

# “Constructive Resistance and Radical Joy”: Clare Farrell’s Powerful Call to Artists at OAUK 2026

At the 2026 Outdoor Arts UK Conference, keynote speaker Clare, designer, activist and co-founder of Extinction Rebellion, delivered an electrifying and deeply human speech calling artists into a new era of collective courage, creativity, and constructive resistance.

Addressing a packed hall of outdoor artists, producers, festival makers and cultural leaders, Clare painted the current moment with unflinching honesty: a time of climate breakdown, democratic fragility, economic instability and rising authoritarianism. But within this “multi-faceted, intersecting shit show,” she argued, lies a historic opportunity for artists to lead.

**“Whether or not we win doesn’t matter as much anymore,”** Clare said. **“What matters is whether we are working as hard as we can to create the most beautiful world possible.”**

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## The Case for Organised Love

Clare urged the sector to recognise its unique cultural power: the ability to shape imagination, shift social norms, and help people feel connected — to each other and to public space.

Artists, she said, can’t wait for systems to fix themselves. Instead, they must help build **“organised love at scale**, which requires Creating solidarity (practically and socially); Building community infrastructure (not just artworks); Refusing fatalism; and Working with determination for a more humane future.

Outdoor arts, with its immediacy, accessibility and public-facing nature, sits *exactly* where this work needs to happen.

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## Why Artists Must Lead the “Constructive Resistance”

Clare’s core message was clear: artists must step into leadership, not merely as performers, but as **architects of cultural possibility**.

She described *constructive resistance* as the vital twin practice of: Pushing back against systems that no longer serve us; and Building new alternatives from mutual aid to local democratic practices.

**“Mutual aid isn’t a crisis response — it should be the backbone of our resistance.”**

Outdoor artists already work in the places where democracy breathes, in streets, squares, neighbourhoods. This positions us to both disrupt and rebuild.

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## Culture Sets the Conditions for Change

One of Clare’s sharpest insights centred on the role of culture in shaping political imagination:

**“If what people believe about politics and the economy creates the limits of what seems possible, then our job is to break those limits.”**

Outdoor arts has extraordinary power to:

- Make new worlds feel imaginable
- Help people experience agency in their bodies
- Shift despair into belonging
- Turn spectators into active citizens

These aren’t side effects — they’re fundamental.

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## Reclaiming Democracy as Relationship

Clare reframed democracy not as a system but as a **relationship** built on:

- Relational power
- Deep listening
- The courage to speak authentically
- Collective agency in public spaces

She argued that many people have **never actually felt** democratic participation in its true sense, and that artists can help cultivate it by transforming public space into a stage for connection and dialogue.

**“Help people speak up.  
Help people listen well.  
And help them feel powerful together again.”**

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## **Inspiration as a Radical Tool**

Clare insisted that inspiration is not naïve or decorative but is strategic, especially in difficult times.

**“Wouldn’t it be embarrassing if we died of climate collapse because we couldn’t think of anything else to do?”**

Outdoor arts can spark the imagination needed to act, by creating joyful interruption, embodied experiences, collective movement, and moments where people feel powerful together. These sparks matter. They lead people into agency.

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## **Projects Leading the Way**

Clare shared three initiatives she’s co-developing that embody her ideas:

### **1. The Fate of Britain**

Pop-up gatherings that bring local changemakers together to imagine new civic possibilities.

### **2. The Humanity Project**

Neighbourhood-based assemblies that practice ground-up democracy, empathy, and shared humanity.

### **3. “Good Neighbours” Live TV**

A messy, lively experiment calling for neighbourliness — personally and nationally — as a guiding ethic.

Each of these projects is an invitation for artists to help build the cultural conditions for a kinder, more collaborative future.

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## **A Final Call: Build the New World Together**

Clare concluded with urgency, hope and love:

**“We have to be committed to creating a new world  
no matter what.  
And it’s going to be beautiful,  
and quite hard work,  
just like love is.”**

Her closing sentiment echoed around the room: a reminder that outdoor arts is not decoration but is civic power, glue for communities and an engine of cultural transformation.

This is the moment, Clare argued, for outdoor artists to lead.