

Episode 6: “Artists as Honest Witnesses”

Lance Foster

The Art of Climate Dialogue

Vivian:

Welcome to The Art of Climate Dialogue: Stories From Iowa. Produced by myself, Vivian M Cook, and to The EcoTheatre Lab. And welcome to today's conversation with artist, educator and community leader, Lance Foster. Who will start our episode by sharing an artist statement for one of his artworks. And please check out our podcast website to see Lance's artwork for yourself.

Lance:

Adawe is a word in our tribal language which means many things. To heed, to give heed to, to pay attention to, to attend to, to watch, to watch on or over, take care of. Ho! Is not a command, but an exhortation. A hope and a wish for the one who listens to do what needs to be done, what is good to do. This artwork is a representation of the connection between Ni dhi (the Yellow River), and ni tanra, (the Great River, the Mississippi) here at Effigy Mounds. This is a connecting corridor, a travel path for animals and plants along the river systems. Like branches that connect to larger branches all the way to the trunk, the largest river.

The corridor connects the cores, places of refuge and reproduction for plants and animals. Many of these often at the connecting points along the rivers. These are places where the animals and plants disperse from and to, keep the land healthy. And then there are the bears moving along the river, representing the top carnivores, which are only supported by the healthiest of lands, the ones closest to the original ecosystems they have always been a part of. The grid is how that land was divided up by the Jeffersonian grid of townships and sections. And it is fragmented by human farming, residences, and utilities which obliterated the original land and its refuges, and even blocked the flow of life along its corridors. It is a question people need to ask. Is it possible to have both land that is healthy, with its cores, corridors, and carnivores as the original communities, and human community needs as well? The hand represents this decision to harm or to help. Red for life, and black for death, because it is the same hand of humanity that does both.

Vivian:

Addressing climate change is urgent, but in order to move toward action, we first have to find ways to talk about climate change with one another. The Art of Climate Dialogue: Stories From Iowa, is a podcast series featuring 13 conversations with artists, farmers, community engaged researchers, and community organizers and activists, who have all used arts and storytelling strategies to talk about climate change and agriculture. Through this podcast, they generously share these strategies so that listeners can implement them in their own communities. I'm Vivian and I invite you to explore The Art of Climate Dialogue with me. As we enter into these conversations around climate action, sustainable agriculture and community engaged arts in Iowa, The EcoTheatre Lab and I want to first recognize that Indigenous nations have been leaders in such conversations for centuries and continue to be today. Iowa now occupies the homelands of Native American nations to whom we owe our commitment and dedication.

Iowa is now situated on the homelands and trading routes of the Ioway, Meskwaki, and Sauk, Otoe, Omaha, Ianktonwan and Santee. And because history is complex and time goes far back beyond memory, we also acknowledge the ancient connections of many other Indigenous peoples here. The history of broken treaties and forced removal that dispossessed Indigenous peoples of their homelands, was and is, an act of colonization and genocide that we cannot erase. And as a result, Indigenous ecosystems within Iowa have suffered from extraction, degradation and unsustainable agricultural practices, contributing to the ongoing climate crisis. Understanding and addressing these injustices is critical as we work toward climate dialogue, action, and justice in our communities. My thanks to

Episode 6: “Artists as Honest Witnesses”

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The Art of Climate Dialogue

podcast interviewees Shelley Buffalo, enrolled member of the Meskwaki Tribe; Lance Foster, enrolled member and tribal historian of the Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska; and Sikowis Nobiss, Plains Cree/Saulteaux of the George Gordon First Nation, for their collaboration in developing this acknowledgement.

Lance M. Foster is a member of the Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska, of the Ioway Nation. Raised in Montana, he received a BA in anthropology and Native American studies from University of Montana, as well as an MA in anthropology, and an MLA in landscape architecture from Iowa State University. He's an alumnus of the Institute of American Indian Arts. Lance was the director of the Native Rights Land and Culture division of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, a historical landscape architect for the National Park Service, and an archeologist for the US Forest Service. He taught at the University of Montana, Helena College of Technology. Currently, Lance serves his tribe as Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, consulting for the tribe on environmental and cultural compliance. He founded the tribal museum and is an Ioway language advocate and Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act Officer. He serves on the Indian Advisory Council of Iowa's Office of the State Archeologist.

Lance is the author of the Indians of Iowa, and has appeared in the documentaries, America's Lost Landscape, the Tallgrass Prairie, Lost Nation, the Ioway, and Life before Fairfield. An artist, an educator, Lance resides with his wife in White Cloud, Kansas. He was elected Vice Chairman of the Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska in the fall of 2019. He led the effort in establishing Ioway Tribal National Park (Baxoje Mowotanani) in Kansas-Nebraska. And the return of the Tribal Boarding School, the Presbyterian Mission in Kansas, both of which were achieved. He is on the board of the National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, as Southern Plains member. And on the board of the Nebraska Chapter of the Nature Conservancy. Welcome Lance, and thanks so much for joining the podcast, and for sharing with us the artist statement from one of your pieces. I'm very glad to have you here.

Lance:

Yeah, I'm glad to be here. Thank you.

Vivian:

You just started off by reading your artist statement for Adawe Ho!, an art piece you created for the 2019 ReImagining Iowa, Ioway Artist Exhibition, presented by BeWildReWild. This exhibition featured artwork from five Ioway artists. And according to the exhibit introduction, explored a future for Iowa by those whose ancestors used to live harmoniously here, during a time when people were not driven by desires and non-essential possessions, but took only what was needed for survival. Can you tell us more about this exhibit and the two pieces you contributed to it?

Lance:

Yes. It was conceived of by a man who was running an organization called BeWildReWild. His name is R. Ross Gipple. And his idea was to fund an exhibition that would engage with the idea of rewilding. And rewilding is the idea of letting land heal itself by removing human intervention as much as possible, and letting the land be itself. And that in fact rewilding, wild the word comes from the same root that means one's will. And so what is the land's will, what is the land's will? That is to rewild something. So several of us put together an exhibit. As myself, Reuben Kent, Sydney Maybrier Pursel, and Kayla Kent. And we put together several pieces that we kind of connect with the idea of rewilding the land up there, Effigy Mounds. Which is an ancestral location for us. It's the point just before we divided from some of the other Siouan speaking people like the Omaha and Dakota and other people, other relations to us.

Episode 6: "Artists as Honest Witnesses"

Lance Foster

The Art of Climate Dialogue

So this was a little before 1000 AD, and even further back than that, in the Woodland period. My two pieces, Adawe Ho!, which I described to you, and Mowotanani, which is about the original land. A man looking out over the landscape and the rivers, and then seeing the different invisible side of life in the sky, with the morning star there. Those were my contributions to that. I remember Sydney for example, used a gumball machine that had seeds, depending on which one would come out. Some of the native plants around the area like milkweed, that sort of thing. I think it did kind of bring in not only a native point of view to a place that is often distanced in time from people of today. People don't, they almost seem to think the only real Indians existed a long time ago, and all the rest today are either not real Indians, or don't exist at all. So it was a good way to kind of get people thinking. Not only about the land, but about Indigenous people and our connections to Effigy Mounds.

