



PICTURE THIS —
A PORTRAIT OF 25 YEARS OF
BP SPONSORSHIP

“Twenty-five years ago people could be excused for not knowing much, or doing much, about climate change. Today we have no excuse. No more can it be dismissed as science fiction; we are already feeling the effects... It is clear that those countries and companies primarily responsible for emitting carbon and accelerating climate change are not simply going to give up; they stand to make too much money. They need a whole lot of gentle persuasion from the likes of us... We can encourage more of our universities and municipalities and cultural institutions to cut their ties to the fossil-fuel industry.”

Archbishop Desmond Tutu¹

“What is to be done? I am inclined to argue that the Award now has the opportunity to escape from the dead patronage of BP. Apart from all other matters in the Gulf of Mexico, the ghastly deaths of pelicans, turtles and other marine creatures, there are enough to convince me that BP is in such deep disgrace that its very initials sully everything associated with the firm. It would be wise to withdraw from its sponsorship of the arts.”

Art critic Brian Sewell, commenting on the BP Portrait Award in 2010²

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Further Reading – Free downloads from the Platform website:

"Not If But When – Culture beyond Oil"
"Take the Money and Run – Some Positions on Ethics, Business Sponsorship and Making Art"

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Cover image: Dead pelican on Elmer's Island, Louisiana. Photo by Cherri Foytlin

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INTRODUCTION

How bad does a company have to be before an arts organisation refuses to be associated with it or take its money? How much outcry does a sponsor's primary business have to provoke before a line is drawn? What kind of critique should send alarm signals up and down the corridors of the corporate sponsorship department of any BP-sponsored arts organisation?

It seems that some arts organisations can bear a great deal. Controversial oil company BP has sponsored the National Portrait Gallery's (NPG) prestigious Portrait Award since 1989. 2014 marks the 25th anniversary of this relationship which BP and the NPG appear proud to celebrate.³ By bearing BP's logo the NPG provide the company with a stamp of approval. But over the past 25 years, BP's reputation has undergone a radical shift: from a national treasure in the post-war years, to thrusting global player under CEO John Browne, to stained operator whose cost-cutting on safety allowed the disaster of the Deepwater Horizon blowout. But this is only the surface story. BP's terrible record goes back and back.

It's not just about the spills and the impacts on fenceline communities. As we see from the opening quote from Archbishop Desmond Tutu, fossil fuel companies and the enormous political and economic power they wield are increasingly recognized as possibly the biggest obstacle in our transition to a low carbon society. In 2013, peer-reviewed research revealed that BP was the company that was third most responsible for the entirety of greenhouse gas emissions generated since the dawn of the industrial revolution. The research showed that BP had been responsible for 38.84 giga-tonnes of

CO₂e – which is 2.47% of all anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions since 1750.⁴

This record provides the National Portrait Gallery with serious grounds for extracting itself from this increasingly difficult relationship.

In this publication, Platform has brought together three compelling stories that, combined, build an argument that makes the withdrawal from BP-funding an act of irrefutable ethical and common sense. They speak of the Past, the Present and the Future.

The Past.

The first section is an outline of 25 of BP's major environmental catastrophes, human rights violations, and backroom deals, one for each year since BP's first NPG sponsorship in 1989, to now. This catalogue of spills, explosions, deaths, leaks, extinctions, dodgy deals and climate impacts is only a selection from our research.

The Present.

This describes the impacts of just one of BP's appalling incidents, the year of the Deepwater Horizon catastrophe in 2010, and lays out exactly how the legacies are still being born today, day in, day out. The testimony and evidence gathered by Cherri Foytlin and Karen Savage,

contributors to Bridge the Gulf⁵ is a shocking and ongoing indictment of the company's activities.

The Future.

This final section is an acute piece of analysis on the role of art in society in relation to ethics and sponsorship. It is a thoughtful and powerful call for ethics by artist Raoul Martinez, himself three-times shortlisted for the Portrait Award, and a known critic of BP's involvement with the award. As artists, audiences, policy-makers, critics, where do we want the arts to go in relation to ethics and sponsorship for the sake of future generations?

Returning to the question of how bad a company has to be... what more does BP have to do to become unacceptable? Let's say that this is a hot topic at board level – the current level of debate around BP sponsorship suggests it's likely to be so. Let's then imagine that there are those at senior management level within the NPG who would like to make a change - what's stopping the gallery from moving away from endorsing BP? One challenge is that the NPG's deal is only part of a five-year BP sponsorship with three other major cultural institutions – Royal Opera House, Tate, and British Museum. That's a tight quartet with the NPG being the smallest institution. However, this deal comes up for renewal in 2016 providing perhaps an opportunity to get out. Another factor is the close friendships that exist between the Directors of the four organisations and former BP CEO Lord John Browne, patron of the arts, Chair of Tate's Trustees, and CEO of Cuadrilla Resources – a major fracking company.⁶ Perhaps awkward,

diplomatic implications are the reason. Or is it the money that keeps these major cultural institutions tied to the oil industry? While the institutions remain tight lipped about how much money they're getting, our research based on the available information suggests that the sums of money involved are nowhere near as significant as you might have thought.⁷

Within the NPG's own history there is a precedent for cleaning up sponsorship ethics. In 1988, the NPG ended its Portrait Award relationship with tobacco company John Player that had started in 1980. Chin-Tao Wu tells the story of NPG's changing attitudes to this deal, and suggests that its ending signified that 'the heyday of tobacco arts advertising was now over, and a recognition that the long and hard campaign against tobacco advertising had finally taken its toll.'⁸

This was bold – it was eleven years before the Labour Party drafted a proposal to ban tobacco advertising and sponsorship. Could it be that the National Portrait Gallery will once again set the agenda for the arts and make the move away from Big Oil? Platform has been working with arts institutions to help them develop ethical funding policies that are in line with their organisational values,⁹ but we've yet to see an outfit the size of the NPG take a bold and ethical stance on oil money. This publication seeks to provide the NPG and all arts organisations, artists and audiences involved with BP and the fossil fuel industry with well-founded evidence to help plan for and support that move.

