



ART & CLIMATE SCIENCE, OUR TAKE

# When Art & Science Collide

October 24, 2023 BY Abby Luby

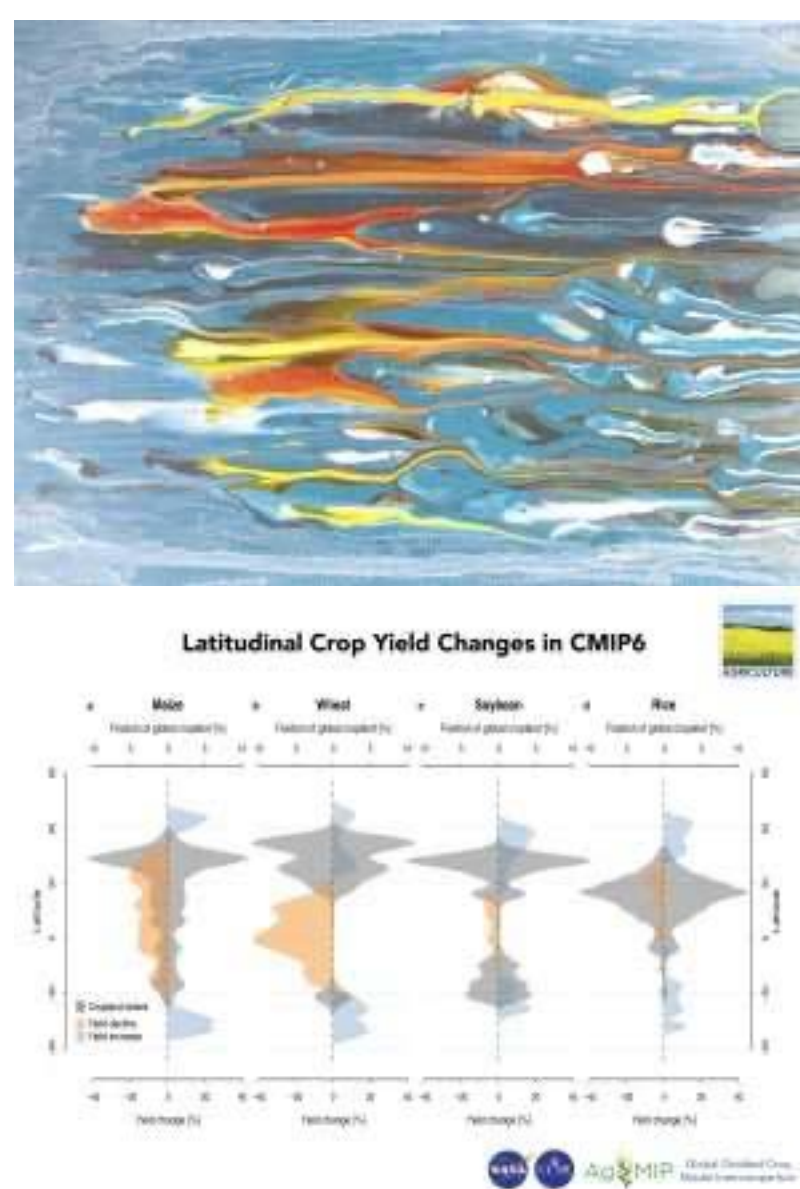


**Abby Luby**

What happens when artistic creative energies are inspired by raw, scientific data?

Experimenting with this very idea in 2020, at the height of the COVID pandemic, the [Climate Impacts Groups](#) at the [NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies](#) started the “Science & Art Initiative,” seeking to challenge scientists isolated by the pandemic in a way they had never been challenged.

