

If symptoms persist, consult your physician

# moniji

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# Calling! Planet Earth

Voting with your Pocket. Becoming a global citizen.

By **Warren Bugeja**

**A**s custodians of the planet for just about 100,000 years (sharks by the way have been around for 350 million years) we've made a mess of our parental duties. The planet can look after itself, thank you very much. However it needs protection from us humans and at the rate we're going, if we don't spruce up our act quickly, Gaia (mother earth) might just shrug off the itchy parasites we are with just one tilt of her axis. The Earth won't be destroyed, we will, with all our big powerless technologies and big empty promises.

It's time to wake up. The clock is ticking loudly. We have been raised in a society that is unable to look beyond the short-term tip of its greedy nose, that equates economic growth with progress no matter what the environmental and social costs. Our flawed education system pressurises us to collect certificates, to produce and be successful. The media entices us to consume, develop fear, to have desires, all that weren't ours to begin with. Most people are trapped in jobs that are in conflict with their personal ethics, that don't reflect who they really are on the inside, creating a psychic dissonance and inner dissatisfaction that is lulled to sleep by constant consumption. We are not taught, unsurprisingly, how to question the status quo, how to pursue a happy, healthy or sustainable way of living. Our governments rule by division, pitting "troublesome" minorities against each other. Wars that are fought in the name of national safety or religion really mask a primal urge for territorial expansion and conceal financial gain as the primary motive. Others, like the conflict between Israel and Lebanon over the Golan Heights, are ostensibly about dwindling precious environmental supplies such as water, the new gold. The water wars, as they will be described, are just decades away from becoming the next terror.

So we are parcelled by borders, defined by passports. Stubbornly clinging on to what separates and does not unite us – race, class, creed and colour. Well thank God for climate change. Nature has no borders. Environmental disasters in one part of the world have gargantuan repercussions in other continents. Remember Chernobyl in Russia and milk radiation in Scotland? Yes, climate change and its very real presence right here, right now, is an opportunity for nations to finally

“ Malta is so small, so sustainably manageable, abundantly blessed by sun and wind, it's a shame it isn't the paradise it could be ”

come together and work towards a common cause. It is very much now or never. Global warming, no longer just a "green issue", IS our wake up call. It's time we started to think of ourselves as global citizens.

On the local scene this is so much more imperative. Years of colonial subjugation, coupled with our geographical navelgazing insularity, has programmed us Maltese into becoming cunning consummates at extracting as much as we could on the sly from the ruling "foreigners" of the epoch. This short-term egoistic Robin Hood mentality may have been justified, considering the hardness of the times and the fact that Malta and its inhabitants were very often nothing more than a pawn in the hands of the then superpowers. It is sad however, in this day and age, to consider how badly this prevailing anachronistic attitude has backfired; it is the Maltese themselves and the Maltese environment that the Maltese are cheating, with our get-rich-quick schemes and unchecked construction. Malta is so small, so sustainably manageable, abundantly blessed by sun and wind, it's a shame it isn't the paradise it could be. As a nation of apathetic armchair critics we drastically need to re-direct our pointy fingers inwardly.

As global citizens it is our civic duty to be informed, to be aware of what is going on locally behind the scenes and in the world outside. We are not tiny and insignificant. It is our democratic right to speak out, we all have voices. The American President Eisenhower once said that it is not governments who change the world, people do. Collectively, many voices singing the same tune have power that can sway governments. As members of the 6.1 billion people on the planet we affect the environment each day via what we consume. As individuals and global citizens we need to be responsible as consumers. The scales are tipped too heavily in favour of producers. It is they who manipulate the media with their big advertising budgets and control what we read, see and hear. The invisible big multi-corporations, the construction, oil, pharmaceutical, industrial and banking institutions, decide how we live, what we eat, what our landscape looks like, determine our health and finance the politicians, keeping them dangling to their tune on tightly reined marionette strings. Most industries that are polluting are in fact being given government subsidies. ▶ 10





