

Climate Change and Cultural Policy

Report on the Event

*‘Cultural infrastructures as
Drivers of people-centered
climate action’*

**A ResiliArt Debate for UNESCO
Mondiacult 2022**

1 March 2022



WITH THE
SUPPORT
OF



IN THE CONTEXT OF



Quotes from Debate Participants

‘In terms of heritage and culture, juxtapose this idea of rapidly transforming our world [with] the question of what is it that we really need to care for in our worlds and what is it that we don’t want to lose?’

– **Isak Stoddard**, PhD candidate, Department of Earth Science, Uppsala University (Sweden).

‘The Climate Crisis is fundamentally a culture crisis. Climate policy should start with culture and cultural policy should start with climate.’

– **Alison Tickell**, Director, Julie’s Bicycle (UK)

‘Genius vs skill, beautiful vs useful, art vs craft, culture vs nature, art vs life. Without these violent rifts, all the ideals, the practices and the institutions that make up the [extractive] art system and indeed much of the general capitalist infrastructures would collapse.’

– **Isabelle Fremeaux**, Co-Founder, Laboratory of Insurrectionary Imagination (France)

‘Reconciliando, reconectando al arte con la ciencia, diseño e ingeniería, posiblemente en momentos donde el distanciamiento físico que impuso la pandemia, la desconfianza política, las invasiones y las guerras, por lo que es importante juntarnos y buscar que todos los proyectos que se presenten respondan a una juntancia entre arte y ciencia.’¹

– **Paula Trujillo**, Creative and Cultural Economies Specialist (Colombia)

‘More than 50% of all historical CO2 emissions have been released in the 40 years since the first MondiaCult in 1982. Policy broadly speaking in this period has failed to bend the emissions curb but is this not also a failure of cultural policy? How do we hold cultural policy makers accountable for their responsibility to support the far reaching, rapid transitions that climate science says in necessary to prevent the worst impacts of climate change?’

– **Jordi Pascual**, United Cities and Local Governments

‘We need to adopt a new “circular culture” that where cities are seen as ecosystems that unite arts, sciences, and our dreams.’

– **Özden Coşkun Öner**, İzmir Metropolitan Municipality, Directorate of the Historic Environment and Cultural Assets (Turkey)

¹ Translation: ‘Reconciling, reconnecting art with science, design and engineering, possibly at a time when the physical distancing imposed by the pandemic, political distrust, invasions and wars, so it is important to get together and seek that all the projects that are presented respond to a union between art and science.’

Introduction

The UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development, known as MONDIACULT 2022, will be held in September 2022. It is meant to be 'a renewed reflection on cultural policies to tackle global challenges and outline immediate and future priorities.'

The Climate Heritage Network, Culture 2030 Goal and United Cities and Local Governments believe that the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss are defining challenge of our time, requiring an ambition and comprehensive treatment in cultural policy commensurate with the magnitude of the climate emergency itself. On 1 March 2030 they joined together to host a debate on how cultural policy in general, and Mondiacult specifically, could best fulfil this ambition.

This debate entitled 'Cultural infrastructures as Drivers of people-centered climate action' was organised as part of Resiliart, a global movement to gather inputs to inform the preparatory process of Mondiacult 2022.





Background

The twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss are defining challenges of our time. Six-plus years after adoption of the Paris Agreement, the goal of holding global warming to 1.5 degree Celsius is barely alive. In February the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released its new report on climate Impacts, Adaptation & Vulnerability and the findings are grim. UN Secretary General Guterres called it an ‘atlas of human suffering and a damning indictment of failed climate leadership.’

How do we account for this great failing of climate leadership? One growing critique holds that prevailing models of climate planning are falling short because they fixate on large-scale, technological and market-based solutions, and miss factors less easy to quantify: the socio-economic context of the climate crisis.

Culture is both part of the cause and part of the response to climate change. On the one hand, the take-make-waste ethic that has emerged since the advent of the industrial revolution has spread what environmental humanities scholars call ‘petrocultures’ and ‘carbonscapes’ across the earth.

