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# *COOL: How We Did It* Exhibition Statement

In the 1930s electricity from Australian-made wind turbines was powering lights, playing radios and charging batteries in outback towns and on remote properties. Solar power was generating hot water. 'Green oil' or 'fresh fuel' was developed in 1942 from the Earth's premier oxygenator-algae. As a supplement to local wind, solar and battery power, 'fresh fuel' could be produced and distributed in decentralised and resilient systems designed to meet community needs. Did we ever need fossil fuels?

Algae grows incredibly quickly and flourishes in a range of highly efficient, closed loop systems which require minimal water and no fertilisers or pesticides. In addition to energy, its biomass produces nourishing food supplements, soil biochar, therapeutic treatments and medicines, polymers for 'bioplastics', innovative textiles and more…all the while oxygenating and purifying the local atmosphere and repairing degraded ecosystems. Just imagine if all of these regenerative solutions were produced as part of the remediation of 80,000 inactive toxic mine sites around Australia? What if all this was community-led through democratically organised cooperatives?

Exploring regenerative innovation, created in collaboration with scientists and researchers, and timed to coincide with United Nations COP31, this exhibition is the first presentation of CLIMARTE's *COOL: How We Did It* artwork. All of the artwork is human created, no AI.

Set in 2035, as though it's already been achieved, this artwork reflects on how local communities creatively and strategically collaborated to fast track the transition to socially and ecologically regenerative systems based on respect and reciprocity - into the *Symbiocene*.

Inspired by the possibility of a transformed future, *COOL: How We Did It* is grounded in the past and anchored by First Nations' 'caring for country' principles and protocols. We acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the lands we live and work on and are deeply committed to The Treaty that establishes Gellung Warl as the permanent representative and deliberative body for Traditional Owners and First Peoples in Victoria. We acknowledge all First Nations peoples and recognise that sovereignty was never ceded. This always was and always will be Aboriginal land.

We gratefully acknowledge the generosity of leading algae experts Professor Greg Martin and Dr Anna Kaksonen for their guidance and the City of Yarra for its material support and constant encouragement.

Deborah Hart
CLIMARTE Chair & Creative Producer

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# Climate Guardians, *Ushering in the Symbiocene*

Photographs by Julian Meehan, 2026

A metaphor for an urgent, peaceful transition out of the Anthropocene, *Ushering in the Symbiocene* by the Climate Guardians is a performative work honouring care, respect and reciprocity.

This collaboratively developed, experimental work came together in Naarm over three weeks between late August and mid September 2026. You can watch a short video of the performance here.

**Performers:**

Earth's life force: Meredith Blackburn

Humans:
Peter Abraham
Daniella Conser
Deborah Hart
Nancy Lang

Climate Guardians:
Melissa Corbett
Hannah Levina Vrijenhoek
Sarah Metzner
Bronwyn Plarre
sage Raharjo-Gunawan Zhou-Lin
Louise Rippert
Indira Truscott

Creative Direction: Deborah Hart, Nancy Lang
Movement: Meredith Blackburn
Filming + editing: Richard Hart, 198 Studio
Photography: Julian Meehan
Behind the scenes photography: Maya Coburn

Especially commissioned for CLIMARTE's *COOL: How We Did It* project, performed in Fitzroy Gardens at dawn on 18 September 2026.

Exhibition quality prints $250 each.

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## Daniella Conser, *The Work of Holding*

A cast of my own hand, suspended and bound reaching up and outward, 2026

This work sits somewhere between restraint and support, between the structures that hold us together and those that hold us back. I think about the ties we find ourselves within, those we might need to cut through, and those we depend upon to sustain us. The fragility of what we hold, and what it might mean to reach through the confines of what we know.

In the face of the climate and biodiversity crises, hope can feel increasingly difficult to hold onto. Perhaps it is through our relationships with one another, and with the living world, that we find the capacity to imagine and work towards different futures. And in the small, collective acts of care, in what we make and do with our own hands, that these possibilities begin to take shape.

My heartfelt thanks to ceramic artist Salvatori Lolicato, who facilitated the making of my plaster hand at Veg Out Community Gardens in St Kilda. Established just a month after I was born, the gardens have grown alongside me. A space of community, creativity and comfort, and a living example of what collective care and grassroots action can make possible. Perhaps, in looking towards 2035 and asking *how we did it*, we need only look to the spaces and communities that have been showing us how all along.

