's what it wants to do. It's got a message.

Quentin Cooper

No one's going to debate that one –

Bergit Arends

No one is going to debate that, so you know we need somebody with a bit of a spectrum here. The activist work by the group *Plain Stupid*, very clearly activist work, very clearly directed towards climate change I think. That is also very clear. *Staying with films – The Day After Tomorrow* – blockbuster film – is that a climate change film, maybe?

Quentin Cooper

I would say yes and so would the director, but that doesn't of course mean that it is because it's not accurate in terms of its -

Charlie Kronick

But you could also argue I mean particularly about *An Inconvenient Truth*, which is obviously labelled as a film about climate change. It's also a film about technological optimism. It's a film about the belief that the American way of doing politics, where you go and have a town meeting and you explain things to people and you overcome their deficit in understanding, which will somehow lead to a change in behaviour. It could be about that, as much as about climate change. But I'm like Bergit, I'm going to resist this, because you can view any object through any lens that you choose. Obviously there is going to be one that screams in enormous red letters 'I am about climate change'. I think that what's really interesting about the negative response to Gore's movie, it's not that people really hate the idea that carbon dioxide has a greenhouse impact in the atmosphere. What they really hate is that it says 'You are going to have to change.' They think it says 'You are going to have to change the way you live.' That you are going to have to accept a set of political values that you don't particularly like. And that's what they don't like about that movie. And they probably don't like Al Gore and they don't like his suits and they don't like his visual effects, but all of those things are wrapped up together. Climate change is a badge for that and I think that's – it's a useful one and it reveals a lot about the conversation that goes on, but to me it's not actually what the conversation is about.

Quentin Cooper

So you almost sound like you are suggesting that there is more to be lost through attempting classification than there is to be gained in that what you can gain is a limited understanding of what you've probably grasped – this is very obviously climate change – this is a bit more peripherally so? What you lose is some of the effectiveness of that art because you can then say 'Oh, that's a climate change artwork and therefore we don't need to engage with it'?

Charlie Kronick

Well I would say that, but I think Beth wants to say something about that.

Beth Derbyshire

It's also a bit like saying, well you know the classic 'Is it art or isn't it?' That's not really an interesting question. Is it interesting and is it valid? And I think the thing about activism is that - you know activism is brilliant in many respects – and people who are artists and activists are often making that behaviour because they perhaps want to incite change or affect behaviour, a bit like taking the sentence home. And then I think there is – other people who can bring a different way into work. But I think, also going back to *An Inconvenient Truth*, I think it's also a film about conscience and I think that that's the thing that people find very difficult and that's one of the things that perhaps people find difficult with when they think about climate change out there they are worried that there is almost going to be a wagging

finger. Where in fact, if you look at many people working in this field it's actually about sort of revealing hopefully human insights and some truths in there.

Quentin Cooper

A couple more questions before I open it up to the audience. One that just seems to be hanging there that I ought to ask. Does a work of art about climate change need to have anything to do with reducing emissions? Robert?

Robert Butler

No I don't think it does. I mean I think that the world that I am explaining to my children is completely different to the world that I was born into and climate change is the big reason why it's different. So I want to hear the great minds, the great writers ponder this and write about it. That's what I want. I want a deeper engagement with the subject.

Quentin Cooper

Anyone disagree?

Bergit Arends

No. Let us just say climate change - when do we think it started then? Are we talking human induced climate change and if we just take the year in which James Watt patented a steam engine for example we know which was a major driver behind industrialisation and energy uses – 1796. That's the beginning of climate change art if you want it.

Quentin Cooper

Right. This is finally the answer to my question right at the beginning.

Bergit Arends

Because obviously we need to know when climate change started and then all of that period we will have made climate change art.

Robert Butler

Sure, but there is a difference between when it started and when we realised what we'd been doing.

Bergit Arends

Well we realised very soon –

Quentin Cooper

And also surely, between Charlie's point as well, that in our Twenty First Century context we can go and look at artworks from earlier periods, or even things that aren't artworks and consider them to be relevant to climate change as well.

