Acting for Climate: Beyond activist art to artistic activism

A case study of the performance arts company, Acting for Climate, from a social movement perspective

Siri Amanda Vlasic

LUCSUS

Lund University Centre for
Sustainability Studies

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Supervisor: David O'Byrne, LUCSUS, Lund University

Abstract

Limiting the global average temperature rise to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels is a major task that that requires profound societal changes. Many agree that changes in culture are the way to tackle environmental problems. Several social movements and environmental activists have tried to use art as a tool to educate, engage community in participation of decision making, and strengthen community identity, but it is still widely contested as to what degree art can change culture from a theoretical perspective. With a case study of performing arts company, Acting for Climate, this thesis explores how the group can be categorized as a social movement organization. Additionally, it examines how framing processes and performance have helped the organization emerge. Although Acting for Climate can be classified as a social movement organization, there is opportunity for the company to learn and grow from insights formed through the analysis using social movement theory.

Keywords: Social movements, performance art, sustainability, framing, performance of opposition, Scandinavia

Word Count: 11,911

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Abbreviations

A4C   Acting for Climate

SMO   Social Movement Organization

IPCC   Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

1 Introduction

Climate change is one of the greatest threats facing society today. There is ample scientific data to back this up, yet global temperature continues to rise. Currently, climate change research attempts to inform and assist societies address both biophysical and social challenges brought on by this crisis (Tabra et al., 2017). These efforts focus primarily on managing carbon emissions and adapting to the impacts of climate change (Galafassi, 2018). Even with advances in climate adaptation literature, there is no consensus regarding the best ways to address these problems, especially in a way that promotes transformative cultural changes relative to climate change (Galafassi, 2018). Moreover, environmental and climate change communication has not led to the necessary level of public engagement (Nisbet, 2009). To address this, researchers within the field of sustainability have called for the integration of the social sciences, and some scholars have also called for a 'humanistic climate response'. This field of thought considers humans as the solution and pays great attention to the overall human experience. This entails "affect and emotions, human values, subjectivity and the possibilities for the fulfilment of human potential" (Galafassi, 2018).

The purpose of art has been debated throughout history, but there is no denying that art can have an instrumental social function and can provide a new perspective for how we view the world, ourselves, and each other (Bell and Desai, 2011). A number of art academics and educators have emphasized the transformative power of the arts (Milbrant, 2010). Art can serve as a tool to maintain social traditions and describe the world, but it can also explore issues of social justice, identity, and freedom. Most scholars agree that art alone cannot change society, but the arts do have the capacity to give and amplify voice, and form to individual and collective needs that motivate and sustain social transitions and movements (Milbrant, 2010).

Limiting global temperature increase to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels is a clear, yet no menial task as it requires extreme cultural transformations (Galafassi, 2018) and societal changes (Bentz, 2020). Effective strategies to learn and engage with climate change play an important role in addressing this challenge (Bentz, 2020). Art and arts-based practices are increasingly seen as a powerful way of developing meaningful connection with climate change (Bentz and O'Brien, 2019). Artistic and creative practices and approaches can help expand our visions for the future through opening our minds to new scenarios of change. The potential for art to transform society and its capacity to support agency and feelings of hope,

responsibility, and care, is well documented (Boal, 2000). Furthermore, artistic expressions can contribute to deep emotional learning about sustainability (Bentz, 2020). According to Bell and Desai (2011), "the transformative power of art relies on its capacity to spark cultural, cognitive, and psychological changes". As noted in Table 1, it can be argued that art can play a variety of roles in affecting the range of dimensions related to overall global change and sustainability transformation (Galafassi, 2018). The table also indicates that art can be useful in engaging storytelling, dealing with difficult emotions and dilemmas, exploring futures imaginatively, political engagement, and engaging with values and beliefs (Galafassi, 2018) – all of which come into play in social movements and activism.

Table 1. Potential role of art in various dimensions of climate change and sustainability (Galafassi et al., 2018, p. 74).

Dimensions of climate change transformations processes possibly accessible through the arts.	
Dimensions	Potential role of the arts
Creative imagination and serendipity	Potential to create spaces for active experimentation and imagination, fostering creative thinking. Serendipity is an integral part of emergent and resilient responses
Dealing with difficult emotions and dilemmas	Create safe spaces of disclosure and sharing
Engaging storytelling	Narratives combine cognitive with emotional resources in the depiction of specific experiences, offering increased comprehension, interest and engagement of audiences
Science communication	Enrich narrative, visual and experiential aspects of communication and extend its reach
Possibilities for political engagement	Hybrid experiences that bring together art, science and climate change can be fertile ground for collective action by creating sites of encounter, public scrutiny, meaning negotiation and trust
Exploring futures imaginatively	Develop metaphors, imagery and narratives of alternative futures
Pre-figuring potential futures through direct action	Develop and perform direct intervention, experimentation and re-designing in daily situations and social systems
Engaging with values and beliefs	Unveil values and beliefs behind action and perception, connecting with personal and collective drivers of action
As part of transdisciplinary learning processes of knowledge integration	Artists as active participants of a transdisciplinary process integrating multiple learning and processes and involving multiple ways of knowing
Shifting awareness and openness to more-than-human worlds	The arts may provide access to different sources of cognitive, emotional and sensual experience, opening up sensibilities to extended ecologies and more-than-human worlds
Coupling cultural systems with social–ecological change	Art can reveal materially and directly what is happening in social–ecological systems which may lead to the attuning of human perception, value systems and worldviews to changes in the biosphere
Embracing social–ecological complexity	Art embraces uncertainty and tends to trace the ways in which society and nature are intertwined. This approach may open up alternative modes of relations to nature beyond 'command-and-control'

The list of social movements and environmental activists that use artistic expressions to educate, engage community in participation of decision making, and strengthen community identity is extensive (Vaidianu et al., 2014). Artistic and creative expressions seem to be particularly important for younger audiences, who are currently leading climate related movements on a global scale (Della Porta, 2014). There are some studies that explore the use of art in social movements (Sanz and Rodriguez-Labajos, 2021), yet there is

general lack of reference in academic literature that explores the theoretical perspectives of art in environmental movements. As a result, the question remains as to how activist art and social movement strategies work together to achieve maximum impact. Beyond this, the question of the role that art plays in environmental conflicts still remains.

1.1 Research Aims & Research Questions

Social movement organizations, and more generally social movements, have historically utilized art and artistic symbolism to enhance activism and protest (Tarrow and Tilly, 2011). Although the relationship between art and social movements is well-document in historical contexts, it has emerged as being particularly critical in recent years (Bell and Desai, 2011) as researchers and activists have been searching for novel ways to engage audiences about climate issues. As art-focused organizations become more prevalent in the world of environmental activism, the debate on the effectiveness of art in catalyzing social change remains. By using a case study of performance art company Acting for Climate (A4C), I plan to explore the role that art plays in climate activism and in transforming the cultural dimensions of climate change. Therefore, the aim of this thesis is twofold. The first aim is to understand how activist art and social movement strategies are being implemented in the practices of A4C, and the second aim is to understand how the framing processes used in activist art and social movement strategies *can* work together to achieve maximum impact in the future. To guide this exploration two main research questions (RQs) and subsequent questions have been determined:

RQ1: What can be learned by characterizing A4C as an SMO?

    RQ1a: What are the political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and framing processes/strategies used by A4C?

    RQ1b: In what ways can A4C further utilize social movement theory to strengthen the organization's aims?

RQ2: What role does performance play in the emergence and movement of A4C?

    RQ2a: What are the framing processes/strategies unique to performance art?

    RQ2b: How does the nature of performance art aid or hinder a successful social movement?

1.2 Historical Background

Historically, there have been many artists, artistic practices, and art-based movements that have aided and/or led to societal changes (Galafassi, 2018). These artists and movements have succeeded in societal transformations by "heralding shifts in mindsets, opening up new political horizons and providing – sometimes even forcing – the creation of novel spaces for reflexivity and experimentation" (Belfiore and Bennett, 2008, as cited in Galafassi, 2018). For example, Dada artists used art to advocate for silliness and nonsensical behavior in daily life as the only response to the horrors of WWI. Additionally, in the 1960's, the Situationists International played a major role in the revolutionary Paris events, exposing the division between artists, consumers, and the means of production (Tate, n.d.).

In the 1990's, the discussion of climate change art as a response to sustainability issues became more widely discussed. This increase in climate change art dialogue was intended to address the tendency of humans to value personal experience over scientific data (Bentz, 2020). In the early 2000's, the call for artists to engage with climate change increased as it became more obvious that climate science alone was not sufficient for motivating the public and politicians to act across various scales (Galafassi, 2018). The role of arts also increased as climate-related art received greater attention through the media. An example of this can be seen in Bill McKibben's (2005) opinion piece *What the Warming World Needs Now is Art, Sweet Art*, which reached a large audience through global media. McKibben argued that an intellectual understanding of the scientific facts is not enough. To move forward and effect meaningful change, the other side of our brains must be engaged to approach problems with our imagination. The people best suited to help us do that, according to McKibben, are artists (McKibben, 2005). Another example can be seen in the release of Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth*, which used film to popularize climate science (Connelly, 2016).

