

How to Talk with Children about Global Warming

by D. Franklin

Summary

How to Talk with Children about Global Warming (HtTwCaGW) is a multimedia work-in-progress focused on somatizing eco-social awareness. It explores our somatic relationship with environmental issues. The various media are "entrances" for the audience. One might attend the dance performance and see scifi books for sale; another might read the book and discover the music; yet another might hear the music and attend the exhibition of drawings; etc. The piece is modular and each of the components can be presented independently or as a whole (depending on logistical and funding constraints).

- Solo dance performance in a black box theater (or outdoors, according to Covid-19 restrictions)
- Soundtrack of experimental electro-acoustic music for the dance performance, released online in conjunction with music videos
- Gallery exhibition of pen-and-ink drawings combined with digital prints to create a non-digital "poetic blockchain" that articulates the philosophy of *HtTwCaGW*. Alternatively, drawings would be printed as postcards and distributed as part of a street art performance.
- Site-specific guerrilla public street art workshops aimed at provoking public discourse. One aspect is a public art festival celebrating cooperation and somatic adaptation that enables safe physical togetherness. In the context of Covid, imagine public space with 2m circles drawn to encourage distancing; string quartets play, while wind instruments join in only from windows at a safe distance; choreographers create site-specific dances in which the dancers wear respirators, etc. Individual street performances include masking statues and selling rose-colored glasses while distributing respirators for free.
- A series of movement education workshops based on a "dialogue with the body" to explore somatic heritage and physicalizing narratives.
- Scifi storytelling: dramatic envisioning of collective future(s) through writing / storytelling workshops / public readings
- Curriculum materials for teachers/parents to use with children, exploring their fears about environmental issues and encouraging ecological living*

** Development of prototype materials would start after participation in Driving the Human October 2021. The experiences and contacts gained would support the development of future-proofed curriculum materials (in consultation with educators) aimed at somatizing eco-social awareness.*

The common thread of all these elements is somatic education for all, but especially for children, thus future-proofing knowledge by embodying it. The theme "global warming" is a stand-in for humanity's approach to threats facing the biosphere, while "children" are a stand-in for all of us. Rationalist technocratic solutions and regulations seem to be failing because of a global crisis of epistemology and fragmentation of consensus reality. What is our collective somatic reaction? Humanity's survival may depend on mass behavioral changes that move toward voluntary simplicity, and which could be sparked by cultural changes in which our ethical compasses are re-oriented toward collective survival through an art that incorporates physicalized storytelling to re-narrate public discourse and change our bodies' relationships with the environment. The goal of all the various aspects of the piece is to somatize and embody an up-to-date form of eco-social awareness.



D. Franklin is a visual artist, performer, somatic movement educator, videographer, musician and translator who lives near Prague, Czech

Republic. Originally from New York City, he is a graduate of Harvard (A.B. cultural anthropology 1987), the Boston School of the Museum of Fine Arts (Dip. video and performance 1995) and Université Paris 8 St-Denis (M.A. digital humanities 2015).

His career spans the remarkable. He has supervised film and TV crews with political figures, rock stars, and iconic intellectuals in the lens (George W. Bush, Bill Clinton, Amanda Palmer, Noam Chomsky). He has performed with a Czech dissident artist and in a cult film/performance (Milan Kohout, Michael Pope's *Neovoxer*). He has managed an acupuncture clinic for people with AIDS and has led Shintaido movement workshops in the US, Japan, France, Italy, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and on a deserted island.

His current work-in-progress, *How to Talk with Children about Global Warming*, is a dance performance, series of drawings, guerilla street performances, and album of electro-acoustic music based on his science fiction novel of the same name.

