

## Artist directs UN climate change conference towards the Reef

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An Australian artist will put the Great Barrier Reef in the spotlight in the UN's Artists 4 Paris Climate Change.



*Source Artists 4 Paris Climate 2015 - Janet Laurence*

'Art can make a difference' is the motto that 30 artists from 23 countries are championing this month as they head to Paris for the United Nations' Artists 4 Paris Climate 2015, an exhibition for action.

The Australian representative will be Sydney artist Janet Laurence, who will create a site-specific artwork revealing the plight and the beauty of the World Heritage Great Barrier Reef as part of the curated exhibition alongside the 2015 Paris Climate Change Conference/COP21 held in Le Bourget.

Through an imaginative installation, Laurence hopes to

counter the UN's lack of action, despite concern for the Reef's health. In July this year the World Heritage Committee decided against declaring the reef "in danger" but placed it on a watch list for the next four years.

Titled *Deep Breathing (Resuscitation for the Reef)* Laurence plans to create a kind of *Wunderkammer*, or multi-layered vitrine enclosing photos, videos, sculptural objects, natural materials and borrowed specimens.

'The aim of the work will be to create the imaginative possibility for healing our marine world, with a focus on the World Heritage Great Barrier Reef (GBR). As always, my work plays between evidence and imagination - scientific information is transformed into a poetical and often playful delivery in order to create accessibility and reveal the invisible,' she said.

Laurence explained in a statement that the project would draw upon research in collaboration with scientists from the Great Barrier Reef Authority, Australian Institute of Marine Science, WWF, as well borrowed species from the collections of the Natural History Museum Paris and the [Australian Museum](#).

In preparing for the project Laurence spent a week as the Australian Museum's artist-in-residence at the Lizard Island Research Station in northern Great Barrier Reef in July this year.

The main focus of Laurence's artwork is coral bleaching, and underwater photographs will offer a backdrop to her *Wunderkammer*.

'It will reveal the loss and fragility of the ecosystem and the scientific work being done to restore this invaluable reef system,' said Laurence.

'We are at a point where art is able to enter an essential dialogue of environmental politics and help to create and communicate an understanding of our global inter-connection and vital relationship to the natural world. Art makes visible what is otherwise invisible,' said Laurence in a formal statement.

'I feel that art still has the power of enchantment and transformation, and can provoke its audience into a renewed awareness about our environment, during this critical time of climate change and resulting social and ecological trauma,' she concluded.

Rather than just the glossy tourist image, Laurence is placing the reef's fragility central to this global forum using her installations intimacy to appeal to audience empathy.



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Artist to show fragility of Great Barrier Reef to #GOP21, not the "glossy tourist idea" [bit.ly/1iuz4Xd](https://bit.ly/1iuz4Xd)

13:00 - 18 Sept 2015

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[Source Artists 4 Paris - Janet Laurence](#)

Laurence's installation will be presented within the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle (MNHN) in the Jardin des Plantes, Paris (16 October – 30 December).

The conference curiously coincides with the Paris' International Contemporary Art Fair (FIAC, 21-25 October).

Janet Laurence's installation *Deep Breathing (Resuscitation for the Reef)* will return to Australia and will be presented by the Australian Museum in 2016.

For [more on her project](#) for *Artists 4 Paris Climate 2015*.