

small moments of beauty + truth

ART INSPIRED BY THE CHILDREN OF GAZA

لحظات صغيرة من الجمال والحقيقة

FEATURING ARTISTS

Di Allison
Paul Bailey
Irene Briant
Dean Chatwin
Belinda Hall

Patrick Hall
Julie Gough
Pete Maarseveen
Julie Monro-Alison





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This exhibition started from a simple idea: that engaging in the world and committing to change, can begin by focusing on the small, shared moment. Acknowledging these shared moments of humanity brings us out of our insularity and small-mindedness to a mindset of generosity and expansiveness.

This can open our eyes to others' circumstances, vastly different to our own, political realities, and to uncomfortable truths. And it can facilitate the ability to listen to others' stories in their entirety.

I began by asking artists that I greatly respect to make work about childhood, and to donate these artworks to raise money for and awareness of a remarkable project. Gaza Children's Cinema gives children in Palestine the opportunity to experience, and engage with, the joy of cinema; a rare space where kids can be kids. The beauty and simplicity of this project however, cannot be separated from the realities that have led to its existence. Palestinians have suffered dispossession, military occupation, and armed conflict for 70 years, and those living in Gaza, an external blockade for the past 11 years. Of the 1.9 million residents in Gaza, nearly half are below 14 years of age, and 1.3 million are refugees.

This exhibition promotes and embraces the right to curiosity and wonder for all children; to reclaim childhood in a harsh world. Through the generosity of all involved, including the children of Gaza, I believe this exhibition offers a space of hope, a space of listening and, like Gaza Children's Cinema, a place where stories can be shared.

I am especially grateful to Ayman Qwaider and Samya Jabbour for their contribution to this project.

RICHARD SKINNER, CURATOR

gaza children's cinema

The Gaza Children's Cinema began with a chance meeting in the Spring of 2013. After a few years in Europe pursuing a Master's degree in Peace Studies, I had just returned to Gaza and was walking on the beach with some friends. There we met Ahmed, a 10-year-old boy at the time, who worked long hours selling ice-cream to people on the beach. We asked Ahmed about his situation and he spoke to us of the difficulty and hardships of working at such a young age to support his family. We realised that this conversation could have been his only opportunity to have an informal space to express himself and voice his own reality. Ahmed inspired the idea of a mobile cinema, as an idea to create a safe space for children. The Gaza Children's Cinema was born a few months later, in the Summer of 2013.

Gaza Children's Cinema is a community-based initiative run and directed by volunteers. It is a mobile cinema designed to move from one community to another. The initiative has been operating through building partnerships with existing non-profit and local community organizations since its foundation in 2013. We have lately partnered with Tamer Institute for Community Education, a leading education provision organization in Palestine. Targeting mainly marginalized, impoverished and border areas as well as refugee camps, we have managed to reach out to hundreds of families each month through organizing several screenings at different locations across the length of the Gaza Strip. In 2017 we held 160 screenings, giving thousands of children their first experience of cinema.

Gaza Children's Cinema provides children with a unique platform to verbalise their stories. Children are encouraged to draw their feelings and tell stories. Children are also encouraged to play out their experiences in supervised play sessions. These approaches enable the children to find ways to externalise the trauma, rather than letting it fester like an internal time bomb.

Mahmoud, a 15-year-old boy participating in one of the film workshops, had this to say about the children's cinema: "Expressing your sad feelings and sharing it with your peers about the situation in Gaza is better than hiding it inside yourself. When we smile but we have great internal pain, it is important for me to share how I feel in this platform..."

Gaza Children's Cinema is designed to offer regular routine, opportunity for self-expression and the chance to engage with peers in a safe and creative environment. We have found that gathering children together can support socialization, establish peer and family networks and encourage children to understand and accept views other than their own. It's important for us that the children don't suppress their feelings and that they search for their strengths and hope for the future. In the context of Gaza, if the children can't process their emotions during this time, they could be affected for the rest of their lives.

