

# Arts and Environmental Initiative

## Dialogue I

*Presented by*  
**California Lawyers for the Arts**  
*In Collaboration with*  
**Fort Mason Center**

*November 10, 2008*  
*San Francisco, California*



*As time encircles and recycles itself,  
mirror likenesses thicken and fog up.  
If you have trouble finding yourself,  
start looking elsewhere. The sky –  
not only is it not the limit, it opens  
and dares you to look up who you are.  
Mountains and mountains and mountains  
– they're you. Great Lakes you take  
to be out there someplace look like you,  
splash and churn and shine like you.  
The world beyond washed flesh is you.  
Light dries your eyes; one blink can melt  
illusion, dissolve the frame that says:  
"I look at you and see no evidence of me."*

*Al Young, California Poet Laureate, © 2008*



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### **Special Thanks to our Ad Hoc Planning Committee:**

Al Goncalves, Managing Director, Fort Mason Center  
Margie O'Driscoll, Executive Director, American Institute of Architects, SF Chapter  
Shawn Rosenmoss, Development Director, San Francisco Environment Department  
Bruce Davis, Executive Director, Arts Council Silicon Valley  
Sam Bower, Executive Director, greenmuseum.org

### **California Lawyers for the Arts Participating Staff:**

Alma Robinson, Executive Director  
Jill Roisen, Arts and Community Development Program Director  
Missy Ablin, Arts and Community Development Program Associate  
Angela Mooney D'Arcy, Santa Monica Education Programs Coordinator  
Ellen Taylor, Sacramento Program Director  
Linda Schanfein, ArtHouse Manager  
Maija Grassis, Arts Arbitration and Mediation Services Case Manager  
Josie Porter, Systems Coordinator

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[www.calawyersforthearts.org](http://www.calawyersforthearts.org).

For information about this project or to order this report please contact:

Alma Robinson, Executive Director

[ar@calawyersforthearts.org](mailto:ar@calawyersforthearts.org)

(415) 775.7200 x 112

- or -

Jill Roisen, Program Director

[acd@calawyersforthearts.org](mailto:acd@calawyersforthearts.org)

(415) 775-7200 x 102

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# Arts and Environmental Initiative

## Dialogue I

### SUMMARY

On November 10, 2008, California Lawyers for the Arts brought together 70 environmental, philanthropic, and public sector representatives from local, state and federal agencies, as well as artists and non-profit arts professionals, for an innovative dialogue on arts and environmental issues. Aligning arts and environmental interests, our goal was to find ways to build a platform for a larger role for the arts in raising public awareness of the pressing environmental concerns that threaten our global well-being.

In the required reading for the day, *The Bridge at the Edge of the World*, James Gustave Speth, Dean of the School of Environmental and Forestry Studies at Yale University, argues convincingly that: “We can reclaim nature and restore ourselves. There is a bridge at the edge of the world. But for many challenges, like the threat of climate change, there is not much time.”

The urgency of the current situation calls on all of us to pause our daily routines and examine the ways in which we can make a difference by putting our diverse talents to the task of changing the trajectory of climate change. The day’s presentations and discussions demonstrated that artists are prepared to contribute to making this change, that many are already doing groundbreaking work, and that this potential has barely been revealed to policymakers in government and philanthropy.

As artists and advocates for the arts, we know that the arts provide opportunities to confront our deepest fears, to spark dialogues, to raise consciousness and to stimulate calls to action. Starting the day with California Poet Laureate Al Young’s moving poetic treatment, “The world beyond washed flesh is you,” we were challenged to look beyond the narrow boundaries of self-interest and see how our gifts for expression, collaboration and even outrage could be put to the greater common cause of healing our planet and restoring balance to ourselves in nature.

Thus, the goal of the Arts and Environmental Initiative is to enhance the essential cultural link—often overlooked—in building public awareness of critical environmental concerns and stimulating the public—and the arts community—to seek opportunities to correct and change harmful behaviors.

Sam Bower, Executive Director of greenmuseum.org framed the opening panel, “Creative Responses,” with slides of groundbreaking work by environmental artists, such as Helen and Newton Harrison, and Betsy Damon, who have often been more generously supported internationally than in this country. Presentations by James Kass and Pamela Michael, the directors of Youth Speaks and River of Words respectively, demonstrated the power of environmental concerns in poetry and visual art created by young people. Katri Foster, Youth Speaks Program Associate, performed a poem describing the environmentally caused asthma and cancer plaguing her minority community. Ken Ikeda, director of Bay Area Video Coalition, described new environmental/media projects.

During a working lunch, California State Senator Mark Leno was introduced by California Arts Council Director Muriel Johnson, and reviewed his efforts to increase arts funding.



The second panel provided information about “The Built Environment: Architecture, Art and Green Design and LEED Building Standards.” Margie O’Driscoll, Executive Director of the San Francisco Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, explained the importance of architecture in any discussions about climate change, noting that a large percentage of carbon dioxide emissions emanate from buildings. Seattle artist Buster Simpson described the challenges of working in the public sphere, while emphasizing the need to bring artists into the first stages of architectural and landscape projects, to collaborate with other professionals, rather than at the end. Dan Geiger, Executive Director of the U.S. Green Building Council – Northern California Chapter, develops and administers LEED standards for buildings, while Aaron Pope, representing the San Francisco Academy of Sciences, demonstrated how the LEED standards were met at the Academy’s new building. Wade Crowfoot, the director of Environmental Initiatives for the Mayor of San Francisco, described the City’s ambitious efforts to become the greenest city in America.

A final panel on Resources for Arts/Environmental Projects was facilitated by Bruce Davis, Executive Director of Arts Council Silicon Valley. As Manager of Grants for the San Francisco Department of the Environment, Shawn Rosenmoss discussed strategies to collaborate with other city agencies to try to meet the City’s goals for recycling and other environmental initiatives. Felicia Filer described the challenges of administering the public art program for the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs. Al Goncalves, the Managing Director of Fort Mason Center, announced that the Center would present an Arts and Environmental Festival during the summer of 2009, as a result of the staff’s collaboration in planning this Dialogue.