Vivian:

Thanks so much for sharing that. And you said you feel like it was a good way to get people connected to this history and present of this landscape. Can you talk a little bit more about how people interacted with the exhibit, how people interacted with these pieces?

Lance:

I think people did use Sydney's machine, and bought a few of seeds out of it. I also know that some of the pieces are in loway Here To Stay, which is a show that Sidney curated at our historic mission here, and then also down at Atris in Kansas. So I think these pieces have been jumping around from place to place. I've heard good things from people about it. I unfortunately couldn't go. I do know that Reuben gave a pre-presentation there. I think Sydney also talked about the pieces. But it was right there in the visitors center at Effigy Mounds, so a lot of people got to see them.

Vivian:

So is that a pretty public place?

Lance:

Right. And I think, sometimes they came there just for that show that Reuben and Sydney put together, presentation. But also, just when people traveled around looking at, just as regular tourists to different places, there's art in the parks is one of the things that people do. And they come upon an alternative interpretation. A different way than just the archeological static kind of pictures of the past. I think from what I heard, made people really think things in a different way.

Vivian:

You described what Adawe means, and about this call to heed, or to watch on or over, or to take care of. How do you feel like your artwork, especially that piece, encourages people to look at our relationship with the environment differently? Think about what's happening with the climate differently, and our role in that?

Lance:

Well, I know that it has the representation of the Mississippi River. And a connection, the two large kind of circles being those cores that connect to the river along the Yellow River. And then has, just there, the most famous kind of mound up at Effigy Mound are the Marching Bears. And so I had those mounds representing our bears connecting from along the river, and then joining down there at Yellow River.

Episode 6: "Artists as Honest Witnesses"

Lance Foster

The Art of Climate Dialogue

And in the background there are some faint drawings of tractors, and row crops, and earth moving machinery and stuff. So that kind of is like what they call a palimpsest, where something that existed before is kind of rubbed away, but you can still see its traces. And that's the thing, and we'll talk more about that too. About the fact that people feel, and then think. And so, although it's somewhat narrative as a piece, it's also a way to get people to ask questions about what it means.

Like a lot of artists do, I don't want to just come out and say it, although I usually end up coming out and saying it. But I think it's good for people to just kind of wonder at first, anyway.

Vivian:

Yes, definitely. And you said your piece shows this merging of what's going on with the land. And now the questions we need to be asking about our relationship with the land, and the life around us. And then also, the historical landscape. And there's a conversation between those. So you are an anthropologist and historian yourself. And so a lot of the visual artwork that I've seen of yours, and your writing, explores this connection between the history, present and future, of our landscapes. How do you think documenting our history through art in particular, can help us move toward a future that addresses climate change?

Lance:

Well I hope we address climate change, because it's not just a future. The greatest effects will be noticeable in the future, but we notice it happening all around us now. So it's not something that's going to happen, it is something that is happening. I don't know how people can engage with it, it's pretty big. All the battery powered cars that you have, they all have ripples throughout the environment. I mean although we want to try to save carbon emissions as being one of the huge effects, the fact is, that to get those cars, you still use petroleum to manufacture them. And the rare earth minerals that make up those batteries have to be mined from somewhere, whether it is some of the worst effects in places like Brazil and China. But then here, even here in Nebraska, there's a mine, Elk Creek Mine, which is slated to start rare earth mining as well. So the point is, not just technology, technology is going to fix this. It's going to have to be a totally different way of understanding life, and wanting less, and thinking differently.

And I don't know that people will be able to do that. But you got to try, right? And you got to help people begin to grapple with the disturbance we feel inside, that something isn't quite right, that we cover up with more and more hamburgers and cars.

Vivian:

Right. And you're talking about whether technology is a fix, and how we often think, or lately than we're looking at technology fixes as if they're easy, instead of really examining the narratives we're telling about our relationships with the land, and how that's affecting climate change. You and I have talked about the differences between progress, sustainability and resilience. And how those are not equivalent terms or concepts. How do you explore the differences between those in your artwork, and why?

Lance:

One of the things I learned in grad school, is that in order to talk about anything, in order to really fruitfully discuss anything, you have to get at the definitions first. If you can't agree on definitions, then it's really hard to get anywhere in your discussion. For example, if I wanted to say, "Hey, think of a chair." Okay, I'm telling you right now, think of a chair. Now, did you think of a rocking chair, a kitchen

Episode 6: "Artists as Honest Witnesses"

Lance Foster

The Art of Climate Dialogue

chair, a recliner, a stool? I mean, if you can't agree on something as concrete, when I say what does a chair mean? You can't come to an agreement on that, then how can you come into agreement on what progress is, or sustainability or resilience? So I mean you have to find a common ground first. And with a lot of us today, we think so differently, our worldviews are so different. Not just politically, just even what existence is, that you almost have to spend a lot of time working on what you agree about what the definitions might be.

So progress is, and it's essential to get from one point to another. And that's just the meaning. But the idea behind it is that things are going to get better, somehow. It's always going to get where we make more money, we have improved health. People's idea of progress is very different.

Vivian:

Right. Like what does get better mean?

Lance:

Right. What does get better mean? How do you define that? Sit down with 10 people and say, "What do you mean by getting better?" You're going to have at least eight or nine totally different ideas. And sustainability is a catchphrase now to say, "Well, sustainable development." Well okay, if you're developing things, sustainability means that it will be able to carry on at a certain rate, at a certain point, because you have a finite world. How can it be sustainable to that point? I mean, if you want to look at the cycle of rain, that's sustainable because there's only so much water in our system. And it goes into the clouds, it goes on the earth. Some of it soaks into the ground, some goes into the ocean. And evaporation, it goes again. That's kind of like sustainability. Water's on our planet for millions and millions, billions of years in that sense.

But how can we be economically sustainable? What does that mean to people? Especially how does sustainability work with progress, or does it? If something, what we're doing right now is already destroying things, or causing problems in our ecosystem, or in the world system, whether it's human or other, the ripples are going out. How is that sustainable anyway? I do think that resilience is something. For example, when we had the pandemic, the whole idea in the economy was, I developed from warehouses, to the idea of just-in-time. Which means, whatever it is you're selling, if five are going out, then five should come in on a regular kind of conveyor belt sort of idea. So the trucks keep going, you don't ever fall behind, you already always have whatever it is in stock. And as long as the systems are having no hiccups, like floods, or bridge collapses, or pandemics, then that flow is fine.