A PORTRAIT OF 25 YEARS OF BP

(The figure in brackets after the year refers to the annual average level of atmospheric carbon expressed as Parts Per Million.¹⁰)

1989 (353.07 ppm)

On March 24, the oil tanker Exxon Valdez struck a reef off the coast of Alaska and spilled 260,000 to 750,000 barrels of crude oil over the next few days. The oil went on to cover 1,300 miles of coastline, and 11,000 square miles of ocean. While the oil company Exxon received much of the public blame, investigative journalist Greg Palast wrote that, "As the principal owner of the Alaska Pipeline and Terminal, BP, not Exxon, was designated by law to prevent oil spilled by the Exxon Valdez from hitting the beach. It was BP's disastrous failures, more than Exxon's, that allowed the oil to devastate Alaska's coast."¹¹

1990 (354.35 ppm)

BP was forced to settle in court for waste-dumping into US rivers, paying \$2.3 million for discharging waste from its Marcus Hook refinery into the Delaware River. Authorities said BP was discharging excess oil and grease, ammonia, solids, sulfides and various chemicals that reduced the amount of oxygen in the water, changed its acidity and sickened and killed fish. The Environmental Protection Agency said that in the US from 1979 to 1990 BP had violated its wastewater discharge permit 6,500 times.¹²

1991 (355.57 ppm)

An explosion at the company's Ferndale refinery in the US in January killed one person and injured six others. BP was charged with 20 violations of the Washington Industrial Safety and Health Act following a six-month investigation and fined \$135,710.¹³

1992 (356.38 ppm)

In September Margaret Thatcher travelled to Baku to give the Azerbaijan government two cheques on behalf of BP worth \$30 million as down payments on Azeri oil and gas fields. Less than one year later Heydar Aliyev took power, after an armed insurrection ousted the country's elected president, Abulfaz Elchibey.¹⁴ BP has continued to do business with the Aliyev regime to the present day, with oil revenues being used to maintain a repressive power base that stifles democratic dissent. Human Rights Watch said that in 2013, "The Azerbaijani government's poor record on freedom of expression, assembly, and association dramatically deteriorated during the year. The authorities arrested dozens of political activists on bogus charges, imprisoned critical journalists, broke up several peaceful public demonstrations, and adopted legislation that further restricted fundamental freedoms."¹⁵

1993 (357.07 ppm)

In March two information brokers were convicted of selling confidential inside information obtained by bribing BP executives. The UK court was told during the trial that the corruption within BP's procurement department went to a very high level, with millions of pounds in bribes being used to reveal secret information about the company's planned projects in the North Sea. BP executives created intentional delays in bidding processes so that confidential information could be passed on to other companies by the information brokers.¹⁶

1994 (358.82 ppm)

Over a three year period spanning all of 1994, BP was responsible for the illegal disposal of hazardous waste on Alaska's North Slope. BP's contractor Doyon Drilling illegally discharged waste oil, paint thinner and other toxic and hazardous substances by injecting them down the outer rim of the oil wells. BP Exploration Alaska (BPXA) failed to report the illegal injections when it learned of the conduct and in 1999 agreed to resolve charges related to the illegal dumping for \$22 million.¹⁷

1995 (360.80 ppm)

BP signed a major deal with the Algerian military regime 1995, only three years after the military coup that cancelled the first multi-party legislative elections in Algeria since independence from French colonial rule.¹⁸ The contract was signed while a brutal civil war was raging, with systematic violence from both the state and Islamist fundamentalists taking more than 150,000 lives and resulting in tens of thousands of disappearances.¹⁹ The joint venture was worth \$3 billion, giving BP the right to exploit gas deposits around the oasis town of In Salah in the Sahara for the next 30 years.²⁰

1996 (362.59 ppm)

A Colombian paramilitary brigade created a regime of terror along the route of the Ocesa pipeline, in which BP was a dominant shareholder. Documents revealed that the Ocesa pipeline consortium and an Israeli private security company discussed arming the brigade with attack helicopters and guns, while it was under investigation for the execution of civilians. In 1998 the public relations adviser to BP in Colombia, told the Guardian that the sale of military equipment and the general relationship with the brigade were 'unavoidable.'²¹

1997 (363.71 ppm)

BP's 800 kilometre Ocesa pipeline in Colombia came into operation, after destroying crops, fishponds and local livelihoods. Hundreds of residents were forced into destitution and displaced to cities. Rural Colombian farmers stood up to intense repression and death threats, to eventually take BP to court. In 2006, BP accepted responsibility and agreed to a multi-million pound settlement.²²

1999 (366.65 ppm)

Whistle-blowers criticised the management of an Alaskan pipeline being operated by a company, Alyeska, of which BP owned 50%. A group of senior employees spoke to the Guardian about "impending disaster and prepared evidence of falsified inspection reports, a culture of intimidation, and "lip service" to safety... Collectively, the whistle-blowers describe a life-threatening "gamble" by Alyeska with the people of Alaska and its fragile environment. A battle between safety and the bottom line – one where executives and their contractors, concerned about budgets and bonuses, actively undermine

and intimidate technicians and inspectors given the task of upholding safety."²³

2000 (369.52 ppm)

In 2000 British Petroleum officially rebranded itself as BP, with a new helios logo suggesting green energy, and promoting the fact that it was 'Beyond Petroleum'. The cost of the Helios logo design and its rollout was rumoured to over \$100, 000, 000 leading some to state that BP had spent more on telling people about its green credentials than it actually spent on renewable energy itself.²⁴ However, in 2011 BP announced that it was selling its solar unit.²⁵

2001 (371.13 ppm)

Five people were killed and at least 40 severely injured in a series of kerosene lamp and stove explosions in February in eight villages scattered across the Madang Province of Papua New Guinea. Lanterns and stoves exploded when lit, destroying several homes and at least part of one village. The kerosene was contaminated at BP's Papua New Guinea facilities.²⁶

2002 (373.22 ppm)

Five months before the March 2003 invasion of Iraq, BP (and other oil companies) lobbied UK government officials to gain greater control over Iraq's oil reserves. According to a report by The Independent, "Baroness Symons, then the Trade Minister, told BP that the Government believed British energy firms should be given a share of Iraq's enormous oil and gas reserves as a reward for Tony Blair's military commitment to US plans for regime change... The Foreign Office invited BP in on 6 November 2002 to talk about opportunities in Iraq "post regime change". Its minutes state: "Iraq is the

big oil prospect. BP is desperate to get in there and anxious that political deals should not deny them the opportunity."²⁷

2003 (375.77 ppm)

In September BP and a group of Russian businessmen, announced the creation of a strategic partnership to jointly hold their oil assets in Russia and Ukraine and creation of TNK-BP. The TNK-BP joint venture was to be plagued by a decade of bitter internal fighting²⁸ and meant that BP's oil & gas fields in Russia became responsible for approximately a quarter of their global oil production and the company's most profitable arm, in part because of its low expenditure on health, safety and environmental protection. This vital part of BP was dramatically less transparent than the rest of the company but it was publicly criticised for its part in TNK-BP's appalling pollution of the Ob and Yenisei river basins in Siberia.²⁹

2004 (377.49 ppm)

300 NGOs and individuals wrote a letter to then-CEO of BP John Browne to express their "mounting concerns" over the company's failure to meet human rights commitments made two years ago in a multibillion pound Liquefied Natural Gas project in Papua New Guinea. The signatories, including a former BP Indonesia vice-president who oversaw much of the project's early development, claimed there was a "worrying lack of transparency" in the Tangguh development in the eastern Papua province and "a failure to acknowledge the disturbing realities of the wider west Papua context."³⁰



Top: Southend Stop The War picket a BP Petrol station in protest over BP's attempts to access Iraqi oil reserves 2008 - one of many such protests across the country. Photo by Southend Stop The War

Bottom left: Tar Sands protest outside the National Portrait Gallery in 2009. Photo by Mike Russell

Bottom right: Portraits painted by Gulf Coast residents impacted by BP's Deepwater Horizon disaster exhibited outside the BP Portrait Award in 2011. Photo by TwoTwoFresh



2005 (379.80 ppm)