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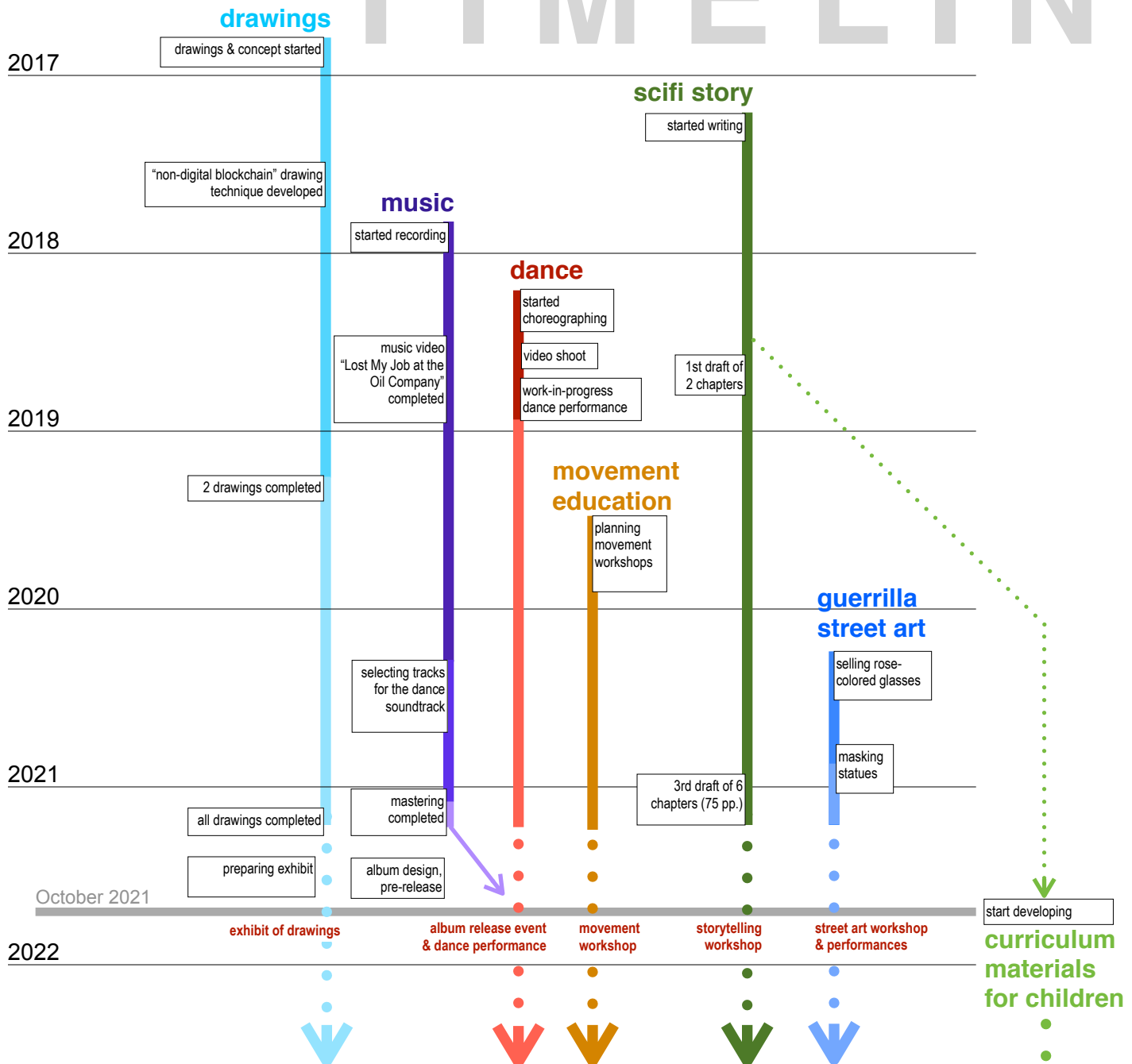
www.dfranklin.org



photo
Michaela
Vojteková



TIMELINE



Anticipated outcomes: Berlin, October 2021

Due to the unpredictability of the Covid-19 situation, all events should be structured with the assumption that they will be held outside in the open air (streets, parks, public squares). If conditions allow, some events would ideally be indoors. Planning should allow for both contingencies.

- drawings** gallery exhibit of drawings / or distribution of printed reproductions as street performance / outdoors
- music** the recorded music project is integrated into the dance performance
- dance** solo performance with recorded music plus mini live concert in a small theater / or outdoors
- movement workshops** challenge somatized individuality and learn group movement in a gym, studio / or outdoors
- storytelling workshops** develop awareness of narratives and how they become somatized in a studio / or outdoors
- guerrilla street art** activates public spaces as sites of both aesthetic and ethical discourse / only outdoors

curriculum materials were developed by a fictional character in the novel *HtTwCaGW*; the experiences, knowledge, and contacts anticipated during *Driving the Human* will be used afterwards to drive the prototyping of real future-proofed curriculum materials (in consultation with educators) focused on somatizing eco-social awareness.



