THE CLIMATE STORY LAB

TOOLBOX

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WHY DO WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT CLIMATE STORYTELLING

- We are in a climate emergency, and impactful climate communication is more critical than ever before.
- We need every great story about the climate to reach its full creative potential, both representing and connecting with diverse audiences.
- This begins by challenging ourselves to move past the mono culture of past climate narratives and to identify and amplify a biodiversity of stories as diverse as the ecosystem we seek to save.
- We want to offer up the Climate Story Lab as a convening model — whether in person or virtual — and the content of each lab as ideas to be iterated and adapted to suit your context.
- Our goal is to inspire both storytellers and cultural organizers — from museum curators to college professors to festival programmers — to facilitate necessary climate narrative conversations within their own communities that will inspire citizens, engage politicians, and mobilize communities.
- The model is yours to take, use, and evolve. We will keep updating this toolbox with new content and insights from our peers around the globe.

If you do host your own convening inspired by the Climate Story Lab, our only ask is to help us learn by filling out **this shareback form.**

In solidarity,

Doc Society and **Exposure Labs**

You can download our
shareback form here

THE CLIMATE STORY LAB

WELCOME

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II. CATALYZE

III. STRENGTHEN

IV. INSPIRE

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A LOOK INSIDE:

GATHER

Suggested guiding principles for your gathering

CATALYZE

A library of video prompts from leading experts

STRENGTHEN

Avenues to shareback your community's insights

INSPIRE

Additional resources curated by the global community

DOWNLOAD

Sample slides, branding assets, and social media posts

GATHER
SUGGESTED GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR YOUR GATHERING

Each agenda in every location is going to vary depending on whether you're planning an afternoon's conversation with your team or a five day summit.

We hope the report outs from **New York** and **London** will whet your appetite with topics for conversation and in case it's useful, here are a few guiding principles which have underpinned our own meetings thus far:

- Get intersectional. Ensure the people in the room and those speaking reflect the broad movement we wish to build and the communities we want to engage.
- Center climate justice as a guiding principle of all conversations and acknowledge those who have been affected first and most by climate change.
- Ground the conversation in context by sourcing the latest data on public opinion around climate change, the opportunities and challenges in the local political context, the degree of opposition or disinformation around climate, the state of current climate movements.
- Challenge ourselves to think about the weaknesses and tropes of climate storytelling.
- Share media impact case studies to help inspire better strategy around distribution and outreach.
- Reflect on the audiences that have been excluded and think about new narratives that connect with diverse audiences and give credible hope.

GATHERING IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

The future of in-person gatherings is uncertain, but the need for resilience, community and connection is more important than ever. Here are some of the best resources we've seen that offer guidance and offerings for planning virtual meetings and events:

- **A Comprehensive List of Tips, Tools, and Examples for Event Organizers During the Coronavirus Outbreak** by CMX
- **Online Meeting Resources Toolbox for Facilitators by Facilitators** for Pandemic Response Group
- **Tips on Virtual/IRL Hybrid Meetings** by the Sierra Club

CATALYZE
A LITTLE LIBRARY OF VIDEO PROMPTS

We are starting to curate a library of dialogue prompts featuring videos from incredibly smart thinkers and doers. Between 10-20 mins in length, our hope is that these videos can be easily integrated into your programming and help catalyze deeper conversations.

We are launching the series with four films, presented by colleagues who participated in the first two labs. We will continue to add voices from global thought leaders over the coming months. Please let us know if these are useful and we will keep adding.

FIrst we'd like to introduce you to Ahlyah Ali, a climate organizer from the UK who helped set the context for the UK Climate Story Lab.

We'd had a presentation about the latest science, heard the data on how public opinion is changing around climate change, discussed the political opportunity and challenges in the UK. Equally important was to understand how organisers and activists were feeling in this moment. In this short film Ahlyah shares the perspective of youth in the UK climate movement and reflects on the storytelling they need now.

