

OF ALL THE CLIMATE-CHANGE INITIATIVES AROUND TODAY, CAPE FAREWELL IS POSSIBLY THE MOST EXTREME. BUT PERHAPS THAT'S WHAT IT'S GOING TO TAKE TO BRING ABOUT THE CULTURAL SHIFT WE NEED

MASTER OF THE ARCTIC

Words Karen Hodkinson

It all began with one man's passion, a few friends and a boat. There was no grand plan to speak of. 'When I started I was just going to go with a small group of artists,' the artist David Buckland enthuses about his Cape Farewell project. 'Organising a boat of 20 people up to the Arctic was insane. Every time I went to anybody and said, "I need some funding," they would say, "You want to do what?"' The first expedition to the Arctic was a success. 'I thought that was probably it. But the first one was successful, and people were very excited.' A second expedition followed, then a third, and today Buckland is in the seventh year of Cape Farewell. 'It's just unbelievable ... I find myself in situations and think, "What am I doing here?"' Since August 2007 Cape Farewell has held a three-year residency at the Southbank Centre, operating as a cultural eco-hub for the Centre's creative climate-change initiatives.

THE PROJECT'S MOTTO IS THE CULTURAL RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE.

A group of artists and scientists travel to the Arctic on a boat, and all of them return with material to work on. Sounds easy, and that is just how Buckland paints it. His enthusiasm and belief in the project turns mountains into molehills. 'If it's how we live that is causing the problem, then in a way that's a cultural responsibility. When big things happen culturally, you will always find artists working. They are not picking up an issue, they're actually carrying on the normal practice of being an artist. When things

are in turmoil is when artists are most excited,' he explains.

A keen sailor – he was getting ready to go on a two-week sailing holiday at the time of our interview – Buckland read somewhere that the North Atlantic Ocean had been mathematically modelled, which he thought was simply impossible. But it ignited his curiosity, and the seeds of Cape Farewell were planted. 'I started it up as a way to create a new language that the public could engage with because they don't read science,' he explains. While the project's scientists collect important information for research to try to predict the future health of planet earth, the artists use the inspiration of the experience for their creations. The artists have been on two or three journeys because 'it's so shocking and immense the first time round'.

The expeditions are not for just anybody. The gruelling nature of an expedition requires that team members are picked very carefully. Artists and scientists man the ship side by side with its professional crew. 'At four in the morning, you are the one who gets up, you're the one who holds the big wheel, you're the one that changes the sails for three hours. Then your shift finishes and another starts. We have a professional captain, but each shift is five of us with one professional, and they rotate. For eight days you're sailing a boat through those waters. Hardly any of the project people have sailed before. It is quite phenomenal,' Buckland explains. 'We're all dependent on each other, a happy band that feeds off each other and off the experience itself.'

'WHEN BIG THINGS HAPPEN CULTURALLY, YOU WILL ALWAYS FIND ARTISTS WORKING'

There is no contract with the artists to say that they must create an artwork out of the experience. 'All I ask them to do is engage with the place, with the subject matter, and see if they're inspired to make something,' Buckland says. 'It's an open invitation.' The majority of artists have gone on to make work after arriving home. Film, music, art, even a comedy routine have arisen out of these journeys. The director David Hinton's film *Art from the Arctic* was first broadcast on BBC4 in February 2006 as part of the Climate Chaos season, and has since been shown all over the world.

The issue of climate change has gained huge momentum over the last few years. Cape Farewell has taken it to festivals such as Glastonbury, Hay and Latitude this year alone. At Latitude there was a straight two hours of delivering the climate-change message, kicking off with a screening by Buckland in the film tent followed by Marcus Brigstocke and his comedy routine, then Jarvis Cocker with his new song 'Slush' and beatbox artist Shlomo. 'Every time we finished a bit of our film, we had a standing ovation. For two hours it was fantastic,' recalls Buckland. So is the message finally getting through? 'Two years ago it would've been all uphill ... Some would have got it, but most people would have gone, "What can you do?" But the Latitude audience, I'm sure, were already on our side. They were already wanting to engage.'