These are a few examples of how art has been used in social movement and the communication of climate science. There are certainly other ways in which art has been used to challenge social norms and relations using different tools, methods, forms, and materials (Bell and Desai, 2011).

1.3 Case Study Introduction

Acting for Climate is the case study used in this thesis. A4C is a performance art company that utilizes components of contemporary circus, such as acrobatics, theatrical physical expression, dance, music, and

voice. The group's overarching aim is to inspire people to act for a more sustainable future (Acting for Climate, 2022f). The group emerged in Norway in 2014, broadening its reach in 2015 to encompass Scandinavia as a whole, and in 2019 grounding a second branch in Montreal, Canada. The Scandinavian contingent consists of six people (five actors and one producer) (Acting for Climate, 2022a) and the Montreal branch is comprised of three main actors (Acting for Climate, 2022e). Beyond the core crew of actors, A4C networks with other artists and collaborators across several countries and continents. The company is entirely funded through grants, including Perform Europe, Arts Council of Norway, and Nordic Council of Ministers, to name a few, yet the work of A4C would not be possible without volunteer and community support (Acting for Climate, 2022a). This case study focuses on the original group located in Scandinavia.

The work of A4C Scandinavia can be broken down into three main components – workshops, projects, and performances. *Workshops* are generally held once a year in an outdoor location that varies from year to year. The goal of these workshops is to gather and share information between artists, actors, scientists and the public. The intent is for those attending the workshops to learn, but also for A4C member to gain knowledge related to climate science, community engagement, and new artistic approaches. *Projects* usually result from the workshops, where A4C finds and works with a community to address a specific issue. The community, scientists, and artists work together to create a performance and often results in an artist in residency. *Performances* can result when a project is adapted to reach a greater geographical scope or audience. They can also be developed independently by artists in A4C. A common thread of all performances is that they are based on theory and input from actors outside of the company. They often result in tours that reach different locations in Scandinavia and sometimes further afield in other European countries (Acting for Climate, 2022a). See Table 2 for an annotated overview of A4C's past and ongoing workshops, projects, and performances.

Table 2. Description of A4C performances, projects, and workshops (Own creation, 2022).

PERFORMANCES	
BARK	A site-specific contemporary performance held in a range of local forests that explores the process of reconnecting with each other and with nature. The forest, the soil, and the trees are the main characters of the performance, and as such are considered co-creators with the performers, climate scientists, and audiences (outside eyes) (Acting for Climate, 2022b).
Ripples	A contemporary circus performance about eco-grief and utopia, sailing across the Baltic Sea to inspire people to act for a more sustainable future (Acting for Climate, 2022h).

KIME	A contemporary performance about the beauty of nature. Four artists scream out the universal frustration carried by the masses as related to the climate crisis. They bring the forest with them into the space and sow a seed of hope (Acting for Climate, 2022d).
Into the Water 2019	A traveling sailing performance and mini-festival to inspire artists, activists, and the public through contemporary circus, physical theatre, and workshops. This performance aims to inspire and create action for a more sustainable future through themes related to climate psychology, natural cycles, and water (Acting for Climate, 2022c).
PROJECTS	
Circus for Climate	A co-production between A4C and Riga Circus, working with Latvian youth on the realization of sustainability through art and activism. The results of this project is being developed into a performance slated for 2023-24 (Acting for Climate, 2022g).
Redout Skalka Multicultural Space	A collaboration between A4C and the Municipality or Jelsava, Slovakia to create a new cultural space for the region (Acting for Climate, 2022g).
Global Climate Artists	Support provided to Nafsi Africa, a performing arts organization in Nairobi, Kenya, for a climate performance tour in Denmark that is being organized by the Sport Media NGO (Acting for Climate, 2022g).
10 advices for non-formal learning	As part of Into the 2019 Into the Water Tour, A4C created a guide for non-formal learning reflecting their experiences and philosophical perspectives (Acting for Climate, 2022g).
WORKSHOPS	
The Greenhouse Network	An international community of artists established by A4C. The goal of this workshop was to explore deeper into the work and study of artistic research and environmental issues, and in the process create a capacity building project for the participants and artists (Acting for Climate, 2022j).
Teambuilding in Scandinavia	A space for future workshops to share knowledge between A4C artists, collaborating organizations, other performance artists and similar groups and individuals (Acting for Climate, 2022i).

The research of this thesis focuses mainly on the BARK performance. As indicated in Table 2, BARK is a site-specific contemporary performance incorporating local forests, dealing with reconnecting with each other and with nature. The artists created this performance through collaboration with climate scientists, artists, and local contacts. The five actors utilized group acrobatics, vertical dance, dance, and physical theatre in combination of contemporary soundscapes in their performances. The goal was to convey a sensory experience to change perspectives on human nature and encourage connections with nature by interacting with the forest, trees, and soil. The BARK performance premiered in 2021 in Denmark and toured in Denmark, Sweden, and Finland by bicycle; the 2022 tour traveled to Spain, Germany, and Denmark (Acting for Climate, 2022b).

1.4 Contribution to Sustainability Science

This thesis contributes to sustainability science by exploring and producing an example of interdisciplinary work in sustainability (Jerneck et al., 2011). To address the complex challenges posed by climate change, new and creative strategies must be employed (Kökerer, 2021). Social movements are widely seen as ways to catalyze action (David and McCaughan, 2006). Since the looming threat of climate change grows larger, there is still space to theorize and advocate for new or alternative methods in empowering cultural transformations (Pröpper, 2017). The theoretical validity and usefulness of social movements can be acknowledged while simultaneously applying the theoretical perspective to alternative approaches such as art, which is also understood to hold transformative power.

1.5 Thesis Structure

Chapter 2 introduces the theoretical framework of social movement, including the three factors that shape the emergence, development, and impact of successful social movement. Additionally, Ron Eyerman's application of Performance of Opposition (2006a), also known as Performance Theory, is introduced in Chapter 2. Methods are discussed in Chapter 3, beginning with an explanation of the research design. Data collection processes through semi-structured interviews and participant observation are then described, followed by an explanation of the thematic analysis methodology, and concluding with a discussion of research limitations. Chapter 4 analyzes A4C as a social movement organization, discusses its framing processes and strategies, and explores A4C through the lens of Performance Theory. Chapter 5 discusses the results found in Chapter 4. And finally, Chapter 6 provides research conclusions and recommendations for further studies.

2   Theoretical Framework

To understand the role of social movement in artistic activism, this section describes *social movement theory*, focusing on the factors that shape social movement. Since A4C does not outwardly state that they are a social movement organization, an introduction of social movement theory is necessary to understand how the group can be classified as a social movement organization (SMO). This theory will also help explain the emergence of the movement. Further emphasis will be placed on the role of framing processes and the exploration of emotions, values, and narratives exhibited through artistic practices. In addition, Ron Eyerman's *performance theory* and idea of *performing opposition* will be introduced to further evaluate the framing processes used by A4C and discover if and what is unique about performance
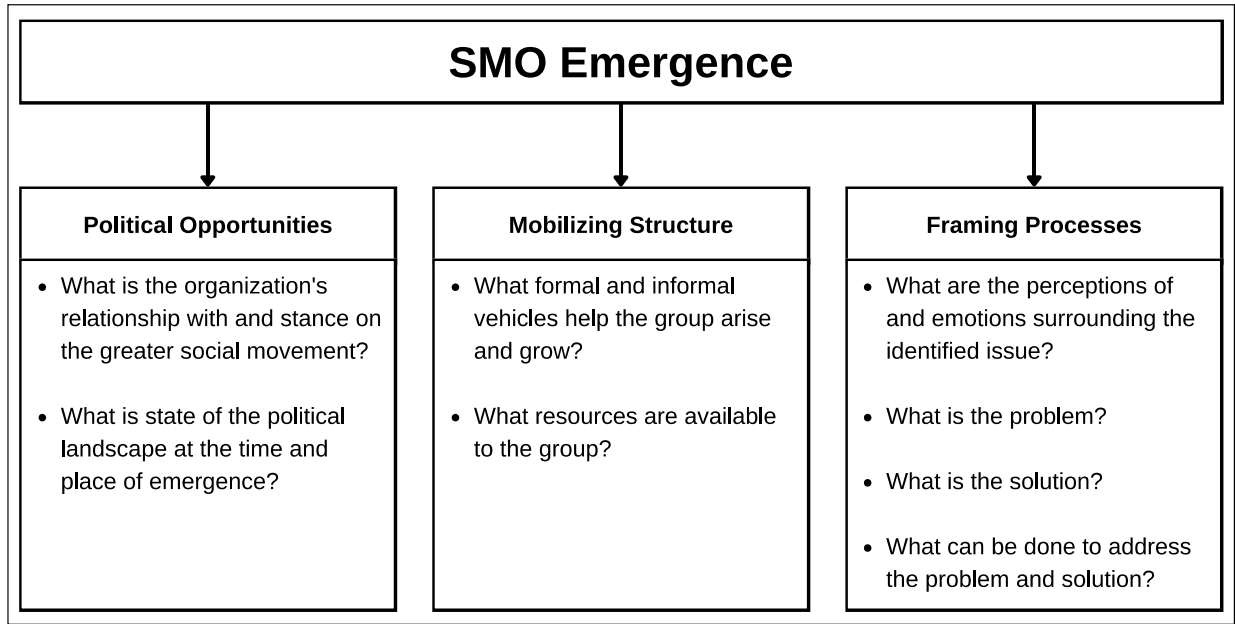
art in terms of cognitive framing and subsequent collective action of the movement. Finally, social movement theory, framing, and performance theory ideas will be applied to evaluate A4C's strengths and weaknesses, in addition to what can be improved within the organization and similar movements.