But once you get a pandemic, all the warehouses empty out. And then, even now, we have problems with eggs. Now they're talking about smuggling eggs across the border from Mexico. Because just-in-time, so efficiency, which is what just-in-time's about, is not the same as resilience. 'Cause resilience is having that spare tire in your trunk. It's not efficient because it takes up space in your trunk, but when you need it, it's sure nice to have. So those are the kind of things that people need to discuss, before even we decide what we need to do, or what we can do. These differences in my artwork, I'm just beginning to engage with that.

Vivian:

You said you're just beginning to engage with that. I know that you have a lot of different modes of art that you operate in, as a visual artist and a writer. But also as a community leader, and what it means to design processes for storytelling, and for people to come together and talk about these questions.

Episode 6: “Artists as Honest Witnesses”

Lance Foster

The Art of Climate Dialogue

Lance:

Yeah.

Vivian:

I mean one thing this podcast is trying to explore is yeah, what you said about the importance of people getting on the same page, and even having a conversation to define what we mean by climate change, and how it's affecting us. And what is sustainability, what is resilience, what is adaptation? I mean what I've seen, even in my own community, is people aren't really talking about it. And I think that's across a lot of our communities, that we don't talk about it enough. And then it's really hard to actually make action plans, and to become more resilient together.

You said you're exploring these topics more recently, but I know several of the pieces that I've seen of yours that are from quite a few years ago, I think you were starting to ask these questions. At least as a viewer looking at your artwork. We've talked about a painting of yours titled Wamanje Hintewi, that was in the Iowa Gallery at the World Food Prize Hall of Laureates, and that that means, our crops. And you've talked about how the history of the World Food Prize, where this piece is displayed, is directly connected to the industrialization of agriculture. Which I think brings in a lot of questions about what progress means, because the industrialization of agriculture and the green revolution, I think were seen as great progress, but a lot of those practices are contributing greatly to climate change. So how has your painting, which highlights the origins of Iowa agriculture and loway culture, contributed to conversations around agriculture today, and in the future, and what progress means?

Lance:

Well that painting that I did for the Hall of Laureates, is kind of a part two. The very first one was when I was going to school at Iowa State, and there was, as part of the American Indian Symposium that David Gradwohl and others had established there in the seventies. Every year there was a new speaker, and that one was about agriculture. And that one, it was the same woman who was actually planting the seeds. And the four different colors of corn. And around the boundary of it, there was a John Deere tractor stylized, kind of talking about today, and how the big plume of dust behind it. And even then I was exploring the idea of our traditions, which are the first seven feet of the earth are made up of our people, who have been buried for thousands of years here. And the farmer going along this tractor and not even thinking about that. Or about all the things that created that soil that provides him for a living, and all the things that we need for materials of the society we live in now.

So that was the first stage. And then when the Hall of Laureates, the World Food Prize asked me about doing one for their gallery, because they needed something that talked about the Indigenous contribution. At that time I thought, you know what, let me do the part two, which is in the fall. Because the first one was spring planting, and then this one would be the fall, when she's getting ready to harvest, and all the things that she planted are ready to go, ready to harvest. And thinking about it, and then visiting it later in Des Moines, walking through the gallery and seeing that, and then coming here. I was raised in Montana, before the big Montana gold rush sort of thing that's going on now. And it was a very different Montana back then, than it is now, which is all about again, money. And I'm seeing Iowa change. When I was taking landscape architecture there, they said over 90%, 98% of the land is different than when we left it, our loway people left it for the settlers to come in, when we were pushed out.

And so it's very different. And the water has become undrinkable in many cases, and everything's pretty poisoned. It took me living here and understanding the input that it took to create the green revolution, that helped to feed the world. Not only though that feeds the world, it creates new products, and corn

Episode 6: "Artists as Honest Witnesses"

Lance Foster

The Art of Climate Dialogue

syrup, and all these things that also increases diabetes. And a lot of that, it's for fuel, it's not really for food anyway. It's really complex. We all have narratives, we all have nice stories. Because as a human being, not only do we learn through images, we learn through stories. And the story is, feeding the world, and it's a beautiful story. But when you look into it and you see that we're not only poisoning through nitrates and stuff that we need to get the green revolution, then it's like, wow.

The deeper you look, it's kind of like with a lot of what they call greenwashing, a lot of the solar stuff, you find out that it takes all the mining to be able to do that. Or the wind turbines, after the blades wear out, where do you put the big old fiberglass blades? It's never a simple one and done situation, there are always ripples. There are always all these connections to things that at first you don't think about it, because you think you're doing a good thing. And the deeper you look into it, and you see how many connections there are that create unseen and cumulative effects, that you begin to wonder. And then, you realize maybe all you can do is be an honest witness, because there's so little that I can actually do about it. But maybe I can help people see more clearly what's happening. And even that, is that good? Is that good to help people see more clearly, especially if you can't do very much? And if it creates unrest in people's hearts, and despair, and all that?

I mean, is that really a good thing? I don't know. After a while, you just do what you are. And that's kind of what I'm grappling with, really.

Vivian:

You say, being an honest witness is sometimes all you can do. And maybe that's what you are doing, and the people on this whole podcast series are doing? Through artwork and stories, is how do we talk about what's happening now, what happened in the past? And trying to hopefully envision something different, where we have maybe figured out a way to be more resilient. I've talked about with several people on this podcast series, this difficult balance between the despair, and depression, and tragedy that comes with talking about climate change. And where there's room for hope, without hope being a false narrative, that just say, "No, things can get better." But where's there room for genuine conversations about what a hopeful future could look like, to address the climate change that's happening now? And I'm curious how you have navigated that balance in your own work.

You mentioned briefly at the beginning, the other piece that was in the Reimagining Iowa exhibit Mowotanani, in that you've actually created several pieces with this image of this figure who's surrounded by his environment in some way, looking, connecting with the environment in some way. I know you put the figure in multiple paintings, right? In this one, Mowotanani, you say in your artist statement means, the land the way it was originally made by the creator. And you talk about how today, many people don't trust the land, and so we're disconnected from it, and have made it captive to our purposes in many cases. And that leads to the kind of tragic, uncertain how to see things the way they are. And I'm wondering how you use artwork to show an alternative relationship with the land, and how that balances hope and despair?

Lance:

Yeah. See, I think kids are born within the extent of a living world. They look at their pets and they see a kind of a person. They see somebody that looks back at them, maybe can't talk. Maybe kind of talks to them a little bit in a weird kind of way. They have monsters under the bed and in the closet. They have cartoon, they have stuffed animals they name. They really reflect on it, what they call an animistic sort of worldview, which is everything is alive. Maybe the big tree in the front yard, they both enjoy the shade, but they also climb it, and it becomes a friend to them. So this kind of dynamic kind of feel the

Episode 6: “Artists as Honest Witnesses”

Lance Foster

The Art of Climate Dialogue

kid has, before we get labels on things. Before you, whether you go to a traditional Indian ceremony, or whether you go to a church, or whether you go to a science lab or whatever. You're later on, and all these feelings underneath get channeled into these different kind of group identities.

