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Student name: Rinnette Ramdhanie
Student ID no.: 93731397
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Supervisor: Dr. Marsha Pearce

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Abstract

More artists have been creating work addressing climate change and using scientific data to do so. It is, however, unclear how these artists are converting the factual information into a visual experience which can resonate with viewers. This paper examines artwork by a selection of artists from the Anglophone Caribbean and analyses how the formal elements of art are used to convert facts about climate change into feelings which can motivate a viewer to take action. The impact of climate change is more than just physical but a social issue and, artists are equipped to ensure that the science behind the subject is communicated to the public. A case study approach was used in this research where the work of four artists was examined. Using a formal analysis of each of the pieces selected, this work argues that these artists are giving a voice to the facts surrounding climate change by using the basic elements of art. It reveals and emphasises how the elements are used to establish personal connections between the artwork and the viewer as a way for the viewer to become emotionally invested. Once people have feelings about the subject, it will move them to take action.

Keywords: Visual Art, Artists, Climate Change, Anglophone Caribbean, Formal Analysis, Climate Justice

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Introduction

The consequences of climate change have had significant effects on individuals and communities creating or exacerbating various social concerns. While governments, businesses and other stakeholders have been key in creating policies and passing laws to reduce our carbon footprint, to have a greater effect the citizens of the world have to be reached. They need to understand climate change, have access to pertinent information, and become engaged at a level that will allow them to assist with dealing with behavioural or political barriers. They also need to have a forum to contribute new ideas and gain ownership of proposed solutions (“Social Dimensions”). Artists help society to familiarise itself with the complexities of life in general and also have the power to reform the collective perception of a population (Mathur). As a result, the theme of climate change has gained traction in artwork and exhibitions across the globe (Hahn 187).

In order to be effective, artists have to be familiar with the facts associated with climate change and use these in their work to evoke an emotional response in the viewer. Climate change is no longer discussed only by scientists but by everyone from all walks of life. Scientists however, deal only in facts and need help to communicate these facts to everyone else. According to ecological artist Thijs Biersteker, this is where artists come in (“Facts to Feelings” 01:43-01:59). He further posits:

Facts don’t move people, emotions do, ... empathy does. Feeling the facts does make a change (“Facts to Feelings” 01:28-01:43).

Artists can take the scientific facts and turn them into personal experiences to which people can relate. Understanding the facts develops an appreciation which can lead to action. Sometimes

people need to feel scared or uncomfortable in order to act (Biersteker, “Facts to Feelings” 05:08-05:28).

Artists can help to show the bigger picture by turning facts into “personal relatable experiences” and giving them a voice so that people can “feel the fact” (“Facts to Feelings” 01:43-02:05). The guiding question for this research is how do artists in the Anglophone Caribbean use their practice to turn facts about climate change into feelings in an effort to motivate the public to act? To answer this question, works by a selection of artists from the Anglophone Caribbean have been examined. These works are related in some way to climate change.

Climate Change as a Social Issue

Climate change is where there is a significant change in the average temperature, humidity and rainfall patterns over a long time period. It can refer to a particular region or the whole Earth. The Earth’s climate has always been gradually changing over thousands of years and will continue to do so for the next few decades. However, due to human intervention, the changes are happening at a much faster rate and are a cause for serious concern. The effects of climate change include weather-related events such as frequent and more intense hurricanes, flooding, rising sea levels, droughts and forest fires (“Climate change”). Apart from the immediate physical effects of these disasters, there are also long-term challenges after the event has subsided. As a result, there are millions of people across the globe who are struggling with health issues, forced displacement and migration, and lack of food, water and livelihoods, (“Social dimensions”). Throughout history, art has been used as a tool for raising awareness of these types of social issues.

The Role of the Artist

Climate change has gone beyond being just an environmental crisis and is now a social crisis. It does not only affect our weather patterns but also every aspect of our lifestyles (Fisher). Art as activism has always been used to challenge inequalities, bring attention to marginalised groups and foster some sort of social change that will benefit humanity (Sahni). As climate change issues have escalated, artists have responded to the crisis and are addressing it in various ways. Artists are trained to expand their perceptual and expressive ranges and as a result, they help to broaden perspectives and allow others to see more than they would otherwise not notice. Art also forces people to look at what would normally be avoided because it is disturbing and may cause anxiety. This shock can stimulate feelings they were probably not aware of and can inspire action (Schein 1). This makes artists suitable for expressing many human situations including the social challenges posed by climate change.

In addition, the climate crisis is also causing an imagination crisis which can only be solved by art. Artists who are aware imagine how every choice they make is reflected in some way in the environment. They can also ensure that the science behind the climate crisis is communicated and accessible to the general public. In this way, they make the issue personal and when something becomes personal, people then start to act on it. Solving the imagination crisis will help to solve the climate crisis (Biersteker, “How Art Can Help”) and artists are well-equipped to do this.

