Activism Toolkit

Art for Environmental Advocacy and Community Engagement

Eco Art Caucus of the Women's Caucus for Art

A developing resource guide | Links reviewed October 12, 2026

This guide gathers practical tools for artists who want to connect their work with environmental advocacy and community engagement. Begin with Beautiful Trouble for creative action ideas, then choose resources for the particular task: planning a campaign, convening a dialogue, telling a story, working in public space or learning from a project.

Some resources focus directly on climate and environment; others offer broader methods that artists can adapt. Online guides are available to U.S. readers even when their creators work internationally. Paid training, services and books are distinct from the public references linked here. Past campaign kits and archived projects are identified.

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Creative action and campaign planning

Connect the artistic idea with a purpose, an audience and a desired change.

Resource	How artists can use it	Access and useful details
Beautiful Trouble Creative activism toolbox	Interconnected tactics, principles, stories and planning exercises help artists connect a creative idea with a campaign's purpose.	Explore Beautiful Trouble Free online toolbox. Begin with the guide, then choose a small set of tools for your project. Shared adaptations require attribution and compliance with its noncommercial share-alike licence.
Center for Artistic Activism Creative campaign toolkits	Practical tools connect artistic imagination with concrete advocacy objectives and audience participation.	Explore Center for Artistic Activism Free downloads. Broad social-change resources adaptable to environmental work; specialist training and advising are separate services.

Resource	How artists can use it	Access and useful details
Artful Activism ActionAid creative activism toolkit	Facilitated exercises use drawing, performance, collage, zines and mapping to explore issues and imagine responses.	Explore Artful Activism Free PDF developed through workshops in Bangladesh and Uganda. Useful for designing a participatory session; adapt exercises with the group and credit the creators.
The Art of Activism Workbook Stephen Duncombe and Steve Lambert	Exercises support the development of artistic activist projects, from initial ideas toward deliberate action.	Explore The Art of Activism Workbook Free companion workbook. The related book is a separate publication that can be purchased or sought through a library.

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Community dialogue and shared decision making

Develop the project with the people it concerns and create meaningful ways to participate.

Resource	How artists can use it	Access and useful details
Imaginings USDAC arts-based community dialogue guide	A guide for convening creative conversations about a community's future and the actions people want to take together.	Explore Imaginings Free guide. USDAC is a people-powered cultural organisation, not a federal government department. Useful for environmental futures gatherings and neighbourhood projects.
Liberating Structures Group facilitation methods	Structured invitations and small-group sequences help more people contribute to a planning meeting or creative inquiry.	Explore Liberating Structures Public instructions link to a menu of methods. Select a structure for a specific purpose and adapt participation for language, access and the group's needs.
Design Justice Network Community-centred design principles	A short framework for asking who shapes a project, who benefits and how those most affected can lead decisions.	Explore Design Justice Network Free principles and translations. Use as discussion prompts when agreeing project roles, ownership and accountability with community partners.

Resource	How artists can use it	Access and useful details
Creative Equity Toolkit Creative collaborations and cultural consultation	Resources address listening, consent, relationships and respectful approaches to making art involving another community's culture.	Explore Creative Equity Toolkit Public resource collection from Diversity Arts Australia and the British Council. International examples are useful to U.S. readers; cultural protocols remain specific to the people and place.
Equitable Community Engagement Toolkit City of Philadelphia	Practical guidance supports gathering input and designing engagement that accounts for who participates and whose views shape decisions.	Explore Equitable Community Engagement Toolkit Free public toolkit. Developed for municipal work; artists can adapt its engagement methods to local projects. It is broader than arts or environmental advocacy.

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Climate storytelling and visual communication

Consider whose story is being told, how it is shared and what the audience can do next.

Resource	How artists can use it	Access and useful details
Center for Story-based Strategy Narrative analysis tools and resources	Worksheets help a group explore dominant narratives, assumptions and the stories it wants to change through a campaign.	Explore Center for Story-based Strategy Downloadable tools and practical guides. Use with local partners to develop the story and purpose before deciding on images, performance or other creative forms.
Climate Visuals Climate Outreach visual communication principles	Research-based guidance helps photographers and artists consider how images connect climate issues with people, impacts and responses.	Explore Climate Visuals Free report. Apply the principles thoughtfully to the audience and context. Check the licence and credit for any photograph you want to reproduce.
350 Climate Storytelling Toolkit Digital stories for the climate movement	Practical guidance supports creating and sharing stories within climate organising. Useful for short films, campaign documentation and online communication.	Explore 350 Climate Storytelling Toolkit Public toolkit. Distinguish a community member's permission to take part from permission to publish their story or image; agree credit and intended uses.

