

WEATHER REPORT:

ART AND CLIMATE CHANGE

CURATED BY LUCY R. LIPPARD

Weather Report: Expecting the Unexpected

—Lucy R. Lippard

*"People in Greenhouses Shouldn't Tell Lies."*¹

I heard somewhere that weather is what you get, and climate is what you expect. In the last few years, it has become abundantly clear that we no longer know what to expect from the climate; in fact—had we only noticed—we haven't been getting the expected for decades. As a firm believer in the ecological truism that everything is connected, I can't imagine an issue more all encompassing—or more challenging. Climate change, following the Gaia hypothesis, touches upon every aspect of life as we know it, even when we don't know it's happening. One small change in the climate triggers microcosmic to macrocosmic chain reactions. Ecosystems, with their infinite sensitivity to change, "describe climate zones by where they grow."² Helen and Newton Harrison's *The Mountain in the Greenhouse*—a video of wildflowers being chased up a mountain by warming temperatures—is both metaphorical and emblematic. When the flowers and their dependents reach the top, where will they go?³

The very fact of global warming offers startling insights into life on this planet. The existing literature makes it clear that the more research is done, the more

the uncertainties increase, but what is rarely disputed is the fact that humans are exacerbating, if not inducing, climate change. It is also possible that even if we do the right thing, we may not be able to turn it around. "The climate we perceive is a metaphor for the sum of weather conditions over a chosen span of time and space," writes Charles Wohlforth.⁴

Having spent a year or more devouring information on global warming,⁵ I looked forward to showing off my newfound knowledge, but my task here is not to summarize the science (which Andrew Revkin does with flair) but to cover all too briefly the strategies chosen by the 51 artists in this show, and to imply what that says about the interactions between art, activism, and science (which Stephanie Smith does so well).⁶

One of the principles of this exhibition, agreed upon from the beginning with EcoArts and BMoCA, was to give artists access to scientists working in the fields that they hoped to address. This process was at once fruitful and delicate. (Scientists are determined to remain politically neutral in order to retain their objectivity; artists chafe at constrictions.) Another goal was to put together a

show that was beautiful, accessible, and alarming, but not alarmist. Yet once we have heard the cries of the pika (a small, cute, alpine animal in line to be one of the next species to reach extinction due to climate change, joining the already-lost Golden Toad, Staghorn Coral, and others), as broadcast by Brian Collier in *The Pika Alarm*, we have no choice but to empathize directly with the fate of "Nature," and remember that we too are part of it.

Working with a small museum, and given my own preoccupation with activist and public arts, there were certain choices that had to be made. We knew we could not possibly cover all the bases suggested by climate change. How didactic did we want to be? How aesthetic? How focused? How ambiguous? An informative photography show on the visible effects of global warming would not be hard to put together.⁷ A more aesthetically oriented show would incorporate painting and sculpture.⁸ I decided to focus on conceptual and site-specific work that seemed better able to cope with the vast amount of information available. We had a large pool of artists to choose from, given resources like Colorado's own EcoArts, the similarly named artists' internetwork, eco-art, the Green Museum, and ecoartspace.⁹

The artists I finally asked to participate (29 women, 12 men, 10 collaborations) had already addressed the subject of climate change or were wholly involved in environmental issues and had made related work. They are important because they reach out to their audiences, they are willing to work in the world, to make art in a global arena, and because they are knowledgeable or curious enough to enter into dialogues with scientists and/or community. It has been exciting to watch them wrestle with this gigantic problem, trying to find ways to follow the debates and communicate visually what we can barely comprehend, even as it is oversimplified in the mass media. Each artist has been moved by a different aspect of the coming changes, ranging from renewable energy sources, sustainable building, food production, habitat restoration, suburban sprawl, governmental responsibility, wildlife migration, water shortages, desertification, and biological mutation, to the economic ramifications of our wasteful society,

and on and on. There is no part of human life that will not be touched by climate change over the next millennium—should we last that long.

