AFTER LANDSCAPE

Goldin+Senneby, Accelerator and the Anthropocene Laboratory

Goldin+Senneby, ***After the Artist's Garden in Giverny*** (2024). Photo by Eric Moretti

After Landscape is a series of works on protective museum "climate frames" that reconstruct climate protests directed at famous landscape paintings. Instead of focusing on the canvases, the works attend to the traces left on the glass and frames themselves. These actions are part of an ongoing cultural renegotiation of the relationship between humans and nature.

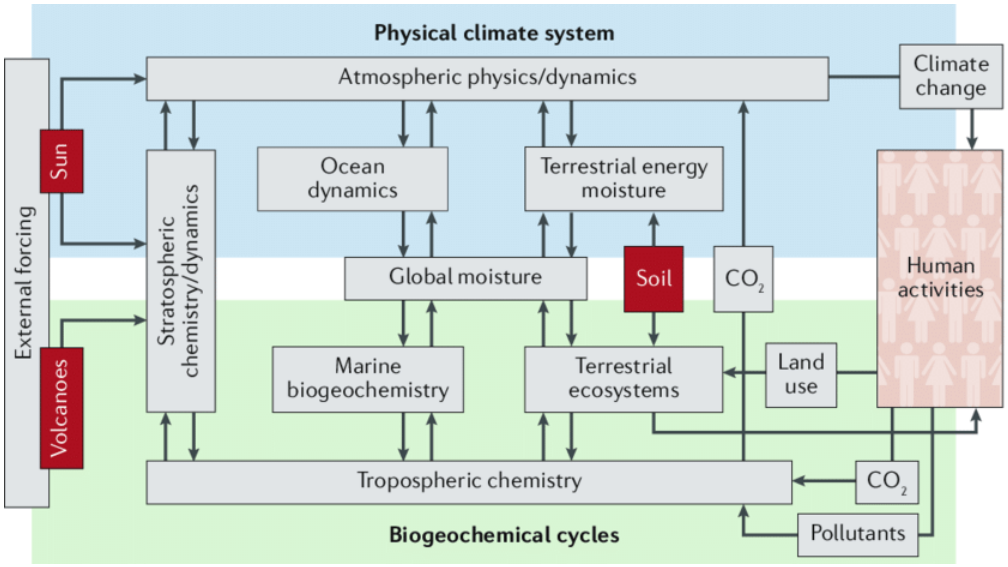
In contrast to iconoclasms of previous centuries, recent attacks on landscape motifs do not reach the paintings themselves, stopping at the protective glass, also known as the "climate frame". The attack is directed at the physical and cultural frame through which we see landscapes.

The concept for *After Landscape* was developed in 2024 as part of a collaboration between Goldin+Senneby and the Anthropocene Laboratory. A selection of the works premiered in the exhibition Flare-Up at Accelerator, Stockholm University, in spring 2025, and has continued to inspire scientific work at the Laboratory. Flare-up is on display October 24, 2025 - March 15, 2026, at the *MIT List Visual Arts Centre*. ARTnews selected *After Landscape* as one of the defining artworks of 2025.

The making of After Landscape

The Anthropocene Laboratory hosted a series of workshops in February and May 2024 as part of The Intertwined Biosphere research project, which Goldin+Senneby attended. A central concern in these meetings was how to re-imagine the dominant worldview of the past 11,000 years that separates humans from nature, and what it would mean to make sense of humanity's embeddedness in the wider living world.

The early Earth System diagrams developed by NASA in the 1980s are one way to integrate humans with nature, but they curiously place humans outside the Earth system, at a certain distance and with only limited interaction. These diagrams, like many models, mirror questions central to much of art history: From where do we see the world? And how do our technologies of representation shape and constrain what we are able to see?



NASA's Bretherton diagram of the Earth System. Reproduced from Steffen, W., et al. (2020) The emergence and evolution of Earth System Science; originally published as National Research Council (1986) Earth System Science: Overview: A Program for Global Change.

Asking what an art-historical analogy to Earth system modelling could be, the artists turned to landscape, as a technology that conditions our view of the surrounding environment. The word "landscape" first entered modern English language as *landskip* in 1598, in an English translation of a book on "curious painting". At first it referred to a genre of painting and poetry, and only later became a term to describe real-life views.