Not for sale.

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## Lichen Kelp, *Passiona Anemona*

Video stills, 2025

The first piece in a larger puzzle; *Passiona Anemona* is a video work that pairs and compares the morphology, movement and allure of two organisms existing like sister cities echoing across borders of land and sea; passion flowers and anemones.

Rising from dreamy mists, gentle breezes and tidal tugs the two appear as chorus and verse in this love song to the future of the sea, composed by land based ocean devotee, Lichen Kelp. With a promise made to the beguiling structure of a passionflower to model her next project on its architectural fascinations, an artist led marine research centre seeds and facing the sun, asks itself how, why and where? An anemone responds.

You can watch the *Passiona Anemona* video here.

Specially commissioned for *COOL: How We Did It*.

Exhibition quality prints $350.

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## Eugenia Lim, *The Coal Face - COP31 edition*

This is an adaptation of Eugenia Lim's *The Coal Face (ScoMo)* which was initially commissioned for CLIMARTE's 2019 Poster Project.

Tote bags and stickers are being distributed to *Fossil of the Day* award winners at the United Nations COP31 in Antalya, Türkiye. They will be accompanied by a copy of an Open Letter to Australia's Federal Climate Change and Energy Minister Chris Bowen who is the President of Negotiations until the next COP in November 2027.

Please find key points below and you can read the full version of our Open Letter **here**.

As the world's third biggest fossil fuel exporter with a very well documented fossil fuel lobbyist problem, we argue that it's in the interests of honest international dialogue that we lead in acknowledging the profound, multilayered harm fossil fuel lobbyists are wreaking on our own country.

In the hope of both supporting and encouraging the Australian Government's position further, we outline the key challenges, specifically regarding the role and power of fossil fuel industry lobbyists:

- More than 1,600 fossil fuel lobbyists were reported to have attended COP30.
- More than half a century of empirical evidence shows fossil fuel industry lobbyists' are engaging in deceptive tactics to undermine scientific consensus in order to continue peddling what they know to be lethal and incalculably costly products.
- Many fossil fuel lobbyists are also political leaders with ties to industry funded—Atlas Network affiliated—so-called 'think tanks' which abuse charitable laws.
- Fossil fuel war profiteering is in plain sight, with evidence that companies are making 'windfall war profits' amidst 'net favourable' conditions.
- As governments have sought to protect their people from impoverishment, a recent United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) report warned that global fossil fuel subsidies are on track towards $US1.1 trillion this year.
- Public fossil fuel subsidies exacerbate market manipulation (manufactured scarcity and dependence) on the centralised and expensive (highly profitable) fossil fuel systems that are collapsing the Earth's ecosystems.
- Fossil fuel lobbyists are obstructing the development of the only long term solution to stabilise economies; local, affordable, regenerative energy systems.

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## Grace Lipson, *Climate Target: Mapping Infinite Solutions*

Hand drawn and painted on paper using pen and watercolours, 2026

This painting symbolises a climate target in which each circle represents a science-based, regenerative alternative to fossil fuels. These include renewable energy, such as solar, hydro, tidal, wind, batteries as well as biofuel and biogas sources such as algae, fungi, mycelium, and hemp; the very solutions needed to address our interconnected, escalating ecological and cultural crisis.

The basic physics behind natural climate solutions have been understood for more than a century. Urgently transitioning to socially and ecologically regenerative practices that support the Earth's own natural processes will enable all species and ecosystems to begin healing and eventually to thrive again. Breaking free from fossil-fuel addiction will help us begin to heal deep wounds from centuries of brutal colonisation—wholesale systemic theft and genocide.

Circularity is the symbol that maps our path forward, from closed-loop solutions and a circular economy, to regenerating oxygen bubbles released from blue-green algae alchemists. This system is spun into motion by diverse, democratic and decentralized community effort, converging to ignite change, justice and hope.

Created during a School for International Training internship with CLIMARTE, in response to CLIMARTE's *COOL: How We Did It* project.

Exhibition quality prints $250.

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**Bridget Nicholson, *Touch this earth lightly***
Ceramic, 2003 - 2013

My interest lies in the compact, complex liminal space where people and the natural order remain in constant flux, pushing and pulling as they negotiate how humanity can prosper within the cycle.