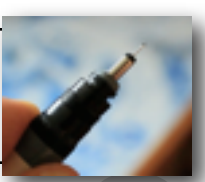
BUDGET

HtTwCaGW @Driving the Human, Berlin October 2021	
Subtotals for each module	
	dance performance budget
If in a theater:	Technical requirements: capacity 80 - 200, rear-projection screen, theatrical projector, marley floor, stage min. 8 x 12m, basic lighting grid, PA system
	• venue rental: 2 days rehearsal + 3 days performance € 2500
	• personnel: lighting & audio technicians x 5 days € 4000
	• admin support: ticketing
	dance performance in a theater subtotal € 6500
If outdoors:	Technical requirements: outdoor location where a campfire is possible (performance will start in darkness before sunrise), battery-powered portable PA system, transportation. the preferred location is Berlin's Tempelhofer Feld, but this is flexible
	• PA rental € 50
	• car rental € 50
	• personnel: audio technician x 1/2 day € 300
	dance performance outdoors subtotal € 400
	drawing exhibition budget
If in a gallery:	Technical requirements: Small white-cube gallery (40-80m2)
	• framing of work prior to exhibition € 500
	• rental for 2 weeks € 2100
	• wine and cheese etc. for gallery opening € 60
	drawing exhibition in a gallery subtotal € 2660
If outdoors:	Technical requirements: • printing 2000 postcards € 100
	drawing exhibition outdoors subtotal € 100
	movement workshops budget
If in a gym/studio	Technical requirements: wood floor, min 15m2 per participant x min 10 participants
	• gym or studio rental 2hrs x 3 sessions € 180
	movement workshop in gym/studio subtotal € 180
If outdoors:	Technical requirements: the preferred location is Berlin's Tempelhofer Feld, but this is flexible
	movement workshop outdoors subtotal € 0
	storytelling workshops budget
If in a studio or theater	Technical requirements: min 15m2 per participant x min 10 participants
	• studio or theater rental 2hrs x 3 sessions € 180
	storytelling workshops budget subtotal € 180
If outdoors:	Technical requirements: a park or similar location, not too noisy
	movement workshop outdoors subtotal € 0
	guerrilla street art workshops budget
Variant 1: masking statues	Technical requirements: (building the statue-masking device, then using it in public space) access to basic woodworking tools: workbench, drills, saws, measuring tape -- could be outdoors if there is access to electricity and an adequate work surface
	• woodshop / tool rental for max 8 participants 1 hr € 60
	• supplies (wood, respirators, clips, nuts, bolts, washers, sandpaper) € 120
	guerrilla street art workshop Variant 1 subtotal € 180
Variant 2: public engagement, interaction and improvisation	Technical requirements: public space
(outdoors only)	guerrilla street art workshop Variant 2 subtotal € 0
Global expenses	(regardless of which module is funded)
	round-trip travel Prague-Berlin € 100
	artist's honorarium €300/day x 6 days € 1800
	artist's per diem (meals, transport w/in Berlin, misc. €50 x 6 days) € 300
	accommodation in Berlin €40 x 6 days € 240
	subtotal global fixed expenses € 2440
Total funding requested	
(indoor variation)	€ 12140
Total funding requested	
(outdoor variation)	€ 2940

HtTwCaGW has modular components, each of which could be presented independently depending on budgetary or other considerations, or ideally the piece would be presented as a unitary whole. Variations (indoors and outdoors) of each module are included to adjust for restrictions concerning Covid-19.

Guerrilla street art workshop: building a statue-masker





DRAWINGS

→
When you start/stop to scratch the itch, you water the Fields of Uncertainty
Digital print, rapidograph on paper. 33" x 21" (84 x 53cm)

↓ (detail)



If, as Oppenheimer said, the 'progress' of civilization is not a fraud, why is there no fork in the road of the anumus mundi? [sic]
Digital print, rapidograph on paper. 33" x 21" (84 x 53cm)

↓ (detail) →





MUSIC

<https://soundcloud.com/manta-601346377/spit-fire-at-the-devil>

<https://soundcloud.com/manta-601346377/rivers-of-space>

<https://soundcloud.com/manta-601346377/arctic-twang>

All pieces were improvised and recorded in a single take, “live-to-tape” with no multitrack recording, overdubbing or post-production. These home recordings were made with acoustic nylon string guitar, an SM57 microphone, a Roland AC-33 portable guitar amp with chorus, reverb, and phrase-looper effects, and custom-built analogue synthesizers made from a children’s toy called Little Bits, recorded on a Zoom H5 digital recorder. The analogue synthesizers do not have sampling. Technically, the looper is a type of sampling, but none of the sounds in my music were sampled, recorded, or prepared prior to the “live-to-tape” recording, with the exception of the voices in *Lost My Job at the Oil Company*.