Landscape painting as an independent genre in European art was invented in the early 16th century in Flanders and the Netherlands. Since then, it has been an ideologically charged genre of art, helping to shape cultural understanding of ownership, identity, nationality, and nature.

Earth system modelling in recent decades has struggled to integrate more aspects of human activity into the model, while landscape painting has worked to embed themselves inside the vistas they had once invented. With the emergence of "plein air painting", artists left the studio—and the idealised image of the landscape—to go out into the field, painting what they actually encountered.

One canonical example is Claude Monet's series of haystack paintings, made in the fields around his home in Giverny. Monet would be seen with eight or ten canvases at a time, working on them simultaneously and shifting between them as the light shifted. Rather than just the haystacks, he was painting the light and atmosphere at different times of day, across the seasons, and in different types of weather.

The haystack paintings were also a great commercial success, allowing Monet to acquire the Giverny estate where he would subsequently grow his famous garden which he painting for the rest of his life. One of these haystack paintings is today housed in a private museum in Potsdam: the Museum Barberini.

History of Iconoclasm

In the autumn of 2022, the activist group Letzte Generation [Last Generation] attacked the Haystack painting in the Barberini by throwing mashed potatoes at the work. The following year, another of Monet's iconic landscape motifs, known as *The Artist's Garden in Giverny*, was attacked by two climate activists from Återställ Våtmarker [Restore Wetlands] during an exhibition at Nationalmuseum in Stockholm. Similar climate actions have taken place at museums across Europe, often targeting iconic landscape paintings. These actions can be understood within a longer history of iconoclasm—attacks on images and symbols in moments of social and religious upheaval.

Many of these recent climate actions have been specifically directed towards late 19th century landscape paintings. These works often present idealised scenes of rural nature at precisely the moment when fossil-fuelled industrialisation was transforming landscapes and climate. The attacks can be read as an assault on the idea of the human observer placed outside nature: an expression of the ongoing renegotiation of the very "nature vs. culture" separation at the core of modernity.

The history of iconoclasm is probably as old as that of iconography. The 16th century saw Protestant and Calvinist Iconoclasm in Northern Europe —the Beeldenstorm —where religious images were systematically destroyed. Later critics noted that the frame of an artwork was "an element of beauty as much as colour and outline on canvas," The early 20th century saw suffragette activist Mary Richardson hack Diego Velázquez's *Venus* painting with a meat cleaver. In statements to the press about the attack, Richardson announced that: "Justice is an element of beauty as much as colour and outline on canvas."

In contrast to these historical predecessors, none of the recent attacks on 19th century landscape motifs have reached the paintings themselves. The works are protected by glass and climate frames designed to stabilise temperature, humidity, and other environmental factors. The attack leaves its mark on this protective surface. In this sense, the action is productive: it reveals and challenges the very frame through which we are invited to view both landscape and nature.

After Landscape: Iconoclastic Conservation

After Landscape reconstructs a series of protective museum climate frames bearing the marks of recent landscape iconoclasms. The artworks are executed by painting conservator Fernando Caceres, based on the different museums' own documentation of each attack. The first work in the series is titled *After the Artist's Garden in Giverny* (2024) and based on the action at Nationalmuseum in Stockholm in 2023.

Installation view:Goldin+Senneby: Flare-Up at Accelerator. From left: ***After Grainstacks*** (2025), ***After Vase with Fifteen Sunflowers*** (2025), and ***After Sower at Sunset*** (2025). In the foreground: Resin sculptures from the series ***Multiple Scars*** (2021). Photo: Jean-Baptiste Béranger.