As Elizabeth Kolbert observes in her book *Field Notes from a Catastrophe*, which has been called "the *Silent Spring* of our time,"¹⁰ the effects of global warming are most visible in sparsely populated areas where "nature" herself is most visible. Boulder, as a city in an arid state with ready access to mountains and grasslands and an impressive record of open space and conservation initiatives, is just the right location for this event. Wildlife migration, growing patterns, rising temperatures, and melting glaciers are all more obvious here than in urban areas that will be equally affected. Yet while Boulder is among the relatively few towns in the United States to have signed a resolution to meet the standards of the Kyoto Protocol and is a hotbed of national and academic climate change institutions (many of which have collaborated with us), the city is far less accustomed to issue-oriented public art. *Weather Report* will deluge the populace with artwork outdoors, around town, at the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR), and at the University of Colorado's Norlin Library and ATLAS building.

The days when artists accepted "cultural confinement," simply making objects to be exhibited in designated spaces, are long gone. Public works are the core of this exhibition. (Since I'm writing this in July, I've not yet seen any of them!) Public art is hard to conceive and execute and vulnerable to vilification and vandalism, since broader audiences who come upon these works unaware are not usually accustomed to the vagaries of the contemporary avant-garde. At the same time, the element of surprise can be invaluable when dealing with a subject that is both familiar and unknown. We will be taking a poll in the museum to see what the most popular works are, how effective and/or moving people find them, and which works are most energizing toward action and change.

In a recent issue of *The Nation* devoted to "the climate crisis," Lawrence Wechsler's article on "artistic responses to global warming" appeared 10th of 10 articles. It is not unusual for art to come in last where "real world" issues are

involved. Wechsler pretty much dismisses artists who address the issue “head-on, often in the form of exhibitions with massive science-fair-like wall postings, lots and lots of words, all quite earnest though in the end not terribly satisfying as art” or as agitprop.¹¹ I do not agree with this oversimplification and have tried to put together a show so varied that it cannot be dismissed as merely art, merely science, or merely agitprop.

There is no reason to exaggerate the elusive power of art. Artists cannot change the world ... alone. But when they make a concerted effort, they collaborate with life itself. Working with and between other disciplines and audiences, and given the chance to be seriously considered outside the rather narrow world of art, they can offer visual jolts and subtle nudges to conventional knowledge. The popular image of artists as renegades frees them to imagine situations and outcomes beyond the boxes. At best they can make the hot breath of climate change both vivid and immediate to this visually oriented society, and they can inform us in the process. They can also deconstruct the ways we are manipulated by the powers that be and help open our eyes to what we must do to resist and survive.

Newton Harrison and Helen Mayer Harrison are North American pioneers of what is now called ecological or “eco” art, having worked since the 1970s with scientists to envision alternative systems for entire countries, watersheds—even continents.¹² As they unearth the stories buried in every map, they construct new scenarios with which to imagine a different future. Patricia Johanson’s “buildings that grow and change,” forming alliances with living systems in order to “subsume the hubris of ego and waste,” were conceived in the 1960s, when she was commissioned by *House and Garden* to design a garden. Although unpublished, this engendered some 150 sketches and set her on a lifelong engagement with public art, energy conservation, and sustainability. Working around the world, she has blurred the boundaries between the habitats, patterns, and processes that “enmesh human creation within the larger patterns and purposes of the natural world.”¹³

Another early contributor to art about global warming was Agnes Denes, whose many years of visionary environmental projects and propositions are devoted to creative problem-solving. Her 1980 *Pascal’s Perfect Probability Pyramid & the People Paradox—The Predicament (PPPPPPP)* depicts more than 16,000 tiny people forming the structure of a pyramid—a metaphor for interdependence, or a “society of visual mathematics.” Her *Tree Mountain, A Living Time Capsule* reclaimed a 29 meter-high, human-made mountain in Finland, where 11,000 trees were planted by as many people as a national commitment to the 1992 Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit.