On the other hand, traditional knowledge that pre-dates (or works independently of) the fossil fuel era can point the way to post-carbon living at scale. The worldviews and interpretations of development held by Indigenous Peoples and local communities that were never co-opted by modern take-make-waste approaches offer counterpoints to prevailing paradigms of ‘progress.’ Artistic and imaginative tools support a profound examination of inherited assumptions and hold the potential to transformatively reinterpret today’s carbon-scapes and their accompanying mindsets.

The 1 March event explored how cultural infrastructures and narratives can be harnessed to drive more effective climate action and climate policy through people-centred approaches that tackle the socio-economic structures that undergird the climate and biodiversity crises, and how climate policy can help unlock this potential.



Debate Provocation

A short provocation was prepared to guide and inform the debate. The provocation can be found here:

- **Provocation in English:** <https://climateheritage.org/wp-content/uploads/ResiliArt-Event-Provocation-21-Feb-2022-rev-a21c.pdf>
- **Un desafío en español:** <https://climateheritage.org/wp-content/uploads/ResiliArt-Event-Provocation-21-Feb-2022-es-a21c.pdf>
- **Une provocation en français:** https://climateheritage.org/wp-content/uploads/ResiliArt-Event-Provocation-21-Feb-2022_FR-a21c.pdf

Questions Addressed

The debate was framed by three questions:

- How do cultural actors address petrocultures, with their extractive, take-make-waste systems and unsustainable consumption and production patterns? How do we contextualise and interpret the heritage of the carbonscapes they have unleashed during the Anthropocene? Do approaches developed to address other so-called “toxic heritage” hold analogies for addressing petrocultures?
- How can cultural institutions be accomplices, or even just allies, in the resistance of local communities and Indigenous Peoples to unsustainable, extractive models of governance and living? How can they help lift up traditional and Indigenous ways as counterpoint perspectives to unsustainable models of ‘progress’?
- How can cultural policies support artists, heritage advocates, traditional knowledge holders, cultural, and creative voices to help people imagine – and realise – new post-carbon, climate resilient futures?



Three Major Cultural Policy Gaps and Needs Identified During the Debate²

(1) Differentiating and ‘hospicing’ toxic heritage.

Culture is both a part of the problem and the response to climate change. Many lifestyles and values (in industrial societies) are deeply entangled with fossil fuels and extractive/colonial systems. Cultural policies must support transformation of these ‘petrocultures’ and related ‘carbonscapes.’ Framing this heritage as ‘toxic’ offers counter-narratives, helping people see connections with environment harm, and systemic inequalities. Cultural institutions/heritage sites managed by trusted organizations with interpretation already framed in place-based, local narratives offer ready spaces for these conversations.

(2) Nourishing Art for Transformative Change

Cultural policy must unlock artistic and imaginative tools to support transformative reinterpretation of today’s carbonscapes and make-take-waste mindsets. This means nourishing an art ecosystem that is locally rooted, non-extractive, and joined-up to climate action. Approaches that embed culture in GHG-intensive, business-as-usual models (e.g., some ‘creative industries’ and ‘cultural tourism’ models) must be dismantled. Cultural policy should create safe spaces for dialogue with grass roots cultural activists and encompass hyper-local responses as well as national priorities aligned to climate action.

