

SOUTHBANK CENTRE

**'We value our clean air and
our green spaces'**

Love Ssega

**'There's no such thing as waste,
only unrealised potential'**

Doug Francisco

**Art
by
Post**

**Poems for
Our Planet**

Words on the Wind



National
Academy
for Social
Prescribing

*Art by Post: Poems for Our Planet is delivered in partnership
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**Poems for
Our Planet**

Welcome to Art by Post: Poems for Our Planet. This is an opportunity to use creativity and nature to inspire you and support your wellbeing. Together, we'll take part in creative activities which invite us to connect with the living world around us, and explore opportunities to care better for our planet.

Getting closer to nature can help us to be happier and feel that our lives are more worthwhile, therefore improving our wellbeing. *The Nature Connection Handbook*, published by the University of Derby, identifies five pathways that can help us grow our connection to nature – we'll highlight some of these throughout this booklet.



About the artist

Love Ssega is a musician, producer and performing artist. He co-founded a pop band (Clean Bandit), left to get a science PhD, and now has environment-focused works commissioned by the National Gallery, Serpentine Pavilion, Whitechapel Gallery and MoMA PS1. His clean air project *Airs of the South Circular* was featured at the United Nations' COP26, after which he set up LIVE + BREATHE, a similarly focused campaign for residents of Lambeth and Southwark. He is currently Philharmonia Orchestra's Artist in Residence.

Poem by Love Ssega

'Life in Clean Air'

Taking time to reflect and enjoy life is always better outdoors and amongst nature.

Whether in a forest,
Up a mountain,
In a park,
Or by the sea,
The one thing that is constant
Is the air that we breathe.

This air is not the same for all,
Especially in our cities,
So in words of your own,
Say what life in clean air could be.





1

The walk of our dreams

Love Ssega has written a small poem, 'Life in Clean Air', as a challenge for everyone to write a poem or describe their favourite space in nature while thinking about the positive difference clean air makes to the whole experience. This space could be real or imaginary – somewhere you visited once on holiday, or somewhere you have seen or imagined in your mind's eye.

As you explore and examine this area, think about the natural elements outside:

- Can you remember a special time in the sun, wind, gentle breeze or rain?
- What is your favourite outdoor space and why?
- What is the air like here? Is it fresh, dry, cool, clean?

These answers can become your poem.

2

Treasure on the trail

'The wind can bring other people's rubbish into your path but you can make it your treasure.'

Imagine your favourite outdoor space. Visit the space if you are able to get there. What changes could you make to care for it and the planet?

Start by writing a few lines

- What does it look like?
- How could or should it be, if it was up to you?
- What would you suggest to improve it (for example, plant more trees or flowers that attract bees, install allotments to encourage people to grow their own food)?

Take your time, using your answers to help you draw a map of a place you want to look after.

Tell two people – someone older than you (or a similar age) and someone younger – about your favourite space.

About the artist

Doug Francisco, is an artist, activist, ringmaster, clown, art director and vibe mechanic.

A founder member of The Invisible Circus and the Artspace Lifespace charity, which reimagines underused buildings in Bristol as creative havens, Francisco has also been the narrative director of Boomtown Festival for over a decade and, more recently, art director and lead storyteller at Bristol's Wake The Tiger Amusement Park, an immersive art experience. His current passion project, with the charity Global Goals Centre, is Sparks, a recycled department store that's been reinterpreted as a sustainability hub in Bristol city centre.



Doug Francisco believes in the sacred from the profane, the magic and miracle of everyday objects discarded as waste, the trappings and wrappings, the treasure in the trash. All are talismans of our throwaway today, future relics of a golden plastic age when we were all kings and queens, with indescribable amounts of resources at our fingertips. In their proliferation they serve to distract us, often creating more longing than satisfaction, so disposable that they only make us want more. We don't see the treasure lying at our feet, extracted from deep beneath the earth, processes and practices as complex and scientific as they are magical and transformational.

Francisco seeks to elevate them to their rightful glory as gods and goddesses of our era of extinction, brief and yet brutal as it may be to witness and worship these priceless treasures that may in fact end up costing us the Earth itself!



3

The kings and queens of Trash City!

Colourful litter and plastic packages shine from every hedgerow and gutter. We aim to transform them into artwork to inspire and educate ourselves, cleaning as we are creating.

You will need:

- Some recycled packaging
- Glue or Sellotape
- Coloured pens or paints
- Biro, felt-tip pen or crayon



Step 1

Rummage in the things you might normally throw away at home and collect the treasure: a crisp packet, food packaging and plastic, etc. Take a bag and fill it with other packaging to make a head. Twist closed and tie in a knot to make a head. Then, draw or paint on a face.

Step 2

Make a crown from cardboard or other material, and decorate it with recycled items to add colour. Use pieces of plastic wrappers or paint them. Place the crown on the puppet head and your king or queen of Trash City will emerge! Alternatively, you could make a picture using the recycled materials. Cut out pieces from magazines and embellish them with colourful scraps to collage your trash royal.

Step 3

Think about the world we care for, and the way we use things. How can we turn trash into treasure? Write a manifesto from your kings and queens of Trash City.

Where is your king/queen from and what would they say about looking after nature in their kingdom?

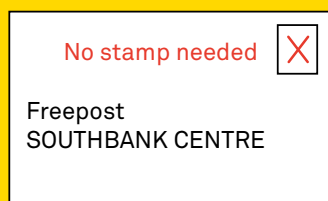
Getting closer to nature can help us to be happier and feel that our lives are more worthwhile, therefore improving our wellbeing. Simply noticing the good things in nature each week brings sustained and clinically significant improvements in mental health. There is now a solid body of evidence that having a strong sense of connection to nature helps people feel good and function well.

To find out more, see the *Nature Connection Handbook*
<http://bit.ly/NatureConnectionHandbook>

We'd love to hear from you!

The Southbank Centre is the UK's largest arts centre, and this summer we're presenting a season of events, performances and an exhibition about our planet and climate change. We'll be including some *Poems for Our Planet* poetry sent to us by our participants as part of this.

If you would like to send us poetry and artwork you've created through the activities in this booklet, you can email artbypost@southbankcentre.co.uk, use the envelope provided or address an envelope to **Freepost SOUTHBANK CENTRE**. Please write your name on the back.



If you can't send us your work by post or email, please arrange for somebody else to send your work to us, or you can tell us about your artwork by phone on **020 7960 4206**.

You're welcome to get in touch to let us know what you think of this booklet, ask questions, give feedback or opt out of the project at any time.

Contact us

By phone: **020 7960 4206**

By email: artbypost@southbankcentre.co.uk

By post: **Freepost SOUTHBANK CENTRE**

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