Rationale

Puerto Rican artists, Frances Gallardo and Lionel Cruet, have created work surrounding Hurricane Maria, showcasing the destruction as well as the slow recovery due in part to human-induced factors including poor disaster recovery policies. Sint Maarten's Deborah Jack addresses the frequency of hurricanes and references hurricane victims in her work. Tony Capellan (Dominican Republic), Nadia Huggins (St. Vincent), Guy Gabon (Guadeloupe) and Dominique Hunter (Guyana) have all created work pertaining to the impact of climate change on the oceans and water systems including how it is affecting marine life. While several Caribbean artists are creating work that is related to climate change, only a few of those have been studied and documented in an academic forum. Of those who have been documented, most are affiliated with non-Anglophone Caribbean countries. This study adds to the very small body of work pertaining to the contribution of Anglophone Caribbean artists and how they visualise climate change and its effects. It is vital to explore the works of these artists and their contribution to the climate change discussion as, this will inform society and increase awareness of climate change as a domestic issue and not something that is distant and foreign. It is important that artists who create work about climate change entice people to have strong emotional responses that will create a sense of urgency and motivate action to achieve positive changes (Hahn and Berkers 96). This matters because more people need to act. More people need to become aware and feel the urgency to take action. While it is challenging to convert any type of scientific fact into feeling, artists are equipped to overcome this imagination crisis. This paper argues that Anglophone Caribbean artists are giving a voice to the facts surrounding climate change by using the formal elements of art to evoke feelings which can result in the public taking action.

Parameters

This work is limited to artists from the English-speaking Caribbean. The focus will be only on those artists who have created work that responds in some way to the climate crisis. This paper looks at the work of four artists and not the entire community of Anglophone Caribbean artists who may be producing work related to climate change.

While there are political constraints which have affected how countries deal with the impact of climate change and which may even have contributed to making the situation worse through inactivity, this paper deals mainly with the social dimensions of climate change.

Objective

This study analyses the work of four artists across a variety of media including paintings, video, installation and sculpture. The objective of the study is to examine how the formal elements of art in selected works induce feelings that can move someone to take action to alleviate the effects of climate change. The specific elements that will be explored are line, shape, form, texture and sound. The work of two artists was examined to describe how line, shape and form were used to homogenise humans and their environment. The work of another two artists were studied to analyse how sound and texture were used to depict climate injustice.

Methodology

The research design strategy used was a case study approach where artwork from four artists were selected and examined in detail to determine how climate change facts were used to move the viewer.

They are Alberta Whittle from Barbados, Deborah Anzinger from Jamaica, Nadia Huggins from St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Jonathan Gladding from St. Lucia. These artists were selected from a small pool of Anglophone Caribbean artists who have produced work related to the climate crisis. Each artist represents a different country to ensure some geographical diversity. In addition, the work examined was created within the last ten years. This timeframe was chosen as the Paris Agreement was passed in 2015 at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP21). The Paris Agreement is an international treaty on climate change. This treaty was significant as one hundred and ninety-six Parties endorsed it (“The Paris Agreement”), and in doing so it influenced public support and opinion on the climate crisis.

Collection of data included observational studies of the artwork using a system of formal analysis that is a variation of the process documented by Edmund Burke Feldman in *Varieties of Visual Experience*. The following will be done for each artwork studied:

1. the work will be described noting what is visible in the artwork,
2. the relationships among the things named will be analysed, and
3. the work will be interpreted to uncover the overall meaning (Feldman, 487-503).

In addition, information was collected from secondary sources including interviews, speeches, articles and social media posts. These were found mainly on art gallery websites, various media groups and published works.

This study answers the overarching question of how Anglophone Caribbean artists are using their practice to turn fact into feelings with respect to climate change. The approach taken to

accomplish this is to look at and interpret how the formal elements of art are used in various artwork. The formal elements of art are line, shape, form, colour, value, space and texture. There are additional elements which can be considered with respect to film, and these are time, motion and sound. In order to answer the overarching research question, the following sub-question was addressed: how are the elements of art used to turn facts into personal relatable experiences that will make people feel?

Chapter Outline

This paper consists of an introduction, four chapters and a conclusion. Chapter 1 provides a literature review for the study. Chapter 2 introduces the artists and the artwork that will be used in the study. Chapter 3 examines how line, shape and form are used to convert climate facts into feelings, while in Chapter 4 texture and sound are used to do the same.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

This study answers the overarching question of how artists in the Anglophone Caribbean use their practice to turn facts about climate change into feelings in an effort to move the public to act. While a few papers have been published that address the work done by Caribbean artists related to climate change, there is a shortage of research in this area. Several studies have been published which draws attention to hurricanes in particular, and other environmental issues related to the sea.

Several artists have used climate data to highlight the increase in the frequency of hurricanes and its effects. Martínez uses the work of Puerto Rican artists, Frances Gallardo and Lionel Cruet to demonstrate that a declining economy, colonialism, neo-colonialism and government neglect were the causes for long and partial recoveries after Hurricane Maria hit the island in 2017 (2). Gallardo's *Hurricane Series* uses satellite imagery and in *Murmuration (Mosquito Cloud)* she uses small paper sculptures of mosquitoes to trace the wind pattern in a six-foot image of a hurricane (Martínez 21-22). According to Martínez, Gallardo is depicting how smaller shapes come together to form larger bodies, using paper to demonstrate the fragility of humans in the face of these superstorms and names the hurricanes in her work after people she knows who were affected by the storm (24, 29). In Lionel Cruet's *Floods Aftermath and Other Hurricane Stories*, he creates paintings on blue tarpaulins like the ones used to cover houses in the aftermath of a disaster (Martínez 45). Additionally, Deborah Jack addresses fragility in her work referencing hurricanes as metaphorical catalysts for the trauma that the Caribbean has seen over the course of history. Her installation *Shore* includes visual references to hurricanes and depicts them as memorials for lives lost (Selk 145-146).

While these artists' works clearly demonstrate a use of climate-related facts as well as artistic elements to elicit feelings from the viewer, none of them are from the Anglophone Caribbean.