There's something dynamic in every living human, that sees the butterfly as something like yourself, something living in holy. And I think that the word Mowotanani, we don't have a word ... The reason it came up with this, is because the loway National Park that has been kind of another art project in a way, which I've been devoted to over the last couple years, is kind of derived. We don't have a word for a national park. We don't even have the word for wilderness. Wilderness is not a concept in our traditional culture. Wilderness is something that came about in the European dichotomy of a world that you dominate and domesticate, and then that world out there in the mountains, or whatever it is, wild is. Jesus fasted, and that's where the devil was. And that's where scary wolves and Little Red Riding Hood. And we don't have that.

It's not part of our idea. We're all related, everything is connected. And it's not to say it's a fuzzy Disney world, no. I mean, there are dangerous animals, there are dangerous places, places you don't go. But it's all a living thing that the creator, everything that exists is here, the mystery created to be here, and it all has a role. We may not know it, but we're limited. We're not on top of things the way the Western mindset is, that humans are the central part of the world. We see it as we're a connected part of the world. It's all a big community. So Mowota is wild food. It's all the greens, it's all the wild plants that you use for medicine, and food, and shelter, and all the tools you make. So Mowotanani has to do with, that's where all that comes from. That's the original world, that's the real world. The world we built is on top of that, using that. But it's not the real world.

When there are periods of collapse in our civilizations, the real world comes back. We saw that during the pandemic when the animals started coming out more, and crossing bridges, and going up streets. And the air cleared. And even in India and places where there's a lot of people, nature just for a year or two began to slowly start coming back, because that is the real world. And things like money, and credit cards, and economic systems, those are things we've made up that we all agreed to believe in, but they're not the real world in that sense. They will not be forever, they weren't before we came on the scene. So that's kind of what that figure represents. It's like I started painting that sort of figure when I was in my teens and twenties, of a man on a vision quest looking out, trying to understand the mysteries of the world, different places he found himself.

And the latest version I have, the sticker I have for the Iowa Tribal National Park, has a man and his wife and child there, all together, because it's a family. Before it was a single person, and now it's really more about how are you connected together? Looking out at the future in the world, and trying to ... I don't know, it's not about living in the past. I do use past imagery, because that's what people connect as identifiably Indian. But I've also done pictures with an older lady out on her stoop in front of her house, and broken down cars with sagebrush growing through it. And she's looking at a grasshopper on her cane, establishing that relationship. 'Cause all of it around us, it's still alive. Now we've buried it with our stuff, but it's still there and it's ready to come back. And I don't know that we want it back as a society.

I don't know what we see as our end point. We've even got people thinking that it's the Matrix or something somehow, that that's the real world, this computer world in their mind. We're so distanced from reality, that people think chocolate milk comes from brown cows. So it's a lot of work to do. And if you can find one little piece of it that you can try to help people with, cool, to engage with the world. I taught art for about seven years, up in Helena. I had a lot of veterans from Afghanistan and Iraq and stuff, who had gone through some very bad things. And to have just an hour where they could draw, and go outside and look at the beauty in things, really understand the beauty and the transient of

Episode 6: "Artists as Honest Witnesses"

Lance Foster

The Art of Climate Dialogue

things. You see calmness coming over them and they just really, you set them out and pencil and stuff in front of them. You help them maybe do the eye a little bit like this.

Look, if that's what you're going for, realism. And they're happy. And I think art can really help heal people. So they can engage with whatever truth they have to face is. Whether it's climate change, or something in their own lives.

Vivian:

That's something that has come up quite a bit over my interviews in this podcast series. Both the idea that our relationships with each other, moving from the figure of a man interacting with his environment, to the figures of a family and how we have to agree what we believe in. I think that's really insightful to think about is, that we do, we make agreements all the time about what we're going to believe, or not believe in. And like you said earlier, how we're going to define the conversations that we have to have. Whether it's about the economy, the environment, or social relationships, or how they're all intertwined. And I think it's really fascinating how the art that you create, you said you use past imagery because it's recognizable. But it's also showing relationships, and how relationships with each other and the environment not only could be, but have been, and still are for some people.

That having a different relationship with the environment that is more reciprocal, that is more about community, isn't just in the past. And also, isn't just imaginary. That it's something we can consider now. And that you're doing that with your students, or have done that with your students too, giving them opportunities to process. And you've talked about that with me when we've talked previously, is how art can help us process our relationship with the ecosystems we're living in, especially when those conversations are polarizing, and can be paralyzing I think, in a lot of ways.

Lance:

That's true. Because English is very much an object centered language. Nouns are put in different relationships by verbs in our loway language, Baxoje. The language is much more verb centered. It is about action, and in some points actions become things. In some places, like for example the word for God, Wakanda, we used that long before Marvel Universe did. But Wakanda, the word kan, kan means something that's so old, or so big, so mysterious, it's beyond your understanding, it's beyond all that. And then you put da at the end, and it means at a certain place. And wa in front of it, it's something. So the ka is the process of mysteriousness of something being hard to understand. But then you put in front of it and it becomes something that we call Wakanda, which is like a Manitou, which is a community of spirits under God who made everything, Ma'Un the earth maker, who put all these things together in a mysterious way that we recognize. And we just almost like we live just a little bit of it. And then it was too late, and then we fade away.

We become part of the mystery ourselves. And we always were really part of the mystery, and that's the thing. I think West is just still not understanding and accepting, is that nature is not something separate from human beings. Human beings are part of nature too. So if you want to understand how people need to live or interact, you learn that from seeing how nature is, and how ecosystems are. And how the things that live for a long time, how they are. So art is a process, and you end up with a piece of art that you hang on a wall or something. And as any artist knows, or any craftsperson of any kind knows, or a farmer, when you're doing the work, is when you get into another place in your mind, and then the product is something different. The product is something, sometimes it succeeds and sometimes it doesn't.

Episode 6: "Artists as Honest Witnesses"

Lance Foster

The Art of Climate Dialogue

But is the process just as important? And so the process that you see in the ecosystem is really the important thing. I remember there was a saying that every sacred place is where the mystery stopped. And at those places is where you can see the mystery. That's why things are sacred or whole there. But yeah, it's all stuff to grapple with, and try to ... and if you say it, just like I'm saying it now, it becomes pedantic, and you're trying to explain something that really can't be explained. You can learn things through stories and you can learn things through art.