A prescient urban approach to climate change was *Rapid: Post Petroleum Gas Stations—Launching a Brand*, a 1999 indoor/outdoor show anticipating alternative fuel stations, at Nikolai Fine Arts in New York, which happened to be next to an Exxon station. Rapid Response (two artists, two environmental activists) placed a light box sign reading “GLOBAL WARMING,” next to and approximating the gas station’s signage; the logo style of British Petroleum (now, significantly, “Beyond Petroleum”) was appropriated for a sign reading “GREENHOUSE EFFECT.” Indoors, minimalist black “pumps” bore detailed information on renewable energy. Above all, Rapid Response tackled practical issues by designing in detail a suspended fuel tank and a Rapid Fuel Station.¹⁴

Virtually none of us is innocent of overproducing the carbon emissions generated by cars, planes, buildings, and appliances. Taking responsibility for our personal behavior is the theme of Sherry Wiggins’ interactive *Carbon Portraits*—profiles of local citizens with varying lifestyles and income levels. The profiles are exhibited in public spaces, where viewers can identify, or not, and apply these analytical tools to their own lives ... or not.¹⁵ In several instances, the artists have attempted to inform the public about how to do the right thing. *Weather Report*’s wide range of temporary works in public spaces include Lynne Hull’s *Cooler Choice* stickers, highlighting environmentally friendly choices for consumers. Hull is best known for her “trans-species art,” in which she provides amenities for creatures whose

habitats are disappearing. Included in the exhibit are a series of “wildlife warning” signs, showing semi-erased animals threatened by lack of water and global warming.

Isabella Gonzales’s *2¢ Worth ... Your Participation Is Requested* solicits public action about the thinning of the ozone layer (roughly the thickness of two pennies). Her penny jars (one of which is set up in a local credit union), are nostalgic reminders of some of our childhoods, now eliciting public contemplation about the fragility of the future. The next generations are also the concern of Mierle Laderman Ukeles, famous for her decades of “maintenance art” and work on the production and management of urban solid waste. She will distribute a questionnaire for children ages 7 and up, the drawn or written answers to which will be exhibited in public places. Buster Simpson’s *Stretched Shirts*—a photographic scroll documenting a series of “agitprops” about global warming, was executed with a group of high school students, scientists, and artists for a week in Portland, Oregon in 2002. With the light shining through them, the connected white shirts evoke flags or clean laundry (integrity)—vulnerable stand-ins for human resistance and collective effort—all a “stretch” in our complacent society. Simpson is also working on a master plan for the coming Winter Olympics in Vancouver that will incorporate climate change awareness.

One lesson easily taken from this work is the importance of specificity and place-based research, both for scientific data and outreaching art. Eve Andrée Laramée, who has been making videos and installations on the environmental future of the West, is designing a newspaper insert/leaflet to provide scientific information on the changing perceptions of desertification and its relevance to the Boulder area.¹⁶ Bill Gilbert, working with biologist Bruce Milne and artist Erica Osborne, proposes *Bough*—a fractal-determined design for Boulder’s mountain/prairie ecotone, utilizing plant species capable of adapting to rising temperatures (in other words, plants that will not fall off the top of the mountain).¹⁷ The biological future is also the subject of Rebecca DiDomenico’s

Intentional Mutations—a shapeshifting menagerie, guided by the artist’s scientific collaborators, of creatures that could evolve as wildlife gradually adapts to changing climates. Nature, like artists, she points out, will experiment with evolutionary possibilities, offering “a giant testing ground” for the success and failure of species.

