

Introduction

Gallery Climate Coalition (GCC) was founded in 2020 by a group of gallerists and professionals working in the visual art sector as an attempt to develop a meaningful and industry-specific response to the growing climate crisis.

Evolving from an informal collective, GCC now operates as a quickly growing international charity and coalition, employing 2 full-time and 2 part-time members of staff (in addition to several regular freelance contributors) and serving over 1,100 members across 40 countries, made up of artists, museums, non-profits, art sector businesses and commercial galleries.

In October 2023, GCC marked three years of operating publicly as an environmental charity and membership organisation. GCC's initial strategy was to raise awareness about sector-specific impacts, build a community, and provide relevant resources to help members implement effective changes needed to create an environmentally responsible art world. This stage has proved successful, but GCC's 2030 targets are rapidly approaching and effective action is more urgent than ever. As such, 2023 marked a change in strategy, from resource provision and raising awareness to one based on tangible action and advocacy.

This document outlines some of GCC's key impact achievements in 2023. To review our operational achievements and goals see our [2023 Organisational Progress and Goals](#) document.

Through the generosity of our supporters, volunteers and collaborators we have been able to build a meaningful and sector-specific response to the climate crisis. **Thank you for your continued support.**

2023 Key Impact Achievements

Listed In Chronological Order

1. **Co-Hosted the International Climate Control Conference**
2. **Partnered with Whitechapel Gallery to host the Climate Crisis >> Art Action Symposium**
 - 2.1. **Launched the Decarbonisation Action Plan for Non-Profits and Institutions**
3. **Launched the inaugural group of GCC Active Members**
4. **Continued the Sustainable Shipping Campaign**
5. **Published results of the Frieze Waste Audit**
6. **Encouraged fundraising for Strategic Climate Funds**
7. **Grew our community and network**
 - 7.1. **GCC Chapters**
8. **Continued to develop and evolve GCC's training and consultation capacity**

1. Co-hosted the International Climate Control Conference

In December 2022 GCC partnered with [Ki Culture](#) to support the first ever International Climate Control Conference.

Climate control requires massive energy consumption and is one of the leading contributors to carbon footprint in the cultural sector. In our efforts to reduce our collective carbon footprint, the cultural sector should look toward increasing ranges of climate control.

Many Protocols have been developed and adopted, but little information is known about actual implementation. To facilitate collective action in this area, GCC and Ki Culture hosted a two-day conference in early December 2022. The free online event outlined the current state of climate control globally and the scientific data behind less rigid controls, showcased the latest research and scientific data, highlighted best practice in the field, and brought together all stakeholders for a holistic view on the issue. Sessions included keynote speakers, panel sessions, and case study/best practice presentations.

The event was attended by over 458 professionals globally, and the live stream from both days has now been viewed over three thousand times.

Off the back of this event, Ki Culture initiated the Getting Climate Control Under Control Program. Since January 2023, the 18-month Pilot has provided coaching and training for staff and walks museums through the process of changing climate control conditions. Guided by leading experts in preventive conservation and energy efficiency, and focused on collective action, the Pilot Program ensures that the transition to more environmentally sustainable practices also maintains the best preservation conditions for collections.

2. Partnered with Whitechapel Gallery to host the Climate Crisis >> Art Action Symposium

At the beginning of March 2023, [Whitechapel Gallery](#) and GCC hosted an in-person two-day symposium tackling the critical environmental issues facing the UK's public arts institutions.

Supported by the [AKO Foundation](#), the event featured voices from leading visual arts and environmental organisations as well as change-makers beyond the sector, including Economist Kate Raworth, Director of Tate Modern Frances Morris, Co-Executive Director of Greenpeace Areeba Hamid, the founder and CEO of Julie's Bicycle Alison Tickell and Just Stop Oil spokesperson Emma Brown, and concluded with a performance from Love Ssega.

From the outset, GCC and Whitechapel Gallery were determined that this was not "just another sustainability conference". Climate Crisis >> Art Action was to be grounded in clarity, actionable takeaways and the latest climate science, so that anyone in attendance could return to their desks on Monday morning equipped with relevant context and expertise - feeling empowered to implement effective change.