Vivian:

Well you've said that. You've talked about how art can help us think and ask questions, without telling us what to think. That it creates these pathways for people to maybe engage, without it being pedantic, or without telling people that they're wrong, or hitting them over the head with facts and figures that start to become mush, because we just are kind of overwhelmed by them all the time. What do you think it is about artistic techniques that can facilitate such a process? You've worked in a wide variety of disciplines and positions, in anthropology, and history, and architecture, and archeology, and education, and museums, and government. You've been in all of these different spheres. So what do you think artistic techniques can offer to climate dialogue, that is unique from other disciplines?

Lance:

Well for me, I guess I think different than you're supposed to think, because I always just figure I'm being me. And part of what I am comes through in anthropology, and part through art, and part through whatever. So there's just who I am. And sometimes you can find a position that pays in a particular aspect of who you are, and sometimes you can't. And you're out there creating art, or taking long walks or whatever. But I think for example, there are a lot of things we can learn from safe storytelling. You can tell the same story, Little Red Riding Hood or whatever, from childhood to adulthood, and it's like a flower. Every time you hear it, another petal opens. And you begin the same story you've heard all your life. You can learn more and more from that very same story, because it reflects, it kind of touches on something you experienced as an adult that you didn't experience as a kid.

And art is the same way. And that's why artists a lot of times, don't like to try to tell what the art's about, because they want people to bring themselves to the art, and for the art to touch on themselves. Now some artists get really hoity toity and weird about it, and that's part of their mystique that they create, to try to make a lot of money and convince people their geniuses and stuff. But the main thing is that art goes beyond words, and it goes into something older than writing. I mean, we were creating this stuff 40, 50,000 years ago, and long before we started writing. And the animals you see in some of those cave paintings and stuff, there's a lot of details and things that people don't even, they're just beginning to uncover, like the 3D representation from different angles. Animals kind of come alive, or joined with other animals.

So that's the exciting thing. Land art, like Spiral Jetty, that's changed over time. It's original appearance, the salt that builds up on it, and the raising and lowering of the water level and everything. So it becomes something different. And I love that Andy Goldsworthy's kind of worked in those kind of things, about the process of ice and leaves and everything on water. And it is, the process is important. They take pictures of, it's not the end thing, which usually is transient and disappears. But that's not really great in the world of art when you're trying to make a living a lot of times, because then it's about looks, matches people's sofas or whatever, which I've been criticized about my colors being too vivid for people's sofas.

Episode 6: "Artists as Honest Witnesses"

Lance Foster

The Art of Climate Dialogue

Vivian:

This is probably a tangent honestly, but this idea of what kind of art do people have to make in order to make a living? But then, that I think goes back to what you were saying about our agreeing how to define things. And that art, in a way that makes a living, is for people to purchase and hang in their homes. And a lot of the art that I think we are discussing on this podcast series, is actually art that is meant for public spaces, or for people to stumble upon. Or like you've talked about, that you have all of this art that you merge with your historical and research narratives, to help people connect more deeply with our understanding of history and the environment. And then that you also have the art that you're currently doing, that is really public and in community spaces. And one thing that I hope people start to recognize more, which is happening to some degree now in some communities, that there is a different value to processes like art making and storytelling, that we haven't necessarily given it, including an economic value.

So there's some communities that have artists in residence that are working with city planners, and working on community engagement. And there actually is being given some sort of economic and social value beyond just aesthetics, although aesthetics obviously play an important part in getting people to engage in the first place. But I hope more of that will happen, especially because I think people like you, I mean I look up to you in this work, because you've talked about how you have put your artistic lens into a lot of the work that you do, and a lot of different disciplines. And that you've combined it with your work in the community. And how these things can go together, and they're more connected than we often think. So thank you for that.

Lance:

They really are.

Vivian:

I wanted to talk about a couple of the initiatives actually that you've recently started, or are working on right now, that are talking about community art and community engaged work that's connected to your role. So can you tell us about the Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska Arts Committee, and the projects y'all have initiated so far? And how you see this committee helping to catalyze dialogue about climate action?

Lance:

Yeah. So our tribe helped us, well established this committee among tribal members. As I mentioned before, Sydney Pursel and her father Philip, artists, and another young man who works with us, Brett Ramey, they kind of initiated a mural project in White Cloud, that's kind of one of the kind of usual historical murals a lot of small communities have. And they worked on that for a long time. The weather being the weather, and they weren't living here at the time, so they'd have to come and go to finish it, and they did. White Cloud was where Paper Moon was filmed in part, and there's a lot of histories named after one of our head chiefs that we had. So there's all these different images that connect there. And people started thinking more and more about art. A lot of rural communities are very utilitarian. They have nostalgic views of the old grandparents' farmhouse, and maybe a pretty cornfield and things like that.

And there's certainly an appreciation for the history that's in these places. But art sometimes is just kind of scarce in these, there's other priorities. So when people saw that mural, they said, "We need more of that here." And we've been talking about different ways to let people know the boundaries of our

Episode 6: “Artists as Honest Witnesses”

Lance Foster

The Art of Climate Dialogue

reservation, and our culture and everything. So the first big project that we got a grant for, was a mural that ended up on the side of our carwash. And it is reminiscent of ribbon work. Traditional ribbon work, and the positive negative sides, that in a sense of art, positive/negative, not morals. But the idea of light and dark, a day and night, and above and below and that kind of thing. And they had a community planning part to this, where people collected plants and drew patterns from the leaves, from some of the significant kinds of plants that they encountered. And then tracks from some of the clans that were historical.

And they put this all together, and it was kind of a consensus design. And they put it up and it's a beautiful thing. And people started getting more and more excited about this, because art is really about your identity. And we have a bee farm and honey operation, so there was a design there. Now water bottles, all these things that we're trying to do with part of an economic development. So art as you well know, is just intrinsic. And it's vital to revitalizing communities, and expanding opportunities. People feel and respond to art. And that was kind of the core. It's a combination of our identity and our economic development that we're trying to do here, in a rural place. Brett especially, we have him hired on to do, through a grant for climate resilience, to engage the community on that level. And he's worked with interns on the farm.

We do regenerative agriculture here, to try to decrease the needed inputs, things like the sprays and everything. How can we create a living soil that brings back life, and with the pollinators and everything? So that kind of connects with the Iowa Tribal National Park, which is kind of the natural side of things. The Mowotanani part of our landscape, along with the máxe. The máxe is the farm fields. So we were shattered pretty badly by the missionizing, and assimilation, and genocide that all tribes were subject to. And now we're trying to regroup, try to find those puzzle pieces, and pieces in our memory, our collective memory, and our ancestors, and our history, and the land itself. To try to rebuild who we are as loway, particularly. Native American, there's no such thing as the Indian language. They're languages. We all have commonalities, we all have our own differences, and we're trying to explore that through art, especially as a rural community.