## Fact File:

### FACTS! This is the world we live in today:

1. 16 billion dollars worth of antidepressants were sold in 2001
2. Up to a third of the world is in danger of starving
3. One coffee jar costs Lm 1.50, but the third world farmer only gets 2 cents.
4. Bangladeshi employees sewing garments for top sports brands are allowed two toilet breaks in a 15-hour day for which they receive \$1. They work 7 days a week. In Latin America, union members demanding basic human working conditions for workers in a major soft drinks plant were tortured and murdered
5. 1.1 billion people lack access to clean drinking water and more than 2.4 billion lack adequate sanitation.
6. Only 2.5% of the world's water supply is fresh. A person requires 50 litres of water per day for drinking, bathing, cooking and other basic needs.
7. Six million tonnes of products are dumped in the ocean each year.
8. For every kilo of fish caught in drag nets, nine kilos of fish are thrown back into the sea dead and uneaten. Thousands of protected dolphins and turtles are caught and die each week on 50 miles of hooks tied to long line fishing nets.
9. The fishing industry has already destroyed 70 per cent of all marine life. There won't be any fish left for your grandchildren to catch.
10. In 1989, as a result of a massive oil spill, Exxon Valdez was ordered to pay 1.2 billion dollars to the state of Alaska for damage to marine life, the fishing industry, tourism and coastal conservation accruing. Appeal after appeal, to date Exxon and their line up of lawyers and lobbyists have got away without paying one single cent. In 2005, Exxon made 41 billion dollars in just one year, a record profit by any private corporation.
11. A Forest the size of Great Britain is destroyed each year.
12. Seventeen trees are saved for every tonne of paper recycled.
13. An oak or mahogany tree takes 100 years to reach maturity. Conversely a pine tree only takes 20.
14. Only 2.2% of the world's energy comes from renewable energy such as small hydroelectric dams, wind, solar and geothermal.
15. Most oil companies have shares in motor companies, the reason why non-fossilised fuel motored cars are still prohibitively expensive.
16. 2005 was the hottest year on record
17. The USA consumes 25% of the world's oil. China consumed two billion barrels in 2004. This will rise to 10 billion barrels by 2015



49 Yet this is the age of the information highway. Knowledge is there for the having. All you require is a keyboard. The peaceful revolution begins with the power of your pocket. You don't need to change anyone, not your family, your community or the world. Start by the man in the mirror. All you need is to change what you purchase and what you boycott. You can influence the world through your cash. Now you've got the producer's attention. **m**

*"Sometimes it falls upon a generation to be great. You can be that great generation"*  
 — Nelson Mandela 2005