IN HIS SEVEN YEARS WITH CAPE FAREWELL, BUCKLAND RECOGNISES THERE'S BEEN a big social shift. More people understand and care about what's going on in the world they inhabit, and they want to be involved. There will be a Shift Festival for a week in January 2010 at the Royal Festival Hall and Queen Elizabeth Hall. Prior to that there will be a show co-curated by Buckland at the Royal Academy, with 25% of the works coming from Cape Farewell. 'We started going round the world and seeing who's doing what. It's extraordinary how many artists have actually done climate change,' Buckland says. 'If we can remake the image of climate change from this whole "gloom and doom, the whole world is going to shut down" to "Wait a minute, let's change culture and have a fantastic time," where's the problem with that?'

Buckland is so busy organising expeditions – the next one in 2010 is going to the Russian Arctic – that he is left with little time to make art. He has collected a huge amount of material to work on, and can't wait to dive in. It can be frustrating for an artist to be sitting on a treasure trove of inspiration, unable to get down to business. But he recounts what a friend so rightly told him, 'Cape Farewell is one big art project.' ■

capefarewell.com

'I STARTED UP CAPE FAREWELL AS A WAY TO CREATE A NEW LANGUAGE THAT THE PUBLIC COULD ENGAGE WITH BECAUSE THEY DON'T READ SCIENCE'

THE CAPE FAREWELL PROJECT
VENTURES BEYOND THE ARTIC FOR
THE FIRST TIME WITH AN 18-DAY TREK
THROUGH SHRINKING GLACIERS,
CLOUD FORESTS, RAIN FORESTS
AND THE AMAZON ANDEAN RAIN
FORESTS OF PERU

Established in 2001, the Cape Farewell Project is the brainchild of artist David Buckland, whose lens-based works have been exhibited world-wide. At the time, Buckland envisaged a collective of artists, scientists and communicators who would pioneer a cultural response to climate change and stimulate the production of art founded in scientific research.

'Climate change is a reality. Caused by us all, it is a cultural, social and economic problem and must move beyond scientific debate. Cape Farewell is committed to the notion that artists can engage the public in this issue, through creative insight and vision,' he says.

Today, participants range from Ian McEwan and Yann Martel to Anthony Gormley, Lucy and Jorge Orta, and Shlomo and Martha Wainwright.

Dr Simon Boxall, Cape Farewell Science Co-ordinator, explains: 'We can take our results and publish them in journals, and yes, our colleagues will see them and they are peer-reviewed and solid, but they will only be read by, if we're lucky, 1,000 people. We also need to get the message across to the wider public. If we can get our messages into the media, we're talking to 100,000 people or 1 million people.'

The organization takes its name from a promontory on the southern shore of Greenland, and it was to the Arctic to which initial missions travelled. Since the first visit in 2003, they've returned seven times, but it was only this year that the Project embarked on a journey to the Earth's lungs at the other end of the planet - an 18-day trek through the Andes into the Amazon rainforest.

INTO THE AMAZON'S HEART

Words Vivienne Hambly

Photography Ana Cecilia Gonzales-Vigil

Hannah Bird, Project Coordinator, wears her anti-mosquito hat during a two day hike on the Trocha Union, the path into the jungle

THE EXPLORERS



CHARLIE KRONICK
Chief policy advisor,
Greenpeace

Charlie Kronick has worked in the fields of environment and development for over 15 years at Greenpeace and as an independent consultant. His work has concentrated on the social component of environmental issues, as well as the relationship of growing economic globalisation to notions of both sovereignty and environmental protection.



MARLENE MAMANI SOLORZANO
Scientist and expedition guide

Marlene is an experienced Peruvian botanist who, as well as completing her own research, also helps coordinate the ECI's research. Marlene worked with Cape Farewell to organise the 2009 Andes expedition.



