

Oats Peas Beans And Barley Grow

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SZq3m0cZ_bk

1 Artes Mundi 7: Storytelling

In 2016 the shortlist for 'Artes Mundi 7' brought together, competitively, six international contemporary artists who directly engage with everyday life through their practice and who explore contemporary social issues across the globe. They presented their messages through the agency of installation artworks in the Welsh National Museum in Cardiff, which hosted the [Artes Mundi 7 competition](#).

Fig 1 Seed Journey: Artes Mundi 7 (2016)



Each artist brought their own unique perspective to present stories that explore what it means to be human in contemporary society (Fig 1). Whether introspective and deeply personal or engaged with broader social and cultural issues, each artist demonstrated the importance of art and culture in our everyday lives. Their stories challenged our preconceptions of the meanings of culture and ecology, to open up new ways of engaging with the future survival of a globalised society with seriously failing ecosystem services.

Storytelling was once the most ambitious mission of Western painting. Renaissance artists told the life of Christ and the saints using sequential panels on the walls of churches. Michelangelo presented the sweeping drama of the Old and New Testaments across the vast expanse of the Sistine Chapel Ceiling. Closer to our own era, Diego Rivera celebrated the struggles of the Mexican people. However, with the rise of abstract modernism, the storytelling impulse among artists seemed to disappear, dismissed as exhausted, irrelevant, or embarrassingly academic. But the drive toward narrative, and an art audience's fascination with stories, have resurfaced in recent years, often in video, but more evocatively in installations, which invite comparisons with developments in contemporary fiction—shuffled chapters, meandering plot lines, mash-ups of genres, and elusive or unreliable narrators.

Installation art is a story telling practice and a catch-all term that describes any arrangement of objects in an exhibition space. This could vary from a room full of sculptures to a space filled with video monitors. What sets an art installation apart from sculpture or other traditional art forms, is its emphasis on a total, unified experience, created by an individual or a group rather than a display of separate, artworks of individuals. Art installations also tend to veer towards the experimental, aiming to shock or unsettle the viewer.

The term installation first came into use in the 1960s to describe the way in which an exhibition was laid out, hence there is an emphasis on the artist as curator. The artist curated exhibition was particularly popular with Minimalist artists who were acutely aware of space and the ways in which their work related to it. Their work was often sensitively selected, arranged, or installed, to create a dialogue with its surroundings in order that viewers could take in both their work and its environment as one overall, immersive story. Documentation of this work was often referred to as an 'installation shot.' and the art work is archived as [a series of photographs](#).

Artes Mundi 7 showed clearly that artists working today continue to explore the possibilities of installation art and blur the boundaries between arrangements of art objects, the display of museum artifacts and their inclusion in installations. Also, the challenge for the installation artist, as opposed to the filmmaker or writer, is that he or she is free to choose from so many mediums to realize a completed project. These range from text, video, sound, ready-made props, photography, conventional approaches like drawing and sculpture, to occupying the great outdoors. No longer do works of art exist solely for the sake of our experience of them. Artists are creating a discourse; critiquing society and culture through their art. Installation art takes the aesthetic experience away from formal unity. The viewer has to tackle a new kind of, disjointedness created by the juxtaposition of diverse multimedia elements.

What is expected of the viewer of an installation often goes beyond the demands of more traditional art forms. The experience can be either an exhilarating mental trip or an exercise in frustration because the meanings of the objects and their contribution to the overarching story are not always obvious. Inevitably the baffled visitor seeks a written description of the artist's message or finds a gallery attendant who is in the know.

As an aid to creativity, many artists who make installations start with a two dimensional mind map of their story. The narrative is then told graphically by making connections between facts or concepts, which are expressed as objects. created, or selected, for presentation as a three dimensional display. The goal of the mind map is to make the items all cohere in a gallery or museum setting, and in the viewer's mind.