MUSIC VIDEO

<https://vimeo.com/390846365>

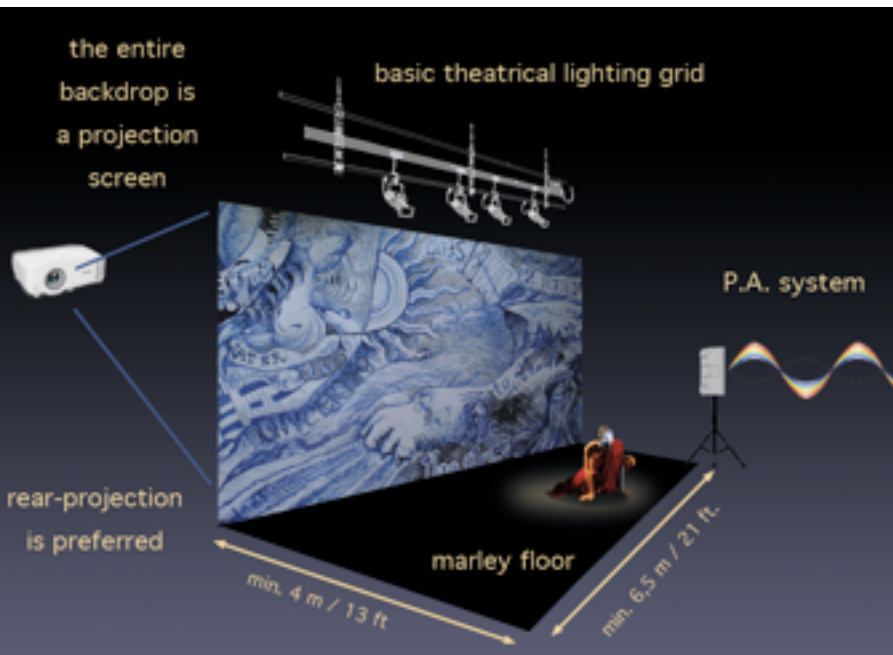


DANCE



↑→
Work-in-progress performances at Lenka Jišová Studio (Pilsen) and Jméno Café (Prague) with flautist/composer Yii Kah Hoe (<http://www.yikahhoe.com/>), 2018

