

Welcome to this week's presentation & conversation hosted by the **Canadian Association for the Club of Rome**, a Club dedicated to intelligent debate & action on global issues.

The views and opinions expressed in this presentation are those of the speaker & do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of CACOR.

From Environmental Grief to Growth: Reflections on environmental action in rural Minnesota

Biography: Professor Beard has published in the *International Journal of Listening, Philosophy and Rhetoric, Southern Journal of Communication*, and *Enculturation*, among other venues. With Heather Graves, he co-edited "The Rhetoric of Oil" (Routledge). He is also a Fellow with the Institute on the Environment at the University of Minnesota.

Description: There are multiple reasons why rural residents experience "environmental amotivation," which "is correlated with beliefs that individuals are incapable of performing effective pro-environmental action, that the energy required is too great, or that specific actions will be ineffective (i.e., low response efficacy)." Causes of this amotivation may reside in the rural experience of economic, social and civic life, where residents of small towns feel remote from power and so unable to act. Other causes of this amotivation may reside in the emotional stress of climate grief.

This presentation reflects on a yearlong project to synthesize multiple strands of work on climate grief & climate action, including the commissioning of multiple works of art, research into climate literacy and climate information resources, & the celebration & invitation to participate in the assisted migration of 110,000 trees from southern-central Minnesota to NE MN in advance of climate change.

CACOR acknowledges that we all benefit from sharing the traditional territories of local Indigenous peoples (First Nations, Métis, & Inuit in Canada) and their descendants.



Website: canadiancor.com
YouTube: [Canadian Association for the Club of Rome](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)
2025 March 19 Zoom #237

“Find your Forward”

From Environmental Grief to Growth: Reflections on Environmental Action in Rural Minnesota

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Canadian Association for the Club of Rome 2025

Thank you to CACOR



VISION

Canada becomes a nation that effectively restores and sustains its ecosystems, all species, and serves as a model to others.

MISSION

CACOR's mission is to encourage and enable Canadians to explore, understand, and advocate for the sustainability of the biosphere, its species, and human wellbeing, through research and communication about the issues that compose our planetary crisis.