The clay moulds of the feet you see here are a part of a collection of 998 pairs of feet/shoes/skins collected over a ten-year period, across Australia. While I was wrapping and moulding the cool clay to people's feet we spoke about their relationship to the world around them; their values, loves, connection to places, stories, and relationships spilling over another, oozing with physicality and embedded in the visceral, emotive sticky mess that is blood and guts, soil and sky. Included here are representatives from four states across Australia what they share is their humanness and connection to their place — be it Abbotsford or Alice Springs.

In thirty, one hundred, or ten thousand years, this relationship will persist—shifting and changing no doubt, but ever present in the matter of us all.

Not for sale.

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## GeoArt by Ata Tara, *Transitions in Energy Landscapes*

***Energy Mixity* -** GIS-based digital maps printed on paper in four layers, combined with a resin coating, 2025

***Trilogy* - Fossil fuels, Renewable energy, Algae biofuel**
GIS-based digital cartography, layered digital composition and fine art printing with a resin coating, 2025

I was born in Bushehr, on the southern coast of Iran, where the Persian Gulf carries oil, heat, and history in equal measure. This coastline has long operated as a threshold—between land and sea, extraction and export, local life and global dependence. My family is from Abadan, a city deeply embedded in the infrastructures of petroleum. Following the Iranian Revolution and during the Iran–Iraq War, my family migrated to Bushehr. Displacement, in this context, was not an interruption but a condition produced through the entanglement of energy and conflict.

My migration to Australia in 2008, and settlement in Brisbane, brought me into another energy landscape—this time defined by coal, mining, and large-scale industrial systems. My current work engages with energy transition, supporting shifts toward renewable and bio-based systems. Yet this work unfolds against a familiar backdrop of escalating tensions across Iran, the Middle East, and the Persian Gulf. Once again, energy is inseparable from conflict, price volatility, and geopolitical anxiety.

This recurrence is not incidental. Across generations and geographies, energy remains bound to cycles of extraction, insecurity, and displacement. What shifts is context; what persists is structure. My practice reflects on this persistence—on how landscapes are repeatedly tasked with absorbing the demands of global consumption, and how communities inherit their consequences.

To approach energy transition, then, is not only to engage with technological substitution, but to confront deeper cultural and ethical questions. For me, it is inseparable from memory and migration, and from the possibility of interrupting inherited patterns. A regenerative future is not simply one powered differently; it is one organised differently—less around extraction and scarcity, and more around care, continuity, and mutual responsibility. It asks whether places like the Persian Gulf might one day be understood not as strategic reserves, but as living environments capable of sustaining life beyond the logics of conflict.

Specially commissioned for *COOL: How We Did It*.

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## Giselle Wilkinson, *Bring Me Your Finest Hour*

Hand drawn and painted on paper with pencil, pen, charcoal, watercolours and oil pastels, tied to painted dingo wire with jute string, 2026.

A voice from the Sentient world strives to reach our ears, often finding them selectively deaf. Its envoys seek to penetrate our dumbness and numbness, our sad stupidity and stubborn greed. Signs, marks, messages and clues are everywhere the knowing eye looks but so many of us are disconnected, staring at the ground, looking for what we've lost - not noticing wondrous skies and falling stars.

Birds we notice; eyes, faces, fronds and buds catch our attention. Yet the Lug worm is among legions of species less famous, less beloved and so often overlooked.

Seaweed is strewn artfully on the beach by parting waves,iconic characters elegant upon the damp sand. They speak a veneration of life and death, exquisitely beautiful even as they die.

Is the work of the lugworm a secret language too?
Are these marks emblems, totemic, spiritual?
Is this writing in the sand?
If you were the Lug worm author what would these marks mean?

A sentient being from a different world - a realm without word-based language.
Words. Words that serve we humans so well but take us into our minds and the material world and away from the waves of connective space, of presence and prescience.

This interpretation of the Lug worms' calligraphy attempts to bridge a gap. This is what I 'hear' from the sentient world and from the Lugworm (Luvworm) when I see their work.

'Bring Me Your Finest Hour' conveys a call to action. It is a plea that speaks to our deep concerns, our many fears and our yearning for safety; to our purpose, courage and truth; our compassion, hope, vision and power.

It speaks, of course, of life and love.

Exhibition quality prints available, price on demand.

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