In March an explosion at BP's Texas City refinery in the USA killed 15 workers and injured more than 170 others. BP admitted that "deeply disturbing" internal mistakes were responsible for the explosion. BP pleaded guilty to a felony charge for violating the federal Clean Air Act, agreed to serve a three-year probationary period and to pay a \$50 million fine.³¹

2006 (381.90 ppm)

267,000 gallons of spilled oil was discovered in March at the Prudhoe Bay field, the largest ever spill on Alaska's North Slope region. In the court case brought against BP, prosecutors said BP managers failed to heed "many red flags and warning signs" that key pipelines were being eroded. In 2011 federal officials announced that BP would pay \$25 million in civil fines to settle charges arising from two spills from its network of pipelines in Alaska in 2006 and from a willful failure to comply with a government order to properly maintain the pipelines to prevent corrosion.³²

2007 (383.76 ppm)

BP announced a move into controversial tar sands production in Canada, taking a 50% share in Husky's Sunrise oil field in Alberta.³³ Tar sands extraction has been the subject of intense criticism for their climate impact, their impact on Canada's Boreal forest, and the devastation caused to indigenous communities. Addressing the BP board at the 2011 AGM, Clayton Thomas Mueller representing the Indigenous Environment Network said:

"Fort McKay First Nation is situated in the heart of the oilsands. You can go in any direction and within twenty minutes, you

will find an oilsands plant. How does the Husky Sunrise project impact us? Well to start with, there are several parcels of land dedicated to the use of trappers from the first nation. Because the animals have disappeared, these traplines are no longer used for trapping.

These traplines have become islands of cultural identity. We use them to escape the industrial activity and as a place to teach our children traditional ways. We are a people whose very cultural identity is linked to the land. The Husky Project has interfered with traplines in the area, reducing access for the local people and taking away the peace of the bush life. High traffic volumes and industrial activity have taken away the peace and quiet and in some cases, taken the land itself.

SAGD³⁴ projects are touted as 'clean oil' but in fact the sheer volumes of water used impacts the surrounding land, drying up the muskeg and reducing animal habitat. We still get the air pollution and with it more sickness."³⁵

2008 (385.59 ppm)

BP's drilling deal with Gaddafi was finalised in May 2008, and in September the company began exploring in Libya - what it described "one of the most ambitious such projects ever embarked upon by our industry anywhere." BP used its close relationship with Tony Blair, MI6 and the Foreign Office to break into Libya's enormous oil reserves. Company executives knew they were doing business with a dictator - many protestors were killed in the February 2006 protests in Benghazi. Yet BP publicity provided a glossy image of Libya, emphasising safety, wealth and freedom. Even when the intense fighting began in spring 2011 and reports emerged of tanks crushing



Be Patient, Mixed media on schoolmap, 2010 by Collin van der Sluijs

civilians, BP remained “committed to improving the business in Libya regardless of the political situation.”³⁶

2009 (387.37 ppm)

In 2009, BP obtained a production contract during the 2009/2010 Iraqi oil services contracts tender to develop the Rumaila field. But BP was later accused of “backroom deals” that resulted in terms that were less favourable to the people of Iraq. Greg Muttitt, author of *Fuel on the Fire: Oil and Politics in Occupied Iraq*, published the original and amended contracts and said: “Iraq’s oil auctions were portrayed as a model of transparency and a negotiating

victory for the Iraqi government. Now we see the reality was the opposite: a backroom deal that gave BP a stranglehold on the Iraqi economy, and even influence over the decisions of Opec.”³⁷

2010 (389.95 ppm)

In April the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig exploded in the Gulf of Mexico, killing 11 workers on board. Oil gushed into the ocean until the 15 July when the well was capped. The US government claims that 4.9 million barrels of oil were spilled in the offshore disaster, while BP estimates a leakage of 3.26 million barrels during the three-month period it took to cap the blowout.³⁸

2011 (391.62 ppm)

Documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act showed BP officials discussing how to influence the work of scientists undertaking supposedly independent research into the impacts of the Gulf Spill. Greenpeace US research director Kert Davies said the oil company had crossed a line. "It's outrageous to see these BP executives discussing how they might manipulate the science programme. Their motivation last summer is abundantly clear. They wanted control of the science."³⁹

2012 (393.82 ppm)

Two scientists accused BP of an attack on academic freedom after they subpoenaed thousands of confidential emails relating to the Gulf of Mexico disaster. The scientists wrote: "BP claimed that it needed to better understand our findings because billions of dollars in fines are potentially at stake. So we produced more than 50,000 pages of documents, raw data, reports, and algorithms used in our research – everything BP would need to analyze and confirm our findings. But BP still demanded access to our private communications. Our concern is not simply invasion of privacy, but the erosion of the scientific deliberative process."⁴⁰

2013 (396.48 ppm)

In 2013 William Hague flew to Azerbaijan to support BP in the signing of the final investment decision for the BP operated gas field Shah Deniz 2.⁴¹ The gas extracted from Shah Deniz 2 will feed the Euro-Caspian Mega Pipeline - a piece of infrastructure that will stretch from Azerbaijan to Italy and pump over a billion tonnes of co2 into the atmosphere. For the people living along the pipeline it will

mean environmental destruction, loss of livelihoods and heavy repression along the militarized route. In addition it will further entrench the Azerbaijani dictator Ilham Aliyev.⁴² While Hague and BP CEO Bob Dudley were shaking hands with Aliyev, the Chairman of Election Monitoring and Democracy Studies Center, Anar Mammadli, was being arrested on false charges.⁴³ He was later jailed for five and a half years. Mammadli's serious criticisms of the Presidential elections were believed to be the real reason for his imprisonment.

2014 (ppm data not yet available)

In March BP's Whiting refinery in Indiana spilled between 470 and 1228 gallons of crude oil into Lake Michigan, a drinking water source for some seven million Chicago residents.⁴⁴ The refinery has also been criticised for being responsible for huge black mountains of 'high-sulfur, high-carbon risk petcoke' along the Calumet River, a by-product of tar sands production.⁴⁵

2015

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Karen Savage is a mother of four, middle school math teacher, and frequent contributor to Bridge the Gulf who works to amplify Gulf Coast voices, stories and perspectives often overlooked by mainstream media. Karen also volunteers with Turkey Creek Community Initiatives, the Gulf Coast Fund, Mother's Project Gulf Coast, Life Support Project and other grassroots initiatives.

Cherri Foytlin is a journalist, advocate and mother of six who lives in south Louisiana. She is the author of "Spill It! The Truth About the Deep Water Horizon Oil Rig Explosion," regularly contributes to Bridge the Gulf Project, and in the Spring of 2011 she walked to Washington D.C. from New Orleans (1,243 miles) to call for action to stop the disaster. She has been a constant voice speaking out for the health and ecosystem of Gulf Coast communities in countless forms of media.

BP'S ONGOING GULF COAST DISASTER

Written by Karen Savage
& Cherri Foytlin

"Before BP came to town, we were fortunate. We loved what we did and we always made our living doing what we loved to do. We never had to struggle."

That's how Edward Foster, a commercial crabber for the past forty years, describes life before BP's "well from hell" exploded four years ago, spewing more than 4.2 million barrels of crude oil into the once-abundant Gulf of Mexico.