Definitions of an installation and a mind map are interchangeable. Both arrange words, ideas, tasks, or other items around a central key word or concept, and are used to generate, visualize, structure, and classify ideas. The common aim is to aid the study and organisation of information, communicating it to solve problems and pointing out ways of taking action to improve a social condition.

Artes Mundi 7 brought together six social themes reflecting on 'the human condition'. This document is the response of a visitor who selected one of these works, 'Seed Journey', to build a personal mind map out of the experience, and curating it on line to extend the story as an internet webquest. As an exercise in cultural ecology it can be taken as an educational legacy of Artes Mundi 7.

Curating is often seen as a mediation between artist, work, and audience, with the curator firmly at the center. Artists working with installations are increasingly realising the importance of providing detailed information to the gallery to ensure that aspects such as size, placement, and technical specifications of the installation art are understood. This provides parameters within which artist and gallery maintain a consistency to the installation each time it is shown. The artist can therefore be described as the primary curator. The central role of artist as the curator in charge of the process of selection and placement has thereby been further emphasized, because he or she has to work directly with the institutional and physical limitations of museum or gallery spaces. Because the viewer can enter a three dimensional space created by the artist, an installation can be visualised as a microcosm of the human ecological niche.

2 Seed Journey: The Story

Of the six social themes presented as Artes Mundi 7 installations 'Seed Journey' is the one that connects directly with the future survival of Homo sapiens. It taps into a vital thread of human history that began with the origins of agriculture in the Near East, where the process of domestication can be attributed to multiple centres, with the eastern Fertile Crescent playing a key role.

'Seed Journey' was produced by Futurefarmers. [Futurefarmers](#) is a multi-disciplinary collective headed by Californian artist [Amy Franceschini](#). The collective was founded in 1995 as, a group of art and farming practitioners. A consistent line through Franceschini's work reveals sustained questioning about how "nature" and "culture" are perceived.

Franceschini gives the following reasoning for her works:

“Through farming, I saw the connection of politics and power. I saw how the politics of marketing and trade and commodities all tied in. But I also started to see about the environment. I saw how the chemical water that went into the creeks started making the frogs become deformed and Silent Spring [a book by Rachel Carson, published in 1962, that warned of the dangers of pesticides to the environment] was written, which was a big eye-opener to a lot of people. It’s kind of simple: I want to be alive and I want to breathe.”

“By working collaboratively,” we are told, Franceschini and Futurefarmers “visualise and understand the way systems interact and control our everyday lives and begin to question and deconstruct social systems such as food policies, public transportation and rural farming networks.”

Since 2013 Futurefarmers has been leading the Flatbread Society, a project centred on the creation of communal spaces in which people from diverse cultures gather to make flatbread. ‘Seed Journey’ focuses on the very seeds of grain used to make bread that were brought to Europe from the Fertile Crescent thousands of years ago. The seeds have been “rescued”, grown and distributed by the collective since 2013 from a range of sources, such as seeds saved during the famine precipitated by the Siege of Leningrad and those discovered by archaeologists in an abandoned sauna in Hamar, Norway. As part of Artes Mundi 7, in an act of reverse migration, Futurefarmers are taking these seeds by sailing boat from Oslo to the Middle East. They will stop along the way to meet like-minded farmers, artisan bread makers, and organisations, and to collect more seeds. Wales is one of these ports of call.

Regarding the historical objective of the voyage, the prehistoric settlement of Chogha Golan on the eastern edge of the Fertile Crescent is a key archaeological site dating to the end of the last Ice Age roughly 11,700 years ago. In horizon II of the Chogha Golan dig, dating to 9,800 years ago, domesticated emmer wheat appears. Over a period of two millennia the economy of the settlement shifted toward the domesticated species that formed the economic basis for the rise of village life and subsequent civilizations in the Near East. Plants including multiple forms of wheat, barley and lentils together with domestic animals later accompanied farmers as they spread across western Eurasia, gradually replacing the indigenous hunter-gatherer societies. Many of the plants that were domesticated in the Fertile Crescent form the economic basis for the day to day survival of world population today.

