

Hello Everybody,

My name is Shaun Dunne. I'm the artist in residence here at the Ark.

I work with responsibility to the Children's Council.

You've seen them all over the shop today, taking photos and introducing themselves, I'm sure.

My job really is to guide this group in their discovery of the ark.

I support them to meet, talk, criticize, ask questions and get involved in any way they want. We see work together. We have Q&A's with the artists. We collaborate. We learn new skills. And we play.

Not every child gets to play in this way. Not every child in Ireland is brought to the table in the same way. That's an issue.

Over the year, we've talked a lot about equality. We've talked about homelessness. We've discussed who's posh and who's not. Over lunch, we've discussed education and what it's worth. There all going to different schools next year...

These young people are very alert. They're very aware. In the making of this film, we discussed our differences. We understand there's a tier.

But just because they understand it- that doesn't mean that they accept it. That doesn't mean it's fair. Access. Who gets to access what and where? And when?

Access is a big theme in my work and I'm delighted to be resident in an organisation that is supporting young people to avail of creativity without the pressures of the financial.

Similar investment, when I was younger, was crucial to my development as an artist so I'm delighted to be a part of a conversation and an action that pays that investment forward in some way.

Today, we're here today to talk about Children's Rights.

And we're to talk about the right to play.

As an artist you talk a lot about play. You talk about the release it gives. You talk about representation in play and you try to encourage people to watch you play and play more themselves because you believe in the respite it gives, the interrogation it promotes and the empathy it can provoke.

As adults we don't think about playing as much.

I think we can often look at young people playing and feel like they're the luckiest people in the world.

We look at play like it's a luxury, not like it's something you deserve.

We're here today to promote the ideology that children should be seen and heard. We want the young people of Ireland to know that they have rights. And that play is a right too.

Every month in the Ark I meet with a group of young people and yes, we play.

But we play the political. We make fictions inspired by real things. We talk about the now.

Hopefully, today, you'll watch this film- which is a slice of the conversation that we'll continue to have- and be mobilised to support your children in their play and in their rights.

Let them know what they deserve. Let them be verbal. Let them be seen and heard.

I'm going to hand you over to four members of our Children's Council now.

Grace, Naoise, Abbie and Lee.

Thank you!