Across the U.S. Gulf Coast, fisherfolk and many coastal residents refer to time simply as 'before BP' or 'after BP'.

Foster is a fourth generation fisherman and his son Ralph, who works with him, makes the fifth generation of the family to raise his family off the water. Edward's grandson, Ralph's son, might have been the sixth generation, if it weren't for BP.⁴⁶

Before BP, the Foster's traps would have been out in the warm Gulf waters at this time of year, in a spot they'd been going back to for decades, a spot where they regularly pulled in between 600 and 900 pounds of crabs every few days.

But last week they brought back only 35 pounds of crabs from that same spot, not even enough to even pay their expenses, much less make a profit. Now, 'after BP', the traps are piled on a boat behind the



house. The father-son team did the math and realised they can't afford to put them back out.

Over in Pointe a la Hache, Louisiana, Byron Encalade is an oysterman. He's worked on the water since he was a child and he doesn't mince words when describing his livelihood after the BP spill.

"On the east bank of Plaquemines Parish, we haven't produced one oyster since the BP spill." When BP denied the oyster reefs were ever visibly oiled, Encalade responded, "That's the biggest lie ever told".⁴⁷

Despite BP's denials, a report released in late 2013 as part of the Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) confirmed what Encalade and his fellow

oystermen already knew. The oysterbeds were directly impacted by oil from the disaster. And the effects of BP's oil aren't confined to oysters. The same report cited concerns for vegetation, birds, turtles, crabs, several fish species, whales, manatees and other sea life.⁴⁸

According to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) researchers and others, dolphins in Louisiana's heavily oiled Barataria Bay, were among the sickest ever studied. When compared to dolphins in Sarasota Bay, which was not visibly hit by BP's oil,

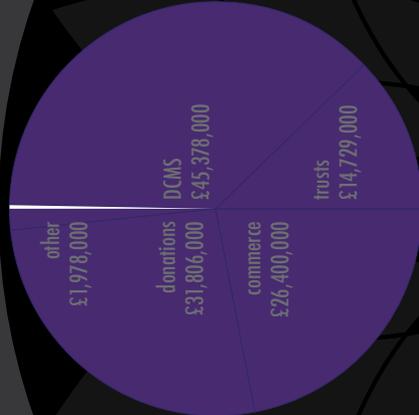
"Barataria Bay dolphins were 5 times more likely to have moderate-severe lung disease, generally characterized by significant alveolar interstitial syndrome, lung masses, and pulmonary



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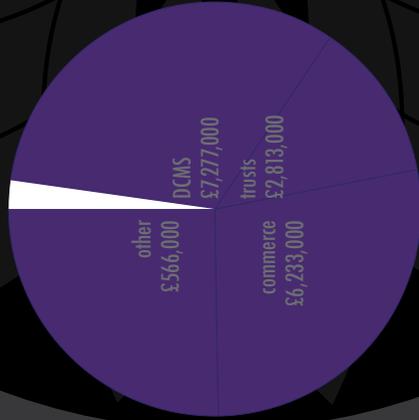
CULTURE CLASH

BP's £500,000
0.4% of total income



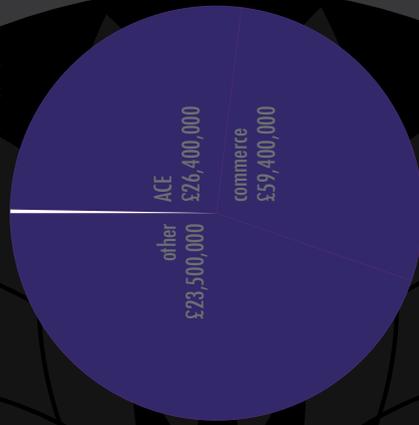
British Museum
total income
£120,791,000

BP's £500,000
2.9% of total income



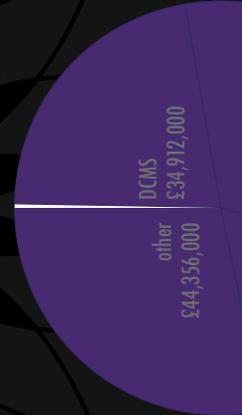
National Portrait
Gallery total income
£17,389,000

BP's £500,000
0.5% of total income



Royal Opera House
total income
£109,800,000

BP's £500,000
0.3% of total income



BP ART BLOC
BP gave £2million* to four of the UK's leading cultural institutions in 2013.

HALF THE BP ART BLOC
HAVE STRONG LINKS TO FOSSIL FUELS

- Tate chair of trustees, John Browne was CEO of BP from 1998 to 2007. He is currently chair of

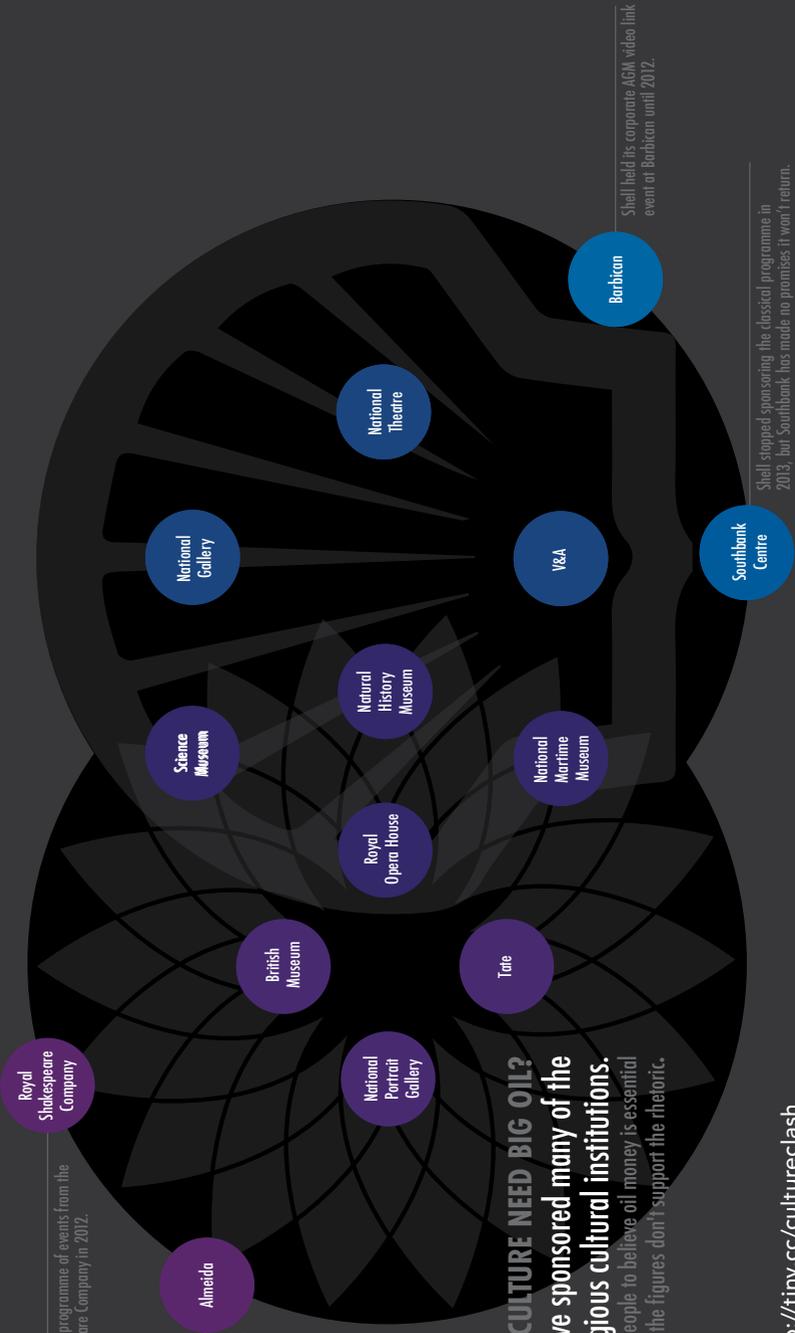
The estimated £500,000 per institution is a tiny fraction of their overall income.