Bergit Arends

Well, when we take when did climate change appear on the UN agenda, in 1972, then we've made climate change art since then?

Quentin Cooper

Well you're pushing it forward in time -

Charlie Kronick

Or it could go – I mean it yo-yo's. It goes back and forth you know. The first climate conference, world climate conference in '72 didn't look a lot at climate change as it is currently characterised, which is global warming. That started in '88 at the second world climate conference. So I mean, it doesn't really matter frankly, I would suggest, when you could get your timeline and stick your pin in it what to me is what's significant. And going back to the question that you just asked – does it have to tell you how to reduce emissions? – no. There are plenty of places you can go to find out how to reduce emissions. And if it has some indirect non-linear outcome that leads to a reduction of emissions, hooray. But it would certainly not be on my, kind of report card, of whether it was a success or not.

Quentin Cooper

And presumably it would be legitimate, I'm afraid, to include things that were telling you why climate change isn't happening, why you don't need to worry. That is a form of climate change art.

Can we finally go back to this point which is that, is there that much point to these boxes, these classifications? You've got something here that's clearly evolving. It's gaining new limbs. It's losing organs. It's very difficult to put something into a particular pigeon hole isn't it, if it's still evolving in this way, Bergit? Shouldn't we be busy getting climate change art out there, rather than trying to work out what box to put it into?

Bergit Arends

Yeah, exactly. I think climate change, or environmental art or ecological art which I think is a wider term. There's lots and lots of work out there that deals specifically with climate change and if that's what it wants and sets out to do, definitely we should say well this is something I want to talk about, climate change, but I think there is such a vast amount of cultural production going on out there that reflects our time and that's – it will inevitably reflect climate change and it will more or less deal with what the pressing questions are if we want some

drivers to do something – activist, behavioural, whatever, then you know it will do so. It will declare itself like that I think.

Quentin Cooper

Beth –

Beth Derbyshire

I agree with much of that so I won't repeat it. But one thing I would say is that what is clear is it can have an accumulative impact, so you know the more good work that you keep seeing and the more effect you will hopefully have because you will reach more people. And I think what's interesting about it is that so many different cultural practitioners are saying it in different ways, whether they are using newspapers, or boats or whatever, or galleries or non-gallery work and I think that will lead to a collective voice and that should be encouraged.

Quentin Cooper

Robert –

Robert Butler

Well I broadly disagree and I think the more you unpack it, the more you spread the kind of the goodies out on the table and the more you are able to differentiate what's going on here from what's going on there and value what's special about different things - and that's what I really think of as anatomising, it's drawing out the kind of the wonder of each thing as a separate entity - the more instead of limiting, you liberate.

Quentin Cooper

Okay. We can at least classify you as disagreeing. Charlie -

Charlie Kronick

I think if you look at it in terms of the contemporary context we are in a deeply utilitarian time. It's the age of austerity. Everything is going to be priced, put in the appropriate bin and then if we can't afford it it's going to go. To me that is going to make it very hard to respond to climate change. Art needs to get out there because of the impact. It's in danger of the thing that's going to suffer first in the times we are in and I think it's important that it get out there, regardless of what you call it

Quentin Cooper

Well actually one of the ways we did mention categorising is a good way to do is by time and I'm afraid ours is up so we will have to leave it there, hopefully to be filed under successful podcast/radio programmes exploring aspects of cultural responses to climate change, but not for us to say.

My thanks to our defiantly indefinable panel of Bergit Arends, Beth Derbyshire, Charlie Kronick and Robert Butler. That's alphabetical by first name, classification fans. To the audience here with us at the Open University and to London and to you whoever you are for deciding this rated as worth listening to.

This is one of four specially recorded Mediating Change discussions around the broader theme of cultural responses to our changing climate. The first is on the history of such responses. The second is on popular culture and the final one will, not unreasonably, look to the future and the ways that culture, politics and science interact as we try to anticipate and respond to climate scenarios.