Artists have also used their practice to draw focus to the ocean as a site of various environmental crises including coral bleaching, acidification and rising sea levels all as a result of climate change. After witnessing the deterioration of coral reefs, Nadia Huggins created the *Transformation Series* which is a set of diptychs that pair fragments of her body with various life-forms. It draws attention to how our actions eventually affect our environment (DeLoughrey 157-158). DeLoughrey, however, analyses Huggins' work in the context of blurring gender binaries and does not directly address any reference to climate data that may have been used in her work (151). Guadeloupe's Guy Gabon's artistic practices reflect her environmental concerns. Her installation *#AllClimateRefugees* addresses the rising sea levels which force communities to emigrate. She calls on key stakeholders to adopt a new approach to dealing with the ecological disasters that affect the Caribbean islands (Selk 149). Dominique Hunter's installation *And Then It Came* as well as *Downpour* draw attention to the increased flooding due to a rise in sea levels. In her country Guyana, two hundred thousand people live in danger of being flooded (Selk 150). Gabon and Hunter have both based their work on facts pertaining to climate change. However, like DeLoughrey, Selk's focus was not to examine how artwork on climate change can induce action for the issue, but to examine how culture can become a priority when natural disasters occur (138). While Huggins and Hunter are from the Anglophone Caribbean their work was not analysed in the same context as this study.

Generally, there is a paucity of work available that addresses how Caribbean artists deal with climate change. In addition, most published works in this area investigate work done by artists outside the Anglophone Caribbean. Of the few artists from the target countries who are studied, their work is discussed in the context of other social issues and not necessarily to draw attention to the climate crisis.

Chapter 2: Creating a Climate Crisis: Artists from the Anglophone Caribbean

It is the intention of this study to look at the work of several Anglophone Caribbean artists who have done work related to climate change and analyse the effectiveness of their pieces on converting climate facts and data into feelings which can motivate a person to act. This chapter introduces the four artists and the exhibitions or collections that will be studied in order to accomplish this.

Jonathan Guy-Gladding (St. Lucia)

Jonathan Guy-Gladding is originally from Massachusetts and had been working in New York as a computer artist. After five years he wanted to broaden his experience and challenge himself by making some significant contribution to society that requires some form of sacrifice (“Quintessential Caribbean”). Consequently, he applied as a volunteer in the Peace Corps and was sent to Saint Lucia in 1999. While there, Gladding found true inspiration for the first time in the daily lives of the people, their culture and heritage, and the environment of Saint Lucia. Gladding had been painting in a cubist style for many years but now paints realistically as he feels this is how he best captures the details in the subject matter he wishes to depict (Thomas 71). What was meant to be a two-year assignment has turned into twenty-five years. Through his work, Gladding is now considered one of Saint Lucia’s own (Sheridan).

The Caribbean campaign “1.5 to Stay Alive” was launched in 2015, as an initiative of the regional organisation Panos Caribbean, in an effort to instigate action and draw attention to the increase in global temperatures and how this is affecting Caribbean countries. In response to this initiative, Gladding produced a painting which became an iconic poster symbolising the Caribbean’s stand at COP21 held later that year in Paris (“New Iconic Painting”). An outcome of the convention was the Paris Agreement which is a legally binding international treaty on climate change. Through the tremendous efforts of Dr. James Fletcher, former Saint Lucian minister responsible for sustainable development, a main aim of the Paris Agreement is to promote efforts to limit the increase in global temperature to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels (“The Paris Agreement”, Kravatsky). In order to accomplish this, greenhouse gas emissions must peak before 2025 and decline 43% by 2030 (“The Paris Agreement”). Surpassing the 1.5°C threshold poses the danger of triggering more severe climate change impacts, such as more frequent and harsher droughts, heatwaves, and intense rainfall. Since 2015, Gladding has continued to produce similar pieces over the years with the last piece completed in 2021. There are now a total of five paintings in the collection.

Nadia Huggins (St. Vincent & the Grenadines)

Nadia Huggins was born in Trinidad and Tobago but grew up in St. Vincent and the Grenadines where she is currently based (“Coral & Ash”). She is a self-taught photographer and freelance graphic designer and is known for her underwater photography as well as being an environmental activist (Archer 132). Huggins’ work speaks to the effects of climate change as well as the increased frequency of natural disasters in the Caribbean. She is aware that landscapes change over time and in most cases are undocumented. As a result, Huggins’ is interested in recording

even small changes so that future generations have a reference point. In current times, changes caused by the climate crisis is critical and she strives to drive home the urgency with which decisions have to be made especially with respect to the small island states, like those in the Caribbean, who are affected the worse (Aziga).

This paper will look at Nadia Huggins' *Transformations* which is a series of diptychs that investigates her identity as it relates to the marine ecosystem. She was concerned with the destruction of the coral reefs and decided to explore the interaction between her body and the organisms she photographed. She took photos of the same life forms in the same location, in tandem with her body, over a period of two years. Her work draws attention to how our actions eventually affect our environment (DeLoughrey 157-158).

Alberta Whittle (Barbados)

Alberta Whittle is a Barbadian-Scottish multidisciplinary artist who works across various media including film, installation and performance. She often utilises archival materials and found footage in her work, which is produced in collaboration with a network of artists and performers ("Alberta Whittle"). Whittle was born in Barbados and moved to England as a teenager. She later moved to Scotland to study, and now lives and works there.