Tate total income
£157,821,000

BP sponsored a programme of events from the Royal Shakespeare Company in 2012.

BP sponsored the Almeida theatre in 2009.



Shell held its corporate AGM video link event at Barbican until 2012.

Shell stopped sponsoring the classical programme in 2013, but Southbank has made no promises it won't return.

DOES CULTURE NEED BIG OIL? BP and Shell have sponsored many of the UK's most prestigious cultural institutions.

The oil companies want people to believe oil money is essential to the arts, but the figures don't support the rhetoric.

controversial fracking company Cuadrilla.

- ROH trustee, David Clementi is non-executive director on the board of the Rio Tinto Group.
- ROH trustee, Julian Metherell is Chief Financial Officer of General Energy – ex-BP CEO Tony Hayward's oil company looking to drill in Kurdish Iraq.

* In December 2011, BP announced that it was giving £10 million to four cultural institutions over five years. The £2 million refers to one year's worth of this total sum.



Collapse, 2012 by Brandon Ballengée
Mixed-media installation including 26,162 preserved specimens representing 370 species. Glass, Preffer and Carosafe preservative solutions. 12 x 15 x 15 feet. In collaboration with Todd Gardner, Jack Rudloe, Brian Schiering and Peter Warny.

Installed at Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York, NY, USA, 2012. Photo by Varvara Mikushkina.

Courtesy Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York, USA

consolidation. Of 29 dolphins evaluated from Barataria Bay, 48% were given a guarded or worse prognosis, and 17% were considered poor or grave, indicating that they were not expected to survive. Disease conditions in Barataria Bay dolphins were significantly greater in prevalence and severity than those in Sarasota Bay dolphins, as well as those previously reported in other wild dolphin populations. Many disease conditions observed in Barataria Bay dolphins are uncommon but consistent with petroleum hydrocarbon exposure and toxicity.⁴⁹

A second study led by NOAA researchers and published by the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, shows oil from BP's failed well is causing serious problems with heart development in several large Gulf fish, including blue-fin tuna, yellow-fin tuna, and amberjack.^{50 51}

The study goes on to say,

"Losses of early life stages were therefore likely for Gulf populations of tunas, amberjack, swordfish, billfish, and other large predators that spawned in oiled surface habitats".

Which confirms what fishermen like David Arnesen, a commercial fisherman from South Louisiana, have been seeing on the water. Since BP, catches have been down. Last year many of the amberjack had reproductive problems and low body weights.

"Not only do we have no stock, but they never dropped their roe (eggs)," Arnesen explained. "In January and February (of 2013), they had roe. When we went back in June – five months later – they were still full of roe. They usually drop the roe after 6-8 weeks. And their body weights are down 25-30%."⁵²

Since the release of these studies, BP has refused to pay for most additional NRDA-related studies. If BP and the NRDA trustees can't come to an agreement on which studies to fund, the issue will likely end up in federal court. The NRDA process will determine how much BP will have to pay the public for damage to it's natural resources.⁵³

Foster, Encalade, Arnesen and other fisherfolk across the coast report worsening conditions and fear for their futures. These studies and others like them do little to ease those fears. The full extent of damages to populations of tuna and other large fish won't be known at least until those who were juveniles during the worst of the disaster reach full maturity. Tuna don't fully mature for eight years – and we are only four years out from the disaster.

Economic Damages

All of which makes BP's denial of legitimate claims beyond frustrating for those who earned their living in the seafood industry before the disaster. When the economic settlement was reached in 2012, BP's Lead Attorney Richard Godfrey said,

"The settlement is placing large sums of money today and tomorrow and next week into the hands and the communities of the Gulf, the victims of this tragic event. We believe that it's fair, just and reasonable, and that this process should not be interrupted or stopped based upon the objections of the few for the purpose of injuring the many who need to be compensated now."⁵⁴

"Today, tomorrow, and next week" have all come and gone, and many Gulf Coast residents and communities that suffered economic damages are still in financial limbo. BP itself has been among the few who objected, filing appeal after appeal, adding insult to injury, and tying up various

US courts with what thus far have been determined to be mostly baseless appeals.

The oil giant says the claims facility is interpreting the agreement incorrectly, compensating those who did not suffer as a direct result of the disaster. The court disagrees, saying that is part of the agreement BP willingly entered into.

Judge Barbier, who presides over the settlement, has called such manoeuvres, “deeply disappointing” and in November 2013 said,

“Frankly, it is surprising that the same counsel who represented BP during the settlement negotiations, participated in drafting the final settlement agreement, and then strenuously advocated for approval of the settlement before this court, now come to this court and the 5th Circuit and contradict everything they have previously done or said on this issue.”⁵⁵

As of this writing, BP has appealed all the way to the US Supreme Court.⁵⁶

At the same time BP’s been trying to wrangle their way out of the agreement in various courts of law, the oil giant has launched an all out public relations blitz in an attempt to sway the court of public opinion.

BP paid for multiple full-page ads in major US newspapers. A slick website, “State of the Gulf”, launched during the summer of 2013, claiming to “set the record straight”. The site includes downloadable copies of the full-page ads, white papers and other documents attacking everything from media reports they deem unfavorable, to editorial writers, to plaintiff lawyers to the science behind the studies by NOAA and others.⁵⁷

But while BP continues to busy US courts and their own public relations crew, Gulf

Coast residents whose losses are directly tied to the impacted seafood industry continue to wait. Often bombarded with repeated requests for the same paperwork, some, like Michelle Chauncy, a seafood seller from Barataria, have suffered devastating financial losses, yet still not been compensated.

“I’m in the seafood business...yet I’m held hostage when clearly my livelihood is directly related to the loss. Ninety per cent of what I sold came from Barataria Bay, which was ground zero. I’m still waiting on them to make it right!”

Many who haven’t been compensated are afraid to talk publicly for fear of retribution in the form of denied claims. Some who have spoken out publicly against BP wonder if this is the reason that well-documented, legitimate economic claims have yet to be paid or have been denied all together.

Implications for Human Health?