Overview

Personal Stories

Environmental Grief and the Spectrum of Emotions about the Environment

Environmental Literacy and Indifference about the Environment

Frozensness. Environmental Amotivation, especially in Rural Communities

Using Art to Find Forward

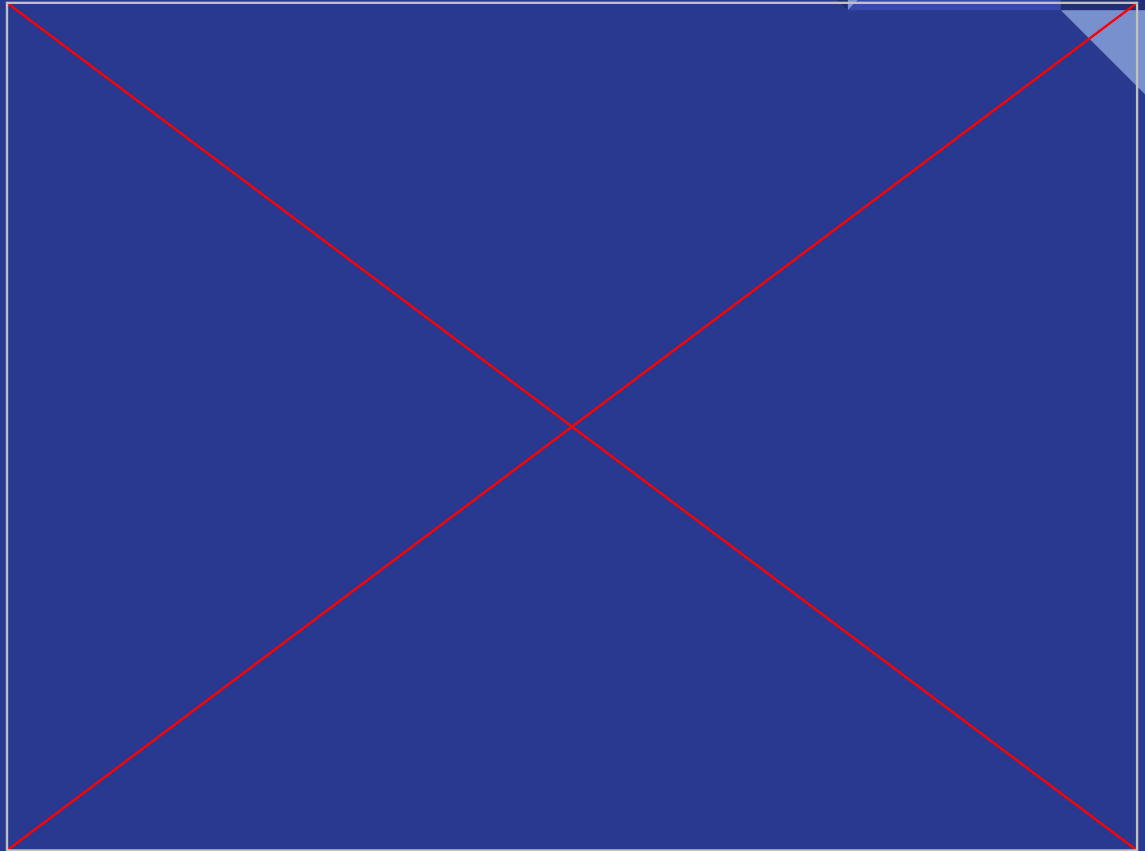
110,000 Trees and a Seedling for You

Personal Stories



Personal Stories

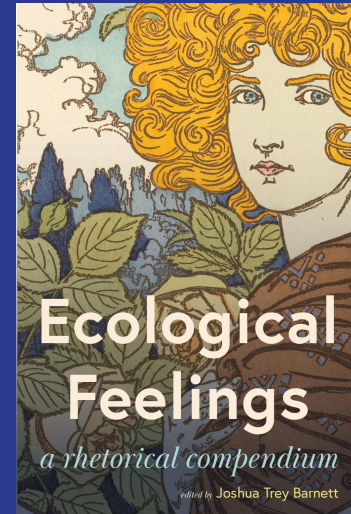
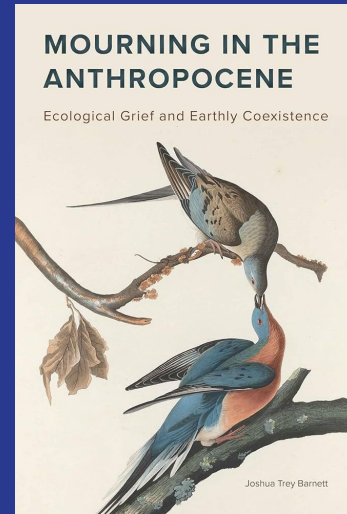
høle in the skY
zeitgeist new music
quartet
& kathy mctavish



Environmental Grief and the spectrum of Emotions about the Environment

Joshua Barnett:

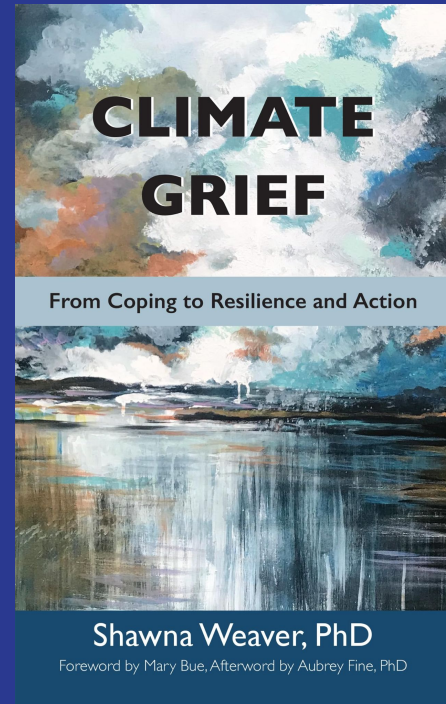
- “Humans can and should cultivate capacities for attending to, sitting with, and responding to ecological losses and earthly transformations.”
- “One of the penalties of an ecological education,” Leopold once remarked, “is that one lives alone in a world of wounds.”
- “Loss, as many writers have pointed out, is the cost of connection.”