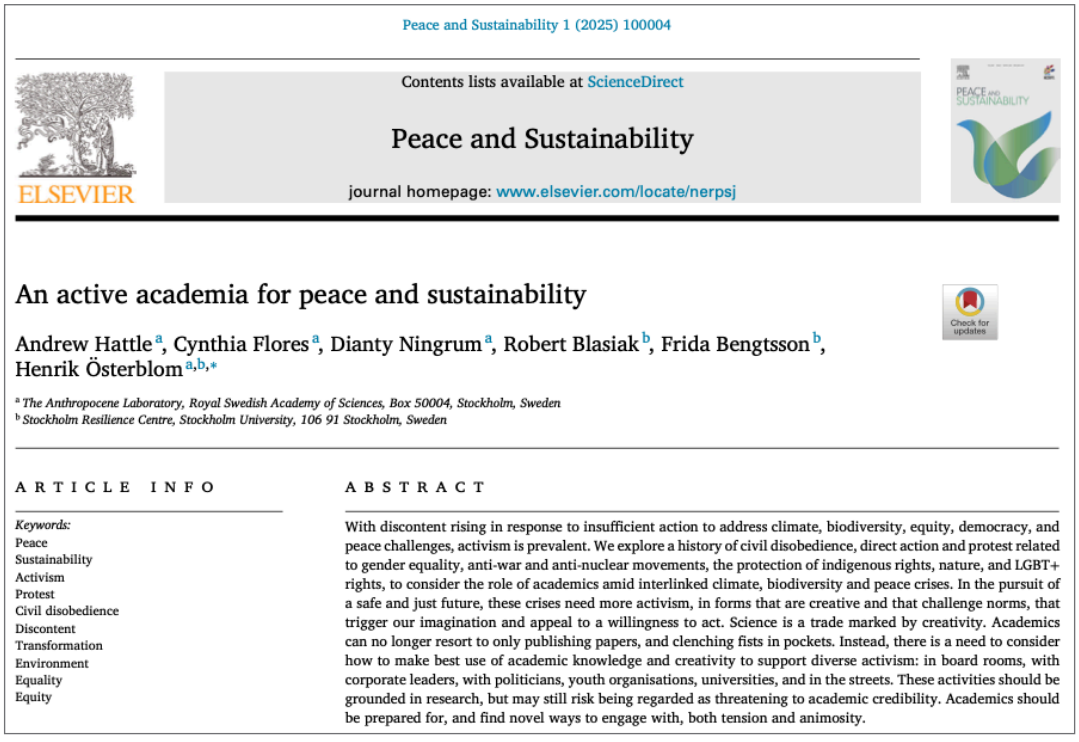
Exhibition view: Goldin+Senneby: ***Flare-Up***, ***MIT List Visual Arts Center***, 2025. Photo: Dario Lasagni

Mutual inspiration and cooperation

Accelerator at Stockholm University helped identify suitable artists for the Anthropocene Laboratory, facilitated a series of meetings (including in the studio of the artists), and supported the development of *After Landscape* as part of the Flare-Up exhibition. The workshops on "making sense of an intertwined biosphere" provided key inspiration for the artists.

For scientists, the collaboration provided an in-depth encounter with artistic process and generated conversations that helped inspire scientific thinking. The artists' way of describing the protests as an evolution of the way humans interact with landscape supported reflections on how scientists can themselves engage as activists and to figuratively "go out of the lab".

As a continuously contentious issue, academic involvement in activism is much debated in the literature. Is it possible to be a scientist and an activist at the same time? In the academic article "*An active academia for peace and sustainability*", published in January 2025 and co-authored by researchers at the Anthropocene Laboratory, we explored this topic. The article traces historical links between activism and social change, and discusses how scientists can balance academic integrity with active engagement in society. The collaboration with Goldin+Senneby and the development of *After Landscape* form one of the concrete cases through which these questions are examined.



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An active academia for peace and sustainability

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ABSTRACT

With discontent rising in response to insufficient action to address climate, biodiversity, equity, democracy, and peace challenges, activism is prevalent. We explore a history of civil disobedience, direct action and protest related to gender equality, anti-war and anti-nuclear movements, the protection of indigenous rights, nature, and LGBT+ rights, to consider the role of academics amid interlinked climate, biodiversity and peace crises. In the pursuit of a safe and just future, these crises need more activism, in forms that are creative and that challenge norms, that trigger our imagination and appeal to a willingness to act. Science is a trade marked by creativity. Academics can no longer resort to only publishing papers, and clenching fists in pockets. Instead, there is a need to consider how to make best use of academic knowledge and creativity to support diverse activism: in board rooms, with corporate leaders, with politicians, youth organisations, universities, and in the streets. These activities should be grounded in research, but may still risk being regarded as threatening to academic credibility. Academics should be prepared for, and find novel ways to engage with, both tension and animosity.

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