

# 7 CREATIVE CLIMATE TRENDS | N°5 COLLABORATION

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Arts and culture are not only responding to environmental challenges but are trailblazing the way forward: creating new narratives, testing ideas, developing interdisciplinary collaborations and reimagining what's possible. Environmental sustainability is being ingrained within the whole cultural economy - from investment, strategy and operations, to creative programming, partnerships and public engagement.

For over 11 years, Julie's Bicycle has been tracking this movement of change within arts and culture. Drawing from this experience, we have identified [Seven Creative Climate Trends](#) - key communities of environment centered practice that are leveraging significant cultural value. They are: Artwork, Activism, Organisational Leadership, Design and Innovation, Collaboration, Path-finding, and Policy Changing. This configuration of trends aims to demonstrate the full breadth and diversity of creative responses to the environment, contextualizing them as a whole movement, networked and moving in concert. Julie's Bicycle is inviting all artists and cultural practitioners inspired by - and working in alignment with - our natural environment to situate themselves within these seven trends and tell their stories of leadership on our new interactive [map](#). This map is open to all and has been designed to make visible this growing movement of change.

## Spotlight on collaboration

Manchester's cultural community has been working together through the [Manchester Arts Sustainability Team](#) (MAST) since 2011, to understand, share, solve and scale climate change action. MAST brings

together about 30 organisations in total, from community-based arts centres and iconic cultural venues to an internationally renowned festival and national broadcasters, in a participatory and non-prescriptive way.

MAST has come a long way. From a small group with external facilitation and funding it has evolved into a network funded and run for and by its members. From an initial focus on practical action, activities have evolved into a wide range of cultural and environmental practice and engagement. The group is now also taking an active role in city climate change strategy.

MAST grew from the Manchester Cultural Partnership's desire to explore how arts and cultural organisations could contribute to the city's first climate change strategy 2010-2020. In its first two years, the group received funding from MLA Renaissance North West, a museum programme, and was facilitated and supported by [Julie's Bicycle](#). By the end of that time, it had agreed a mission and an annual emissions reduction target in line with city's target. The group benefited from [Arts Council England's environmental programme](#) delivered in partnership with Julie's Bicycle. It has also benefited from training under the [Carbon Literacy Project](#), a Manchester-based initiative.

Rooted in the city, MAST enables members to meet face-to-face once every three months, share common challenges and opportunities and link directly to what is happening on a city level. The group is chaired by members on a revolving basis, and able to fund small projects and reporting through a modest annual membership contribution.



The focus on practical action, in particular on energy, has led to a 16% reduction in emissions over three years, avoiding 2,800 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> and £890,000, largely through zero to low cost measures. The group also works on a range of topics from green energy procurement to sustainable materials.

Most members are now combining taking practical action with creative responses - productions, exhibitions, events etc. - to engage employees, audiences and communities on climate change themes, in the understanding that practical action are mutually reinforcing. [HOME](#) and the [Whitworth Gallery](#)'s websites provide an excellent demonstration of this combined approach. Other examples include:

- Manchester International Festival's organic urban farming partnership with the Biospheric Foundation, engaging thousands of community volunteers
- Contact Young Company's 'Climate of Fear', a show exploring the emotion of anger through themes of climate justice, social inequality, memory and the body
- ITV's inclusion of climate change in the storyline of Coronation Street, the UK's most popular soap opera

Arts and culture-based activities proved particularly effective and popular in 2016's Climate Lab. This was an experimental programme, run by the Manchester Climate Change Agency, to test different ways of engaging the people of the city in developing its 2017-2050 climate change strategy. One of the highlights was [Climate Control](#) at Manchester Museum, a six-month long series of exhibitions and events, attended by over 90,000 people, exploring what kind of future people hope for and how to make it a reality.

MAST's chair is a member of the [Manchester Climate Change Board](#). The board is a multi-stakeholder group which oversees and champions delivery of the city's 2017-2050 climate change strategy, with the support of the [Manchester Climate Change Agency](#).

Manchester is now working to establish how it can make its fair contribution to the Paris Agreement. As part of this process the climate change agency and board are working together to develop sector-specific zero-carbon roadmaps, including for the arts and culture sector, in close co-operation with MAST.

MAST has become a local, national and international best practice example of environmental collaboration. In 2017 it was featured in the World Cities Culture Forum's (WCCF) [Culture and Climate Change Handbook for City Leaders](#). Also in 2017, Manchester was awarded [Good Practice City](#) status under the European Union's [Urbact programme](#) in recognition of MAST's work.

As an URBACT Good Practice City, Manchester is now leading an Urbact transfer network to share and build on its experience, working with five other city partners - Wrocław (PL), Mantova (IT), Gelsenkirchen (DE), Šibenik (HR) and Águeda (PT). 'C-Change: Arts and Culture Leading Climate Action in Cities' is an exciting and innovative new collaboration. It is not only an opportunity to develop sector collaboration on climate change in other cities, but also a key driver for MAST and Manchester in taking its approach to the next level. For Julie's Bicycle, who has worked in partnership with MAST from the start and is also providing key expertise for the C-Change network, it also marks an exciting new step in the creative climate movement on a city-level.

For further information on MAST and examples of network good practice see [MAST's five-year report](#) (2017).

