

Art and Science session participants

Jessica MacMillan

Biography:

Jessica MacMillan (b. 1987, USA) is an artist and amateur astronomer based in Oslo whose work spans sculpture, installation, 3D animation, and light. Her works investigate astronomy and planetary science through ordinary found objects and optical instruments, creating experiences that connect our everyday lives with the vast cosmic scales that surround us. MacMillan is frequently drawn to Svalbard for its extreme, planetary nature and dense scientific community. In 2019 she was an artist-in-residence at the Kunstnerhytta in Ny-Ålesund, and in 2021 held a residency at Artica Svalbard in Longyearbyen, where she installed her outdoor light installation "Time Line." In 2026 she will return to Artica Svalbard for a 3-month residency.



Project description: *Time Line*

"Time Line" was an outdoor installation of a single 10-watt green laser that pointed to a specific coordinate in the sky: the "solar apex," which marks the trajectory of our solar system through the Milky Way Galaxy. As the planet rotated and the stars moved overhead, a computerized telescope mount turned the laser to track this point. With a solid line of light, "Time Line" projected the path our planet is taking into the future. This project was directly inspired by two observatories in Ny-Ålesund: first, the Koldewey Aerosol Raman Lidar (KARL) operated by AWIPEV, which is an observatory that shines a green LIDAR (a pulsed laser) up into the atmosphere to monitor pollution from sources like volcanoes, forest fires, and industry. Second, the Geodetic Earth Observatory, operated by the Norwegian Mapping Authority (Kartverket), that uses radio telescopes to monitor movements in Earth's surface, the rotation of the planet—and in relation to this project—Earth's exact position in space.

Website:

www.jessicamacmillan.com

Olivier Morin

Biography:

Olivier Morin (b. 1965, France) has been a photographer with AFP (Agence France-Presse) since 1990.

He has held senior roles all over the world, including Editor-in-Chief (2016–2021).

His work spans news, politics, lifestyle, and sports, with coverage of 12 Olympic Games and multiple Football, alpine skiing World Cups.

Olivier has received major awards, including Sports Illustrated Photo of the Year for his iconic Usain Bolt lightning image, New York Times winner of the year.

Since 2021, he is Deputy Global photo chief, in charge of the photo coverage of the climate change and the impact on biodiversity and humankind, while exhibiting internationally.



Project description: SVALBARD, the silence that breathes

In Svalbard, emptiness stretches to infinity, carved by ice, wind, and silence. Within this apparent void, fragile lives endure—wild, luminous, and rare. It is a land both lifeful and endangered, where survival is written in every breath. The beauty is immense, yet shadowed by the fragility of a vanishing world. Those photographs are a witness, a tribute to presence, and a warning of loss.

Website:

www.oliviermorinphotography.com. Instagram [@Olivier MORIN](https://www.instagram.com/OlivierMORIN)

Georgia Rose Murray

Biography:

Georgia's Arctic research and international exhibitions have been supported by grants and awards from; The Scottish International Education Trust, The British Council, The British Embassy in Iceland, The Chinese Embassy in Iceland, The Royal Scottish Academy and Dundee University. Georgia Lecturers in Art across various Scottish institutions and in 2018, ran a Post-Graduate Art & Design Course at Sichuan Fine Arts Institute, in China. In 2009 she was awarded a 1st Class Hons Degree in Fine Art from Dundee University and in 2013, an MFA in Contemporary Art, from Edinburgh University.



Project description: *Light air shadow pigment*

Georgia's work primarily arises from immersive experiences of light and darkness, within Arctic landscapes. Over the last 10 years, Georgia has experienced each Arctic season at least once. She has worked alongside Polar Scientists since 2016, when she was first invited to be a guest of The Czech Arctic Research Station. Significant discussions and data feed into the paintings she creates. Georgia visited Svalbard in August 2025 specifically to see, feel and paint the reality. The expedition was timely and deeply sad, as she witnessed how quickly glaciers are diminishing.