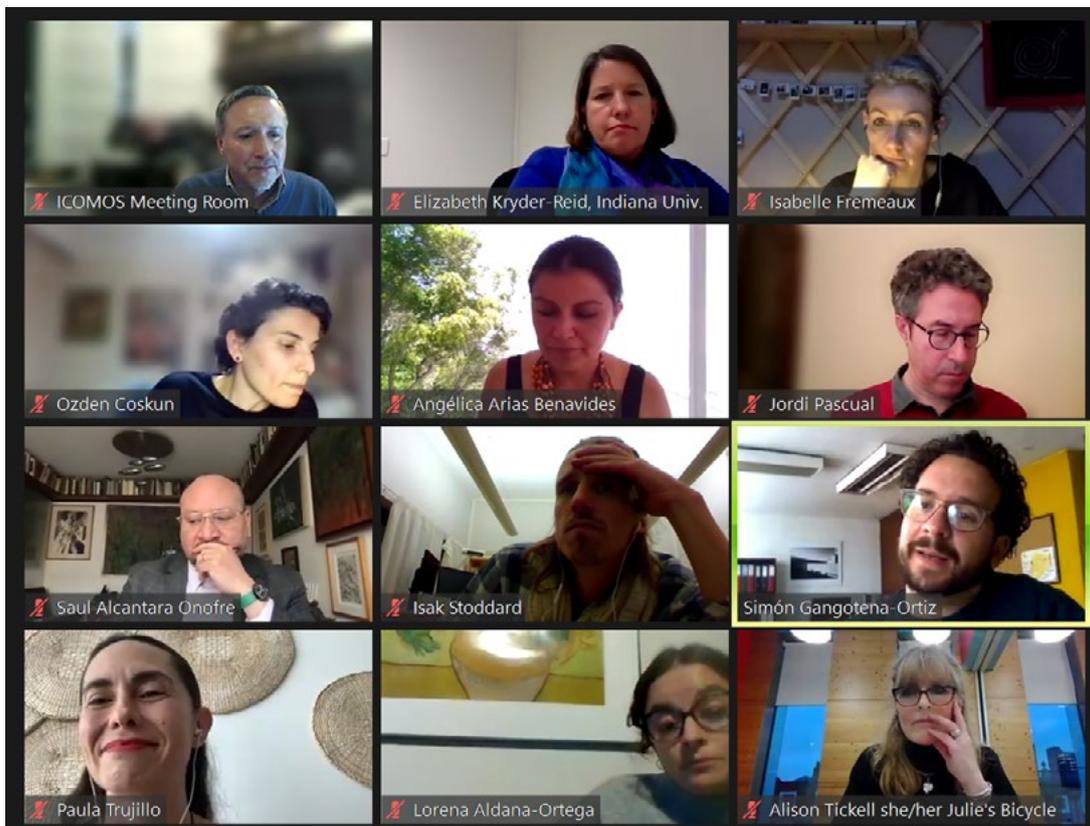
(3) Strengthening the Cultural Rights Perspective

The worldviews of Indigenous Peoples’ and local communities not co-opted by prevailing notions of ‘progress’ enrich our ability to imagine systems not based on the exploitation of people and nature. Adopting a cultural rights policy lens supports expression of these alternative climate futures by guaranteeing ability to identify with cultural communities, participate in cultural life, and access knowledge. Cultural organisations amplify these responses by holistically supporting Indigenous Peoples; eschewing extractive approaches to traditional knowledge; and linking culture to climate, gender, and racial justice.

² Note that the Debate reporting topics, formats, and topic lengths were set by ResiliArt.

Illustrative Comments made by Debate Viewers

- Landscape architecture is of vital importance, from the perspective of proposing solutions to the energy and environmental crisis, recovering the identity and spirituality of society, restoring the cosmogonic link with nature and the earth.
- Es posible ser parte de la solución, deberíamos como artistas salir de esa zona de confort para atacar estos problemas.³
- Through an aesthetic and narrative exploration, classical music, sound, can generate that space of awareness, in which people can reflect about the relationship we have built with our Environment.



³ We can be part of the solution. As artists, we must step out of our comfort zone in order to address these problems.



Mechanisms that can enable heritage/creativity to harness the digital transition and new technologies

Digital environmental humanities, especially those that harness spatial data (e.g., StoryMap), can be useful tools for reaching broad audiences with engaging narratives. Digital tools are also useful for community-curated content and incorporating citizen science.