The meeting concluded after small groups strategized how the arts community could contribute ideas for productive and lasting change. Table topics included: Brainstorming the Fort Mason Festival; Collaborating with State Agencies such as the CAC, PUC, and the State Coastal Commission; Public Art and Local Arts Agencies; Youth and Arts Education projects; and the Post-Carbon Society. An open table was named: “How to Seed Creativity.” C.L.A. was urged to provide information to arts members, create a common base of knowledge from an environmental perspective, and seeks ways to integrate the arts with environmental interests.

The Dialogue made clear that there is much work to do in this intersection, and demonstrated the enthusiastic interest of the arts community in contributing its diverse voices to the wider dialogue, and to committing to a long-term search for solutions informed by the abundant connections between ecology and the arts.



# Arts and Environmental Initiative

## Dialogue I

### INTRODUCTION

By aligning arts and environmental interests through this forum, we hope to build a platform for a larger role for the arts in raising public awareness of the pressing concerns that threaten our global well-being. The aim of this project is to enhance the essential cultural link in building public awareness of critical environmental concerns and stimulating the public to seek opportunities to correct and change harmful behaviors. Part I of this report discusses the overall conclusions and a call to action proposed by attendees. Part II describes the content of the Dialogue's panel presentations and next steps. Panel III describes the conversations of various round table groups that concluded the Dialogue.

Al Young, California Poet Laureate, was commissioned to write a poem for the occasion. His reading of "As Time Encircles and Recycles Itself" began the meeting with a tangible demonstration of the power of creativity and set the stage for an imaginative discussion of the role of the arts and the larger contribution that each individual could be inspired to undertake.

In advance of the meeting, all of the invited participants agreed to read James Gustave Speth's seminal work, *The Bridge at the Edge of the World, - Capitalism, the Environment and Crossing from Crisis to Sustainability*. This book provided all of the participants with a common framework for the day's discussions. The day's facilitator, poet devorah major, asked the participants to cite single words or short phrases that captured some of the key themes and concepts in the book. Often quoted were these closing lines:

*"Another world is not only possible. She is on her way,"* says Arundhati Roy, *"On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing."*

This set the tone for the meeting and helped define a common challenge: *"Not only is another world on her way, we are going to help bring her in."*

Speth characterized today's environmentalism as burdened by systemic failures, policy failures and outmoded thinking. He attributes most of these failures to values driven by the modern economy and he makes a strong and credible argument for "new solutions" emerging from a great awakening or transformation in our thinking about ecology. We are stewards *renting* earth's finite resources from future generations.

In *The Bridge at the Edge of the World*, Speth stresses the need to act now with a sense of urgency as well as a sense of hope. He also acknowledges the significance of democratic participation and grassroots movements. He argues the search for solutions "will be found outside the environmental sector – in alliance with communities of concern that are not in the first instance environmental."



## **PART I**

### **KEY THEMES FOR MOVING FORWARD**

***“Courage to Embrace Change”***

***“Making personal changes”***

***“Stewardship”***

Many felt that there was a need for the arts sector, including youth arts education, to be more engaged in environmental issues by creating partnerships that can lead to better stewardship of resources. The group prioritized the need to see and expand the varied intersections of art, cultural and ecology.

Environmental impacts also impact cultural workers, such as the traditional basket weavers who are getting ill because of the pesticides used on their grasses.

To the extent that cultural change is needed, artists can be creative agents, interpreters and visionaries.

***“Awake”***

***“Consciousness”***

***“Change the corporate state without violence...revolution of consciousness.”***

In order to “develop the political will to meet environmental goals” participants needed to look seriously at the deterioration of community as identified in Speth’s work as a root cause.

Participants expressed the need for a massive cultural change in order to enlarge the table where important dialogues and better decisions could occur.

It is important to add the missing voices, including indigenous voices and voices of younger artists, to bring alternative cultural models *and new ideas* to the table. Cultural transformation would also include looking at the role that artists can and do play in public spaces, and the ways in which policy is created and resources are distributed for producing art in public spaces and other venues.

***“Interdependence”***

***“We especially need the preachers and the poets.”***

***“Humans did not inherit the earth; we borrow it from our grandchildren.”***

Participants asserted the vital relationship of the arts and the environment, and acknowledged artists creating ways to help society to “harvest arts creativity” in order to help solve civic problems.

Artists have multiple roles to play in energy consumption, waste management, sustainability of natural resources and other fundamental environmental challenges.

Artists can (and should) act as an essential and dynamic part of the process of conceptualizing environmental change, creating poignant art and messages that look at problems and solutions in new lights.



## Action Steps

The arts community should play a critical role solving problems and creating solutions by examining underlying root causes of cultural issues in the environmental crisis. In order to move forward, there was a big interest in encouraging arts and environmental specialists, which typically operate as “silos” in funding agencies, such as foundations and government agencies, to collaborate across the disciplines to effect change. Artists could facilitate cross-communication by assisting businesses that are interested in funding arts/environmental projects, such as the solar-chip manufacturer Applied Materials, Inc. Participants applauded this as an example of corporate greening.

There was a significant interest in creating an “Eco-Arts Tool Box,” which would include guides or manuals listing art supply companies that sell environmentally friendly products such as paints, papers, thinners; provide information about these products, the ecology and recycling of arts materials, specific arts tools and technology products.

In connection with government, suggestions were made to increase communications with the federal, state and local departments of interior and parks, environment and energy, and science and technology in order to advocate the importance of including artists in decision- making processes. The Arts and Environmental Initiative should:

- Increase artists’ participation at public hearings on environmental issues.
- Create and implement a broad government agenda of appreciating the arts.
- Establish a pool of working artists who can advise governmental bodies on environmental issues; integrate artists into existing local, state and national task forces on the environment.
- Include environmental issues as a topic in task forces and think tanks on the arts.

