

Climate action and creative climate justice

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Abstract

The answer to SDG 13 Climate action in this special issue takes the form of a contribution that breaks with the academic genre and bypasses the established academic or artistic formats of the journal. Instead, this contribution opens the door to the climate activist movement, shining a light on the urgency of the hour and the issues that are paramount in the hearts of climate-engaged artists, educators and cultural workers. Klimakultur, a non-profit organization supporting and strengthening the climate and environmental ambitions of the arts and culture sector in Norway, has together with Rosendal Teater in Trondheim released what they call a *Creative Climate Justice Guide*. This publication serves as inspirational tool for climate action.

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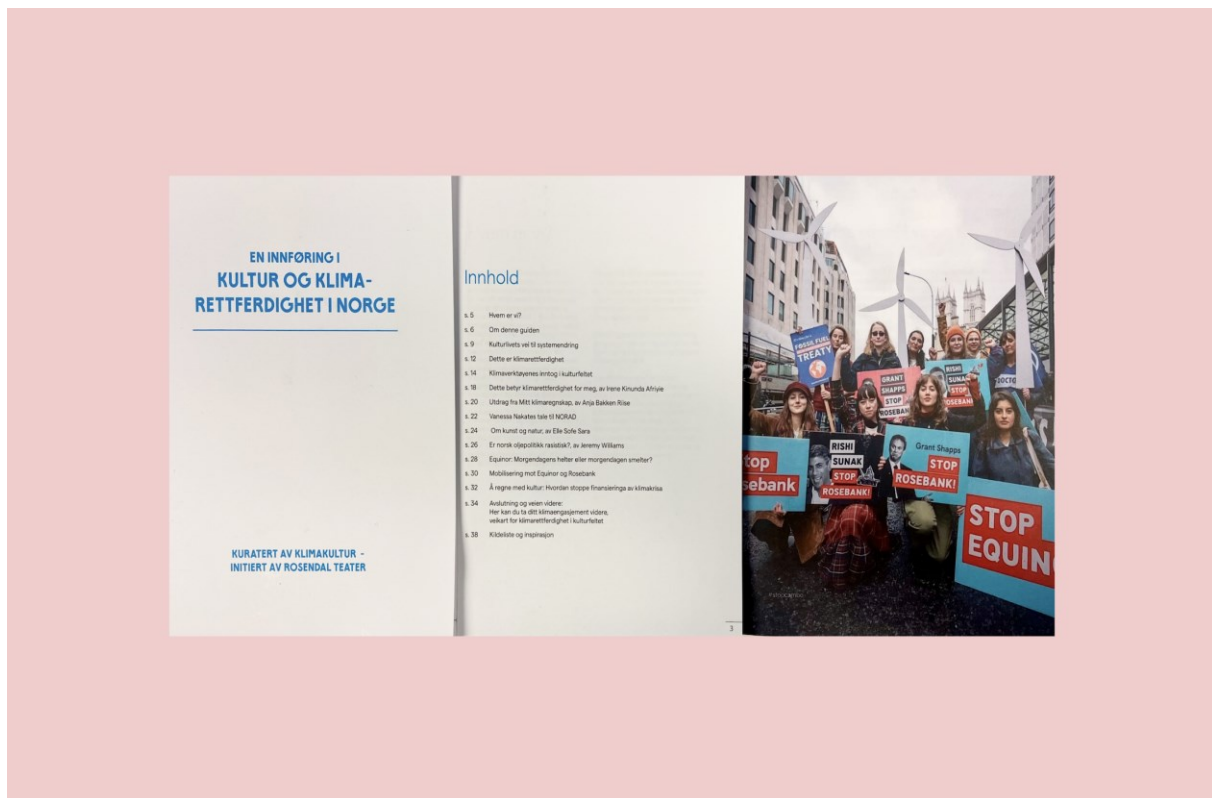


Figure 1. Design and photo by Rosendal Teater and Klimakultur SA

Climate Action

Climate activism arises from an understanding of the urgent need for action and societal change, recognizing that we all must contribute to a collective turnaround to raise awareness and the will to change course. If the UN's Sustainable Development Goals are to be achieved by 2030, it is now that we must act. We can't simply sit here, writing important articles and discussing the significance of art and culture for sustainability. We must also take action.