As a tangible and intangible asset, cultural heritage offers climate services and can build resilience in the face of climate change. Community and societal responses to climate change vary widely, but all can benefit from the participatory governance models. Citizen science approaches utilise technology to deputise the public in the monitoring and recording of heritage at Risk. Utilising citizen science, community observations and knowledge of the interactions between climate and weather events and their cultural resources/ practices can support monitoring of slow onset impacts on cultural heritage (e.g., coastal archaeology), and the loss and damage issues arising thereof.

Cultural heritage inventories and participatory cultural mapping initiatives, serving as a knowledge-gathering process, support climate vulnerability and risk assessment, as well as a platform for citizen mobilisation. Both traditional approaches like oral histories and new technologies such as low cost non-invasive and non-destructive tools and technologies like photogrammetry and mobile GIS assist in this task.

Management of cultural facilities, landscapes, and heritage sites can no longer be predicated solely on historical climate or weather records. A changing climate means changing weather. Predictions of future climate change Impacts and cultural heritage responses need to be developed using recent and current observations as proxies for future change, integrated with the range of climate and Emissions scenarios developed in the most recent Assessment Reports of the IPCC. The ability to Downscale 20- and 30-year climate Scenarios will be a necessary skill of every site manager.

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Role of higher/professional education to realize a more sustainable culture sector

Debate Keynote Speaker Isak Stoddard and colleagues have written that an ‘epistemological monoculture’ has ‘impoverished the collective global capacity to imagine and realize forms of living not dependent upon exploitation of people and natural “resources.”’ Higher education, including in the culture arena, can be a part of this problem when they provide few resources to support students to interrogate and critically reflect upon the underlying narratives that shape industrial modernity. This includes examining the means and aims of artistic practice and production and heritage conservation as they related to the imperatives of the climate emergency. Indeed, some culture and heritage pedagogies may be better understood as active sites of production of business-as-usual mentalities, reproducing the very things that have created climate change.

At the same time, many students are keenly interested in creating sustainable cultural institutions and to engaging public audiences in the existential issues of climate change and biodiversity loss. The work of museum organizations addressing climate change, for example, are a central part of Museum Studies curriculum from curation to collections management at one speaker’s institution.

Improving education, communication, and training for heritage professionals and decision makers about climate change and its various impacts will be key. Training on how to communicate about climate change, including how to effectively assess and explain to other the impacts of climate change on cultural heritage would help immensely.

Access to foundational cultural skills should be a policy priority which can disrupt the prevailing cultural model which privileges higher education and access to academic learning. The opportunity for a green cultural transition is also an opportunity to redress obstinate social imbalances, by supporting access to green skills and enterprise for socially excluded, indigenous, and young people.

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Innovative mechanisms to safeguard freedom of artistic expressions

The imperatives of climate action put a premium on freedom of artistic expression. Artistic and imaginative tools support a profound examination of inherited assumptions and desires that hold the potential to transformatively reinterpret today's carbonscapes and the take-make-waste mindsets that accompanying them. This work of advancing 'social imaginaries' (i.e., collective images of how we might live) supports the rapid and far-reaching transitions needed to mitigate climate change.

Almost by definition, this work calls on artists and creative actors to enter sites of political contestation that push against power structures and implicate artistic freedom. By valorising the role of artistic and imaginative tools in advancing national and local climate goals and documenting the utility and necessity of unsettling business as usual approaches as an element of climate action, cultural policy can offer new defences of artistic freedom.

Climate action such as carbon sequestration projects, GhG mitigation and adaptation infrastructure and projects can themselves pose a threat to cultural rights. This occurs when the co-benefits of culture and heritage are not actively considered in the design of climate action. Extractive approaches to traditional knowledge, including actions taken by cultural institutions (some steeped in ethnographic, colonial traditions) can itself pose a threat to artistic and cultural rights. Traditional and Indigenous Knowledge is often a part of complex social and political systems. Maintaining holistic spiritual and relational foundations, often tied to land tenure, is key to the safeguarding Indigenous way of knowing and stewardship, and in turn to unlocking their climate action potential. This approach should be championed in cultural policy.