Additional suggestions emerged from the discussions:

- Develop a database of individuals’ and organizations’ talent(s)/expertise
- Identify *existing* projects/initiatives and *new* areas of need
- Articulate a philosophy about how artists can be integrated into the wider community of environmental interests
- Improve artists’ familiarity with environmental terminology
- Articulate the business value of artists’ branding
- Tap into indigenous tradition and know-how
- Acknowledge younger artists who are developing new modes of survival
- Include social justice issues as crucial to this conversation
- Utilize California Lawyers for the Arts to provide information and develop a network of artist members
- Create a common knowledge base from the perspective built at the Arts and Environmental Initiative.
- Collaborate with organizations in the private sector to foster social responsibility.
- Grow the Arts and Environmental Initiative statewide and nationally

## Arts and Environmental Initiative Next Steps

Based on conclusions reached in this gathering, participants identified present and future needs,



evaluated the structure of the Dialogue and made recommendations about how to move forward. Participants prioritized the need to expand the Arts and Environmental Initiative with meetings such as this one and discussed how to continue educating artists and stakeholders, and how to develop artists' perspectives and strategies for dealing with environmental threats.

Consensus supported more convenings such as the first Arts and Environmental Dialogue.

Suggestions for the next meeting included:

- Restructuring the agenda to allow more time for participants to get to know one another and develop relationships in order to go forward.
- Short informative discussions and more opportunities to cross-pollinate would be more beneficial than longer panel presentations
- More diverse participation, including indigenous peoples, folk artists, scientists, engineers and environmental justice organizations.
- A separate gathering of young artists/environmentalists
- More discussion of eco-art concepts and eco-arts training to build a common vocabulary
- A more eco-friendly gathering





## PART II SUMMARY OF PANEL DISCUSSIONS

### Point of Departure

**Deborah Fleischer** of Green Impact summarized the themes in James Gustave Speth's, *The Bridge at the Edge of the World, Capitalism, The Environment, and Crossing from Crisis to Sustainability* in three parts: (1) the bad news, (2) the good news and (3) the road forward. First, Fleischer reviewed the bad news: "the science of 350." If we continue at the current pace of consumption, carbon dioxide emissions are projected to grow rapidly. At 387 parts per million, we already exceed the sustainability level of 350 parts per million. Speth asserts that at current levels of consumption, human impact creates an ecological footprint that requires one and one third Earths. If no changes are made in existing patterns of consumption, we will need at least two Earths to survive until 2040. Speth warns that the dire impact of sustained climate change necessitates a "virtual crisis" to precipitate the needed transformative change, because a real crisis would be much too late.

Speth believes that the environmental movement has largely failed because corporate capitalism continues to measure wealth by GDP alone. This approach encourages exponential growth in rates of consumption in both the developed and developing worlds. To create a sustainable future we must marshal our forces to challenge societies' dependence on excess consumption and runaway growth. Speth's "good news," is that individuals and institutions are increasingly concerned about changing current harmful consumption patterns and voluntarily shifting toward simplicity, choosing to pursue quality of life over conspicuous consumption. Referencing Paul Hawken's *Blessed Unrest*, Speth describes this new wave of environmentalism emerging from the ground up as an unstoppable force, driving humanity to re-imagine the relationship between people, environment and one another.

She closed her presentation of *Bridge at the Edge of the World* with an overview of "the path forward." Speth posits that this crisis creates an opportunity for wise leadership to forge a new road going forward. He writes with particular enthusiasm about leaders like Van Jones, who have embraced this crisis to grow new green collar jobs and create a green economy. Fleischer noted that bringing artists into the forefront of the discussion about the environment is part of this new wave. Fleischer cited Michael Moore in his letter after the election of President Barack Obama: "The arts and the artists will not be seen as the enemy. Perhaps art will be explored in order to discover the greater truths. Right now anything is possible."

The morning panelists closed with the following question pitched to participants: "What is the story for the future we will create?"



## PANEL DISCUSSIONS

### 1<sup>st</sup> Panel: Creative Responses

**Sam Bower**, Executive Director, [greenmuseum.org](http://greenmuseum.org), began this panel by framing the history of the relationship between art and the environment. Bower stated that indigenous peoples drew no line between art and environment; they held an integrated concept of the earth as both canvas and ecosystem. He asserted that contemporary artists should strengthen and grow the art and environment (re)fusion that began to take hold in the 1970s. To illustrate the axiom that public spaces should be committed for public use, he showed slides of several representative artists, such as Buster Simpson, Betsy Damon and Dan McCormick, whose work as artists mitigates environmental impacts. Going forward, he asserted, artists, as well as the philanthropic community, government, environmental and arts organizations and community groups must think about collaboration, community access, how to share the EcoArt vision, and how to create a supporting infrastructure and systems that strengthen existing efforts where possible rather than creating new ones.

**Pamela Michael** of River of Words (ROW) uses the watershed as a model for combining art and the environment and applies ‘activist principles’ to education. The organization provides teacher training workshops, presents an annual contest of environmental art and poetry and collaborates with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on various projects, educating individuals about the endangered state of watersheds. Watersheds are often polluted, but they can also generate new life. Michaels stated, “In past centuries, we’ve seen exploration and exploitation. This century needs to be about restoration.” She said that ROW is already part of an infrastructure raising environmental awareness through art, emphasizing that the greater public and those involved in today’s environmentalism must understand that art can be used to teach and its power can inspire people to take action.

**Ken Ikeda**, Bay Area Video Coalition (BAVC) said that stories could increase understanding and technology can advance both art and environmental concerns. Technology creates accessibility and proximity to action; technology can serve as a great community-organizing tool. In training youth to be independent producers, BAVC uses technology *for the good*. An environmental video project entitled, “*Turning up the Heat*,” shows the impact of global warming.

Closing the morning panels, Youth Speaks Founder/Director **James Kass and Katri Foster**, Program Associate, spoke about their efforts to present the insights of young people. Kass stated, “Up until a couple of years ago, social justice events were mostly people of color and environmental events were mostly white.” To address this disparity, Youth Speaks created an annual competition on environmental issues. In year one, all of the submissions were from white youth but the participation of young people of color has increased quickly. Youth of color have been attracted to the opportunity to speak about environmental issues on their own terms. Katri Foster performed her piece, “Red, Black & Green,” which described the experience of watching her brother suffer with an environmentally induced cancer. She asked, “How do we get diverse people to go green and become more life affirming?”

