

## ANTARCTIC CLIMATE EXPEDITION 2023

aurora  
expeditions

# SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES THROUGH ART

ARTICLES BY RENEE CAPOZZOLA &amp; TOBY WRIGHT

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTION BY  
THE PRINCIPAL EXPEDITION TEAM

## THE ANTARCTIC CLIMATE EXPEDITION 2023 (ACE 2023)

Aims to bring about public and government awareness of the importance and the splendor of the Antarctic, to address the warming climate and loss of ice in the southern polar region as a direct threat to the future of human life on this planet. The purpose of this Expedition is to confront the consequences and develop creative strategies for everyone to radically reduce carbon emissions, with the goal that each one of us will take more active ownership of our carbon footprint, then find ways to reduce and offset their emissions.

Hence the primary mission is for the ACE 2023 Team to propose and champion 23 Resolutions to reduce and offset emissions within our lives, communities, and countries to pace up in reaching Net Zero. The principal expedition team for this important climate summit will comprise conservationists, celebrities, and ocean luminaries. 100 people will be selected to be part of ACE 2023. You can be one of them. Find out more [here](#).

#ACE2023, #AntarcticClimateEpic,  
#AntarcticClimate, #OceanGeographic, #ACETEAM



Coral Table Mountain  
Photo Credit: RENEE CAPOZZOLA

## THE POWER OF UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHY TO ADDRESS GLOBAL WARMING AND CLIMATE CHANGE

WRITTEN BY RENEE CAPOZZOLA

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The idea that a picture is worth a thousand words has been engrained in modern culture for at least a century, as newspaper editor Arthur Brisbane is credited with advising his colleagues in 1911, “Use a picture. It’s worth a thousand words.” Linguists and academics debate whether that is the true origin of the adage, with some attributing the derivation to a similar Chinese proverb (“One hundred hearings does not match a single viewing.”). However the saying evolved, there is no doubting its validity. Pictures are powerful, and thus are an important tool for strategic action to address global warming and climate change.

The concept of global warming, and more broadly climate change, is not new. Even in the 1800s scientists were contemplating how carbon dioxide might change climate and running related experiments, and in the early and middle decades of the last century such work continued and concerns grew. By the late 1980s these issues became mainstream, and in 1989 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was formed under the United Nations. Since that time, climate change and global warming have become more crucial and more publicized with every passing year.

The overwhelming consensus from the scientific analyses projects a very bleak outlook: melting of polar ice caps, rising sea levels, the warming of oceans, the destruction of coral reefs, and more intense weather, all of which we are now witnessing in real time. The concentration of carbon dioxide is currently the highest in reported history, measured at 416 parts per million in 2021, and surface temperatures have risen by over 1 degree Celsius since the year 1900. Now more than ever, we need to come together and form an action plan to drive down carbon emissions and become better stewards of our planet.

Within this broader mandate, we can and must do more to harness the power of photography, and particularly underwater photography, to focus the world’s efforts on the current crises. Striking images command immediate attention and raise awareness. Climate change for many is an abstract topic. Busy with their everyday lives, many wonder “how will it affect me directly, and when?” Too many people think that unless their own house is flooded or too hot, the climate crisis is somebody else’s problem,

or at least a problem for another day. Simply reading in a newspaper or magazine or online article that temperatures are projected to rise 1.5 degrees Celsius within the next twenty years, it may be difficult for the reader to perceive how that change impacts his or her daily life right now.

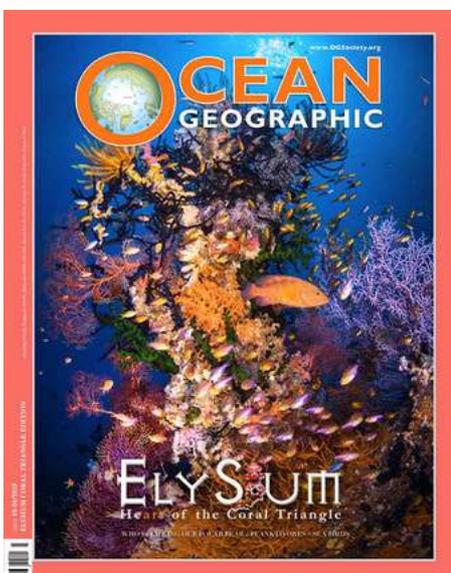
However, if that same person sees a picture of a polar bear starving due to a loss of its icy habitat, that will convey the urgency of the issue. The long predicted impacts are already happening. Underwater photography is particularly important because roughly seventy percent of the Earth's surface is shrouded by water, and thus even harder for the average person to see or visualize. A picture of a healthy coral reef teeming with life next to a barren, unhealthy reef devoid of life due to the effects of warming waters drives the impact home. Using their cameras as instruments of exploration and change, underwater photographers are called to use their talents creating beautiful and powerful pictures not only for their own self-fulfillment but also to advocate for local, national, and international solutions to global warming and climate change.



