

The Together For Our Planet Entry

MARCOS HENRIQUE MELLO

Amazonia em chamas
"Amazon in Flames"



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This painting is in oil on canvas measuring 0.61 x 0.84 cm. In it, I portray a forest fire with Indians representing various ethnic groups in South America.

About The Artist

Marcos Henrique Mello was born in the city of São Carlos- São Paulo – Brazil. He graduated in Physiotherapy, where he learned anatomy and today uses this knowledge in painting his paintings. Self-taught contemporary plastic artist, he is inspired by the sentimentality of Van Gogh's paintings, by Rembrandt's lights and shadows, and also by the movement and lights of William Turner's paintings. His pictures show our current problems like environmental destruction for example. It uses strong colors but preserves a good combination, and it always tells a story, an event. In his paintings, he uses oil on Canvas techniques, with brush strokes directly on the canvas, using his brushes in the drawing, always after applying a background, he paints one paint over another.

Curator Comments

There are a handful of fundamental natural systems like the Amazon rainforest and Antarctic ice sheets that have kept Earth's climate relatively stable over the past 11,700 years. The Amazon forest spans nine South American countries (Brazil, Peru, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Guyana, Suriname, French Guiana) and covers an area twice the size of India and therefore is the largest forest in the world. Moreover, it contains at least 10% of the biodiversity on Earth.

However, in just around a century, we've managed to lose about 20% of its total area to deforestation for cattle grazing, agricultural production, and logging, as well as mining. This loss of native forest is tragic for many reasons, one of them being that it gives rise to negative feedback loops that degrade the forest even further. The Amazon's resilience depends on its size. It generates about half of its own rainfall by recycling moisture. Yet, coupling decades of deforestation and fires in the Amazon with the global climate crisis cause dry seasons to get longer and made megadroughts become more common, and those degraded conditions mean trees are dying at a faster rate, and as more plants and trees die the Amazon's ability to absorb carbon from the atmosphere is declining. This feedback loop is pushing the Amazon beyond its adaptive limits and toward its [tipping point](#): a transition from the lush rainforest we know to a savanna.

The Amazon rainforest had previously been a [carbon sink](#) but has now become a carbon source, emitting over a billion tonnes of CO₂ a year. Carbon sinks absorb more carbon than they release, while carbon sources release more carbon than they absorb. Without emissions from fires, the Amazon would be a carbon sink. In other words, the Amazon is a carbon source because of biomass burning. Experts estimate that the Amazon stores up to 200 Gt of carbon — the equivalent of 4 or 5 years' worth of human-made carbon emissions. If the Amazon continues to be a carbon source, it could release all this stored carbon, which would not only perpetuate warming in the Amazon and across the planet but also accelerate other tipping points all around the world.

The 'Together For Our Planet' Initiative (2021)

A collaboration between Occhi Arts and Entertainment and Phoenix FTA Limited, a UK-based sustainability strategy consultancy. Inspired by the UK Creative Earth Competition, Occhi Arts and Entertainment and Phoenix FTA Limited invited young artists from around the world to creatively engage with key topics of concern at the COP26 Climate Summit in Glasgow. The initiative provided young artists with a renewed opportunity to visually express their views to world leaders and community stakeholders by producing 2D artwork (drawing, painting, printmaking, collage, and photography).

