68 Climate Leaders Changing The Film And TV Industry

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Can Film and TV tell a new climate story? GETTY

With it's new Extrapolations show, AppleTV+'s has taken a star-studded peak into our climate future.

As climate stories go, this definitely follows the Frankenstien blueprint I've bemoaned before. Set between 2037 and 2070, as things get progressively worse, the hubris of humanity becomes a bigger villain than Kit Harington's evil billionaire putting profits before planet.

But, even though I'd personally prefer a climate story about how we won. I'm immensely pleased that Extrapolations was made at all. Just over a decade ago, I started a project called Broadcasting Green – to inspire and train TV and Film scriptwriters and show-runners on environmental storytelling. We had a few successes and the odd recycling bin popped up in shot. But, when we decided to make our guidance public, it became harder for the studios and networks to agree. Because climate change had entered the culture wars.

What's changed? Well, now there's another war, and it's one that Hollywood moguls are more worried about – the audience wars.

Young audiences want the media they consume to reflect the world they live in – and that includes climate change. New research shows younger people would listen more to social media influencers than TV content on the topic. And they watch seven times less TV than their grandparents, preferring TikTok or YouTube. This means the climate story has become competitive content for Film and TV.

Some filmmakers prove that audiences avidly watch environmental content, from Adam McKay's Don't Look Up, to James Cameron's Avatar blockbusters. And big names in the industry like Matt Damon, Emma Thompson, Leonardo DiCaprio, Don Cheadle, Mark Ruffalo and Shailene Woodley are stalwarts of climate campaigns. MORE FOR YOU

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But, beyond these famous faces are a growing community of passionate creatives, researchers and activists, leading a transformation in TV and Radio content. I'm lucky enough to work with many of them and witness the huge difference they are making, that we're all starting to see on our screens

They are telling a different story; more intersectional, hopeful and immediate to today. It's my pleasure to list them below - true climate leaders working every day to make the TV and Film industry part of the solution.

Follow them, interview them, hire them, work for them and invite them to speak, teach and provoke you.

IMPORTANT: The following list is personal – these are folks I know of, have met, or been working with to change TV and Film content for climate change. I look forward to discovering more names. The list is in reverse alphabetical order:

Valerie Weiss, Ph.D. @valerie.weiss.director

Valerie is a film and television director whose credits include *Star Trek: Strange New Worlds, Outer Banks,* and *Mixtape.* She holds a Ph.D. in Biophysics from Harvard and is passionate about telling stories of speculative fiction with a scientific bent about climate change. She serves on the Director's Guild of America Sustainable Future Committee and is on the Board of Advisors of Scriptation, a Paperless App for Filmmakers.

Tracy Rector

Tracy is the Managing Director, Storytelling, at Nia Tero - working in solidarity with Indigenous Peoples to strengthen guardianship of Earth and all beings. Her passion is to amplify and empower Indigenous voices. She has two decades of experience as a community organiser, educator, filmmaker, film programmer, and arts curator - having directed and produced over 400 projects. Her work has been featured on Independent Lens, ImagineNative, National Geographic, and the Smithsonian's Museum of the American Indian.

Stephanie Dawson (PGA), Dorothy Fortenberry (WGAW), Jenny Lynn (WGAW), Lydia Dean Pilcher (PGA/WGAE), Jessica Poter (WGAW), Sasha Stewart (WGAE)

As co-leads of the WGA PGA Interguild Climate Storytelling Working Group, they galvanise their fellow writers and producers to incorporate climate into their projects. Working with the NRDC, Good Energy and other climate groups, they run trainings, workshops, and tackle narrative strategies for film and TV. In coordination with WGAW staff, they created a WGAW climate action page with climate storytelling guides and resources on how to make productions more sustainable, similar to the Climate Storytelling hub on the PGA's resource Green Production Guide.

