



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
2021 Volume I: The Social Struggles of Contemporary Black Art

---

## **Black Art and Climate Justice**

Curriculum Unit 21.01.01  
by Leslie Blatteau

### **Introduction and Context**

---

This unit is for a 12th grade International Issues Senior Seminar elective at a mid-sized public high school in New Haven, Connecticut. Most students in this class are enrolled in the Law & Politics Pathway where they took Contemporary Law in 10th grade and Constitutional Law in 11th grade. As a result of this course of study and their experience with student-centered, anti-racist and transformative pedagogy in these classes, they are ready for the continued embedding and examination of critical race theory in their learning. In addition, they expect continued engagement through discussion and performance-based assessment. As a result of the international focus, the focus on current events, and the multiple opportunities for student choice, students are motivated to participate, research, and discuss topics related to capitalism, patriarchy, racism & imperialism, climate crisis, and war. However, as a result of the intensity, trauma, and violence associated with these critical issues, it is crucial to also center and celebrate the resistance movements that consistently respond to toxic oppression and recreate lasting worlds of justice, healing, and peace. This unit focuses on dominant narratives and counternarratives to support students' analysis of critical issues and subsequent envisioning of another possible world.

Young people in New Haven have drawn their elders' attention to the need for more robust climate justice education in our schools. The purposeful organizing by the Climate Justice Schools Initiative demands that a curricular shift take place in all disciplines to bring relevant climate connections to our classrooms. According to their website, "The Climate Justice School program recognizes the disproportionate impact of climate change on marginalized communities and future generations and actively works towards curbing the human cost of a changing climate while creating healthier communities."<sup>1</sup> The urgency of climate education cannot be understated, and the benefits are clear. As a social studies teacher, I will put Intersectional Climate Justice in the forefront of my curriculum. Climate studies should not be just the work of science teachers. Students will learn about Climate Justice by considering the race, gender, and power implications of the climate crisis. By situating the current Climate Justice movement in the historical and cultural context of anti-colonialist and anti-capitalist movements of the past and present, I can strengthen the counternarratives of this unit and center Black led resistance movements. I also have an opportunity to highlight these connections between Climate Justice, anticolonialism, and anti-capitalism through the centering and analysis of Black art, specifically film, sculpture, prints, and photography. In order to center the voices of young people, students

will curate their own Black Art and Climate Justice art exhibits that connect to the counternarratives, art, and artists we investigate.

## What is Climate Justice?

---

The increasing global phenomenon of storms, droughts, fires, floods, disease, and famines is inescapable. If you are not one of the millions of people experiencing these events, then you are one of the millions who watch the videos, news media reports, and rising death tolls related to these catastrophes. Students will have questions about the causes of these global phenomenon. Teachers should ensure that students develop background knowledge about the causes of severe weather events. It is necessary to explicitly teach about carbon emissions, their origins, and impacts. According to National Geographic, carbon emissions “cause climate change by trapping heat, and they also contribute to respiratory disease from smog and air pollution. Extreme weather, food supply disruptions, and increased wildfires are other effects of climate change caused by greenhouse gases.”<sup>2</sup> By reviewing recent climate news stories and analyzing this definition, students will be able to make connections between increased carbon emissions and severe weather events.

It is important to build background knowledge about relevant climate science vocabulary. The World at 1°C published several diagrams to explain climate change. These diagrams provide students with visual tools to organize their thinking. During the introductory lesson, each student studies a copy of “Ten Indicators of a Warming World” and works to make observations and predictions about what impact those indicators will have on the planet. Students will also benefit from analyzing the World Resource Institute’s “Cumulative CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions: 1850-2011 (% of World Total)” and Oxfam’s “Percentage of CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions by World Population” to reflect on their assumptions about energy use, geopolitics, population, and related socioeconomic factors. Overall, teachers can support students by teaching key vocabulary and creating opportunities for analysis and discussion of headlines, infographics, videos, and text excerpts. Students should track their questions, observations, and connections throughout their work with the more science-related aspects of this unit.