Environmental Grief and the spectrum of Emotions about the Environment

Shawna Weaver:

- "Climate grief is not a pathology," she writes, "but a reasonable, rational response to living in an increasingly unstable environment."



Environmental Grief and the spectrum of Emotions

Alison J. Head,
Steven Geoffrey,
Barbara Fister, and
Kirsten Hostetler
of Project
Information
Literacy, San
Francisco

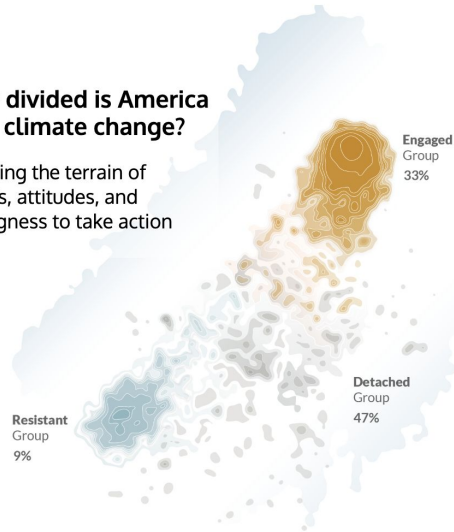
Think about a time in the past two weeks when you saw, read, or heard about climate change. What two words best describe your reaction to the topic, especially how it made you feel?

1	sad (9.7%)	sad frustrated sad extremely sad rather sad sad thinking very sad sad angry worried sad
2	worry (8.6%)	worrisome worried mad hopeless worried worried sick worried aware worried sad anxious worried
3	anxious (6.9%)	anxious concerned fear anxious anxious worried anxious anxious depressed anxious depressed
4	concern (6.5%)	concern anxious concerned overwhelmed concerned increasingly concerned really concerning
5	scary (6.5%)	very scared scared informed scared optimistic scared worried scared angry scared scared hopeful
6	frustrate (4.7%)	frustrated sad frustration concern fear frustration frustrated frustrated determined frustrated scared
7	depress (3.7%)	sad depressed depressed sad depressed depressed sad overly depressed depressing concerned
8	hopeless (3.5%)	hopeless infuriated hopeless worried angry hopeless sad hopeless despairing hopeless sad hopeless
9	angry (3.3%)	sick angry sad angry angry angry scared angry hopeless angry depressed sad angry
10	disappointed (2.3%)	disappointed disgusted moderately disappointed disappointment futility scared disappointed
11	helpless (2.3%)	sad helpless nervous helpless sad helpless questioning helpless sad helpless surprised helpless
12	shock (2.2%)	shocking destructive extremely shocked shocked depressed surprise shock concerned shocked
13	+ hopeful (2%)	hopeful optimistic concern hopeful scared hopeful w Screenshot anxious hopeful anxious hopeful

Environmental Literacy and Indifference about the Environment

How divided is America over climate change?

Mapping the terrain of
beliefs, attitudes, and
willingness to take action



1. **The Engaged (33%)** are convinced that the climate crisis is happening and that it's their civic duty to stay informed. They keep up with climate change news and information, but they are not consumed by the media coverage.
2. **The Detached (47%)** are concerned, but not sure what to think about climate change. While most believe climate change is happening, they don't follow much climate change news.
3. **The Resistant (9%)** don't believe climate change is happening and do not engage with climate change news and information. They do not trust scientists or journalists and deny claims that climate change is real.

Alison J. Head,
Steven Geoffrey,
Barbara Fister, and
Kirsten Hostetler
of Project
Information
Literacy, San
Francisco

Frozenness

Frozenness

Environmental Amotivation

The Unique Features of Rural Amotivation

Using Art to Find Forward

FINDING FORWARD

TURNING CLIMATE GRIEF INTO GROWTH

UMD students are deeply aware of climate change, but also face emotional challenges around it:

69% oppose views that dismiss human impact on the climate.

94% recognize climate change as real, with 78% urging federal prioritization.