Solitaire Townsend @GreenSolitaire

Solitaire is Co-founder & Chief Solutionist of the award-winning global sustainability agency Futerra, which for decades has pioneered using

creativity, storytelling and behaviour change for climate action. She coauthored BAFTA's Planet Placement Guide for climate content in broadcast media, and writes extensively on climate change communications. Solitaire sits on the advisory board of the Hollywood Climate Summit and she's the author of this list.

Shira Gans - LinkedIn

Senior Executive Director, Policy + Programs at NYC Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment, Shira directs NYC Film Green, a program certifying sustainable film/TV productions in NYC. She creates resources and events to help productions decarbonise, reduce waste, and green their supply chains and works with other city agencies to build green infrastructure

Samuel Rubin

Samuel is a social impact producer, currently collaborating with the UNFCCC at ECCA's Convening Team, a global sectoral initiative to unite entertainment and culture on climate goals and solutions. His work has been recognised by Grist Fixers 50, awarded with the Cogenerate Innovation Fellowship and the Jackson Wild's Jury Prize for the Can You Hear Us? Impact Campaign. He previously co-founded YEA! Impact.

Sam Enoch - LinkedIn

Sam is the Vice President of Film Strategy at Universal Pictures. He partnered with the NBCUniversal Sustainability Team to develop and launch Universal's GreenerLight Program, an industry-first initiative that embeds sustainability considerations into the studio's script-to-screen creative, production and greenlight processes for the full Universal film slate. Originally from the UK, Sam also serves on the Board of the Los Angeles Zoo and BAFTA's Learning, Inclusion & Talent Committee.

Romain Vakilitabar - LinkedIn

Romain is the Executive Director of PopShift (an initiative of Pathos Labs) which privately connects Hollywood's leading TV writers with some of the world's most fascinating people to explore new stories, and to rewrite dominant narratives. While PopShift covers many different topics, in May, they are bringing 50 people who have been deeply affected by climate change to meet privately with 50 TV writers.

Rewrite the Future: Daniel Hinerfeld (Director), Meredith Milton (Creative Director), Katy Jacobs (Director of Entertainment Partnerships); Elizabeth Corr (Associate Director, Arts and Cultural Partnerships); and Rebecca Strawn (Entertainment Partnerships Associate).

NRDC's Rewrite the Future helps Hollywood take on the climate crisis, encouraging content that represents our climate altered world with compelling, constructive, and inclusive stories. RTF helps audiences grapple with the crisis and imagine hopeful futures that inspire action. RTF produces events and presentations about climate representation; encourages new voices through the NRDC Climate Storytelling Fellowship; consults on film and TV projects; and supports entertainment companies in elevating climate content.

Resilience Entertainment: Jie-Ming Chung - LinkedIn, Mikkel Juel Iversen - LinkedIn

Co-founders of Resilience Entertainment (Amsterdam, London & New York). Their founding team combines the creative and business ends of the Film & TV industry with climate related academia and cause related finance innovation. The focus of Resilience is to develop, produce and finance content that inspire audiences to take positive climate action.

Rachel Groenedijk - LinkedIn

Rachel is Senior Responsible Business Manager and Lead for Responsible Content at Sky. She leads on strategy to mobilise millions of people to take action on climate change through Sky TV. Prior to that, she led a team to deliver Sky's partnership with COP26 - as part of Sky Zero, their commitment to go net zero by 2030. .

Nila Madhab Panda @nilamadhabpanda

Nila is an Indian film producer and director. He's made over 70 films, documentaries, and shorts based on social issues such as climate change, child labor, education, water issues, sanitation and other developmental issues in India. His 2017 film *Kadvi Hawa* (or *Dark Wind*) - which explores the story of a farmer and a bank recovery agent, whose lives are impacted by climate change - won an award for Best Film at the National Film Awards India.

Megha Agrawal Sood

Megha believes in the power of sharing stories and building unexpected collaborations to inspire action. She is a Director at **Doc Society** and leads the **Climate Story Unit**, an initiative to support productions and impact campaigns of climate-themed stories. Megha's experience includes leading impact programming at the film company, Exposure Labs, and helping purpose-driven organisations grow at the innovation firm, IDEO.

