

Kids take over Earth Speakr, an interactive artwork started by Olafur Eliasson

Earth Speakr is a new interactive artwork by artist Olafur Eliasson that amplifies kids' views on the future wellbeing of the planet. The artwork invites adults and today's decision-makers, change-makers, and global leaders to listen up to what kids have to say. Earth Speakr uses augmented reality and includes a free app and an interactive website (www.earthspeakr.art) available in the 24 official languages of the European Union. Eliasson created the artwork on the occasion of the German Presidency of the Council of the EU 2020.

London, 1 July 2020 - Earth Speakr launches today, inviting kids across the continent to collectively create an artwork by speaking up for the future of our planet.

An initiative by Icelandic-Danish artist Olafur Eliasson, Earth Speakr – which comprises an app, a website, physical presentations, and more – forms the central component of the cultural programme on the occasion of the German Presidency of the Council of the EU 2020. The artwork is funded by the Foreign Federal Office and realised in cooperation with the Goethe-Institut. Earth Speakr is free-of-charge and promotes collaboration and reflection between people of all ages across Europe on climate change and the future of the planet.

Kids speak up for the planet

Over the next six months, everyone can download the Earth Speakr app and animate their environment using playful interactive technology. Kids and young people below the voting age can choose to take part by giving their voice and speak up for their local surroundings and for the planet. Their creative messages are shared on www.earthspeakr.art and experienced on the app via Augmented Reality (AR).

"Earth Speakr is a collective artwork that invites kids to be artists. What Earth Speakr will become depends on the Earth Speakrs – their creativity and imagination. The artwork is made up of their thoughts and visions, concerns and hopes. What they create can be playful and whimsical, serious, or poetic. There is no right or wrong, and it is easy for everyone to take part. Earth Speakr invites kids to speak their hearts and minds and participate in shaping our world and the planet, today and in the future", said Olafur Eliasson.

"Children are usually expected to be attentive in school and follow rules. But now it is our turn, as adults, to listen to what young people have to say. In Earth Speakr, Olafur Eliasson gives children a unique opportunity to creatively and thoughtfully come up with ideas that have the potential to benefit the future of all Europeans. With their voice recordings transmitted in the heart of European policymaking, Earth Speakr gives young people the floor and for the sake of our common future, we better listen carefully," said Heiko Maas, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany.

To include as many people as possible, Eliasson and his studio developed a predominantly digital artwork with the support of an extensive team including kids, researchers, and other specialists. Earth Speakr is made available in the 24 official languages of the European Union and can be accessed worldwide. In addition, the project is partnering with a growing network of museums, libraries, and educational institutions, such as the Goethe-Institut, to share the artwork online and in person when and where possible in times of social distancing.

Adults listen to the future

Earth Speakr amplifies kids' messages and invites adults and today's decision-makers, change-makers, and global leaders to listen to them. At www.earthspeakr.art, adults can demonstrate that messages are being heard by creating so-called 'Loud Speakrs', AR collections of messages. Loud Speakrs can be placed anywhere on a virtual map – in public squares, parks, above political buildings – to encourage others to listen too. Earth Speakr messages are also streamed at the European Parliament in Brussels and Strasbourg, and in Berlin at the "Lichthof" of the Federal Foreign Office.

"Life on Earth is a coexistence of people, animals, plants, and ecosystems. We must acknowledge this coexistence and then take the right actions to nurture it. In today's debates over climate policy, it is crucial that the voices of the next generation are heard loud and clear, since it is they who will live in the future that we are currently shaping.

My artwork Earth Speakr invites kids to speak up for the climate, whether with concern or hope. With the Earth Speakr app, they can express themselves through anything of their choice in their local environments. The artwork brings together their voices and amplifies what they have to say. We – adults, decision-makers, and politicians – need to hear the kids' creative messages and take them seriously", said Olafur Eliasson.

From 1 July 2020, kids' messages will appear on Earth Speakr's virtual map, and Loud Speakrs can be viewed in AR at prominent locations across the EU. To find out more and to participate in creating the artwork, download the Earth Speakr app from Google Play or App Store, visit the website at www.earthspeakr.art, and join the discussion @earthspeakr on social media.

Are you ready to listen to the future?

Editors Notes

Watch Olafur Eliasson walk through his artwork, Earth Speakr, at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFuqKULtMl0&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

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.

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