Over *two-thirds* have personally experienced extreme weather as a result of climate change



Project Information Literacy

PROJECT ON THE ENVIRONMENT UMD KATHRYN A. MARTIN LIBRARY UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND SYSTEM LIBRARY

FINDING FORWARD

TURNING CLIMATE GRIEF INTO GROWTH

UMD students exhibit a strong engagement with climate change despite feelings of distress:

63% feel powerless about the climate crisis, yet 95% express concern for the environment.

Channeling concern into action, either individual or collective, helps turn feelings of helplessness into a power force toward environmental change.



Project Information Literacy

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Using Art to Find Forward

YOU CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT

UMD students show a strong belief in the impact of individual actions on climate change despite anxiety about the future:

77% believe personal actions can mitigate climate effects, while 76% feel anxious about their own future

Students demonstrate a willingness to learn, motivated by a mix of anxiety and hope regarding climate action.

Taking individual steps can turn anxiety into motivation and inspire fellow students to do the same.



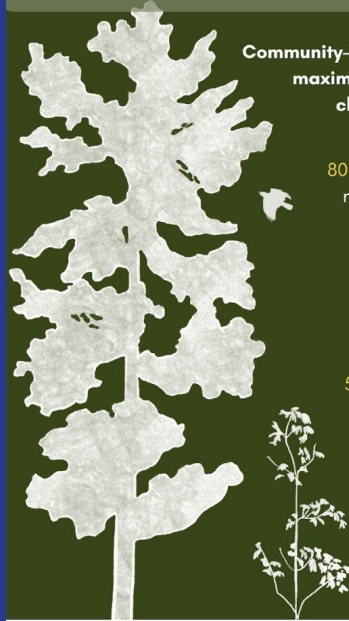
YOU CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT

Community-minded students can maximize impact by joining climate organizations:

80% of UMD students are motivated to engage in local initiatives

39% actively seek out organizations for sustainable change

58% felt that they were part of a larger community of like-minded people about climate change



110,000 Trees

In Minnesota, especially in the northeast Arrowhead region, the climate has already warmed substantially in the past 100 years, and the northern Great Lakes region is expected to continue to experience some of the most dramatic responses to climate change in the United States.



4:17

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Back to top ^

Screenshot

110,000 Trees

“What we found is that the southern source material ... did better than the local trees in northern environments, suggesting that assisted migration works,” says Eттerson.



4:17



Back to top ^

Screenshot

Using Art to Find Forward



Using Art to Find Forward

Helical Hymn (January 2025)

In 2018, we moved to rural Duluth and discovered an old growth white pine tree on our new property. We were immediately captivated by this magnificent being, and it slowly evolved into a place of prayer, meditation, offerings and reverence. One cannot be in the presence of this being without feeling humbled - imagining all it has grown through and weathered. It incites a deep connection to the land and the forces that are bigger than us. We assumed the role of guardians of this tree, and in turn, stewards of the land around it and beyond.