Linda Hooper-Bui is a disaster ecologist at Louisiana State University who studies marsh insects and spiders. Her research shows that since the BP disaster, insects and spiders in marshes have been in a continuing cycle of repopulating, dying off, and attempting to repopulate again.

As the oil weathers, the top layer dries into an asphalt-like coating. But when heated in the strong Louisiana sun, the top layer cracks open, emitting hydrocarbons trapped below and killing the insects and spiders. Hooper-Bui’s work is especially relevant, as she has been studying the marsh for several years and has ample pre-spill data with which to compare.⁵⁸

What her research also shows is that some of the oil’s most damaging chemicals are still there. That knowledge haunts her. “It means there are toxic,

aromatic hydrocarbons in the marsh still four years later, and people who live, work, and play in the Gulf of Mexico are potentially exposed to them”, she recently told WAFB TV News.

Since shortly after BP’s well began to spew, clean-up workers and coastal residents from Louisiana to Florida have been reporting serious health effects from BP’s oil and use of Corexit.^{59 60 61 62 63} A report released in 2013 by the Government Accountability Project documented symptoms in diverse and wide-reaching Gulf communities, including “blood in urine; heart palpitations; kidney damage; liver damage; migraines; multiple chemical sensitivity; neurological damage resulting in memory loss; rapid weight loss; respiratory system and nervous system damage; seizures; skin irritation, burning and lesions; and temporary paralysis.”⁶⁴

Steve Aguinaga and his friend, Merrick Vallian did nothing more than go for a swim at Fort Walton Beach in Florida. They came out covered in a viscous, orange mix of oil and dispersants. That was July 2010, and Aguinaga has been seriously ill ever since. But he is the lucky one. Vallian died a few weeks later.⁶⁵

Fisherman Joey Yerkes was exposed to BP’s oil and dispersant mix while working clean-up during the summer of 2010. Later that year, his health worsened dramatically when re-exposed to gulf water while shrimping. He’s lost five friends to health conditions he suspects have been brought on or worsened by the disaster.

Yerkes has accumulated over \$85,000 in medical debt.⁶⁶ According to the health settlement, which was recently finalised, even clean-up workers who meet the requirements are only eligible for compensation up to \$60,700. The

continuing effects of BP’s disaster have forced Yerkes, like many who are sick, to move inland, away from the Gulf water, away from the still-oiled marsh, and away from their homes, livelihoods and communities.

Since the BP disaster, Kindra Arnesen, a South Louisiana mother of two and wife of a commercial fisherman has seen the children of her community struggle with serious health concerns. “We have sick kids all over the place who are suffering from upper respiratory infections, severe asthma, skin infections, blisters in between their fingers and arms and on their legs and their feet. Some kids have blisters all around their mouths and their noses. These kids were perfectly fine before the spill and the spraying of Corexit began.”^{67 68}

MacArthur Genius Award Recipient and chemist Wilma Subra explains, “EPA [Environmental Protection Agency] and BP knew of the health impacts associated with [Corexit and oil]... The issue was responding to an oil spill of this magnitude, with unprecedented quantities of Corexit, including novel subsurface application. Gulf coastal communities, and individuals who consume gulf seafood or recreate in the gulf, are the guinea pigs left to deal with the consequences and will be feeling the full effect in years to come.”⁶⁹

Arnesen, whose community is 70 miles from the nearest doctor’s office, says their families are left to suffer. “BP has done zero for these kids, they haven’t gotten proper testing or medical care.”⁷⁰

Unfortunately, it doesn’t look like that will change anytime soon. Many familiar with the acute and long-term health effects of oil and dispersant exposure say the medical settlement doesn’t cover enough conditions, covers mainly non-acute health effects and does not provide ample medical

Collapse responds to the global crisis of the world's fisheries and the current threat for the unraveling of the Gulf of Mexico's food-chain following the 2010 BP Deep Water Horizon oil spill. The large-scale installation created a pyramid display of 26,162 preserved specimens, which represented 370 species of fish and other aquatic organisms in gallon jars. It is meant to recall the fragile inter-relationships between Gulf species. Empty containers represented species in decline or those already lost to extinction.

Collapse, 2012 by Brandon Ballengée
Mixed-media installation including 26,162 preserved specimens representing 370 species. Glass, Preffer and Carosafe preservative solutions. 12 x 15 x 15 feet. In collaboration with Todd Gardner, Jack Rudloe, Brian Schiering and Peter Warny.

Installed at Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, USA, 2014.
Photo by David O. Brown.

Courtesy Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York, USA



care compensation for those with acute long-term illnesses. Coastal residents who live outside the eligibility zones will receive no compensation and many of those who are eligible have medical bills that far exceed the maximum compensation.⁷¹

BP As Sponsor of the Arts?

When asked about BP as sponsor of the arts, Mississippi gulf coast resident Derrick Evans thought for a moment, then admonished, "Created by inspired souls to inspire other souls, art is supposed to "lift" humanity - not "trick" humanity into

ignoring or sanctioning Earth's greatest avoidable plights or worst global citizens."

He paused thoughtfully and continued, "On the US Gulf Coast, BP is directly responsible for infinitely more death and destruction than "art", including our ecosystems, livelihoods, ways of life, human health, and government integrity. A giant and unrepentant wrongdoer, BP's cynical purchase of recognition in the British art world is mere "artful dodging", closely akin to their shameless posturing and abject pimping of public and private institutions and media in the United States."

PICTURING THE FUTURE

Written by Raoul Martinez

The facts are plain: scientists have been warning for decades, with uncharacteristic alarm, of impending environmental catastrophe. Over the same period, academics and journalists have repeatedly exposed the active role that fossil fuel companies have played in attempting to discredit climate science and prevent any meaningful response to it. Against this backdrop I have always felt deeply uncomfortable with having my work associated with one of the world's leading fossil fuel companies.

