

Ecologies in Practice: Arts Methods for Creative, Vocal Responses to the Earth Crisis and Climate Change

Expressive Drawing and Writing Resource

Sometimes people find it difficult to say what they feel about important issues such as the Earth Crisis and climate change. This resource introduces a way of combining drawing and writing to assist creative, vocal self-expression.

Part 1

There are many people who are currently concerned about the ways that extracting minerals and fossil fuels from the Earth is causing climate change and affecting the living conditions and diversity of living species on the planet. One of the processes that Earth activists are protesting about is 'fracking', which is a process of fracturing and drilling deep holes in the earth to look for fossil fuels. There is evidence that this process seriously affects the Earth and environment.

Task 1:

- Look at these images by artists who make work about fracking. What do they remind you of? How do you think they draw attention to issues for people to respond to?

Fractured, The Shale Play, Nina Berman



<https://www.ninaberman.com/fractured-the-shale-play>

Otobong Nkanga, In Pursuit of Bling, 2014-2015



<https://www.otobong-nkanga.com/drawings>

<https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-st-ives/otobong-nkanga/otobong-nkanga-where-i-stand>

- Find as big a sheet of paper or card as you can. This could be recycled paper or card, it could be any type of paper that is strong enough for energetic, expressive mark-making in pen and pencil.
- Draw with abstract mark-making for five minutes to express your feelings of protest about Earth Crisis issues such as fracking, climate change and loss of biodiversity. Abstract mark-making uses energy, pattern, shading, shape, colour and line, without trying to represent an object, person, animal or thing. Use your whole body and arm reach to make the drawing.
- For the next five minutes, focus on expressing a voice of protest in drawings that are representational – showing animals, plants and the built and natural environment.



Task 2:

- Read this poem 'They Came for the Shale' by James Tierney.
- What do you think it is about? How does it communicate a voice of protest about the causes and effects of climate change, 'fracking' and other forms of extraction from the Earth?

They Came for the Shale

by James Tierney

The sparrow your dad loves to watch
pick seeds from the bottom of the garden
is getting too hot to fly.
Its pecking at his own feathers in some attempt
at relief.

Your bank holiday
seems to disappear

while through the kitchen window great machines bore holes
deep into your countryside view.

He brought you up on the line
Nothing lasts forever
but you've had that plastic giraffe on your windowsill
for twenty-three years
and it's still as good as new.

<https://poems.poetrysociety.org.uk/poems/they-came-for-the-shale>

- Take five minutes to write out all of your feelings and thoughts about the issues raised by the poem and in discussion today. This is uncensored, focused writing, so you can write whatever comes up for you.
- Then choose 4 words from the poem to add to your expressive drawing. Aim to create a 'line of flight' connecting the words with the lines and shapes of your drawing. You can repeat the words as many times as you like.



To conclude the task: Speak out loud with others for 10 minutes about how you have expressed the issues that you have reflected on, of extractivism, the use of fossil fuels that pollute the air and the Earth Crisis, and what you have discovered about your own creative voice in drawing and writing in doing this task.

This resource was developed by Dr. Miranda Matthews and Dr. Francis Gilbert Goldsmiths University of London, it has emerged from an Ecologies in Practice research project created by the Centre for Arts and Learning and Climate Museum UK, and funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and Goldsmiths, University of London.