Once students have the foundational understanding that greenhouse gas emissions, specifically carbon dioxide from burning fossil fuels, cause climate change, they will be ready to unpack phrases like climate crisis, climate chaos, and ultimately climate justice. Students should discuss the meaning, similarities and differences of the phrases. In addition, they can consider the reasons why the language used to describe these issues has changed over time. In their introduction to *Climate Futures: Reimagining Global Climate Justice*, “The Future is Ours to Seek: Changing the Inevitability of Climate Chaos to Prospects of Hope and Justice,” the authors discuss the “grim reality of climate change” and the “extreme weather events around the world, wreaking havoc and setting new records in their wake.”<sup>3</sup> They also discuss the importance of climate justice perspectives. This discussion is crucial to students’ analyses of the unit’s dominant narratives and counter narratives that follow. The authors write,

Climate justice perspectives center the fact that the brunt of climate change falls hardest on the most poor and marginal peoples—peoples often tramped by the twin ravages of colonialism and capitalism, who demonstrate resilience despite these depredations. The rampant extraction of resources by imperial powers in colonized lands—and subsequently by local predator elites—left the land in a state of continuing impoverishment, and with depleted levels of physical and economic resources that make it daunting, if not impossible, to withstand the humanitarian and

environmental crises caused by climate change. The extraction-driven industries built on the platform of colonialism by the so-called 'richer' nations of today have been primarily responsible for climate change. Yet these nations have made little attempt to take responsibility and atone for their destructive actions. The reckless capitalist pursuit of growth, production, and profit have propelled some to protect their lavish lifestyles with no regard for the negative consequences of their actions for the poor and vulnerable.<sup>4</sup>

This climate justice analysis demonstrates that there is not universal or equal impact when it comes to the chaos, crises, and suffering that accompanies climate change. A three-part summary of the important evidence quoted above will help students understand the big idea of climate justice and make the necessary connections to the art they will encounter and analyze in subsequent lessons.

- Poor and marginalized people, already experiencing the negative effects of colonialism and capitalism, bear the brunt of climate change.
- Fighting climate change is hard in colonized lands; not only because resources have been depleted but also because extraction by colonial powers causes further destruction.
- The so-called richer nations do not make enough effort to change their destructive systems and they fail to acknowledge the way their systems negatively impact poor and marginalized people.

## Countering Dominant Narratives - Introduction to the Critical Issues

---

In researching and writing a unit of study focused on the climate crisis, it is necessary to question the dominant narratives about the systems that have brought us to this point in the Anthropocene. Oxford defines this term as the “current geological age, viewed as the period during which human activity has been the dominant influence on climate and the environment.”<sup>5</sup> It is interesting to note that even within the Climate Justice movement, there are dominant and counter narratives about whether or not the climate crisis “has to be explained as a human problem for which we are all equally responsible.” Vishnas Satgar continues,

The Anthropocene-centered discourse lets capitalism off the hook...[This] discourse is blind to the power wielded by capitalism as a historical imperial system that has devastated and destroyed planetary ecosystems...since its origins. Moreover, it does not appreciate the extent to which the structural and political power of capital has made it the main geological force on planet Earth. As a result, by failing to realize that the climate crisis is a product of, and induced by, capitalism, this discourse provides a warrant to affirm solutions that reproduce the same capitalist system and imperial logic that destroys life on the planet.<sup>6</sup>

This example shifts the focus from a human centered analysis of climate change to a capitalism centered analysis of the climate crisis, serving to remind us that these narratives exist on spectrums. Students can and should situate themselves on these spectrums during classroom discussion and throughout the course of the unit.

Implicit and explicit cultural and political messaging minimizes the role that capitalism, racism, patriarchy, and imperialism play in the climate crisis. As a result, this unit supports students as they compare, discuss, and interrogate dominant and counter narratives. For students to construct their own narratives inspired by

history, art, and current events related to these critical issues, they need practice with the themes, vocabulary, and controversies contained in the narratives. The ideas that follow describe how to approach teaching this content with specific reading, discussion, and engagement strategies to accompany both visual and text-based sources.

Teachers can set up a Gallery Walk and post the narratives where students read, annotate, and discuss these ideas while determining where they stand on these issues. Students will also generate questions, highlighting misunderstandings, topics of interest, and opportunities for deeper analysis. Here is a brief overview of the four dominant and counter narratives that serve as the unit's foundation. Teachers will find a more detailed analysis of these narratives, along with a discussion of the relevant sources, artwork, and teaching strategies to support student understanding and engagement. In the culminating performance-based assessment, students curate their own Black Art and Climate Justice Museum Exhibit that incorporates art, along with a description and review, as it relates to the students' newly synthesized narratives.

#### *Dominant Narratives*

The extraction and commodification of natural resources is necessary for economic and social progress.

Colonization and capitalism are justified political and economic systems to be venerated and celebrated. They are not connected to the Climate Crisis. The Climate Crisis is inevitable.

