Olafur Eliasson

Artwork asks politicians to demonstrate they are listening on World Children's Day

Embargo until the 16th of November

On World Children's Day, 20 November 2020, artist Olafur Eliasson asks political leaders and changemakers to demonstrate they are listening to the next generation.Initiated by Eliasson's public artwork Earth Speakr, kids' messages on the future wellbeing of the planet are being delivered to politicians prompting reaction, and amplified on social media under #ListenToTheFuture.

Over 250,000 people have collectively taken part in Earth Speakr since it launched in July on the occasion of the German Presidency of the Council of the EU 2020. Eliasson started the multilateral artwork – featuring an app and a website available in 25 languages – to amplify kids' hopes and concerns on climate change, promoting cross-generational exchange across Europe and beyond.

Art and culture provide a space, a meeting point, to connect and share perspectives, while celebrating differences. When engaging with a work of art you can gain a sense of feeling listened to, seeing your ideas reflected in the form and structure of an artwork. To me this two-way exchange is essential. Earth Speakr is an artwork made by kids who express themselves creatively about the climate and their own future. The artwork invites you to listen to their brilliant, funny, and, not surprisingly, heartbreakingly honest messages.

World Children's Day is a reminder to us all to show kids – and to demonstrate through action – that their down-to-earth views are entirely valid and much-needed in shaping our future. They must become co-designers of our tomorrow. To recognise the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including the child's right to be heard, I ask politicians and other people in power to work to make this happen, not just today but every day of the year.
– Olafur Eliasson, Artist

Kids are speaking up

Children from 70 countries and counting are co-creating the artwork by sharing their views – in their native languages – using the app's augmented-reality technology. The video messages are addressed to adults, but also to other kids, offering solutions, ideas, and sharing frustrations.

Hello, I need to say something. Please protect the environment, otherwise there won't be any future. There is no Planet B, and there is no Plan B if we are not doing something. Thanks for your help. **– states the pavement in Kapfenberg, Austria**

I wish people would eat fewer animals. **– says a wall in Tallinn, Estonia**

For each child born, a tree should be planted. **– suggests a leaf from Leiria, Portugal**

To ensure kids' messages are being heard, over 108 Earth Speakr virtual or in-person events, organised by a growing network, are actively inviting kids to be the artists and bring their surrounding environment to life. Goethe-Institutes and German Embassies across the EU have supported the artwork from its initiation, enabling kids to discuss their messages first-hand with local politicians. Innovative collaborators and partners, including Dokk1, Aarhus Public Libraries (Denmark), the cultural institution TBA21–Academy Ocean Space (Italy), World Clean Up Day, and Young Innovators by EIT Climate-KIC are integrating Earth Speakr into their environmentally-focused activities.

Earth Speakr is funded by the Foreign Federal Office and realised in cooperation with the Goethe-Institut. To take part, download the Earth Speakr app from Google Play or App Store and visit https://earthspeakr.art/en/

Earth Speakr in Ireland

The future lies in our hands and with our original EarthSpeakrs we are being heard. We might be children but that does not mean we do not respect or appreciate our environment. On the contrary, we see the world in front of us very clearly through the eyes of children – eyes that are not blinded by money, politics or corruption. The reality is: something has to be done! Now or never, before it is too late!" ***– 5th Year Student, Coláiste Íosagáin, Dublin***

*Our youth is the first generation to protest in the name of science and climate justice, and they are calling for us, the adults in the room, to enable them on their journey to a zero-carbon economy by 2030. With Young Innovators we support teachers, students and educators with understanding systems thinking and complex problem-solving in and outside the classroom and give them the means to lead us to a prosperous, inclusive and resilient society. Young Innovators partners with Earth Speakr because every participant in the programme can amplify their ideas about a green future and make their voices heard to anybody around the globe. Just transition is a collaborative process and we all need to work together towards a mindset shift that will re-imagine the world and systems we operate within****. – Young Innovators by EIT Climate-KIC***

In October, Olafur Eliasson presented Earth Speakr during the TED Countdown, alongside Climate Activist Al Gore and Musician and Actor Jadon Smith, live-streamed by some 17 million viewers**.** This November, Earth Speakr will feature in It's Time – a two day digital festival of climate action also featuring His Royal Highness Prince Charles. Studio Olafur Eliasson has collaborated with leading institutions and experts to create Earth Speakr toolkits – free of charge and available in 25 languages – to inspire kids in museums, libraries and classrooms to speak up for the planet.