Lydia Dean Pilcher - LinkedIn

Lydia is a two time Emmy winning, Oscar nominated producer and

founder of New York production company Cine Mosaic, working in international and multicultural storytelling. Her director credits include the climate narratives *Radium Girls* and science fiction film, *Homing Instinct*. As Co-founder of Producers Guild of America's, PGA Green and GreenProductionGuide.com, she has been an ambassador for sustainability in entertainment for over 15 years. She co-leads the WGA/PGA Interguild Climate Storytelling Initiative and Co-Chairs the Directors Guild of America Sustainable Future Committee.

Lucy Stone @lucycjstone

Lucy is Director of Climate Spring and is a change maker working on climate change, having set up businesses, campaigns and worked with communication organisations on climate change strategy. She has worked with philanthropy, the UN, and academia on many climate initiatives, and has been working with TV, film and theatre makers developing climate related stories. She is also a director of FILE Foundation.

Lindsay Crowder @lec101 & Samantha Adler - LinkedIn

Lindsay is the Program Director at Exposure Labs, overseeing the development and implementation of all impact & storytelling based programming centered on those most impacted by the climate crisis. Through initiatives like Film in the Field, serving climate organisers using storytelling in their work, to Climate Story Lab, serving climate storytellers seeking impact in their work, Lindsay grounds her approach in building community and transformational change. Samantha is the Senior Program Manager at Exposure Labs. She manages climate programming and storytelling impact work.

Kimberly Burnick - LinkedIn

Kimberly is the Director of Sustainable Production & Content at NBCUniversal. Through the Sustainable Production Program, Kimberly oversees the implementation of sustainable practices on film and TV sets, in addition to partnering with creative departments on incorporating onscreen sustainability storylines and behaviours to help educate and inspire audiences. She spearheads the newly announced GreenerLight Program under the Universal Filmed Entertainment Group, an initiative to embed sustainability across the entire filmmaking process.

Kate Langrall Folb, M.Ed. @Katefolb - LinkedIn

Director of Hollywood, Health & Society (HH&S), and a 20+ year veteran in entertainment consulting. She leads a team connecting film & TV content creators with health and science experts to ensure accuracy in their depictions. She oversees all HH&S projects, campaigns and events, including the annual Sentinel Awards, and for over 10 years has led their climate change initiative, resulting in storylines on top network, cable and streaming shows.

Josh Cockcroft @JACockcroft

Josh is a Development Producer and Director of Climate Spring. He has worked for organisations such as the BBC and Entertainment One, as well as producing independently. Alongside his work as a producer he has authored a number of research projects on the creative industries, and has worked extensively around issues of diversity, equity and inclusion.

Jill Tidman @TheRedfordCenter

Filmmaker and Executive Director of The Redford Center, the nonprofit co-founded by Robert Redford and James Redford which has supported more than 150 impact-driven environmental films since 2005. Their resources, collaborations, and popular Redford Center Grants and Fiscal Sponsorship programs have moved millions to support independent filmmakers to create engaging, inclusive projects that are used to positively influence systemic and societal environmental change.

Jeremy Mathieu @JeremyMathieu

Head of Sustainability at ITV. Jeremy has previously worked as a sustainability advisor for the BBC, and as International Manager for BAFTA Albert Consortium, and as a producer at ESPN. He has delivered training courses and advised senior teams in navigating the transition to a sustainable society through operational, editorial and strategic considerations. His expertise covers how broadcasters can lead on climate by engaging and empowering audiences, as well as setting ambitious targets in-house.

Jeff Orlowski-Yang

Jeff is the Founder and Creative Director of Exposure Labs, a film and impact production studio that uses stories to change the world. Orlowski-Yang directed the Sundance- premiering, Emmy-winning documentaries *The Social Dilemma* (2020), *Chasing Coral* (2017) and *Chasing Ice* (2012), which were seen by hundreds of millions worldwide and screened everywhere from classrooms and local communities to Capitol Hill and the United Nations.