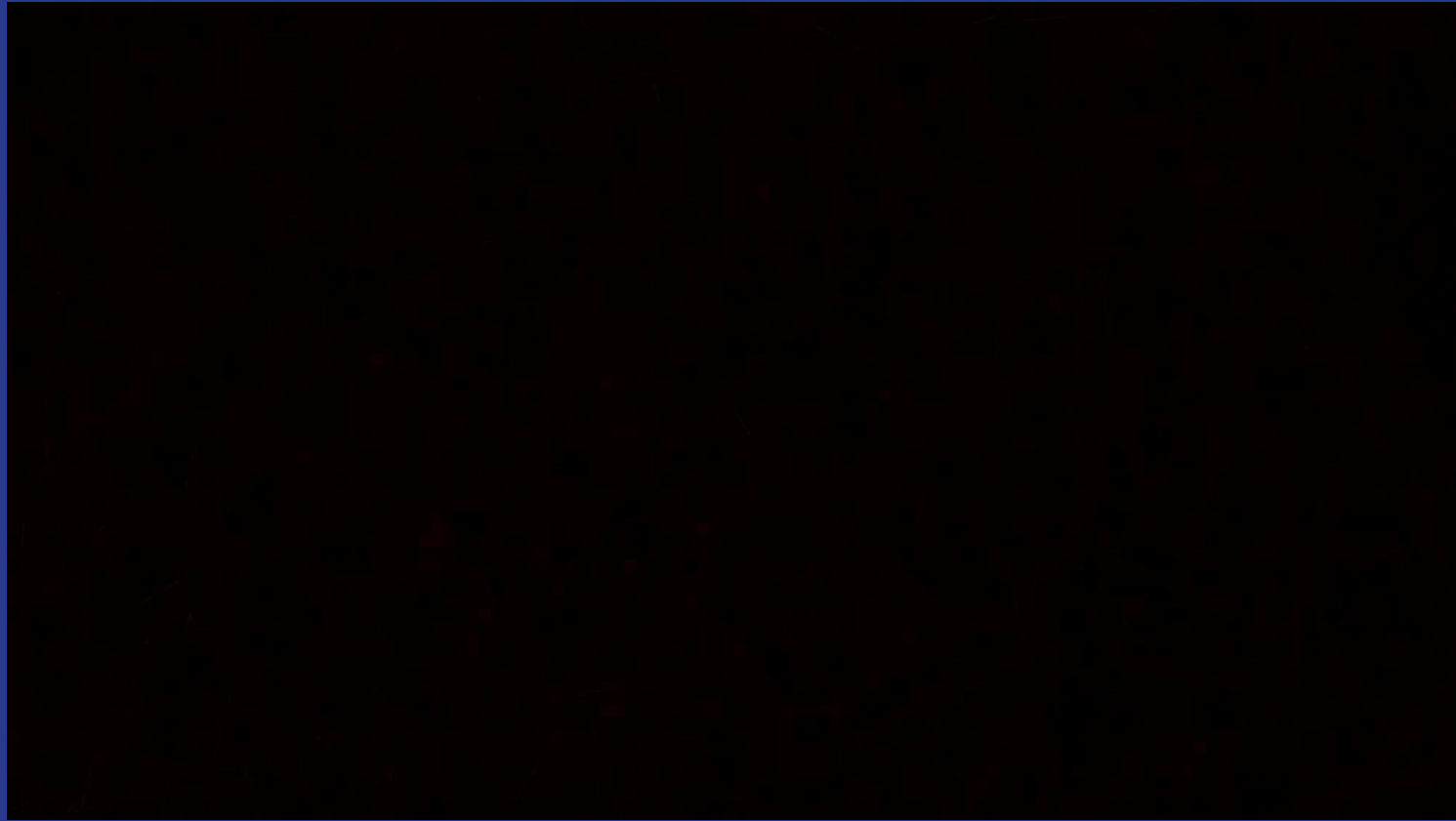
The Forest Assisted Migration Project resonated with us because of the sacred significance of this tree. This project could potentially save millions of white pines, and gift our descendants and the planet itself with these majestic beings for generations to come.

Helical Hymn is a song of praise, but also a song of hope. This multimedia piece incorporates stop motion animation, experimental video, and original music, the rhythm of which is created with the sounds of planting a tree (spade digging in, patting the earth, watering the soil). Woven throughout is a nod to the helical (spiral) growth of the Eastern white pine and the spiral of regeneration and new life. Human hands are visible throughout, revealing the human element in fostering the continuation of the species. As the piece spirals through, the viewer experiences the life cycle reflected through the animation and layered textures. The four elements of earth, air, fire and water are represented through the colors.

It has been a privilege to honor this sacred tree along with the work that is happening to protect its descendants.

Amy Fitzpatrick - stop motion animator
Dan Fitzpatrick - cinematographer, editor, music producer
John Thain - drone operator

