

Royal  
Academy  
of Arts



# Art Detectives



# EARTH

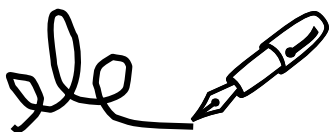
*Art of a changing world*

**6 Burlington Gardens  
3 December 2009 – 31 January 2010**

A guide for younger visitors to the exhibition

[www.royalacademy.org.uk/education/artdetectives](http://www.royalacademy.org.uk/education/artdetectives)

**Hand this in at the Reception desk to see your  
pictures and stories on the website**



You will need a pen/pencil to write and draw

Remember not to touch anything in the exhibition as fingers leave marks!



In this exhibition, you will see work by 35 artists who have all explored the theme of **climate change** in different ways. They are worried about the way that pollution is causing the world's temperature to rise. Some of the artists make us think about the world today, and others focus on the future of the changing world in which we live. **The exhibition is made up of five sections:**

## **Introduction**

Artists in this section have explored key elements that make up the natural world – including the earth, water, air and sky. Lots of the subjects of these works are very familiar to us, but they have been shown in quite unexpected ways!

## **Perceived Reality**

Artists in this section have thought about life on earth as it is now, and imagined how life might be different if climate change is not controlled properly.

## **Artist as Explorer**

This section looks at how artists can help us to better understand climate change, by encouraging us to see things from different points of view. Artists in this section have travelled all over the world and you will see images of very hot and very cold places.

## **Destruction**

This section looks at natural disasters and problems the environment could experience if we do not care for the planet properly. Some artists like to compare the beauty of the natural world with the damage and destruction caused by human beings.

## **Re-Reality**

Works in this section make us take another look at things that we thought were real or familiar. Things are not always as they seem! The artists here want us to think about how our futures might be affected by climate change.

# Introduction



**Find: Spencer Finch, *Sunlight in an Empty Room (Passing Cloud for Emily Dickinson, Amherst, MA, August 28, 2004)* 2004**

The artist made this work to recreate the moment when a cloud passed overhead as he visited the home of an American poet called Emily Dickinson. Do you think he has happy memories of visiting the poet? Why or why not?

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What do you think the cloud is made of and what is holding it together?

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How does this work make you feel when you stand underneath it?

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Write a poem about a time when you visited a close friend or relative. Think about what time of year it was and what the weather was like.

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_



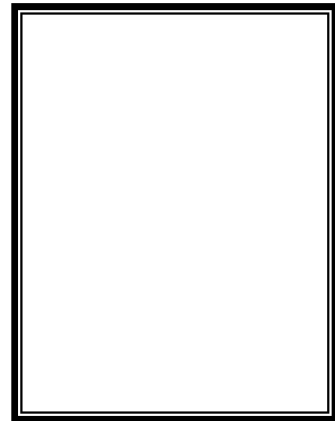
**Find: Antony Gormley RA, *Amazonian Field*, 1992**

Antony Gormley made this work whilst visiting the Amazon Rain Forest, and was helped by the local people he met there. In fact, almost every figure we can see has been made by a different person! How many figures do you think there are here? \_\_\_\_\_

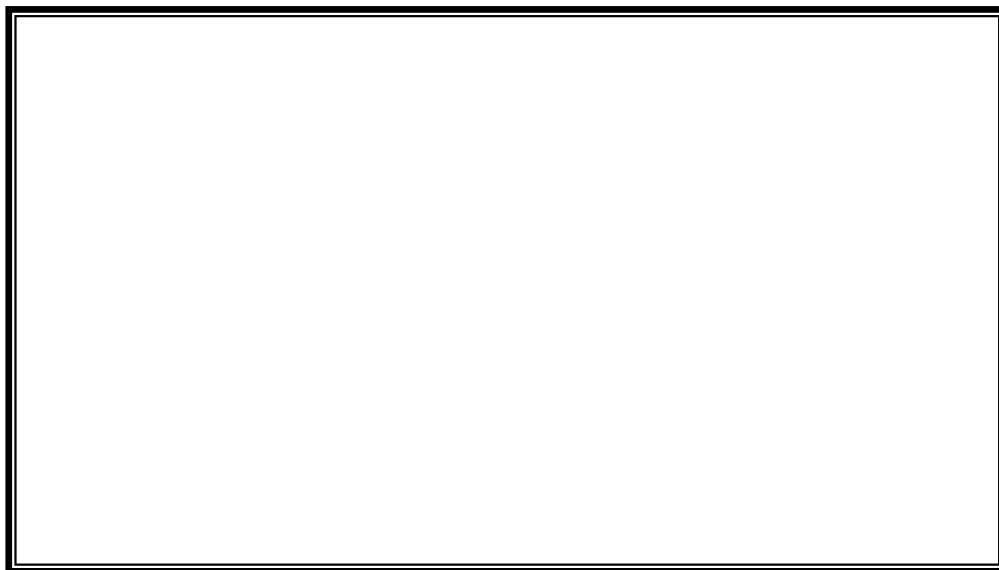
What do you think they are looking at? Are we looking at them, or are they looking at us?

