

Columbia Youth Climate Summit 2019

Workshop Descriptions and Presenter Bios

Workshop Session One

Workshop A - Jason Smerdon

- **Workshop Description:** This workshop will address how to effectively communicate three scientific facts: 1) the Earth system is warming; 2) CO₂ is rapidly increasing in the atmosphere and is already at a concentration not seen in over 3 million years; and 3) atmospheric CO₂ increases are causing the observed warming and are due to human activities. In other words, the Earth is warming and we are causing it. The consequences of this warming are already impacting the world around us, while projected future warming over the 21st century will enhance and expand climate-related risks for all regions of the planet. We will discuss how to communicate these immutable facts, while additionally analyzing how such facts are distorted and diminished in a world of "alternative facts." We will discuss credible sources while unpacking some of the basic climate denialist talking points and why they exist.
- **Bio:** Jason Smerdon is a Lamont Research Professor at the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory and co-director of the Earth Institute's Undergraduate Program in Sustainable Development, both at Columbia University. He teaches classes in climate science and sustainable development. The broad objective of Smerdon's research is to characterize and understand climate variability and change on multi-decadal to centennial timescales. Smerdon is particularly interested in climate variability spanning the last two thousand years, how climate models represent climatic change over this time period, and how studies of climate over the last two thousand years can be used to inform future climate projections. His recent work has focused on hydroclimate variability and change, with an emphasis on multidecadal droughts in North America. In addition to over 90 published papers in the scientific literature, Smerdon is coauthor of the textbook *Climate Change: The Science of Global Warming and Our Energy Future* (Columbia University Press, 2018). Smerdon received a B.A. in Physics from Gustavus Adolphus College and a Ph.D. in Applied Physics from the University of Michigan.

Workshop B - Iván Asin

- **Workshop Description: Art Education for Sustainable Development: Local and Global Perspectives** This workshop focuses on discussing local sustainability issues and global citizenship through the lens of art and art education. The conversation includes the issue of materials, sense of community and paradigms.
- **Bio:** Iván Asin is an NYC-based art educator from Santiago, Chile. His work focuses on establishing connections between art education and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). He studied Visual Arts and Marketing at Montclair State University, earned a Masters Degree in Art & Design Education from Pratt Institute and is currently a Doctoral Candidate in the Art Education Program at Teachers College, Columbia University. He was awarded the title of Master Environmental Educator by the state of Colorado in 2017 and is currently part of the Fulbright Specialist roster. Since 2010, Iván has taught visual arts in the New York City public school system and community-based art programs in Amsterdam and New York. As the founder and leading art educator of the Center for Art Education and Sustainability (CAES), Iván has taught workshops in Argentina, Peru, Colombia, Mexico and the United States, and has carried out professional development for art educators at conferences and higher education institutions.

Workshop Session Two

Workshop A - Zero Hour NYC

- **Workshop Description:** The youth are the most affected demographic of climate change; however, because the majority of them are unable to vote, the legislation needed to combat the climate disaster the youth face is not being passed. Zero Hour NYC represents the youth voice that is oftentimes overpowered by the constituency. We will rally, protest, and march until our message is heard and our demands are met. The Strive for Change workshop addresses the necessity of the youth voice and its power in the climate movement. We will be teaching students to become more confident and knowledgeable about the change they're capable of.
- **Bio:** Rachel Lee is a 15 year old climate activist from Closter, NJ, although her work is primarily in NYC. She joined Zero Hour, a youth-led climate organization, in the summer of 2017, after being pushed to action watching a documentary about the Canadian Tar Sands, and worked in the NYC branch as a junior coordinator. She was appointed the head coordinator of Zero Hour NYC after the historic Youth Climate March in NYC last summer. Rachel has since worked with PCM-NY for their RISE march in September and has represented Zero Hour NYC at the UN Youth Assembly. She is a sophomore attending Northern Valley Regional High School at Demarest.

Workshop B - Sharon Gaber

- **Workshop Description:**
- **Bio:** Sharon Gaber is the Manager of the non-profit, North American Passive House Network. Here, she currently oversees every facet of the organization including their nationwide Certified Passive House Designer Training Program. Her formative background is in museum studies for decorative art and she has managed many diverse antique furniture galleries in New York City over the past 15 years. Through her work with interior designers and architects she became aware of the immense impact that sustainable design and products could have on the industry. Determined to create positive traction in the industry she went on to create her own consultancy to help cultural institutions become more

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sustainable. She continues this work as the Development Chair of the Climate and Environment network at the American Alliance of Museums. She is a LEED AP, BPI Certified, a NYS real estate agent and is working toward becoming a Certified Passive House Consultant.