Using Art to Find Forward

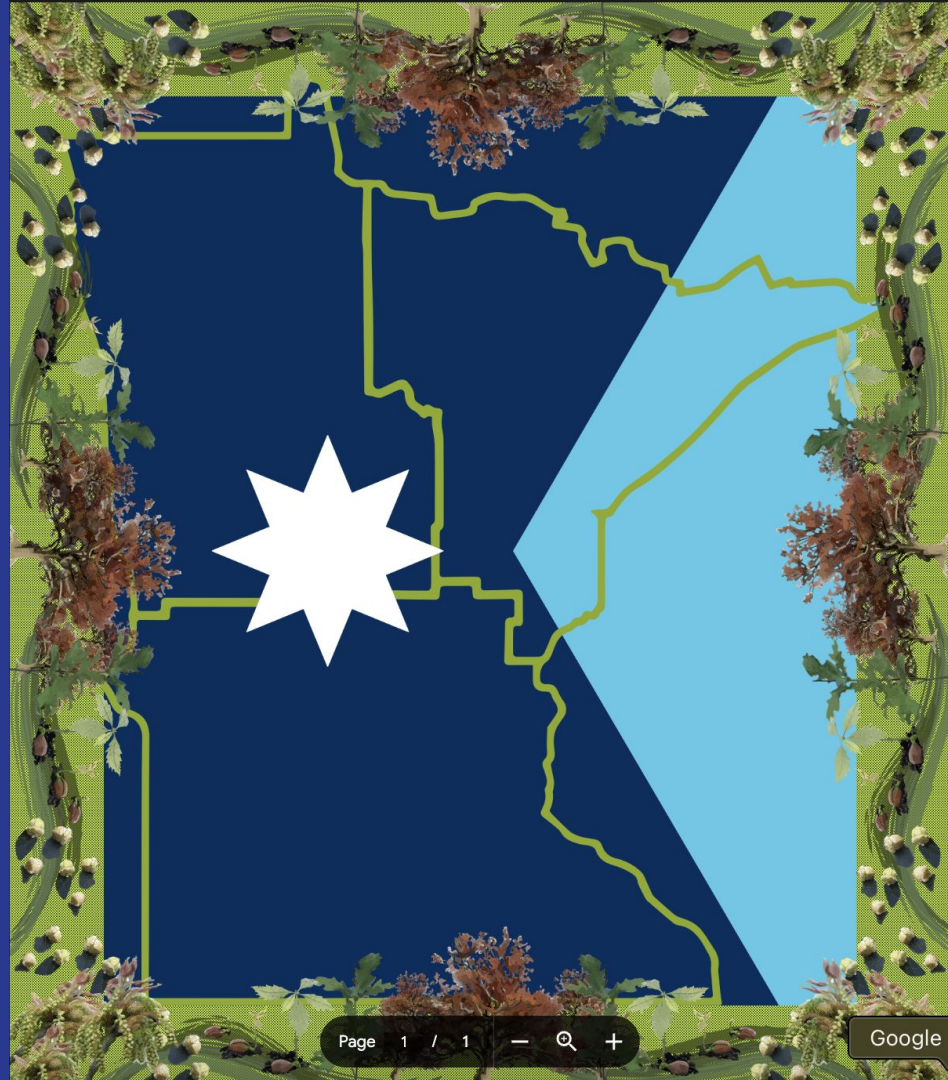


Using Art to Find Forward

(12'x14')

Around the border there are 100,000 dots representing the number of trees this project includes.

The border is representative of the red oak life cycle created in hand drawn illustrations. The center of the design incorporates the new MN state flag design with the MN pantone colors overlaid with the Assisted Migration project state map (indicating the seed collectors in the Southern region, current growers in the Northeast and future growers in the Northwest region).



Using Art to Find Forward

Oak Grove Blessings

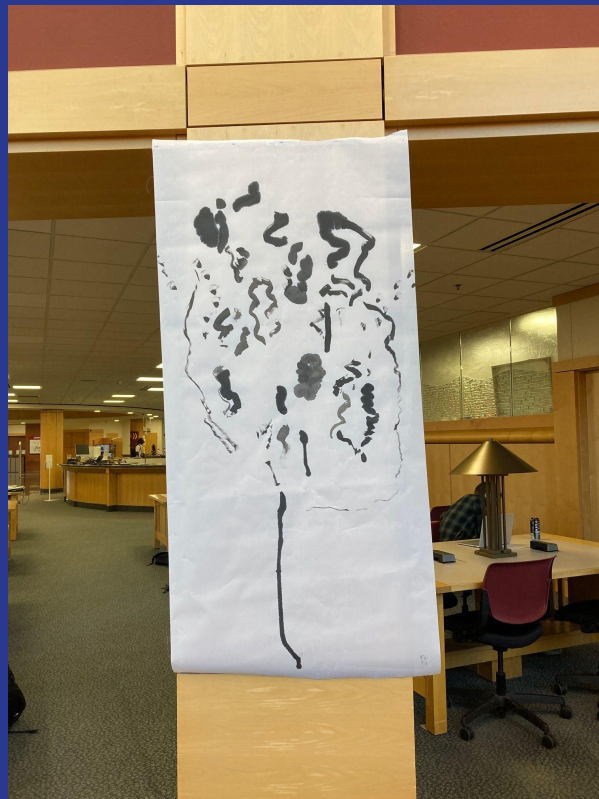
The baby oaks in the "Minnesota Million: a forest restoration movement" are now growing in northern Minnesota nurseries and greenhouses, reaching their little leaves to the sky.

