

A statement by Create London in response to Common Wealth’s [statement](#) on the similarities between their performance work ‘CLASS the elephant in the room’ and Create London’s commission of Ellie Harrison’s ‘The Elephant in the Room’, which is nothing more than an unfortunate coincidence.

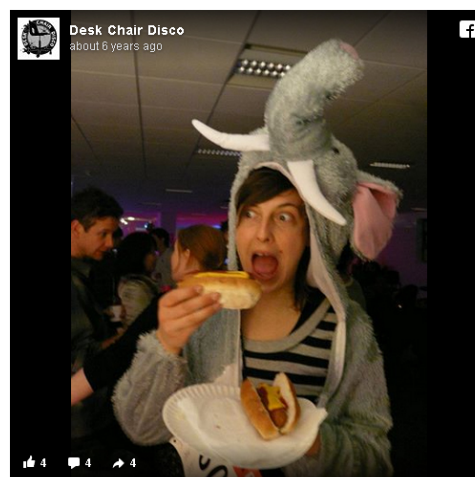
It is clear that all parties care passionately about the growing inequalities which divide our society and have extensive track records in research and active engagement attempting to address these. We therefore enter into resolving this issue with the spirit of solidarity that is required for us to build a fairer world.

In October 2017, Create London selected Glasgow-based artist Ellie Harrison from a shortlist to make a new work as part of *Panic! 2018 It’s an Arts Emergency*. Her proposal, with a working title ‘Power & Privilege (The Elephant in the Room)’, was devised as a response to a major new research paper on inequality in the creative and cultural sectors written by academics from the Universities of Edinburgh and Sheffield (due for release on 26 March 2018). This research builds on the well-known survey Create London initiated in 2015, [Panic! What Happened to Social Mobility in the Arts?](#)

From October 2017 – March 2018, Harrison has been working to develop her work with Create London’s team, and, on Friday 9 March she launched an open call for people to take part in a [Power & Privilege Workshop](#) in London on 14 April 2018 as part of the project.

On Saturday 10 March, Harrison received an email from Rhiannon White of Common Wealth alerting her to the similarities of her project with their work ‘CLASS the elephant in the room’. In her reply on Saturday 10 March, Harrison explained the provenance of her idea:

“Thanks for your message and the link! Yes, I see there are some similarities in the aesthetic and themes of the work. I was not aware of your project until now and derived my concept from my experience of doing Power & Privilege Workshops... when on the [Campaign Lab](#) course in London in 2013-2014. The elephant costume idea came to me from my [Desk Chair Parade/Disco](#) which I did in... Newcastle in 2011 and via a quote from [Loki](#) writing about my [The Glasgow Effect](#) project in 2016.”



“...people are actually annoyed at the big floppy-haired elephant in the green room: they are annoyed at rising social inequality and how this expresses itself culturally.” — [Loki](#) writing on [The Glasgow Effect](#) in 2016

Harrison has not yet had a reply from White and is very keen to meet and discuss possibilities for collaboration in tackling the important issues they are both passionate about addressing in their work.

We acknowledge more diligence could have been given to researching the title of the work before its launch, however, as [Loki](#)'s quote (above) suggests, this idiom is often used to refer to social class. We are also aware of another event addressing social mobility in the arts held at the Royal College of Art in 2015, which was also called '[The Elephant in the Room?](#)'

In order to resolve this issue and ensure there is no further confusion with Common Wealth's work, Harrison has decided to change the title of her project to 'Power & Privilege'. She will be working over the course of this week to remove online references to the previous title.

Create London would also like to stress our full support for Common Wealth's work. Create London's drive to commission and publish this research is to create conversation and action around social mobility in the arts and are therefore happy to see that Common Wealth quoted the 2015 Panic! research in their [report](#). We support any other work created in the UK to promote these conversations and address the issues the creative and cultural sectors face. We encourage Common Wealth to continue their important work.