AYMAN QWAIDER
GAZA CHILDREN'S CINEMA
(CO-FOUNDER)



THE CALL TO PRAYER: FARAH ABDULRAHIM JAHJOUH, 13 صوت الأذان، فرح جججوح ١٣

these small moments

They've just bombed the cultural centre. My apologies, I intended for this to be quite a different piece of writing, but the heart of Gaza now lies on the theatre room floor and I don't have the stomach for poetry. The Said Al-Mishal Cultural Centre had stood as a towering testament to the creative will of the Palestinian people against all odds. Five stories high, it was one of only two places in the besieged Gaza Strip where theatre artists and musicians could rehearse and perform, where 2 million life-weary citizens could enjoy brief moments of reprieve from the stifling realities of occupation. It was the most treasured of all the venues used by the Gaza Children's Cinema. It took just seconds for Israeli air strikes to raze it to the ground.

For a people already brought to their knees, it's difficult to fathom what such a loss will bring. In the immediate term, the message it sends to the children who have already survived three brutal wars in the past decade seems to be clear: it is not enough to lose your loved ones, your schools, your freedom of movement, your innocence, your sleep, your dignity, and a good part of your sanity; you must also lose your culture. The consequences, medium and longer term, could be nothing short of monstrous. But this is Palestine, and the story doesn't end here.

Just hours after the Said Al-Mishal Cultural Centre was destroyed, I was sent a photograph that was at first difficult to believe. Watching video footage of the same scene only deepened my astonishment. There in the grey rubble of what remained of the cultural centre, a band of young people staged an impromptu concert. Guitars, keyboard and drums, amplifier and microphones rigged to the ubiquitous generator, accompanied angelic voices as they sang the Palestinian national anthem to a crowd gathered in the debris. The band's name: Al-Anqaa – The Phoenix.

This, it seems, is Gaza. And Gaza is teaching the world the sanctity of life.

The Gaza Children's Cinema appears as another phoenix rising from the smouldering remains of Palestine. In joyous scenes of bright colour, we see radiant children gathered to enjoy one of the simple pleasures of being children. This is no small thing in Gaza. From this distance, we take great comfort in these symbols of redemption. The phoenix rises, triumphant, from a parched, apocalyptic landscape of crushed concrete and unimaginable trauma. We glimpse a

thylacine emerging from the Tarkine. And we are momentarily released from the intolerable pain of witnessing the slow extinction of a people. We cry out through our tears, *here, see, they are rising from the ashes, they live!* And we rejoice in the resilience of their humanity, and therefore ours. And we hail the miracle of innocence reborn. And it is natural that we take some comfort here; for the horrific realities of Gaza – married with our own impotence to effect change – can be too harsh to bear witness without respite.

In these small moments, we are relieved of the discomfort of facing our complicity in their demise; we are absolved from the burden of looking too closely at the political realities that have allowed this gross inequity to continue unchecked for 70 harrowing years. Those who decry the mention of politics in public spaces invariably sit on the comfortable side of the political divide. It is the lot of the oppressed to advocate for the right to narrate their truth, as it is the privilege of the comfortable to deny them their voice.

I have a photograph of my father taken when a light still shone in his eyes. He is 14 years old, holding the Palm Sunday candle; his sister, my aunt, the other side of the altar, their uncle and baby cousin in the foreground; their parents notably absent. It was taken in Mar

Elias Cathedral, the church very near to their house that their father, my Dodo, was barred from after dignifying a parishioner with a funeral that the priest himself had denied. My Dodo was a man of honour.

When my father still had a light in his eyes he played marbles on the fertile ground of our lineage and dreamt under a roof of vaulted stone. With a slingshot in his pocket he ran with friends over terraced fields of olives and oranges and crouched under mulberry trees waiting for pigeons. He ate of the modest bounty laid out each day at his mother's table and learned to play chess at his Jiddo's knee. The ground was sure beneath his feet. Sure as Home.

May 15th, 1948. The Nakba. The end, and the beginning. The end of sure. The beginning of tallying the numbers to measure the distance back Home. My father's eyes took on a turbid opacity.

When a nation falls in the night and no one is awake to its implications, does it make a sound?

IMAGE CREDIT: MOHAMMED ZAAUN



IMAGE CREDIT: MOHAMMED ZAAUN



We count the killed, the orphaned, the permanently disfigured, the demolished, the displaced, the deranged, in orders of magnitude. Like a crazed hostage I find myself pacing, counting, numbering the steps from my sanity. UN Resolutions read like a discordant manuscript. 181: new borders drawn by men with no language. 194: our blessed right of return. 212: please help the refugees. 252: the holy city of Jerusalem protected. 2253: ...and defiled. 38/180: ...and defiled again. 302; 513; 1315; 2341: *still, please, the refugees...* 2792; 3236; 31/21; 32/40: *didn't you hear 194...?* 1: the power of veto.

