

Gothamist

The Climate Museum starts pop-up series in SoHo, continues search for permanent home



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Century-old postcards, bought in bulk on eBay, are tacked onto a wall in a SoHo gallery space. Arranged like a quilt, the 400 dispatches are nostalgic throwbacks to American destinations transformed into an 8-by-13-foot mosaic of a “rapidly approaching future of catastrophic climate change.”

“Someday, all this” is a new art installation by David Opdyke for a pop-up series by the Climate Museum while the nonprofit ramps up a search this year for a permanent, transit-accessible home in New York City.

The exhibit — located at 120 Wooster St. in Manhattan, next door to the Chanel store — shows off climate change-themed works of art alongside a kid-friendly “action incubator,”

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an interactive studio that stimulates visitors to learn, act, and express themselves about global warming. It runs from Oct. 8 to Dec. 22.

“Our mission is to help people who are worried about the climate crisis, but not yet active in engaging with it, take civic action and involve themselves in civic dialogue,” said Miranda Massie, director of the Climate Museum. “Art is a profoundly powerful way to do that.”

Originally chartered in 2015, the museum has hosted six exhibitions and more than 200 events over the last four years. Art exhibits are coupled with science lectures and workshops — to build public conversations around solutions, identify disinformation campaigns, and confront a future of sea level rise and extreme weather.



Since December 2017, the gallery has moved into temporary locations such as Governors Island, but most of its exhibits have been outdoors — featuring unorthodox methods such as giving away free posters of exhibited artwork for people to distribute and display in their communities as a creative way of spreading the message on climate change.

“Someday, all this” retains the same ethos. Immediately, visitors encounter a vast tilework of scenes. Some have been altered with paint, giving them an improvised look. At a distance, all the small rectangular scenes in the matrix create one large scene of two continents separated by an ocean. A closer look reveals chaos in the form of upside-down postcards and inconsistencies in the land masses. To make the experience more accessible, an audio tour narrated by the artist is available for the visually impaired.

“We’ve been on the road to sort of messing things up since the very beginning,” said Opdyke. “So I’m sort of taking these contemporary problems that we’re becoming more and more and more aware of and more worried about.”

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Along with the exhibition, the action incubator is an interactive experience that includes a station stocked with postage-paid postcards, same as the ones in Opdyke's mural. Visitors can use these postcards to write to elected officials to call on them to take action on climate change policy and funding.

The kid-friendly studio offers NASA-sponsored lectures for children, a science library and art workshops. Along with Opdyke's mural, the museum will also be debuting a booth where visitors can record their responses to question prompts such as: "Has climate change affected your daily life?"

The Climate Museum is funded by individuals, philanthropic foundations, and corporations such as Ford Motor Company. Massie said the organization is careful about vetting corporate money, even though it's "very much in fundraising mode" to secure a permanent and centrally located space.

"We have turned down funding from potential sponsors that are inconsistent with our mission," Massie said.

The next pop-up in the series will be an interactive history exhibition on climate change and inequality. The Climate Museum is currently searching for a location for this show.

"There's never been a time when our decisions, as human beings, have mattered more," Massie said. "This is the moment when what you do and think and say and who you connect with and how you express yourself matters more for humanity than at any previous point in our species' history."