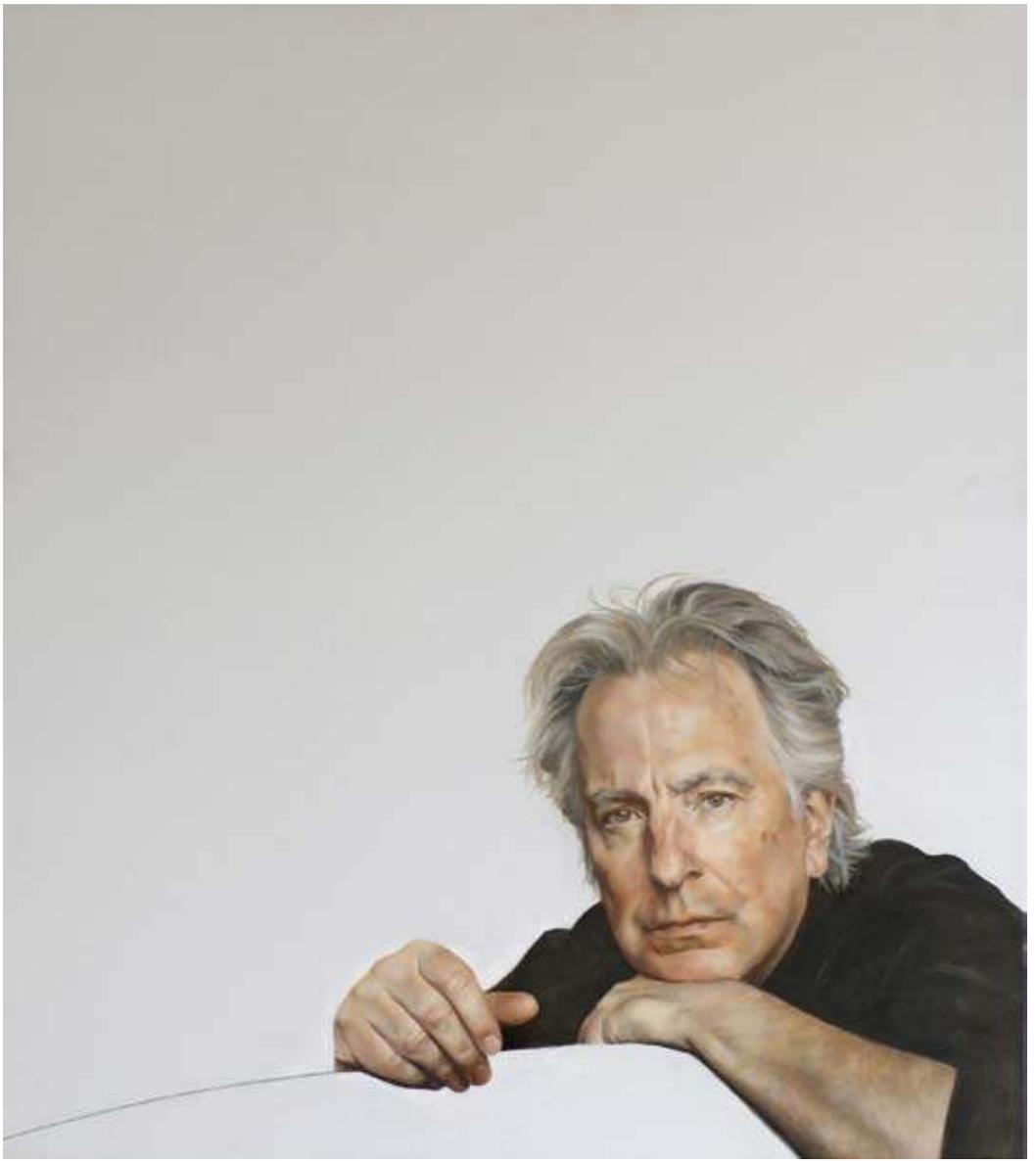
My portraits have been selected three times to appear in the BP Portrait Award. I remember having to think carefully through the implications, before first submitting a painting to the competition. The National Portrait Gallery has always been a favourite of mine, housing great works from artistic luminaries such as John Singer Sargent, and the portrait award itself has always been a great showcase for contemporary artists. But it seemed ethically problematic to include my work in an exhibition sponsored by BP.

Ultimately, I decided that a personal boycott by a young and unknown artist would go completely unnoticed and serve no practical end. If my work was selected, I reasoned, at least I could voice my opposition to the sponsorship, and perhaps that criticism would hold a bit more weight

coming from someone who'd already been selected. As it turned out, this was a good call. Due to the valuable work of Platform, I have been able to voice this opposition through numerous media outlets. I've discussed and debated the problems surrounding fossil-fuel sponsorship on Channel 4 News,⁷² the BBC World Service, Time magazine, Dutch television, and in a number of articles and interviews.

Whenever I discuss the issue I make the following argument: once we ask the question 'Who should be allowed to fund our cultural institutions?' it becomes clear that unless we're willing to accept the sponsorship of fascist groups and foreign dictators, we clearly believe a line must be drawn somewhere. So the issue is not whether we draw a line, but where we draw it.

*Raoul Martinez is an artist, writer and filmmaker. His portraits have been selected for exhibition in London's National Portrait Gallery as part of the BP Portrait Award, and he has painted leading figures in the arts and academia as well as a series of symbolic works. His first film, the award-winning documentary 'The Lottery of Birth', was released internationally in 2013. He is currently working on his first book, *Creating Freedom*, due for publication in 2015.*



Alan Rickman, Oil on Canvas, 34" x 39"
2009 by Raoul Martinez

In the case of fossil fuel companies, there is an extremely persuasive case for placing them on the wrong side of that line: they have been, and remain, one of the most powerful obstacles to addressing the most serious threat our species has ever faced. Every year hundreds of millions of dollars (one estimate puts the figure at almost half a billion dollars⁷³) are spent on lobbyists, think tanks, advertising, party funding, and public relations (of which arts sponsorship is one part) to convince the public that climate change either doesn't exist, doesn't really matter, or will just be too expensive to solve – take a look at the remarkable book 'Merchants of Doubt'.⁷⁴

This sabotage should be regarded as a crime against humanity on a par with genocide. Of course the motive is profit, not human devastation. But the outcomes produced may well be equivalent, and have long been predictable. And to the person who dies of starvation, drought, drowning, or resource wars, it is little consolation to hear that environmental catastrophe and the human suffering it produces was never the primary goal of the fossil fuel industry, but merely collateral damage in the pursuit of profit.

