



Mediating Change

I'm Joe Smith from the Open University and I'm here to introduce the four podcasts that make up the Mediating Change series.

Sure, climate change is a science and a policy issue, but the group of people who have put together these four programmes think it's a great deal more than that. We believe climate change will have as big an impact on our culture - on how we think about who humans are and what their place in the world is – as anything since the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species*.

These discussions consider how humanity is making sense of an extraordinary new body of knowledge. Knowledge of climate change raises huge philosophical and cultural questions about who and what counts – now and in the future. We want these recordings to help artists, writers, filmmakers and others to understand the context in which they are working and to place their own work in relation to that of others.

We also want to encourage critics and climate research and policy people to see that cultural work in this area can and should be much more interesting and important than polemic or persuasion. There is a spectrum of work, all with its own distinct value. In demonstrating that, we hope that more creative people will feel comfortable to explore and question issues surrounding climate change.

We've pulled together a diverse cast including journalists, artists, writers and researchers to think through what climate change means for culture and vice versa. Yes the list is pretty unusual: top climate researchers, writers and journalists alongside a comedian, a choreographer, a campaigner, an entrepreneur, an architect and so on.

But we think that all of these cultural responses matter as humanity tries to make sense of the fact that, according to the best available knowledge, everyday actions by people around the world seem to be changing the climate. The long term consequences of those changes are very unpredictable, but what's for sure is that talking about them, thinking about them and acting on them can't be left to a small body of experts: they are issues we must all come to inhabit. And we'll do that through cultural work.

The podcasts have been sponsored by the Open University's Open Space research centre and the Ashden Trust. The insights found here contribute to a wider research project being developed by researchers at Open Space, The Ashden Trust and Sheffield University's Architecture School. Take a look at the Mediating Change section of the Open Space website to follow our progress.

Let me introduce the series. The first sketches a thirty year history of cultural Responses to Climate Change. The second looks at popular culture's often sketchy approaches to the topic. The third considers how we can go about analysing and categorising the arts communities' responses and the final discussion considers the future, and the ways in which climate change alters the way we think about change, time and responsibility.