

# COLUMBIA SPECTATOR

## Climate intersects with art at new fest

By [TRACY SHEN](#) Columbia Daily Spectator  
September 24, 12:15am

A bike tour might sound like a strange component to an art exhibit, but a new program dedicated to art's relationship with climate change will take visitors for a ride.

Ten Days of Climate Action, a Human Impacts Institute initiative that's part of the 2013 Climate Action Award competition, strives to bring together creative minds from different artistic fields—dance, photography, music, film—to communicate climate issues to a wider public.

"We aim to use inspiration through the art as a way to engage more people with climate issues," Tara DePorte, SCE '05 and founder and director of the Brooklyn-based Human Impacts Institute, said.

The event, which begins Sept. 23, embraces all art forms, including sculpture, fashion, and dance. Each installation will be evaluated by the Climate Action Award judges based on its depiction of the relationship between art and climate change, its emotional impact, and its aesthetic appeal. There will also be a live reading on how a family was torn apart by the fossil fuel industry, followed by a networking reception in Schermerhorn Hall on Sept. 23.

Ten Days of Climate Action will include an organized bicycle ride to explore the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, a photo exhibit by the Lexicon of Sustainability, and the global premiere of a "climate cabaret"—Superhero Clubhouse's "Don't Be Sad, Flying Ace."

The initiative encourages the audience not only to observe, but also to participate actively in the art, as the events appeal to the public to protest the Keystone XL oil pipeline, DePorte said. On Sept. 25, the event organizers will ask audience members to write down their own understanding of climate change on postcards, sending a communal message of environmental concern to U.N. Secretary-General Ban-Ki Moon.

"I am actually a visual artist myself and I've always been an environmentalist-centered artist as well," DePorte said. "But I have always kept these two separate till I started the Human Impact Institute."

DePorte's understanding of the unity of art and environmentalism prompted her to challenge a group of friends in New York's art community to incorporate climate change into art projects for the first year of Ten Days of Climate Action.

"It was definitely a personal challenge," DePorte said. "In the first year, I was in roller skates and tutu, giving free climate counseling to people who were overwhelmed with guilt because they weren't doing anything about climate change."

Because DePorte realizes that people can find the climate change issue overwhelming, she believes art can inspire a collective emotional response that encourages people with different interests to be open to new ideas, such as finding a connection between climate change and business.

"One of our missions of the Human Impact Institute is to bring environmental issues to people's lives," she said.

*For more information on Ten Days of Climate Action, visit the Human Impacts Institute [website](#).  
[arts@columbiaspectator.com](http://arts@columbiaspectator.com) | [@ColumbiaSpec](https://twitter.com/ColumbiaSpec)*