There is no poetry in numbers. As there's surely no harmony in the calamitous symphony of occupation.

I was born on someone else's country. And someone else now walks the fertile ground of my lineage. And all of us are haunted. *Terra nullius* is a treacherous lie in every language.

I am too far from you. A silent rage impounds me. A gnarled tree imbeds its roots in the reedy marrow of my pelvis and its wooden trunk contorts around my spine. This is the story they planted in me, grown wild now in the unkempt garden of exile. I am ashamed that I allowed it to take root.

But I still carry the iron key to our door in the pocket next to my heart, and wherever I walk I scatter the path with jasmine flowers, lest I should lose my way in the night.

My friend sends me a link to a group in Gaza offering Arabic classes via Skype. The program is called We Are Not Numbers. My young teacher is terribly patient, sweet and kind. She is delighted to learn that I am Palestinian. *Why do you have no language*, she asks. *We were encouraged to assimilate*, I tell her. And together we lessen my isolation, and hers. And together we scatter jasmine flowers on the shared path of our decolonisation. Her mother comes in to her room some days, to teach me some Arabic of her own. During Ramadan she gives me several recipes for juices, her new favourite a Moroccan carrot juice that I should make in the summer. Her mother extends to me an unconditional welcome to her house, should I ever be allowed in to Gaza. *Where are you from*, she asks me. *Haifa*, I reply. *Insha'Allah, one day you will come Home.*

SAMYA JABBOUR
PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA
AUGUST 2018



MY INNER VOICE: BAYAN KHALED ABU AL-HUSSEIN, 14 صوتي الداخلي، بيان أبو الحصين ١٤



THE SOUND OF TANK TRACKS: IMAN ABU GHANAYEM, 14 آثار الدبابة، ايمان أبو غنایم ١٤



TORTURE OF THE PRISONER: FATIMA RABIA ABU RAKHIA, 14 عذاب الأسير، فاطمة أبو رحية ١٤



BIRDSONG: HABIBA BADWAN, 14 صوت العصافير، حبيبة بدوان ١٤

the lightness of seeing

DIANE ALLISON

2018

HD Video

6 minutes 33 seconds

Edition 1 of 5

Our lives are a fragile projection viewed through the lens of human sight. *The Lightness of Seeing* invites us to observe the overlooked, to see beauty in the mundane and to see ourselves as a transient moment suspended in the infinite current of Time. It asks us to embrace the mystery and delicacy of the incomprehensible which continues in our presence and in our absence.





IMAGE CREDIT: ARTIST

common thread

PAUL BAILEY

1050 mm Diameter x D 60 mm

Plywood, pine, found school painting aprons, mirror glass.

The cloth is from communal school painting aprons; as such, the unique trace of marks on each of them was not so much painted but rather developed over the course of numerous shared experiences of making. The main handprint is left by the unknown learner, and so by every learner. Together they form an enduring record of their journeys, little evidences of moments on the track between the idea and the creation. Sometimes it seems that while we live through the years, and in the days, it's the moments that stay with us.

Many of my mother's childhood moments, living in a war torn city (their house was bombed) are recorded in her diaries, and some of those are about loved visits to the cinema. When war broke out the government had initially ordered all places of entertainment, including cinemas, closed, but rescinded the ban within four weeks, and visits to the movies increased during wartime.

Diary entry, 3/4/44: I am longing for Thursday to come! (They are going to the cinema.) Rain pouring down outside. At last received a letter from Daddie. No siren!



concrete memories

IRENE BRIANT

2018

H 455mm x W 610 mm

Digital photographs, found objects.

That one is on the footpath outside number 72, I remember because that's the square bit I can jump over and the 7 and the 2 are on the gatepost. You can touch them, they are nice and black and shiny. And the next one is at the bottom of the hill where you have to hold on to someone's hand when you cross the street. That's a rule. And the ones that are more yellowy must be from the wall near the shop, not a footpath. They are so smooth I like touching them. The best bits of pavement are the knobbly ones. When they get cracked the moss grows in the cracks and is beautiful and green and soft when you touch it. I know where that one could have come from too. It's where I stand and look through the gate where the green path is and the steps are green too and there are two green frogs on the steps. The building past the shop looks very old. I wouldn't like to live there, the paint is cracked and dirty and if you look through the window under the blind you can see lots of dead blowflies.

peacemaker

DEAN CHATWIN

H 90mm x W 140mm x L 240mm

Glass, Tasmanian oak.