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At first it is hard to tell the figures apart, but the closer you look, the easier it is to see that they are all unique – a bit like human beings. Pick your favourite figure and draw a picture of it.



All of these figures have been made out of terracotta, which means ‘baked earth’ in Italian. It is made from clay which comes directly from the earth. Think about some other natural materials that you could use to make a sculpture – for example soil or sand. Design a sculpture using one of these materials below.





**Find: Ackroyd & Harvey, *Beuys' Acorn*, 2007 onwards**

Ackroyd & Harvey's artwork is inspired by an artist called Joseph Beuys. In 1982, he decided to plant 7,000 trees in a German town to help the environment. Ackroyd & Harvey have collected some of the acorns from these trees, which we can see growing here.

How many saplings (baby trees) can you see?

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The photograph is of an acorn that is beginning to grow into a young sapling. One day, it might even grow into a huge oak tree!

Draw a picture of how you imagine one of these saplings in:

1 month

1 year

100 years

Can you name any other type of trees?

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Do you think there should be more trees in towns and cities? Why or why not?

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# Perceived Reality



**Find: Antti Laitinen, *It's My Island I*, 2007**

Photographs and a video show the island built by the Finnish artist Antti Laitinen. He made the island by dragging over 200 sandbags into the sea, all on his own. As you can see from the video, sometimes he did this in the face of strong waves and harsh winds! Do you think he enjoyed building his own island? Why or why not?

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We can also see his finished island in the photographs. Circle some of the words below that you think might describe how he felt when sitting on his island.

**HAPPY      PROUD      LONELY      TIRED      SAD**  
**CALM      COLD      EXCITED      FRIGHTENED      WARM**

Would you like to live on your own Island? Why or why not?

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Imagine that you are stranded on an island. It is getting dark, and you are forced to build a shelter to sleep in, using things that you find on the island. Sketch a picture of your shelter below.



# Artist as Explorer



**Find: Sophie Calle, *North Pole*, 2009**

Sophie Calle was involved in a project called **Cape Farewell – Art and Climate Change**. She travelled with other artists on a large boat to the High Arctic to explore the effects of climate change. These photos were taken when she buried some of her mother’s jewels on the Northern Glacier. Her mother had always dreamt of travelling to the North Pole, but sadly never managed to visit.

Can you spot the three items that Sophie Calle decided to bury?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you think she did this?

\_\_\_\_\_

She also thought about whether anybody might find the objects in the future, if the glacier melted into the sea and the currents swept the jewels away. Perhaps an explorer might find them in 1,000 years! Imagine you are walking along a beach, and you find the objects in the sand. Write a short description of how you would react.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_



**Find: Bill Woodrow RA, *Small Steunes Oscillator* 19, 2009**

Bill Woodrow made these paintings after seeing the **Northern Lights** in Norway. The Northern Lights are natural lights seen in the night sky, in areas close to the North Pole. Sometimes, they illuminate the whole sky in glowing and swirling colours!

Which colours do you think Bill Woodrow saw in the sky when he witnessed the Northern Lights?

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He has also used different patterns to depict what he saw in the sky that night. *Design and sketch your own pattern for the night sky.*

A large, empty rectangular box with a double-line black border, intended for the student to design and sketch their own pattern for the night sky.

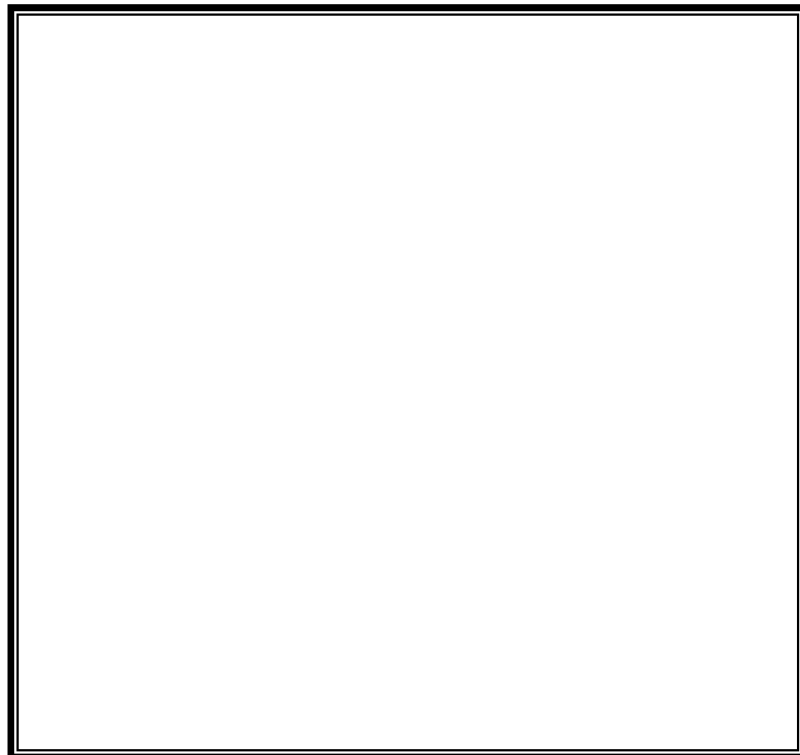
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