The global presence of the US military is necessary. The US military is an efficient organization that promotes stability around the world.

The solutions to the economic and political problems facing the world today will be market driven. Those individuals with power, money, and racial privilege are best suited to address current crises.

#### *Counter Narratives*

The protection and restoration of resources, and the stewardship of the natural world, is necessary for planetary survival.

Anti-imperialism and democratic socialism are viable alternatives to the current global capitalist system. Colonialism and capitalism have caused the climate crisis. A rejection of these systems is necessary for planetary survival. Another world is possible.

As the largest institutional producer of greenhouse gases in the world, the US military exacerbates the climate crisis and increases instability. A global anti-imperialist peace movement is a necessary response to the violence and pollution caused by the US military.

The healing that is necessary today is feminist, indigenous, youth led, queer, anti-racist, and intersectional. Radical change depends on commitment, love and hope from the collective.

### **Joy Harjo's Poetry Brings Counter Narratives to Life**

One additional teaching resource for this introduction to the narratives is the Joy Harjo poem, "Advice for Countries, Advanced, Developing and Falling A Call and Response," found in *An American Sunrise*. Using seven call and response conversations between two opposing voices, Harjo captures how compelling, reasonable, and necessary counter narratives are, particularly with respect to historical analysis and resistance movements. For example, in the fourth conversation, she writes: "We cannot own anyone else, people, the lands, or resources. We are here to care for each other. *We are right. We build walls to keep anyone who is not like us out of here. God gave us these lands. We separate children and cage them because they are breaking our God's law.*"<sup>7</sup> Her choice to situate the so-called counter narrative first is powerful; the voices, experiences, and culture of indigenous people in the Americas predate the white supremacy, capitalism, patriarchy, and settler colonialism associated with the so-called dominant narrative. Her poetry calls into question the premise that resource extraction and carceral systems are necessary or appropriate. She centers indigenous knowledge as the most significant narrative.

Students will read this poem and match the conversations within to narratives included in the chart above. They can periodically return to the poem as they become more familiar with the art included in this unit. Students should be encouraged to write not only standard prose as they curate their museum exhibits but to also write poetry using Harjo’s work as a model. Just as climate justice curriculum need not remain in a science classroom, poetry need not be trapped in an English class. Science, poetry, current events, history, and art belong in the social studies classroom. These purposeful interdisciplinary inclusions are the best tools to engage students and model for them approaches to learning that mirror life outside of school and the classroom.

## Unit Essential Questions

---

1. How can we ensure the survival of the planet?
2. Why is there a climate crisis? Who is responsible for addressing it?
3. What impact does the U.S. Military have on the climate? What are the connections between peace and climate justice?
4. How can we radically reimagine a future where healing is guided by feminist, indigenous, youth led, queer, anti-racist, and intersectional ideas and practices? What ideas and practices lead to radical change?

### Part One—Ensuring Planetary Survival

1. What is the impact of globalized extraction and commodification of natural resources?
2. What strategies for survival can we learn from Wanuri Kahiu’s films?
3. Is planting trees a revolutionary act?

In Hannah Holleman’s lecture titled, “No Empires, No Dust Bowl,” her listeners take stock of the everyday materials that sustain our day-to-day work. She names extraction and commodification as driving forces in the globalized capitalist economy and environmental crisis. She lists the materials: Metal, trees, soil, fossil fuels, and plastics and she states that “nature comes to us from somewhere.” The materials that “come to us” must also go away from us - to landfills, the water, and toxic recycling sites. She adds that the consumers who buy computers, furniture, cars, paper, books, gasoline, bottled water, wheat, and corn “temporarily make use” of these materials, while additional people and corporations profit from this extraction and commodification. In addition, the labor conditions where people work, in mines, logging camps, and factories, are unhealthy and unsafe; and workers often lack education, agency, or a seat at the decision-making table.<sup>8</sup> Holleman makes it clear that equilibrium has been destroyed and the planet’s health is in danger. It is also clear that these disastrous consequences are the result of centuries of racism, imperialism and capitalism on a global scale.