Youth Speaks sponsors free concerts, with none of the violence sometimes associated with youth gatherings, based on the idea of building a positive space for dialogue about the environment. Foster said what she found most important was encouraging young people to think of themselves as experts in their own communities; young people have not previously been included in the conversation in sufficient numbers.



*“When we have conversations about poverty there are poor people in the room, but when we talk about the future, it is very rare to have the future (young people) in the room. This needs to change.”*

## **Networking Lunch The Politics of Change**

During a working lunch, participants were asked to prioritize issues that arose from the morning. **Muriel Johnson**, Director of the California Arts Council (CAC) introduced California Senator–elect **Mark Leno**, who formerly chaired the State Assembly Appropriations Committee and a recipient of an award from the CAC for his support for the arts. While Leno was optimistic for the long term, he was very concerned about the state’s dismal financial situation. In 2001, the CAC allocation in the state budget was slashed by 95%. To address budget problems, Leno sought to create a new, dedicated funding stream for the arts. He proposed a one percent (1%) surcharge on every arts and entertainment ticket sale throughout the state that was projected to raise \$30 to 35 million annually to restore the CAC to 2002 funding levels. Unfortunately, he received limited support and his proposal died. On a positive note, \$109 million was allocated for K-12 arts education.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Panel: The Built Environment: Architecture, Art & Green Design, and LEED Building Standards**

The first afternoon panel was facilitated by **Margie O’Driscoll**, Executive Director of the San Francisco Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. O’Driscoll opened the discussion asserting the importance of architecture in any dialogue about climate change, noting that a large percent of carbon dioxide emissions emanate from buildings.

**Buster Simpson**, who calls himself an ‘Artist Working in the Public’ stated that collaboration is the key. This Seattle-based artist said he values humor in art and art as agit-prop. Some of his projects have met with difficulty including the Foot Project, a sculpture of a giant foot meant to signify the human carbon footprint, which was rejected by the City of San Francisco. Simpson discussed other installations, such as *Field of Drains*, an imprisoned stream adjacent to the Walla-Walla Penitentiary. This piece included a series of words stamped on license plates produced by inmates and installed along a section of the creek. In another, he made farm discs into musical instruments.

Additional projects discussed by Simpson included works designed with an engineering firm in Doha, which redirected shower water to an outdoor garden; another in Yemen in which water from a mosque waters adjacent food gardens and a partnership with the developer of a Whole Foods store in Pasadena which diverts wastewater from the freezing system to groundwater through an outdoor sculpture.

**Dan Geiger**, Executive Director of the U.S. Green Building Council – Northern California Chapter (USGBC), discussed his organization’s work implementing “green” building standards. USGBC is the fastest growing NGO (non-governmental organization) in the world. Green buildings are profitable for companies because operating costs are lower, return on investment and valuation are higher, they save energy and water, reduce waste, and provide healthier, more pleasant work and living environments. USGBC recently released a strategic plan that articulates a vision to regenerate and sustain all communities, and includes an explicit commitment to social equity. Realizing this vision will require



not only great design, but behavioral change, like teaching tenants about energy conservation and encouraging people to talk to their property owners about greening their buildings. Geiger said that he felt that art is a powerful way to learn and raise consciousness.

**Aaron Pope**, Manager of Sustainability Programs at the California Academy of Sciences, recently ‘LEED platinum certified,’ talked about the Academy as a 21<sup>st</sup> century museum with a mission “To explore, explain and protect the natural world.” The institution integrates art, beauty and sustainable design. Visitors leave with concepts they can apply in their own lives. Pope showed slides as he described the Renzo Piano building design showing the central piazza, which sucks cold air into the building and creates a natural air conditioning system. Natural light all around reduces the use of energy resources. In addition, the living green roof provides insulation and helps keep the building cool. His succinct tour of the Academy of Sciences demonstrated the question he posed at the start of his talk, “Why build green?”

**Wade Crowfoot**, Director of Climate Protection Initiatives for the City of San Francisco, stated that the goal of the initiative is to create a thousand Academy of Sciences, matching form and function to meet environmental goals in the city. Crowfoot explained the importance of cities in creating and solving the issues of climate change. Most people live in cities and 80 percent of greenhouse gas emissions come from cities. In San Francisco, 54 percent of greenhouse gases come from transportation; however, city government monitors and controls only about six percent (6%) of vehicles. Buildings account for another 46 percent of the greenhouse gases.

Crowfoot said that Mayor Gavin Newsom is supportive of efforts to control climate change. Collaboration projects launched by San Francisco include public education campaigns about switching to energy saving CFL light bulbs, urban apple orchards and the Victory Garden facing City Hall, which produces both organic food and outdoor shelter. Crowfoot encouraged participants to challenge the City with more ideas and information. As an example of the present urgency, he cited a study concluding that if global warming were not curbed, SFO airport and Bay View/Hunters Point would be under water if sea levels continued to rise as expected.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Panel: Resources for Arts & Environmental Projects**

**Bruce Davis**, Executive Director of Arts Council Silicon Valley facilitated the panel on resources. He spoke about the need for the arts and environmental movement to promote a “big tent” approach that welcomes all, asserting the importance of “synchronicity” going forward and the historic election of President Obama as the right candidate at the right time in the right place. He recalled past examples of successful synchronicity: the anti-nuclear movement of the 1970s was aided by *The China Syndrome*, the landmark independent film that helped to create a sense of urgency leading to new regulations; and MUSE concerts – the world’s largest solar-powered concerts.

**Shawn Rosenmoss**, Manager of Grants for the San Francisco Department of the Environment, posed several questions on the theme of awakening and changing behavior: “How do you make environmental issues real to people without scaring them? She discussed the successful “future sea level” project in which buildings were wrapped to show how high sea level would rise due to global warming. She said “we must engage and motivate people for them to take behavioral action.” Rosenmoss described her challenge as finding ways to include artists in projects that contribute \$1.5 million for environmental action and waster diversion projects.



She shared an example of one success-- a circus funded to develop themes about zero-waste, recycling, and reducing consumption. Circus performers toured the shows in schools and community settings, performing at the opening of the Academy of Sciences in walk-around acts with environmental themes that engaged the public. Rosenmoss concurred with previous comments about the arts being invaluable in getting more people to connect with environmental issues.

