

Artist statement – My blue, blue heart – M C Oliveira

There are some speeches that are hard to ignore, some statistics hard to face, some news articles linger in our minds.

While the magnificent flame trees bloomed, I heard Greta Thunberg's "How dare you?" speech and I took notice.

I read the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres' opening statement at the UN Summit on the dire state of our planet and the lack of action taken by world leaders and that made my heart very blue.

Then Australia was on fire and it just kept burning. Malcolm Turnbull finally opened up in a Time magazine article, where he wrote about the idiocy of his own Liberal party and their denial of climate change. I thought it was a little too late, but it stuck in my mind.

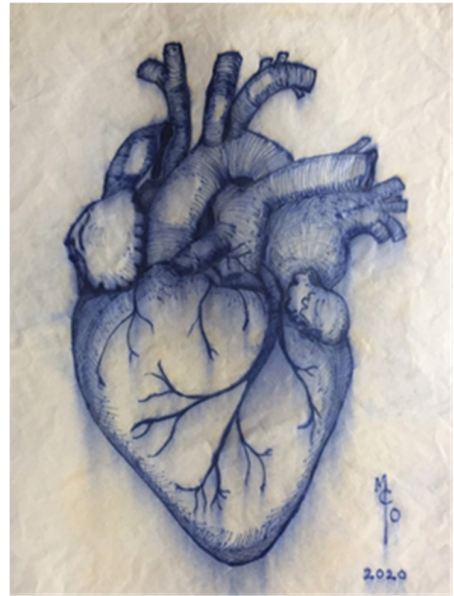
Then COVID-19 struck and turned our lives upside down. We were full of confusion, fear and uncertainty and family became our priority. As the weeks progressed, 'Woolworths' limits list' gave us an insight to how our minds were consumed with protecting and nourishing our loved ones.

As Mother Nature's splendour and beauty demanded to be seen, my blue, blue heart struggled to put aside the problems of this fractured new world.

But I'm hopeful that from chaos and destruction comes new life and new order.

I'm hopeful with new beginnings come new ideas, new innovations, new ways of doing good for everyone, not just the 1%.

I'm hopeful that we can work together for the greater good and create a better future for our planet, a better future for our children and a better future for humanity.



Climate activist Greta Thunberg, 16, addressed the U.N.'s Climate Action Summit in New York City on 23 September 2019.



"My message is that we'll be watching you.

"This is all wrong. I shouldn't be up here. I should be back in school on the other side of the ocean. Yet you all come to us young people for hope. How dare you!

"You have stolen my dreams and my childhood with your empty words. And yet I'm one of the lucky ones. People are suffering. People are dying. Entire ecosystems are collapsing. We are in the beginning of a mass extinction, and all you can talk about is money and fairy tales of eternal economic growth. How dare you!

"For more than 30 years, the science has been crystal clear. How dare you continue to look away and come here saying that you're doing enough, when the politics and solutions needed are still nowhere in sight.

"You say you hear us and that you understand the urgency. But no matter how sad and angry I am, I do not want to believe that. Because if you really understood the situation and still kept on failing to act, then you would be evil. And that I refuse to believe.

"The popular idea of cutting our emissions in half in 10 years only gives us a 50% chance of staying below 1.5 degrees [Celsius], and the risk of setting off irreversible chain reactions beyond human control.

"Fifty percent may be acceptable to you. But those numbers do not include tipping points, most feedback loops, additional warming hidden by toxic air pollution or the aspects of equity and climate justice. They also rely on my generation sucking hundreds of billions of tons of your CO₂ out of the air with technologies that barely exist.

"So a 50% risk is simply not acceptable to us — we who have to live with the consequences.

"To have a 67% chance of staying below a 1.5 degrees global temperature rise — the best odds given by the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change] — the world had 420 gigatons of CO₂ left to emit back on Jan. 1st, 2018. Today that figure is already down to less than 350 gigatons.