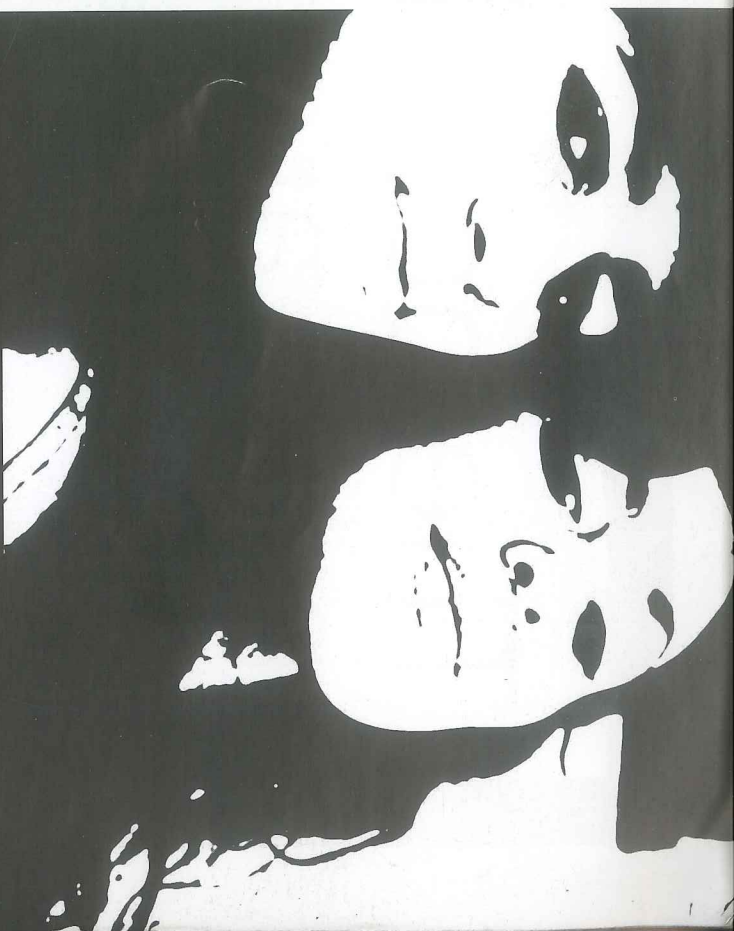
18. We release 70 million tons of Co2 (Carbon Dioxide) into the atmosphere every single day. There is more Co2 in the atmosphere now than in 650,000 years
  19. Fifteen million plastic bottles are purchased in the UK each day
  20. In 2000 it rained in Antarctica.
  21. In 2004, for the first time in recorded history, there was a hurricane in the south Atlantic
  22. Two fifths of the deforestation in Brazil is due to cattle ranching, exporting meat to fast food concerns. If the same land were to be cultivated for grains, soybeans or vegetables it would yield 16 times the amount of food. Cattle, in addition to being forced with growth hormones and antibiotics, consuming large amounts of water and fodder, release copious amounts of methane contributing to greenhouse gases.
  23. Shampoos are tested on chimpanzees by squirting the liquid into their eyes until they go blind. Vivisection led to smoking and high cholesterol being deemed safe for humans. Environmental poisons like asbestos and glass fibres were declared safe for humans after research on animals. Drugs that tested safe in animals, Fen-phen and Rezulin being examples, killed humans. If some drugs have been shown to have different side effects in a pair of human twins, then how can animals reliably predict human response?
  24. Every 20 minutes a species becomes extinct
  25. Polar bears are drowning
  26. Way back in the 60s, Malta was lauded at the International Convention on the Law of the Sea for declaring the sea and all marine life to be the common heritage of mankind. Ironically we are still dumping raw sewage into the sea, not even metres away from our shores
- The future looks bleak if we don't act now:**
27. All forests will be depleted within 30 years
  28. Within a decade there will be no more glaciers in Glacier National Park
  29. Global sea levels could rise by more than 20 feet with the loss of shelf ice in Greenland and Antarctica devastating coastal areas worldwide
  30. The Arctic Ocean could be ice-free by the summer of 2050
  31. A third of all coral reefs are expected to vanish in the next 30 years