**Felicia Filer**, Director of the Public Art Division of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, leads a department with millions of dollars available for public art. Since the LA arts community is at the crossroad of funding challenges that include demographic shifts, the Public Art Division is developing a new strategic plan. Input from visual artists revealed that some are more interested in the process than making objects and queried how the Public Art Division could shift the funding structure to respond to this interest. She found that there are now more “hybrid” artists like those working with landscaping, than before. She wondered how the Division should incorporate changes in the definition of “artist” to respond. Another insight gained was that artists want to use their creativity in other efforts, not just *inside* the arts.

The Public Art Division responded in two areas:

- Increasing the availability of grants for environmentally based projects and artists, identifying artists who work with environmental projects and who could work with architects in different (more interactive) ways in the development of new construction designs.
- Convening a series of conversations with other city departments to help re-purpose available funding, helping them find ways to collaborate with artists to address issues, and identifying ways to change current infrastructure to work successfully with artists.

Filer commented on the difficulty artists face in making art in public spaces due to cumbersome regulations, permits and fees, and physical problems. Public spaces are built as pass-throughs, not as places in which to work and create art. This discussion brought up some new questions.

How do we break down barriers to open public space to artists? How do we create a language to illustrate how artists contribute to environmental solutions? Filer identified that language was key. She said that agencies must come up with a new language to allow artists to work on public spaces without permits and fees and make the process more user-friendly. Her department has accumulated money from private developers, and will use it to fund eco-friendly and sustainable temporary public art projects.

**Al Goncalves**, Managing Director at Fort Mason Center, announced that the center will commit up to \$180,000 from a bequest towards the costs of an Arts and Environment Festival composed of a series of events to be held over a month long at Fort Mason in the summer of 2009. Interested participants were invited to brainstorm the content and purpose of the festival at one of the roundtables set up for the end of the Dialogue.



## **PART III**

### **WHERE WE NEED TO GO FROM HERE**

In the afternoon, the participants gathered into six small focus roundtable groups to discuss the issues raised by the morning panelists. Comments and suggestions are summarized in this section of the report:

#### **Topics Discussed**

- 1) Brainstorming the 2009 Fort Mason Festival
- 2) Considering New Ways to Collaborate with the California Arts Council, State Coastal Conservancy and Other Governmental Agencies
- 3) Public Art and Local Arts Agencies
- 4) Youth and Arts Education Projects
- 5) How to Raise Awareness about the Post-Carbon Society
- 6) How to Seed Creativity

#### **TOPIC 1: Brainstorming the 2009 Fort Mason Festival**

This roundtable had the enviable task of discussing how to spend \$180,000 from a bequest to Fort Mason Center for the purpose of subsidizing programs and events for the Center's first Arts and Environmental Festival, planned for 2009. The participants concluded that the Festival should benefit not only the Fort Mason Center and the public who will attend these events, but also the 23 non-profit resident organizations at Fort Mason and the greater community. The group recommended a summer month as the best time for this event. An ambitious list of programs emerged, including a month long crafts celebration; an outdoor exhibition, using some of the original Burning Man concepts; a marketing center; and other Eco-Art. The mixed-genre arts project "After Nature" exhibited in New York was offered as one approach to a major arts/ecology initiative. In addition to creating environmental awareness through the arts, the group felt that the Festival could also raise the profile of Fort Mason Center as a year-round destination. Other ideas included keeping the festival ecological in conception at every stage, even planning how to bring visitors to the festival, via an eco-friendly alternative like water transport.

The 2009 Festival should include local, national and international artists working on ecological concerns commissioned to create new projects. Outreach to public utilities and other energy or environmental agencies for collaborative projects would be an important strategy, with emphasis on inclusion and increasing grassroots involvement. Participants felt that planners needed to strike a balance between operating expenses and paying artists for their work. Other stakeholders including corporations interested in finding creative ways to address environmental issues should be approached for their support, strengthening teamwork and building lasting partnerships.



## **TOPIC 2: Considering New Ways to Collaborate With the California Arts Council, State Coastal Conservancy and Other Governmental Agencies**

This group discussed the challenge of integrating the arts into the mandates of non-arts government agencies. Partnerships should be broadly inclusive, including artists, ratepayers and agencies. The group noted that arts funding in California is inadequate to provide necessary support to individual artists and state agencies, leaving agencies like the California Arts Council without resources to support public art projects. The group felt that artists should help create exploratory initiatives and initiate more dialogue between artists and the agencies. When initiatives and projects are conceived and created, artists should be there at the outset working alongside the architects, the design engineers, interior designers, etc.

Tension between agencies and community about content of art messages should be acknowledged and navigated. Ongoing ‘cultural wars’ between the religious right, social conservatives and others create political, communication and funding issues that cannot be ignored. Other issues raised included how agencies should find artists, how they should measure the impact of arts projects, and if state agencies organize programs and distribute information on “green” issues, whether artists can play dual roles as recipients of the information, and play a part in creating more dynamic and accessible materials.

Artists should attend agencies’ public meetings and conferences, get involved, get on the agenda to discuss their proposals, while demonstrating the cost effectiveness of their projects. The group noted that although the current climate for new programs is particularly hospitable, there are existing programs for artists to access. Examples like a Fish and Game program in Florida that used children’s art contests, posters and calendars to raise public awareness about environmental issues should be catalogued and shared.

## **TOPIC 3: Local Arts Agencies and Public Art Issues**

The primary issue discussed in this roundtable was the issue of definitions and common language-What is/what should public art be? How will we determine what defines art in the public interest? What about art that is produced by citizens vs. artists who “do his/her own thing? Should public art be limited to static objects like installation or sculpture? Should public art be decorative/permanent or process/experimental/temporary? Should public art include live performances and others creating art in public spaces?

Who is best suited to select public art? The group discussion led to some suggestions. Ideas included a peer review panel of artists and arts administrators, similar to the CAC selection/evaluation process, and the need to include artists in the development of Requests for Proposals. For public art to be effective (and truly public) artists need to feel connected to a place and be a part of the community.