Whittle's work centres around the colonisation, erasure of people of colour in everyday society, capitalism and memory, as well as environmental issues. She is especially concerned about the sense of amnesia that people in the UK seem to have and wants them to recognise the deep-seated history of extraction and forced migration that happened in the Caribbean. There is an

absence of conversation on these matters, as well as uneasy relationships between Europe and the Americas, while it is acknowledged and discussed openly in the Caribbean. Consequently, her work aims to unsettle people from their positions of comfort, privilege or passiveness, and encourages what she calls “active remembering” (McNay). She uses the unusual hurricane season in the Caribbean to force people in the UK to remember that there is life across the Atlantic and that our histories are linked. In addition, Whittle addresses the idea of how people were erased both historically during European colonisation and now, through inequalities in social systems and institutions. Similarly, individuals and communities are being erased through the effects of climate change – through powers which they have no control over. She connects these themes and uses her work to draw attention to the unfairness of the systems which caused both.

The videos which will be examined in this paper are *between a whisper and a cry* and *from the forest to the concrete (to the forest)*. These works address the vulnerability of the Caribbean to the effects of climate change even though it is not responsible for the current climate issues. They look at the amnesia the West exhibits with respect to the complicity of their own contribution to the situation and also their willingness to sit back while further bodies are erased as it was during colonisation.

Deborah Anzinger (Jamaica)

Deborah Anzinger is a multidisciplinary artist who is based in Jamaica. Her work includes paintings, sculpture, videos and installation art. The main themes of her work include an intersection of the environment, the economy, human rights, capitalism and globalisation

(Mohsen). Anzinger feels that it is dangerous to depend on economic and social systems that compromise our survival by damaging the environment and climate. She also examines the effects of colonialism, and now imperialism, on the local ecology of Jamaica. Both have exploited human and natural resources for the benefit of centres of power (“Ecology is of Utmost Importance”).

In her exhibition, *An Unlikely Birth*, Anzinger looks at the intersection of race, gender and the environment. She specifically addresses climate injustice or environmental racism as it relates to capitalism’s history stemming from slavery and empire (Das). It also deals with the fact that climate change does not affect everyone equally. Some communities are more vulnerable because inequity may be part of their history, the existence of socioeconomic disparities, and current social systems that do not support certain racial or ethnic minorities (“Climate Equity”). The exhibition includes large unframed canvases, small-scale framed paintings, an architectural structure and ceramic pieces, all of which combine both synthetic and natural elements.

Chapter 3: Harmonising Humans and the Environment Using Line, Shape and Form

A line is a path made by some instrument and is usually associated with direction or orientation. How lines communicate is something taught very young when learning writing skills. Artists use similar line combinations to depict their ideas (Feldman, 207-208). Line can also be seen in sculptures, moving in three dimensions, and is created when the material is bent into shape, sometimes conveying meaning through suggestion. Line is the probably the most expressive of the visual elements since the outlines of things are important to their identity. Also, since line is exact and unambiguous, it compels the artists to “speak” clearly (Feldman 210).

Shapes are two-dimensional and flat. Closed lines can become the boundaries for shapes, but shapes can also be an area of colour. Shapes can be geometric which are precise and regular, or organic which are free-form and irregular, or one of a kind (Feldman 211, “Elements of Art: Shape” 01:17-01:29). When shapes are given a third dimension – depth, they become forms (“Elements of Art: Form” 00:39-00:44). Form can be real or implied. It is implied in paintings, by using shadows and highlights, and is real in sculptures as it takes up three-dimensional space (Farr “Analysing the Elements| Form”).

This chapter shows how line is used in selected artworks from Jonathan Gladding to demonstrate how the actions of humans affect the environment. Additionally, Nadia Huggins' use of shape and form help viewers see the closeness of the marine world to humans.

1.5 To Stay Alive #1

Gladding's painting *1.5#1* (Figure 1) shows a little girl standing in water which is up to her neck. The water is shown in cross section and includes a view of what is beneath the surface. It is relatively calm on the surface while underwater there are faded or blended dashed white lines in every direction. Behind the child and staked into the sandy bed is a sign with the words "1.5 TO STAY ALIVE". She is looking directly at the viewer and holding her hands in front of her. She is also wearing a long white dress down to her ankles with a colourful apron and headband. Across the middle of the painting is written in light grey letters "1.5 to stay alive".



Figure 1: Jonathan Gladding, *1.5 #1*, 2015, oil on canvas. Source: the artist.

The girl appears to be standing in the sea or ocean based on the horizon and a cloudy sky in the background. Despite being immersed in the water and the illusion of movement provided by the dashed lines under the water, the dress stays down around her ankles and does not float around. Her body is a vertical line being used as a marker for the water level. The lack of movement with her clothing adds to the illusion of an upright, motionless marker. The grey sky portends a storm and there are waves in the distance, however the sea is calm near the child. Her posture and expression are serene and expectant as if what is going to happen next is inevitable and she is just waiting for it.

In this piece, line is used in the form of language or in the words “1.5 to stay alive”. Artists often use language to draw attention to political issues or social justice turning words into art. “1.5 to stay alive” is depicted twice in this piece to emphasise the significance of the message. For those who are not aware of what these words mean in the context of climate change, it adds some mystery and invites them to investigate further to discover the meaning. For those who are aware, it gives a sense of urgency equating survival of the child with survival of the Earth. The line used to depict the level of the water is significant as it is painted across the girl’s neck. It further adds to that sense of urgency as she is completely submerged except for her head, indicating that there is not much time left for her to be completely immersed. The use of her body as a vertical marker is significant as water markers are sometimes used, not only to indicate water levels, but also to provide warnings and regulatory information to vessel operators (“Waterway Markers”). Her body is being used to show the rise in sea levels in addition to being a warning of the danger the Earth currently finds itself. The dress worn by the child looks like traditional wear and is representative of Saint Lucia. This colourful attire is worn on national holidays and on Jounen Kwéyòl or Creole day and represents the island’s cultural identity and heritage (Joseph). By depicting her wearing this clothing, Gladding is representing the threat posed by climate change, not just to Saint Lucian, but to Caribbean heritage.