BRENNDAN MCGUIRE
Sound Engineer

Brenndan has worked as a recording and live concert sound engineer as well as a sound designer and music producer for the past 20 years. He enjoys dumpster diving for consumer electronics and giving trash a new life with his company Gleaner Audio. He is presently fabricating a recording studio out of a vintage Airstream travel trailer in the outskirts of Joshua Tree California.



ANTHONY SANTORO
Animator

Anthony is the lead artist and visual effects supervisor at Curious Pictures, the largest animation studio in New York. He also wears the hats of a designer, animator, composer, photographer, 3D artist, and programming wizard. He has lead and VFX supervision credits on a range of film, TV, and video game projects, including the documentary *Chicago 10* which opened the Sundance Film Festival in 2007.



ANA CECILIA GONZALES VIGIL
Photographer

Ana Cecilia Gonzales Vigil is a photographer and picture editor who has worked for various international NGOs, newspapers, magazines and news agencies. She won a World Press Photo award in 1993 and has been a Jury Member of the contest three times since. She is currently the Peruvian photo correspondent for *The New York Times*.



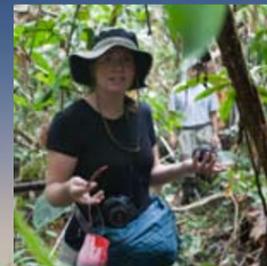
DARO MONTAG
Artist, Lecturer & Researcher

Daro Montag is an artist, lecturer and researcher who works with living organisms and natural processes. Best known for colourful images made in collaboration with micro-organisms, he is interested in understanding, and bringing to light, the inherent creativity of natural phenomena. His most recent project examines the soil and its significance both culturally and ecologically.



JOSH FISHER
Scientist

Josh is a research and teaching fellow in the Terrestrial Ecosystems Group within the Environmental Change Institute at Oxford University. He works across plant, ecosystem, global and social scales with a combination of field ecology, biometeorology, modelling, GIS, remote sensing and sociology. He previously worked at the US EPA and NASA.



MARIJE DE HAAS
Designer

Marije is a designer and the creator of an ever-expanding print series *Pictolution*. Using everyday international symbols, she creates a new language by combining these symbols as a sort of graphic evolution experiment. She is also a founding member of design collective Bullet, which, among other things, is responsible for most of Cape Farewell's visual communication.



YADVINDER MALHI
Scientist

As Professor of Ecosystem Science at the School of Geography and the Environment and Programme Leader of the Ecosystems Group at ECI, Yadvinder's research interests focus on interactions between tropical ecosystems and the global atmosphere, with a particular focus on their role in global carbon, energy and water cycles.



LUCY + JORGE ORTA
Artists

Contemporary artists Lucy + Jorge Orta have been collaborating since 1991. Parallel and feeding into their studio practice of sculpture and painting, they stage ephemeral interventions, performances, workshops, which explore the crucial themes of contemporary world: the environment and sustainable development, habitat and community, mobility and migration.



YANN MARTEL
Author

Yann is the author of a collection of short stories, *The Facts Behind the Helsinki Roccamatios*, a novel, *Self*, and the international bestseller *Life of Pi*, for which he won the 2002 Man Booker prize. Forthcoming is a collection of letters to the Prime Minister of Canada, *What is Stephen Harper Reading?* and, in 2010, a double novel and essay on the Holocaust.

THE EXPLORERS

'THE CLOUD FORESTS OF THE ANDES MAY BE PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TO CLIMATE CHANGE, AND SCIENTISTS ARE ONLY JUST BEGINNING TO PIECE TOGETHER A PICTURE OF HOW THESE INCREDIBLE ECOSYSTEMS ARE RESPONDING TO CLIMATE CHANGE. THIS JOURNEY WILL PROVIDE A MAGICAL OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE BOTH THE MAJESTY AND VULNERABILITY OF THE ANDES AND THE AMAZON'

YADVINDER MALHI, SCIENTIST

It's the most biodiverse region in the world, and in some parts there are more species of tree in 100m² than there are in the whole of Europe. Yet it's estimated that dozens of species in the Amazon Rainforest become extinct everyday through deforestation and resultant habitat loss.