"How dare you pretend that this can be solved with just 'business as usual' and some technical solutions? With today's emissions levels, that remaining CO₂ budget will be entirely gone within less than 8 1/2 years.

"There will not be any solutions or plans presented in line with these figures here today, because these numbers are too uncomfortable. And you are still not mature enough to tell it like it is.

"You are failing us. But the young people are starting to understand your betrayal. The eyes of all future generations are upon you. And if you choose to fail us, I say: We will never forgive you.

"We will not let you get away with this. Right here, right now is where we draw the line. The world is waking up. And change is coming, whether you like it or not.

"Thank you."

*Opening remarks at pre-COP25 press conference from
UN Secretary General António Guterres, 1 December
2019*

Muy buenas tardes.

Good afternoon.

For many decades the human species has been at war with the planet. And the planet is fighting back.

The World Meteorological Organization is releasing its State of the Climate report at this conference.

And its findings are clear.

The last five years have been the hottest ever recorded.

Sea levels are the highest in human history.

Ice caps are melting at unprecedented speed and the oceans are becoming more acidic with all its consequences.

Biodiversity on land and sea is under severe attack.

Climate-related natural disasters are becoming more frequent, more deadly, more destructive, with growing human and financial costs. Drought in some parts of the world is progressing at alarming rates destroying human habitats and endangering food security.

Every year, air pollution, associated to climate change, kills seven million people. Climate change has become a dramatic threat to human health and to human security.

In short, climate change is no longer a long-term problem. We are confronted now with a global climate crisis.

The point of no-return is no longer over the horizon.

It is in sight and hurtling towards us.

However, my message here today is one of hope not of despair.

Our war against nature must stop. And we know that that is possible.

The scientific community has provided us with the roadmap to achieve this. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, we must limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius, reach carbon neutrality by 2050 and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 45 per cent from 2010 levels by 2030.

But let's be clear. Until now, our efforts to reach these targets have been utterly inadequate.

The commitments made in Paris would still lead to an increase in temperature above three degrees Celsius.

But many countries are not even meeting those commitments.

Emissions of greenhouse gases are still growing at an alarming rate.

Today, the world is set to produce 120 per cent more fossil fuels than what is consistent with a 1.5-degree pathway.

And, for coal, the figure is 280 per cent.

But the scientific community is also telling us that the roadmap to stay below 1.5 degrees is still within reach.

The technologies that are necessary to make this possible are already available.



The signals of hope are multiplying.

Public opinion is waking up everywhere.

Young people are showing remarkable leadership and mobilization.

More and more cities, financial institutions and businesses are committing to the 1.5 -degree pathway.

That was recently clearly proved during the Climate Action Summit in New York.

What is still lacking is political will.

Political will to put a price on carbon.

Political will to stop subsidies on fossil fuels.

Political will to stop building coal power plants from 2020 onwards.

Political will to shift taxation from income to carbon - taxing pollution instead of people.

We simply have to stop digging and drilling and take advantage of the vast possibilities offered by renewable energy and nature-based solutions.

That is why in September I convened the Climate Action Summit.

The Summit provided a global stage to see who is stepping up.

Seventy countries committed to carbon neutrality by 2050.

This includes seven G20 countries as well as many nations who have contributed least to the problem.

But we also see clearly that the world's largest emitters are not pulling their weight. And without them our goal is unreachable.

That is why it is so important that we gather in Madrid for this COP25.

I expect from the COP a clear demonstration of increased ambition and commitment showing accountability, responsibility and leadership.

In the crucial 12 months ahead, it is essential that we secure more ambitious national commitments – particularly from the main emitters – to immediately start reducing greenhouse gas emissions at a pace consistent to reaching carbon neutrality by 2050.

We should ensure that at least \$100 billion dollars, US dollars a year, is available to developing countries for mitigation and adaptation and take into account their legitimate expectations to have the resources necessary to build resilience and for disaster response and recovery.