## What YOU can do:

**Reduce your ecological footprint. Little things that add up and make a difference:**

- 1. Let there be light:** switch your old Jurassic Edison light bulbs to incandescent energy saving lights. They consume one 1/5th of the energy, provide equal luminosity and last up to 10 years.
- 2. Think long term:** Invest in a solar water heater, cut your electricity bills in half. Insulate your roofs.
- 3. Turn it off:** LED lights consume 1.5 watts of energy per hour. Switch off your mobile charger, DVD player, computer and TV sets when not in use. Turn off lights when exiting a room.
- 4. Pump up:** your car tyres and improve fuel mileage by 3%. Every gallon of petrol saved keeps 20 pounds of Co2 out of the atmosphere. Fit radial tyres on your car which cut tyre drag providing a 6% fuel saving.
- 5. Drive less:** Car pool, use bio diesel, where possible walk and use public transport. Use the park-and-ride system in Valletta
- 6. Ban it:** Tropical hardwoods such as mahogany, iroko, cedar and oak from the Amazon and Indonesia forests. Buy soft pine wood furniture instead from sustainable forests. GMO foodstuffs. Vivisection. The fur industry.
- 7. Boycott it:** Fish-farmed fish. Fast food, products from the corporate hall of shame that support sweatshops. Get informed – log onto [www.sweatshop.org](http://www.sweatshop.org)
- 8. Dump it:** The attitude “It’s them not me, what can I do?”
- 9. Recycle it.** Separate your waste. Use recycled paper. Out for a picnic, take your rubbish back home with you
- 10. Buy it:** Products not tested on animals. Dolphin-friendly tuna. Free-range milk, meat and eggs. Locally grown organic fruit and vegetables and products. Eat close to the soil – vital nutrients are lost in transportation. Fair trade goods, making sure the farmer pockets the profit not the middleman. Ecological cleaning detergents. Reusable water bottles like H2 only. Containers of glass and paper instead of tins and plastic.
- 11. Cover it:** Lids on pots while cooking boil water faster. Pressure cookers and steamers save around 70 per cent of energy
- 12. Reduce it:** eat less meat. Fly less. Pockaging and wrapping paper. Go shopping with a canvas bag. Use your washing machines and dishwashers at full load only and at lower temperatures.
- 13. Use it:** Gas cookers are 80% efficient in contrast to electrical cookers, which are 28% efficient. Open paths when you are in natural reserves or parks. Low flush toilets. Put a brick or two in your WC unit.
- 14. Adjust it:** Just two degrees on your heating and cooling thermostats. Install a timer too.
- 15. Wrap it:** Your water heater in an insulation blanket thereby saving 1,000 pounds of carbon dioxide a year with this simple action.
- 16. Become a member** of an environmental organisation. Support your local groups, especially animal welfare groups. As Mahatma Gandhi said: “The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated”. Call the radio. Write to the papers. Sign petitions, send emails.
- 17. Shorten it:** Your showers. Save water.
- 18. Plant or adopt a tree:** A tree will absorb one tonne of carbon dioxide over its lifetime, exhaling life-giving oxygen in exchange. Plant an indigenous tree, which is drought resistant.
- 19. Vote for leaders who have the environment truly at heart**
- 20. Tell your parents** not to ruin the world that you live in.
- 21. If you are a parent,** join with your children to save the world they will live in
- 22. Learn as much as you can** about climate change then put your knowledge into action. Log on to [www.climatecrisis.net](http://www.climatecrisis.net)
- 23. Log on to [www.protecgaita.org](http://www.protecgaita.org).** The Gaia Foundation in Ghain Tuffieha, a non profit-making NGO, set up to safeguard the environment in 1994, sells organic vegetables, foodstuffs and body products not tested on animals, biodegradable cleaning detergents, fair trade items, indigenous trees and endemic plants and shrubs.



Opening the doors to the fascinating,  
artistic world of the recycled

## Junk Jungle

“Gathering what others spill. Finding  
beauty in what others deem worthless...”

**A**ny object can be turned into art when in an artist's hands. Items collected from the street, in scrap yards, fields, off rubble walls can be manipulated and transformed into an art form which hopes to express the feelings, imagination and originality of the artist. Many produce artworks to advertise products... hopefully our artwork will create awareness...

We are living in a world which, day by day, keeps getting even more polluted. Nature keeps getting destroyed and many are hopelessly moulded into an almost robot-like system where money-making and materialism are among the main priorities.

The art installation which my artist friend Enrique and I made for the Earth Garden festival last spring tries to convey the message that our environment needs to be taken care of. We created a dying, suffocating, almost futuristic female image out of intertwined junk, rusted wire and metal found in the Maltese countryside wearing a rusted metal tutu and a gasmask. The art work hopes to create more awareness of the polluted landscape. The spring mattress on which the female figure is attached was found lying on a rubble wall close to where we live and the rest was found lying around in fields. We thought of cleaning up the countryside while at the same time creating an artwork that could hopefully shock the viewer and make him think, think about the situation of our environment and try to act. We created the female image wearing a gas mask lying on a spring mattress dreaming of a better future, holding real flowers in her rubber gloved hand.

What world will our children live in? Technology claims to be modernising our world but what about the environment? We live in an amazing world and we need to take care of it.

Both Romina Delfia and Enrique Tabone are students of Art and they teamed up to produce this art installation for the Earth Garden festival last spring. Both have exhibited several times before and are highly passionate about art, creativity, and the protection of nature and the environment.