Technical requirements for theatrical presentation





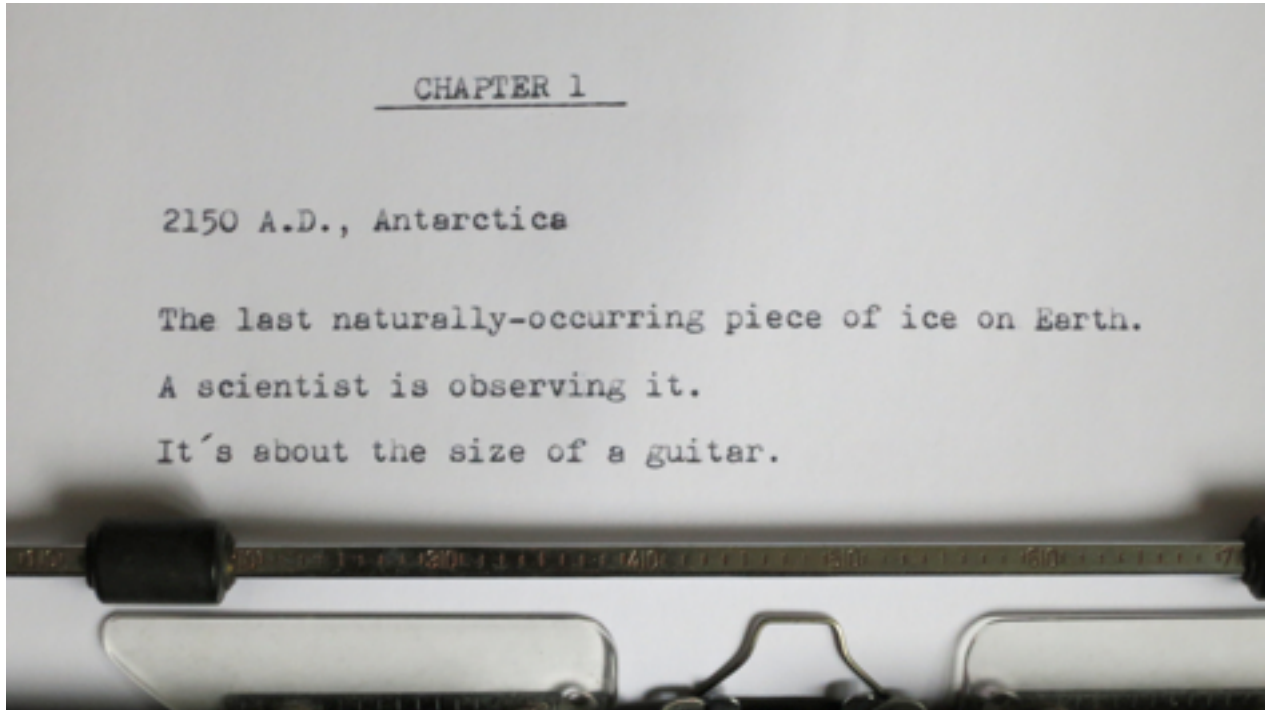
MOVEMENT EDUCATION



D. Franklin leading [Shintaido](#) movement workshops at Lamorlaye FR; Prague CZ; on a deserted island, Maine USA; with children in Pilsen CZ; and Bexhill UK



STORYTELLING



Sample creative writing exercise:

1. You are a single hydrocarbon molecule. Tell the story of the 20th century from your point of view. When you went from being underground for millions of years to being in the open air, were you "liberated" from pressure underground? Were you "extracted" from your comfortable home? How do you feel, floating above the Earth, destroying the ozone layer? As you serve the purposes of humans, are you a slave to their needs, or a happy robot? How do you feel about being used as an ingredient in napalm? Do you feel for your brothers and sisters, being refined, transported, and ignited in the engines of industry? Completing this assignment will require doing some research on the history of the fossil fuel industry, chemistry, geopolitics of the early 20th century in the Middle East, paleontology of dinosaurs, etc.

2. You are the entire Amazon rain forest...

Excerpt from the novel

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"They are the Monkeys That Burn Stuff," she wrote in her notebook. "They do what it is their nature to do. You don't blame bacteria for multiplying exponentially when given the chance, do you?" Was it racist to call the whole human species 'the Monkeys That Burn Stuff'? It's just descriptive. If somebody puts a value judgement on 'monkeys,' that their species-ism. Not my circus, not my monkey. Not my problem that your monkey has evolved from winging nasty-smelling turds at you to setting stuff on fire. Except it is my monkey, because we are all those monkeys. And we think we're the circus ringmaster. Aye, there's the rub.

She turned her bike around and went back to where she had come from. As the shadows of late afternoon sunbeams, having departed from the Sun 8 minutes 20 seconds ago and arriving in Cambridge, Massachusetts USA just now, lengthened into springtime evening twilight, and the red taillights glowed and blinked and winked in the stop-and-go traffic on the roads that curve in parallel with the ancient meandering rhythms of a river, she saw a man praying. She was about to meet Mahmoud and ask him why he was praying to cars....



STREET ART

MASKING STATUES

Masaryk monument, Pilsen, with the masked soldier standing as far as possible from Masaryk (to protect him?). A passer-by called the cops on me

At Saský Bridge (also called Roosevelt Bridge) in Pilsen, Czech Republic, built by Martin Stelzer. I don't know which saint this is. A passer-by laughed as I was putting the mask on the statue, commenting "Even these poor guys have to wear masks now." She was wearing a mask.



ROSE-COLORED GLASSES FOR SALE

Selling rose-colored glasses at the Ministry of Health, Prague (and distributing masks for free)



Multiple masks placed on Chaplin— a Sculpture of His Film (Chaplin— plastika němu filmu) by Vladimír Preclík in Prague's Barrandov district, home to several famous Czech film studios.

What people see at first:

What they see with rose-colored glasses:



Rose-colored glasses

50 Kč

masks: free

Rose-colored glasses

50 Kč

The statue-masker device in action at the Memorial to Victims of Communism (Pomník obětem komunismu) in Prague

