

Helen McCrorie

If play is neither inside nor outside, where is it?

13.07.19 — 06.10.19

If play is neither inside nor outside, where is it?, is a new film made by artist Helen McCrorie. The film centres on a child-led outdoor playgroup that meets in the grounds of a former military camp in Perthshire.

Helen is an artist working with video and documentary strategies. *If play is neither inside nor outside, where is it?* celebrates the innate creativity of play and has been filmed over several years, capturing different seasons and the unpredictability of children at play outdoors. The playgroup is inspired by the outdoor play movement and ideas of 'Loose Parts Play', which advocates for children to define the use or function of the materials that they engage with, allowing for free and imaginative play led by the children.

The playgroup meets in the unique site of Cultybraggan, built in 1941 as a former POW camp. The site still includes military architecture, such as a perimeter fence, Nissan Huts, a prison block, a military assault course, a firing range and a Cold War bunker. It is now in community ownership and supports a range of small businesses and community groups, except the bunker which is now privately owned and is being converted into an underground data storage facility.

The film features the two environments of Cultybraggan; the outside, in the camp where the children play, and the inside of the bunker. The contrast between the institutional bunker space with this outdoor site of emancipated creativity is inspired by the theories of child psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott, who described play as potential space between external reality and inner psychic reality. His assertion is that cultural experience begins with creative living first manifested in play, then expands into the whole of culture, bridging its different spaces. *If play is neither inside nor outside, where is it?* celebrates innate creativity and explores our understanding of data gathering and learning as interconnected, yet diverging, processes.

The film is narrated by a young female voice, reading an impossible manifesto from the view point of children asserting their rights to play, along with stories that relate to the site. The narrative encourages tangential and imaginative narrative strands, drawing from the mystery of the site and the connections and differences between play and data gathering, bodies and machines, learning, creativity and institutions.

Helen McCrorie's recent exhibitions and screenings include *Against the Flow*, Perth Playhouse, Platform Festival, Culture PK, 2018; *This Is It – Universe* at No. 35 Gallery, Bannockburn, 2017; and *The Clock in Commune*, The Glasite Meeting House, Edinburgh Art Festival, 2016.

Satellites Programme is Collective's development programme for emergent artists and producers based in Scotland. Satellites aims to support practitioners at a pivotal point in their careers through a critical programme of retreats, workshops, studio visits and group discussions, public exhibitions, events and publishing. Artists are selected from an open submission by a new panel each year. The 2018-19 participants are Helen McCrorie, Emmie McLuskey, Kimberley O'Neill and Katie Shannon.

COLLECTIVE

THE HILLSIDE

1. *If Play is Neither Inside nor Outside, where is it?* HD Video, 25mins, 2019.

Featuring: Cultybraggan Outdoor Playgroup

Narrator: Isla Cameron

Additional voice: Laura Cameron

Camera, edit, sound recordings : Helen McCrorie

Sound design: Helen McCrorie and Mark Vernon

Additional sound recordings: Mark Vernon

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