1.5 To Stay Alive #3

Gladding’s 1.5 #3 (Figure 2) shows the image of the head and shoulders of a little girl standing in water which is up to her neck. She is wearing a colourful blouse and hat. Her necklace is broken and red beads are floating around her neck. She is holding up one finger on her right hand and five fingers on her left. There is a circle painted around the girl which looks like it was sketched

in with paint as, it is not one solid line but many short lines joining to form the circle. In the background, on the right, are the shapes of some hills or mountains, while on the left the sky is orange and smoky. The bottom half of the image shows an underwater scene with various marine life such as fish, turtles, coral and anemone. Across the middle of the image, on an almost transparent white band, are the words “1.5 TO STAY ALIVE”.

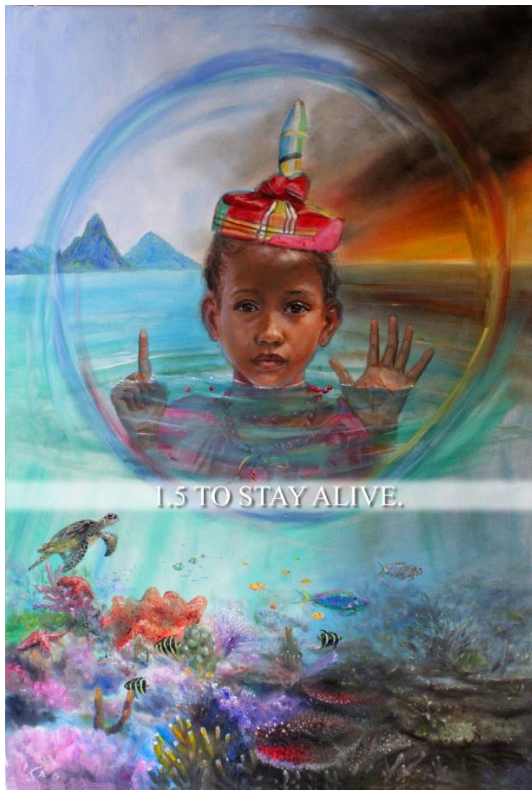


Figure 2: Jonathan Gladding, *1.5 #3*, 2021, oil on canvas, Anse Chastanet Hotel, St. Lucia. Source: the artist

As in *1.5 #1*, line is used again in the message “1.5 TO STAY ALIVE.” On this piece it is painted on a light grey band of colour which serves to separate the image of the child from those of the marine life below the surface of the water. The circle around the child places a spotlight on her and draws the viewer’s focus. The viewer is also drawn to the marine life as light, depicted as

hazy lines almost blending into the background, is shining through the water directly onto the organisms. The eye moves from the little girl to the fiery sky behind her then to the animal life at the bottom of the painting. In spite of the line across the painting, the water connects the girl with the animal life below her. The circle around her again connects her with the animals, as the bottom of it can be seen below the words. It also links her to the fires in the background, since it takes on the colour of the fire, water and her clothing.

The necklace appears to have been broken as a result of the rise in water level which is up to her neck signifying the potential destruction that can be caused by the water. The use of children and animals usually appeals to people's sensitivities. This painting is demonstrating the threat to marine life and coral reefs if sea temperatures continue to rise. The fiery sky on the left can be the source of the danger or a result of the danger. The child is signalling 1.5 with her fingers as a reminder of what has to be done. She can barely raise her hands above the water to do so as if she is already being affected. The use of a child is particularly effective as they are the most vulnerable among us and they are also symbolic of our future. The artist is saying that our children will live difficult lives if temperatures continue to rise. The circle surrounding the girl focuses attention on her and adds to her vulnerability as well as makes her appear trapped. She is trapped as a result of the climate issues and also because there is not much she can do. Her expression is very sad and at the same time judging the viewer for the situation she has found herself.

Transformations No. 1

Transformations No. 1 (Figure 3) is a form of photographic abstraction using two closeup images of the artist on the right and a sea urchin on the left, both taken from a side view. Huggins' face is in shadow and seems to have been replaced with the spines of the sea urchin. The lines of the spines all converged on what should be her face. Both subjects are surrounded by blue with lighter areas indicating light sources. On the right side there are lines of lighter blues moving down from the top and reflecting off Huggins' head and shoulders.