Next steps of debate organizer to respond to the opinions expressed

The Climate Heritage Network is a global network whose members are committed to mobilising arts, culture and heritage to address climate change and support communities in achieving the ambitions of the Paris Agreement. Launched in 2019, the CHN seeks to scale up culture-based climate action and to foreground the cultural dimensions of climate policy. The CHN is committed to taking forward many of the issues raised in this debate.

CHN members work with all types of culture including arts and music; museums and libraries; landscapes, heritage sites and archaeology; and intangible heritage, traditional knowledge, and Indigenous ways of knowing. CHN members include units of government at all levels, Indigenous Peoples' organisations, civil society, universities, cultural institutions, artists, creative industries, and design and other businesses.

The aim of the Climate Heritage Network for calendar years 2022-24 is to support the role of arts, culture and heritage in helping people to imagine and create post-carbon, climate resilient futures. To achieve this, CHN members are collaborating on two key strategies:

- **Increasing Culture-Based Climate Action:** To increase the quantity and quality of arts, culture and heritage-based Climate Action at local, regional, national, and international scales and across sectors.
- **Mainstreaming Culture into Climate Policy and Climate into Culture Policy:** To mainstreaming culture and heritage into international climate policy and science, both to improve the effectiveness of climate policy and to create frameworks, entry points and better practices for culture-based climate action.

It was noted during this ResiliArt event that very little support is offered culture and heritage-based climate action and research via the formal funding and policy mechanisms of cultural policy (though exceptions were noted). The recognition and support of climate work by cultural frameworks would itself be an advance in cultural policy.

1 March Programme

Welcome

(Potts: In English with Spanish Translation)(Arias: In Spanish with English Translation)

Andrew Potts
and Angelica Arias

7 minutes

Keynote Address

“Three Decades of Climate Mitigation: Why Haven’t We Bent the Global Emissions Curve?”
(In English with Spanish Translation)

Isak Stoddard

15 minutes

Talk

“Toxic Heritage and Climate Change: Lessons for Cultural Policy”
(In English with Spanish Translation)

Elizabeth Kryder-Reid

10 minutes

Talk

“Against extractivist art, towards a culture of reciprocity. The potential of artistic and imaginative tools to transform today’s carbon-scape.” (In English with Spanish Translation)

Isabelle Fremeaux

10 minutes

Roundtable

Each Discussant will be asked to provide a 3-minute reflection mentioning 1 or 2 points they think it is important to stress; discussion follows plus audience questions as time allows(In English with Spanish Translation)

Andrew Potts, Moderator
Discussants:

- Jordi Pascual
- Alison Tickell
- Özden Coşkun Öner

20 minutes

Panel

How can Cultural Voices bring a people-centred approach to climate planning, one which addresses socioeconomic dimensions of the climate crisis?
(In Spanish with English Translation)

Opening remarks and introduction of speakers by Angélica Arias (5 minutes)

20 minutes

Intervention 1. Paula Trujillo, Colombia (4 minutes)

Intervention 2. Simón Gangotena-Ortiz, Ecuador (4 minutes)

Intervention 3. Saul Alcantara, México (4 minutes)(Invited)

Conclusions by Angelica Arias (3 minutes)

Concluding Remarks

Andrew Potts and Angélica Arias

5 minutes

Cultural infrastructures as Drivers of people-centered climate action: A ResiliArt Debate for UNESCO Mondiacult2022

Tuesday 1st March 2022
10:00-11:30am Mex. City time; 5:00-6:30pm CET

INTERPRETATION EN / ES

Climate Heritage NETWORK #CULTURE2030GOAL CAMPAIGN culture 21 UCLG Committee WITH THE SUPPORT OF IN THE CONTEXT OF ResiliArt

Debate Participant Biographies

ANGELICA ARIAS BENAVIDES

An architect by profession, **Angélica Arias Benavides** serves as the executive director of the Instituto Metropolitano de Patrimonio de Quito (Ecuador) where she is in charge of the management, coordination and supervision for the conservation of cultural heritage. Quito was the co-first city in the world to be declared a UNESCO World Heritage City. Angelica previously served as the Minister of Culture and Heritage of Ecuador. Before assuming the position, she was Undersecretary of Social Memory of the Ministry of Culture and Heritage of Ecuador, where she promoted the development, implementation and monitoring of repositories of libraries, historical archives and museums in the country. Angélica was recognized with the 2018 Program of Invitation of Personalities of the Future (PIPA), sponsored by the Government of France. Additionally, she is a member of the Board of Directors of the Climate Heritage International Network.

