



In the first consultation of its kind, the Scottish International Storytelling Festival is gathering stories, songs and dances from festival audiences in order to provide an artistic response around the theme of the 'Tree of Life' to what some are calling the most important event of this century – COP21 UN climate change negotiations in Paris (30th November – 11th December).

As the festival enters its closing weekend, specially programmed tree-themed events looking at building a greener world will be held at the Scottish Storytelling Centre and the Royal Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh, ahead of an event and workshop entitled 'Tree of Life', which symbolises the inter-relation of life and an ecology that unites humanity and nature. These events will allow audiences to share their stories of a greener future with decision makers in Paris next month, as Donald Smith, Director of the Scottish International Storytelling Festival explains:

"The Tree has roots, branches and leaves, and offers a habitat for birds, insects and animals. It symbolises the inter-relation of life and an ecology that unites humanity and nature. It is a sign of sustainability, through which we can re-green our planet through virtuous cycles of air, water and earth. We invite our friends around the world to share their Tree of Life stories and traditions so that Paris may receive the oldest ancestor wisdom in the world – the wisdom of life – and give our children their future."

The festival marks the start of what will be a Scotland wide series of performances, events, exhibitions and workshops as part of ArtCOP Scotland: Scotland's climate change arts season in response to the COP21 negotiations in Paris. ArtCOP Scotland, initiated by Creative Carbon Scotland is using this global event as an opportunity to explore how culture can address climate change and imagine more sustainable futures and ways of living. Spread across the country, this season is a celebration of creative exploration, debate and discussion connecting art, climate change and environmental sustainability.

Events will be run with commissioning partners including Gayfield Creative Spaces (Edinburgh), Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (Glasgow), Deveron Arts (Huntly), Firefly Youth Arts (Livingstone), and The Stove (Dumfries). The season will also encompass events run in collaboration with key partners including UNFIX Festival of performance and ecology, and the Radical Renewable Art & Activism Fund with artist Ellie Harrison.

Ben Twist, Director of Creative Carbon Scotland said:

We believe that culture has an essential part to play in shaping a sustainable Scotland through the work it makes and presents, the way it operates and how it speaks to the public. ArtCOP

Scotland provides an excellent platform for artists, cultural organisations and policy makers to creatively explore this.

For further information and tickets for the Scottish International Storytelling Festival visit: [www.tracscotland.org/festivals/scottish-international-storytelling-festival](http://www.tracscotland.org/festivals/scottish-international-storytelling-festival)

for further information ArtCOP Scotland and events visit  
[www.artcopscotland.com](http://www.artcopscotland.com)