We've had pushback from people who are still conventional ag kind of thinking. And that they don't find beauty in natural things as much. They rip out all the shelter belts and they ripped out all the trees, so that you get another row corn in there. And that's the tension, the contested landscapes we're all experiencing in rural areas. And after a while, where's the beauty? I mean I guess people have these differences in beauty, but how do you begin to see what people find as beautiful? And that is an important thing. I think in rural communities, people have to engage with what is beautiful? How do you define what is beautiful, and is it important at all, or is it everything about utility?

Vivian:

Right. That's again, something that we've talked about on this podcast in several different interviews, is yeah, how do we shift that definition of beauty? And we have to start seeing how agriculture could be, how our relationship with the environment could be in a way that still allows us to practice agriculture, but also protect our rural, and in small communities, economic and social landscapes too? And how all of that's intertwined. I'm excited to see what y'all do with the committee too, 'cause I think that's something that is inspiring, to see how you're bringing art, and economic development, and social and cultural, and agricultural conversations altogether, which seems critical for climate resilience. You also completed a mural project recently for an I29 rest area. What is this project, and how do you envision people interacting with it, once it's installed this fall?

Episode 6: “Artists as Honest Witnesses”

Lance Foster

The Art of Climate Dialogue

Lance:

Well you probably know, and I know your listeners have seen a lot of the rest areas around Iowa that connect with say, different historical themes or cultural themes. I've seen one for Lewis and Clark, for example, up by Sioux City. And I've seen one over by Iowa City, it's about writers, and because Iowa City's so famous for its writing program, the University of Iowa there. So sometimes it's a combination of art in the rest area. Sometimes they're outside sculptures and other elements, that really get people curious in thinking about their world. So the one in I29, and it's the Northbound one near Glenwood, is actually connected to the importance of Glenwood. Glenwood was a culture and was part of the Nebraska culture, which were ancestral to the Caddoans, who split into the Pawnee and the Arikara. And so earth launches are part of the site complex there.

And so there's been efforts a long time to try to make people understand the importance of that place, and create a park, and create museums and things. So it's part of the Iowa Department of Transportation's effort to connect with those community interests. As well as the travelers, to enrich their understanding of the landscape. So my piece is kind of a larger, it's getting blown up to 10 by 14. The painting itself was smaller, about two by three feet roughly. And it is of an earth lodge, and the life inside an earth lodge. Ceremonial, also preparing meals and stuff, divided into the four seasons. It shows kind of that cycle of life throughout the year. It's going to be inside the rest area. And outside they'll have a lodge. They'll have a place where people who are interested in the different tools, the arrowheads and things of that culture, the pottery.

So it's going to be kind of almost like a mini museum in a lot of ways, but it'll be on the artistic side of that. And there are other artists there too. I know Kayla Kent will have one of her pieces there again too. Usually with those kind of projects, there's a percentage under federal money that you have to have toward art, and I think that's one of the drivers for that. I think it used to be 10%, I don't know if it is or not still. But they had offered to pay my piece on that for 10,000, and I decided to give it as a gift to the people of Iowa instead, so that they could enjoy it there. And like I said, I mean we all got to make a living, but I thought, it makes me feel good that it was at least valued that way.

But it makes me feel good that people there can enjoy it. When they go in there to do their business, they'll see the image of, the reflecting of what happened there long ago. And it's important also to know, in our language, that if something happened a long time ago, it's still happening now. And something happening now has its roots in the long ago.

Vivian:

Right. That was another question that I was curious about with this piece. Because when we talked about it before, you brought up this idea of longevity and resilience, and how the earth lodge, and seeing it through the seasons kind of encapsulates that. So how do you think this piece might invite questions? Or at least people to consider these ideas of longevity, and resilience, and sustainability, in the face of climate change?

Lance:

For one thing, a lot of, you know the whole thing. I mean, I think people are coming to the realization that the climate is indeed changing. They're still arguing about what's causing it and what to do about it, but I think people are ... and several years ago, people weren't even agreeing that the climate was changing. You couldn't even say climate change politically, you had to say weather. Because farmers know about weather, but don't talk to me about climate. So parts of this painting talked about the different events, like lightning, and snow, and the fall, and these changes. So there's change in that. So

Episode 6: "Artists as Honest Witnesses"

Lance Foster

The Art of Climate Dialogue

weather as change is part of that painting, but it's also the idea of our sense of time. Which is in the western sense, time is linear, and it goes from the beginning to the end. But our Indigenous thought is that life, it's more like a year.

It never repeats itself exactly, but it's like a spiral, and it comes to the same points. So it starts at a point and it spirals out. But at certain points, there's those previous line of the spiral touches another succeeding line of spiral, and another event similar to that happens. It's like history doesn't repeat, but it rhymes, kind of a thing. And if you look at pre-scientific, pre-Christian, pre-whatever. You go look at Ragnarok, you look at the Norse mythology. At the beginning and the end of worlds, it's that same kind of, it starts, it goes through this thing, it ends, and then it starts again. So I think that in one way, that will help think about seasonality. But also in a larger term, about things that happened in the past may happen again.

Vivian:

Both this piece, and the work that y'all are doing with the committee, are focused in particular on public art that is easily accessible in community spaces. Like you said, people will come upon the mural while they're going to do their business, and a lot of people are going to see it that way. So what do you think public art? We've talked about art in a lot of different contexts, and where it might be, and hanging up in a museum, or in people's houses or anything. But what about public art being on a carwash, or in a rest area? What can that offer to climate conversations?

Lance:

You know what's really cool about art? Is people don't even have to like it. They can really dislike something, but it makes them think about it, and why they dislike it. And why they think, what are they doing this stuff for? Because the two kinds of art you're talking about, the kind that hangs in museums, or the kinds that hangs in people's offices, or stores, or places of business, their homes, that's the private side. And it may spark conversations within that group, but it doesn't spark community conversations. The museum's mainly about an artist's place in history, and its importance in the world of art. I like art, I'm not really a fan of the art world, because they're really different things. I like the doing of it, but I think public art is a way to get things going. Is a way to get people saying, "Hey, did you see that weird thing over there? What's the deal with that?"

And they're like, "Well, it could be actually a thunderstorm." "So why is it raining on the Indian?" But then there's another part that's the weather. Is that through different paintings, or what's going on there? I think most of my stuff is not that mysterious on that level. It's pretty interpretable, but you have to know the culture to get into the deeper levels of it. I think public art is the way, whether it's climate or any other things that we're going through right now, public art is great. Because it doesn't beat you over the head with somebody telling you, you've got to believe in it, or you can't believe in it, or whatever that we hear in the discourse.

