

# Artists get no apology from A Statue for Elsie Inglis

The artists who were getting ready to submit their entries to win the commission to create a statue for Elsie Inglis say the latest statement from the charity which holds the funds to pay for the new statue does not apologise to them.

The procedure to choose an artist was not concluded when the trustees stopped it without warning in late September. Then in October the trustees announced that the man who has already created statues of Adam Smith and David Hume for the High Street was being engaged. They explained that when they viewed the reports of the procession on the High Street at the time of HM The Queen's death in September they "recognised the statue needed to meet with the historical consciousness of the Royal Mile. It was further confirmed we needed to rethink our approach as we watched The Queen's coffin and the cortege make its way to St Giles' Cathedral for a service of remembrance".

At an earlier stage the artists, through a member of their Facebook group, Michael Hill, explained: "No explanations or apologies have been offered. The decisions made have been behind closed doors and without public consultation or scrutiny.

"We strongly believe Dr Elsie Inglis would not support the sudden cancellation of the original open call for submissions

and hiring of the Royal sculptor and the resulting blocking of women from entering the commission. This decision goes against the aims of the campaign. It stands in direct opposition to the core beliefs expressed by Dr Elsie Inglis herself. The Trustees' actions are unreasonable, not transparent and the unjust and disorganised situation that has resulted reflects poorly on Dr Elsie Inglis' legacy."

The group DR ELSIE INGLIS STATUE FOR THE PEOPLE -we will not sit still! was set up by artist Natasha Phoenix. In response to our article [publishing the latest statement](#) from the charity A Statue for Elsie Inglis, Natasha has issued her response.

## **The statement from artists:**

"Alexander Stoddart was approached to make sure the opportunity to create this reached as many people as possible, instead it was closed down to all artists.

"Trustees say they reserve the right not to commission any of the designs, however when you read the brief you can see, it looks like that would happen at the end of the process, like in every other commission.

"They clearly feel entitled to ignore what the public have made so clear, and unfortunately this gives the impression that they value the kudos of securing an established sculptor above running a fair process and giving emerging artists a chance to be part of the history of Edinburgh. What kind of message does commissioning of this send to the children of Edinburgh.

"While Sandy Stoddart's work is admirable, does anybody really want the Royal Mile to become an Alexander Stoddart theme park?

"This is going to be such an inspirational piece for so many

women and girls. Dr Elsie Inglis strongly believed in creating opportunities for women to work. How can we honour Elsie Inglis while ignoring her basic principles? They literally took this away from women and girls. It's shocking that they have separated Dr Elsie Inglis from her lifelong dedication to women's rights."

Dr Elsie Inglis died in 1917 of cancer and her own funeral was held in St Giles Cathedral, before her burial in Dean Cemetery.