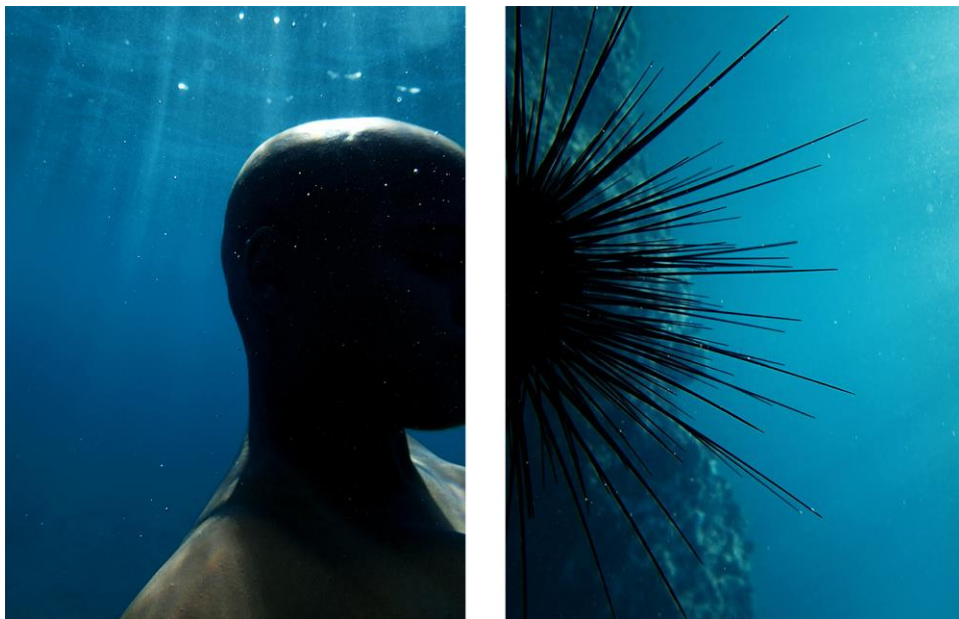


Figure 3: Nadia Huggins, *Transformations No. 1*, 2015, digital photograph. Source: <https://nadiahuggins.com/Transformations>

The sharp, straight lines of the spines contrast with the curved outline of Huggins' head and shoulders. The viewer is drawn to the sea urchin's spikes, then the area where a face should be. The thick white line between the images abruptly stops any association that could be made between the two.

The contrast between Huggins' outline and the spines makes her appear vulnerable as the curved lines are soft while the urchin's spines seem hard, sharp and dangerous. The piece is striving to connect the human with the marine life. The colour of the water in the background of both images is very similar and supports this interrelation. The vertical line in the middle seems to be saying that in spite of the connection being made, there is still a separation between humans and other life forms. In this case, the distinction could be that humans are capable of making decisions that can have disastrous effects on the planet, while other organisms are only susceptible to the consequences of those decisions. There is also a sense of calm about Huggins that is at variance with the urchin which seems to be giving off a sense of some impending, negative occurrence. Also, the dark colours of the subjects themselves create a sense of heaviness against the blue background. The surrounding water adds to the feeling of heaviness pressing down on the subjects. The combination of contrasts and heaviness give a sense of urgency to the piece. There is a connectedness between the human and urchin, and a sense that whatever happens to the urchin will also affect the human.

Transformations No. 3

Transformation No. 3 (Figure 4) is another diptych in the series showing two images side by side. On the left is the shoulder of the artist and on the right, there are two round corals where the one in the foreground is shown partially. Moles and skin pores can be seen on the shoulder, while there are piths and patterns on the corals. The surface of the water can be seen just over the shoulder of the artist. The image of the corals has also been rotated ninety degrees clockwise so that where the water meets the sand in the background forms a vertical line.



Figure 4: Nadia Huggins, *Transformations No. 3*, 2015, digital photograph. Source: <https://nadiahuggins.com/Transformations>.

The roundness of Huggins' shoulder is mirrored by the round shapes of the coral. The moles and marks on Huggins are reflected by the piths and marks on the coral showing similarities in both surfaces. Since the surface of the water can be seen over the shoulder this gives a sense of lightness as if Huggins is floating near the surface. In contrast, the background of the image on the right is anchoring the coral and gives the impression of weight. Both corals seem very large and heavy and not the size of the human shoulder to which they are being compared.

Anthropomorphising the corals, by pairing it with a shoulder, allows viewers to relate to them and visualise the connection between the environment and humans. Recognising that relationship can induce people to care more about what they are seeing. Brain corals grow only a few millimetres per year and can live up to 900 years (NOAA). The implied size and weight make the viewer aware of how impressive and unique such an organism can be. Similar to Gladdings' *1.5 #3*, the use of marine life in the piece generally appeals to the public. This piece, however, does need

some context in the sense that viewers may have to have prior knowledge of corals and how they grow in order to relate to their dire situation. Lastly, featuring the rotated image of the corals as if they are standing on end, gives the viewer a feeling of instability – as if the corals are about to fall down and out of the image. This feeling of discomfort, combined with the image of marine life, forces people to think of the environmental issues facing the organism. It also shows how humans and the environment are interrelated and how what happens to one affects the other.

Chapter 4: Showcasing Climate Injustice Using Texture and Sound

Texture refers to how a surface looks or feels and can be either real or implied (“Elements of Art: Texture” 01:03- 01:09). Real texture can be created using a wide variety of methods including cutting, gouging, tearing or layering different types of material. Implied texture is represented using the other elements of art such as line, shape, colour, form and value. For example, using different types of lines or repeating shapes in a drawing can imply texture (Farr “Analyzing the Elements| Texture”).

Sound is an element of film that is used to enhance the overall experience as well as to make the film comprehensible. It includes music, dialogue, sound effects ambient noise and background noise (Reich 73).

This chapters looks at how Deborah Anzinger uses texture to highlight climate injustices and how Alberta Whittle’s films use sound creatively to elicit feelings from facts about hurricanes.

An Unlikely Birth

An Unlikely Birth by Deborah Anzinger (Figure 5) is composed of an unstretched canvas, and a dark mass which looks like curly hair attached to the bottom right side of the canvas. There are two plants which seem to be growing out of the hair. The canvas itself shows a painting of an abstract landscape and consists of predominantly muted colours including of green, white, blue and tan. The blue and white look like a sky with clouds and appear in the middle of the canvas

surrounded by green and tan. The green, which looks like foliage, appears over the blue in some abstract shapes. The tan around the edges are painted areas, but it also appears in the middle as painted lines. Over everything are painted some black lines of varying widths. None of the lines are straight but look like abstract doodles or like a child drew it with marker. Generally, the lines look very smooth almost as if they were printed. The thickest line is on the top right just over the hair and looks like a large, not very well-formed W, where the latter part has been cut off by the edge of the canvas. The canvas itself is not mounted flat on the wall as the edges of it are raised.