Wanuri Kahiu also communicates a vision of global catastrophe; but instead of a sociology lecture, she uses the art of filmmaking. Kahiu brings her viewers to a silent future world, after World War III, or the Water Wars, where communication is digitized, and water is the most limited resource. The protagonist, Asha, carries a treasured and necessary plastic water bottle, even putting her recycled urine into it. In her lab at the Virtual Natural History Museum, she finds something drastically different. She knows this because of the scent, consistency, and digital analysis of the soil sample that found its way to her desk. The scent awakens her dreamworld and sends her on an imagined underwater journey until she wakes up, escapes visa denials and violent attacks by security forces, and pursues the actual mission of planting a tree in the soil sample she

chose to protect. The short film, simultaneously reframing the past, narrating the present and visioning a dystopian yet hopeful future, investigates themes of patriarchy/matriarchy, bureaucracy, migration, communication, colonialism, conservation, and the climate crisis.<sup>9</sup> Asha, who plants, nurtures, and becomes one with the tree as the film ends, is an Afrofuturistic Wangari Maathai, resisting the regulatory and violent police state to restore balance, indigenous soil, and regain control of a world ravaged by commodification and war.

In the chapter about Wangari Maathai's memoir *Unbowed*, "Resistance from the Ground: Agriculture, Gender, and Manual Labor," in the book *Naturalizing Africa: Ecological Violence, Agency, and Postcolonial Resistance in African Literature*, Cajetan Iheka writes about Maathai's "example of tree planting." He describes her work as a "challenge to the oppressive structures of post-independence Kenya where the leaders destroy forest resources and impoverish the human population in the name of development."<sup>10</sup> The dominant and counternarratives of this lesson connect to Iheka's ideas as he names Maathai's childhood and indigenous knowledge as central to her resistance. He also describes the impact of colonial and postcolonial exploitation in Kenya while focusing on Maathai's work with the Greenbelt Movement and its role protecting human and environmental rights in Kenya.

Central to Iheka's argument is a rebuttal of the idea that Maathai learned about environmental justice, activism, and the implementation of grassroots solutions during her time at university in the United States and Europe. A white supremacist analysis of her life focuses on her need to leave the continent and learn in non-African academic settings in order to address the crises in Kenya. However, the lessons and experiences Maathai took from her mother during her childhood in Kenya were much more impactful than her time in predominantly white institutions. Iheka reminds us that we should locate her environmental vision in her childhood memories because "experiences of childhood are what mold us and make us who we are."<sup>11</sup> In her childhood she encountered the knowledge of indigenous and rural women which shaped her work in much more meaningful ways. Iheka writes, "What emerges in *Unbowed* then is a movement whose resistance is shaped by indigenous environmental practices and rural women who worked to actualize its objectives."<sup>12</sup> This focus on Maathai's own childhood, and her later organizing work with the Greenbelt Movement, is proof of the power and impact of indigenous knowledge, its connection to ecological wellbeing, and the role that it plays as a counter to colonialism and white supremacy.

The radical resistance of the main character in *Pumzi* echoes the life and radicalism of Wangari Maathai. Iheka discusses Maathai's specific memories of her mother, as well as her indigenous worldview that depicts the land as the source of life and replenishment. Iheka captures Maathai's "mother's injunction." Maathai's mother's message to her daughter was "Don't idle around during the rains, plant something."<sup>13</sup> And even while faced with violent attacks intended to intimidate and paralyze, Asha, the main character in *Pumzi*, is the antithesis of idleness. Upon finding the soil sample containing water, the post-apocalyptic version of rain, she jumps into action to plant something. Like the women in the Greenbelt movement, she must be subversive, escaping the trap of the state, without a visa, to build a future using the practices of the past.

As we engage students with the film *Pumzi* and the life's work of Wangari Maathai, we can "foreground the indigenous source of Maathai's vision."<sup>14</sup> This highlights the important role that indigenous environmental practices play in the fight against the climate crisis. It disrupts the dominant narrative that Maathai developed her ideas about the Greenbelt Movement's radical practices during her time in the United States and Germany. The counter narrative focused on her childhood and her "recollection of indigenous environmental practices...discloses a grassroots source of her resistance."<sup>15</sup> Students can use the film and Maathai's story as

they develop their own narratives about the role that indigenous people, their knowledge, and practices can play in the planet's struggle for survival.

As students engage with this critical tension between extraction/commodification and stewardship/survival, it is important that they learn the historical context related to Wangari Maathai's life and work. The exploitation that she and the women of the Greenbelt Movement resisted was the postcolonial reality of not only Kenya, but so many lands where white supremacy, imperialism and colonialism devastated people, land, and culture. Iheka quotes her memoir directly: "The colonial government had decided to encroach into the forest and establish commercial plantations of non-native trees. I remember seeing huge bonfires as the natural forests went up in smoke...These trees grew fast and strong and contributed to the development of the newly emerging timber and building industry."<sup>16</sup> Using this quote as a starting point, students can hypothesize about the impact of non-native plants and loss of forest. At the same time, they can consider how non-native plants and fires are a metaphor for the larger colonial invasion and loss of indigenous knowledge and agency.