Since at least the time of the Roman Empire the human population of Europe has eaten mass produced grain, some of which was stored to guard against bad harvests. Over the centuries supply has risen with human demand but the storage margin has always been relatively small. For example, during the 1980s and early 1990s global grain reserves averaged about 100 days of consumption. The peak of 130 days was reached in the mid 1980s. Since then, grain reserves have declined, when measured by consumption, through

the first decade of the 21st century. More recently global grain reserves have averaged only about 70 days. The world has eaten the grain surplus of history and now eats crop-to-crop regardless of the size of the U.S. corn crop, which supplies between 40-50% of the world demand.

Alongside this trend there has been a decline from state-owned strategic grain reserves in favour of a more market-oriented approach that is dominated by a handful of powerful multinational corporations who maintain sophisticated supply chains. Because data on the amount of food these corporations hold in storage are proprietary secrets, it is really impossible to assess how resilient or vulnerable this makes the global food system.

This is brief account of the geopolitical background to the Seed Voyage installation.

Futurefarmers arrived in Cardiff on the first leg of their journey from Scandinavia to the Middle East with a big story of about what cultures share, and how they develop. Their cargo of seeds in the restored sailing boat Christiania, which were once “weeds”, represent the food grains that have been domesticated over tens of thousands of years. Grain farmers were change-agents, cultivating crops by hand and exchanging seeds and know how through a complex hand- to-hand network. Seed Journey refers to this process as ‘hand to mouth’. Its message is:-

“We don’t need a museum to preserve varieties. What we want is to plant them in the soil.”

This can be taken as a critique of the massive technological investments in seed banks, because the associated concepts of living sustainability are really maintained and developed through living networks.

The seed carrying vessel Christiania has become a “laboratory” where the collective continues its research. The Seed Journey installation is therefore an interactive “base camp” and visitors are invited to become part of the journey and to consider the possibility of social change and different futures. In this context, Futurefarmers are interested in preserving ‘the commons’ as it relates to land use, biological matter and the sharing of knowledge. Therefore, Seed Journey can be seen as a gesture towards the relatively recent cultural departure of humanity from self-sufficiency and the ecological loss of local genetic controls on plant breeding in relation to the impossibility of the human condition returning to a Neolithic way of life. Seeds are now a vital element of Earth’s natural capital.

3 Seed Journey: Mind Mapping

Starting from the first view of an artwork, the brain begins to work backwards seeking to touch the mind of the artist who created it. The viewer attempts to trace its origins in the mental processes of the maker, thereby acquiescing to the brain's natural preference to scan a visual space in a non-linear fashion. The viewer transcribes what comes into the mind as a two-dimensional tree-like diagram. This mind map enables him or her to more easily sort through different details and recognize relationships among these details. Mind mapping is a

natural expression of what the brain does to allow a person to organize and understand information faster and better. It is an expression of radiant thinking, which helps unlock the mental potential of the brain to interact fully with the complexities of the environment .

It is argued that there are important alternative spaces of meaning to be developed through the creation and placement of an installation between object and audience. The archiving of an installation like Seed Journey, as a mind map, gives the creative act more permanence than an 'installation shot'. Digital curating, in particular, allows for greater audience participation, both by expanding the potential audience and by allowing visitors to navigate through virtual galleries under their own direction. By facilitating visitors' creation of their own visual arguments, a new level of audience participation in visual analysis appears and a fundamental intellectual and intuitive aspect of curating is made possible.

The transcribing of Seed Journey as a mind map web quest is actually a research activity. The objective is to explore how digital resources can be used for storytelling at its most basic core as an art practice using computer-based tools to create interactive mind maps encompassing digital documentaries, computer-based narratives, digital essays, electronic memoirs, interactive storytelling, etc. In general, all these creative acts revolve around the idea of combining the art of telling stories with a variety of multimedia, including graphics, audio, video, and Web publishing.