Marguerite Kahr’s *Homeland Insecurity* is a set of potted industrial hemp plants (made of fabric) embedded with subliminal messages that convey factual data about this beneficial crop, countering the bad rep of its cannabis cousin, which has retarded hemp’s environmental and economic potential.¹⁸ Janet Koenig and Greg Sholette cite statistics about the 750 million personal computers in use around the world at this very minute. Their plastic-wrapped computer discards, which, improperly recycled, contribute carbons and hazardous chemicals to global warming and to global ill health, are made into monumental columns, doubling as kiosks for posters bearing information on the subject.

The first initiative of the global warming-focused arts organization Precipice Alliance was Mary Ellen Carroll’s *indestructible language* (2006)—a 900-foot-long neon text installation across the facade of an old factory building in Jersey City, visible from the Newark Airport: “It is green thinks nature even in the dark.” I read this as a hopeful message about nature’s capacity for renewal even as we remain stubbornly in the dark about what we must do to maintain the green. Precipice Alliance’s cofounder, photographer Joel Sternfeld, contributes to *Weather Report* a group of snapshot-portraits of the participants in the 11th United Nations conference on climate change, in Montreal in 2005. He lets us see the human faces and hear the words at a watershed moment—when the world ignored the United States’ determination to undermine the Kyoto Protocol and agreed to go forward and seek solutions.¹⁹

Several of the public works in *Weather Report* are performance-related. In the 2006 4th of July parade in the small town of Whitefield, Maine, activist artist Natasha Mayers and friends spoofed life in a transformed northern clime (skiing in a

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bathing suit, SPF 3000, pond hockey, "Snow Plow Drivers for the Kyoto Protocol," L.L.Bean hot-weather fashions carved out of old parkas, and so forth), hilariously bringing the issues of global warming into a local context. Futurefarmers (Amy Franceschini and Michael Swaine), collaborating with microbiologist Jonathan Meuser and Boulder's Masala community, will present an outdoor theatre piece, a kind of fairy tale about a gardener, a community planner, and a scientist who escape to Greenland and set about to solve the world's problems. Bobbe Besold is organizing the *Thirteenth Tipping Point*, a Day of the Dead costumed procession/performance community event to take place on October 29th, dramatically presenting "death and transformation, denial and action".

Basia Irland (who was raised in Boulder) has developed another chapter in her ongoing *A Gathering of Waters* (also executed along the Rio Grande, in Canada and England).²⁰ This broadly collaborative project connects people along 47 miles of Boulder Creek, drawing attention to the diminished Arapaho Glacier, the source of Boulder's water, which has dropped over 100 feet since 1960. The intermountain West's concern with water is also the subject of Chrissie Orr's vast, lyrical *Earth Drawing*, a map of the shifting watershed, based on climate change modeling from Hydrosphere. "Being in the community, not in a studio, is activism in and of itself," says Orr, who teaches Land Art and Community Activism at Santa Fe's Ecovercity.²¹ Jane McMahan, working with glaciologist Tad Pfieffer (a photographer himself), gives form to Boulder's water supply with a block of glacial ice. A "kind of altar," placed near Boulder Creek, it is paradoxically kept "on life support" by energy from solar panels, even as the sun melts the glacier. Israeli artist Shai Zakai documents her projects based on lessons learned from ancient times about adaptation and mitigation (rainwater stored in pebble fields, a technique also used by the Pueblo peoples of the Southwest), a "library" of seeds, and erosion through an exploration of roots, actual and mythical.

While potential lack of water is the subject of several works, Mary Miss (thinking of the water marks on New Orleans buildings after Hurricane

Katrina) asks passersby to imagine Boulder's next major flood. Working with Denver hydrologist Steve Blake, she indicates the potential highwater marks of a 100-year flood on buildings and trees around town with large blue dots—"prompts" or "acupuncture" with which to prick the viewers' consciousness as they "connect the dots," and look at our "failure to combine smart water management with smart land use," as Peter Gleick has noted. "We have economic incentives and subsidies that lead people to make bad decisions about placing themselves in harm's way, and even in the absence of climate change we could reduce our flood damage and flood risk and flood deaths enormously by changing the way we build things ... if we were smarter we would rethink these decisions."²²

