

Thank you to Jan for inviting me to speak.

Welcome to Arts House -I am Creative Producer here, but the invitation to speak came to me in my role as director of TippingPoint Australia, whose purpose is to energise the cultural response to climate change.

What fascinating films...and how great to see the different ways that the footage was used – the many different meanings that were created through the imagination, skill, rigour and curiosity of the artists. Not dissimilar behaviours to the animals that were filmed.

I agree with Freya that what is critical now for any impactful response to the catastrophic climate change that is becoming more evident with everyday, needs to be rooted in our physical and emotional understanding of ourselves as social animals as much if not more than the green economic proposition that we can keep doing what we do, but doing it greener or the scientific data collection, modeling and projections that can give license to the adaptors to persuade us that we can manage this disaster.

Art has always been the way the human species have created shared meaning- and understanding of what it is to be human, through the telling of stories, in many different forms-visual art, writing, films, music or theatre. We need meaning now more than ever before, not only to strengthen our moral imperative to take action, but also through the process of creating meaning to understand ourselves as animals better. And possibly avert catastrophe for our species and the environmental biodiversity in which we are currently such a malignant force.

Art can be cautionary or inspirational, warnings or beacons. An ochre painting of a tall ship dated to the 19th century at the Djulirri rock shelter in Arnhem Land is not only decorative, but a clear example of what to look out for. The French caves are dominated by images of human predators and prey, from bears and lions to stags, horses and aurochs. Coal miners once hammered rock with twittering canaries living beside them, their changing song a warning alarm for a dangerous gas leak. These living sensors kept us safe. [‘Singing Sentinels’](#) by London-based architect Liam Young explores a future scenario where bio-engineered birds once again monitor the air for us. Eighty birds have been released into the [Mediamatic Gallery](#) in Amsterdam as an

ecological warning system, living in the space and providing audible feedback on the state of the atmosphere. Across the course of the exhibition Liam performed the climate change acceleration piece '[Silent Spring](#)'. As a 'pollution DJ', he flooded the gallery with CO2, altering the air mixture to replicate the predicted atmospheric changes of the next 100 years. We hear the canary song subtly shift, their rhythm change and eventually silence, an elegy for a changing planet.

Fear and grief are part of the human condition. And so too is the need to be hopeful, to imagine a future in order to move towards it.

TippingPoint Australia facilitates spaces and processes for creative conversations and interventions that support an environmentally sustainable future. For me the creation of a space for meaningful conversation requires all the skills and sensibility of art making. Bringing together artists, scientists, philosophers, economists, engineers to stand on common ground, under the same sky, feels like a critical step to healing the fracture. Understanding the value of dialogue, growing our capacity to listen to others and to ourselves, to rehearse our thoughts, change our positions, argue our points and cry in public is critical to developing empathy and creating the conditions for hope. For relearning our capacity to be social animals, to co-operate, corroborate and collaborate.

Home Art is a TippingPoint Australia project co-produced with the City of Melbourne Arts and Participation team. Currently eight artists are working with eight households in North Melbourne to create an artwork ..a dance, a song, a speech, a poem, a story performed by the householders in their own homes to a small audience of friends and neighbours. Home Art is a low impact art project, the creative team travel by bike and public transport whenever possible, there is no purchasing or creation of new sets as they use their house as the set, their own clothes as costumes. Audience travel is the biggest cause of carbon emission in the creative process so Home Art was an instrumental response to that issue, by localising production and minimizing the production aspects, the work is simple in form and rich in relationships. The householders open their doors to their neighbours, to strangers. The artists' role shifts from producers to facilitators, the audience are guests, the performers hosts. We all trust each other. (play short film from Home Art 3 start 30 secs in. turn down sound after a minute... runs for 3 mins

http://homeartproject.org/?page_id=27)

I'd like to conclude by briefly mentioning a project that is happening next week at Arts House— its called Going Nowhere and its an exploration of what international exchange might look like without anyone getting on a plane. Four Australian artists are collaborating with international peers in the creation of a work than can be performed in either place, without either of the artists having to be there...again issues of trust and co-operation emerge. The project necessitates a shift in the ownership of intellectual property to co-authorship, and away from the status of the international artist to the complicity and capacity of the audience to engage with the surrogate, to reimagine authenticity. Sarah Rodigari is one of the Australia artists and she is Sydney based. As a strategy to reduce her footprint (as an Australian it is likely to be 4 times the average of about 2.7 global hectares annually) she has decided her stand in for the week end's activities will be a goat with 1/10th of the footprint of a dairy cow.

The thought of spending next week end with 3 artists and a goat talking about the future already fills me with happiness.

Angharad Wynne-Jones

November 2012