# Destruction



**Find: Cornelia Parker, *Heart of Darkness*, 2004**

This artwork is made from wood collected from a forest fire in Florida, America. Thousands of trees were destroyed in the fire. In some ways this sculpture still looks a bit like a forest, partly because we can still see pieces of branches and bark. **Draw a picture of how the forest might have looked before it burnt down.**



Cornelia Parker is very worried about climate change, and thinks that artists can help people to understand the problems it is causing. **Do you agree with her? Why or why not?**

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Who else has a role to play? Circle some of the words below.

**TEACHERS      SCIENTISTS      CELEBRITIES      CHILDREN**  
**ADULTS      BUSINESSES      SHOPS      GOVERNMENTS      CHARITIES**



**Find: Tue Greenfort, Medusa Swarm, 2009**

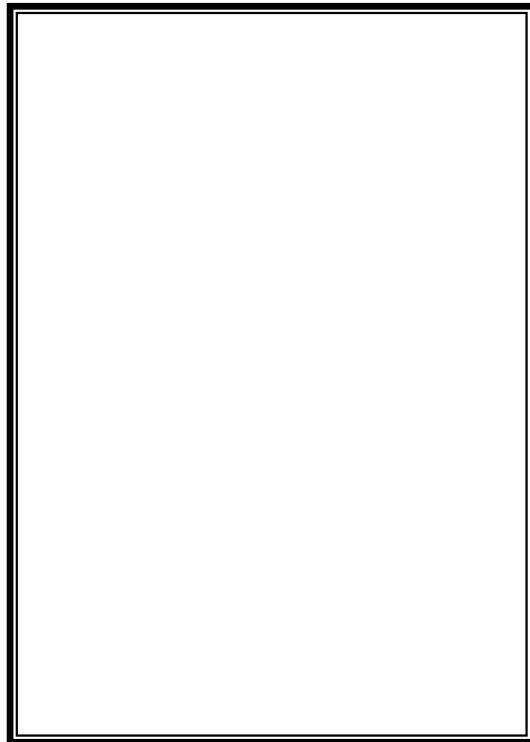
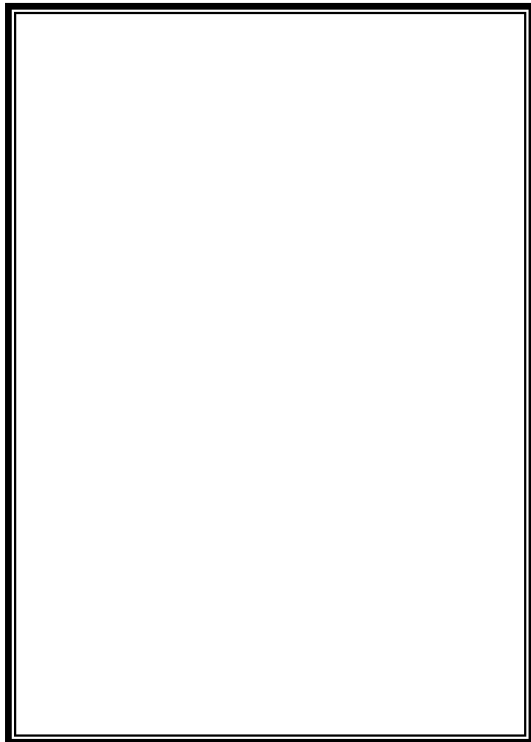
Scientists are very worried about the effect of climate change on the natural habitat or homes of animals, birds, fish and insects.

This artist has made delicate glass sculptures of **mauve stinger jellyfish**, known for having a very painful sting! The numbers of jellyfish in some parts of the world have increased, because many of their predators are endangered, including turtles and trigger fish.

Do you think that these sculptures are beautiful or threatening? Why?

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Climate change has caused many species to become homeless, and some have had to move into unfamiliar environments that they are not designed to live in. Draw a picture of your favourite animal in both its natural environment and also in the wrong environment.



