

Charlotte Square Gardens, Edinburgh

10 - 26 August 2019

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 Edinburgh
International
Book Festival

Tuesday 20 August 2019

Ellie Harrison discusses *The Glasgow Effect* at the Edinburgh International Book Festival

“The most sustainable way of addressing the climate emergency and inequality is reducing the lifestyles of the most privileged people in society, that’s actually what we need to do.” said Ellie Harrison, the artist behind the controversial art project *The Glasgow Effect*. She was speaking today with writer Jemma Neville at the Edinburgh International Book Festival about her book and Neville’s new release *Constitution Street*.

Harrison received £15,000 of Creative Scotland Funding for her 2016 performance art piece during which she did not leave Glasgow for a year. The piece received criticism for seeming to trivialise the phenomenon in which people in Glasgow tend to die younger than in other cities with a similar socio-economic background.

“What I wanted to do in choosing the title of *The Glasgow Effect*,” Harrison said “And what’s central to the analysis in the book is linking together the economic, the social and the environmental problems that we’re facing. And actually what we have to do at this time of climate emergency and growing inequalities, is we have to find solutions that are going to address both of them at once. We can’t just tackle one of them.”

“Privatisation is the thing that I am most angry about and the thing that I think has the most devastating impact on our lives today.” She added. “There’s massive inequalities just in these very basic services we need to be able to live in a city.”

She also spoke of the backlash to her piece, which she thought was due to an image of her “parachuting in from England and taking the mick.” Harrison claimed that Orwell award winning book *Poverty Safari* by Darren McGarvey was prompted by her piece. “He was so angry that I got this money that he managed to channel that anger into producing this book, which is a great book.”

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Constitution Street is a social history of residents on one street in Leith, and Neville explained some of her findings from her research; “We have a tale of two cities certainly when everyday people are looking through the big black bins because they’re hungry and they don’t have enough food and at the end of the street is a Michelin restaurant. That isn’t good enough. We have to move from commodification of the space.”