



CULTURE4CLIMATE

CULTURE4CLIMATE: C4C COFFEE TALKS

What is the role of culture in times of climate crisis, especially in the Baltic Sea region? Linked to a common sea, the states of the whole region are equally effected of climate change. We believe that by creating new narratives and by reaching out to people on an emotional level, arts and culture have the power to not only help us understand, but also to make the connections beyond borders and national or political limits.

CULTURE4CLIMATE (C4C) offers a collaborative forum where such sharing can be made possible, and where experiences across disciplines and borders can focus on action, not only on intentions. **In addition to this, we are running a series of short interviews: The C4C Coffee Talks.** In this format, we are talking to our project partners and various stakeholders from the cultural and political sector of the Baltic Sea Region about their ideas and perspectives on arts and culture in climate change. In the following pages, you find excerpts from two recent interviews with **Circus Artist Lena Kruit** and **Jonas Færgeman of the Baltic Sea Youth Platform**.

We conducted those interviews in preparation for the Break Up Session we will be holding during the **29th BSSSC Annual Conference on October 8 from 10:00–12:00 CET** about **the Power of Culture to tackle Climate Change**. The online-format will offer an open discussion and participatory session-process including good practice examples. Kruit and Færgeman will also be part of the discussion panel which is moderated by Marcus Hagemann (ARS BALTICA) and Oleg Koefoed (Growing Pathways).

C4C Coffee Talk, October 4, 2021

Guest: Lena Kruit, Circus Artist

(Excerpts)

How do you connect people to the culture for climate / culture for sustainability topic via circus arts?

We have two ways of supporting this message. One is in our workshops and courses. We use a lot of old and recycled plastic, like toilet paper bags. We start to juggle with them and meanwhile talk about what is bad about plastic waste and how we can reduce it. We also have some other tricks like juggling a toothbrush – you can circle it around your finger. Everyone is very impressed with it and practices it at home! We also juggle with vegetables and talk about waste of food. And on stage: With a partner, I developed a show about plastic in the ocean. The show contains pair acrobatics and also a fish in a net, which is unwrapped in the end and throwing out plastic. It is a very impressive picture and usually, a lot of people come to me after the show and tell me they will start collecting plastic wherever they can.

Does circus art work as an entry door for special topics (like sustainability and climate change)?

Yes! We use the very basic curiosity of movement and circus arts. Most of the people have it inside them, they are interested in circus, like ‘woah, there is someone juggling a lot of things!’ or ‘there are people standing above each other!’. It is a nice way to get in touch with them and show that most of it is not so difficult, you only have to practice. When we got them with this, we get them in touch with all the other competences you can learn within the circus arts and of course, with the sustainability topic.

What do you think in general culture can do in terms of climate change?

For me, culture is use of expressions, so when you make culture on your own, you can transport your own feelings that you have towards a topic, and that’s how you connect it. Culture and climate can belong together, culture can support some climate topics.

If you had a wish, whom or what would you like to call upon help in terms of culture and climate change?

If I could make a wish, it would be that people would understand how important every single person is. It is not about anyone to decide something – everyone is responsible for everything! When everybody starts to understand this, that would be my biggest wish – and that of course people in politics start to understand that it is not about the money, it is about nature.

Lena Kruit from Kiel (D) is an aerial acrobatics performer and teaches circus arts combined with ecology and sustainability topics at Meermanege.

Read more here: <https://meermanege.de>

C4C Coffee Talk, September 30

Guest: Jonas Færgeman, Baltic Youth Platform

(Excerpts)

Why do you think culture can make a difference for climate change?

The most impactful thing that I have seen when it comes to culture directly is that the climate crisis affects people in a very homogenous way, emotionally speaking. Here in the Baltic Sea region, we are hit by the consequences of the climate crisis to a much lesser extent than those closer to the equator. But: I rarely observe anything in the climate dialogue which connects people more than the emotions attached to the climate crisis, whether it is hope, fear, despair or anger. It is an emotional language concentrated around the same issue that makes me able to connect to those people from very different cultures much easier. When we are creating a subculture across our own cultures wherein we can understand the climate crisis together and act upon it, suddenly the so called clash of cultures gets diminished.

Can you share some experiences our your experience in culture and climate change that you think have an actual impact?

The only two cases when I don't have to be entertained is music – it's a passion, I need to do music! – and it's the same thing with climate. Who would I be as a person where I look at where we are going in this world and then not act, and not do something? Just as Greta

Thunberg says: 'I should be in school, I shouldn't have to do this!', I could never look at myself in the mirror and say: 'I didn't do anything, I didn't assist' – It's a sense of duty, and that could be motivating as well.

It is important to acknowledge the immense power of emotions. That is something that art does extremely well. People have a much stronger reaction to something, when that reaction is emotionally based and not simply based on facts and data. The greek philosophers say we ought to value our rationality rather than our emotions, but as David Hume argued; we are simply governed by our emotions much more than our rationality, whether we want to or not. The fight between our ought-to's and want-to's is a fight which culture and arts can soften. The politicians do not act according to their proper emotions, simply put. They act upon selfish emotions such as greed and lust for power, rather than action upon emotions sparked by the climate crisis. We need politicians who are willing to understand their ought-to's and start acting, even if this results in a setback or loss in their career paths. Here, art and culture is a helpful tool for us to express our emotions to the people in power.

If you could call upon help by anyone or anything, what or who would it be?

Accountability – we have seen for many years now report after report and promises after promises when it comes to climate action. For example the Paris agreement – what is the repercussion of not following it? What actually happens if a country says 'nah, we don't want to'? Absolutely nothing! And I know it's a fantasy to say the UN should have the authority to punish countries if they are not following such agreements and it is probably never gonna happen, but that is exactly what we need. Like, we could have an agreement in the Baltic Sea region and check in about it every year. The countries who have problems sticking to it should of course get help, but if a government doesn't follow it just because they don't want to, there will be repercussions.

Jonas Færgeman from Copenhagen (DK) is a member of the Baltic Sea Youth Platform. He has a degree in Business and Philosophy and has worked a lot with climate policies. Currently he is studying Classical Composing in Karlstadt, Sweden.

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