

Warming Warning — arts-science public art — on view at Harvard

Cambridge, MA. *Warming Warning*, is a new collaborative public art project installed on Harvard University's Science Center Plaza (1 Oxford St. Cambridge, MA) from October 22nd to December 7th, 2018. This visually striking educational installation is a co-creation of Harvard Forest Fellow [David Buckley Borden](#) and Harvard Forest Senior Ecologist [Aaron M Ellison](#) that combines art, environmental design, and science communication to convey global climate-change data and spur action on campus. The 9' x 10.5' x 28' sculpture is coupled with events, both on and off campus, that are geared towards local work on climate and pathways for direct action.

Local *Warming Warning* programs include events at Le Laboratoire, Somerville Museum, Cambridge Public Schools Design Lab, Project Zero/Harvard Graduate School of Education, and the Science Center Plaza. For full event details visit: <https://harvardforest.fas.harvard.edu/warming-warning>

Warming Warning immerses visitors in a three-dimensional visualization of ongoing climate change. On one side, the > 1.5 °F change (since 1880) in global average temperature is highlighted as a white-to-red heat-gradient. The other side illustrates different future scenarios of carbon dioxide emissions. These are the paths we can take now that will lead either to a fossil fuel-free future or to an increasingly warm and uninhabitable planet.



Warming Warning with reflection bench on view at Harvard University's Science Center Plaza.

The design represents climate change as a series of painted triangles (“deltas”) constructed from standard 4x6” timbers. Sunlight channeled and diffused through 6” gaps bounces off the brightly painted sides, endowing the whole sculpture with an incredible luminosity. Shadow patterns and color-spectrum vibrancy shift as the sculpture reflects the sun’s daily arc. The visual experience of the installation also changes in response to the visitor’s perspective. The combined dynamics animate the work throughout the day and reward repeated visits.

Finally, *Warming Warning* leaves space for more triangles to be added at the end of the series. A stack of nine wood timbers make up a reflection-bench that suggests each person’s role in the narrative of unfolding climate change. The primed seating element prompts each visitor to consider how they can color the future through individual and collective actions to confront climate change.

This collaborative project is supported by a unique partnership between the Harvard Forest, Harvard University’s Office for Sustainability, and Harvard Common Spaces.



Various views of new Warming Warning installation at Harvard University’s Science Center Plaza.

About the Artists

David Buckley Borden is a Cambridge Massachusetts-based interdisciplinary artist and designer. Using an accessible combination of art and design, David promotes a shared environmental awareness and heightened cultural value of ecology. David's work manifests in a variety of forms, ranging from site-specific landscape installations in the woods to data-driven cartography in the gallery and have recently earned him residencies at the Santa Fe Art Institute, Trifecta Hibernaculum, and Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art.

David was a 2016/2017 Charles Bullard Fellow at the Harvard Forest where he answered the question, "How can art and design foster cultural cohesion around environmental issues and help inform ecology-minded decision making?" David continues to collaborate with Harvard researchers, to champion a cultural ecology supported by innovative interdisciplinary science-communication.

Learn more about David and his work at <http://davidbuckleyborden.com/>.

Aaron M. Ellison is the Senior Research Fellow in Ecology in Harvard's Department of Organismic and Evolutionary Biology, Senior Ecologist at the Harvard Forest, and a semi-professional photographer and writer. He studies the disintegration and reassembly of ecosystems following natural and anthropogenic disturbances; thinks about the relationship between the Dao and the Intermediate Disturbance Hypothesis; reflects on the critical and reactionary stance of Ecology relative to Modernism, blogs as [The Unbalanced Ecologist](#), and tweets as [@AMaxEII17](#). He is the author of *A Primer of Ecological Statistics* (2004/2012), *A Field Guide to the Ants of New England* (2012), *Stepping in the Same River Twice: Replication in Biological Research* (2017), *Carnivorous Plants: Physiology, Ecology, and Evolution* (2018), and *Vanishing Point* (2017), a collection of photographs and poetry from the Pacific Northwest. On Wednesdays, he works wood.

Learn more about Aaron and his work at <http://harvardforest.fas.harvard.edu/aaron-ellison>.

About the Harvard Forest

The Harvard Forest is a department of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS) of Harvard University, located in Petersham, Massachusetts. From a center comprised of 4,000 acres of land, research facilities, and the Fisher Museum, the scientists, students, and collaborators at the Forest explore the interacting physical, biological, and human systems that drive change in the New England landscape.

Learn more about the Harvard Forest at <http://harvardforest.fas.harvard.edu/>.

