



## PRESS RELEASE

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## WHAT'S IT GOING TO TAKE TO PUT THE ARCTIC AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE GLOBAL DIALOGUE ON CLIMATE CHANGE?

*No human, current or future, inhabiting planet Earth deserves a world devoid of Arctic ice.*

**OSLO, 16 December 2019** -- COP25 (Conference of Parties) wrapped up in Madrid yielding compromises, postponed decisions, and delayed actions after unsuccessful attempts to break the deadlock on setting radical greenhouse gas reduction targets ahead of COP26. *"The international community lost an important opportunity to show increased ambition on mitigation, adaptation, and finance to tackle the climate crisis."* declared UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

When the very fate of humanity and the natural world lies in the hands of political leaders that are failing to respond to the concerns of the citizens they represent, with science that serves as the cornerstone behind international, multi-generational mobilized action on climate change, what's next? It's imperative that making declarations which just buy more time be immediately replaced with making unprecedented, unequivocal, and unwavering action in solidarity to address the global 'climate emergency' (the Oxford English Dictionary's Word of the Year for 2019).

*"Our first responsibility is to remain united, to prevent the division that all too often results in inaction. Today, in a world of crisis, we can no longer afford the price of division. We are in the process of rebuilding this unity. It is not a goal in itself, but an essential prerequisite for action"* stated UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay.

A variety of climate summits and conferences held worldwide, taking place between COP21 in Paris in 2015 through COP25 in Madrid in 2019, have brought politicians, business leaders, climate experts, and celebrities together to *talk* about solutions that can help us mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change we are already bearing witness to. What has been glaringly lacking when tackling the climate conundrum in these conference settings is the linchpin that has been holding our entire planetary climate system together - 'Arctic ice'.

With the saying repeated by numerous scientific and environmental organizations: *"As goes the Arctic, so goes the world,"* why has this not be enough to sound the alarm? How can something so profound, vanishing, and irreplaceable be a mere side note, or a side event, rather than being a featured climate change topic placed as a priority agenda item requiring urgent global action?

With NOAA's *2019 Arctic Report Card* released on December 11th, prior to the close of the session, reinforcing the facts that the Arctic is experiencing rising atmospheric and oceanic temperatures and declining sea ice, intensifying potential for sudden and extreme change, we can only hope the call to action to world leaders is clear.

To address these issues, Millennium ART and Norsk Klimanettverk are launching a year-long public activation campaign in 2020, [\*REARCTIC: Creating a Culture for Bold Climate Action\*](#), with a lens focused on bringing the Arctic, the epicenter of global climate system, to the forefront of the international dialogue and decision that will be made between COP25 and COP26. COP25 hosted in Madrid December 2-13, 2019 served as the deadline for countries to update their first draft of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC's) for their post-2020 climate actions, providing an opportunity to significantly raise the ambition ahead of the implementation of their NDC's at COP26 hosted in Glasgow November 9-20, 2020. However, with no overall consensus reached on increasing climate ambition, the most important issue we need to immediately tackle is that that we don't have time to wait for "*post-2020 climate action*," we need Arctic action now!

[\*REARCTIC\*](#) is a creative knowledge sharing platform that focuses on stopping the release of heat-trapping greenhouse gases and highlights natural and technological solutions that extract carbon from the atmosphere and oceans to prevent Arctic ice and snow from melting and the Arctic Ocean from warming and acidifying. Based out of Oslo, Norway, *REARCTIC*'s mission and purpose is intrinsically aligned with the target set out in the Paris Agreement to avoid a total '*climate catastrophe*' by keeping global temperature rise well below 2°C by 2030.

Each year, UNEP's *Emissions Gap Report* assesses the gap between anticipated emissions in 2030 and levels consistent with the 1.5°C and 2°C targets of the Paris Agreement. With the 2019 report just released in November, on an annual basis, this means cuts in emissions of 7.6 per cent per year from 2020 to 2030 must be made to meet the 1.5°C goal and 2.7 per cent per year must be made for the 2°C goal.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) *Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate*, released in September 2019, suggests that we could see an ice-free Arctic every three years if we limit warming to 2°C above pre-industrial levels.

According to the National Snow & Ice Data Center (NSIDC) Arctic sea ice extent averaged for October 2019 was 5.66 million square kilometers (2.19 square miles), the lowest in the 41-year continuous satellite record, with sea surface temperatures and air temperatures several degrees above average over most of the Arctic Ocean. With monthly sea ice extent reaching a record low, Arctic sea ice has also declined 9.8 percent per decade relative to the 1981-2010 average.

The Arctic Ocean's surface waters hold the most plastics of any ocean basin, with the highest number in the world of particles measured at the ocean floor, and it's burdened with the world's largest microplastic concentration, greater than any of the garbage patches around the world.

Rather than losing hope and falling into apathy, governments, businesses, and civil society groups from all global regions can take Arctic action, individually and collectively. With *REARCTIC*, we capture the minds and hearts of climate change advocates and climate change deniers alike to help people understand the critical role Arctic ice plays in the entire scheme of things, such as maintaining a habitable planet. With a sophisticated cultural approach to public communications about science-based, climate-related, data-driven solutions, *REARCTIC* provides hope through achievable, aspirational imagery as social and economic motivators.