2.1 Social Movement Theory

Social movements have been a feature throughout modern society (McAdam et al., 1996), while environmental movements have become a discernable feature in recent decades, with recent upswings in tandem with climate change and successive IPCC reports (Thiri et al., 2022). Although there are several different definitions of social movement, the overall concept is well-established. According to Kolb (2007), social movements are organized efforts by groups of people working to achieve a common political or social goal. They are defined by a sequence of contentious demonstrations, performances, and claim-making campaigns (Kolb, 2007). Further, they can also be understood as sustained sequences of contentious politics, unified collective challenge, a common purpose, and social solidarity (Tarrow, 2011). Tilly & Wood (2016) state that social movements are contentious because, in nature, the collective claims conflict with another actor's interests. Those making a collective claim are inside the movement, while those with opposing ideas or interests are considered outside of the movement (Eyerman, 2006a). They are political because the government, in some aspect, is involved in the claim of the organization (Tilly & Wood, 2016). The use of A4C as a case study in this thesis reflects the idea that social movements are built upon networks of organizations. As McCarthy and Zald (1996) point out, social movements are known by and have become a force for social change through the SMOs that they create (McAdam et al., 1996). In this case, A4C is explored as a SMO spawned from the overarching environmental movement.

The following section highlights the three factors that contribute to the emergence and the continued development of social movements and SMOs. With those factors defined, emphasis shifts to the framing processes that are the primary focus of this thesis. The relationship between these factors can be seen in Figure 1.

SMO Emergence

Political Opportunities	Mobilizing Structure	Framing Processes
• What is the organization's relationship with and stance on the greater social movement? • What is state of the political landscape at the time and place of emergence?	• What formal and informal vehicles help the group arise and grow? • What resources are available to the group?	• What are the perceptions of and emotions surrounding the identified issue? • What is the problem? • What is the solution? • What can be done to address the problem and solution?

Figure 1. Diagram depicting how SMOs emerge. This diagram indicates how political opportunities, mobilizing structures and framing processes help a SMO emerge within a larger social movement (Own creation, 2022).

2.1.1 Political Opportunities

The opportunities for a potential movement to engage in successful action vary over time, consciously trying to take advantage of and even shape political opportunities (McAdam, 2017). These variations contribute to the emergence, structure, success, and longevity of movements. Political opportunities and constraints can be seen in any process that significantly changes the institutional assumptions, structures, or power relations on which the political establishment is structured (McAdam et al., 1996). Examples of events and processes that disrupt the political environment include, but are not limited to, wars, economic crises, regime changes and demographic shifts (McAdam, 2017). As experienced threats and perceived opportunities lead to contentious politics, social movement is only possible if there is sufficient group organization through collective action and mobilizing structures (Tarrow and Tilly, 2011). This can be seen through the emergence of SMOs and grassroot, bottom-up organization. Defining the meaning of political opportunities and constraints will help understand the conditions that led to the emergence of A4C and explain why the group utilizes particular framing devices.

2.1.2 Mobilizing Structures

Mobilizing structures are the "collective vehicles, informal as well as formal, through which people mobilize and engage in collective action" (McAdam et al., 1996). The organizational vehicles available at

the time of political opportunity determine the success of the group in exploiting the opening (McAdam, 2017). Traditional social movement theory research focuses on two distinct theoretical perspectives in the organizational dynamics of collective action (McAdam et al., 1996). The first is resource mobilization theory, which focuses on "mobilization processes and formal organizational manifestations of these processes". This can be seen through the creation of SMOs within a movement, which in this case includes A4C as a subset of the environmental movement in Scandinavia. Second is the political process model, which focuses on the importance of the physical setting in facilitating and structuring collective action, highlighting the importance of community and grassroots settings in facilitating collective action (McAdam et al., 1996). This can include bottom-up resources such as work, neighbors, universities, and friendship networks, to name a few (McAdam et al., 1996). Understanding this political process model can help determine the grassroot networks and resources that allowed A4C to emerge.

Movements often try to expand these structures in order to mobilize resources. This can mean forming alliances with other organizations that are either already inside the movement or on the outside looking to come in. In some cases, this can lead to negotiations in terms of framing. Ultimately, expanding the mobilizing network can allow increased exploitation of political opportunities while also strengthening collective action (McAdam, 2017). As previously mentioned, understanding the role of mobilizing structures in social movements provides a better idea of how A4C has emerged, the political opportunities they are trying to exploit, and the subsequent framing tools they apply to achieve their goals.

2.1.3   Framing Processes

Even in the successful combination of political opportunity and mobilizing structures, collective action is not possible without the presence of cognitive framing (McAdam et al., 1996). As McAdam (2017) states, "people need to feel both aggravated about (or threatened by) some aspect of their lives and optimistic that by acting collectively they can begin to redress the problem". If a movement lacks either of these two emotions, development and success is unlikely (McAdam et al., 1996). Coined by Snow et al. (1986), framing processes place importance on the cognitive or ideational dimensions of collective behavior. More specifically defined as "the conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action" (Snow et al., 1986). However, more recent research has used the concept to address all cultural dimensions of social movements (McAdam et al., 1996). Instead of the emphasis only placed on fear (or threat) and optimism

(or hope), other emotions like shame, pride, guilt, love, hate, anxiety, awe, and wonder have been introduced into the realm of framing processes.

Even though social movement theory stresses the importance of framing in a successful movement, there is no clear definition or framework (McAdam, et al., 1996). Instead, framing theories and methods are adopted from different sociologists and scholars in the field. Erving Goffman (1974) was the first to discuss the concept of framing to explain how individuals identify and understand social events and which norms they should follow (Snow et al., 1988; Benford and Snow, 2000). Successful social movements use three types of frames to further their goals (Snow and Benford, 1988). These include diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational frames (Snow and Benford, 1988). First, diagnostic framing identifies the problem in a clear, easy to understand way. Second, prognostic framing offers a solution to the problem. And third, motivational framing provides a call to action – what should be done if you agree with both the diagnostic frame and the prognostic frame (Snow and Benford, 1988).

Understanding framing in light relation to social movement theory can help the SMO utilize it for mobilization. This framing knowledge is applied in this thesis to help understand the framing processes and strategies that are intentionally used by A4C. Further, it helps to clarify the emotions the organization is playing to, while pinpointing framing processes that might be neglected within this case study.

2.2 Performance of Opposition

The concept of social movement, along with the three main factors laid out by McAdam et al. (1996), is well-established and generally met with consensus. To complement this and further understand the emotional and cognitive elements of framing processes, this section focuses on Ron Eyerman's application of performance of opposition, also referred to as performance theory in his writing. Performance theory takes social movement theory a step further by linking cognitive framing, narration, and discourse with the practice of mobilization (Eyerman, 2006b). Accordingly, "if social movements articulate frames of understanding, the performance of protest actualizes them" (Eyerman, 2006b).

Social movements move individuals and turn individuals into collective groups because they engage emotion and value. They are a form of acting in public – "a political performance which involves representation in dramatic form" (Eyerman, 2006b). Performance theory places importance on how opposition is performed, as well as the place and space of movement (Goffman, 1971).

As addressed earlier, framing is critically important in a successful movement, but so is ritual performance (Eyerman, 2006b). "Framing in social movements, through narrative structure, focus and direct emotion/energy in particular collective, political directions." As Eyerman states, "narratives and stories containing rhetorical devices, story lines, which link a particular occurrence/experience to others, broadening their meaning beyond the situational, imposing a higher order of significance, thus orchestrating and amplifying both the emotional experience and the meaning of the event, as individuals fused into a collective, with a purposive future and meaningful past" (Eyerman, 2006b).

Demonstrations are regarded and accepted as a form of political action in modern, democratic society. They are, essentially, performances that need to be rehearsed, played, and interpreted. With A4C being a performance art group, performance of opposition can be used as a tool to study the relationship between artistic performance and demonstration (or protest). In Eyerman's application of performance theory, demonstration involves three parts, as follow:

1) "Gathering in a public space – preferably one which combines visibility with symbolic significance" (Eyerman, 2006b).
2) "Displaying both membership in a politically relevant population and support for some position by means of voice, point, or symbolic objects" (Eyerman, 2006b).
3) "Communicating collective determination by acting in disciplined fashion in one space and or moving through a series of spaces" (Eyerman, 2006b).

Activists often make sense of their own protests through frames that already exist (Eyerman, 2006a). Performance gives these frames a story, adds drama, and activates emotions through *mise-en-scène. Mise-en-scène*, typically employed in theatre, ensures a performance has a setting, a stage and a script, performers, and an audience. This is central to how social movements move (Eyerman, 2006b).