ÖZDEN COŞKUN ÖNER

Özden Coşkun Öner is an architect and working in İzmir Metropolitan Municipality, Directorate of the Historic Environment and Cultural Assets since 2010. She has a MSc degree in restoration from Yıldız Teknik University (İstanbul/TURKEY) and a PHD degree in architecture from İzmir Institute of Technology (İzmir/TURKEY) that is focused on architectural design parameters in traditional buildings in terms of their energy performance for future housing design.

SAUL ALCANTARA ONOFRE

Saul Alcantara Onofre from Mexico President of ICOMOS Mexico. He is a professor at the Autonomous University Metropolitan Azcapotzalco and has expertise in cultural landscapes and natural heritage. He is an architect specialized in the restoration of monuments and historical centres by the School of Restoration of Monuments and Historical Centers of Florence, Italy and master's in landscape architecture by the University of the Studies of Genoa, Italy.

ISABELLE FREMEAUX

Isabelle Fremeaux is an educator, facilitator and author. She was a lecturer in Media and Cultural Studies at Birkbeck College-University, London (2001-2011) before deserting the academy to embrace shared life and commons building. With Jay Jordan, she co-founded the Laboratory of Insurrectionary Imagination (www.labo.zone), which brings together artists and activists to co-conceived and deploy creative forms of resistance. They co-authored the film/book *Les Sentiers de L'utopie* (Zones/La Découverte, 2011) and most recently *We Are "Nature" Defending Itself: Entangling art, activism and autonomous zones* (Pluto/Vagabonds, 2021) (<https://vagabonds.xyz/wandi/>). Isabelle inhabits the liberated territory of the ZAD in Notre-Dame-des-Landes, a rebel territory that fought off a climate wrecking airport project and is still in struggle to establish commons.

SIMÓN GANGOTENA- ORTIZ

Simón Gangotena-Ortiz from Ecuador - Founder, executive and musical director of the InConcerto Foundation, an organization created in 2012 and dedicated to the generation and management of cultural and musical projects in Ecuador. One of its emblematic projects is the Música Ocupa Festival, whose main objective is the decentralization and democratization of classical music, the rescue of material cultural heritage and immaterial and the construction of social, cultural and political dialogues within our society through music.

ELISABETH KRYDER-REID

Elizabeth Kryder-Reid (Ph.D Brown University) is Chancellor's Professor, Anthropology and Museum Studies, in the Indiana University School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI, Director of the Cultural Heritage Research Center, and the former Director of the IUPUI Museum Studies Program. With a background in archaeology, art history, and public history, her research investigates cultural heritage with a particular focus on the intersections of landscape and power and the contestation of social inequalities across gender, race, class, ethnicity, and religion. She is the author of *"California Mission Landscapes: Race, Memory, and the Politics of Heritage"* (2016), a contributing author to *Interpreting Religion* (2018) and *Keywords in American Landscape Design* (2010), and PI of *Shaping Outcomes* (www.shapingoutcomes.org). She is the coordinator of the Toxic Heritage Research Collaborative (<http://toxicheritage.com/about/>).



