

Youth Climate Action Training

Workshop 1:

What's Already There? Rethinking Creativity & Sustainability

Luke Casserly

Introduction

This workshop invites young people to explore the question, “What’s already there?” as a way of reimagining the relationship between sustainability and creativity. Participants discover how everyday landscapes, objects, and relationships can be the starting point for a new production. Through group discussions and playful creative exercises, the workshop invites young people to use what already exists rather than always seeking the new. The session aims to open out fresh ways of seeing, spark conversations around our impact on the environment, and empower participants to craft ideas that imagine a better world and leave a positive environmental legacy.

This workshop was created for Youth Theatre Ireland’s Climate Action Training Workshops series by [Luke Casserly](#), a multidisciplinary performance maker and facilitator from Longford, whose work weaves together ecological research, autobiography, sound art and site as a way of carving out space for new possibilities to emerge between live performance and physical landscape.

What to Expect:

The workshop will address sustainability by focusing on resource consciousness, ecological awareness, and a creative approach to repurposing materials. Instead of promoting consumption, it will instead ask participants to consider how we can work with what we already have - whether that’s through materials, spaces, or existing resources within their local community. By reframing overlooked environments and everyday objects as valuable resources, the workshop will hopefully nurture a mindset that reduces consumption and fosters long-term environmental care. The session will also focus on the importance of embedding sustainability into creative practice from the outset (as opposed to retrofitted solutions) by encouraging participants to see sustainability not as a burden, but as a foundation for making new work.

Participants can expect a day of playful and thought-provoking activities which are responsive to the interests of the group. The challenge lies in resisting the urge for “more” and instead learning to value what’s already around us - be it in nature, our community, or

our imaginations. This shift in thinking might feel unusual at first, but it will hopefully open up exciting possibilities for creativity and sustainability that people can take away from the session and bring back to their wider youth theatre group afterwards. The workshop will include some discussion, practical exercises, and collaborative making in small groups. Expect moments of curiosity and reflection, as well as the chance to explore how the relationship between our landscapes and personal stories can become a powerful tool for change.

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This workshop was delivered to four youth theatre groups in the Roscommon Arts Centre, Co. Roscommon, Ireland, in November 2025. This workshop was delivered over one full day but can be delivered over several sessions as time allows.

Duration 10:00 - 5.00pm

Age range 13-18 years old

Space

A bright, well-ventilated room. Ideally the space should also have windows and / or easy access to an outdoor area.

Preparation

Each person attending is invited to bring along an object from the first landscape they ever encountered - this could be something literally from that place or something more symbolic / poetic that serves as a reminder of it. Each person is also invited to bring along a notebook to the session if they wish. This note should be sent to participants well in advance of the workshop, with an additional follow up reminder the day before.

Materials

Sheets of paper, pens, masking tape, post-its, a large table set to one side, participants' objects, and notebooks.

Workshop Outline

10.00-10.10 The facilitator welcomes everyone and gives a brief overview, housekeeping, etc.

10.10-10.45 The Story of Your Name

The facilitator begins with everyone in a circle leading a short physical warm-up. Each participant is then invited to tell the group the story of how they got their name (its meaning, why they were given it, if they were named after a particular person, etc). The intention is for everyone to get to know one another, and to begin thinking about autobiographical storytelling in a gentle way.

10.45-11.30 Objects Show & Tell

The facilitator invites participants to bring the object they brought along with them. Each person speaks in the circle, for a couple of minutes about their object (why they chose it, what place it recalls, what that object means to them, etc.) and one by one the objects are placed in the centre of the circle to form a tapestry of different geographies. At the end, invite participant observations and thoughts on the image of all the objects laid out together. Objects should be placed on a table to the side after the exercise is over.

11.30-11.45 Short break

11.45-12.30 Archival - Part 1

Participants are invited to find a spot somewhere in the room or outdoors close to the space and create an archival list of the things they notice. Ideally, participants can spread out and find a place that is interesting to them, preferably outdoors. They're invited to divide their observations into categories including physical things, sounds, smells, and textures. This exercise should take about 10 minutes, after which the group comes back into a circle to discuss what they noticed. They should first exchange notes with the person next to them (in pairs) then the facilitator asks if anyone would like to share some observations. Was there anything unusual discovered?

12.30-1.15 Archival - Part 2

Participants are invited to now consider any other objects they happened to have with them into the room today. Using these objects, they're invited to create a miniature exhibition of their items (coats, bags, phones, keys, wallets, other personal items, etc.) to tell the story of these objects using visual materials only. Each person will have 15 minutes to create their micro-exhibition in the space, and the group will travel to each one to have a look.

Encourage each person to speak about their items, and why they decided to arrange them in the way they did. Do they tell a story?

1.15-2.15 **Lunch break**

2.15-2.45 **Game: What Are You Doing?**

This is an improvisational game in which participants enter the circle and create a moving image of a physical activity (e.g. starting a lawnmower, playing basketball, combing their hair). Once they have established the image, another person enters the circle and asks them, 'what are you doing?' to which the person says something completely contrary to what they're actually doing. The person who asked then has to bring that action to life and so on until everyone has a go.

2.45-3.00 **Reflections: Invitation to share thoughts, ideas that have cropped up so far.**

3.00-3.30 **Collaborative Making**

We revisit the tapestry of objects from the Show & Tell earlier in the morning. Participants are now invited to think about bringing that object to life in the room through performance. Each person is invited to find a partner and re-tell them the story of their object, acting as a sounding board for each other in terms of what's most intriguing, surprising, or curious. The facilitator then invites participants to name different forms of performance (a monologue, a short piece of choreography, a group action, a poem, an installation, a soundscape, etc.) which should be written as a list on the wall to get people thinking about the best form / medium to accommodate the story of their object. Encourage people to think about space and how they might present this to an audience. Each pair will act as a director / dramaturg for the other, and the facilitator should move from group to group to offer advice and encouragement where needed.

3.30-4.00 **Landscape Dialogues**

Each pair is asked to imagine their two objects in conversation together. The idea is that they will merge their two performance ideas together to create a short, devised performance based on the relationship (either real or imagined) between their two objects. Participants are invited to think about the history of those objects, the landscapes they come from, their own relationships to them, etc. This is an open-ended exercise with no 'right' or 'wrong' response. And no pressure to perform, e.g. some might prefer to share what they discussed, if they don't feel the impulse to 'make' something. It's important to re-emphasise the performances do not have to be traditional dramatic scenes - encourage the use of phones

to record sound, choreograph something, lead the group through a space, etc. as a way of translating their objects into a live 'moment'.

4.00-4.45 **Sharing of Micro-Performances**

Each group shares what they've created, followed by feedback from the group on what they observed during the sharing.

4.45-5.00 **Final Moments**

With everyone back in a circle, participants are invited to share thoughts on the day and what came up for them. The facilitator thanks everyone for coming along to the session.