3 Positive Solutions Creative Actions (suitable for Lockdown)

Positive Solutions Arts

In December 2020 we asked XR Scotland rebels to make and photograph art representing a positive climate solution and to write something about this including examples of where it is already being put into practice. It was very popular and the calendar filled up quickly. We posted one solution on social media each day of December as an advent calendar.

We made a PDF of the art which you can view here

We wanted to continue the positive theme as a regenerative action to counter all the depressing news we're bombarded with. We also wanted to reach out beyond our social media followers and into the community. So in this document we have three projects we have on the go that people can do at home during lockdown (or anytime!). If you have any problems with any of the links in this document or questions please message Peach on Mattermost

1. Positive Solutions Fabric Jigsaw Puzzle Pieces (for wall hanging)
2. What If... (posters)
3. (Making It Personal) My Hope For... (photographs)

1. Positive Solutions Fabric Jigsaw Puzzle Pieces (for wall hanging)

UPDATE: There has been interest from across the UK to make a large wall hanging together and to take it to COP26. So If you're interested in being a link for this work in your area please email xredinburghmakers@gmail.com

Embroider, applique, paint, draw, glue a positive solution to the climate and ecological crisis. It can be something, global, national or local. You can print this template (it's A3 size so you may need to print over two A4 sheets and tape together) and cut your own material. (It can be useful if someone can pre-cut some puzzle fabric and post out to those who don't have access to a printer).

IMPORTANT DIRECTION: All puzzle pieces must face the same way when completed so they can fit together as a giant wall hanging jigsaw.

Template can be found here

If you're not sure how to print the template at home if you have an A4 printer, follow these instructions

When collecting puzzle pieces it could be useful to get name, age, location, contact details (MM, email) and a short blurb describing the design if you want to write a descriptor for the pieces when on display. Once all pieces are collected fit them together to create a large wall hanging/ banner. Can display and use to interact by inviting people in your local communities to add their own pieces (once lockdown ends).

Note: we haven't yet collected our pieces and fitted them together so not yet sure how exactly we're going to do this. It might be that we use a zigzag stitch along the edges to join them or place all pieces on backing fabric and stitch them on individually.

2) What If…

This is inspired by Rob Hopkins' Book 'From What Is to What If: Unleashing the Power of the Imagination to Create the Future We Want' and the podcast 'From What If to What Next' which you can find here or on other podcast platforms (very uplifting and hope-inducing podcast. Highly recommended)

Examples of 'what if' questions can be found in the titles of the podcasts or here are some from chapter 7 of the book. Use these or ask your own What Ifs. Form your question in the positive…what is it you want, rather than what you don't want? Walk around your local area and imagine how you would like it to be different. Be curious. Be playful. Invoke longing.

Rob writes that we can view the climate crisis 'as an historic, once off invitation to our brilliance'. What if we created a fossil free energy system within 20 years? What if every new house built generated more energy than it consumed? What if urban agriculture became utterly commonplace? What if our cities became huge biodiversity reserves? What if single use plastics were only things we saw in museums? What if you could swim safely in all the local waters? What if all residential streets were play streets? What if every street had public art? What if birdsong drowned out traffic noise? What if there were more trees than people? What if a squirrel could get from one side of the city to the other without touching the ground by jumping from tree to tree? What if you could see the Milky Way from every garden? What if we rewilded the golf courses? What if our shops were locally owned? What if we could make the city/town fully sovereign by 2025? What if we could reorient the economy to work along cooperative lines? What if we had a broad participatory democracy? What if we could create a truly equitable town/city/nation?

Make a poster or other medium asking your question. Stick this around your neighbourhood to prompt your community to start asking 'what if?' Invite the viewer to ask their own what if. Maybe you know of this 'what if' being implemented somewhere in the world- why not include this in the information, maybe a link for it so the viewers can see for themselves that it's possible.

LEGALITY- this counts as fly posting. Technically you could be prosecuted and fined but it's unlikely. Be careful about where you place it...not on private houses-keep it public. Or ask in shops to display it.

A poster template if you want to use it or make your own

Take photos of the 'What if' posters and collect these to make a collage for social media.

Bonus question: Is there something that you want to do in your local area when lockdown ends that invites your community to reimagine the space/possibilities? Examples: put a picnic bench or a raised bed garden in the street. Close off a road for a day so kids can play there. Create a map of locally owned shops selling local produce. How would you go about making that happen? What is the first step? Who do you want to get on board? Who would you need to speak to? Do you want to get permission from the local authorities or do you want to do it as a civil disobedience?

3) (Making It Personal) My Hope For...

Posts on social media starts on (we are using Spring Equinox but obviously can start any time) - photos/videos need to be emailed to (Add your local XR address) (with the subject heading MY HOPE FOR) 7 days before your scheduled date. Add your name to the calendar (create a calendar)

Take a photo or short film of a tree, flower, river, landscape, walk, animal, person/people (or symbols of those people) that mean something to you.

Write a couple of sentences/ paragraphs/ poem/ song about what it means to you and what your hope is for its future. "Charles Eisenstein looks at debates about global warming and proposes a narrative shift for the climate movement. Embracing love of nature, he writes, moves people beyond denial and passivity to the action necessary to protect life on our planet."

In addition (if you want, and to get the message out beyond our social media community) on the day of your post- email a copy of your photo/film and writing/ link to the social media post to your local councillors, MSPs, MPs. Environment MPs (you can find out how at https://www.writetothem.com/). Let them know what you hope that they will do about it. If you know of similar things already being done elsewhere share a link to that too to show it is possible.

Take it out into the community- print out /or create art and exhibit nearby. Add XR logo? Address for XRScotland FB. LEGALITY- this counts as fly posting. Technically you could be prosecuted and fined but it's unlikely. Be careful about where you place it...not on private houses -keep it public.