In developing artworks for this exhibition, I have found myself working in two distinct creative ways: firstly, responding directly to the plight of children in Gaza – the horrifically inappropriate circumstances they live in; and secondly drawing on my own experience as a father.

The conditions endured by the children in Gaza as reported in news articles have repeatedly shocked me, whilst their experiences have allowed me to reflect on how children live here in Tasmania. As can be imagined, works relating to the situation in Gaza are more conceptually challenging. Although the poetic use of materials to develop sculptural forms remains the primary consideration, these works contain a latent political dimension that reference the inherent injustices. My intention is that these works ultimately express hope for an improvement in the situation for the children of Gaza.

Contrasting with my remoteness from the situation in Gaza, the artworks informed by parental experience are inspired by actually seeing my daughter Louisa's creative play. In particular I have been fascinated by the way she reinterprets objects I have made for her – an experience providing me with new unconventional insights.



shadow plays: acts 1, 2, 3

BELINDA HALL

Linocuts on glass, acrylic paint, wallpaper

H 420 mm x W 420 mm x D 45 mm

As a child I was always fascinated by the way light would find ways of working itself into the darkest of spaces. In my dark room I would wait for the shadow plays to begin - light from passing cars' headlights would squeeze its way through the chinks in my curtains' armour and turn my bedroom walls into a screen. Animated silhouettes would flicker into life, creating illuminated bedtime stories that would comfort, inspire and entertain. The light never discriminated; it played on plasterboard, the white wood of the bed head and the patterned landscape of my pillowcases and quilt. It knew no boundaries.

As a teacher, I love working with primary school students and feel privileged to be part of their childhood. Together we celebrate creativity, learning and telling our own unique tales. Fearing one's own shadow limits creativity and expression so my wish is for all children to be given a little more light. A sense of belonging, hope and security should be within reach of all children, giving them a script to play with where love, imagination and curiosity can take on a starring role.





IMAGE CREDIT: DIANE ALLISON

cat and mouse

PATRICK HALL

2018

H 1200 mm x W 75 mm x D 250 mm

plywood, aluminium, 16mm film, collected film projector parts, LED lighting

Cat and Mouse takes a strip of 16mm film (the opening few seconds of Walter Lantz's 1938 cartoon 'The Cat and the Bell') and loops it to make a cat eternally chase a mouse. Separating the two protagonists is a drawn and scratched line. Cinema projection takes an image and expands it for communal exhibition. But this piece reverses that process. The viewer must engage the object in an intimate and personal way and stare into the lens, rather than away from it, to see a tiny illuminated image - a world within a box. The individual cells of the film can be changed by winding a handle. Wind the strip too fast and the story blurs. It is only when the moment is slowed and stopped and is read as a series of stills that the meaning becomes clear. More a comic strip than a film. *Cat and Mouse* wants to slow the confusion of time, of competing histories, of arbitrary divisions, of accidents of geography and power politics. It wants to put into focus the small things, the insistent moment.



taken

JULIE GOUGH

2018

H 1520 mm x W 1050 mm

Fur, fabric, thread, shell.

Before 1840 more than 200 Aboriginal children were living with colonists across Van Diemen's Land, most taken—whether their parents were dead or alive. Of these children 56 lived at some time in an Orphan Asylum, the most infamous in Hobart Town was ironically portrayed most famously situated under a rainbow in the painting in oil paint on canvas by John Glover: *Mount Wellington with Orphan Asylum, Van Diemen's Land (1837)*, a date when many of these children were held within its walls.