As such, the second day of the symposium consisted of hands-on workshops and roundtable discussions. The workshops were intended to create an intimate, collaborative space for participants to share issues, case studies, resources and actions around tackling the climate crisis. The workshops were inclusive and open - listening to all viewpoints, emphasising opportunities for exchange and collaboration, and highlighting key areas requiring action within arts institutions. The workshop participants worked in different contexts and at different career stages, purposefully avoiding conventional institutional power dynamics.

Workshops were led by leaders and experts within the sector, on the topics of Adapting Conservation and Collection Management Practices, Programming and Advocacy for Environmental Responsibility, Reducing Impacts of Art Shipping, Climate Justice & Decarbonisation, How to Plan and Design Exhibitions with a Lower Environmental Impact and Building Management for Climate Conscious Cultural Institutions.

Over both days, the symposium saw 230 in-person attendees and was live-streamed to an international audience of over 1,000 people. During the lead-up to and over the duration of the event, the symposium garnered significant traction across social media platforms, reaching over 45k accounts and engaging with a further 1.5k.

What was astoundingly clear from the event was the enormous role art has to play in engaging public audiences with environmental issues. Art can do this on an emotional level, in a way that transcends facts, figures and politics. This gives public art institutions a unique role to play, and a significant influence on public discourse.

Having grown out of the commercial gallery space, the symposium marked an important moment for GCC, showcasing the organisation's ability to act as a leader across the entire visual arts sector, both commercial and non-profit. As a result of the event, GCC's non profit and institutional member base expanded by over 60 organisations. Many conversations that took place across the two days continue to inform our ongoing programming.

"The symposium was expertly put together, thought-provoking... It was a pleasure and an honour to be a part of it. The GCC's commitment and tenacity never fail to impress. They have a vision for the future of the arts, and the planet, which is both workable and urgently necessary. By focusing on creative solutions and a constructive vision, they demonstrate that change is both possible and inspiring." – Bidisha Mamata, Broadcaster & Journalist

"The climate crisis can feel overwhelming, and one's sense of agency can feel tiny. But we have agency, we have responsibility, and now we have an opportunity to make change, both individually and institutionally." – Gilane Tawadros, Director of Whitechapel Gallery

2.1. Launched the Decarbonisation Action Plan for Non-Profits and Institutions

Following the Climate Crisis >> Art Action symposium, GCC created and published a [Decarbonisation Action Plan](#) specific to the public sector – the first of its kind.

The resource builds on the topics, conversations and questions raised during the symposium, collating the expertise and insights gathered from across both days into a resource, and pulling together some of the key concerns, barriers and questions that arose and sought to address these in the document.

The aim is that the Action Plan will support the public sector in setting, planning for and reaching decarbonisation and waste targets, as well as aiding fair and equitable operations by embedding principles of social as well as environmental responsibility at every level of your organisation.

Since launching, the Action Plan has been downloaded 900+ times via the GCC website. The Action Plan is additionally hosted on the Whitechapel Gallery's [Climate Crisis >> Art Action Resource Hub](#) which has been viewed 2,100+ times to date.

3. Launched the inaugural group of GCC Active Members

In three years, GCC membership has grown to 1,000+ from more than 40 countries. Upon registration, all members agree to take urgent and effective action as part of the [Coalition Commitments](#). However, simply signing up to the coalition does not guarantee that the necessary actions are then taken.

The 'Active Member' initiative was introduced to distinguish those who have taken action, as well as incentivising those yet to do so. This marked an evolution in strategy, from awareness raising and community building to one focussed on near-term tangible action – reinforcing GCC's role in driving change across the sector.

Active status is awarded to GCC members who can demonstrate that their organisation has implemented environmental sustainability best practice, via three simple criteria:

- Completed a CO₂e report or audit for a 12-month period
- Established and maintained a Green Team
- Published an Environmental Responsibility Statement

On May 10th 2023, GCC announced the first wave of its members who achieved Active status. An impressive 10% of GCC's member base demonstrated that their organisation had implemented environmental sustainability best practice in line with GCC guidance. This included a wide range of small organisations, artists and individual professionals that made significant and transformational changes by implementing effective actions, as well as leading figures from across the sector such as Christie's, Frieze, Guggenheim Bilbao, Hauser & Wirth, The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), and The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA).

Beyond the quantifiable benefits of holding organisations to account, there is the intangible impact of accelerating the environmental responsibility conversation, and normalising decarbonisation strategies. GCC's announcement highlighting successful Active Membership applicants garnered a large amount of social media traction, with GCC's posts reaching over 10k users. 83% of Active Members went on to share their Active status and badge across social media.