Vivian:

You said earlier that often artists intend for their pieces to create a dialogue. That artists sometimes don't want to talk about exactly what their pieces mean, because they want people who are viewing the artwork to bring their own interpretations, their own perspectives, their own experiences to that piece. And in that way, putting it in public spaces invites a conversation, or people to ask questions, which it sounds like the work that you've done is already doing, which I think is exciting as well. And we've talked about how, especially with public art I think, it can be hard to see the impacts, or what questions people

Episode 6: "Artists as Honest Witnesses"

Lance Foster

The Art of Climate Dialogue

are asking, because you're not always there. You're not going to sit outside the I29 rest area and just watch people interact with your artwork for days. It's sometimes hard to see the impacts.

Lance:

I kind of like just accidents. I kind of think the world has a pattern to it. For example, I'll tell you about a mural I did up in Helena, which was downtown Helena. Which went through urban renewal, destroyed a lot of the things that people remembered there. And one of those parts of downtown was Chinese restaurants, and kind of remnant parts of what had been Chinatown. And I painted and put the names of some of the businesses there. And I kind of did kind of a ink drawing, kind of looked like ink of one of the old men that lived there at one time, people remembered. And it got a lot of notice, good and bad. The bad was that somebody painted the swastika on his forehead, 'Cause that's where people were at these days. But the good was, some of the Chinese families that knew each other a long time ago, they had not talked to each other for decades.

Not necessarily, they just drifted apart. But in talking to each other, "Hey, did you see they did one about the restaurant?" And they started talking, they got together. These families reconnected after a couple generations, where they had big dinners together, they started talking again. And I think that's the kind of thing I like to see. I like organic things that just develop. I don't like study guides. I mean they have their place. But I think the whole point of art a lot of times is to provoke thought, rather than tell people what to think.

Vivian:

And knowing that there will be unanticipated ripple effects.

Lance:

Right. And that's what I think is exciting. To me, that's part of the art too.

Vivian:

You said these conversations, these unanticipated ripple effects are part of the art. You said that as a community leader, you feel that the artwork you must often create now, is actually designing ways for people to connect to the land, and to each other, and to tell their stories. Can you talk a little bit more about this?

Lance:

Yeah. Our Ioway Tribal National Park, it's not clay. It kind of is clay in some places. And it's not art. And it's not oils and watercolors. It is a living place. And sort of like found object art, you think about a place that has its own character as being neglected, has been discarded, or not treated right. And then you find ways to recast it. So for example, we had attractive land that was given back to us. Two tracts by the Nature Conservancy that they were unable to care for to the degree they wanted to, because they were so far away up in Lincoln, the Rulo Bluffs preserve. And we got that, and it has biologically unique aspects to it, as classified by the state of Nebraska. Different species of flowers, and insects, and birds and things that nest there. And then we also had the Leary Site, which is ancestral to our people, where we traded buffalo skins and pipestone and stuff, with the Pawnee ancestors.

And I kept thinking, how do we preserve this place for the future? And we had a flood, and then the pandemic. And I said, "There's an idea of something that people care about, which are parks, national

Episode 6: "Artists as Honest Witnesses"

Lance Foster

The Art of Climate Dialogue

parks. Not just a park, because if you say park, people think swings and slides and that kind of thing. So you have to talk about a national park. And in our treaties, we are the loway Nation. And we are the loway Tribe. Depending on the treaty, we mentioned both. So that there we go. Is it possible to have a tribal national park, in that sense? And I saw that Red Cliff had done that already. Using that term I thought, you know what, we can be number two. So there we are. We had a lot of challenges. Our casino is our big economic driver here, but it's pretty much out of the way.

It's pretty small. It's like not like with one of the big operations that larger tribes have. But it is a place where people can meet, and eat, and game a little bit, and have work mainly. It's a big job driver here. So I thought, what if we have loway Tribal National Park, and it's a way for people to connect and bring other people to go to our casino. But really me, I'm all a gorilla artist. I'm all about, how do I preserve this? My art, I love my art, but it's not eternal, but the land is eternal. And how can I help as an artist, use that creativity to help the land tell its story? So loway Tribal National Park was born. And we got our mission back from the state, and we're telling the story of how our changes in our culture started really there.

And so one of the things I'm doing as an artist, as another kind of artist, is trying to do a historical reconstruction, a painting of what the mission looked like, and the route. In fact, one of the panels I'm doing is like, I've done graphic novel stuff too, and I'm telling the story of a little girl who was stolen by immigrants during the Gold Rush, the St. Joe Road that went through the Mission area. And how she returned years later. The family, no one remembered her, nobody knew who she was. And eventually she became homeless and wandered the streets, asking people, "Do you know who I am? Do you know me? Do you know my name?" Because she was only given her name Lucy by the people who stole her, and nobody knew. So she wandered and got sick, couldn't take care of herself. Was put in a poor house, a poor farm, over in St. Joe.

And people say, even after she died, which wasn't too long after she was put there, they would still see this figure going around asking, pausing, as if to ask, "Do you know who I am?" So these kind of stories like this, those are all things that aren't part of the layers of history and understanding how we got to be who we are. I love the Gauguin's painting, Who Are We? Where do we come from, where are we going? Because that's essential to all of us. I think all of us, listening, talking, whatever. It's like who am I? Where did I come from? Where am I going? Central human questions.

Vivian:

Thank you so much for sharing that, and that there is an artistic lens to the work you're doing. And how that really does merge economic, and social, and environmental implications, and how they're all connected. At the beginning of this episode, you described a decision that humans have to make. To harm or to help. To move our ecosystems toward life, or death. To quote your artist's statement, "Because it is the same hand of humanity that does both." So as we talk about ways to move toward climate action and justice, we need policies that support agricultural systems, such as the ones you depict in your artwork. Ones that build reciprocity and resilience. Or even places like a tribal national park that's preserving history, and culture, and environment all in one. So especially as someone whose work has crossed over into so many sectors, including government, what role do you think arts and storytelling can play in pushing for climate policy?

Lance:

We all like to think of ourselves as thinking and rational beings, and we are. But at a deeper level, we're all emotional. And I've heard a lot of people say the same thing, which is, "You don't save something you

Episode 6: "Artists as Honest Witnesses"

Lance Foster

The Art of Climate Dialogue

don't love, and you don't love something you don't know." So one of the critical things people can do, in government policy, whatever, is to help people learn about the places, especially where they are. Where they live, the history, the deep history of where they live. How things came to be how they are. People love origin stories about how the rock and the land formed. The glaciers, or the volcanoes, or whatever that form the underlying part of it. And the different animals that lived there for thousands of years. Some came and some went, and some we no longer see here. But it all builds this large story, deep history, deep story there.

