

Environmental Artists

Environmental art

Environmental art addresses concerns relating to the natural and urban environment. Modern environmental artists create work that highlights sustainability and ecological issues, such as marine debris, consumer waste, pollution, deforestation and the destruction of ecosystems. The artworks can be impactful or shocking to make us think more deeply about our relationship with the natural world. They can also be conceptual, which means that their intention may not be immediately apparent.

This sculpture of a human figure next to a dyke will gradually disappear from view due to climate change and rising sea levels.



Exposure by Antony Gormley, 2010

This art installation is made from chunks of ice taken from icebergs off the coast of Greenland. The artist wanted people to watch the artwork melt away to bring them closer to climate change in action.



Ice Watch by Olafur Eliasson, 2015

Reuse, recycle and repurpose

Environmental artists create their artworks from waste or recycled materials, such as plastic, paper, glass, metal, tyres, fabrics and other found materials. Using recycled materials reduces the amount of waste in the environment and supports the artist’s message. For example, this sculpture of a crab, made using plastic bottles, highlights the damage done to our oceans by single-use plastic.



Ocean plastics

Ocean plastics are usually single-use plastics that cannot be recycled, such as food wrappers, water bottles, carrier bags, straws and takeaway containers. This is causing significant harm to marine animals. At current rates, scientists expect the amount of plastic in the seas and oceans to outweigh the number of fish by 2050.



Ocean art

Ocean art is constructed from marine debris. It is impactful, highlighting the plight of marine animals. For example, this sculpture of a giant fish, created from single-use plastic from nearby waters, shows how fish are ingesting plastics to a point where their bodies are full and they can no longer survive.



Glossary

conceptual art	Art where the idea behind the work is more important than the finished piece.
ecosystem	The complex relationship between the plants and animals in a particular environment.
marine debris	Waste found in the seas and oceans.
sustainability	The ability to be maintained without exhausting natural resources.