Species imbalances aside, it's the deforestation itself that's also concerning. Absorbing carbon dioxide, forests are natural carbon sinks but, when they're cut down, the opposite becomes true: currently forest clearing in the Amazon accounts for 20% of the earth's carbon emissions.

It was into this that the Cape Farewell Project ventured between 23 June and 10 July this year, at the invitation of the Environmental Change Institute (ECI) at Oxford University. The trip followed the science programme Climate and Ecosystem Dynamics, in an Andean to Amazon transect, beginning at Salcantay glacier high in the Peruvian Andes near Cusco and ending in the jungle blow at Tambopata.

Participants, who included Daro Montag, Rhian Salmon, and Ana Cecilia Gonzales Vigil, visited science stations run by the ECI and took part in varied climate research and discussions to gain better understanding of the breadth of research being undertaken in the Andes and the implications of human activity on the fragile environment.

One of the venturers was Yann Martel, award-winning author of Life of Pi: 'What have I learnt? It's too early yet to say for sure, but I'll venture this: We, all of us, must learn that fine balance between the prosperity of our own species and the well-being of the planet, we must ... manage our economic assets so that our affairs continue to be bustling without our environment becoming too hot.'

'WHEN IT COMES TO CLIMATE CHANGE, THE DESTRUCTION OF RAINFORESTS HAS A DOUBLE WHAMMY EFFECT FOR EVERYONE. RAINFORESTS ABSORB ALMOST A FIFTH OF THE WORLD'S MAN-MADE CO2 EMISSIONS EVERY YEAR. BUT TROPICAL DEFORESTATION RELEASES AN EXTRA 17% OF ANNUAL GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS. SO IF THE RAINFORESTS ARE DESTROYED, IT'S BAD NEWS ON BOTH COUNTS'

THE PRINCE'S RAINFORESTS PROJECT



'Yesterday we headed up to the Salcantay glacier in the high Andes to camp overnight at 4 800m, prepared for a cold night'



'Expedition just arrived in Lima. Lost a tripod en route. Hopefully about to make the next plane to Cusco'

'Everything is big. The trees, the leaves, the spiders and frogs, the bullet coup and blue bees - and the number of bites on my body'



'More sightings: small brown snake; big black snake; green snake; otters; red deer; hyla frog; orgimi frog'



'Watching ants. What makes us think we are the dominant species? That idea is hard to maintain in the jungle'



'Just saw posters drawn by children requesting an end to the burning of the planet; a global perspective from an isolated community'



'Glaciers are what water most of Peru. All glaciers below 5,000m are in danger of disappearing by 2015 which would be a major problem'



'Our ideas are flowing as rapidly as the Amazon river, and invading our thoughts as the jungle overtakes life'

'I THINK WE ARE LIVING IN A VERY INTERESTING TIME, WE HAVE REACHED A POINT WHERE WE NEED TO RETHINK THE WAY WE DO THINGS. WE HAVE PUSHED OUR BIOLOGICAL AND ECONOMICAL BOUNDARIES TO A BREAKING POINT AND HAVE LEFT OURSELVES NO CHOICE BUT TO RESPOND'