Next up you can watch video prompts that help us think about unlikely allies and how to engage them. Reflect on the power of comedy as way to transform audiences. Consider the ways in which we can truly collaborate with subjects and communities and leave behind extractive storytelling. As Bananarama says; 'it ain't what you do its the way that you do it.'

FEATURE 1: NON-EXTRACTIVE STORYTELLING & CO-CREATION: MAYA NEWELL

When we consider the status quo in media production, most stories apply extractive practices through the process of production and distribution. Co-creation conversely offers an alternative to the single author vision. Projects emerge from a process and evolve from within communities and with people, rather than for or about them. Co-creation and non-extractive storytelling give agency to the people whom the stories belong to. Filmmaker Maya Newell discusses what these practices can look like, using her film "In My Blood It Runs" as an example. Newell draws her process from the **Screen Australia protocols**, and credits the many organizations and First Nations filmmakers who created the model she uses.

POTENTIAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stories have you seen that have successfully incorporated non-extractive practices? What do you think made them successful?
- What stories in your community could benefit from the process of co-creation?
- What are ways to realistically and organically transition storytelling from the status quo, which can be harmful or exploitative, to non-extractive practices?
- What are some strategies that storytellers working within constraints such as time or budget can use to still ensure non-extractive practices?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

We have included additional resources relevant to the topic including articles, reports and podcasts.

- **Pathways and Protocols: A Filmmaker's Guide to Working with Indigenous People, Culture and Concept** by Screen Australia
- **Collective Wisdom** by the Co-Creation Studio at the MIT Open Doc Lab
- **Whose Story? Five Doc Makers on (Avoiding) Extractive Filmmaking** by International Documentary Association (IDA)
- **The Do's and Don'ts of Filming in Indian Country** an interview with Sterlin Harjo

FEATURE 2: COMEDY AND CLIMATE: CATY BORUM CHATTOO

The need for public engagement in social justice issues is crucial, and it can be challenging to encourage audiences to pay attention to dire problems. Humor, by offering frames of hope and optimism, may help encourage participation in social problems. Caty Borum Chattoo, Executive Director of the Center for Media and Social Impact addresses the opportunities and challenges of finding intersections between comedy and social justice engagement.

POTENTIAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- In what types of situations do you think centering joy and humor over stories of suffering or trauma may be more effective in reaching audiences? Are there particular audiences that might be more inclined to engage?
- What are best practices to balance the acknowledgement of the real grief and pain your audience may be holding with the levity of comedy?
- Where do you see openings for comedy and humor in your own work?
- What kinds of strategic collaborations and partnerships can you think of in your own ecosphere that might benefit from this framework?

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- **Comedy's Role as a Catalysts for Social Change: Hannah Gadsby's "Nanette"**
- **Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good** by Adrienne Maree Brown
- **Can Humor Fight Prejudice?** By Negin Farsad
- **Comedians Will Soon Rule the World**
- **A Comedian and an Activist Walk into a Bar: The Serious Role of Comedy in Social Justice (Communication for Social Justice Activism)** by Caty Borum Chattoo

FEATURE 3: ACTIVATING UNLIKELY ALLIES: MACKY ALSTON

Many people may avoid engaging people with completely different backgrounds and perspectives from their own, but when it comes to creating a wider and deeper impact, finding an unlikely ally can help you reach your goal more effectively. As an example, filmmaker and activist Macky Alston discusses his own experience working with communities of faith. As a gay Christian, who has made films that have been used to argue the Christian case for LGBT equality, Macky is aware of the difficulties as well as the opportunities of such partnerships. His own work at the **Auburn Seminary** involves training progressive faith leaders, and he notes that faith groups have been at the forefront of social justice movements for decades. Macky encourages us all to examine our own assumptions and blocks to partnership with unlikely allies.

POTENTIAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What is a time where you had to re-examine your own assumptions about another person or group of people? What did you learn from that experience?
- What goals could you reach more effectively by finding partners outside of the usual suspects?
- What are communities that you know of who could be potential allies around climate?
- What are strategies you could use to engage the unlikely allies in your work?

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- **Engaging Unlikely Allies by Hildy Gottlieb**
- **Money + Meaning Podcast: Unlikely Allies Building New Markets for Impact** by Social Capital Markets
- **Finding Common Ground: The Story of an Unlikely Chicago Alliance** by Craig Phillips, Independent Lens
- **What if White People Led the Charge to End Racism?** by Nita Mosby Tyler

STRENGTHEN
AVENUES TO SHARE BACK YOUR COMMUNITY'S INSIGHTS

As a reflection of your community's collective insights, we encourage you to put together a shareback piece that can be sent to participants, and can be distributed with the community of climate storytellers and their allies.

- **Here is a template** to get started. Beyond a documentation of what was done, your shareback could be an invaluable resource for those who were not in the room. Here are the reports we produced from **CSL 2019 in NYC** and **CSL 2020 in the UK**.
- If you don't have time for a full report, consider an email with highlights and some selected photos.
- Most importantly, the community doesn't end here. Find ways to keep in connection and conversation through tools such as Google Groups or Slack.

*** Note: We want to learn from your gathering. If you have used the CSL Toolbox, please send your own reflections and sharebacks so that we can incorporate them into this resource! You can fill out our template form, or create your own report and send them to: mona@exposurelabs.com.*

INSPIRE
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES CURATED BY THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY

Over the past year we have collected suggestions of things to watch / listen / read from the CSL community. It is our hope and intention to grow this into a co-created space that continues to evolve through new recommendations from our global climate storyteller community. We offer this initial selection up to you as a resource to help create your agenda, trigger discussions and downright inspire.

For a little bit of everything, start with **this expansive thread** of climate story recommendations from Dr. Katharine Wilkinson's Twitter thread.

WATCH ME

READ ME

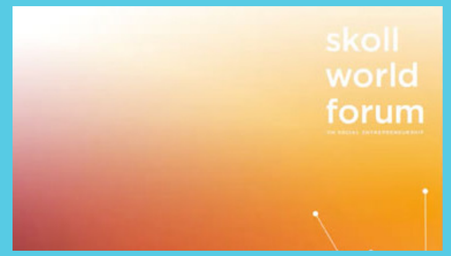
LISTEN TO ME

WATCH ME

A QUIET STORM
From Duck Productions & poet Selina Nwulu

AOC & NAOMI KLEIN'S "MESSAGE FROM THE FUTURE"

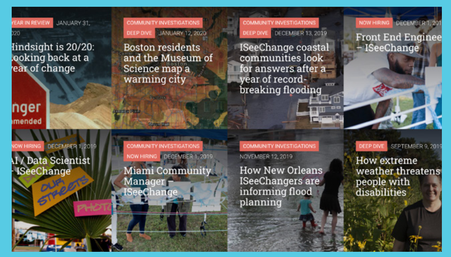
BEYOND INCLUSION: BUILDING NARRATIVES OF LIBERATION
by Michele Stephenson



CLIMATE JUSTICE IN THE TIME OF COVID: WOMEN AND GIRLS LEADING
panel at Skoll World Forum

DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT IT; WHY OUR BRAINS ARE WIRED TO IGNORE CLIMATE CHANGE
by George Marshall

HOW EMPOWERING WOMEN AND GIRLS CAN HELP STOP GLOBAL WARMING
by Katharine Wilkinson



I SEE CHANGE
Crowd-sourced stories of climate change reporting

RISE: FROM ONE ISLAND TO ANOTHER
by Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner and Aka Niviâna

SAVING THE PLANET WITHOUT MAKING IT EVERYONE'S TOP PRIORITY
by Angela Francis, Chief Economist at WWF

THE INDIGENOUS: THE FRONTLINE - CHANGE FOR CLIMATE TALKS
by Eriel Tchekwie Deranger