GCC were thrilled to see how receptive our network was to the Active Membership initiative. Anecdotally, members shared that they appreciated having a framework to guide them, and GCC will be building on this over the coming years to ensure that the initiative is considered a leading and widely respected metric. The Active Membership initiative is ongoing and further impacts will be tracked in GCC's annual reporting.

“Being an active member of GCC has significantly assisted UreCulture in embedding a practical framework to manage, document, and report environmental sustainability within our organisation's annual plans and KPIs. Beyond being just a framework, it has created a shift in our organisational thinking. We need governing bodies to establish frameworks and standards that compel organisations to integrate sustainability best

practices into our business-as-usual. Initiatives like the GCC's Active Membership, along with similar programs or legislative requirements from other entities, are critical in shaping systemic change within their governance networks. This influence will be key in expediting the transition toward accountable, transparent, and impactful sustainability strategies and targets implemented by organisations." – Nicky Ure, UreCulture Managing Director

4. Continued the Sustainable Shipping Campaign

Transporting an artwork by air has on average sixty times the climate impact of moving it the same distance by sea. For a typical arts organisation, air freight may be the most environmentally impactful activity they will undertake. In 2022, in collaboration with representatives of all components of the sector and environmental advisors, GCC developed a comprehensive international sustainable shipping campaign to address the issues surrounding artwork transportation, set new standards and motivate the art world to take collective action.

GCC worked with representatives of Lloyd's Market Association (LMA) Joint Specie Committee to develop best practice guidelines for insurance of artwork travelling via sea freight, leading to greater adoption of the method.

In continuation of the campaign, in 2023 GCC introduced a system to indicate which shipping services are most conducive to the coalition's 2030 targets. This was developed at the request of members – 70% of gallery registrars GCC surveyed said they would favour shippers with more sustainability services.

The survey is completed voluntarily and highlights the positive work that is already being done by shipping companies, making it easier for GCC members to identify freight services that are in line with the principles of environmental responsibility and help them to make informed decisions on freight services that are conducive to their climate targets.

Upon launching the resource, 10+ leading shipping companies globally had submitted their responses. GCC members have provided positive feedback, stating

that they appreciated both the resource and the transparency of the shippers involved. The Sustainable Shipping Campaign is ongoing and further impacts will be tracked in GCC's annual reporting.

"The most recent Art Basel / USB Art Market report stated that 68% of collectors wanted to use alternative delivery methods to reduce carbon emissions, so we know the will is there and we also know the way to do it is by using lower carbon modes of transport such as sea freight and addressing how objects are packaged. We need to work together to change our collective behaviours and embrace more sustainable standards and Christie's are excited to collaborate with others across the sector to achieve this." – Tom Woolston, former Christie's Head of Operations and Sustainability Programme Lead

5. Published results of the Frieze London Waste Audit

The GCC team, led by GCC's Materials Specialist Kim Kraczon, completed a materials & waste analysis study during the exhibitors installation and first days of Frieze London 2022. The project intended to gather data and insights on the materials and packing methods most commonly used by fair participants and to better understand the waste systems currently in place at the fair. A particular focus was placed on single-use plastics used either for artwork packing or in the production and delivery of the event itself, as these tend to be the most problematic from a waste perspective. Whilst materials used for catering and food service were considered it was not a primary focus of the study.

To gather the information GCC observed and documented relevant activities during the fair, held meetings with Frieze team members and representatives of Hope Solutions, and conducted a digital survey, which was shared amongst participants. Informal and anecdotal feedback was also gathered via conversations with gallery participants.

One year on, the impact of this audit could be seen in the implementation of the following new initiatives at the Frieze London and Frieze Masters in 2023:

- Increased number of specialist waste managers onsite that advised galleries on appropriate recycling and waste disposal options.
- Added recycling points for poly and bubble wrap to ensure it did not get contaminated and could be recycled.
- Provision of maps of waste and recycling points so they were easily located.
- Improved signage at waste and recycling points so it was clear what material should be placed in which bin.
- Reduction of the fair's own reliance on poly by removing one layer of floor covering. The plastic floor covering was then collected for recycling.
- Removal of the inner plastic sleeves from gallery signage.
- Encouraged use of reusable packing materials by making smaller storage bays available.
- Addition of more water stations and provision of refillable water bottles to galleries to limit the use of single use bottles.

