

# changing destination

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION



**Ingeborg Govaart**  
*Interaction designer*

In my ideal world every person lives in a place with fresh air, clean drinking water and enough food to live a happy life. Producers and consumers are more conscious about packaging and the contents of their products. All means of transport produce fewer to no polluting gases and the world consumes less to no meat- and dairy products.

Changing Destination is an artistic research project highlighting the issues of environmental refugees through different mediums, by involving people in a narrative towards long term solutions against climate breakdown. The objective is to make one person's ecological footprint visible and show that the lifestyle you live might not have an impact on your environment but will influence somebody else's life. That something has to change in our mentality and behaviour towards climate is a fact. There are still obstacles that prevent the majority of the earth's population from shifting their behaviour and political policies towards more sustainability. This can also be driven by economic reasons.<sup>1</sup> Next to being an artistic project, Changing Destination has an educational purpose. Addressing an adult audience in a way that is entertaining but backed by science. The project stems from my conviction and belief in an eco-friendly world. This together with the conviction that designers can have a positive impact on the climate breakdown debate. Therefore the main research question is

The artistic project is about combining my personal story and the climate breakdown experience of others in an interactive installation with the goal to confront the audience with a simple storyline that holds a mirror and set reasonable goals to take action. My objective is to make people aware of their ecological footprint by making one person's impact visible. This is important because 'seeing is believing' rather than being told what to do. We need to learn to co-exist with the ecosystem that supports us. The planet can live without us.



*How can my journey to zero waste be translated into an interactive installation that influences the climate breakdown debate and shifts the view on environmental refugees?*



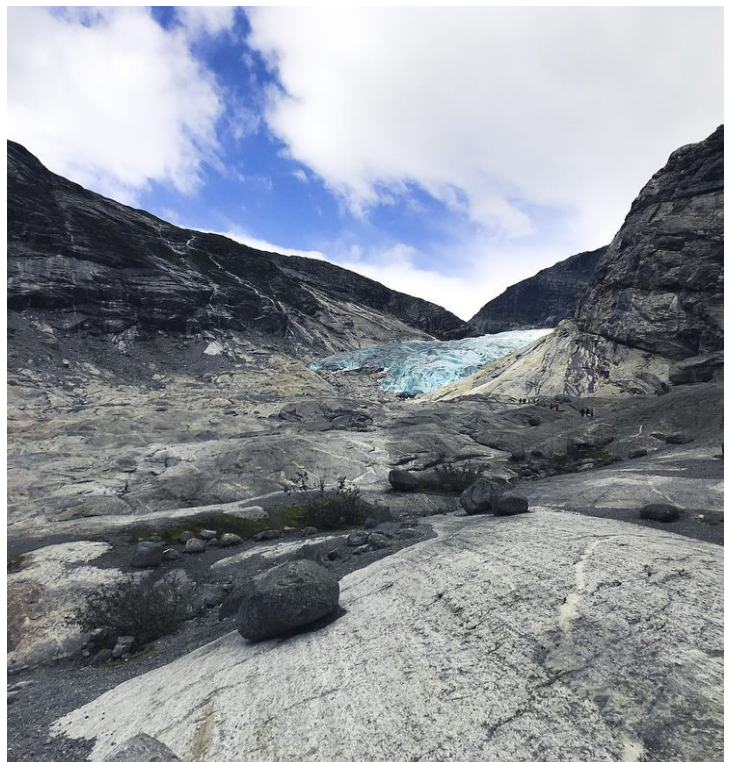
## Climate breakdown

Our goal as humans is survival, but in the meantime we need to learn to co-exist with the ecosystem that supports us. For years it has been a mistake to think that because of climate breakdown the planet is at stake and not the human race. Though the earth has gone through numerous climate breakdowns, which in some cases caused massive extinctions. If we keep heading the same way we have been for the last decades there soon will only be fights over fresh water and safe land. Humans have only been around for 0.004 per cent of the earth's history. Climate breakdown is not new to the planet, but it is to us humans.<sup>2</sup>

In the meantime climate breakdown continues to affect growing regions around the world, threatening to create as many as 200 million environmental refugees by the year 2050. Still, people who migrate because of gradually deteriorating living conditions are regarded as economic migrants and as such have no recourse to any of the international instruments that otherwise protect the rights of internally displaced people, asylum seekers and refugees.<sup>3</sup> The International Federation of Red Cross estimates that as of today there are 25 to 50 million people on the planet that are considered environmental refugees, or climate refugees, but these people are not officially recognised as refugees by governments under the Geneva Refugee Convention. One example of environmental refugees are the Inuit people in the Arctic region. This region, that stretched over the USA, Canada and Greenland, is warming faster than any other place on earth.

