

Special Event

The Children are Now: Assembly

Welcome to **Assembly**, an event led by children and adults that aims to share ways of recognising, respecting and advocating for children's human rights. Made in collaboration with children – through Children's Parliament, Imagineate and Sistema Scotland – artists and academics, it is a journey that will involve conversations, talks, music, performance and play!

You will be asked to take part in some of the activities and we ask that all adults and children respect and listen to each other equally.

This programme will guide you through the event. If you have further questions, please feel free to ask a member of staff who will be wearing a Talbot Rice Gallery lanyard.

INTRODUCTIONS

Today's event is led by MCs Abigail and Benjamin, who have been supported by artist Althea

14:05 – ART MAKES CHILDREN POWERFUL

Child Human Rights Defenders (Rida, Flynn, Evie, Eva) in conversation with Research Assistant Min

Discussing the process of making placards for the exhibition to express children's calls to action, Child Human Rights Defenders will reflect on art-making and empowerment.

14:20 – FREEDOM REQUIRES FREE PEOPLE - A DAY IN THE LIFE OF ADULTISM AND THE POTENTIAL OF CHILDISM

Presentations by our academic colleagues with a special guest from Rutgers University-Camden, USA*

Dawning "When Systems Can't Listen" – Fiona
Adultism means that children are excluded from places of power and the decisions that affect them. This opening chapter explores how children are prevented from fully participating in the world.

Light of Day: "Who Gets Protected, Who Gets Policed" – Marlies
Our next chapter examines why society sees some children as innocent and others as a threat. How are different children and childhoods valued differently?

Storm: "When Everything Intensifies" – Kasia
How does militarism become embedded in childhood? This chapter explores what happens when violence and conflict shapes children's everyday lives.

Dusk: "Where Does Childism End?" – Emma
In this chapter we look at what happens to adultism when children grow up. What experiences do we carry into youth and adulthood?

Night-time: "What the Stars Illuminate: Advocacy, Naming, Changing" – Kay and John
If adultism is the problem, can childism be the solution? Our final chapter considers ways forward.

14:55 – YOU HAVE GOT TO SPEAK, WRITE, PAINT, DANCE AND SING

A new composition by children!

Children – from Sighthill, Clovenstone and Canal View primary schools – working with Big Noise Wester Hailes (Sistema Scotland) have composed a new piece of music to help everyone learn about children's human rights.

15:10 – ASSEMBLE NOW!

A hands-on workshop initiated by artists Craig and Althea.

Inviting children and adults to play together to reimagine the Playfair Library, we will build a more equitable space. Making dens, shelters, resting spaces and playgrounds we will work out more dynamic ways of being together whilst exploring "Childish Citizenship".

15:45 – ELECTION

A performance by Bishop May Down, written in collaboration with children and produced by Imagineate. The cast are: Reel, Dominik, Willow and Jaxson

We end Assembly with a performance that imagines children as bigwig decision-makers with the power to make real change. A group of twelve-year-olds in fake moustaches deliver a political manifesto, offering children's perspectives on what is valuable in the world. They want to end war, lower food prices, and tax the rich - and they also want no school ever!

ELECTION was originally commissioned by the North Edinburgh Arts Youth Arts Collective with Imagineate, and was written by children from the NEA Youth Arts Collective and Forthview Primary School P6b.

Huge thanks to the children involved in today's event and the following people and organisations:

Our academic colleagues from **the University of Edinburgh**: **Dr Fiona Morrison**, Reader in Childhood Studies; **Dr Emma Davidson**, Senior Lecturer in Social Policy and Qualitative Research Methods/Co-director of the Binks Hub; **Dr Marlies Kustatscher**, Senior Lecturer in Childhood Studies; **Dr Katarzyna Kaczmarek**, Senior Lecturer in Politics and International Relations; **Professor Kay Tisdall**, Chair of Childhood Policy.

Special guest: **Distinguished Professor John Wall**, Rutgers University-Camden, USA. Wall is also Director of the Childism Institute and the Children's Voting Colloquium.

Althea Young is an interdisciplinary artist and social practitioner who regularly works in schools with young performers and school staff to create performance that disrupts notions of traditional children's theatre as well as the traditional school curriculum. Craig McCorquodale, short bio

Craig McCorquodale is an artist making work for both the theatre and public space, inviting all kinds of people into his projects in the hope that the live moment might help us challenge the perceptions we have of each other.

For ELECTION: **Bishop May Down** (they/them) is a Glasgow-based performance maker and facilitator; they make socially and politically engaged performance work with young people, and their wider conceptual practice imagines queer, post-human, and post-capitalist speculative futures.

Children's Parliament was established in 1996 to inspire greater awareness and understanding of the power of children's human rights and support the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) across Scotland.

Sistema Scotland is a charity on a mission to improve lives and strengthen communities across Scotland through its Big Noise music education programmes.

Imagine is the national organisation in Scotland, which develops, celebrates and presents theatre and dance for children and young people.

We would like to acknowledge the support and collaborations for this lecture and the symposium. This includes: The Binks Hub, CAHSS Challenge Investment Fund, Centre for Research on Families and Relationships, Children's Parliament, the Childhood & Youth Theme (CAHSS) and the Childhood & Youth Studies Group (MHSES, the University of Edinburgh).