Distinguishing if and how A4C uses the act of demonstration and the concept of *mise-en-scène* in their performances to intensify, highlight, and dramatize the issue being addressed in their performance helps to understand how to make it more visible and to multiply its emotional intensity. Although performance theory suggests that incorporating a rehearsed and scripted performance to social movement can enhance the emotional response and subsequent collective action, it does not determine the reception.

According to Eyerman, performance theory gives central place to emotions, as both actors and audience must be moved if a performance is successful. This is important when determining the success, or lack thereof, during A4C performances. Therefore, the emotional responses of both the actors and the audience will be considered when analyzing the success of A4C performances later in this thesis.

3 Methods

3.1 Research Design

This thesis is based on a case study of A4C and utilizes qualitative research strategy to analyze art and performance within environmental movements. This methodology was utilized because it aligns with the chosen theory and is conducive to the qualitative data collected through interviews, storytelling, and observations used to answer the RQs (Creswell, 2016). A qualitative content analysis, which places emphasis on the role of the investigator in analyzing the text, determining categories/themes, and drawing understanding from the data, is suitable in this thesis research (Bryman, 2012).

My research began with the desire to gain a deeper understanding of the role art plays in sustainability, specifically when it comes to collective behavior change and social movement. I began with the hypothesis that art has an intrinsic emotional value that can be used as a tool within social movements. Therefore, this case study can be classified as an instrumental case study as the intention is to provide insight into an issue and help refine a theory (Yin, 2009). As a result, I chose to apply social movement theory and performance theory in the exploration of this this topic. It should be noted that this thesis follows a critical realist ontological and epistemological stance. Simply put, critical realism recognizes that the nature of reality is objectively known, while our knowledge of reality is socially constructed (Fletcher, 2017). For example, this thesis is based on climate change being a scientifically proven phenomenon, while the way the artists and audience understand climate change and choose to act upon it is subjective.

3.2 Data Collection

Data was collected primarily in the form of interviews and participant observation. Secondary data was also collected in the form of document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted via Zoom with members of A4C to learn more about the origins of the organization, and to gain a better understanding of the innerworkings of the group and explore the methods they use to reach their goal "to inspire people to act for a more sustainable future" (Acting for Climate, 2022a). At the time of the

interviews, A4C was on tour for their performance titled BARK. I was invited to attend the Danish segment of the tour in Svedberg, Denmark. I spent the week of May 7-14, 2022 cohabitating with the group and attending the performances. During this period, they conducted seven performances, six of which I was able to attend. This experience facilitated participant observations, including unstructured interviews with both actors and audience members. During this time, the group also provided access to documents they use for planning and scripting purposes, which is useful as supplements to the interview and observation data. Since the data collected during this period primarily included information regarding A4C's BARK performance, this thesis examines the organization as a whole, and with emphasis placed on BARK.

3.2.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

In order to answer the RQs, two semi-structured interviews were conducted with three members of A4C. Each interview lasted approximately one hour and was transcribed using Microsoft Word online software. I created an interview guide, (Appendix 1), consisting of 15 open-ended questions as the foundation for the interview. The research guide was based on my basic understanding of the company and the theories used in this research. The nature of semi-structured interviews provides freedom to deviate from the interview guide and ask supplemental or follow-up questions if necessary (Bryman, 2012). I began the interviews with background information about my thesis, followed by questions to help answer the RQs. It should be noted that before the interviews began the respondents, respondents were informed that they could stop the interview at any time and/or not respond if they felt uncomfortable or did not have a response for the question. The respondents were also encouraged to ask questions if they required clarification. Although the respondents were informed they had an option of remaining anonymous, none provided a clear indication of preference. To err on the side of caution, I assigned each respondent with a letter (A,B, and C) instead of using their name in the interview transcripts. Table 3 provides interview details, the letter assigned to each respondent, and the role they hold in A4C.

Table 3. General interview information. Included in the table is the letter assigned to each interviewee, the role they hold in A4C, and the date, length, and location of the interview (Own creation, 2022).

Interviewee	Role in A4C	Interview Date (dd/mm/ivy)	Length of Interview	Interview Location
A	Co-founder, board member, and artist	13/04/2022	58:52	Zoom
B	Board member and artist	13/04/2022	58:52	Zoom
C	Board member and producer	11/04/2022	1:07:41	Zoom

3.2.2   Participant Observations

During the week spent in Svedberg with A4C, I lived, shared meals, and socialized with the A4C BARK performance actors. "Participant observers can either be insiders who observe some aspect of life around them (observing participants) or they can be outsiders who participate in some aspects of the life around them and record what they can (participating observers)" (Bernard, 2006). In this case I was a participating observer as I was an outsider recording life around me. Traditionally, true participant observation requires a year or more to fully emerge into the culture of the group being studied. There are also documented cases where observation is achieved in a matter of weeks or months. Beyond that that, it is possible to do useful participant observation in just a few days (Bernard, 2006). In the case of this research, I was able to spend seven days with the study group. Although this qualifies as participant observation, the data collected is considered surface level at best.

I took descriptive field notes, applying a jotting style where I wrote down keywords and phrases to help trigger details when unable to fully record the moment (Bernard, 2006). While observing the performances, I tried to remain as unobtrusive as possible by focusing my attention on the actions and reactions of the actors and audience instead of my own feelings towards the performance. I was able to record the habits of the actors when they were not performing, and when time allowed, I conducted unstructured interviews with both the actors and audience members. Being unstructured, I did not pre-plan the questions and instead asked questions in the moment that suited each situation or scenario (Bryman, 2012). The intention of these interviews was to collect extensive data to answer the RQs. Since I was unable to record these interviews, I instead attempted to note the quotes in my field notes. However, on occasion I only wrote down keywords from the interviews when full notetaking seemed inappropriate or interrupted the flow of conversation. Before interviewing attendees and actors, I explained the nature of my thesis research, ensured the respondents they could chose to stop the interview at any time, and informed them they could choose not to answer questions if they did not have an answer or did not feel comfortable answering it.

The audience interviews were very brief and only lasted a few minutes; the actor interviews were more in-depth and took place in a group setting. Observations of the actors and audience members during this week provided data concerning the operations of the organization, the methods they use to convey their message, and the reactions of the participants to help answer the RQs of this thesis. Throughout the week

I recorded my observations in a journal where they were later typed into a Microsoft Word document and categorized into themes to answer the RQs when I returned home from Svedberg. A sample of my field notes can be found in Appendix 2 and full participant observation field notes are found in the attached ZIP file.

3.3 Methodology: Thematic analysis

A thematic analysis of the transcribed interviews and observations is applied as a method to transform qualitative data into findings (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This is an appropriate method in this case, as it allows the researcher to form a theoretical understanding of the data in order to make a theoretical contribution to literature within the field of research (Bryman, 2012). I began by familiarizing myself with the data by reading it and reviewing the contents. Next, I manually determined themes in the text by highlighting quotes, phrases or words that could answer the corresponding RQs. The data-informed themes corresponding to each RQ can be seen as subchapters in the analysis and results section of this thesis.

3.4 Limitations

Throughout my research I encountered multiple limitations, highlighted by the small sample size of my case study group. Although A4C is a growing organization with projects reaching across Scandinavia and beyond, the group of full-time members and organizers is small. The Scandinavian branch of A4C includes only four full time actors and one producer. As a result, I was only able to conduct two semi-structured interviews with three of the full-time members. Although this number of interviews is small in the realm of qualitative data, I was still able to interview three out of the four full time members.

I was fortunate to be able to collect additional data in the form of observations and unstructured interviews. Unfortunately, the time I was able to spend with the group was very limited. I was only able to collect observations from one week in the field with A4C. This is a result of the limited time scale and resources available for the research of this thesis. As a result, bias may be seen, as I could not completely emerge myself in the community of the group.

A4C is an organization that creates performances, projects, and workshops in multiple countries. Due to the time constraint of this research and resources available, I focused on a small part of the organization - the BARK performance. Even though I was able to collect some overarching data about the organization

as a whole, the majority of this data only represents the BARK performance during the tour in Svedberg, Denmark, which limits my results and creates a potential bias.

4   Analysis and Results

4.1 A4C as an SMO

This section will use social movement theory to situate A4C as an SMO. Exploring the political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and framing processes that have been utilized by the company will help understand how A4C emerged within the greater environmental movement. Additionally, it will pinpoint potential cracks or opportunities where the group can further implement social movement theory to strengthen their overall aim.

4.1.1   Political Opportunities

To determine the political opportunity that is giving room for A4C to emerge as a social movement organization, it was important to ask the interviewees how the organization started and what facilitated the organization to form. The following are sample statements made by interviewee A, B, and C pertaining to political opportunity:

C: *"It's the system."*

C: *"…one of them is very active in the Green Party in Norway, and for example, she doesn't feel like they're not doing anything, but she feels we could do better."*

C: *"I would say the goal is always the same… it's react to climate change, react to how we can be sustainable, but using creativity."*

B: *"Being able to combine my profession as an artist with my actual political wish of creating change and to work with the clear intent of making change."*

A: *"We wanted to find someone or some other artists who were doing environmental work… but it was really difficult to find."*

A: "There weren't so many artists working on environmentalism at the moment."