Understanding public perceptions, knowledge and beliefs about climate change is important for developing educational messages, guiding the development of persuasive messages, and identifying anticipated responses to policy proposals. In general, people tend to associate climate change with psychologically distant images or negative apocalyptic images of climate change provided in popular media, resulting in low emotional arousal, less concern, and lower belief in climate impacts.

Climate conferences take place behind closed doors only accessible by highly coveted badges, climate strikes take place in the streets accessible by all who believe in strength in numbers, while each approach has its merits, each can also be polarizing. Our approach with *REARCTIC* is to democratize the global climate dialogue by making it accessible to everyone through the universal language of art. Art evokes emotion, and emotion evokes change. If we wish to be inclusive of all perspectives and opinions, especially with impacts and solutions applicable to varying geographic regions, we must foster a culture that creates and shares knowledge for taking uninhibited bold climate actions to increase the well-being of our planet.

Throughout the *REARCTIC 2020* global activation campaign, we will present and share a collection of creative design experiences to communicate our planet's most urgent message, including a take-action micro-documentary film, an interactive traveling dialogue series, a digital climate action toolkit, a social media advocacy and action hub, a high-impact virtual reality experience, and an architectural projection mapping experience that will be broadcast live to the world from [Oslo on Earth Day, April 22, 2020](#), in celebration of its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, to amplify the urgent Call to Action for all to protect the Arctic now!

With *REARCTIC* we reframe the narrative on the Arctic, shifting the imagery away from emaciated polar bears, to images of the sheer power and beauty of the Arctic (what we stand to lose) combined with scientific facts and data (what is actually happening) and seeded with inspiration (solutions exist).

With a flexible Call to Action, people can heed the call with an action that resonates with them personally, or with their school, business, city/town, or community. #REARCTIC = #RETHINK #REDESIGN #REPLANT #REINVEST #REPOWER #REINVENT #REDUCE #REPURPOSE #REPRESENT #REFORM #RELOCATE #REENGAGE #REIMAGINE. Choose your path.

*REARCTIC* addresses '*Arctic amplification*' the rapid warming caused by global greenhouse gas emissions accelerating Arctic ice melt and causing extreme weather episodes including droughts, heat waves, floods, and cold spells. The influx of freshwater from melting Arctic ice makes seawater less salty and less dense, disrupting the '*global ocean conveyor*' and the warming of the Arctic affects cold and warm temperature contrast that is needed to drive the '*polar jet stream*.' Vanishing Arctic ice and snow cover diminishes the ability of the Arctic to reflect sunlight back into space, sparking the '*albedo effect*' accelerating the rise of atmospheric and oceanic temperatures, which in turn triggers a release of ancient carbon and methane stored within the soil and ocean floors of the Arctic, warming the planet even faster.

This is a pivotal time in history, ‘*the Anthropocene, Age of Man,*’ a time when climate anxiety is on the rise with children and youth around the world, a time when the leaders of our world have a chance to act now, not post-2020, a time for each of us to hold ourselves personally accountable by living sustainably and voting for people who support climate policies that will protect the planet’s biodiversity, the livelihood of people, and the survival of species. The end of the world as we know it is starting to appear beyond the horizon of the melting Arctic ice. The sands of time are running out, but if you join us in acting now for the Arctic we can still flip the hourglass over and change the course of history. Are you in?

[Visit](#) the REARCTIC website and learn about the campaign.

[Register](#) for the REARCTIC Earth Day event on April 22!

[Support](#) REARCTIC with a tax-deductible donation!

[Download](#) the REARCTIC project presentation.

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**REARCTIC:** Creating a Culture for Bold Climate Action is a global activation campaign that puts the Arctic at the forefront of the dialogue on climate change in 2020. By visualizing climate science through data-driven storytelling, sharing knowledge about the Arctic to transform mindsets, accelerating action to replicate and scale existing climate solutions, and demonstrating bold leadership, we can protect Arctic ice from vanishing in our lifetime.

**MILLENNIUM ART** has been producing ground-breaking cause-related environmental art experiences, conceptual installations, innovative programs, and dynamic campaigns in collaborations with the United Nations System since 2005. Each creative communication initiative is designed to empower and engage diverse global audiences in generating action on socially relevant themes by illuminating ways we can reshape the future of human ecology on our planet to create a peaceful, equitable, and sustainable future.

**NORSK KLIMANETTVERK** (Norwegian Climate Network) spans a broad selection of Norwegian society, from cultural workers to climate scientist, civil servants and academics that work together to increase and mobilize action to avert catastrophic climate change events, by making climate change relevant to more people and solutions more accessible by getting people personally involved. Norsk Klimanettverk also coordinates the annual Climate Festival, which for several years has been the largest climate mobilization in Norway, communicating the need for climate action in new and creative ways.

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