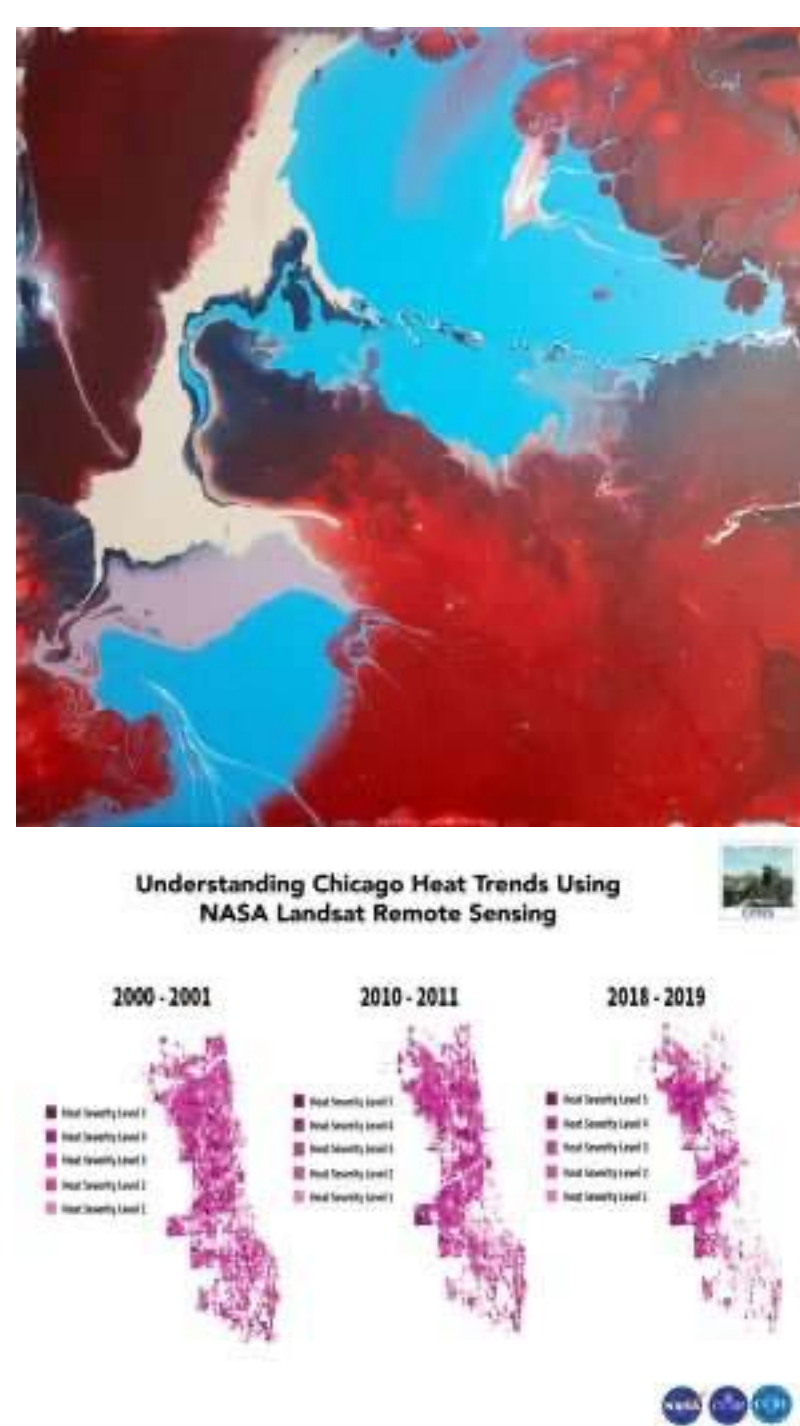
The unique, new approach was to re-interpret scientific data of charts, numbers and graphs that would ultimately inform scientists as they faced a blank canvas and contemplated applying different colors of paint. This particular process tailored for the researchers, is known as ‘paint pours,’ a method that was guided by artist [Kate Doyle](#), known for her visual environments based on climate change. Doyle had materials delivered to each group members’ home and via teleconferencing, she led the group to pour and manipulate the paint on the canvas to aesthetically connect to the visual data. Using these tools of artistic expression scientists engaged their imaginations to create work inspired by their straightforward statistical information.



## Paint pour by Dr. Jonas Jaegermey based on Latitudinal Crop Yield Changes for Maize, Wheat, Soybean and Rice

Freely pouring paint on a canvas, working colors with one’s personal gestural stamp and allowing color and fluidity to chance was quite therapeutic for scientists who live in the world of exacting data. It was a chance to visually express complex ideas, ideas that gave color, shape and texture to climate impacts on agriculture, cities and ecosystems in a way that sharpened their thinking and furthered the expression of information. They discovered the art they created had complemented the science.

For viewers of all ages, these intriguing, lyrical, energetic abstract images pique our curiosity about the art’s direct connection to the science. We are drawn to the nitty gritty impacts of climate change where art becomes a springboard to the science and vice versa.



## Paint pour by Dr. Christian Braneon based on Chicago Heat Trends Using NASA Landsat Remote Sensing

Over the past 3 years, the program was expanded to include undergraduate interns from [NASA’S Climate Change Research Initiative](#) who created triptychs integrating research and art. Students also created and led a Youth Climate Science & Art Workshop in 2022, a 3-day interactive virtual learning experience that involved climate change effects and climate advocacy. Participants created multimedia collages reflecting their area of interest.

A gallery at GISS is slated to open early next year premiering completed works of the Science & Art Initiative.