Website:

www.georgiarosemurray.com

Esther Horvath

Biography:

Esther Horvath is a photographer for the Alfred Wegener Institute; a National Geographic Explorer; a fellow at the International League of Conservation Photographers; and a Nikon Ambassador. Her work focuses on documenting climate research in the polar regions. Horvath is a TEDx speaker and is actively involved in public speaking and visual science communication through books, international exhibitions and education. Her work is published in The New York Times, National Geographic, Smithsonian, Nature among others.



Project Description: *Stars of Polar Night*

The photo documentary *Stars of Polar Night* focuses on the work of the Franco-German AWIPEV Arctic Research Base, the Norwegian Polar Institute, and other institutes in Ny-Ålesund, with logistical support from Kings Bay. It tells climate science stories through the eyes of the settlement's researchers, aiming to humanise science and shine a spotlight on the people behind the climate data. It depicts scientists and staff working day in and day out – including through public holidays – in the cold, dark landscape, spending long months away from their families and friends, collecting samples for analysis in the hope of better understanding the changing Arctic and its significance for humanity.

Website

<https://estherhorvath.com/>

Torben Snekkestad, Morten Qvenild, Anja Lauvdal and Julie Freeman [Collaborative work *Glacier Lamentation*]

Torben Snekkestad

Biography:

Torben Snekkestad is a professor at the Norwegian Academy of Music (NMH), saxophonist, and composer celebrated for his distinctive textural sound and fearless improvisations. His work spans contemporary classical music, jazz, free improvisation, and electroacoustic projects. Snekkestad has collaborated internationally with leading artists including Barry Guy, Nate Wooley, Evan Parker, and Maja S.K. Ratkje.



Website:

www.torbensnekkestad.com

Morten Qvenild

Biography:

Morten Qvenild is a professor at the Norwegian Academy of Music (NMH) and one of Norway's most innovative keyboardists and composers. Known for his work in projects such as In the Country, Susanna & the Magical Orchestra, and his solo project Personal Piano, he blends acoustic and electronic soundscapes with improvisation and experimentation.



Website:

<https://www.mortyq.com/>

Anja Lauvdal

Biography:

Anja Lauvdal is a University Lecturer II at the Norwegian Academy of Music (NMH), pianist, composer, and improviser. She is widely recognized for her exploratory approach to keyboards and electronics across genres. Lauvdal has played a central role in Norwegian groups such as Moskus, Skadedyr and Brodowski and has collaborated with artists including Jenny Hval, Mats Gustafsson, and Laurel Halo.



Website:

<https://www.anjalauvdal.no/>

Julie Freeman

Biography:

Julie Freeman works with living systems and emerging technologies. Since the early 1990s, her large-scale installations, sound sculptures, and online works have explored sound and real-time data as dynamic artistic materials. She has exhibited at major venues including the V&A, ICA, Barbican, Modern Art Oxford, and the Science Museum, and her work has been featured by the BBC, The Guardian, and New Scientist. Julie founded the Open Data Institute's Data as Culture programme, is a TED Fellow, co-founder of Fine Acts, and runs the digital art studio Translating Nature. She is also the inventor of Sonaforms®, sonic furniture that lets you experience sound through touch.



Website:

www.translatingnature.org

Project description: *Glacier Lamentation*

Glacier Lamentation is an interdisciplinary artistic research project at the Norwegian Academy of Music led by Torben Snekkestad, Morten Qvenild and Anja Lauvdal. The project combines sound art, scientific data and field recordings from Arctic environments to explore the emotional impact of climate change. It creates poetic soundscapes, installations, concerts and audiovisual works that bridge art and science. The work draws directly on recordings made during two field expeditions to Svalbard in March and August 2025. Sounds of glaciers, ice caves and Arctic landscapes are transformed into immersive compositions, installations and an upcoming audiovisual film. By using Svalbard's vulnerable ecosystem as a living laboratory, the project highlights the human–climate–nature connection and gives the glaciers a “voice.”

Website:

<https://nmh.no/en/research/projects/glacier-lamentation>