

Laura Donkers PhD

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Key skills

- Experienced project manager
- Creative problem solving
- Strategic thinker
- Programme designer
- Experienced collaborator

Education

Contemporary Curating in Art + Design (short course)
University of Dundee UK
Graduated 2021

PhD Contemporary Art Practice University of Dundee UK [Deploying collaborative artistic co-creative methods to strategically promote eco-social regeneration for small island communities](#)
Graduated 2020

MFA Art, Society, Publics
University of Dundee UK
Graduated 2014

BFA Fine Art Honours (First Class) University of Highlands & Islands UK
Graduated 2011

SQA Business Planning Owner/Manager Level 3
University of Highlands & Islands UK
Graduated 1997

Summary

Social practitioner specialising in strategic community engagement projects and activities. I have over 10 years' experience in connecting people with ecology through art to engage and inform eco-mindfulness, mutuality, and kinship. I specialise in researching, designing and leading engagement projects to transform public perception of art and ecology. I also design/lead creative community and schools' programming to build capacity and enthusiasm for climate action towards more sustainable living. My PhD research was awarded AHRC Creative Economies studentship and I have received several awards to develop research opportunities internationally. I have successfully delivered a series of Scottish Government Climate Challenge Fund decarbonisation projects encouraging the growing of more food and reducing waste. These projects integrated local traditional knowledge on growing food with methods of delivery that reflected embodied societal structures. Project goals were consistently exceeded and new ground was created in terms of how the community influenced project development promoting a new vision for co-created community working practices, leading to improved climate change engagement at all levels of local society – schools, local community groups, local organisations, businesses.

Career history

Whenua Ūkaipō Connectedness 2020, Public Trust Hall, Wellington NZ

Oct-Nov 2020

United Nations 75th anniversary art exhibition, bringing forward Māori, indigenous and many other cultures' artistic visions to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Featuring work from 17 artists <https://whenuaukaipo.nz/>

- Key responsibilities: to participate with 16 artists to develop exhibition on UN 17 Sustainable Development Goals
- Achievements: Produced *WILD GARDEN* – a 1.5x10 meter long charcoal and ink drawing, and took part in *Wā Kōrero* a Public Discussion Programme on UN Sustainable Development Goals <https://whenuaukaipo.nz/wa-korero-public-programme>

EcoArt 2020 + 2021, Kaipātiki Project Environment Centre, Auckland NZ

Oct 2020 + Sept 2021

Eco-mindfulness Through Art project, initiated with Kaipātiki Project + Auckland Print Studio, using drawing and printing as stimuli to develop eco-mindfulness. This approach to public engagement, aims to expand creative and ecological awareness through a tactile exploration of ecology. Both programmes have been awarded funding through Auckland Council's Creative Communities Scheme.

Artist-in-Residence at Kaipātiki Project Environment Centre, Auckland NZ

Feb-May 2019

Undertook practice-led PhD research on community/ecological regenerative practices

Awards

Artist-in-Residence Award

Scottish Graduate School of Arts + Humanities

Awarded 2019

Visiting Doctoral Researcher

Award Artist-in-Residence

Award Scottish Graduate School of Arts + Humanities

Awarded 2019

AHRC Creative Economies

DTP Award

Scottish Graduate School of Arts + Humanities

Awarded 2018

Visual Arts + Crafts Award

Creative Scotland

Awarded 2015

Writer + Travel Grant

Connected Communities Bursary

Awarded 2012

Visual Arts + Crafts Award

Creative Scotland/CNES

Awarded 2012

Talent Development Award

Creative Scotland

Awarded 2011

Research Grant

Stanley Smith (UK) Horticultural Trust

Awarded 2011

- Key responsibilities: Collaborate with environmental restoration team, run community art workshops at Eco-Fest, and on site with visiting schools' programme
- Achievements: Produced *RE- GENERATION 2019* - a video project and exhibition at NorthArt, Northcote, Auckland to showcase Kaipātiki Project's approach to community education on regenerative practices

Programme Design/Lead at Tagasa Uibhist, Isle of Benbecula Outer Hebrides UK

Apr 2015 – Nov 2018

Designed and led a series of 4 x one-year *Climate Challenge Fund* community engagement programmes for the Scottish Government with local stakeholder organisations

- Key responsibilities: develop eco-social engagement programme to deliver decarbonisation and sustainable food education to local community; design/deliver education programme on sustainable food production with local schools (Primary and Secondary) and pre-schools; design/produce 3 successful follow-on project applications to Scottish Government's Climate Challenge Fund; Monitoring and Reporting on all stages of project design and delivery
- Achievements: successfully delivered 4 local-food decarbonisation projects; engaged communities; produced community video and exhibition *Meeting Ground*

Owner/Manager at EARTH | Environmental Arts Hebrides

Sep 2011 – Mar 2020

Established environmental arts organisation in Outer Hebrides UK

- Key responsibilities: initiate and develop project ideas, funding applications, project management and lead services
- Achievements: Commissions/collaborations with artists, organisations and projects

2019: *Art in the Capitalocene*, with Prof. Karen Till and Prof. Huhana Smith, shared insights with communities/networks about global ecological and climate crises (supported by Irish Research Council) in Rathangan, Maynooth, Dublin, Cork, Galway, Burrenbeo Trust, EIRE

2018: *To St Kilda and Back*, with musician Julie Aitken, Outer Hebrides UK

2017: *Locating Lorne*, with Dr Deirdre MacKenna, Cultural Documents, Oban UK

2014: *I have a Dream Global Art, a Farming & Peace project*, with Shweta Bhattad, Vancouver Biennale, Vancouver CANADA, and COP 21, Paris FRANCE

2014: *An fheadhainn tha laighe samach (They lie silent and still)*, WW1 Commemoration with Comann Eachdraigh, Uibhist a Tuath (North Uist Historical Society), Outer Hebrides

2011/13: *Art and the Machair* with Olwen Shone, for MachairLife+, Outer Hebrides UK