In 2003, after the ice formed around Christmastime, temperatures rose to four degrees Celsius and it started to rain. This had never happened before on the Arctic.<sup>4</sup>

The Inuit people who live there have been noticing the change and have been forced to adapt their culture to the new climate. They are among several communities around the world that had to face the impact of climate breakdown without having a big ecological footprint themselves.



## The artistic project

The project is divided into two parts, the 'Conscious Dinner Party' series and 'The Game' that won't entertain. The dinner series involves discussions to involve people in the project. It is set up to raise funds for the development of the game. This game makes one person's ecological footprint visible. It also shows its players that the lifestyle they live might not have an impact on their environment but will influence somebody else's environment. The game will be developed in two formats, one can be played online and one as a physical installation.

## 'Conscious Dinner Party' series

A 'Conscious Dinner Party' dinner consists out of three parts: a three course sustainable, local and seasonal dinner, educational discussion and an experiment that is related the second part of Changing Destination, 'The Game' that won't entertain.

During the dinner there will be two rounds of discussion. A week in advance all attendees get their invitation with two sources to research before the dinner. Together with these two documents they also get a character assigned with whose opinion they must discuss. There are five different characters that are loosely based on a combination of real people: greenpeace activist, left-wing politician, scientist, lobbyist for major oil company, right-wing voter.

They are given 20 minutes each round to discuss, first round in the viewpoint of their given character and the second round with their own. The evening ends with a full stomach and an option to pledge to one challenge to make the attendee's life

more sustainable for a month. The different challenges are: only eating meat for two meals a week or less, only eating dairy products for two meals a week or less and no meat, not using plastic straws, ditch all single use plastics, use only means of transport with little to no impact on the environment.

At every dinner in the series one element of 'The Game' that won't entertain will be tested with the attendees. These elements are developed into three different experiments. For every experiment an user test is put in place to get constructive feedback and points of improvements.



## 'The Game' that won't entertain References

*It's not your typical game and you won't be entertained.* The game starts with an introduction about environmental refugees and the influence climate breakdown has on the world. The world inside the game will be a living organism that can be influenced by the ecological impact of the players. They can input their lifestyle by answering a set of six questions. Each of these questions is linked to one of the elements in the world. Air pollution, water pollution, temperature rise, sea level rise, food sources and shelter. The game will show how these answers will influence its environment and the lives of the people and animals that live in it. The current living situation of the Arctic Inuit is taken as a frame of reference for the setting of the game. The players can discover small solutions on how their lifestyle could be more sustainable. At the end of the game every player gets challenged to pledge to one ecological change to save someone else's life.

### Online and offline

The online game and physical installation will be linked to each other through the collection of data. The installation will be placed as an event in public spaces where people are actively busy with consuming, like a shopping mall or supermarket. Players that have interacted with the installation can link the world they have created to the online game. By making the pledge, their world will be available online where it tracks the behaviour of the players and shows the positive effect they have on the world by keeping their pledge. The online game will also keep track of how many times the world has had to restart and how many players have played the game.

- 1) Gore, A. (2017, November 23), "An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power" [Video], [http://www.imdb.com/title/tt6322922/?ref\\_=nv\\_sr\\_1](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt6322922/?ref_=nv_sr_1)
- 2) Vox. (2015, December 12), "What people get wrong about climate change" [Video], <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EbjKcHPmxKQ>
- 3) Murray, S., "Environmental Migrants and Canada's Refugee Policy", <https://refuge.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/refuge/article/viewFile/34351/31258>
- 4) Brown, P. (2003, December 11), "Global warming is killing us too, say Inuit", <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2003/dec/11/weather.climatechange>