UNDER THE BLACKLIGHT: THE INTERSECTIONAL VULNERABILITIES THAT COVID LAYS BARE by the African American Policy Forum

READ ME

A BILLION BLACK ANTHROPOCENES OR NONE
by Kathryn Yusoff

ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE IN A POST-PANDEMIC WORLD
from McKinsey & Company

CLIMATE CHANGE AIN'T THE FIRST EXISTENTIAL THREAT
by Mary Heglar

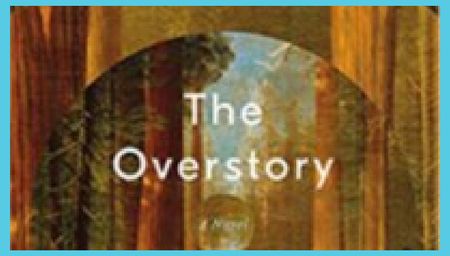
CLIMATE SIGNS
by Emily Raboteau

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE HAS BEEN WARNING US ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE FOR CENTURIES
by Malcolm Harris

MIT'S COLLECTIVE WISDOM

OUR HISTORY IS THE FUTURE: Standing Rock Versus the Dakota Access Pipeline, and the Long Tradition of Indigenous Resistance
by Nick Estes

THE BIGGEST EMERGENCY FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLE
by Jenni Monet



THE OVERSTORY
by Richard Powers

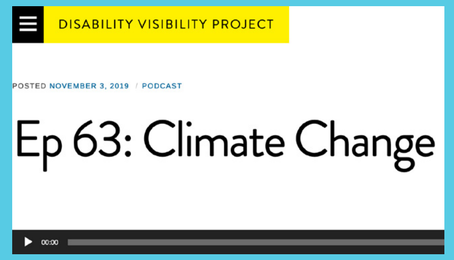
WE NEED COURAGE, NOT HOPE, TO FACE CLIMATE CHANGE
by Kate Marvel

WHAT THE CORONAVIRUS COULD BE TEACHING US ABOUT THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY
by Charles Komanoff & Christopher Ketcham, The Intercept

LISTEN TO ME

A POEM ABOUT WHAT GROUNDS YOU
by Aimee Nezhukumatathil

CLIMATE CASH
Podcast



DISABILITY VISIBILITY
Podcast, episode on Climate Change

HOW TO SURVIVE THE END OF THE WORLD
Podcast

IRRESISTIBLE (FORMERLY HEALING JUSTICE)
Podcast

MOTHERS OF INVENTION
Podcast

TERRESTRIAL
Podcast

THE BETTER CONVERSATIONS GUIDE FROM ON BEING

THE CLIMATE MUSIC PROJECT

THE LOST WORDS BLESSING

DOWNLOAD
LOGOS, BRANDING, SAMPLE SLIDES AND SOCIAL MEDIA ASSETS

HERE ARE A FEW BRANDING MATERIALS THAT WE USE IN OUR LABS. IF YOU CHOOSE TO USE ANY OF THE ASSETS, WE ASK THAT YOU ACKNOWLEDGE *CLIMATE STORY LAB, DOC SOCIETY,* AND *EXPOSURE LABS.*

THANKS FOR READING THIS. PLEASE DO PASS IT ON.

Climate communication is more critical than ever before: we need the best storytelling to reach its full potential and reach the audiences that matter. Born of this conviction, Climate Story Lab catalyses the most compelling media projects being made right now toward big impact.

The inaugural Lab took place in New York in July 2019, followed by Climate Story Lab UK in London in March 2020. The rest of this year we are taking our convening online and hoping to return in person in the US in early 2021.

This series of interventions is a radical collaboration combining the creative and campaigning expertise of Exposure Labs and Doc Society with the best of the Good Pitch Impact Labs and a laser determination to accelerate climate communication. We are grateful to all our partners who have made this partnership possible.

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