Jeaninne Kayembe Oro @_oro5_

Climate Justice Program Manager at the Center for Cultural Power, who collaborates with BIPOC climate storytellers and movement groups working at the intersections of art, culture, and environmental justice. Cultural Power's climate work amplifies the voices of climate leaders of the global majority. She also co-directed *The Aunties*, produced by and starring Black queer women, in a narrative about two farmers and stewardship of Harriet Tubman's ancestral land.

Hollywood Climate Summit: Allison Begalman (Co-Founder/EP, Director of Sponsorships), Ali Weinstein (Co-Founder/EP, Director of Programming), Heather Fipps (Co-Founder/EP), Samuel Rubin (Co-Founder)

The Hollywood Climate Summit is an annual multi-day conference that creates a cross-sector community space for thousands of entertainment and media professionals to take action on climate. Supported by Netflix, Paramount, NBCUniversal, NRDC, Meta, and more, the event gathers filmmakers, executives, artists, activists, climate organisations, and other experts to exchange ideas and inspire each other's creative and innovative work. The Summit will take place June 21st-24th, 2023 in-person in LA and online.

Heidi Kindberg - LinkedIn

VP, Sustainability at Warner Bros. Discovery (WBD), responsible for overseeing the sustainable production program on scripted HBO and HBOMax shows with the dual end goal of reducing environmental impacts behind the scenes while increasing sustainability awareness on screen.
Prior to joining WBD, Kindberg served as Director, Environmental Sustainability at Sony Pictures.

Heather Fipps @heatherfipps

Filmmaker and Professor of Media and Social Impact at Cal State LA. Heather is an internationally recognised leader in community centered impact filmmaking. Her leadership has cultivated hundreds of resources, events, and grants to support fiction and nonfiction environmental storytellers. She is the Program Director of The Redford Center, Cofounder of the Hollywood Climate Summit, and Founder of Community Impact Media. She recently led the conversation "Audiences Want Climate Stories"_at Sundance.

Girish Malik

Girish directed and co-wrote *Jal*, the popular and award winning Hindi language eco-love story about a gifted young man from a drought-stricken village who helps a group of ecologists find water for migrating flamingoes. The LA Times called it "a starkly beautiful, at times dazzling, vision that reinforces water as our most valuable - and perhaps most vulnerable - commodity".

Gabriele Almon - LinkedIn

Gabriele is the Senior Director of Policy & Research at the Television Academy. In her role, she explores how the Academy can meaningfully engage and impact timely topics. Presently, she is shepherding the Academy through its first-ever carbon footprint assessment. She also works with members on initiatives that spur sustainable practices and storytelling throughout the television landscape. Previously, Gabriele served as a homeland security advisor and humanitarian futurist. She was highlighted in Forbes as "The Millennial Everyone Calls When Disaster Strikes."

Favianna Rodriguez @culturestrike

An award-winning interdisciplinary artist and President of Cultural Power. From her work with grassroots organisations to technology companies, to screenwriters in Hollywood to presenting on the international stage, Favianna organises to build cultural infrastructure and shift narratives around climate change. She is activating artists and building with frontline organisers to shift hearts and minds through storytelling, in partnership with influencers, creatives, and climate leaders.

Fanshen Cox @trujulomedia

Founder of TruJuLo Productions - uplifting stories that speak truth in pursuit of justice, in service of love. Fanshen and her team develop and produce film, TV and media with Black/Brown/Asian/Native/Indigenous people while maintaining a commitment to climate change solutions as a core element. Co-author of the Inclusion Rider - a process for inclusive hiring referred to by President Biden's White House as a 'seminal legal document.' Producer and host of the Sista Brunch Podcast highlighting Black women and gender expansive people thriving in entertainment and media.

Estela Renner IMDB and Marcos Nisti IMDB

Estela and Marcos co-created the Brazilian telenovela series *Aruanas* - a thriller based around three friends leading a nonprofit investigating environmental crimes in the Amazon involving a major mining company. The filmmakers consulted with Greenpeace and with the support of many other global human and environmental rights organisations.

