

We, the governors, staff and students at the Glasgow School of Art declare a Climate and Ecological Emergency

We pledge to work with and support our community and local government in tackling this Emergency, and we call on others to do the same.

These are our intentions:

1 We will tell the Truth

Governments, and their public broadcasters and cultural agencies, must tell the truth about the Climate and Ecological Emergency, reverse inconsistent policies and communicate the urgency for far-reaching systemic change.

We will use the power of creative practice to communicate with citizens and support them to discover the truth about the Emergency and the changes that are needed.

2 We will take Action

Governments must enact legally binding policy measures to reduce emissions to net zero by 2025 and to reduce consumption levels.

We pledge to work towards reducing our emissions to net zero* by 2025.

We will use our institution's influence to challenge policies and actions of local and national governments and their agencies, where we interact with them, that do not help to reduce emissions or consumption levels.

We will actively work to imagine and model ways that our creative practice and our campus can regenerate the planet's resources.

3 We are committed to Justice

The emergency has arisen from deeply systemic injustices. Arts and Culture can imagine and forge shifts in the ways we relate to one another and the world, in our values and behaviours.

We will do what is possible to enable dialogue and expression amidst our communities about how the Emergency will affect them and the changes that are needed.

We will support demands for more democracy within our civic institutions and government.

We believe that all truth-telling, action and democratic work must be underpinned by a commitment to justice based on intersectional principles*, led by and for marginalised people.

We will recognise the historical and cultural debt and effort people of colour, and the poorest peoples and nations have made in their struggle for ecological and social justice, and build on that knowledge and experience.

Declaration ends.

**Net zero means that on balance one's activities are zero emissions, taking into account all possible Greenhouse Gas emissions and actions taken to mitigate or offset those emissions.*

**Awareness of how systems of power combine to multiply the impacts on those who are most marginalised in society.*

Annex: How Does the GSA Adapt to the Emergency?

The Emergency endangers our ability to deliver our charitable objective because climate and ecological collapse means we will not be able to deliver creative education to students. Adopting this declaration means we will be more able to fulfil our charitable objectives in the future.

Any declaration must meet our charitable objective which is to “To provide world class creative education and research in architecture, design and fine art which makes a significant economic, social and cultural contribution.” This can clearly only be done if we are addressing, not adding to, the climate and ecological emergency, and if our students are alive to do it.

Understanding the Emergency

The ecological and climate crisis is real and scientifically not only real but beyond all reasonable doubt, also man-made.

Any rise above 1.5oc will lead to ecological and climatic collapse.

The future of humanity, including your children, is at stake: “our house is on fire” and we should react proportionately.

The Glasgow School of Art is at risk, along with our wider society, of collapse within the lifetimes of our current students.

The people most at risk include people of colour, the poorest in society, and those countries who make least impact on the global ecology and climate. We have a responsibility to change, adapt and mitigate change where we can.

We can no longer tinker with a broken system, but need Global Systems Change: Everything must be redesigned and changed, now, away from a dirty fossil fuel economy.

There is Hope with Agency

The Glasgow School of Art is well-placed to act. It can take action to make its Estate carbon neutral through building and retro-fitting a better campus.

Education is powerful: we know it reduces population growth, and gives us the knowledge, power and agency to act.

Our curriculum has an impact on the global ecology. Fashion, Product Design Engineering, Interior Design are all high impact industries, but with scope to redesign the global system.

Creative practice has the power to connect us all emotionally to issues such as climate disruption and ecological loss, and GSA has a role to play in supporting our students to do this.

Glasgow School of Art is a World leader in the arts: What we say matters and is listened to, and we must lead the way in innovative and disruptive action.

Our inherent values of diversity, responsibility, place, innovation, disruption, pluralism, internationalism and collaboration match those of the need for global change.

Global Systems Change, not Climate Change

The racist, male-biased and unfair economic system, founded on and continuing to be supported by pillaging of resources and slavery for over 500 years must be acknowledged and changed.

The dirty fossil fuel global system is grossly unfair. We must do better and provide safety, opportunity and health for all. There is no sense in economic change without social justice for all.

The IPCC report into achieving a 1.5oc global warming limit includes tech fixes which are simply an extension of a broken system, and does not include feedback loops such as the melting artic ice-cap. The situation is far worse than within the IPCC report.

How we Change

Campus & Operations

Buildings: all existing buildings should be retrofitted with insulation and clean energy generation to reduce their carbon cost to neutral or negative emissions.

Prioritise bio-diverse green areas both on the ground and on buildings.

Measure and report all energy and water use to the best detail possible, and publish this publicly each month.

All GSA food outlets to be vegan only.

Ban the use of, and bringing onto campus of, all single-use plastic food and drink containers (plastic water bottles, coffee cups etc.)

All open and inside areas of the Glasgow School of Art will be regularly monitored for CO2 and other emissions detrimental to human and wider nature health.

All possible roads around the GSA will be closed to motorised traffic, and the daily polluting Garnethill school traffic jam addressed.

Procurement

All procurement should assess the climate and ecological impact, and be weighed equally with cost.

We should instigate and demand from our supplies the highest possible standards of ecological and social justice. We must use our influence within the APUC and government to make procurement rules reflect the climate and ecological emergency.

Travel

A travel hierarchy should be implemented, dissuading travel, penalising car and plane travel, and banning airplane travel unless outwith the EU. We must promote cycling and walking to its fullest extent.

Pensions

Our pensions invest in dirty fossil fuels whose use will lead to the end of humanity: we must divest from this and the associated industries, which include industrial chemicals and the arms trade.

Foreign Campuses

We should evaluate the ecological impact of any foreign campuses, and reduce ecological costs associated with them to a minimum.

The Curriculum

The climate and ecological crisis must be fully embedded across the entire curriculum.

Climate and ecological criteria will be embedded within the ethics system.

All assessment criteria will reflect the need to address the crisis within every subject area.

All subject areas will look at how creative people can assist the work of disciplines addressing the crisis (e.g. planning, engineering, politics, ecology)

The staff will undergo a skills and knowledge gap analysis and receive appropriate CPD in the need for this change and what is happening, and how their discipline adds to, and can help alleviate, the crisis.

Organisational Change

We must be fully transparent and accountable in this process: all meetings and documents must be published.

All strategy and policy should prioritise the climate and ecological crisis.

The GSA should instigate a 'peoples' assembly' of governors, staff and students to oversee these changes, with the power to impose change.

All staff should have climate and ecological responsibility within their job descriptions.

All staff and students should attend an annual day-long update on the climate and ecological crisis and work on how to better address the crisis.

All staff and students should be allowed time to attend climate strikes.

The Glasgow School of Art should fully engage with its local community in addressing the climate and ecological emergency.

The Glasgow School of Art should end and in future avoid, any greenwashing corporate support or funding from any business deliberately making profit from humanitarian collapse.

Carbon Neutral, Carbon Negative

Through these actions, the GSA will declare to be at least carbon neutral by the end of 2025, and seek to be carbon negative.

Proposed Next Steps:

- 9 May group & SiAG receive draft for comment and change
- June: further SiAG meeting to discuss final draft
- September/October: GSA staff and student open meeting to discuss draft
- By end of 2019: adaptation by GSA management and Board and public announcement

The Declaration will be administered by the GSA Peoples' Assembly and reported on every six months to all staff and students. It will be reviewed and updated annually.