To be effective public artists could use community-organizing principles, learning to place their work within the community as a whole. Artists should do more to connect with the public, arts organizations and ecological organizations, such as California muralists. The group considered formation of a public art “SWAT” team to attend commission hearings to increase awareness of the ways artists/the arts could help to solve problems through the arts. Public art or art in the public interest should encourage recycling and other good art practices, such as repurposing the fallen wood in parks to be used as arts



resource materials for other building and design projects in the city.

The value of public art was strongly affirmed by this group. Public art brings opportunities for our country to develop greater appreciation of art. Public art can bring exposure for diverse groups including young artists, multi-ethnic individuals, and increase involvement with environmental art. Public art should involve youth as apprentices and paid interns, as much as possible. The group explored new definitions that would include temporary art and projects that can be messy, experimental and biodegradable.

#### **TOPIC 4: Youth and Arts Education Projects**

The Youth Arts and Education Projects Roundtable group felt that any meaningful discussion should begin with a survey of existing projects and organizations/programs there are focused on green arts. Group members mentioned Eco-Art Matters at Met-West, an Oakland High School Girl Scouts of America, Home Away from Homelessness, OneHundred Families (Oakland), River of Words, Science Camp, Self-Esteem Camp (Upstate New York- Environmental Literacy Arts Project), Water-Drop, Adopt-a-Watershed, World Savvy, and Youth Speaks.

Participants discussed project ideas including “Gardens to Go,” art creating ecological messages to post in school bathroom stalls, and placing poetry about the environment in utility rate payers’ monthly bills. The group considered developing a facilitated youth development project combining arts and ecology, possibly a summer project, in which the main question posed would speak directly to young people, “What does the environment mean to you?” The group identified a need to increase teacher training on arts and the environment. One model suggested was River of Words, which makes artist presentations to teachers during teacher lunch hours and could include developing lesson plans that teachers could integrate with classroom curricula. This group felt that the greatest challenge was less about inventing concepts for projects than evaluating, selecting and prioritizing the issues.

The group affirmed the need for greater public funding and how to fund arts education projects. The group also discussed the need to increase young peoples’ opportunities for arts appreciation and art making and awareness about career paths in the arts, through programs like C.L.A.’s Spotlight on the Arts, an arts enrichment and employment program that has placed more than 500 youth in jobs in the arts since 1993.

#### **TOPIC 5: How to Raise Awareness about the Post-Carbon Society**

This discussion began by identifying *The Transition Notebook* “as a good resource for developing language and strategies.” While some artists may have a “fear” of science, artists need to understand and use the language of environmental science when conceptualizing possible projects for collaboration or funding and educate themselves about carbon foot printing. If artists knew more about environmental science, they could produce more eco-friendly and educational art. The group recommended identifying sources to raise artists’ awareness about the environment including issue specific information and ‘science of’ articles. Artists should also be held accountable for their own consumption and carbon footprint.





Like other groups, these participants expressed concern about finding financial support for their ideas, and discussed mounting a strategic effort to tap into the resources of foundations of large companies, since so much of the issue of carbon emissions result from corporate practices. They felt that the arts community needs non-arts partners, i.e., “match-making partners,” that cross sectors and involve diverse groups across the boundaries of profession, class, and generations.

The group conceived the idea of an eco-arts “tool box,” which would include guides and manuals ranking the eco practices of art supply companies and make recommendations about which ones to support, as well as which paints, papers, thinners, etc. are environmentally sustainable. Seeing an opportunity on the other side of this issue of sustainable art tools and practices, participants suggested that some environmentally friendly organizations and manufacturers could form partnerships with artists to help promote their services and products.

The group discussed linking information and resources with the needs of artists to obtain scientific knowledge to inform our thinking about social change, educating the scientific community about the arts, and facilitating meaningful dialogue between these two communities.

## **TOPIC 6: How to Seed Creativity**

This group explored inspiring and supporting creativity in connection with the global reality of limited resources, providing a great opportunity for moving the world forward with the arts as part of the strategy. The group felt that artists have an important role to play in creating pathways towards the cultural shift needed for environmental change. Ritual, spirit and heart were ways to facilitate change towards the four stages of transformation: awareness, information, partnership, and stewardship.

While artists are central to this cultural change model and could be a key “change agent,” artists must also recognize the issue of artist isolation and the need to build bridges to foster awareness of the interconnectedness between all peoples, species, and bio-systems.” Artists and arts organizations should refuse to compete for scarce resources, seeking instead an integration of resources, networks, skills, and shared knowledge.

## **EPILOGUE**

### **A Work in Progress**

Since the November 10, 2008 meeting, there has been significant movement forward. Participants in the Dialogue have been invited to participate in two key Task Force groups on training and community education organized by the California Public Utilities Commission that have the potential to significantly enlarge the framework of this work. We are exploring ways that the arts may be used in new approaches to increase energy conservation. In addition, there could be new initiatives in arts education, as well as community outreach programs funded through PUC ratepayer funds.

As a result of staff involvement in planning the Dialogue, Fort Mason Center is planning to present a major Arts and Environmental Festival from mid-August to mid-September 2009, using the funds from a bequest to the Center to subsidize groups who would like to participate in the Festival. A centerpiece



of the Festival will be a larger conference presented as part of the Arts and Environmental Initiative, and designed to expand on the major theme: how can the arts enhance public understanding of environmental issues and spark behavioral as well as policy change? Plans are to present a similar Dialogue in Los Angeles in preparation for this larger conference. C.L.A. is also reaching out to the network of local arts agencies throughout California to assess their interest in developing arts and environmental projects, which can have impact in their local communities.

Ecology and the arts are deeply intertwined. This Arts and Environmental Dialogue revealed how much work there is to be done, the diversity of artists and arts organizations that are willing to embrace the task and the opportunities to collaborate with the environmental sector for the benefit of the communities we serve.



## APPENDIX A BIOGRAPHIES OF SPEAKERS

**Sam Bower**, [www.greenmuseum.org](http://www.greenmuseum.org), began his career as an environmental artist with the Meadowsweet Dairy, a San Francisco Bay Area collaborative art group. In 2001, he founded [greenmuseum.org](http://greenmuseum.org), an online museum of environmental art. He also helped found Cellspace, a non-profit community art space in San Francisco, and Co-Directed Crucible Steel Gallery. His visual tour of environmental art highlighted some of the artists participating in today's Dialogue.