Figure 5: Deborah Anzinger, *An Unlikely Birth*, 2018. Source: www.artpapers.org/deborah-anzinger-an-unlikely-birth.

Both real and implied texture can be found in this piece. The real texture is provided by the hair as well as the two plants with pointed leaves growing out of it. The implied texture can be seen in the large W which seems to have a white shadow. This pushes the W forward and gives it form – as if it has an edge. As a result, it appears smooth with sharp edges. In addition, the

green shapes in the middle of the painting also appear to have an edge. In this case the edge is flattened, as if it was cut out of paper and stuck onto the piece giving it a collage effect. The thin black line at the bottom also provides texture as it looks like string which has been stuck on the canvas.

The use of real and implied texture in this piece draws attention specifically to the black lines and the black hair. The presence of the lines, which appears man-made in its smoothness, and the hair which represents a naturally occurring substance, implies a relationship between the synthetic and the natural.

The blackness of the lines and hair is reminiscent of crude oil. Crude oil is a fossil fuel which is the largest contributor of greenhouse gases and carbon dioxide emissions affecting climate change globally (“Causes and Effects of Climate Change”). It stands out starkly against the muted colours of nature in the background as if to emphasise how significant the effects of its use are to the environment.

The exhibition *An Unlikely Birth* addresses the theme of climate injustice or environmental racism. In this context, the black hair can also represent communities of colour and the challenges they face as their health, water, air, food and shelter are threatened as a result of climate issues. According to Climate Justice writer, Mary Annaïse Heglar, climate change is a product of racism. She says that it did not start with the Industrial Revolution but with

conquest, genocides, slavery, and colonialism. That is the moment when White men's relationship with living things became extractive and disharmonious. Everything was for the taking; everything was for sale (Heglar).

The black hair against the muted landscape brings this message into focus, especially for persons of colour. Being aware of the climate injustice can induce people to investigate further and to act.

The Distraction of Symbolism

The Distraction of Symbolism (Figure 6) is a one room architectural structure that looks like a shack built to live in by squatters or persons with low income in rural areas of the Caribbean. Like the squatters' shacks, it is constructed from discarded materials such as pieces of ply, old lumber, corrugated galvanise, cardboard, corkboard and pieces of metal sheeting. The four-sided structure also includes a small opening for a window and a doorway. Attached to the outside walls are pieces of black hair like that used in *An Unlikely Birth*. Inside the shack there are two chairs facing a wall with a screen showing a video. Along the two walls on either side of the wall with the screen, are plants illuminated by what looks like fluorescent lights. The chairs

are placed above two pedal-powered generators which the viewers have to use to power the lights for the plants (Figure 7)



Figure 6: Deborah Anzinger, *The Distraction of Symbolism*, 2019. Source: ASAP Journal, asapjournal.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/FIG-3-2019_ICA_Deborah_Anzinger.jpg.



Figure 7: *The Distraction of Symbolism* (detail), 2019. Source: Institute of Contemporary Art Facebook page, www.facebook.com/ICAPhiladelphia/posts/the-physical-structure-of-our-world-our-place-within-it-and-the-stories-we-creat/10157882766323465/

The various material used are themselves textured, and are layered on the exterior walls of the structure to produce further texture. By using this technique, the artist is drawing attention to the quality and type of materials used in the structure. The materials are clearly recycled so this could be a bid to promote recycling and reusing as one of the solutions to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, as it prevents extraction of further raw materials, utilises less energy and reduces harmful wastes (“Combating Climate Change”). Also, the one-room shack represents living simply and with as little impact as possible on the environment. The viewer is aware on seeing the structure that there are people who actually live like this. However, seeing it in a museum setting highlights the contrast between two worlds and makes one wonder what it would be like to actually live under such conditions. This is an uncomfortable thought to someone who is accustomed to the comforts of life.

On closer examination of some parts of the construction, it is evident how haphazardly the material was joined. Also, in some areas it looks as if the pieces were pulled apart or broken by hand, and not cut with a tool, before being fixed to the wall. This, together with the layering of textures and the jagged and sharp edges, all combine to make the viewer feel uneasy. It suggests how fragile and vulnerable some communities are to the impact of climate change. This shack and how it is constructed represents these communities, as it is persons with low income and social position who are in the greatest danger.

between a whisper and a cry

Whittle's *between a whisper and a cry* addresses the vulnerability of the Caribbean to the effects of climate change even though it is not responsible for the current crisis. It is centred around an old mariner's rhyme which gives an overview of the hurricane season:

June, too soon

July, stand by

August, come they must

September, remember

October, all over.

The video has five sections which correspond to each of the months in the rhyme.



Figure 8: Still from *between a whisper and a cry*, 13:34. Source: the artist.

The still in Figure 8 from *between a whisper and a cry*, was taken from the part of the film representing July. In this segment of the film, two people are holding on to a blue tarpaulin while it is being battered by the wind coming off the sea. The scene changes as they move along the beach, all the while still holding tightly to it. There are shots from afar, close up as well as from under the tarpaulin. At times the tarpaulin takes on a life of its own and looks like a large, blue organism sitting on the beach and moving in the wind. The sound made by the tarpaulin is deafening and continues for about four and a half minutes (from 11:11 to 15:35). Also during this period an old recording of a Grenadian sailor's folk song plays. Initially the viewer can hear both the sounds of the tarpaulin flapping in the wind and the folk song but eventually the wind is silenced and only the folk song could be heard. The wind returns nearing the end of the song. After the song ends all that could be heard is the tarpaulin being pummelled by the wind, then only the sound of the wind, then the sound of the tarpaulin in the wind again until the end of the segment.