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Why wouldn't this animal be suited to living in this environment?

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# Re-Reality



**Find: Yao Lu, *Spring in the City*, 2009**

When you first saw this photograph, did you notice the piles of rubbish? Did it take you by surprise when you realised what they were?

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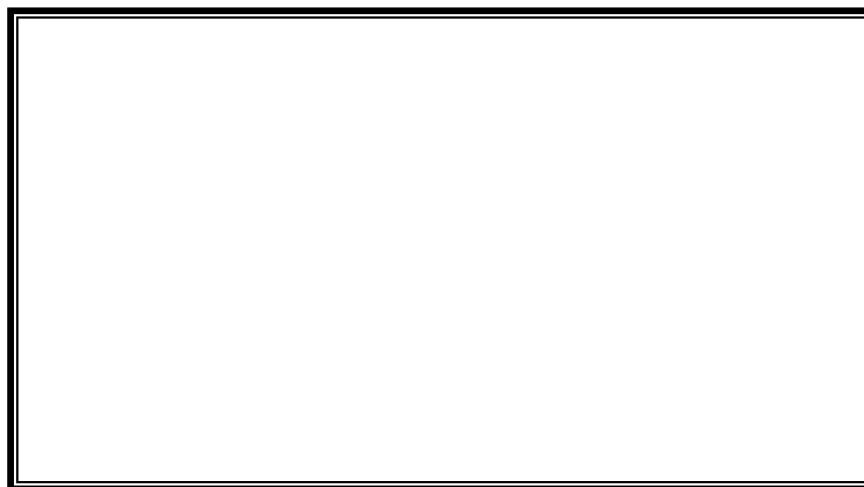
Yao Lu is a Chinese artist whose work is inspired by traditional Chinese paintings of mountains and the natural world. Do you think this photograph is still beautiful? Why or why not?

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Can you think of anything that we can do to reduce the amount of rubbish we throw out?

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You may have seen some artists around the gallery who have used bits of rubbish or throwaway objects in their work. This is one way of recycling the things that we don't need anymore. Design and draw your own sculpture made out of recycled objects in the box below.



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_



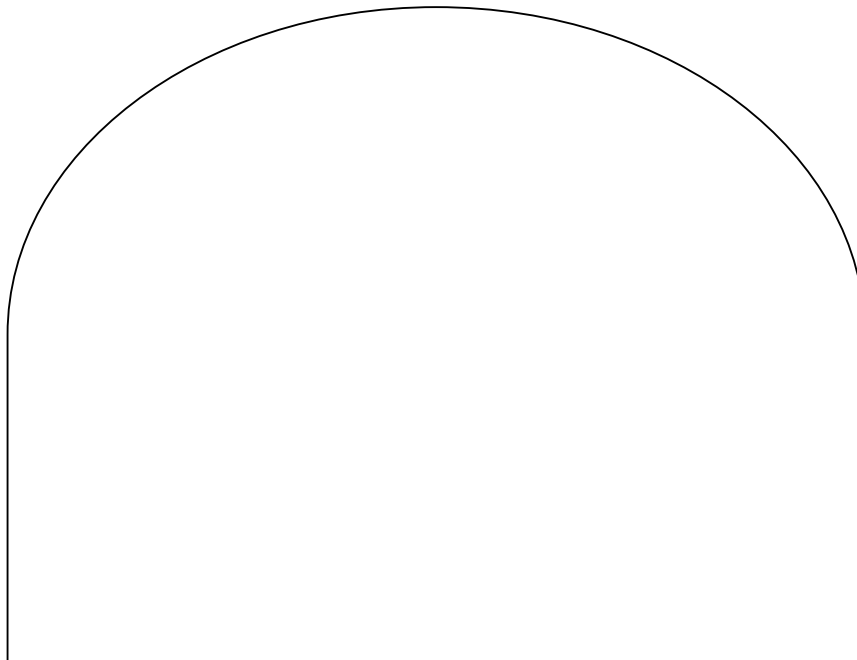
**Find: Mariele Neudecker, *400 Thousand Generations*, 2009**

Mariele Neudecker is famous for capturing miniature landscapes within glass tanks that look a lot like snow globes.

Have a look underneath the stand supporting the tanks. What do you see?

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Even though the earth is changing because of climate change, the world inside Mariele Neudecker's tanks stays exactly the same. Close your eyes and think of a beautiful landscape. Perhaps it is somewhere you have been on holiday, or you have seen in a photograph. Imagine that you could keep this landscape unchanged for ever. Sketch a picture of this landscape in the snow globe below.



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

If you would like to see your pictures and stories on the Royal Academy website, please hand this in at the Reception desk.

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Written and designed by Jessica Croll-Knight and Francesca Herrick  
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