Workshop C - Tom Angotti

- **Workshop Description:** How Disaster Capitalism Undermines Climate Justice in New York City -- and what we can do about it.
- **Bio:** Tom Angotti is Professor Emeritus of Urban Policy and Planning at Hunter College and the Graduate Center, City University of New York. He was the founder and director of the Hunter College [Center for Community Planning and Development](#). His recent books include *Zoned Out! Race, Displacement and City Planning in New York City*, *Urban Latin America: Inequalities and Neoliberal Reforms*, *The New Century of the Metropolis*, *New York For Sale: Community Planning Confronts Global Real Estate*, which won the Davidoff Book Award, and *Accidental Warriors and Battlefield Myths*. He is an editor of [progressivecity.net](#) and Participating Editor for *Latin American Perspectives* and *Local Environment*. He is active in community and environmental issues in New York City.

Workshop Session Three

Workshop A - Sun Works

- **Workshop Description:** *We Are What You Eat: A Conversation about how our Food Choices & Food Waste impact the Climate*
- **Bio:** Sidsel Robards is the co-founder of NY Sun Works Greenhouse Project, a non-profit program that builds hydroponic science labs in urban schools to teach students and teachers about Climate and the Science of Sustainability. She serves as the organization's Board Chair and Senior Development Director. NY Sun Works is an EPA and NAAEE award winning organization, which has grown to serve 100+ schools across New York City and Northern New Jersey. As a Sustainability Coordinator, Jennifer Prescott has implemented recycling systems, Waste Awareness and reduction programs, indoor air quality and energy conservation education, and co-founded the D3 Green Schools Group Composting Pilot on NYC's upper west side. The 2012 Cafeteria Waste Composting pilot was adopted and expanded by New York City Dept.(s) of Sanitation & Education and continues to be established citywide. As a Green consultant Jennifer assists to influence the design choices for interior product & décor as well as building materials, heating/cooling options, and water systems. Jennifer is a New York University Graduate.

Workshop B - Zero Waste Schools

- **Workshop Description:** School sustainability, local recycling laws, and climate change: how do these topics interact? The Department of Education's Office of Sustainability will dive into New York City's Zero Waste goals, how waste and recycling affect climate change, and how students can change school attitudes about waste. Participants will walk away with concrete actions to implement a successful recycling system into their schools, enabling them to lead a culture shift and create lasting sustainability action in their schools and our city.
- **Bio:** Jaxie Friedman is a Sustainability Specialist for the NYC Department of Education. She works with NYC public schools to incorporate more sustainable practices into schools, with an emphasis on improving recycling infrastructure, waste disposal procedures as well as student and staff education. Jaxie has a BA from Wesleyan University and a background working with sustainable agriculture, waste management and youth and adult education.

Workshop C - Environmental Advocates of New York

- **Workshop Description:** *Advocacy 101: How to organize & integrate the arts into a Climate Action Plan* Developing a smart Climate Action Plan takes coordination across many levels of an institution. In the case of school implementation, there must be a commitment from administrative decision makers and deep support from a teacher(s) who will champion efforts and help students engage in the process. This workshop will focus on how to organize within your school and serve as an Advocacy 101 training on how to rally support around climate change (including using arts activism!), benchmark a school's energy, waste and water use, and provide an overview of the political context (New York, US and international climate policy) and why it matters now.
- **Bio:** Joshua Cohen is Director of Campaigns at Environmental Advocates of New York. He oversees the organization's community outreach and citizen engagement efforts. Prior to joining Environmental Advocates, Joshua served as Director of Member Services with the Environmental Grantmakers Association where he helped build and support a national network of environmental funders and managed institutional diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives. Before that, he coordinated energy, waste and water initiatives for The New School's Office of Sustainability, Facilities Management, where he helped draft the university's first Climate Action Plan and managed an entrepreneurial green grants program. He has also conducted public health and air quality research for the New York City Mayor's Office of Long-Term Planning and Sustainability, Columbia University, the Center for the Biology of Natural Systems, and the United States Environmental Protection Agency, and managed the Brooklyn Compost Project, an outreach and education program at Brooklyn Botanic Garden. Joshua received his Master of Public Administration in Environmental Science and Policy from Columbia University's School for International and Public Affairs and a Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Studies and Visual Arts from Hampshire College. He lives in the Hudson Valley with his family.