These statements suggest that A4C emerged as a response to climate change and lack environmental action by politicians, individuals, and within the community of performance art in general. The emergence of A4C coincided with the adoption of the Paris Agreement in 2015 where climate change was being addressed at an international level (United Nations, 2021). This gave more leverage and agency for environmental SMOs, like A4C, to emerge, gain momentum, and ultimately move. Furthermore, the actors saw a space where more action could be taken, especially in a creative and nuanced way. Although not explicitly stated, it can be inferred that a historical lack of political action, accompanied by climate change finally being addressed at an international level (i.e. the adoption of the Paris Agreement) are underlying factors that gave A4C the space to emerge.

4.1.2   Mobilizing Structures

Understanding that mobilizing structures are the informal and formal collective vehicles through which people mobilizes and engage collective action (McAdam et al., 1996), the semi-structured interview data can help explain the formal and informal collective vehicles used by A4C. When asked about organization and resources, interviewee A stated that "through workshops we've developed a lot of methods, both on how to create and to inspire and to work". B also stated that, "we also invite other people, climate scientists or other artists, to research the topic together with us". Additionally, C added, "this is how the company started actually growing, step-by-step, artist-by-artist" in addition to "there was a community around them... they wanted to do something more than just performances". This demonstrates that A4C is a bottom-up organization, relying on a community of artists and scientists interested in addressing climate change to gain members. The workshops that A4C host and attend create a mobilizing structure through knowledge sharing and creating a community of like-minded individuals looking to incorporate art and performance into environmental activism.

McAdam's et al. (1996) emphasizes the importance of community along with grassroots setting in facilitating collective action. Beyond the community from workshops and the already existing artist community the actors are involved, grassroots support can be seen in the form of funding, pro bono work, and volunteer support. For example, interviewee B mentions that A4C is "based a lot on funding and an extreme amount of voluntary work", adding that they "have gotten a lot of help with residencies... help in the startup... a lot of help to write applications". B also states that "there is a biodynamic farm in Norway

that has helped out a lot by giving us residencies or providing food… there are so many people interested in sustainability… and there is a lot of help once you ask". This indicates that A4C receives both monetary and other forms of support from people outside of the movement and organization, who want to join in one way or another. Forming alliances with other organizations either inside or outside of the movement is critical in forming mobilizing structures to expand the organization or movement (McAdam et al., 1996).

4.1.3 Framing Processes

In order to determine the framing processes used by A4C, interview data was analyzed to determine the problems (diagnostic frames), solutions, (prognostic frames), and subsequent actions (motivational frames) pinpointed and encouraged by the organization. When it comes to diagnostic and pragmatic frames, the following quotes were found to be pertinent from the discussions with interviewee A, B, and C:

B: "We worked a lot with Karen O'Brien who works with quantum social change and change theories and how to make people realize that we're all connected to nature and invite people out in the forest."

B: "We want to work with new narratives of hope and empowerment, and not with the topic of climate disaster aesthetics or visuals."

B: "We're also interested in seeing how art can propose new ways of interacting with our world and shaping the world rather than framing the worst possible outcomes."

A: "We have also agreed that it's actually really important to speak to the choir because we all need some support and sometimes, we all feel very alone from working on environmentalism."

C: "We are really going in forests. We want people to get real. We want them to get back to what it was before… we can create our own future and I think that's the main important thing, the most important"

B: The wish of inspiring people to act has also shaped that we work with an 'I can do it' aesthetic"

A: "Ourselves we have seen a lot of contemporary art talking about the environmentalism, but we don't even understand it."

C: "BARK has a poetic narrative that goes like we are finding the tree inside of our soul and we're connecting to the trees around us and nature will come back"

C: "We deliver a lot of hope. Sometimes there is a lot of frustration as well, but it always ends with a message of hope. We don't want people to get depresses about it."

C: "The acrobatics dimension kind of has this 'wow' thing on pupils and they were so happy about it. And then there was a way to start talking about it, but without reducing everything to a talk. So I think that's the method, and this is what you can find in all the projects."

First and foremost, A4C frames the problem of anthropocentrism, the belief that value is human-centered (Kopnina, 2018). This is the most prominent frame and the basis of many of their performances and projects (personal communication, May 11, 2022). Many of A4C's performances, specifically BARK, frame how humans interact with the world and their surrounding environments. The group sees that there is an existing frame of humans *versus* nature that is problematic and instead introduces a human *and* nature frame as a solution to this problem. This ecocentric, or nonhuman centered (Kopnina, 2018) frame is a prognostic frame used by the group as a solution to anthropocentrism.

A4C also states that they aim to create a community of support and understanding through new narratives of hope and empowerment. This suggests there is a problem of people having negative feelings, such as hopelessness or frustration, towards climate action. As a result, they see a solution by acknowledging these feelings, creating community, and inspiring feelings of hope through collective action. In framing terms, the diagnostic frame is hopelessness about the future of the environment and society as a whole, while the prognostic frame is reassurance that others feel the same and there is hope when people come together.

These interviews also suggest that the members believe that the existing ways of communicating climate science and environmental topics often relies on the use of facts, figures, and often stale language. Seeing this as the diagnostic frame indicates that a prognostic frame can be seen in using creative, poetic narratives, such as performance art, as an alternative way to communicate and target a broader audience.

The interview and observation data lacks a clear answer as to A4C's motivational framing, or call to action. Some of the actors state that the intention is to get participants to interact more with nature, appreciate nature more, and understand that humans and nature are one in the same. Interviewee C briefly mentioned what the intended action is by stating, "I would say that the emotions are frustration first. So, let's see the problem with our body, and then action. Action doesn't have to be real action that you do. It's also a state of mind. I see the frustration, my frustration, so now I would just react to it and I want to change the world, so that's hope." This indicates that although A4C wants to encourage future assimilation in nature, it does not have a straightforward objective or action that audience members and participants should act on beyond that. This statement suggests that A4C aims to change the mindsets of the audience and inspire future participation.

When asking audience members what they will take with them after the performance, common answers included:

"To take better care of nature"

"I have a desire to come back and look at nature differently"

"I have to get better at getting out into nature more"

"I get a good feeling in my body, a bit of pure air in the head"

"This deep desire that I have to connect more with nature and to live a more natural life"

These answers fall in line with A4C's motivational goal to inspire engagement with and appreciation of nature. On multiple occasions, the members of A4C state that the goal of the organization is "to inspire people to act for a more sustainable future". However, any further action still remains unclear, ambiguous, and ultimately up to interpretation.

4.2 Framing strategies employed by A4C

The previous section highlights the framing processes used by A4C in their BARK performance. The main frame consists of that of ecocentric views and reconnecting with nature. To frame the relationship

between humans and nature in a way that facilitates a greater appreciation, understanding, and care for the surrounding environment A4C applies different strategies, which can be found in Table 4.

Table 4. Examples of framing strategies used by A4C. The main framing strategies used by A4C, examples of each, and the intended goals are presented in this table (Own creation, 2022).

Framing Strategies	Examples	Goal
Music	- Acoustic banjo, choral work, bird sounds	- Accentuate natural surroundings - Minimal noise disturbance
Physical Expression	- Rooting (using bodies to resemble tree roots)	- Grounding ourselves - Protecting and embracing nature
Costumes	- All performers wear the color red	- Dramatize the performance - Make the performers stand out - Red that the performers are still human and seen as separate from nature
Vertical Acrobatics	- Actors suspended from trees by ropes and harnesses - Tree climbing	- Breaking norms - Dramatization - Showcase the beauty and strength of trees/nature - One with trees - Create emotions of joy, amazement, curiosity
Alternative Stage	- Performances are played in different forests, therefore being site-specific	- Going to spaces people actually are - Embracing and amplifying nature - One with nature - Pushes boundaries - Create a new social construction compared to Blackbox theatres that have an existing identity - Forest/nature is an open backdrop
Ground Acrobatics	- Circus acts and performances - Actors performing acrobatics in groups of two or three performers	- Incorporate playfulness and laughter - Feelings of joy, amazement, awe, happiness - One with trees
Audience Involvement	- Audience is encouraged to pick up leaves and listen to the sounds they make - Audience encouraged to touch trees and plants - Audience is guided through the forest along an existing trail - Audience encouraged to inhale air from forest and exhale towards the sea, explaining that trees need Carbon Dioxide and produce Oxygen	- Embracing and appreciating nature - Brings audience into the performance, breaking barrier between performers and audience, creating sense of community
Language/Speech	- "I am nature"	- Gives nature a voice

(Keywords)	- "I am life" - "It's a relationship" - "A part of the system" - "How long will I stay here" - "I take care of those who need" - "I am resilient" - "We are the same" - "Some species take more than I give" - "We are connected" - "The last word will be mine"	- Breaking the boundary between humans and nature - Highlighting the connection of humans and nature, promoting ecocentrism - Emphasizing strength and power of nature

One of the most obvious strategies can be noted in A4C's costume choice. When asked about the color, the actors explained that they began by wearing green when BARK premiered in 2021, but decided they blended in too much with the nature around them and decided to make a change. They took inspiration from the XR Red Brigade to use red and found the color added drama and extenuated the fact they, as humans, were different from nature. Highlighting this diagnostic frame, humans are seen as separate from humans gave the performance more leverage in breaking this boundary throughout the performance. They were able to show that even when looking very different, there is a strong relationship between both humans and nature (personal communication, May 12, 2022).