**Wade Crowfoot** directs a broad range of climate protection and sustainability projects for the city, focusing on transportation, energy and water. He previously served as Director of Government Affairs for the Mayor's Office and as a legislative aide for the San Francisco Board of Supervisors.

**Bruce Davis** has served as Executive Director of Arts Council Silicon Valley since 1993. He previously served as the Executive Director of City Celebration in San Francisco and was the producer of the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival. He has been a professional lyricist and songwriter for over 20 years. His songs have been published by 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox/Fanfare Music and included in film and television soundtracks as well as commercials and public service announcements.

**Felicia Filer** is the Director of the Public Art Division of the City of Los Angeles, Department of Cultural Affairs. She has overseen the commission of over 150 permanent public art projects throughout the city, including the City's Airport, Animal Services, Bureau of Engineering, Fire, Library, Police, Recreation and Parks, Transportation and Zoo departments. The Public Art Division includes the, Public Percent for Art, Private Percent for Art, City Art Collection, Murals, and Music L.A. programs.

**Deborah Fleischer** of [www.greenimpact.com](http://www.greenimpact.com), is a graduate of the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. She has worked with a variety of non-profits and foundations to develop new strategies, including programs for landowners that supported environmental protection and generated economic returns. At the San Francisco Department of Environment, she helped to develop a green purchasing program.

**Dan Geiger** is the Executive Director of the U.S. Green Building Council – Northern California Chapter, [www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org). Previously, he was the Executive Director of [Groundspring.org](http://Groundspring.org), an organization providing Internet services to nonprofits, and Co-Founder and CEO of OpNet, a nationally recognized program that prepares low-income people for the digital economy. He was also Director of Development of the Vanguard Public Foundation.

**Al Goncalves** has served as the Managing Director of Fort Mason Foundation since 2006 after serving as Staff Accountant and Director of Finance. He currently serves on several boards, including ArtHouse, a subsidiary corporation of California Lawyers for the Arts. Prior to immigrating to the United States, he ran his own accounting practice for seven years in Cape Town, South Africa, specializing in small businesses including designers, artists, manufacturers, and others. In South Africa, he co-founded the AIDS Foundation



South Africa and produced the opening plenary for the first AIDS Conference held in Africa.

**Ken Ikeda**, is the Executive Director, Bay Area Video Coalition, [www.bavc.org](http://www.bavc.org), the leading independent non-profit media arts and training center in the United States, serving the digital media industry, producers and next generation storytellers. Prior to BAVC, he was the founder and Executive Director of Youth Sounds, a network of after-school digital music and video programs which merged with BAVC in 2006 to form the country's largest network of after-school youth media programs. Ken is a founding member of San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom's Digital Media Advisory Council and chaired California Governor Schwarzenegger's broadband task force education working group.

**Muriel Johnson** was appointed Director of the California Arts Council in 2005 after serving three terms on the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors. She has served on many civic boards, including the Stanford Mansion Foundation, Sacramento School of the Arts, the Crocker Art Museum Board, the Sacramento Discovery Museum, the Sacramento Symphony League and the advisory board for California State Historic Parks. She helped write the ordinance for the Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission and served on the first commission.

**James Kass** founding Executive Director, and **Katri Foster**, Program Associate, represent Youth Speaks, [www.youthspeaks.org](http://www.youthspeaks.org), an organization founded in 1996 that has become the leading nonprofit presenter of spoken-word performance and education in the country. Through poetry slams, festivals and workshops, Youth Speaks has launched a growing spoken-word movement that recognizes the relationship between literacy, public performance and self-confidence. The organization also offers professional development for teachers and publishes workbooks, CDs and videos.

**State Senator Mark Leno** was one of the first openly gay men elected to the California legislature. During his second term as an Assemblyman, Leno was successful in getting 21 bills passed by the legislature and signed into law, including laws that expand solar power generation, provide LGBT seniors with culturally competent services, encourage stores in low income neighborhoods to offer healthy foods and promote better educational outcomes for foster youth. He was elected to the State Senate in 2008.

**devorah major**, [www.redroom.com/author/devorah-major](http://www.redroom.com/author/devorah-major), served as the 3<sup>rd</sup> Poet Laureate of San Francisco from 2002 to 2006. In 2005 devorah was commissioned to write spoken word and chorus for *Trade Routes*, a symphony she performed with the Oakland East Bay Symphony. She was in the original class of mediators trained by C.L.A. in 1981 for its Arts Arbitration and Mediation Services Program panel, and has since served as a mediator, facilitator and planner for numerous community organizations. She served as the facilitator for the first Dialogue of the Arts and Environmental Initiative.

**Pamela Michael**, founded River of Words (ROW,) [www.riverofwords.org](http://www.riverofwords.org), in 1995 with U.S. Poet Laureate Robert Hass (1995-1997) to integrate environmental and arts education through community building, watershed awareness, and ecological literacy. Her Watershed Explorer curriculum has been used to train thousands of teachers, park rangers, and youth leaders, including 4-H and Scout leaders, in how to connect kids and their imaginations to watersheds through poetry and art. ROW works with over 30 state coordinators based at state resource agencies, water districts, libraries, arts agencies and humanities councils. ROW also operates the Young at Art



Gallery, one of the world's first galleries devoted exclusively to children's art, and the Creative Learning Lab, where classes are offered for young people, families and teachers.

**Margie O'Driscoll**, Executive Director of the San Francisco Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, [www.aiasf.org](http://www.aiasf.org), has had a diverse public service career, including leadership positions at the Friends of the Library, ArtHouse, the San Francisco Arts Commission, and the San Francisco Democratic Party. As a senior program officer at the Evelyn and Walter Haas Jr. Fund, she managed one of the largest grants ever given to a National Park for the restoration of Crissy Field as a wetland and recreation destination at the Presidio in San Francisco.