Extreme weather events like floods and storms are of course a major source of anxiety. It has been suggested that hurricanes can be regarded as nature's way of driving human infrastructure away from the coastlines to preserve essential ecologies,²³ a possibility illuminated by the Center for Land Use Interpretation's photographs of a barrier island on the Gulf Coast, where vacation homes on the devastated beach have been surreally raised on higher and higher stilts, representing humans' stubborn denials of disaster as well as "the outer limits of habitability on the nation's disintegrating margins." CLUI's deadpan approach to dramatic issues reflects the public indifference to such obvious threats.²⁴

For most of us, global warming remains an abstraction that has not yet entered our own lived experiences, despite the innumerable concrete effects already changing our lives offstage. Though we no longer see photography as "truth," it still conveys first-hand experience like no other medium, and has proved effective in bringing distant places closer to oblivious audiences. When Subhankar Banerjee's striking images of the Arctic National Wildlife Reserve (ANWR) were shown at the Smithsonian during Congressional debates on drilling in the refuge, the show was kicked downstairs and its explanatory captions were censored.²⁵ Decontextualized, even the most beautiful pictures can lose their teeth. ANWR, and the Arctic in general, have been ominously heralded as America's "Last

Frontier." In Banerjee's expressive work, vehicle tracks across the vast tundra become as menacing as a terrorist alert; a whaler's wooden coffin washed out of a beach bank, the bones of humans, the bones of caribou starved of their usual diets, are contrasted with the sustainable hunting of Gwich'in people, who have lived interdependently with Arctic wildlife for millennia.

Like Banerjee's thousands of caribou streaming across their homeland, Chris Jordan drives home his point through mind-boggling multiplicity. His digital photograph of Alaska's immense Mt. Denali is made up of the word "denial" and 24,000 logos representing six weeks of sales of the GMC Yukon Denali SUV; his eight million toothpicks match the number of trees harvested each month to make mail order catalogues; 11,000 jet trails represent eight hours' worth of commercial flights in the United States. Steve Deo (Creek/Euchee) has developed a similar strategy for his social sculptures (such as a globe made up of thousands of plastic toy soldiers). His four life-size bare trees (one of which is appropriately shown in the university's library)—*tree of knowledge*, *tree of life*, *heartwood*, and *tree of origin*—are made from thousands of pages of encyclopedias, demonstrating that for all our knowledge, we are still destroying our most precious resources. Without the trees that recycle carbon detritus (and sometimes, perversely, emit it), we cannot survive.²⁶

In the Arctic, which has become the canary in the coal mine for global warming, indigenous knowledge is finally being tapped. As one Athabascan elder put it, "You young people, the weather's not going to be at the right place at the right time." Richard Glenn, an Inupiat whaler and ice scientist, mused that scientists know "a collection of facts about ice; Eskimos know ice itself."²⁷ On our communal behalf, several artists and groups have, like Banerjee, experienced the Arctic's lessons first-hand. British photographer David Buckland founded Cape Farewell in 2001 to bring artists, scientists, and educators together in a film, an exhibition, a book, and a series of voyages in a century-old schooner to an Arctic island, where artists from various fields, including Rachel Whiteread and Anthony Gormley, have made pieces on site.²⁸

Lillian Ball's *66 Degrees, 32 Minutes, 50 Years* is the projected history of an ice cap from 1990 to 2040, sparked by an invitation to carve ice in Lapland, above the Arctic Circle, where tree lines are rising and the reindeer herds of the indigenous Sami are starving for lack of lichen. A bowl of melted ice from the site is colored by a map projection from above. Inigo Mangano-Ovalle's *Iceberg (r11i01)*—a 25-foot aluminum skeleton, like the ghost of a giant creature—was constructed from concrete scientific data by scanning with radar and sonar an existing iceberg drifting in the Labrador Sea.