Other framing strategies can be observed in the groups use of physical expression and acrobatics. The way they manipulate their bodies to mimic the movement of trees and forest creatures is another way of visualizing the connectedness of humans and nature. This can specifically be seen in A4C's act of *rooting*. In rooting, the artists place themselves on the ground and use this bodies to resemble tree roots. This idea comes from Karen O'Brien's themes of rooting oneself to nature. Having academic literature and discussions with climate scientist to craft the framing techniques the group uses only strengthens the visual messaging of the performance (personal communication, May 8,9 & 12, 2022).

Although there are several other framing strategies used by the group, another powerful tool is audience involvement. Instead of the audience only observing the performance, A4C incorporated the audience members in the BARK performance. This creates a community feeling by bringing the participants into the show. Audience involvement included participant exercises of picking up leaves, listening to noises in nature, inhaling and exhaling forest/sea air, and laying on the ground to observe the vertical acrobatic performances. Not only does this bring the audience into the movement, it also encourages interacting

with nature in the forest. This exemplifies a hands-on way of encouraging the audience to be one with nature (personal communication, May 8 & 9, 2022).

4.3 Performance of Opposition

As Eyerman (2006a) states, social movements articulate frames while performance actualizes them. Therefore, this section explores how and if performance contribute to the intended movement of A4C, thus answering RQ2. First, this section investigates the A4C performance, BARK, as a form of demonstration. Second, it uses performance theory's application of mise-en-scène to investigate whether the performance contains a setting, stage, script, performers, and audience similar to a typical theatre or artistic performance. Lastly, performance theory emphasizes the importance of actor and audience responses in determining if a performance is successful or not. Therefore, actor and audience emotions will be analyzed.

4.3.1 Demonstration
In Ron Eyerman's (2006a) performance theory, a demonstration is determined by three main factors. 1) Gathering in a public space, 2) displaying support for a position through voice, point, or symbolic objects, and 3) collective determination by acting in one space or moving through a series of spaces.

Public space

When asked about the location of their performances, A4C interviewee B stated, "part of it is that we really try to work site-specifically outdoors. When talking about social movements, there's also something about going to the spaces where people actually are instead of inviting them to spaces that they don't have connection to necessarily." Following this, B added that their performances "play in public parks or on a sail ship in the harbor, we also try to meet people where they are in this way". The performance was conducted at Tankenfuldskoven in Svedberg, Denmark – a public forest, nature park, and recreational area. The location is mainly filled with trees of varying age, distribution, and height, tracing the adjacent coastline and having access to water. The location is easy to find and accessible by most members of the public. Tickets to the performance are free and available online. An online ticketing system is utilized to gauge the number of audience members who plan on attending. However, people are still welcome to participate if they do not buy an online ticket (personal communication, May 7, 2022). According to B, "almost all of our projects are for free, so they should be accessible regardless of income".

This information indicates that A4C tries, and most often succeeds, in performing in public spaces that are available to all people, regardless of age, socio-economic background, and ability. Although A4C BARK is performed in a forest, the parts of the forest chosen are easy to walk to and access by the able-bodied individual, but difficult to navigate in a wheelchair. It should be noted that the audience members throughout the week consisted of young children, older guests of retirement age, and many ages in between (personal communication, May 7-8 & 12-13, 2022). Beyond accessibility, A4C chose to perform in a forest that was well-known by local residents and had symbolic significance as a natural space regarded as special either intrinsically or recreationally by local residents. One of the audience members told me a story about first visiting this forest a small child and continuing to visit it as an adult (personal communication, May 9, 2022). This can be seen as an example of the symbolic significance of this particular forest.

Support through voice, point, or symbolic objects

As illustrated in Table 4 in the previous section, certain framing strategies can be interpreted as support via voice, point, and symbolic objects. A4C uses physical expression, acrobatics, music, and similar devices as tools to show support of the environmental movement and the idea that humans and nature are one and the same. In the case of performance theory and finding an example of support through voice, point, or symbolic object, the use of voice and speech by A4C is the strongest and most clear example of displaying agency. Phrases like, "I am nature", "It's a relationship", "How long can I stay here", "I am resilient", and other phrases displayed in Table X clearly communicate A4C's position in the environmental movement as one of ecocentrism (humans and nature coexisting), fearfulness, uncertainty of the future, acknowledgement of environmental resilience, in addition to feelings of hope that sustainable action will be taken in a timely manner. Several audience members expressed the voice a powerful tool, with one saying that "hearing them sing 'how long will I stay here' really stuck with me" (personal communication, May 9, 2022). As a result, it is very clear that A4C uses several tools, specifically voice, to show support and communicate frames. Once again, this indicated that A4C methods align with that of a demonstration.

Use of space

According to Eyerman's (2006a) performance theory, using space by staying in one distinct area or moving through a series of locations is the final factor that determines a demonstration. For BARK, the performance begins at an opening in the forest where the audience is lead through the forest to different

stages and scenes (personal communication, May 8-9 &12-13, 2022). Typical scene descriptions can be viewed in the table in Appendix 3.

This illustrates that the A4C BARK performance follows a plan that brings the audience to different stages and scenes. Each scene has a unique performance, background, and intention, that both highlights different parts of the forest and brings the audience along on a journey. Not only does this allow for a more interesting and demonstration-style of performance, but it also involves the audience in the performance, creating a sense of inclusion and community during the show. Additionally, there is significance with starting and ending the performance in the same location – adding a symbolic element to the beginning and ending. This creates a loop, signifying that everything is connected through ritual and intentional walking patterns.

4.3.2   Mise-en-scène

Mise en scène, typically used in theatre and film, adds an element to performance that indicates intention, planning, rehearsal, and ritual (Eyerman, 2006a). Successful theatre performances often use this process, and the same can be said for successful demonstrations. The A4C BARK performances used all of the elements of mise-en-scène (setting, stage, script, performers, and audience), exemplifying that it applies performance theory tactics.

Although the actual location changes during the tour, BARK always uses a forest as the setting of the performance. During the 2022 BARK tour, the group performed in Olot (Catalonia), Munich, Germany, and Svedberg, Denmark, collaborating with local contacts to determine which forests held local importance, were accessible, and provided enough space for the performance to properly function (personal communication, May 8-9 &12-13, 2022).

A4C uses trees and nature to set the stage of their performances. In the BARK performance this is very obvious, as the artists climb trees, play in leaves, and conduct vertical acrobatics while being suspended from trees (personal communication, May 8-9 &12-13, 2022). When they have used proper stages in the past, the artists have brought elements of nature inside to emphasize the importance of the environment in their performances. Interviewee C states, we "build some kind of trees… took a real tree, pieces, to build a tree on stage because [they] needed and wanted nature to be there, but real nature - not like props".

For a script, A4C applies a shared Google drive where they write the text and translate it into different languages concurrently, depending on the performance location. They also have a document loosely planning the different scenes they will perform. Both the scene script and text script are used as guides, since each performance is site specific and can differ depending on audience reaction, engagement, and overall surrounding due to the natural setting. For instance, bad weather can result in a shortened program, thus affecting the parts of the script the actors use (personal communication, May 8-9, 2022). Copies of the scene and text scripts are found in the attached ZIP file.

A4C performances rely on performers. For the BARK performance, five actors hold different roles and have different skill sets that are applied to amplify the messaging of the performance. In this performance, four of the actors are acrobats, two of whom focus on vertical acrobatics. The primary role of the fifth actor is to guide and converse with the audience, both as a musician and writer (personal communication, May 8-9).

A4C relies on the audience as the group for them to communicate their goals, frames, and messages to. According to interviewee C, the size of the audience does not matter as long as the performance reaches an audience For the Into the Water sailboat performance, "sometimes they had 200 people because it was Helsinki at sunset and sometimes they performed for 10 people because they just decided to stop at a small island in Sweden… so it can change… it's not like we need a huge audience to make it happen… it doesn't matter if it matters for many people or just for one person"(Interviewee C).

4.3.3   Reception

A successful performance, according to Eyerman (2006b) is dependent on both audience and actor responses. This is particularly clear when observing the BARK performances. When the audience seemed particularly moved, stayed after the show to talk, or climbed trees after the performance, the actors left in high spirits, energized, and excited to perform again (personal communication, May 8-9 & 12-13, 2022). In contrast, when audience members did not react in the intended manner, actors left with questions – *What went wrong? What can we do better? How can be better engage the audience?* Although dissuaded, they remained nevertheless determined to continue and improve the performances for future audiences.

Receiving feedback, specifically constructive criticism, can be useful in improving future movement and performances. As indicated in Table 5 none of the audience reactions received were negative. From observing and interviewing audience members after each show, responses were categorized as positive and indifferent, or as participants who seemed moved and those who seemed unchanged.

Table 5. Audience responses to the BARK performance. After the A4C BARK performances I attended in Svendborg, Denmark, 2-5 audience members were asked questions regarding their perception of the show. This table shows an example of audience responses, categorized as either positive or indifferent reactions (Own creation, 2022).