**Aaron Pope**, Manager of Sustainability Programs, California Academy of Sciences, [www.calacademy.org](http://www.calacademy.org) previously worked for The League of Conservation Voters and various non-profit organizations before taking a project manager position with an educational software developer. His project management experience brought him to the California Academy of Sciences a year ago, and he now manages the organization's sustainability initiative, developing content for museum exhibits.

**Shawn Rosenmoss**, Manager of Grants for the San Francisco Department of the Environment, facilitates projects with private sector companies, community based organizations, artists, educators, and other municipal departments. Her background includes running a circus; starting a community day school; developing arts, technology and college prep programs; and producing her own performance work.

**Buster Simpson**, [www.bustersimpson.net](http://www.bustersimpson.net), incorporates ecological, historical, social, and aesthetic elements, contextualizing them into the site-specific works. Based in Seattle, he is known for a wide range of work, including stand-alone sculptures, major infrastructure projects, site master planning, signature sculptures, museum installations, and community projects. Recent projects include a light rail bridge, sustainable water infrastructure fountains, and a campus campanile. Master plans include a 40-acre sustainable arts plan for downtown Vancouver Canada, a \$1.8 billion dollar wastewater treatment plant, and a 14-mile streetscape master planning project in Doha, Qatar.

**Al Young**, [www.alyoung.com](http://www.alyoung.com), is the author of more than 22 books and the recipient of NEA, Fulbright, Woodrow Wilson, and Guggenheim Fellowships. Appointed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in 2005 as California's first Poet Laureate, he travels internationally, often performing his work with musicians. He declares that one of his pressing missions is to rescue language from corporate politics.



## **APPENDIX B**

### **LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

Missy Ablin, Program Associate, California Lawyers for the Arts  
Lynn Axelrod, Resource Renewal Institute  
Elizabeth Baker, Resource Renewal Institute  
Diane Demee Benoit, Institute at the Golden Gate Fort Baker,  
Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy  
Sam Bower, Executive Director, greenmuseum.org  
Peter Brand, Senior Project Manager, State Coastal Conservancy  
Chris Brown, Consultant, Atelier Kathleen Brown  
Vanessa Camarena-Arredondo, Arts & Culture Program, San Francisco Foundation  
Wade Crowfoot, Director of Environmental Initiatives, SF Mayor's Office  
Deborah Cullinan, Executive Director, Intersection for the Arts  
Betsy Damon, Ecology & Community Artist  
Herb Dang, Operations Superintendent, SF PUC Wastewater Enterprise  
Bruce Davis, Executive Director, Arts Council Silicon Valley  
Celeste DeWald, Executive Director, California Association of Museums  
Felicia Filer, Public Art Director, Los Angeles City Department of Cultural Affairs  
Deborah Fleischer, Green Impact  
Katri Foster, Program Associate, Youth Speaks  
Dan Geiger, Director, U.S. Green Building Council  
Al Goncalves, Managing Director, Fort Mason Center  
Nancy Gonchar, Deputy Director, San Francisco Arts Commission  
Maija Grassis, Arts Arbitration and Mediation Services Case Manager, C.L.A.  
Beth Grossman, Interactive Environmental Artist  
Marc Ellen Hamel, Board Member, Shipyard Trust for the Arts,  
Kim Hancock, Attorney, Katzenbach and Khtikian and C.L.A. Board Member  
Quentin Hancock, Media Consultant, qhancock@cruzio.com  
Helen Mayer Harrison, Installation Artist  
Newton Harrison, Installation Artist  
Ken Ikeda, Executive Director, Bay Area Video Coalition  
Muriel Johnson, Director, California Arts Council  
James Kass, Executive Director, Youth Speaks  
Pat Kilduff, Director of Marketing, Fort Mason Center  
Kenneth J. Kunert, Landscape Architect, Los Padres National Forest, U.S. Forest Service  
Thomas Layton, President, Wallace A. Gerbode Foundation  
Mark Leno, Member, California State Assembly  
Leslie Leslie, Fred Gellert Family Foundation  
Grace Ma, Program Fellow, The San Francisco Foundation  
devorah major, 3<sup>rd</sup> Poet Laureate, San Francisco  
Trina Martynowicz, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Grier Mathews, Consultant  
Tomas McCabe, Executive Director, Black Rock Arts Foundation  
Dan McCormick, Installation Artist  
Maria Medua, Director, Museum of Modern Art Artists' Gallery



Pamela Michael, River of Words  
Leila Monroe, Ocean Policy Analyst, Natural Resources Defense Council  
Angela Mooney D'Arcy, Santa Monica Education Programs Coordinator, C.L.A.  
Judy Moran, Public Art Project Manager, San Francisco Arts Commission  
Deborah Munk, Director, SF Recycling and Disposal Artist in Residence Program  
Margie O'Driscoll, Executive Director, American Institute of Architects  
Aaron Pope, Manager of Sustainability Programs, California Academy of Sciences  
Josie Porter, Systems Coordinator, C.L.A.  
Allison Quaid, Creative Eco-Catalysts  
D'Arcy Reynolds, Post-Carbon Artist  
Yvette Robles, Director, BMAGIC  
Alma Robinson, Executive Director, C.L.A.  
Jill Roisen, Arts & Community Development Director, C.L.A.  
Shawn Rosenmoss, Development Director, Environmental Commission  
Jennifer Ross, Executive Director, Zaccho Dance Theatre  
Mark Salkind, Director, the Urban School  
Linda Schanfein, ArtHouse Manager  
Buster Simpson, Artist Working in the Public  
Susan Liebovitz Steinman, Co-founder/Director, Women Environmental Artists Directory  
Josie Talamantez, Chief of Programs, California Arts Council  
Ellen Taylor, Sacramento Program Director, C.L.A.  
Andrée Thompson, Sustainability Committee, Peralta College District  
Amy Tobin, Executive Director, The David Brower Center  
Mary Bayard White, Board Member, WEAD and Faculty, the Crucible  
John F. Williams, Sr. V-P and National Director, Sustainable Development, HDR, Inc.  
and Board Member, New York Foundation for the Arts  
Khan Wong, Senior Program Manager, San Francisco Grants for the Arts  
Yen Lu Wong, San Jose State University Creative Arts Program  
Al Young, California Poet Laureate