Global warming's effect on the Antarctic is a bit more subtle, not yet poised as clearly on the edge of the abyss as the Arctic. The otherworldly vistas of the southern polar regions lend themselves to fantasy. French artist Pierre Huyghe's *A Journey That Wasn't*—a 2005 performance at New York's Wollman Ice Rink (standing in for Antarctica)—took as its premise a voyage to the receding Antarctic ice shelf in search of newly revealed islands and a mythical white animal, finally encountered as "a white shadow."²⁹ Joan Myers began photographing in Antarctica in 2001 and later spent four months there—her acutely trained eye for landscape challenged by a place that looks like no other, which most of us will never see, where change is surfacing from a deep burial.³⁰ Xavier Cortada created a series of extensive installations on his Antarctic visit, focusing on the crucial element of time. The Florida native cast an ice replica of a Mangrove seedling that is very slowly making its way over 150,000 miles to the coastline. In contrast, he marked the mere 50-year history of human presence at the South Pole with chronological flags stretching across the frozen land.

Several of these artists have been working for years with scientists, and their task is to translate their considerable accumulated knowledge into something the rest of us can comprehend. Judit Hersko's *Seven Days of Dissolution*, part of a larger piece called *Shifting Baselines*, is "an analogy for social processes that include gradual shifts to points of reference previously unacceptable." In seven glowing units, it follows, in flashes, the disintegration of a heart and lungs made from shell suspended in water, connected to a tank of "carbon dioxide."

Based on research in collaboration with oceanographer Victoria Fabry, Hersko chronicles the acidifying effect of increasing carbon dioxide emissions on the oceans, which could eventually destroy much marine life. Like the voyage of Cortada's mangrove, these changes are so slow and almost imperceptible that they go unnoticed or are accepted as the natural order until illuminated by science and art.

Andrea Polli makes audio/visual art that radiates from the vortex of art and science into other fields through interactive digital media. Her *N.* (with Joe Gilmore) is a "sonification" of Arctic weather data from the North Pole, 2003 to 2006, modeled by meteorologist Dr. Patrick Market, resulting in a circular projection that makes distance visible. Like much of her work, such as *Airlight* (referring to a visible white smog caused by light on fine airborne dust particles), it offers new readings of storms and climate through sound.³¹

"What the world needs is a good housekeeper," says Aviva Rahmani, a feminist and eco-artist based on a Maine island. As part of her long-term project, *The Cities and Oceans of If*, Rahmani has generated conversations and digital prints with Dr. Jim White of the Institute of Arctic and Alpine Research, "to clarify the complex relationships between natural resources and built infrastructures" that can be directly correlated with global warming. As they hone in on restoration of degraded environments through "trigger points" in the landscape, they explore ways for artists and scientists to work together internationally. Ellen Levy's signature tall panels, painted over digital imagery (in one case a 1971 *Whole Earth Catalogue*), offer vertiginous perspectives on tightly ordered images and information. Her sources are an emblematic vortex of pragmatism and imagination—plans from the US Patent and Trademark Office, in this case those dealing with aspects of global warming—with a subtext about corporate attempts to "own" existing life forms.³²

Buildings account for over one-third of our energy use,³³ and sprawl—the ubiquitous phenomenon of subdivisions gobbling up the landscape—destroys

agricultural land and open space, wasting precious resources with its labyrinth of roads and infrastructure. Ruth Wallen's *Preserving Paradise* explores through a set of postcards the construction of a California suburb, raising issues of tourism, placelessness, and the transmission of information in visual fragments. Kim Abeles has focused for decades on the urban environmental experience. Making clear where the buck has stopped in the industrial history leading up to pollution and climate change, her 1992 *Presidential Commemorative Smog Plates* (portraits of and quotations from US presidents from McKinley to Bush) are etched by exposure to particulate matter in the air of Los Angeles.