Audience Responses	
Positive	Indifferent
"Certain parts of the forest were highlighted that I have never seen before or thought to look at"	*"I really enjoyed the tree acrobatics"*
"I looked at familiar things in the forest in a new way"	*"I really enjoyed laying down and looking at the tree acrobatics"*
"I appreciate the forest more than I did before coming today"	*"Looked very beautiful"*
	"The songs and music were nice"
"I noticed new things by looking at the trees in new ways and different angles, like laying on the ground and looking up"	*"It was a new experience for me and was very interesting"*
"I found myself looking at the trees and my surrounding instead of at the ground when I walk"	*"It was beautiful that they were completely red against the green background"*
"It was a lovely way to be led through the forest, a way I have not tried before"	*"I didn't have any new feelings, but it made me remember childhood experiences like playing and getting lost and seeing things for the first time"*
"I feel more in touch with surroundings and more grounded"	
"Being brought in the forest and taken on a little journey was very grounding"	*"I didn't have any new feelings, but it made me remember childhood experiences like playing and getting lost and seeing things for the first time"*
"Making you feel one with the forest which is something I forget"	
"They act in a way that makes us want to notice nature"	
"We are a part of nature"	
"It gives a sense of togetherness, with each other and everything around"	
"We are a small part of nature"	

5 Discussion

5.1 A4C as a SMO

In answering RQ1, A4C can be understood as an emerging SMO. In terms of political opportunity, the group finds there is a lack of political climate action, specifically in ways that utilize art and performance. When interviewing A4C actors and members, the political opportunity is not explicitly stated. They refer to a lack of environmental and sustainable focused work within the circus community in Scandinavia, therefore implying that the overarching opportunity is a lack of artistic activism within their community and a desire to join the environmental movement in general.

A4C has clear mobilizing structures. They have created and participate in workshops that create an informal network of friendship and knowledge sharing that enables the group to expand and grow. Additionally, they receive support from NGOs, funding grants, and volunteers that provide on-the-ground help that enable the group to grow and survive. Furthermore, A4C receives grassroot support from farms, community organizations, and local producing companies that help the group conduct their performances and programs and sustain their lifestyle of touring by providing local food and housing while on a limited budget.

For the most part, A4C also has clear framing processes. The main frame they utilize emphasizes the co-dependent relationship between humans and nature that is often overlooked or forgotten. Although the group's aim is to inspire action for a more sustainable future, the intended frame(s) of action beyond encouraging participants to engage with and care for nature is unclear.

Although I would classify A4C as a SMO, the organization can be strengthened by incorporating further actionable frames beyond encouraging stronger human/nature connections. For example, they might suggest other ways of acting more sustainably and provide resources of how to become more politically involved beyond attending A4C performances. This might entail establishing partnerships with other SMOs or expanding their framing aspirations. Part of a successful social movement is creating relationships between SMOs to strengthen their individual and group goals, so this could amplify the message and broaden the reach of A4C.

5.2 Framing Strategies & Performance of Opposition

In answering RQ2, A4C has clear framing strategies that are unique and amplified through performance. Chapter 4.2 clearly states the framing strategies utilized by A4C, which answers RQ2. However, most of the framing strategies are unique to performance, providing room to interpret the unique qualities of performance art within social movements.

A4C checks all of the boxes of Ron Eyerman's definition of demonstration. The group places importance on performing in a public space, uses voice to support a movement, and moves along spaces that hold symbolic value. Therefore, A4C's BARK performance can be classified as a demonstration, once again justifying the group as an emerging SMO. Second, A4C also uses all aspects of mise-en-scéne in their performances. The performers apply an artist-first philosophy which includes following certain steps when creating a show. Third, the success of A4C is determined on the reactions of the audience, just as Eyerman states in his performance theory writings. A positive reaction from the audience results in a successful performance for both the actors and the audience. In contrast, a negative or indifferent reaction leaves the audience and the actors with an unsuccessful demonstration or performance.

A4C supports Eyerman's theory of performance of opposition. The nature of performance art allows for a successful demonstration because of the shared qualities they hold. By A4C performing in forests that hold symbolic significance to the local communities, this can draw on positive emotions the audience may already share with the space. As a result, the nature of performance aids a successful social movement in terms of demonstration and protest. The unique qualities of performance lie in the fact that performances and protest are rooted in the same framework, therefore making performance art a powerful tool for mobilizing people to act and move.

Although the performances of A4C currently strengthen the frame of connecting humans with each other and nature, how performance aligns with other, more actionable frames remains unclear. The framing and performance strategies currently implemented by A4C are rooted in feelings of hope, highlighting the beauty, strength, and resilience of nature. The group avoids feelings of frustration, dread, or despair as they don't align with their current frames. However, if the group wants to expand its frames and promote more actionable, potentially political, frames these emotions are critical. When discussing the power of performance with the actors, one of them mentioned that historically performances are not questions, meaning that they are often seen as sacred, ritual, and holy to a certain extent (personal communication,

May 12, 2022). If this is the case, A4C could substantially benefit from taking a more extreme or decisive stance in their performances. For example, clearly stating either frustration towards a political party, movement, or figure that does not consider climate change in decision making. On the other hand, they could praise or promote a particular party or movement they ideologically align with.

Overall, the fact that A4C does not explicitly state they are a SMO could be the biggest weakness of the group. The organization presents itself as a performance art company first, with goals of inspiring actions for a sustainable future. Thus, for performance art to be fully utilized in inspiring decisive, political action both performance and social movement strategies need to be implemented equally. It is all dependent on the motivations of the group. Although A4C can be seen as an emerging SMO, the future success and growth of the group may be inhibited if performance and aesthetic value continue to be the prioritized by the group.

6 Conclusion

The main aim of this thesis was to understand how art and social movements work together to achieve maximum impact. In the context of this thesis, performance art has been a successful tool in helping A4C communicate it's framing processes, but the organization still has room to grow to reach its maximum potential. Like stated before, the group could strengthen by incorporating stronger framing processes, however this does not mean that the strategies (i.e. performance) used to communicate them will succeed. Similarly, it is hard to say if performance art in a different case would be able to successfully communicate the message. At the end of the day both art and sustainability are complex processes that leave room for different approaches, interpretations, and responses.

However, I think it is important to continue researching the theoretical perspective of art in social movements and sustainability, in general. This thesis only includes a very small and specific case study making it difficult for other organizations to utilize this information in a useful manner. Instead, I encourage further research in the field, both small and large. Hopefully, as more data is collected in terms of art and sustainability, it will make it easier for art-based movements to emerge and grow in a more stream-lined manner.

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8 Appendices

Appendix 1 - Interview Guide – Acting for Climate

Step 1: Introduction to research
Step 2: Acting for Climate Interview Questions
1. When did you start Acting for Climate? Or when did you start working for Acting for Climate?
2. What was your motivation to start/join this group?
3. What was your role in the formation of the group? What is your role today?
4. What other actors were involved in the inception of Acting for Climate? And how did they become involved?
    a. Is this the same group that is involved today? Or has it changed? If so, how?
    b. Karen O'Brien and other actors who are experts in other fields
5. What is the overall goal or aim of Acting for Climate?
    a. What is your strategy and/or approach in achieving this?
6. Do you have a target audience? If so, what is it?
7. Can you tell me a little bit about your current and upcoming performances? (currently BARK and Ripples happening over the summer)
    a. Although Acting for Climate has an overall aim to "inspire people to act for a more sustainable future", would you say the goals/aims of each performance are the same? If not, what are the different goals and strategies used in these projects? Different target audience, etc?
8. What is the process of creating a new performance and also planning a recurring performance? For example, the time frame, who is involved, research?
9. Your website states that your goal is to "inspire people to act for a more sustainable future" – what is your strategy and/or approach to inspiring action?
10. I know that BARK is a free event. Do all of your performances have free admission? Where and how do you find funding or volunteers to help with your performances?
11. What kind of tools to you use to reach new members/fans? For example, social media.
    a. What has proven to be the best method of getting more people to join the movement or come to performances?
12. In the past, how has the audience reacted to performances? Emotions, feedback, etc.?
    a. Does audience feedback play a role in shaping future performances?
13. Is there a way for people to become involved in Acting for Climate beyond coming to performances? For example, volunteer opportunities?
14. What does the future for Acting for Climate hold?
    a. New projects?
    b. Overall future goals for the group
15. Is there anything else you would like to share about Acting for Climate or any questions you have for me?
Step 3: Thank you and interviewee questions

Appendix 2 – Sample of Svendborg field notes

May 6, 2022:
(19:00-21:00)
- Arrival by train (Lund to Svendborg); all transportation is sustainable. The artists, volunteers travel by train, bike, or foot.
- I was greeted at the train station by a member of A4C, where she had a bike for me. From there we biked around the city center of Svendborg, where she was hanging up posters for the upcoming show.
- From there, we biked to the colony garden/house where the two of stayed. The other members were staying in other accommodation. Two at an Airbnb (referred to as HQ by the group) and the other two at a local farm with available rooms.
- For dinner we ate food from a local vegan restaurant. It should be noted all food consumed by the performers during the tour is vegan.
-