This is not an exhaustive list of positive changes made by the fair, but are the most pertinent to share publicly and all were influenced by the waste audit GCC undertook.

6. Encouraged fundraising for Strategic Climate Funds

There is a growing awareness across the sector that reducing our own organisational footprints is necessary, but won't be enough by itself to shift the world onto a safer path. As a result, GCC has found that in addition to setting reduction targets, many arts organisations want to do something to take further action and support frontline solutions to the climate crisis. Offsetting has commonly been seen as a way to do this, but as the issues associated with offsetting become better known, there is growing demand for alternative ways for arts organisations to show their commitment and support effective climate solutions.

In response, GCC developed the Strategic Climate Fund (SCF) initiative, which works to raise awareness and funds from within the art market to support carefully selected organisations that:

- Keep fossil fuels in the ground and greenhouse gases out of the atmosphere
- Protect natural environments, their biodiversity and their human inhabitants
- Respect the principles of climate justice
- Are effective at doing the above within our 2030 timeline

GCC requests that members donate to one of our recommended SCF partners as part of the coalition commitments that they agree to upon signing up. GCC is aware that the initiative has been picked up by a vast number of members, and has resulted in donations, in-kind contributions, and longer term partnerships. In just one example, SolarAid – one of GCC’s recommended SCF partners – received a pro-bono exhibition stand from a GCC member.

For the first time, GCC is working with our SCF partners to track the initiative’s impact and to develop an understanding of donations that come through our member base. In 2023, the Art into Acres non-profit received \$82,800 in SCF support from galleries, art fairs and museums. Institutions engaging Climate Action 8x8, Art + Climate Action, Galleries Commit, GCC NY and GCC LA were key. This support funded new permanent protected ecosystem designations: an indigenous-led conserved area, and an old-growth cloud forest, totaling 46,876 hectares. Whether through direct donations, raised awareness, or a general shift in the community, we are optimistic that GCC’s work this year has had a direct positive impact on our SCF partners and their ability to take action on the climate crisis.

In 2023 GCC started work on an update of its SCF policy, significantly expanding and improving the guidance, with plans for a campaign and relaunch in 2024. Strategic Climate Funding is an ongoing initiative and the impacts will be tracked in GCC’s annual reporting. Over the coming years, GCC will be working closely with our SCF partners to record and report on funds raised and ensuing impact.

“As GCC’s ethical climate financing policy for the visual arts sector, Strategic Climate Funds have been pivotal to our conservation work on behalf of the arts community. On an educational level, SCF’s teach participation and climate support.

On an impact level, SCF's support carefully selected and purposeful carbon emissions reduction and protection initiatives."

– Haley Mellin, Art into Acres

"The Agroecology Fund is thrilled to partner with GCC to strengthen healthy and just food systems grounded in agroecology. To transform industrial food systems that have hurt both people and the planet, we need to steer resources into the hands of grassroots organisations and networks leading agroecology movements. Thank you GCC for the opportunity to work together to support courageous food systems changemakers around the world." – Daniel Moss, Agroecology Fund Co-Director

7. Grew our community and network

As a coalition, building community is an important part of what we do. We recognise that a common challenge in taking climate action is the scarcity of time and resources to effectively implement change. To overcome this obstacle, we foster a sense of community and peer support through our activities, enabling individuals and organisations to connect, share experiences, pool resources and exchange ideas.

In 2023, GCC launched regular Member Drop-in Sessions. The one-to-one sessions, which are run by GCC's Member Liaison, are free, run at least once a month (and often twice a month when demand is high), and have proved incredibly popular with members. For new members, drop-in sessions can act as an onboarding moment to provide encouragement and a sense of direction. For other members, these meetings provide ongoing practical support and foster a sense of community.

In another first for our network, GCC members were highlighted across fair signage at this year's edition of Frieze London and Frieze Masters. This was an important opportunity to highlight the good work of our members whilst raising awareness

and connecting to wider public as well as those who are not yet part of our network.

7.1. GCC Chapters

As GCC grows, so do our International Chapters. GCC's Chapters are semi-autonomous groups that represent the coalition at regional levels, either nationally or for specific cities. These groups are responsible for developing localised content and resources in line with GCC's guidelines, hosting events, and engaging with their immediate networks on environmental issues within the sector.