The main argument of the Greenbelt Movement can be framed with the question: "Why not plant trees?" This resistance, led by rural women using indigenous knowledge and practices, was a robust tree planting campaign. They were determined to make the world a better place by "reclaiming public spaces and refusing to yield to the exploitative mindset."<sup>17</sup> In addition, they led with the knowledge that tree planting was not only a revolutionary act, but also beneficial for the communities who do it. Iheka quotes Maathai's memoir to reveal her intimate knowledge of the benefits of tree planting: "The reverence the communities had for the fig tree helped to preserve the stream and the tadpoles that so captivated me. The trees also held the soil together, reducing erosion and landslides. In such ways, without conscious or deliberate effort, these culture and spiritual practices contributed to the conservation of biodiversity." And Iheka goes on to further discuss these benefits which include improvement of lives (human and non-human), empowerment of women, increased biodiversity, and shelter for more species.<sup>18</sup>

A closer examination of the positive impact of tree planting on the soil brings us back to *Pumzi* and its focus on the healing power of soil and trees. Iheka writes that caring for the soil is a "means of repairing or nurturing a nation being bled by its rapacious rulers."<sup>19</sup> Dominant narratives about tending to and protecting the soil frame rural women who work the land as apolitical and disempowered victims. However, both *Pumzi* and Wangari Maathai's life demonstrate the radical healing power of nurturing the soil and tree planting. Not only that but the Greenbelt Movement's efforts modeled for Kenyans the connection between human rights and environmental justice. Iheka writes, "The GBM also used its established platform to mobilize people to recognize and deploy the powers of citizenship in the quest for a better, livable Kenya where human and environmental rights are interlinked and seriously protected."<sup>20</sup> Rural women in this movement demonstrated their agency without needing to learn the science of tree planting. Given her own deep, familial knowledge of indigenous ecology and environmental justice, Maathai encouraged women to draw on their knowledge of the soil to plant trees; they had already been growing and planting for all their lives.

## **Part Two—Another World is Possible**

1. What are the connections between political/economic systems and the environment/climate?
2. What criticisms of and alternatives to the present system can we find in the art of Maren Hassinger and LaToya Ruby Frazier?
3. Is another world possible?

In an interview with David Kiely, Professor Hannah Holleman describes the theory of ecological imperialism.

She discusses its “legacy and persistent realities” highlighting that the “rest of the world” has not agreed “to host the rich world’s garbage or act as carbon sequestration sites for the effluence of the affluent.”<sup>21</sup> Students can return to the Oxfam chart from the introductory lessons that compares CO2 emissions by income level to see a visual representation of the evidence that undergirds Holleman’s argument. Students can use evidence from this interview to help them discuss, analyze, and interrogate the dominant narratives about capitalism, colonialism and the climate crisis. Students will use the texts and art from this part of the unit to construct their own narratives and curate their own Black Art and Climate Justice Museum Exhibit.

In the interview, Holleman describes the cause of the current climate crisis when she discusses the “deeply anti-democratic, imperialistic nature of global capitalism from the earliest colonial period to the present. Political and economic elites of the most wealthy and powerful capitalist countries, in tandem with local and national elites around the globe, have imposed a model of economic development worldwide that thrives on the extraction of ecological wealth and the exploitation, as well as the violent dislocation and subjugation, of peoples.”<sup>22</sup> This excerpt reinforces the connection between capitalism and colonialism which will help students to understand the impact of both systems. The accumulation of wealth and power on the global level is dependent on resource extraction and violence against the land and bodies of human beings, specifically indigenous people and others who experience displacement and dispossession. She explains the cause and effect in a way that challenges the dominant narrative and supports students’ development of another perspective. As students work through the challenging vocabulary in this text, they can name alternatives to the violence of imperialism and capitalism, ultimately making the strange familiar by articulating its opposite.