Many artists and art educators are engaged in the climate and nature crisis, channeling these urgent concerns into their creative expressions and pedagogical endeavors. However, some go a step further and become activists. Art activism can be an expression of burning dedication, desperation, or grief in the face of a system that does not heed research, science, the environmental movement, nature conservationists or aesthetical and sensuous qualities of life. An art activist will use the arts and the arts institutions as platforms and channels to fight for a better world, rising a relentless defense of nature, wildlife, and the very foundations of human existence spanning the globe.

The Creative Climate Justice Guide

The guide is a collection of short texts from different activist perspectives, which also spotlight the romanticization of Norwegian oil and gas. The authors tell stories from different perspectives: What does it mean to live your life as an artist or run your business according to a climate calculator? What does it take for Norway to contribute with climate action that actually helps at a global level? The texts explain how those who have contributed the least to the climate problem are also the hardest hit by climate change, and how the art sector can respond to this through art itself, but also by addressing unjust aspects of social systems and the culture to which they belong. Alexander Roberts, managing director of Rosendal Teater, captures the essence of this in the guide's introduction, claiming that those who have the opportunity to shape a world that is systemically fairer and more sustainable for all who live in it, must do so: "As the amazing Octavia Butler once said, "all that you touch you change, all that you change changes you". Use your influence, your voice and stages, to advocate for a sustainable and just future for everyone. Get involved." (Roberts in Eggen et. al. 2023, p. 8)

Climate justice means putting equity and human rights at the core of decision-making and action on climate change. The concept has been widely used to refer to the unequal historical responsibility that countries and communities bear in relation to the climate crisis. It suggests that the countries, industries, businesses, and people that have become wealthy from emitting large amounts of greenhouse gases have a responsibility to help those affected by climate change, particularly the most vulnerable countries and communities, who often are the ones that have contributed the least to the crisis. (UNDP, June 30, 2023)

Climate justice is a perspective that is absolutely essential in the battle to halt the destructive global development. However, this perspective has been unjustly marginalized in public discourse on the climate and nature crisis. It is a matter of power, a reckoning with those who profit from the ruthless exploitation of vulnerable ecosystems, often at the expense of impoverished communities dependent on these ecosystems. In Norway, it is urgent and unavoidable to talk about oil. Norwegian oil wealth is a sponsor for arts and culture, but at the same time pushing the world in a wrong direction. The wealth we accumulate from sales comes at a deadly cost to people living in more marginal places around the world. It's brutal, but not an exaggeration when we consider the enormous consequences of prolonged drought

and brutal flooding disasters. It is time to shine a light on the blind spot in our welfare society. The individual and institutional focus on managing your own carbon footprint is something the oil industry has systematically worked on for decades. The guide discusses how to manage carbon footprints at an individual and institutional level, but also challenges the arts and culture sector to address the major carbon contributors and how they falsely legitimize their activities in Norway as a response to the climate crisis.

Klimakultur often encounters influential individuals and institutions who claim they don't know how they can contribute, who feel a sense of hopelessness and fear that nothing is happening. Encouraging and inviting action and collaboration is a way to overcome this hopelessness, in addition to being inspiring for others. With the *Creative Climate Justice Guide*, Rosendal Teater and Klimakultur want to show the arts and culture field that their room for influence in the climate and nature crisis is more creative and powerful than the technical carbon reductions each institution implements on its own. The guide encourages the cultural field to speak out about the future, convey ideas, provide space for those who think differently, or experience oppression and the climate crisis up close.

Finally, the guide provides tips on where to find more information and inspiration and how to take your commitment to a fair and sustainable development a step further. Take action, connect with others, and become part of a collective creative response that really matters! This *Creative Climate Justice Guide* presents both international and national voices, voices that make it possible to see the Norwegian oil culture from the outside. We encourage you to read it!

Link to the guide on Klimakultur.no:

<https://www.klimakultur.no/klimaverktoy/kultur-og-klimarettferdighet-i-norge/>

About the authors

Erlend Eggen is the Head of Klimakultur. He is deeply committed to sustainable development and what is actually required of society to get there. Erlend is also an elected representative for the Green Party, which makes it possible to work on sustainable development and system change from several different angles. Klimakultur is a non-profit organization that supports and strengthens the environmental ambitions of the arts and culture sector in Norway.

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