We must also make progress on the social dimensions of climate change and ensure that national commitments include a just transition for people whose jobs and livelihoods are affected as we move from the grey to the green economy.

I also strongly hope that COP25 will be able to agree on the guidelines for the implementation of article 6 of the Paris Agreement. That was unfortunately not achieved in Katowice as we approved the rulebook for the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

This agreement will establish a solid basis for international cooperation to reduce emissions and allow for a greater role of the private sector in climate action.

These are among the messages I am bringing to the conference.

We are in a deep hole, and we are still digging. Soon it will be too deep to escape.

I welcome the voices of the young activists I have been meeting.

They understand that we are jeopardizing their future.

That is why I will continue to push every day to keep climate at the top of the international agenda.



Australia's fires this summer—unprecedented in the scale of their destruction—are the ferocious but inevitable reality of global warming. A hotter, drier climate means more and longer droughts and more and fiercer fires.

So if Australia is on the front line of the climate crisis, why are we not also a world leader in climate action?

In most countries, asking people whether they believe in the science of climate change is like asking them whether they believe in gravity. It is a simple matter of physics. The more greenhouse gases are in the atmosphere, the hotter our climate will become.

But in Australia, as in the U.S., this issue has been hijacked by a toxic, climate-denying alliance of right-wing politics and media (much of it owned by Rupert Murdoch), as well as vested business interests, especially in the coal industry.

As Prime Minister, I tried to ensure that our climate and energy policies were governed by engineering and economics, not ideology and idiocy. Tragically, the climate-denying political right in Australia has turned what should be a practical question of how to respond to a real physical threat into a matter of values or belief.

Even as the fires rage, Murdoch's News Corp. newspapers and television networks have been busy arguing that arsonists or a lack of controlled burning are the real causes of the fires. This has been refuted point-blank by the chief of the fire service in New South Wales, but the misinformation campaign continues in both mainstream and social media.

Climate-change denial has also infected our politics. Australia is currently governed by a center-right coalition of the Liberal Party and the National Party. I led the coalition twice—first as opposition leader from 2008 to 2009 and then as Prime Minister from 2015 to 2018. Both times, my efforts to take concerted action on climate change were followed by my losing my job.

In 2018, my government introduced a National Energy Guarantee (NEG), which combined emission reductions with reliability standards as a means of ensuring a smooth transition to a lower-emissions electricity sector while maintaining reliability of supply. It was supported by business and unions as well as state governments on both sides of politics. A majority of coalition legislators also backed it, but a right-wing minority, supported by their allies in the media, sabotaged the bill and then brought down my government.

In the chaos that ensued, Scott Morrison became Prime Minister, and one of his first acts was to formally abandon the NEG. Since then, the government has had no coherent, integrated climate and energy policy.

These fires show that the wicked, self-destructive idiocy of climate denialism must stop. The world must drastically cut its greenhouse-gas emissions. Above all, we have to urgently stop burning coal and other fossil fuels.

Australia, rather than being a laggard, should be a leader in climate action. Not just because our country is on fire. Not just because we are a wealthy, advanced economy that can afford to lead. But also because we have formidable wind and solar resources that can enable us to generate all of our energy from renewable sources and at the same time enjoy cheaper electricity. Renewable resources are already the cheapest new power sources in Australia, and new developments in storage technologies are making renewables reliable 24/7.

That's why I started Snowy Hydro 2.0, a project that will use pumped water to create energy and, like a battery, store enough power for 3 million homes for a week. The latest estimates show that by 2030, power from solar panels, backed with storage from pumped hydro, will be more than \$40 per megawatt-hour cheaper than power from new black coal, even without a carbon tax.

Australians no longer need to sacrifice economic growth to reduce emissions. We must not waste this climate crisis. There are no excuses and not much time left. Australia and the world need a Green New Deal now.