Holleman calls into the question the belief that capitalism holds the keys to solving the climate crisis. “The mainstream environmental movement has been hamstrung by disorienting claims that capitalism can solve the ecological crisis.”<sup>23</sup> She debunks capitalism as the solution and uses historical evidence to support the point. She describes the historical precedent of the Dust Bowl of the 1930s as “one dramatic regional manifestation of a global social and ecological crisis generated by the realities of settler colonialism and imperialism.” The source of the crisis, then and now, is social. Thus, as she writes, massive social change is required to address it.<sup>24</sup>

In her essay, “De-naturalizing Ecological Disaster: Colonialism, Racism, and the Global Dust Bowl of the 1930s,” Holleman describes the failure of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century conservation efforts and situates these efforts within their white supremacist context. Conservation was a reaction to ecological failure. Ecological failure was caused by the extraction and commodification that was foundational to global imperialism and capitalism. She writes, “By the 1930s there was a well-established, international body of [information] discussing the growing problem of soil erosion across the colonial world. This literature goes back decades before the Dust Bowl in multiple languages, especially as the early conservation movement developed in response to the acceleration of ecological degradation associated with Anglo-European and US colonialism and domestic economic activities.”

## Black Art and Climate Justice Museum Exhibit

---

Using their newly crafted narratives and curated artwork from the three sections of this unit of study, students will be ready to build their Black Art and Climate Justice Museum Exhibit. Given the ongoing devastation and grim predictions related to the current climate crisis, students' work will acknowledge this reality, while at the same time envision another world where healing is feminist, indigenous, youth led, queer, anti-racist, and intersectional. Building upon these counternarratives, students should reflect on how the ideas related to this kind of healing show up throughout the unit. What art and texts most align with these ideas? How can commitment, love, and hope lead to radical change?

This desire to envision and create a better world is nothing new. In 1956, at the First International Conference of Negro Writers and Artists, the authors of *Presence Africaine* described the role of culture and its effort to "reconstruct a world which is filled with life, thought and passion and seems to thirst more than ever for justice, love and peace." The authors of the *Presence Africaine* also named accessibility as a key component of problem solving. "It is important that the great problems should be accessible to every conscience, and that all the cultural originalities should be within everyone's reach."<sup>56</sup> One of the most pressing "great problems" is the current climate crisis. The failure to address this crisis is rooted in the ongoing exclusion of women, indigenous people, young people, Black people, people of color, and queer people as problem solvers whose ideas will bring out radical change the world so desperately needs.

## Resources

---

### Bibliography

Bhavnani, Kum-Kum, et al, *Climate Futures: Reimagining Global Climate Justice*, London: Zed Books Ltd, 2019. Powerful collection of essays that reframe the dominant narratives related to the climate crisis and focus on indigenous and feminist solutions.

Douglas, Emory, MOMA, *The Black Panther Newspapers*, 1969.

Du Bois, W.E.B., "Reflections upon The Housatonic River," 1930, published by *The Berkshire Edge*, 3 April 2016. This speech is referenced by Frazier in her photography and provides insightful historical context for the Black environmental movement.

Dress Code, "Emory Douglas: The Art of The Black Panthers," May 2015. This is a brief, engaging and accessible documentary about the life and work of Emory Douglas.

First International Conference of Negro Writers and Artists, *Presence Africaine*, September 1956.

Furtado, Will, *America Latina*, "Inventing Your Own Game - Maren Hassinger: 'We Are Not Alive to Make Money'" 4 Nov 2019.

Frazier, LaToya Ruby, Artist's Statement, "Ten Contemporary Artists Explore the legacy of W.E.B. Du Bois in

Our Time," UMass Amherst, Fine Arts Center, 2013.

Frazier, LaToya Ruby, 2021. The artist's website is useful for accessing her work.

Harjo, Joy, *An American Sunrise Poems*, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2019. Contains both original work and a curation of relevant poems that center the creativity, suffering, and strength that has been a part of Native Americans history.

Hassinger, Maren, *Leaning*, New York: MOMA, 1980. Both the images of her art and a clip to a brief interview are found on this website.

Holleman, Hannah, "De-naturalizing Ecological Disaster: Colonialism, Racism, and the Global Dust Bowl of the 1930s" *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 44(1): 234-60, 2017. After taking a seminar with Professor Holleman, the role of soil and the history and limits of conversation as a result of imperialism became much clearer.

Huq, Adrian, Connecticut Peace Conference Presentation, January 2021. A current college student, Adrian is a graduate of NHPS and a leader with the New Haven Climate Movement and New Haven Peace Commission. They have been pivotal in pushing New Haven Public Schools to embrace the Climate Justice Schools Initiative and embed more climate focused curriculum for all grade levels and subject areas.