play

PETER MAARSEVEEN

2018

VARIABLE DIMENSIONS

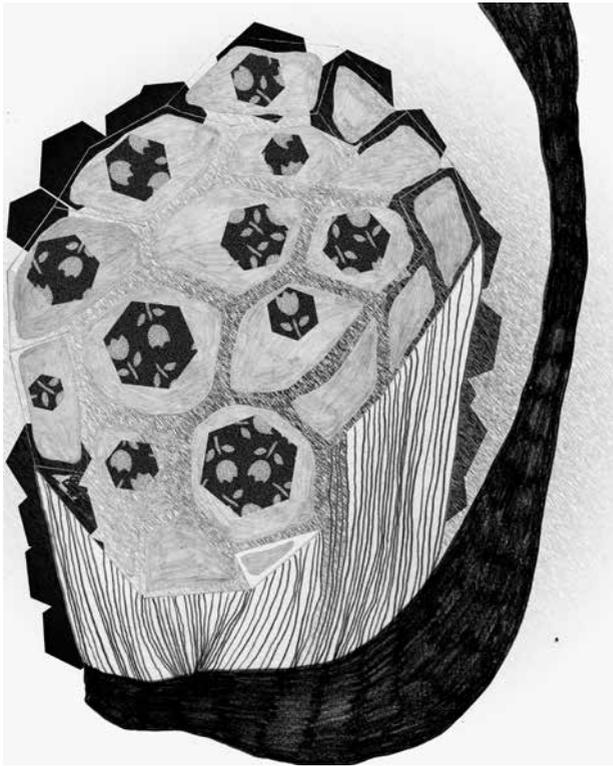
Lego building blocks, pinhole photographs

Every child deserves a right to be able to have a space to play in a safe environment. For this exhibition I have used a pinhole camera I built a few years ago out of Lego bricks to take photos of public playgrounds around Hobart. I wanted to take a toy, which children all over the world play with, and build a functioning sculpture that is able to capture areas in which they play.

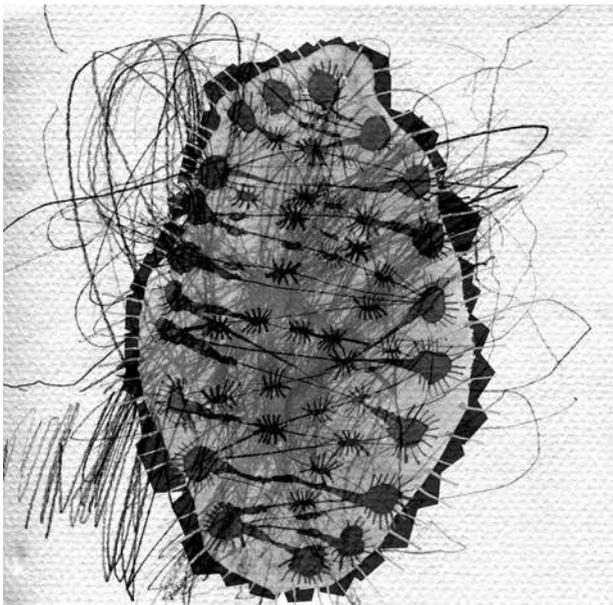
In Australia we have access to many public areas, which are safe for children to play in. Most of us don't have to worry about bombs going off, or police raiding our houses and taking children away for throwing rocks. Children should be able to grow up free, being able to explore the world around them without persecution and harassment.

By combining these two elements of childhood, simple building blocks and a playground and capturing it in the simplest form of photography I seek to embody the innocence that should be afforded to children all over the world.





(II)



(VII)

a little machine: (i), (ii), (vii)

JULIE MONRO-ALISON

2017

(I) H 160 mm x W 160 mm (II) H 260 mm x W 210 mm

(VII) H 500 mm x W 510 mm

Digital print on German etching paper

I remember very clearly the incredulous and bemused wonder with which I considered the changes of my body when pregnant. How strange it was to think that baby would emerge from my swollen belly. This experience is the starting point for my investigation into methods of representing of generation and gestation, processes that are both monumental and secluded, usually hidden away within a protective enclosure.

These works are made from drawings, made by myself and my child. The drawings are scanned and layered with scans of printed fabrics- their patterns reminiscent of the domestic fabrics of my own childhood- and digitally manipulated. The finished images are created in a focussed, yet playful, state of mind. I am fortunate to have these experiences: unhappily not all people are afforded small moments of playfulness, even in childhood.



(1)

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The children of Gaza

futago_



FULL GAMUT





An exhibition and auction on the theme of childhood, to raise money for and awareness of Gaza Children's Cinema, a community based education initiative that gives children in Palestine the opportunity to experience, and engage with, the joy of cinema.

Gaza Children's Cinema offers a rare space where kids can be kids and where all of their stories can be voiced and respected in a safe and interactive space.

**Waterfront Pavillion, Mawson's Place, Hobart.
Exhibition 18th–22nd September 2018**

**Auction 6.00pm Friday evening, 21st September,
to be opened by Senator Lisa Singh.**

TO DONATE GO TO gazachildrencinema.org

