

THE HILLSIDE

Joey Simons

The Fearful Part Of It Was The Absence

04.12.21—13.03.22

About this exhibition

The Fearful Part Of It Was The Absence is a new project by Glasgow-based writer Joey Simons.

Taking its title from Henry Cockburn's observations on the 'terrible silence' and 'fearful absence of riot' that characterised the great demonstrations in Scotland in support of parliamentary reform in 1832, the exhibition presents his ongoing research into how the periodic eruption and absence of rioting has structured the spatial, emotional and class composition of Glasgow.

The exhibition comprises audio visual material, texts and poetry that exist as a site of ongoing interrogation and research. Lining the walls are a collection of newspaper reports, collated texts, first-hand accounts, government edicts, trial transcripts, documentary extracts, poems, songs and slogans as well as Joey's own writing. With the source of the extracts and quotations unclear, past and present intersect, and ideological

notions of progress are undermined. Materials are added, removed and rearranged during the course of the exhibition's life, acting as notes towards a new publication set to be published in March 2022.

In the centre of the room, a large table displays two new works; a two channel video titled *The Scotch are bad mobbers* and an audio piece *It was always around us: interview with Dee*. The video contains a series of clips taken over 2020 and 2021. Joey and photographer Jack Wrigley have recorded their friends reciting constellations of texts ordered around riots and their relationship to silence, language, violence, geography and weather.

As the group read the texts collectively, without rehearsal or preparation, we witness live fragmentation and interpretation of words, an explicit acting out and release, both serious and ridiculous. The components of a riot are performed – breaking into

sites, throwing bricks, falling, running, laughing, repetition, and boredom. At the same time, the performance throws into relief the absence of the real experience itself. The audio piece is a reflection from Joey's friend Dee on the process of filming and her thoughts on violence, language and class.

The Fearful Part Of It Was The Absence includes a workshop and the launch of a new publication. The workshop – *Bells Squibs Crackers Bonfires and Claret* – takes its title from an anonymous leaflet published during the King's Birthday riots in Edinburgh in 1792, and draws upon Calton Hill's long connection as a site of riotous assembly. The publication – *Lying Storms and Mild Storms* – synthesises the montages developed in the exhibition, and features photography by Jack Wrigley as well as new commissioned work from writers and poets reflecting on the significance of riots for Britain's towns and cities today.

COLLECTIVE

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Joey Simons is a writer, researcher, Workers' Educational Association tutor and tenant union activist from Glasgow. Joey's practice challenges the dominant material and ideological structures of historical production by addressing suppressed aspects of working class history, and using this as a basis for deepening political militancy today. He has published two works on the radical history of Easterhouse: *Let Us Act for Ourselves: Selected Works of Freddy Anderson* (Platform, 2020) and *Scheming* (Platform, 2021), a response to Jimmy Cauty's MdZ Estate tour. He is also project lead on the Glasgow Housing Struggle Archive.

Satellites Programme

Satellites Programme is Collective's development programme for emergent practitioners based in Scotland. Satellites aims to support diverse practitioners to produce a new commission and a critical development programme of critical of retreats, workshops, studio visits and group discussions, public exhibitions, events and publishing. Practitioners are selected from an open submission by a new panel each year. The 2021 participants are Stephanie Black-Daniels, Mina Heydari-Waite, Katherine Ka Yi Liu 廖加怡, Joey Simons and Ray Camara.

Thanks to

Thanks to Jack Wrigley, Siri Black, Dee Clark, Charlene O'Neil, Sonja Coquelin, Dava Bernard, Emmie McLuskey, Helen Charman.