MARIJE DE HAAS, DESIGNER

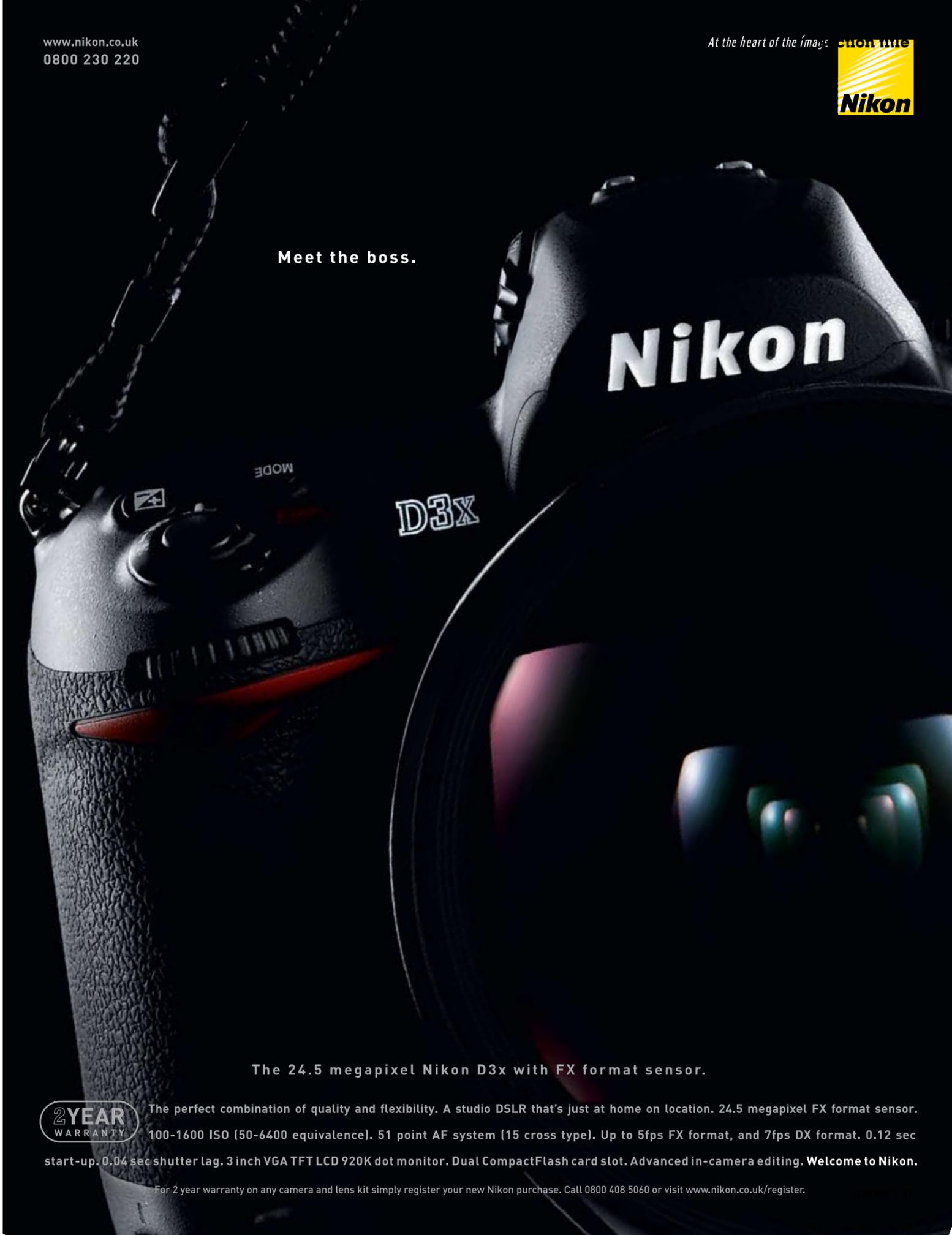
'CLIMATE CHANGE ON ITS OWN IS AN IMPERSONAL FORCE, DEEPLY DISEMPOWERING. ART INSPIRED BY CLIMATE CHANGE, BECAUSE THE MAKING OF ART IS PERSONALLY INVOLVING, A WHOLE-PERSON ACTIVITY, IS EMPOWERING, BOTH FOR THE MAKER AND THE SPECTATOR'



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