**JORDI
PASCUAL
I RUIZ**

Jordi Pascual i Ruiz is the founding coordinator of the Committee on culture of the world organisation of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG). He has published books, articles and reports on cultural rights, international cultural relations, culture and sustainability and the governance of culture, which have been translated to more than 20 languages. Some examples: “Cultural rights, local cultural policies and sustainable development. Looking for a coherent narrative” (Journal of Law, Social Justice and Global Development, 2018), “Culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable development: the best is yet to come” (Economia della cultura, 2016), “Rio+20 and culture: advocating for culture at the centre of sustainability” (UCLG, 2012), “Culture and sustainable development: institutional innovation and a new cultural policy model” (UCLG – UNESCO, 2009), “On citizen participation in local cultural policy development for European cities” (European Cultural Foundation, 2007), or “Third system: arts first! Local cultural policies, third system and employment” (European Commission, 1999). Jordi has been a member of the jury of the European Capital of Culture and teaches cultural policies and management at the [Open University of Catalonia](#).

**ANDREW
POTTS**

Andrew Potts coordinates the Secretariat of the Climate Heritage Network on behalf of ICOMOS, which hosts the Secretariat. The Climate Heritage Networks links organisations around the world that share a commitment to the role arts, culture and heritage can play in tackling the climate emergency. Andrew formerly coordinated the ICOMOS Climate Change and Heritage Working Group (CCHWG). In 2019 the CCHWG released its report *The Future of Our Pasts: Engaging Cultural Heritage in Climate Action*. The *Future of Our Pasts* Report scoped hundreds of ways in which cultural heritage can drive transformative climate action and catalogued the myriad impacts climate change is having on every type of heritage. Andrew holds a legal degree from Indiana University. He previously served as Associate General Counsel of the US National Trust for Historic Preservation and received its John H. Chafee Trustees Award for Outstanding Achievement in Public Policy. He also previously served as ICOMOS Focal Point for the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

ISAK STODDARD

Isak Stoddard is a PhD candidate in Natural Resources and Sustainable Development at the Department of Earth Science. In his current research he is focused on the strategies and imaginaries informing regional climate and energy transitions within Sweden. His educational background is in engineering physics. For the past decade he has been mainly focused on developing transdisciplinary approaches to higher education at the Centre for Environment and Development Studies (CEMUS). He is the lead author of the article “Three Decades of Climate Mitigation: Why Haven’t We Bent the Global Emissions Curve?,” on which the Provocation for this event is partially based (Isak Stoddard, Kevin Anderson, Stuart Capstick, Wim Carton, Joanna Depledge, Keri Facer, et al., “Three Decades of Climate Mitigation: Why Haven’t We Bent the Global Emissions Curve?,” *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 46:1 (2021): 653-689, accessed 20 February 2022, <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev-environ-012220-011104>).

ALISON TICKELL

Alison Tickell established Julie’s Bicycle in 2007 as a non-profit company helping the music industry reduce its environmental impacts and develop new thinking in tune with global environmental challenges. JB has since extended its remit to the full performing and visual arts communities, heritage and wider creative and cultural policy communities. JB is acknowledged as a leading organization bridging sustainability with the arts and culture. Originally trained as a cellist, Alison worked with seminal jazz improviser and teacher John Stevens. She worked for many years at Community Music and at Creative and Cultural Skills where she established the National Skills Academy. She has been on many advisory and awarding bodies including Observer Ethical Awards, RCA Sustainable Design Awards, D&AD White Pencil Awards. She has been on the boards of the Music Business Forum, Live Music and Sound Connections, and is on the board of Energy Revolution. In 2021, Alison became a [lifelong Ashoka Fellow](#).



**PAULA
TRUJILLO**

Paula Trujillo from Colombia - Specialist and manager in the world of Creative and Cultural Economies between Europe and Latin America for more than 15 years. She has been the Manager of the first Creative Hub in Colombia, triggering action of the Creative District of Medellín in the industrial zone of Perpetuo Socorro. Member of Boards of Directors/Boards of Directors of some companies, and professor at universities in Spain and Colombia. She has worked on Medellín's internationalization strategy in the period in which the city decides to move "from fear to hope" as Director of International Business and Executive Director of the Agency for Cooperation and Investment of the City (ACI).

www.climateheritage.org/
www.culture2030goal.net/