Slovenian artist Marjetica Potrč's spontaneous drawings of inventive solutions to aspects of climate change in specific cities (Pittsburgh, Boulder) are a continuation of her work in beleaguered urban communities around the world (Caracas, Bologna, Belfast, and Ljubljana, among others). As she discovers prototypes of innovative products to improve the lives of the resourceful poor, she considers herself a "storyteller who builds stories with architectural material."³⁴

As certain interest groups push for ethanol and hydrogen fuels, despite the fact that they will consume more land and fuel in their construction than renewable sources like wind, solar, and tidal energy, artists explore alternative materials. Kristine Smock's wild "goddess of energy" demands attention as she literally embodies renewable energy sources with her biomass skirt, solar bosom, and windblown hair. Erik Sommerfeld's students at the University of Colorado construct handsome furniture on a sustainable, biological model in his "Symbiotic Design" class. Gayle Crites' delicate drawings commemorate the scientific search for bio-fuel from algae (as well as the beleaguered polar bear's loss of winter sea ice and an abstract vision of the Kyoto Protocol). Demonstrating wind power in aesthetic form are both Patrick Marold's monumental *Windmill Project* in Vail, Colorado, which converts wind into light, and *Coal Warm Memorial*—an installation at NCAR by Airworks (Melanie Walker and George Peters), representing the desire for renewable energy with a tunnel of sound and lights, anchored by rocks ("coal").

Learning Site is one of the now ubiquitous and often youthful collectives working on social and ecological issues across national and continental boundaries. Here they represent the tip of the iceberg of what is being done in Europe and elsewhere about the "Greenhouse Effect." Members Cecilia Wendt and Rikke Luther's "Learning Posters" illustrate projects they have constructed in Europe. In Boulder they are distributing images of a solar module for a greenhouse that is a new addition to a floating house and island they built in 2000 in Copenhagen—hoping to trigger a discussion on "how political consensus is constructed."

Humor and satire are major components of much contemporary activist art. Canadian artist Iain Baxter has been looking at the environmental ramifications of business as usual for over forty years, initially as the N.E. Thing Co. His *Killer Still Life #5* (a shelf full of household pesticides) and *Animal Preserve #8* (a medicine cabinet of stuffed animals in jars) make their points with humor rather than information overkill.³⁵ Beverly Naidus's digital prints, *Brought to You by "The Men Who See Beyond the Future,"* satirize corporate advertising with the subversive art practice of "culture jamming," at which she is a longtime expert.

And finally, The Yes Men, masters of satirical performance, have infiltrated some of the globe's most prestigious business/scientific meetings, offering reasonable solutions for the world's problems that seem preposterous only because of the lunatic context in which nations and businesses operate. For instance, as "representatives of Halliburton" at a corporate retreat, they promoted the "Survivaball" suit as a necessary (if expensive, at \$100 million) protection against extreme global warming. Their *Ice Age* video takes George W. Bush over the thin ice he has asked for by denying climate change, and most recently, posing as representatives of Exxon at Canada's largest oil conference, The Yes Men modestly proposed the use of victims of climate change as the source for a new alternative fuel to be called Vivoleum.³⁶

What next? Will the children of Boulder and beyond take heed from Ukeles' messages? Will Gonzales's pennies offset the US government's reluctance to curb emissions? Will Denes's forests be reduced to Jordan's toothpicks, flooding the planet with carbon as oceans rise and deserts grow? Will the Harrisons' wildflowers find a new home? Will nature heal herself or drag us along a different path? As the global warnings proliferate, we are seeing only the tips of the melting icebergs. But at least we are finally seeing them, and it is the artist's job to teach us how to see.

Lucy R. Lippard is a writer, activist, and author of twenty books on contemporary art and cultural criticism. She has curated over 50 exhibitions. The most recent books are The Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in a Multicentered Society and On the Beaten Track: Tourism, Art and Place. She lives off the grid in Galisteo, New Mexico.