

**Logline** - *There Is A Place On Earth* is a feature length documentary exploring the role of artists in wilderness conservation on a beautiful and poetic journey around the world.

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**Three Paragraph Synopsis** *There Is A Place On Earth* is a feature length documentary exploring the role of artists in wilderness conservation. Dutch Filmmaker Ellen van den Honert takes us on a beautiful and poetic journey around the world where we meet artists/conservationists who share extraordinary creative work and a commitment to the environment.

A musician and artist herself, Ellen asks why and how creative work can become a vital tool in wilderness conservation? Realising that art can ignite our own emotional and intuitive connection to the wild, her curiosity takes us to meet other artists from diverse disciplines who are also inspired by nature and wildness in their work.

From Harvey Locke, whose photography and writings have played a critical role in the *Yellowstone To Yukon* Conservation Initiative, to acclaimed South African poet Ian McCallum whose poem's connect readers to their own sense of wildness, to multi-media environmental artist Sibylle Szaggars Redford who collaborates with the elements and a diversity of performers to create “a living art piece,” plus many other visionary and compelling artists, viewers are treated to an experience that can open up their own sense of the wild – and the necessity to protect it.

### **Full Synopsis**

*There Is A Place On Earth* is a feature length documentary (73 min.) exploring the role of artists in wilderness conservation. Dutch Filmmaker Ellen van den Honert takes us on a beautiful and poetic journey around the world where we meet artists/conservationists who share extraordinary creative work and a commitment to the environment.

The film starts with Ellen's search for finding ways in which she can address the environmental problems in the world. In the process, we learn about her own exploration and experiences with different wild species. A musician and artist herself, Ellen asks why and how creative work can become a vital tool in wilderness conservation? Realising that art can ignite our own emotional and intuitive connection to the wild, her curiosity takes viewers to meet many other artists around the world who are inspired and influenced by nature and a strong desire to protect it.

The first chapter, *Conservation*, looks at the roots of art and conservation as part of the human search to understand the wild and our connection to it. In Hawaii we meet Phil Sabado whose bold, colourful paintings reflect his native Hawaiian values of conservation and respect for nature. “*Conservation wasn't a word then, it was just a way of life... that became a point of reference for a lot of the art that I do.*”

We hear from Harvey Locke, whose photography and writings have played a critical role in supporting

the *Yellowstone To Yukon* Conservation Initiative. *“I believe that humans are profoundly affected by beauty...and that art liberates us to part of that wildness that opens up in us.. Wild nature helps us remember our own cultural indigenous roots.”*

To explore the European roots of connection to wildness, Ellen takes us to the Côa Valley in Portugal to look at 40,000-year-old rock engravings showing the large herbivores that roamed throughout Europe before domestication. These engravings were the inspiration for a successful “rewilding” effort in Northeast Portugal, where horses that were part of European ecosystems centuries ago have been released back into the wild.

The second chapter, *The Journey*, finds Ellen traveling to locations throughout the world where art is playing a direct role in conservation efforts. Starting at the National Museum of Wildlife Art in Wyoming, we learn how the early works of painter Thomas Moran and photographer William Henry Jackson were essential to the establishment of the world’s first national park in Yellowstone in 1872. We go to South Africa to visit acclaimed poet Ian McCallum who discusses his approach for a language of hope *“to be a voice for wild animals, wild places, but, most importantly for the wild part of the human psyche.”* We watch street artist Falko One skilfully spray paint beautiful elephants on the dilapidated walls of rural farmers outside of Cape Town, *“my vision is to paint one hundred elephants a day, because that’s how many get killed a day.”*

Then we experience the work of Earth-body artist Bianca Lee Vasquez who explores a powerful and intimate connection with nature, *“if my art can evoke an empathy, especially connected with nature, that’s the greatest gift for me.”* This approach of sharing the unknown also deeply motivates California photographer Bryant Austin who goes through a challenging and time-consuming process to photograph whales underwater. *“There is a real urgency to connect us with what’s out there...to give the whales a voice...they’re really counting on us to make the right decisions.”*

Also giving nature a voice is multi-media environmental artist Sibylle Szaggars Redford in New Mexico, who literally collaborates with the elements and all types of performers to create, *“a living art piece that connect us to the beauty of this one and only planet.”* She asks, *“What can we do next to open up consciousness and create an even bigger voice for this earth?”*

While art gives us a powerful connection to nature, the third chapter of the film, entitled *Impact*, asks what will it take for art to have *more* impact to help conservation? Having seen the enormous power and influence that artists can have, Ellen digs deeper into the bias of art that doesn’t connect with a fickle public unless the work is human centered. She soon finds out a significant amount of exquisite wildlife art is actually hidden from the public eye – out of favour because the work has representations of animals. As Bryant Austin explains looking at one of his compelling life-sized photographs of a sperm whale sitting in a warehouse, *“the thing I fear most is that my work is just an archive when many whales have gone extinct.”*

The film closes with a montage of diverse works from artists around the world including a poem from Ian McCallum entitled, *There is a Place on Earth*. As Ellen summarizes, *“art should stand as an equal with science, policy, and education, as it has the same power to influence people to make decisions in favour of nature.”* Taken as a whole, viewers experience a unique journey through the impact of creativity leading us to an intuitive connection to nature and our sense of the wild – and the necessity to protect it.