Erica Rosenthal, PhD LinkedIn

As Director of Research at the USC Media Impact Project, Erica leads research on the content, audiences, and impact of entertainment narratives addressing a variety of topics, including climate change. She led research on the glaring absence of climate change in scripted entertainment with Good Energy. Currently, she is spearheading a study of the impact of the climate-focused Apple TV+ series *Extrapolations*, in collaboration with Good Energy and Rare.

Emily Coren @EmilyCoren

An affiliate in Stanford University's Department of Psychiatry & Behavioural Sciences, Emily is a science communication specialist overlapping climate change communication and entertainment education research. She's exploring how geospatial tools and decades of research in public health messaging can make climate change communication more effective at policy change. Check out her work on how climate stories can be framed as solutions-focused, supporting the full range of community agency actions.

Emellie O'Brien (EOB) @earthangelsets

Founder & CEO of Earth Angel, a pioneer of the sustainable filmmaking movement, EOB has worked with over 120 major motion pictures and television series to reduce their environmental impact since 2011. Recent clients include award-winning series *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel* and Aronofsky's Oscar winning film *The Whale*. Her sustainability leadership on *The Amazing Spider-Man 2* contributed to it being acclaimed as "the most eco-friendly blockbuster in Sony Pictures' history.

Ellis Watamanuk (Senior Director of Entertainment), Anirudh Tiwathia, Ph.D. (Lead Behavioral Scientist), Laurel Tamayo (Impact Campaign Consultant), Ruivaldo Viana (Research Associate)

Rare is a leading behaviour change organisation, driving positive behaviours for the planet for over 45 years. With an in-house team of social scientists, Rare's Entertainment Lab brings behavioural insights to Hollywood, helping creators tell climate-friendly stories that put highimpact everyday behaviours on screen across genres and formats. The Lab provides resources, consulting, and research to support storytellers as they inspire audiences to take action at home.

Denise Baden @DABadenAuthor

Sustainability Professor at the University of Southampton and Founder of Green Stories_which has run 16 free writing competitions since 2018. Denise edited 'No <u>More Fairy Tales: Stories to Save Our Planet</u>' in 2022, and has published several eco-fiction novels, in addition to her academic research on storytelling for sustainability. Current projects include working with BAFTA/albert on a project about the role of screenwriters in consumer culture.

David Linde

David is CEO of Participant, a global media company dedicated to entertainment that inspires and compels social change (they made Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth*). Participant's content and social impact mandate speaks directly to the rise of today's "conscious consumer," representing over 2 billion consumers who are compelled to make impactful content a priority focus. David currently serves on the Board of Governors of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and the Board of Directors of Film Independent

Cyle Zezo - LinkedIn

The former head of Alternative Programming at The CW is establishing a new initiative, Reality of Change, to encourage more climate and sustainability storytelling across unscripted television (competition, game

shows, docu-follows, unscripted comedies and everything in between). At The CW, Cyle programmed climate-focused documentaries, integrated sustainability awareness into series and specials he oversaw, and worked with producers to develop creative formats with a climate perspective.

Cheryl Slean

Cheryl is manager of Sustainability and Storytelling at Netflix, helping to support incredible creators making stories that entertain the world. Her diverse background as a filmmaker, theatre artist and educator with degrees in physics, sustainability and English come together to inform her recent work, including co-founding NRDC's Rewrite the Future; producing VisionLA Climate Action Arts festival; and running a production company specialising in narrative strategies for educational media.

Chandra Simon Ritvo @ChandraSimon

Chandra is an award-winning producer and sustainability expert. Her passion is illuminating social and environmental issues through stories, and her films and series have inspired millions of viewers around the world. As a senior advisor to entertainment companies, Chandra supports some of Hollywood's biggest creators who wish to make films and shows that raise awareness of the biggest challenges – and solutions – of our time.

Carys Taylor @CarysTaylor

Carys is director of albert - an environmental organisation (and subsidiary of BAFTA) convening a consortium of broadcasters and producers all over the world, which offers guidance on how to promote and discuss environmental issues in editorial content through an initiative called 'Planet Placement'.