Kahiu, Wanuri, *Pumzi*, <https://vimeo.com/46891859>, 2010.

Kahn, Mattie, "Flint is Family," *Elle Magazine*, 8 Aug 2016. *Elle Magazine* hired LaToya Ruby Frazier to shoot this photo essay about the Flint Water Crisis.

Iheka, Cajetan, *Naturalizing Africa: Ecological Violence, Agency, and Postcolonial Resistance in African Literature*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. While Professor Iheka focused on literature, his writing about Wangari Maathai helped me to effectively include a close reading of the film *Pumzi* in this unit.

Lescaze, Zoë, "LaToya Ruby Frazier, American Witness," *The New York Times*, 1 March 2021.

McKinley, Angelica, and Giovanni Russonello, "Fifty Years Later, Black Panthers' Art Still Resonates," *The New York Times*, 15 Oct 2016.

National Museum of Woman in the Arts, Maren Hassinger on *Wrenching News (2008)*, YouTube, 2017. This YouTube video features the artist discussing her motivation, approach and methodology for this piece.

National Priorities Project, "The Pentagon Increase is the Size of the Entire CDC Budget," 14 May 2021 and "President Biden's FY 2022 Budget Request," 11 June 2021.

Nenquimo, Nemonte, "This is my message to the western world - your civilisation is killing life on Earth," *The Guardian*, 12 Oct 2020.

Nunez, Christina, "Carbon dioxide levels are at a record high. Here's what you need to know," *National Geographic*, 13 May 2019.

Satgar, Vishwas, *The Climate Crisis: South African and Global Democratic Eco-Socialist Alternatives*, Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2018. This book is accessible for free online and discusses the failure of capitalism to address the issues of climate crisis.

Scott, Dread, “Counter Currents: Dread Scott on Emory Douglas,” Walker Art, 14 Jan 2016. This radical contemporary Black artist provides important insight and analysis on the life and work of Emory Douglas.

Zomorodi, Manoush, et al, “LaToya Ruby Frazier: What Is the Human Cost of Toxic Water and Environmental Racism?” TED Radio Hour, NPR News, 7 Aug 2020. The TED Talk featured in this article provides audiences with an opportunity to hear directly from LaToya Ruby Frazier.

### Teacher and Student Resources

The resources that will be most useful for teachers and students are those that link directly to art and interviews with the artists.

- Wanuri Kahiu’s short speculative fiction film, *Pumzi*
- Maren Hassinger’s work on the MOMA website
- LaToya Ruby Frazier’s website, short film, TED Talk, features on *New York Times* and *Elle Magazine*
- Emory Douglas’ work on the MOMA website, as well as his recent lecture, a short documentary film about him, and a feature in the *New York Times*

The following sites, in addition to the sources listed in the bibliography and endnotes, will be useful as students work to develop background knowledge about the climate crisis and military spending:

- Climate Health Education Project, [climateeducationnh.org](http://climateeducationnh.org)
- Elliot Negin, “It’s Time to Rein in Inflated Military Budgets,” *Scientific American*, 14 Sept 2020.
- National Geographic, Climate 101, [nationalgeographic.com/environment/article/global-warming-overview](http://nationalgeographic.com/environment/article/global-warming-overview)
- National Priorities Project, [nationalpriorities.org](http://nationalpriorities.org)

## Appendix on Implementing District Standards<sup>57</sup>

---

- Competency One: Problem Solving and Critical Thinking
- Competency Two: Accessing and Analyzing Information
- Competency Three: Communication and Collaboration
- Competency Four: Creativity and

<sup>1</sup> Climate Health Education Project, Climate Justice Schools.

<sup>2</sup> Christina Nunez, “Carbon dioxide levels are at a record high. Here's what you need to know,” *National Geographic*.

<sup>3</sup> Bhavnani, Foran, Kurian, and Munshi, *Climate Futures: Reimagining Global Climate Justice*, “The Future Is Ours to Seek.”

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>5</sup> Oxford Dictionary, <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/us/definition/english/anthropocene>

<sup>6</sup> Vishwas Satgar, *The Climate Crisis: South African and Global Democratic Eco-Socialist Alternatives*, Wits University Press, 2018.

<sup>7</sup> Joy Harjo, *An American Sunrise: Poems*.

<sup>8</sup> Hannah Holleman, "No Empires, No Dust Bowls," online lecture, 25 May 2021.

<sup>9</sup> Wanuri Kahiu, *Pumzi*, <https://vimeo.com/46891859>.

