

# **Culture Minister Jenny Gilruth visits ESF's Elemental**

**Jenny Gilruth, the Minister for Culture, Europe and International Development, visited Elemental, a new interactive multimedia art installation at Summerhall as part of 2021 Edinburgh Science Festival.**

**As every year, the Festival champions art-based learning in science and the power of bringing scientists and other creatives together with a programme that truly puts the A (Arts) into STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths), turning Edinburgh into a science playground for people of all ages and offering a wide range of digital events for the sci-curious around the world – all available until 11 July.**



Culture Minister Jenny Gilruth said: “The Edinburgh Science Festival is quite rightly world renowned for the way it brings the wonder of our universe to life for so many different audiences.

“It was a privilege to see the imaginative and engaging way complex ideas can be communicated to even the youngest of people. I am pleased the Scottish Government was able to provide £130,000 to develop the incredible Elemental installation which I’m sure will be enjoyed by the many

children and adults that visit.

“It’s important we excite and build interest in science because we have all seen the vital role it has played in our fight against the COVID pandemic and the central part it will play in overcoming the great challenges of our time such as climate change.

“Our ambition is to train more talented individuals who can share their passion and wealth of expertise with young people to encourage everyone to build a strong base of science technology, engineering and maths (STEM) skills and knowledge. It is particularly pleasing to see the focus on gender balance at this year’s festival, with 60% of speakers women and the women in STEM street art trail.”



Some of this year’s STEAM Festival highlights include:

Creating an immersive digital world where magic meets alchemy and alchemy meets science, Elemental invites its audiences to play, discover, create and experience how the Elements – air, fire, earth, water – come together to create the almost infinite variety of our Universe. The experience is created by Bright Side Studios who connect the space between art and technology to create powerful human experiences. The installation is supported by the Scottish Government’s Expo Fund and the Royal Society of Chemistry.

Also at Summerhall is Syncrasy, a group contemporary art exhibition co-curated by Summerhall and ASCUS Art & Science and featuring: Sneha Solanki probing the habitats of the unnatural and presenting a new and expanding rendition of the ‘E-Number’ food additive system in E-Numbers V2.0; in Oscillations, Victoria Evans explores how distant and invisible phenomena affect our everyday lives – using data sonification, she makes audible the cyclical patterns of the tides and their interplay with lunar and solar orbits;

inspired by eczema genetic research laboratory, Beverley Hood multi-artform sensory exhibition We Began As Part of the Body tells a story as seen from a point of view of an artificial skin cell, from the precious, short three week long in vitro life to disposal.



With 60% of this year's Festival speakers women, Edinburgh Science Festival is committed to achieving gender balance in science communication and celebrating the achievements of women scientists. The embodiment of this pledge is Women in STEM Street Art Trail, an Edinburgh trail featuring 9 locations, each showcasing a large-scale graffiti portrait of a different female scientist created by artists Shona Hardie and Kerry Wilson.

Internationally renowned artist Luke Jerram presents his new touring artwork In Memoriam at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, marking its Scottish premiere. Featuring large blue and white flags made out of NHS bedsheets, the artwork is formed in a shape of a medical logo to pay tribute to NHS workers and also serve as a commemorative space to remember those who lost lives in the Covid-19 pandemic.

All images credit – Chris Scott