GCC has volunteer chapters active in London, Berlin, Taiwan, Italy, and Los Angeles, and in 2023 two new GCC chapters launched in Spain and New York.

In February, to coincide with the Arco Madrid art fair, GCC announced the plans for the formation of a group based in Spain. Over the fair, GCC members based in Spain hosted a conversation about the coalition and its work for anyone involved in the visual art sector interested in environmental sustainability. Since then, the group has formalised a founding committee, hosted a launch event, translated resources and developed partnerships with organisations across the region.

In April, GCC announced the launch of its New York chapter at a special event hosted by the Guggenheim Museum. By bringing together leaders of New York's art world, GCC aimed to galvanise the industry's response to the climate crisis and accelerate action within New York's art community. At the Guggenheim Museum, Richard Armstrong, Director, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and Foundation, and Wendy Fisher, President, Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, co-hosted representatives of the city's art institutions, galleries, advisories & art-sector businesses to introduce GCC's Managing Director Heath Lowndes and Co-founder & Trustee Victoria Siddall and to officially launch GCC in New York.

“We are thrilled to officially launch Gallery Climate Coalition in New York, with the support of the Guggenheim and a founding committee of leaders from the city's art community. It is this spirit of collaboration that will enable us to bring about real change, while allowing our industry to thrive, and our actions will have a

ripple effect that reaches far beyond the art world.” – Victoria Siddall, GCC Co-Founder and Trustee

2023 also marked the two year anniversary of the GCC LA group. This was celebrated with an evening of climate focussed discussions generously hosted by Hauser & Wirth at their gallery in Downtown LA. The intimate event featured four workshops led by the co-leaders of the GCC LA group, a local sustainability consultant and GCC’s Managing Director, followed by a vegan dinner. There were 30 attendees, including leading artists, artworkers, collectors and gallery owners.

Lastly, GCC Berlin officially launched as an independent non-profit in Germany. This is the first independent non-profit hub in Germany set up by GCC. Hosted by Klaus Biesenbach, the volunteer team celebrated the occasion with a toast at the Neue Nationalgalerie surrounded by a growing network of support. The timing of this non-profit declaration aligned with the Berlin launch of resource-sharing platform Barder. One of the main aims of GCC Berlin is to build networks within the arts and culture sector to better organise, share resources, and educate one another to bring about systemic change and mitigate the environmental burden of the art world.

“It is an honour for us to acknowledge the founding of the important initiative GCC Berlin at Neue Nationalgalerie.” – Klaus Biesenbach, Director Neue Nationalgalerie

8. Continued to develop and evolve GCC’s training and consultation capacity

As well as providing one-to-one support for our members, GCC has worked to facilitate training sessions with more frequency over the last year. GCC recognises the importance of providing hands-on, customised training to support members in the process of calculating and reducing their emissions, setting targets and implementing best practice. We have received numerous requests for additional support from members, but until 2023 had been unable to provide the support needed.

Over the course of this year, GCC partnered with Contemporary Austin (US), E-WERK Luckenwalde (Germany), Luma Arles (France) and Rupert (Lithuania) to provide 1-1 support in carbon reporting on a project basis. This has included developing a project-based carbon reporting tool, and offering training sessions to each partner on data collection, data entry and carbon analysis.

Over the spring, GCC worked with Art Basel to develop the fair's on-site waste sorting guidance. GCC additionally advised on the wider implementation of their waste strategy for their 2023 fair edition, and hosted a webinar on packaging and materials for exhibiting galleries in line with the updated policy. The webinar was attended by 40+ international galleries and was received positively by those in attendance.

Over the summer, GCC also ran a one-off training session for twenty members of the Guggenheim Museum's curatorial, exhibitions and registrar teams. The purpose of this session was to develop existing knowledge of sustainability in the curatorial department and, in doing so, to make the institution's commitment to mitigating the impacts of the climate crisis more actionable. The training focussed on demystifying carbon vocabulary, the practical application of carbon measurements for art museums, ways to mitigate carbon footprint, and how to utilise the GCC calculator. The session shared information about the urgency of climate action and why it is a shared responsibility for all involved in museum operations, focusing on what resonates most with curators so that they can personalise their approach to curation with the institution's commitment in mind.

We are thrilled to be developing this capacity within GCC, and hope that the continued impact of these workshops will be standardisation across the sector. Being able to fill this gap means that we can ensure advice is as robust and sector-specific as possible.