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# Taking on Climate Action through the Arts





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Cities and communities that are most vulnerable to the impacts of sea-level rise, floods, intense wind, and rainfall, as well as other

devastating effects of anthropogenic climate change are taking action to combat this threat. Policies and reforms are being implemented in cities and communities to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Efforts to encourage resilience have become more prominent after the devastation of Hurricane Sandy, which affected New York and Coastal New Jersey. The topic of resilience has been brought to center attention, particularly in communities and cities at highest risks of coastal flooding due to climate-induced sea-level rise.

[Earth Celebrations](#), a non-profit organization in New York City created an opportunity taking on climate change through creative action and awareness. Founder and executive director Felicia Young has dedicated her work to protecting the environment while creating pathways for art to be a source of inspiration for communities to engage in climate action. I met Felicia Young in 2017 while volunteering with Earth Celebrations to be part of their contingent at the Earth Day March for Science in New York City. This was one of the many marches after the inauguration of Donald Trump as the 45th president of United States. I was a potter at a ceramics studio in Midtown Manhattan and as an artist, I wanted to become more involved in political

action. I volunteered as a marshal for the Rising Waters circular waterways banner, which depicted major rivers and water systems in the United States and the pollutants that had been discharged by big corporations. I continued to volunteer with Felicia Young as a marshal for the Rising Waters banner in the People's Climate March in Washington D. C., and Sandy 5 March. Participating in creative action ignited a curiosity within to integrate creative expression and community action to further inspire social change. As I began graduate school as an [Environmental Policy and Sustainability Management](#) student I also began work as Project Coordinator for Earth Celebration's Ecological City Project under the direct guidance of Executive Director Felicia Young. As Project Coordinator I am responsible for logistics, community engagement, organizing and managing artist workshops in which volunteers are creating spectacular costumes and puppets for the procession. I have gained insight into community organizing, I have developed effective tools and tactics to engage different members of the community while properly emphasizing the importance and urgency of taking climate action. Ecological City is an environmental and cultural climate action project engaging the Lower

East Side community through creative strategies, co-creating a theatrical procession to develop and foster climate resiliency and ecological sustainability solutions throughout the gardens, neighborhood and waterfront on the Lower East side of New York City, connecting local efforts to city and global climate challenges. Through this collective effort Ecological City, Earth Celebrations, aims to bring awareness to ecological sustainability solutions including solar gazebos, permeable sidewalks, water filtration bio-swales, rain/pollinator gardens, water harvesting ponds, composting/gray-water recycling, plastic-free zones, biodegradable packaging and carbon pricing/sustainability rewards are a few means in which this action has already taken place. These projects are being implemented and highlighted through the ecological and cultural procession. The culminating procession of visual art, mobile sculptures, puppets, spectacular costumes, alongside 15 site performances of theater, dance, music, and poetry exploring climate resiliency and ecological sustainability solutions will be enacted by the community through the streets, gardens, neighborhood and East River Park waterfront on Saturday, May 12th, 2018.

Ecological City is a model and an inspiration to motivate communities to engage in and to self-express through the arts and culture, working together collectively to take action on implementing successful strategies to combat the global threat that is climate change. This process shows an alternative mode of action through art while nurturing and strengthening relationships as well as communicates at the deepest emotional level.



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