<sup>10</sup> Cajetan Iheka, *Naturalizing Africa: Ecological Violence, Agency, and Postcolonial Resistance in African Literature*.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 136.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

<sup>14</sup> Ibid

<sup>15</sup> Ibid

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 131

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 132

<sup>18</sup> Ibid

<sup>19</sup> Ibid

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 135

<sup>21</sup> Hannah Holleman, "The Eco-socialist Imperative," *Left Voice*, 13 Oct 2016.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid

<sup>23</sup> Ibid

<sup>24</sup> Ibid

<sup>25</sup> Hannah Holleman, "De-naturalizing Ecological Disaster: Colonialism, Racism, and the Global Dust Bowl of the 1930s" *The Journal of Peasant Studies*.

<sup>26</sup> Nemonte Nenquimo, "This is my message to the western world - your civilisation is killing life on Earth," *The Guardian*.

<sup>27</sup> Maren Hassinger, *Leaning*, MOMA.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid

<sup>29</sup> Kojo Abudu, *Frieze*, "Artist Maren Hassinger Mourns Our Lost Connection With the Natural World."

<sup>30</sup> National Museum of Woman in the Arts, Maren Hassinger on *Wrenching News (2008)*, YouTube

<sup>31</sup> Will Furtado, *America Latina*, "Inventing Your Own Game - Maren Hassinger: 'We Are Not Alive to Make Money.'"

<sup>32</sup> Zoë Lescaze, "LaToya Ruby Frazier, American Witness," *The New York Times*.

<sup>33</sup> W.E.B. DuBois, "Reflections upon The Housatonic River," and Victor Feldman, "Du Bois' environmental legacy celebrated at River Walk, by his 'golden river,'" *The Berkshire Edge*.

<sup>34</sup> LaToya Ruby Frazier, Artist's Statement, "Ten Contemporary Artists Explore the legacy of W.E.B. Du Bois in Our Time," UMass Amherst, Fine Arts Center.

<sup>35</sup> LaToya Ruby Frazier, "Flint is Family."

<sup>36</sup> Mattie Kahn, "Flint is Family," *Elle Magazine*.

<sup>37</sup> LaToya Ruby Frazier, "Flint is Family," 2016.

<sup>38</sup> Manoush Zomorodi, Maria Paz Gutierrez, Sanaz Meshkinpour, "LaToya Ruby Frazier: What Is the Human Cost of Toxic Water and Environmental Racism?" TED Radio Hour, NPR News.

<sup>39</sup> Money for Human Needs, [moneyforhumanneeds.org](http://moneyforhumanneeds.org), 25 Mar 2021

<sup>40</sup> National Priorities Project, "President Biden's FY 2022 Budget Request," and "The Pentagon Increase is the Size of the Entire CDC Budget."

<sup>41</sup> New Haven Peace Council, "Sign Petition: Decrease Military Spending, Save Jobs, Fund Needs."

<sup>42</sup> Adrian Huq, Connecticut Peace Conference Presentation.

<sup>43</sup> Emory Douglas, "Emory Douglas: Designing Justice," Lecture

<sup>44</sup> Dread Scott, "Counter Currents: Dread Scott on Emory Douglas," Walker Art.

<sup>45</sup> Dress Code, "Emory Douglas: The Art of The Black Panthers."

<sup>46</sup> Dread Scott, "Counter Currents: Dread Scott on Emory Douglas," Walker Art.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid

<sup>48</sup> Ibid

<sup>49</sup> Emory Douglas, MOMA, *The Black Panther Newspaper*, vol. 3, no. 13 (Avaricious Businessman).

<sup>50</sup> Emory Douglas, MOMA, *The Black Panther Newspaper*, vol. 3, no. 22 (Our fight is not in Vietnam).

<sup>51</sup> Angelica McKinley and Giovanni Russonello, "Fifty Years Later, Black Panthers' Art Still Resonates," *The New York Times*

<sup>52</sup> Ibid

<sup>53</sup> Ibid

<sup>54</sup> Dress Code, "Emory Douglas: The Art of The Black Panthers."

<sup>55</sup> Sean Malloy, *Out of Oakland: Black Panther Party Internationalism During the Cold War*, 2017.

<sup>56</sup> The First International Conference of Negro Writers and Artists, *Presence Africaine*.

<sup>57</sup> New Haven Public Schools, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Competencies.

---

<https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu>

©2021 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University

For terms of use visit <https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu/terms>