At a first glance Seed Journey can be seen as an art installation that juxtaposes five concepts:

- The seeds
- The boat
- The shared eating of flat bread
- Smoke signals from a bread oven
- The voyage and its records

See a mind map at

<https://www.mindmeister.com/812854749/seed-journey-amy-franceschini-futurefarmers>

4 Seed Journey: Narratives of Change

“Experience of a place can act to transform the local landscape, imbuing it with personal meaning and significance through life experiences. The local landscape becomes a symbolic extension of the self, acting dialectically to create a relationship between people and place. In this way, the identity of members of a community can be reaffirmed and reproduced in regular activities, rituals, stories and the meanings of a landscape that give rise to a sense of belonging and familiarity.”

<http://researchonline.jcu.edu.au/71/5/05chapter4.pdf>

<http://www.contempaesthetics.org/newvolume/pages/article.php?articleID=655>

This meditation on Seed Journey deals, in general, with the dependent relationships existing between different parts of the environment and the human beings who inhabit it. The environment has the ability to affect the individuals and groups living in its midst. In particular, it asks what role is given to environmental agents, such as domesticated wildlife and political events, that people attribute to the forces of the world that surrounds, invades or abandons them?

Whether an agent is an object or an event, it is defined as something with the ability to initiate or influence human lives in its close surroundings. A cereal seed is one such agent of change that produces an aesthetic type of satisfaction from contemplating its role in everyday life. Probably this is why the spread of domesticated seeds was promoted as an aesthetic experience by Futurefarmers.

A narrative of change demonstrates how a feeling of community emerges through experiencing a shared aesthetic of the human ecological niche. The human niche is the 'space' that humans as a species utilize and transform to survive and reproduce. It is largely sociocultural, constructed and enacted within, across, and by social groups and societies. It is worth reiterating that an art installation may be described as a microcosm of the human ecological niche.

John Dewey's major writing 'Art as Experience (1934)' has had a great influence on contemporary work in everyday aesthetics. Dewey suggested that the experiences of aesthetic exaltation associated with art can be traced back to processes that pre-date art and that both humans and other animals partake in. Aesthetic experience, according to Dewey, is on a continuum with the deep feelings of fulfillment that arise from interacting with the commonplace environment i.e. the human ecological niche, to satisfy one's needs. He says an aesthetic experience can belong even to simple experiences like that of lifting a stone, as long as it is done with sufficient attention. Dewey's view is thus highly amenable to the application of aesthetic concepts throughout everyday life where they build feelings of well being into a sense of place. Art valued for its beauty does not enter into Dewey's world.

Dewey held that the sources of aesthetic experience are to found in sub-human animal life.

"Animals often attain a unity of experience that we lose in our fragmented work-lives. The live animal is fully present with all its senses active, especially when it is graceful. It synthesizes past and future in the present. Similarly, tribal man is most alive when most observant and filled with energy. He does not separate observation, action, and foresight. His senses are not mere pathways for storage. Rather, they prepare him for thought and action. Experience signifies heightened life and active engagement with the world. In its highest form it involves an identification of self and world. Such experience is the beginning of art"

Sense of place is a behavioural expression of the modern human ecological niche which reflects the structure and functioning of human societies and the long term transformation of local environments. Here, aesthetics is an essential part of the social processes by which

communities are formed and value their environment through associating knowledge, reflexivity, and communication. In this sense, it is a matter of seeing which types of aesthetic, or ethical, challenges are at work in making and contemplating community environments. These are the physically existing environments in which characters live and move. We may call them “settings,” but this intuitive notion of setting needs to be further refined.