In the hurricane season, July is the month where you “stand by” according to the mariner's rhyme and prepare for whatever may come. Placing the tarpaulin segment in this section of the film is significant as it is saying to the viewer that tarpaulins have to be on standby as part of the preparation process. The folk song used is called “Yard O Yard O” and was sung and recorded in 1962 by a Grenadian sailor called Charlie Bristol. Since July is at the opening of the hurricane season and when safety procedures are supposed to be set in motion, this song is significant as it was originally used to launch boats off to sea (“Saraca” 19) in the same way preparations for the hurricane season are being launched. The song was also sung in a play which was usually performed at wakes (“Saraca” 19). It is as if the artist is warning us to prepare for the worst.

This seems appropriate as every year during the hurricane season, Caribbean citizens fear the worst and this fear has now become a way of life.

The use of the blue tarpaulin in the film is significant as it symbolises refuge and repair (“Alberta Whittle: Between a Whisper” 03:20-04:07). The sound it makes in the wind is similar to the wildly erratic beating of a drum and at times it seems as if it is close to being shredded.

Alternating the sound of the wind and the sound of the tarpaulin flapping in the wind seems to illustrate how ineffective our defenses are against a hurricane. Tarpaulins are used universally after a disaster has occurred as a means of improvised shelter and as a temporary solution when a home is in the process of being rebuilt or repaired after a hurricane has passed. In today’s reality, the frequency and number of hurricanes are greater therefore the season is longer. Consequently, it seems like some Caribbean countries are always in a state of rebuilding as the hurricanes follow each other too quickly for the work to be completed (“Artist Interview” 09:55-10:21).

from the forest (to the concrete) to the forest

This film is relatively short, only ten minutes long, and very fast-paced. It uses footage from during a storm, as well as what looks like the aftereffects of a hurricane after it has passed over a Caribbean island. There are two segments in the film which uses the sounds of debris crashing as if from a construction site, as well as the sound of creaking as if a large structure is about to collapse. In the first segment (from 03:19 to 04:23), the images shown seem to be of some type of coral growing and developing while the destruction and creaking sounds are heard in the background. In the second segment (from 09:12 to 09:35), similar sounds are heard as aerial images are shown panning over a community of wooden houses which have been completely

destroyed (Figure 9). The aerial shot makes it look unreal - like an architectural model which has been demolished.



Figure 9: Still from *from the forest (to the concrete) to the forest*, 09:26. Source: the artist

In the first segment with the growing coral, it seems as if life is continuing as normal in spite of the destruction happening in other parts of the world. The accompanying sounds of destruction reinforces the perception that there are people who are oblivious and insensitive to catastrophes happening elsewhere. In some countries life continues as normal since they are not directly affected by climate change and are completely unaware of its impact on others. In the second segment, the destruction is clear and evident and correlates with the sounds being heard. The sounds augment the effect of the flattened houses and instill some fear and concern in the viewer. There is an awareness of the trauma caused by hurricanes as well as a sense of despair as, sometimes no matter how much preparation is done and disaster recovery methods are put in place, the reality of the situation when a hurricane actually hits is heart rending and nothing

anyone can really prepare for emotionally. The use of sounds together with actual footage of the aftermath of the hurricane is effective in eliciting empathy which can motivate viewers to act.

Conclusion

This study aimed to examine how artists in the Anglophone Caribbean use their practice to turn facts about climate change into feelings, in an effort to motivate the public to act. Based on an analysis of artwork from a number of artists from the target region, this paper argues that these artists are giving a voice to the facts surrounding climate change by using the formal elements of art to evoke feelings of regret, empathy, sorrow, fear, despair, anxiety and a sense of urgency which can motivate viewers to take action.

It is imperative that more people become aware of the impact of the climate crisis and empathise with the communities most affected. It is also important that people around the world are aware of countries like those in the Caribbean which are experiencing the effects of rising sea levels, loss of marine life and increasing number and frequency of hurricanes, and how they are being impacted by it. In addition, it is also key to examine work done by artists in this region as they can uniquely depict the physical and social implications since they live or have roots here.

Scientists need help to get the message across to the general public. This is so that people can appreciate the impact of climate change and be motivated to make decisions which can alleviate the situation. By analysing the work of artists in the Anglophone Caribbean, this study demonstrates the unique ways the formal elements of art have been used to give a voice to climate facts and elicit emotion from the viewer. It is important to analyse and explore climate change work in this context, so that more people will feel an emotional connection to the work, and by extension to the climate crisis, and be moved to take appropriate action.

There are only a few artists in the Anglophone Caribbean whose work deals with the subject, and most address it alongside other themes. It was therefore difficult to select artists for this study

due to the small number in the target area who are addressing the subject of climate change. While the study clearly demonstrates how the selected artists are using the formal elements of art to relate to viewers emotionally, it raises the question of why so few artists in the Anglophone Caribbean are creating work on the subject. Also, additional research could be done to explore the efficacy of different types of artworks in eliciting emotional responses from individuals.

This study adds to the paucity of work available that addresses how Caribbean artists deal with climate change. It also adds to the research available on Anglophone Caribbean artists who create work about climate change, as well as to research on Anglophone Caribbean artists in general.

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