I created these sumi ink scrolls, feeling the energy of the little trees growing up and expanding. The paintings show the trees in both abstract and representational ways and include dreams for the future with the oaks grown and in the forest alongside other trees.

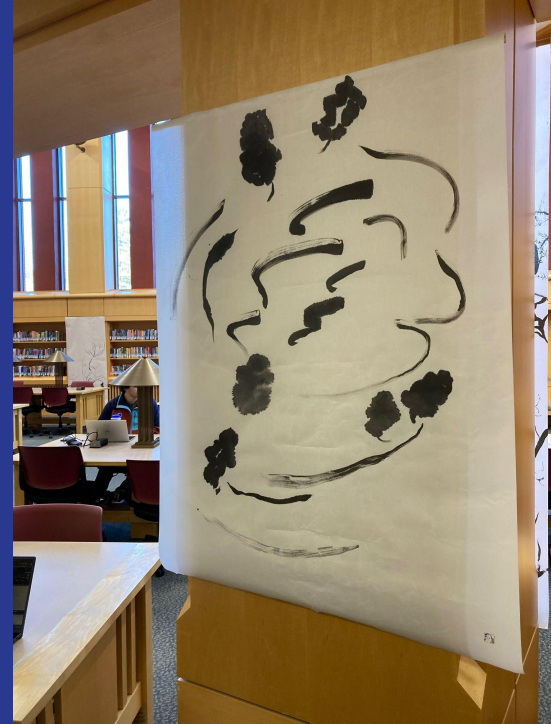
My wish is for you to be drawn into this grove of trees, feeling their presence and sending blessings to the baby oaks for their and our climate futures.

-Lisa Fitzpatrick

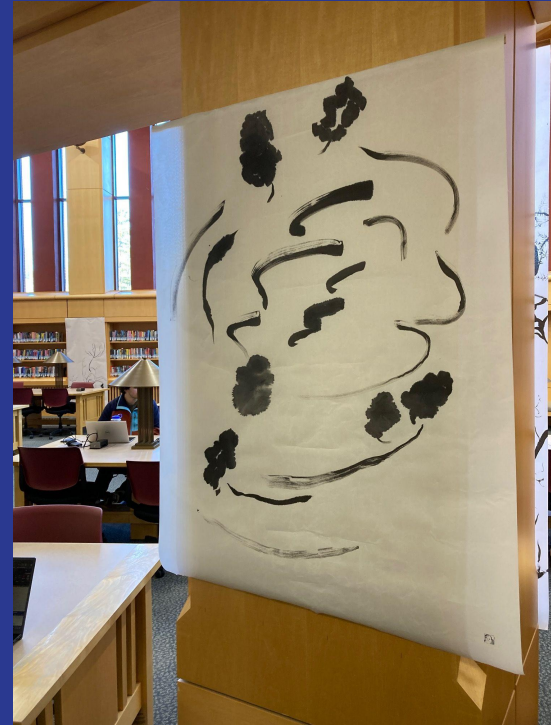
Using Art to Find Forward



Using Art to Find Forward



Using Art to Find Forward



Using Art to Find Forward




110,000 Trees and a Seedling (or Sticker) for You

We will have a seedling available at the entry to the exhibit, so those so moved can participate in the project, and maybe, move from frozen (from grief or indifference) to action.

How can you imagine next steps toward action?



FIND YOUR FORWARD

 UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA DULUTH

Conclusion

This work was supported by a University of Minnesota Institute on the Environment grant, [2024-2025], titled "From Grief to Agency: An Environmental Art Project."