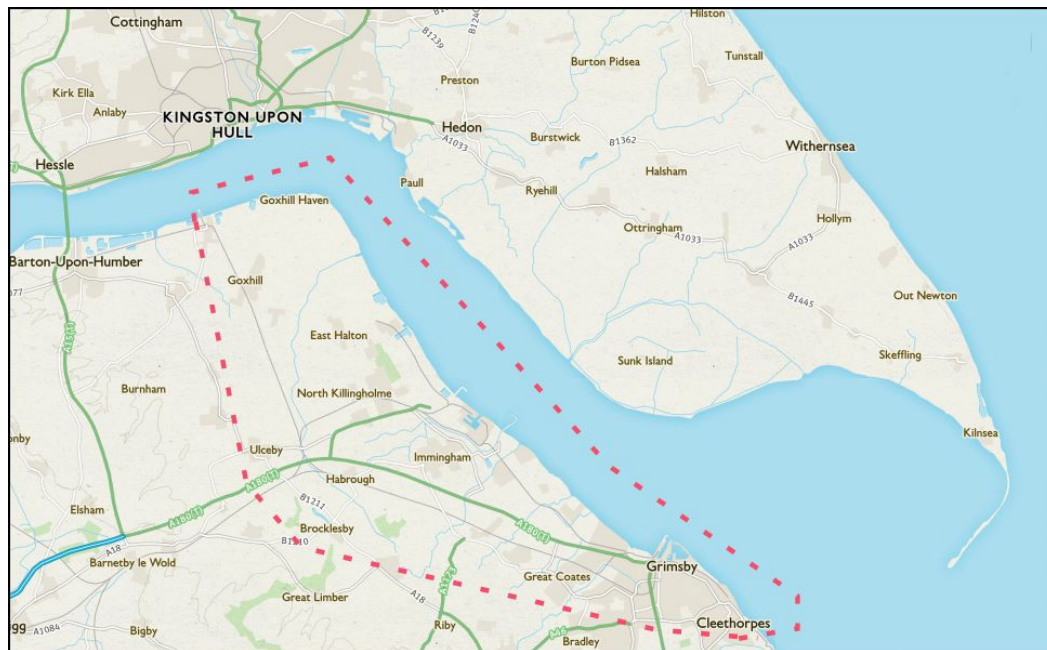
In the theater, we can distinguish the stage on which events are shown from the broader world that is the setting alluded to by the characters. In a written/visual narrative we can distinguish the individual locations where narratively significant events have taken place from the total space implied by the sum total of these events. It is the individual locations and the wider behavioural setting that constitute the human ecological niche within which people gain sustenance and other necessities. It comprises complex social relationships among unrelated and unknown individuals. Thus, a narrative of change is the product of evolution by natural selection acting on individuals and groups via modes of sociocultural niche construction. Aesthetic perception of cultural heritage has a big part in developing a sense of place.

To exemplify this aspect of a narrative of change, which may be used as a blueprint to produce a sense of place in an otherwise placeless population, a small obscure area of the UK county of Lincolnshire is being investigated as a case history. This comprises 16 modern communities on a former prehistoric area of estuarine fenland at the southeast margin of the River Humber. To the west it is bounded by the geological division between fenland and the chalk upland of the Lincolnshire Wolds. This boundary is now marked by the railway line between Cleethorpes and New Holland. Agents of change are varied and include, for instance, decisions to build the railway in the 19th century, the award of lands and their feudal communities to one of King William’s henchmen for services rendered in the Norman Conquest and the discovery of a 4,000 year old wooden Bronze Age track across tribal hunter-gatherer wetlands

The communities included in this area, designated the Cleethorpes-New Holland Niche Lands (CNNL Fig 2), are as follows;

New Holland	Keelby
Thornton	Habrough
Goxhill	Immingham
East Halton	Stallingborough
North Killingholme	Great Coats
South Killingholme	Healing
Ulceby	Grimsby
Brocklesby	Cleethorpes

Fig 2 Topographical map of the CNNL



A mind map of the CNNL is being developed at:

<https://www.mindmeister.com/802521356/oats-peas-beans-and-barley-grow>

5 Seed Journey: Equilibrating with Natural Capital

It has already been pointed out that Amy Franceschini’s work consistently reveals sustained questioning about how “nature” and “culture” are perceived. Her contribution to *Artes Mundi 7* uses the domestication of seeds to illustrate the need to value and conserve global natural capital and so equilibrate culture with the productivity of ecosystems. Natural Capital can be defined as the world’s stocks of humanity’s natural assets, which include geology, soil, air, water and all living things. It is from this Natural Capital that humans derive a wide range of cultural services, often called ecosystem services, which make human life possible. The most obvious ecosystem services include the food we eat, the water we drink and the plant materials we use for fuel, building materials and medicine (Fig). There are also many less visible ecosystem services such as climate regulation and natural flood defences provided by forests, the billions of tonnes of carbon stored by peatlands, or the pollination of crops by insects. Even less visible are aesthetic ecosystem services such as the experiences of joy and wonderment we take from wildlife and landscapes.

In their *Artes Mundi* installation *Futurefarmers* and the *Flatbread Society* point out that seeds contribute to the aesthetic experiences we get from encountering the elements of global capital that underpin conservation, food security, healthcare and natural regeneration in the wild. In particular, seeds are time capsules of life connecting the ‘now’ with the ‘future’ because of their ability to survive dormant in a dry state. Therefore, there are many reasons why individuals may prefer to protect a natural capital asset such as seeds, some are related to an individual’s own self-interest while others relate to the implications for other individuals,

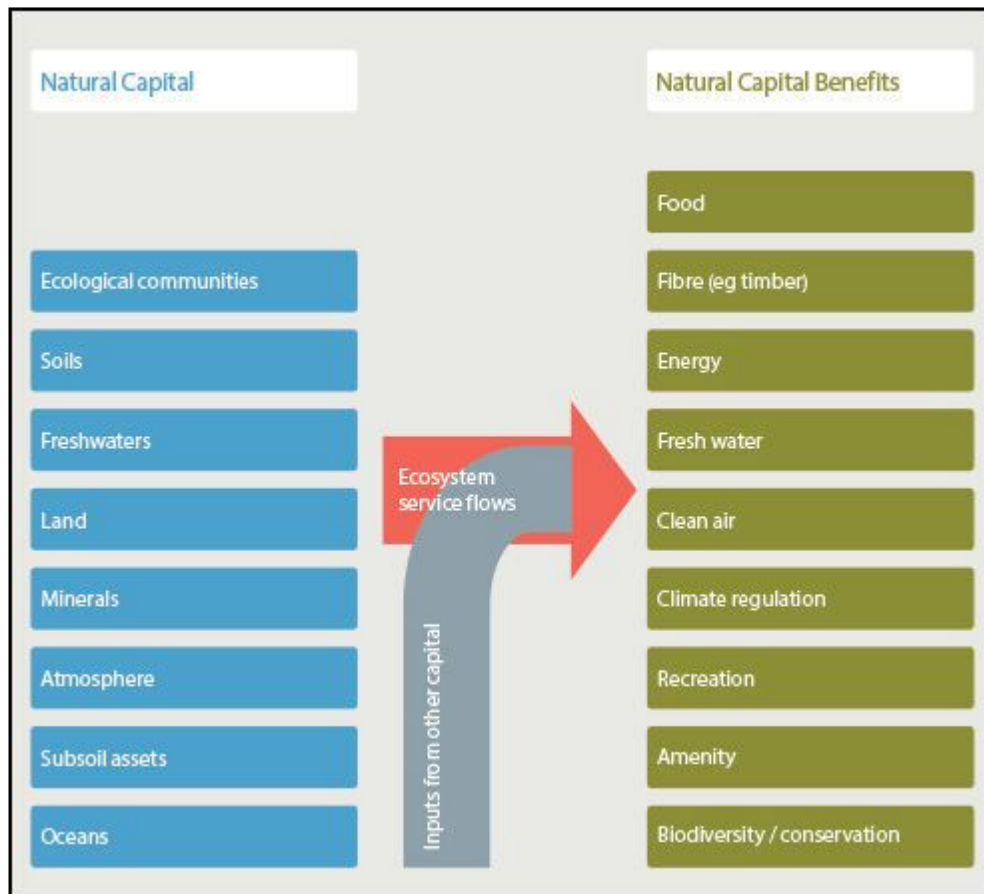
now or in the future. These motivations may be organised into a simple typology of Total Economic Value:

- Use values – direct and indirect uses people make of a natural capital asset now and may do in the future; and
- Non-use value – preferences to protect a natural capital asset for the benefit of others who are using it now (altruistic value), for future generations (bequest value) and for its own sake (existence value).

Economic analysis does not make a judgement about which motivation is more 'valuable' Rather, in an aesthetic encounter with an environmental agent it enables relative values to be measured by looking at what individuals are willing to give up for the thing they value – the more they are willing to give up, the more valuable the thing is. Where what's given up is money, expressing value in a monetary economic context has the advantage of comparing like with like within the framework of financial and other costs and benefits aimed at maintaining natural capital assets (Fig 3).

Therefore, the seed-bearing vessel Christiania is freighted with much more of value than cereal seeds. She carries the educational seeds of an interdisciplinary knowledge system for overcoming the barriers to living sustainably. Effectively, overcoming such barriers requires commitment by society as a whole to sustainable development. Such commitment would involve all of society's stakeholders to work collaboratively and in partnership, to develop policies and processes which integrate social, economic, cultural, political and conservation goals. To advance such goals, a curriculum reoriented towards sustainability would place the notion of citizenship among its primary objectives. It has to be recognized that many of the world's problems, including environmental problems, are related to our ways of living, and that solutions imply transforming the social conditions of human life as well as changes in individual lifestyles. This draws attention to the economic and political structures which cause poverty and other forms of social injustice and foster unsustainable practices. It draws attention to the need for people to learn the many processes for solving these problems through a broad and comprehensive education related not only to mastery of different subject matters, but equally to discovering real world problems of their society and the requirements for changing them. This kind of orientation would require, inter alia, increased attention to the humanities and social sciences in a curriculum for living sustainable.

Fig 3 Natural capital and its benefits



<http://www.landscapejournal.org/Working-with-natural-capital>

The natural sciences provide important abstract knowledge of the world but, of themselves, do not contribute to the humanitarian and ethical values and attitudes that must be the foundation of sustainable development. Even increased study of ecology is not sufficient to reorient education towards sustainability. Even though ecology has been described by some as the foundation discipline of environmental education, studies of the biophysical and geophysical concepts are a necessary – but not sufficient – prerequisite to understanding sustainability. The traditional primacy of nature study, and the often apolitical contexts in which is taught, need to be balanced with the study of social sciences and humanities. Learning about the interactions of ecological processes would then be associated with market forces, cultural values, equitable decision-making, government action and the environmental impacts of human activities in a holistic interdependent manner.

A reaffirmation of the contribution of education to society means that the central goals of education must include helping people learn how to identify elements of unsustainable development that concern them and how to address them. We all need to learn how to reflect critically on our place in the world and to consider what sustainability means to us and our communities. People need to practice envisioning alternative ways of development and living, evaluating alternative visions, learning how to negotiate and justify choices between visions, and making plans for achieving desired ones, and participating in community life to bring such visions into effect. These are the skills and abilities which underlie good

citizenship, and make education for sustainability part of a lifelong process of building an informed, concerned and active populace. In this way, cross cultural education for sustainability contributes to education for democracy and peace. This is the message common to all installations of Artes Mundi 7.

<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/08/25/seeds-of-doubt>