



Art with an environmental slant is rapidly maturing.

In the 20th century, the relationship between art and activism became closer with the two spheres overlapping during the civil rights and antiwar movements. Art was found to convey both a message and emotion that helped activists gain supporters and make change.

Now [that relationship](#) is being developed within the environmental movement as issues like climate change take center stage. In the 1970's, eco-art began to emerge, however it was often carried out by individuals working on specific, local issues. And while art genres like outdoors photography had combined the aesthetic with the natural, it usually lacked a message linked to ideas like conservation. Today environmental art is rapidly evolving in a variety of forms, some overt and some more subtle.

At the California College of the Arts (CCA), painting and fine arts professor Kim Anno is leading the way by developing a degree that covers the intersection of art, science, and the environment. CCA was the also first college to participate at the United Nations' Climate Summits. [Anno notes](#), "There is a distinction between art and activism. They do have overlaps, but they also have differences. Sometimes viewers discount the images of activism if they are too pat, too quickly understood. Art slows perception down and deepens the viewer's experience." And conservationist Carl Safina points out, "Science does a pretty good job of telling us what the world is but not what to think or feel about it. That is the job of art."

[Street artists](#), [world-famous designers](#), [photographers](#), [installation artists](#), and [private companies](#) have worked together to address issues such as Hurricane Sandy, tar sands, and pollution. Some artists are even integrating art and restoration projects. English sculptor Jason deCaires Taylor created underwater works that become artificial coral reefs while Daniel McCormick and Mary O'Brien made sculptures that act as habitats in waterways for uprooted oysters and salmon. Foundations and galleries are also showing increased interest which bolsters opportunities for artists. Amy Westervelt who writes for the [Sierra Club](#) concludes, "Mounting evidence suggests that in the coming decades, environmental art will have the same sort of disruptive impact that social and political art have had."