May 7, 2022:
- 7/05 (Saturday) two shows – 12:00 (47 audience members) & 17:00 (37 audience
(11:00-13:00)
- The artists arrive to the forest where they are performing 30-60 minutes before show
- As the artists are getting ready in the forest, audience members start to gather at the forest opening.
- When the show begins, the audience members are given a briefing about the show – what to expect and to introduce acting for climate and the organizing partner (DYMANO, a contemporary circus company based in Aarhus)
- Performance:
    - As it starts, the audience members are guided down a path towards a tree where the first actor is sitting in a tree playing a banjo and singing a song. Once all of the audience members gather around, this actor (who ends up leading the audience throughout the forest to the different "stages") starts talking to the audience – reminding them to stay as quite as possible and to respect the forest and nature around them.
    - From there, the audience is guided to the first stage. A big tree with large branches. From the tree the remaining 4 artists are humming/singing in the tree, all wearing red. They climb the tree, do acrobatics and swinging, and really emphasizing their breath – taking in the oxygen from the trees. The crowd seems to be in amazement and have a joyful response.
    - Next, the audience is lead to a grove of small trees and shrubs, where the artists being touching the trees and picking up leaves. The artists encourage the audience members to follow along and appreciate the nature around them. At one point the actor leading the group begins to speak and instructs the audience to pick up the leaves off the ground, put them next to their ears, and squeeze them in their hands – listening to the noise of the leaves and bringing the audience closer to the nature around them. The audience seems to be in thought and appreciates listening to the noise of the forest.
    - The audience is brought to a new stage along the path where there is an opening in the trees with some trees on the outskirts and some fallen trees in the area. The actors begin doing acrobatics and singing a joyful, funny song. The audience seems to be in a happy mood, joyful, and laughs at some of the tricks done by the artists. This stage seems to be about some comedic relief.

- Next the audience is guided down a path that opens up towards the sea. They are now standing on a beach - a stage with the forest on one side and the sea on the other. Here, the leads an activity where the action of breathing in the air from the sea and exhaling it towards the forest is done in a dramatized way. Now the artist is talking about how the trees bring in CO_2 that is released by us human but also creates oxygen for us to breathe. It seems like the audience enjoys this exercise and is understanding the great importance of the forest.
- Next, a bit further down the beach two of the other actors emerge – one hanging and climbing in a tree and one walking around carrying branches on her back. The two of them get in each other's way but then make room for each other. This scene is trying to reenact the relationship between different organisms and creatures in the forest. As the audience is led to the next stage, they pass under one of the actors hanging in the tree whispering "it's a relationship" as people pass below her. This scene and exit from the scene seems to enact feeling of humor and joy and awe in for the creatures of the forest.
- Walking to the next stage the artist leader points out certain trees and plans and explains their significance. One tree in particular is pointed out as being the biggest and oldest tree in the forest – here she hugs the tree and encourage the audience to do so as well. The next scene is along the path where there is a big tree with two harnesses and ropes rigged high up in it. As the audience approached there are two actors propelled from the tree who are hanging onto the tree upside down – in a dormant/seeping state. Once the audience congregates, they begin doing acrobatics from ropes in a beautiful manner – really playing with the freedom the tree gives them. The remaining artist create music and sound to mimic noises you might hear from animals in the forest.
- From here the audience is guided to another stage, but along the way the leader encourages the audience to look feel and embrace with the nature around them. Once again one of the actors appears as the audience is walking carrying a log on her back. She walks with heavy feet and in a low voice says, "I am forest".
- Along the path the audience is stopped all standing in a line in front of a grove of trees. There does not seem to be anything happening but all of a sudden one of the actors appears walking/running into the tree grove from a far. She is carrying something on her back. She starts to shake the trees and kick the trees – seemingly angry at them. She then climbs one tree, pulls out a say from the carrier on her back and attempts to cut the tree down. The audience seems to react in a bad way making noises and exclaiming things to discourage the actor from cutting down the tree. After this she drops the saw and instead pulls out a violin bow from her bag. She instead begins playing the tree like an instrument letting out a nice note. The audience seems to be relieved but also in awe that the tree and bow are capable of making such a beautiful sound. Emotions start with confusion and frustration and end in joy, amazement and laughter.
- Next as the audience continues to walk, the leader starts to talk about "our place in the forest" and starts to scream out "hello" "is anyone there" asking the forest "what is my place here" "what is my role" All of a sudden one of the actors appears from a pile leaves – acting as an animal or species of the forest. In the conversation between the leader and the actor in the leaves, the leader asks what their role in the forest is and the actor in the leaves responds with "I don't know" the exchange leave with them saying bye to each other and going their own way. The audience fins this funny and laughs at the exchange. Presumably because of the actor hiding in the leaves.

- Next, the audience is guided to a fork in the trail, where there are two very tall trees. One again there are ropes rigged very high up in each tree and one actor attached in each tree. They begin going acrobatic dancing while the leader of the audience and the other actors encourage the audience to lay on their back and look up at the performance high up in the trees. This performance is quite – all you can hear are the trees and the movement of leaves, mind and the performers. The performers begin to repel themselves down and begin saying and chanting in different languages. The chant that is repeated the most is "how long can I stay here?" insinuating that the time for humans in nature and the forest is limited. All of the artists take part in this making their way to different sections of audience members laying on the ground. The artists then begin rooting themselves to trees which is an artistic dramatization of putting themselves in a root like manner – "rooting" themselves like trees. Then, they root themselves to the group leader who is playing the banjo – creating an image that they are one with the forest and one with trees.
  - Now the audience is guided along a path where the actors are doing acrobatics and then in a pile of leaves rolling around and using the leaves a visual component to their performance.
  - Finally, the actors bring the audience member back to the first three the performed in – but from a different direction. Where they approach the tree and "root" themselves to it. The performance is now over, and the audience begins applauding. The performance comes full circle beginning and ending in the same place.
  - Now that the performance is over, many of the audience members stick around to talk to the performers and play in the trees with them. Has a community feeling to it.
- I spoke to 3 audience members after the show and asked the question – What was your favorite part of the performance? Or something that stood out?
  - "I really liked the tree acrobatics"
  - "I enjoyed laying down, and looking at the tree acrobatics"
  - "The songs and music were very nice"
- Responses were not exactly what I wanted or intended so I will have to work on phrasing better questions that better engage the audience…

Appendix 3 – Table describing the different scenes in the BARK performance

Scene	Description
1	In a large tree, with striking and powerful branches and root systems, the actors climb the tree. They incorporate pair trapeze and create a soundscape through singing that mimics the natural sounds of the forest. As the comes one of the actors, who acts as a guide, leads the audience to the next scene.
2	In an opening in the trees, fallen leaves lie on the ground. The guide encourages audience member to interact with their surroundings by touching shrubs and small trees. The guide also encourages the audience member to pick up dried leaves off the ground, bring them to their ears, and listen to the noise of the leaves as they are clenched in the participants hands. The other actors follow suit, showing the audience member what to do.
3	This next scene is a trio acrobatic performance, with three actors showcasing acrobatic movements, while the two remaining actors make music using a banjo, bird whistle, and vocals. This is a playful and comedic scene.
4	Now the guide leads the audience to a location with the forest on one side and the sea on the other. The guide encourages audience members to breathe in the forest air and exhale it towards to the sea, representing the process of photosynthesis and highlighting how the connections between nature and humans – trees need carbon dioxide and produce oxygen, necessary for human survival. As the audience leaves this scene, two actors perform as animals or species coexisting in the forest, whispering "It's a relationship" as the participants walk by.
5	Now the audience is brought to a pair high vertical acrobatics scene with two actors suspended from a tree using ropes and harnesses. The actors are meant to be seen as organisms living in the tree, starting in a sleeping state, waking up and performing dance and acrobatics suspended from the trees, and then return to their sleep state.
6	The audience members are now led along a trail with a grove of small trees on their right-hand side. As they are walking in a single-file line, an actor emerges from the trees, running in an angry, frustrated manner. The audience stops to watch the performance, as the actor seems angry with the trees hitting and kicking them. The actor continues to climb a tree and takes a saw out of a bag on her back. As the audience responds in a confused and upset manner, the artist proceeds to drop the saw, instead removing a violin bow from her bag, and plays the branches on the tree like a musical instrument.
7	The next scene is once again a pair vertical acrobatics scene. This the performers are suspended from separate trees next to each other. These trees are very tall and the actors dance in the trees among the branches. To get a better look the audience members are encouraged to lay on the ground, among the dirt, leaves, and insects, to get a better look and to immerse themselves with nature. As the artist repel down from the trees, the other actors join them on the ground, walking around the laying audience members saying and chanting phrases such as, "I am nature" and "I am resilient" and "the last word will be mine", to name a few.
8	As the audience members rise from the ground, they are led to the final scene. Along the way, the actors carry out acrobatic tricks and perform a dance among dried leaves on the ground, rolling around and using them as a prop. Finally, the audience is led back to the first tree the actors climbed. As a final act, the actors root themselves to this tree, positioning their bodies in a way that resembles a root system.

(Own creation, 2022)