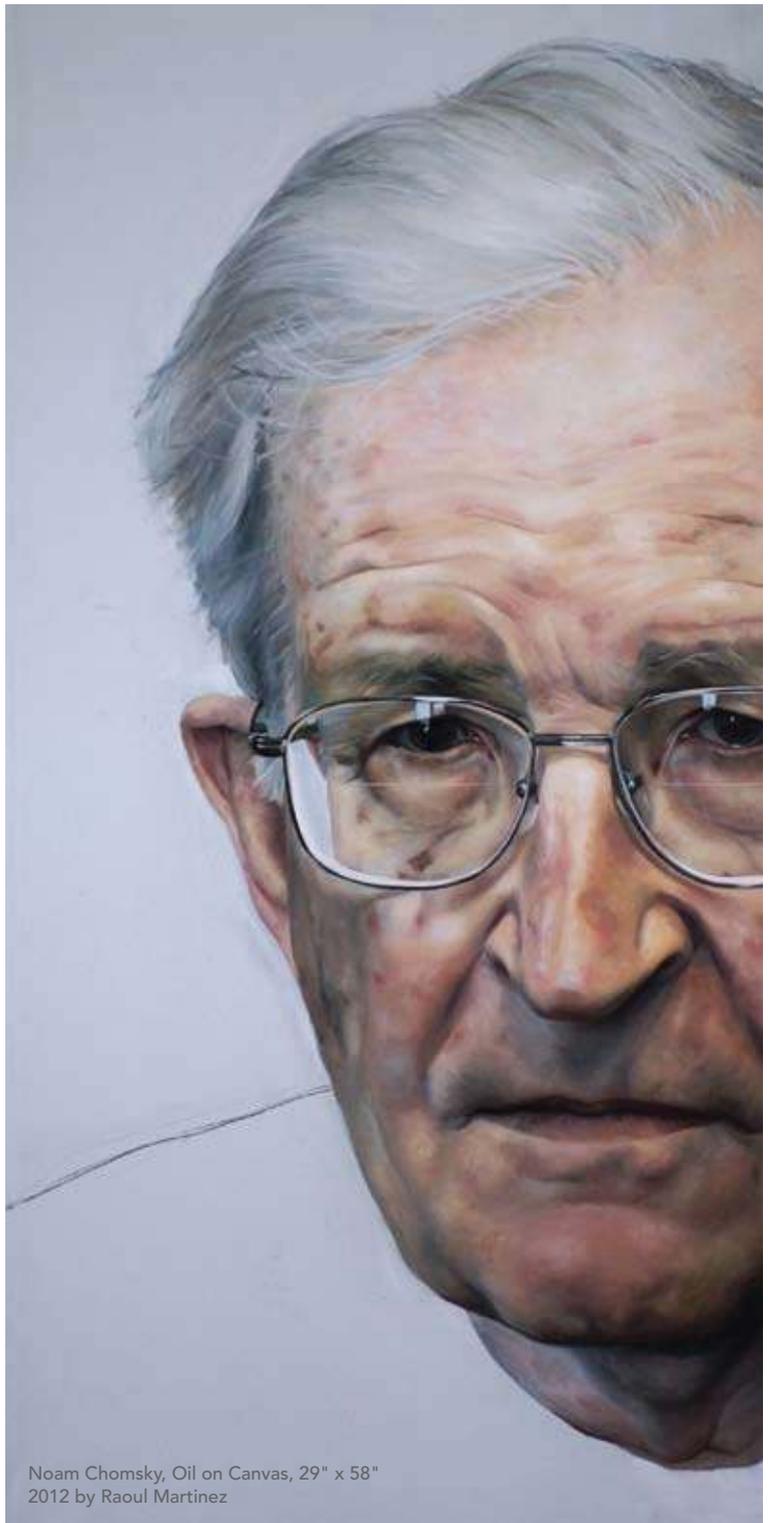
Choosing to accelerate and deepen our climate problems is, as Rebecca Solnit recently pointed out, an act of violence, and the scale of this violence may eclipse anything that occurred in the twentieth century.⁷⁵ I wish this were a gross exaggeration, but once you bypass the persistent distortions of the corporate media and listen to what the scientific community is telling us, it becomes painfully clear that it is not.

One way of deflecting the criticism of environmentalists has been to point out that we all depend on oil, eco-activists included. And of course it's true that

as a society we are currently heavily dependent on fossil fuel. Since Thomas Newcomen's invention of the steam engine, we have transformed the face of this planet with machines powered by coal, oil and gas. The comforts and wealth we enjoy today owe their existence, in large part, to the discovery and utilisation of fossil fuel. But to concede this in no way undermines the case for changing the system. A few centuries ago there were more enslaved people on this planet than non-enslaved. Almost every product consumed, and much of the wealth of the British Empire, owed its existence, directly or indirectly, to enslavement or indentured labour (slavery by another name). In various ways, many of the abolitionists fighting to end slavery would have been beneficiaries of this wealth, but that did not undermine their argument that the system should be replaced.

Just as small groups of concerned women and men once fought to end the institutional violence that was slavery, environmentalists today seek to abolish and replace the institutional violence that is the fossil fuel industry. It should be noted that this violence also has a distinct racist dimension to it, for it is the Global South, who bear far less responsibility than the Global North for our ecological crisis, that is likely to be most affected and least prepared for the calamitous consequences of climate change. To provide legitimacy to fossil fuel companies through sponsorship deals is to place yourself categorically on the wrong side of history.

So what does all this mean for the cultural institutions desperately seeking funding? First of all, let's be clear, the amounts our cultural institutions are receiving, as a proportion of their total budgets, are paltry. According to research by Platform, if BP's sponsorship money was



Noam Chomsky, Oil on Canvas, 29" x 58"
2012 by Raoul Martinez

allocated equally over time across the four institutions with whom it announced a new sponsorship deal in 2011, BP money represents only 2.9 per cent of the National Portrait Gallery's total income – the figure is even lower for the other organisations: under one per cent for the British Museum, the Royal Opera House and the Tate.⁷⁶ In return for these small percentage points, our cultural institutions are providing an invaluable source of legitimacy for companies like BP and Shell.

This is a shameful act. Artists, and the institutions that support them, should be at the cutting edge of critiquing the worst aspects of our society and moving us toward a humane and ecologically sustainable transition. An institution like the NPG should seek to replace the 2.9 per cent of dirty money it receives with alternative sources of funding. They could approach other companies less complicit in bringing about precipitous environmental collapse, hold fund-raising events, pressure the state for more investment, cut back their activities, even sell off some art works if necessary (or a combination of all of these things) – whatever it takes to stop providing a veneer of legitimacy to one of the world's most destructive and morally inexcusable industries.

Art is ultimately a form of communication. But the wider context of a piece of art, the conditions under which it is made, its purpose, and the setting in which it is presented, cannot be separated from that which it communicates. I fear that the acquiescence of the art world to destructive corporate interests drowns out the message of the art for which it provides a public platform. I realised long ago that, as a painter, offering legitimacy to fossil fuel corporations is a far more significant statement than anything that might be communicated by an exhibition. Valuable

creative expression is not limited to the traditional artistic formats. Every choice is inherently creative. If our cultural institutions took a principled stand on this urgent issue it would, in and of itself, be a beautiful creative act, certainly as valuable as any painting or performance they might showcase.

We are living through extraordinary times. The influence of our dominant economic and political paradigms is slowly being eroded. Welcome as this is, this process desperately needs to speed up. The kind of change that we need to bring about will require people from all walks of life, in all kinds of situations, to defy the professional obligations and expectations that too often tame and dehumanise us, and remember the more fundamental obligations that we have to each other, future generations, and the planet that sustains us all.

Solutions to our pressing problems do exist. Much work has already been done: it is clear that in the short term we need a Green New Deal that will channel massive amounts of investment into green energy, and energy efficiency. We also need a worldwide cap on carbon, and we need it fast. And in the longer term we need to ditch the unsustainable growth imperative at the heart of our system, and make a careful transition to what's known as a 'steady state economy', one that tries to maximise quality of life, not quantity of things, working within the limits of Earth's ecological boundaries.

In short, the problem is not the lack of viable alternatives, but the lack of power to implement them. In order to shift the balance of power, we can no longer afford to provide those opposing this change the legitimacy that comes with being associated with our nation's most respected cultural institutions. We can no longer allow the celebration of human creativity to provide cover for environmental destruction.



Howard Zinn, Oil on Canvas, 34" x 50"
2010 by Raoul Martinez

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How bad does a company have to be before an arts organisation refuses to be associated with it or take its money? How much outcry does a sponsor's primary business have to provoke before a line is drawn? What kind of critique should send alarm signals up and down the corridors of the corporate sponsorship department of any BP-sponsored arts organisation?

As the National Portrait Gallery celebrates 25 years of BP sponsorship, we look back at the oil company's chequered history, the current ongoing impacts suffered by communities in the Gulf of Mexico, and look forward to how the cultural sector might respond to the challenge of moving beyond oil money, like it did in the past with tobacco sponsorship.