And if you can arouse people's curiosity ... I mean we all think, especially with the older you get, the more you think you got figured out. "I know that already, I don't need to know that." And I think that's how you kind of lose your youthfulness, by thinking that. I mean, we're all getting old. I can't do nothing about that part, but at least your brain, you can stay somewhat youthful that way. And it will kind of echo through your body a little bit. So I think that it's important for you, for your children, for your grandchildren, to always be curious about where you are, where you lived, who you are, how you got where you are, where did you come from. And don't have the pat answers, think for yourself. When you're a little kid, before you had to go to school, or go to church, or go to wherever you had to go to, and people started telling you what to think, and what to believe, you were a genius. You were a genius. We were all ...

Vivian:

Right.

Lance:

Amazing, and curious, and wanting to engage. What is that bug? Why does it look like that? The big why. The kids are always asking why. And then somehow, the why gets squashed, and then we all become labels of some kind or another. And then if you, even in your secret heart or some dream, you dream something that doesn't fall into that category that you've been assigned, all of a sudden, you don't want to want to be thought of as somebody to step outside the lines, color outside the lines. Kids don't care that much about it, they just like the colors. I think that any of the policy that can support that kind of thing. And I know STEM is the big thing. I know testing has been for a couple, well at least one or two generations. But the geography knowledge, the knowledge of history, the knowledge of all that is neglected. The arts, the music. And by art, we're just talking about visual art right now, but the music, the performance, the writing, all those things, that's what makes life worth living really.

And that's where people's minds open, and hearts open, is those kind of things. So I just think it's a good thing that we can figure out some way to support that through policy. People always are about funding. That's great, but opportunity is another thing. And education to help people do that, and to have kids engage with their parents more. When the kids are still young enough, before they get into all that boy girl stuff, or into substances, and trying to conform to ideas of what they're supposed to look like, or dress like, or all the things that people get stuck in for a long time. 'Til they get old and start thinking about other things. About what their life was worth, and what they did, or didn't do with their life. That's what you can do.

Vivian:

I agree. Those are wise words. So before we leave, what are the three key ideas that you want people listening, to understand about the work you do?

Episode 6: "Artists as Honest Witnesses"

Lance Foster

The Art of Climate Dialogue

Lance:

This is about change, and transience, and that even God can't change history, but right now you can influence future history.

Vivian:

And then, what is the biggest recommendation you have for others who might want to use artistic strategies to talk about climate change, especially in agricultural communities?

Lance:

As a teacher, and then also working with elders here, one of the most successful things that I did that was so enjoyable, was to have people create a map of their childhood. It could be a person 20 years old, it could be a person 80 years old. But I'll sit, turn a big piece of paper and say, "I want you to draw a map of your childhood." That's where you were allowed to play. You'd get boundaries, like you're not supposed to go past this street, or that field, or that ridge or whatever, that you could play. Some people had a shock to find out they could only play in the backyard. So it was a fence, sitting on a tree, or whatever it is. The older you were, the farther those boundaries were. The more recent, most of the time people had very small footprints they could operate within.

But I say, try to draw that from your past. And then you can do it any way you want. You can do it realistic, you can do stick figures, you can do whatever you want. And then write little notes. "This is the dog that everybody was afraid of." Or, "Don't go by the old man, because he shoots at you." Or whatever it is. So that's something that I think rural people, or people who are non-artists, or people who are urban, whatever you're at, everybody could map out their lives, and a place they remembered from their childhood, about what they could and couldn't do there. And then I say, "Now compare it to now, and what has changed." And inevitably there's some development. Some buildings are torn down, some are whatever. Some places are built up. And so you couldn't go to that pond anymore, because there's no pond there anymore.

And so people start thinking about change. And then from change, they start thinking about, well, you start thinking about maybe, do you remember some storms that used to happen, and what some of those storms were like? Or what's different from now, compared to when that was happening? Anything different? Sometimes there's not much different. But it gets people thinking. You don't tell them what to think, but you open up their memories, so they can make it more available to them to consider change.

Vivian:

That's a wonderful idea and exercise. And seems applicable in not only communities, but in a lot of different situations, and in different disciplines.

Lance:

A lot of people say they can't draw. My mom told me she couldn't draw, even though when I was a little kid, she drew the word boy, and it would make a little boy's face out of it with glasses. And she'd say, "No, I can't draw. I can just draw a couple things." Well she's gone now, she passed, but she did the class under me in drawing. I taught her how to draw, and she drew recognizably, her two grandsons. And she was amazed that she could draw. So what I want to tell people is, "That you may think you can't draw, but you can draw." You can make marks, and it's just like Bob Ross would've said, it's all about making

Episode 6: "Artists as Honest Witnesses"

Lance Foster

The Art of Climate Dialogue

that you can do it. It'll make you happy. It'll be something in you, that when you draw, it'll open something up in you that you haven't felt for a long time. You don't have to draw like anybody else, just draw like yourself.

Vivian:

That's good to remember, especially when you talked about how the process of art is what can be the most meaningful in creating dialogue. So making sure people understand that we just have to reconnect with our ability to play and be creative.

Lance:

Right. Make something.

Vivian:

How can people connect with you and your work?

Lance:

I do stuff on Facebook. Go to I29 when it opens up. Or to the World Food Prize.

Vivian:

Yes, definitely.

Lance:

And then, in 2025 is when we plan on opening Ioway Tribal National Park. Although the museum, the Mission Museum is open now, and we're just beginning to install different exhibits in it. So 2025 we'll be opening. And we'll have a permit system, because we want to, our priority is to preserve the land, not create a tourist trap.

Vivian:

Wonderful. Well people have to check out that in 2025. And then I29, the mural's going to be open later this year?

Lance:

Yup.

Vivian:

And we'll have information on the podcast webpage about where to find your work too.

Lance:

Sounds good.

Vivian:

Thank you so much for joining us on the podcast, Lance.

Episode 6: “Artists as Honest Witnesses”

Lance Foster

The Art of Climate Dialogue

Lance:

Well, thanks for the conversation. I appreciate it.

Vivian:

Thank you for listening to The Art of Climate Dialogue, and we hope you'll listen to the rest of the series. More information about podcast interviewees is available at ecotheatrelab.com. We invite you to engage in conversation with us by leaving a comment, responding to the short feedback form in our show notes, and checking out The EcoTheatre Lab's website. We want to thank all of the organizations and individuals who made this series possible. This project is funded by both a North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program Graduate Student Grant, which is supported by the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. And a Johnson Center for Land Stewardship Policy Emerging Leader Award. Our podcast consultant is Mary Swander. Our podcast musician is Omar de Kok-Mercado, and our podcast artist is Moselle Nita Singh. Our podcast land acknowledgement is adapted from text developed by Lance Foster and Sikowis Nobiss, and from conversations with Shelley Buffalo. Rosie Marc is our podcast editor. And I'm Vivian M. Cook, Community Engagement Director for The EcoTheatre Lab, and The Art of Climate Dialogue, podcast producer and host. Take care.