Resource	How artists can use it	Access and useful details
StoryCenter Ethical storytelling references	Guidance on ethical practice and core principles supports participatory media projects grounded in people's own experiences.	Explore StoryCenter The services page links to public ethical practice references. Facilitated workshops and commissioned support are separate paid arrangements; inclusion here focuses on the references.

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Art in public space and environmental inquiry

Explore place-based methods, public participation and environmental observation.

Resource	How artists can use it	Access and useful details
350 Arts Resources Climate art builds and campaign examples	How-to references and visual resources support making art for climate advocacy and collective public action.	Explore 350 Arts Resources Free resource site. Some kits refer to past campaigns, including COP26; adapt the methods and verify the current message. Historical kit pages are not current calls or grants.
Green Map System Community mapping resources and tools	Icons, guides and mapping methods help a community make visible local ecological, cultural and sustainability knowledge.	Explore Green Map System Public resources; credit Green Map System when using its icons and check applicable terms. Digital platform plans and support vary. Print maps can also support an arts project.
Public Lab Archive Community environmental research	Archived methods and project records offer starting points for art projects involving mapping, observation and environmental evidence.	Explore Public Lab Archive Free read-only archive. Do not expect live community support or assume old equipment links remain available. Check methods with relevant specialists before presenting findings as scientific evidence.
Field Guide for Creative Placemaking and Parks Trust for Public Land and City Parks Alliance	A how-to guide and case studies connect arts, community participation, parks and shared outdoor space.	Explore Field Guide for Creative Placemaking and Parks Free downloadable guide first published in 2017. Use for project planning with residents and park partners; local arrangements and available programmes require a fresh check.

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Learning from projects and assessing impact

Use documented examples and small experiments to strengthen the work.

Resource	How artists can use it	Access and useful details
Your Creative Experiment Guide Center for Artistic Activism	A practical route into testing a creative approach and examining what helps it achieve the intended change.	Explore Your Creative Experiment Guide Public guide. Useful before committing a full budget: try a small version, gather responses and use what you learn to revise the work.
Actipedia Creative activism examples	An open-access collection of actions offers examples to discuss when considering form, audience and context.	Explore Actipedia User-generated database linked by the Center for Artistic Activism. Treat entries as project accounts, not independently proven evidence that a tactic will work elsewhere.
Library of Creative Sustainability Culture for Climate Scotland	Case studies show how artists have been involved in environmental organisations, research and climate-related projects.	Explore Library of Creative Sustainability Public reference library. The organisation was previously called Creative Carbon Scotland. Case studies describe past work; they are not invitations or funding offers for U.S. artists.
Art Became the Oxygen USDAC artistic response guide	Accounts and guidance help artists consider creative responses to social and environmental crises.	Explore Art Became the Oxygen Public guide. Particularly useful for reflecting on how an artistic response serves people already responding to a crisis. Read its context alongside local needs.

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Creative climate action and artist networks

Explore artist networks, performance approaches and resources for creative environmental advocacy.

Resource	How artists can use it	Access and useful details
Red Rebel Brigade Environmental performance activism	Collective movement, costume and performance make the environmental crisis visible through an expressive public presence.	Explore Red Rebel Brigade International troupe with groups in multiple countries. The official site links to joining or forming a group; contact the organisers about practice and local participation. Listed separately from Extinction Rebellion, where the project originated.
Extinction Rebellion Arts Art-making resources and local groups	Resources for banners, printing, stencils and collective art-making support creative environmental advocacy.	Explore Extinction Rebellion Arts Explore XR NYC Art Group Find XR U.S. local groups Free UK arts resources are available to U.S. readers. Artwork is restricted to noncommercial use, including restrictions on fundraising. Some assets concern past campaigns; check current local activities.
Culture Declares Emergency Culture Takes Action toolkit	Tasks and resources help artists and cultural organisations develop and communicate a response to the climate and ecological emergency.	Explore Culture Declares Emergency Public toolkit for personal or organisational action. U.S. artists can use the online resources; the network includes local and international hubs. A declaration is a starting point for an ongoing plan.
Art Not Oil Campaign histories and cultural advocacy	Examples and research explore fossil-fuel sponsorship of arts institutions and creative approaches to challenging it.	Explore Art Not Oil UK coalition resource. Its campaign histories are useful to U.S. readers; older member listings and actions should not be treated as current invitations. Check with individual groups about present activity.

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