A country-wide response

Kids are taking part across the country, with messages arriving from 23 cities and towns, from Cork to Blackrock, Ballina to Loughlinstown. Kids have created Earth Speakr messages to air their concerns, creatively share ideas, or to support international environmental days such as World Clean Up Day and the Global Climate Strike. In Ireland a high number of kids have categorised their messages under the headlines Animals, City and Future. With individual messages animating local environments, the artwork reveals a global picture of hyperlocal views, united in the framework of the artwork.

Stop cutting down the trees! – cries a trees in County Kildare, Ireland

We need to work together to stop the climate change. – states a drawing of the world in Bray, Ireland

Explore AR Loud Speakrs in person or online

On the artwork's interactive website, adults can amplify messages by creating a Loud Speakr – a large collection of messages brought together in augmented reality. Once created, Loud Speakrs can be shared online and placed on the virtual world map – in public squares, parks, in front of political buildings – to be explored in real life through the Earth Speakr app.

Over 580 Loud Speakrs are currently on the map in prominent locations, including the Leinster House, Dublin.

Earth Speakr

Earth Speakr is an artwork by Olafur Eliasson. It invites kids to speak up for the planet and adults to listen up to what they have to say.

The Earth Speakr app is available on Google Play and App Store from 1 July

Follow the project on social media:
@earthspeakr
#earthspeakr #listentothefuture

www.earthspeakr.art

Olafur Eliasson

Olafur Eliasson (b. 1967) is a visual artist working with sculpture, painting, photography, film, installation, and digital media. His studio is based in Berlin.

www.olafureliasson.net

Contact

For press enquiries, please contact:

Shane Lennon
shane.lennon@ogilvy.com
087 900 0320

Kate Stapleton
kate.stapleton@ogilvy.com
085 713 5253

Editors Notes

Watch Olafur Eliasson walk through his artwork, Earth Speakr, at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D00JF75NZdM&feature=youtu.be

Images and Videos

For further information and to download press images or videos, please visit: https://earthspeakr.art/en/press-and-media/

Get Involved

Kids can create Earth Speakr messages and invite their friends to make more.

Adults and today's decision-makers, change-makers, and global leaders can explore the Earth Speakr messages, create groups of messages – so-called Loud Speakrs – and share with others to amplify the topics that they find most relevant. Eliasson hopes those in politics will be inspired to bring Earth Speakr messages to the table to make kids feel met and heard.

Institutions can host an event and encourage kids to participate. Toolkits available on the website guide you in co-creating engaging activities for kids to explore the artwork and in bringing Earth Speakr into your existing programming.

Find out more at https://earthspeakr.art/en/get-involved

About Olafur Eliasson

Danish-Icelandic artist Olafur Eliasson (b. 1967) works with sculpture, painting, photography, film, installation, and digital media. His art is driven by his interests in perception, movement, embodied experience, and feelings of self and community. Not limited to the confines of the museum and gallery, his practice engages the public through architectural projects, interventions in civic space, arts education, policy-making, and climate action. Eliasson is internationally-renowned for his public installations that challenge the way we perceive and co-create our environments. In 2003, he made The weather project, a glowing indoor sun shrouded in mist at Tate Modern's Turbine Hall in London. In 2008, Eliasson constructed four expansive artificial waterfalls along the Manhattan and Brooklyn shorelines for The New York City Waterfalls. He has also explored art's potential to address climate change: for Ice Watch, he brought large blocks of free-floating glacial ice to the city centers of Copenhagen in 2014, Paris in 2015, and London in 2018. Passers-by could touch fragments of the Greenlandic glacial ice and witness its fragility as it disappeared before them. In 2019, Eliasson was named UNDP Goodwill Ambassador for climate action and the sustainable development goals.

Located in Berlin, Studio Olafur Eliasson comprises a large team of craftsmen, architects, archivists, researchers, administrators, cooks, art historians, and specialised technicians.

www.olafureliasson.net

About the German Presidency of the Council of the EU 2020

For information about the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union 2020 and the cultural programme please visit www.eu2020.de.

About the Goethe-Institut

The Goethe-Institut is the Federal Republic of Germany's cultural institute, active worldwide. With 157 institutes in 98 countries, we promote the study of German abroad, encourage international cultural exchange and convey a contemporary image of Germany. Through partnerships with institutions in numerous other locations, the Goethe-Institut has about 1,000 contact points worldwide. For more information please visit www.goethe.de/EU2020