Carmiel Banasky @carmielbanasky

Carmiel is an award-winning novelist and TV writer, staffing on Amazon's *Undone*. Currently, she's creating a cli-fi audio drama for Wondery, and adapting a feminist fantasy for TV. She recently co-wrote a film starring Margaret Cho. She has explored the Arctic on a sailing vessel, studying and writing about climate change. As Head Writer for Good Energy, she helps screenwriters integrate climate into any project with joy and humour.

Gaby Hornsby - LinkedIn

Gaby is an award winning factual filmmaker and now Content Editor and TV Lead for Sustainability at the BBC, driving the corporation's implementation of the pan-broadcaster Climate Content Pledge signed at COP26. She works across the organisation, and with the wider industry, to maximise the impact of sustainability related content, including chairing the albert Editorial Working Group and curating with BBC Academy the online festival Climate Creatives.

Bryce Cracknell - LinkedIn

A screenwriter and producer from North Carolina, USA. He is the Founder and Executive Editor of the Anthem award-winning environmental justice publication, The Margin. Bryce led impact campaigns for films and shows including *Descendant, My Name is Pauli Murray, Just Mercy* and *When They See Us*. He is a Udall Scholar and a graduate of Duke University. Bryce is repped by Kaplan Stahler Agency and Kronicle Media.

Anya Kamenetz - LinkedIn

Author, podcaster and Senior Advisor for The Aspen Institute's This Is Planet Ed/Climate Media for Kids program. They support media creators who want to help children and their families build scientifically-grounded and developmentally appropriate understanding of climate science and solutions, to dispel climate anxiety and further action.

Anna Jane Joyner @annajanejoyner

Anna Jane Joyner is a climate story consultant and the founder and director of Good Energy. Anna Jane has worked relentlessly to establish bridges between artists, musicians, faith communities, young audiences, and the climate movement. She produced film and music videos and organised over 300 global partners around a youth-mobilisation campaign for the 2015 Paris Climate Summit. Her work has been featured by Rolling Stone, Variety, The Hollywood Reporter, Glamour, Deadline, CNN, The Associated Press, The New York Times, and more.

Allison Begalman - LinkedIn

CEO of YEA! Impact, a social impact agency rooted in community organising and storytelling that specialises in climate media. She is a recipient of the Roddenberry Impact Award, a participant in the Social Justice Partners Los Angeles 2022-2023 Systems Change Accelerator and is part of the inaugural 2023 Walking Softer Young Leaders Award cohort. She is the creator of USC School of Cinematic Arts' first-ever social impact screenwriting lecture "Call to Action: Writing Stories of Relevance and Social Impact."

Ali Weinstein @thealword

Ali is a queer TV writer, climate storytelling consultant and activist. She firmly believes every story is a climate story, which is evident in her

previous work on NBC's "Law & Order: For the Defense", Netflix's "Glamorous", and the upcoming AMC's "Orphan Black: Echoes". She was recently featured in the Atlantic for her climate storytelling efforts and for co-founding the Climate Ambassadors Network and Writing Climate Pitchfest.

Adam Umhoefer - LinkedIn

An Executive at the CAA Foundation, the philanthropic arm of leading entertainment and sports agency Creative Artists Agency (CAA), Umhoefer has been instrumental in organising efforts around climate storytelling, built partnerships with NRDC, the Black List and The Redford Center for the Climate Storytelling Fellowship and helped launch Good Energy's Climate Storytelling Playbook.

Aboyowa "Aby" Mene @aby.mene and Umanu Elijah @mrumanu_elijah

Aby wrote and Umanu directed the Nigerian movie *A Place Called Forward*, which won multiple awards including The NGO International Film Festival's 2022 Official Selection. The film tells the story of a man struggling with the pain of the death of his wife and children caused by soot poisoning - a toxic carbonate pollution caused by climate change, which is prevalent in Southern Nigeria.

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