Dying Reef  
Photo Credit: RENEE CAPOZZOLA



Polar bear confronted by sea ice loss  
Photo Credit: MICHAEL AW



Raja Ampat Reefscape for Ocean Geographic  
Photo Credit: RENEE CAPOZZOLA

Renee Grinnell Capozzola is an international award-winning underwater photographer who specializes in wide-angle and split-level images. Her work is an intriguing combination of artistic talent honed through oil painting during her youth and a professional background in biology. When she is not in the water with her camera, Renee teaches biology and educates her students about the challenges facing our oceans and the importance of conserving marine ecosystems.

# USING ART AS STRATEGY FOR CLIMATE ACTION

WRITTEN BY TOBY WRIGHT

“OH, YOU’RE SO TALENTED, I’D LOVE TO BE AN ARTIST, BUT I CAN’T EVEN DRAW A STRAIGHT LINE!”

Painters hear this comment regularly, especially from passers-by when working outdoors . I often joke that fortunately art is not about drawing a straight line. Sometimes I even say it is not really a talent.

From my experience, art is only partially a talent. Fundamentally, it is a language. It is learnt the same way and practiced the same way. It can be journalistic or poetic. And when not learnt diligently, you will be misunderstood. I disagree with the 20th century affirmation that a “misunderstood artist” equals a “genius artist”. Personally, I believe those artists make up their own hermetic language, rather than make the effort to embrace a universal language founded in humanity’s shared history. I will concede however, that for several generations, the general public has been denied an education into how to read art. Once an essential subject to round off a full education, art it is now regarded as a secondary subject. It is embraced by parents as a fun subject at first, to keep their children occupied, but later discouraged when it is time to study for a “real” job.

Well-designed and orchestrated graphic images trigger curiosity and reflection, transferring knowledge quickly. Artistic pieces trigger an emotional response, boosting a feeling of immersion into the given world that is represented. Scientific expeditions in the past few centuries often employed painters to capture the atmosphere of a place, to convey the same feelings produced on-site. If these emotions can be conveyed, alongside a supply of relevant information, we have a very powerful tool to move minds.

Science communicators often struggle to make information impactful, and digestible to the public. Art can be the vehicle for education and communication, as it can turn complex, text-heavy, data-heavy topics into digestible, manageable material, presented in an inviting and attractive medium. Environmental campaigns have much to say, and pages of cold data can often be translated into a single image or diagram. Most of us are familiar with illustrations comprising several arrows from one picture or



The eternal pursuit, 130x80cm, oil on canvas  
TOBY WRIGHT, 2020.



Drawing sealions, Sea of Cortez.  
Photo Credit: A.J.STETSON



The ice frontier. 100x70cm, oil on canvas, Toby WRIGHT, 2016.

symbol to another, revealing connecting actions, or knock-on effects from seemingly unconnected natural events. An illustration demonstrates a complex phenomenon that would usually bore the majority of the public to read. This is art at the service of science.

Ethical concerns have created conflicting opinions on how to present images when aiming to harness public engagement in conservation. Do we present images of the current devastation to the natural world, or present images of how we wish to transform them? Current realistic images versus aspirational representations. Is one discouraging and the other encouraging? Is one realistic and the other fantasist? Does one trigger a call to action, and the other a call for complacency? Choosing the right imagery for an intended response is complicated.

A study on the behavioural psychology of cleanliness revealed that a clean space would instil a sense of responsibility to maintain its cleanliness, while a dirty space instilled a sense of despondence and led to a descent into carelessness. Could this translate into the cleanliness of the world, and instilling a sense of positive and constructive behaviour versus complacency and despair?

It is clear that throughout history, the visual arts have an important role to play in changing minds. It must be used in its full spectrum today to advance environmental causes. **It is our first shared language, and will endure through time. We are visual creatures; art connects us all.**

Toby spends as much time painting outdoors as indoors, he paints from life for his landscapes and in the studio for his figurative work. His most recent commission is a historic 13-person group portrait for Monaco's oceanographic museum. It represents for the first time since 1909, the museum's counsel of administrators under Prince Albert II of Monaco.



Painting on Fuglefjord, Arctic.  
Photo credit : ALEX ROSE