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6.30-8pm

The Adventure Playground: Present/Play with Gabriela Burkhalter

KEYWORDS

children, playground, play, exhibition, adventure playground, organised, film, space, people, museum, programme, city, material, architecture, questions, adults, important, contemporary

SPEAKERS

Gabriela Burkhalter, Canan Batur

Canan Batur 00:03

Good evening. My name is Canan Batur, I'm the curator of live programmes here at Nottingham Contemporary. It's my pleasure to welcome you to the last chapter of **The Adventure Playground: Architectures of Contemporary Play** with Gabriela Burkhalter on her decade long research and project entitled **The Playground Project**. Together, today, we will look into how children can be a part of city through the lens of five film clips produced in various localities. The films depict how children negotiate, appropriate and master their environments and how through struggles, perseverance and collaboration, they're able to build personal resilience, and autonomy. In terms of running order today, Gabriela will first present her projects for 30 to 40 minutes, and then we are going to show the aforementioned films as prompts to initiate an informal and intimate conversation. So if you would like to come towards the kind of beginning of rack seating to join in the conversations, you're more than welcome to do so. Whilst you will be able to ask any questions you might have then, please wait for the microphone to be given to you by one of our event assistants before you pose your questions. For those of you who are with us for the first time at Nottingham Contemporary, we often invite artists, thinkers and scholars to collaborate with us on opening up

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our curatorial research and programmes and artistic propositions within our current exhibitions. These interventions and subversions of dominant modes of thought allow us to develop complex questions, and eventually invent methodologies for rewriting the artistic canon and the dominant historiographies and for making critical thought public. Before introducing our guest, I would like to share a brief housekeeping notes, our live programmes open up different interventions and propositions, as I mentioned, on our current research strand Emergency and Emergence, a multi platform programme that looks into transdisciplinary, sensorial and speculative practices of radical sensemaking and wayfinding to think about how we can move from crisis to renewal, from emergency to emergence. This event is also an extension of our current series, The Adventure Playground: Architectures of Contemporary Play, of exploratory talks and propositions that investigate processes of play and imagination, and their role in built environments and designed spaces of playgrounds. Bringing forward architectural and political history of playgrounds as dedicated spaces for children across contemporary cities, and centres on the idea of world making. I'd like to take this opportunity to show our gratitude to the University of Nottingham, Nottingham Trent University and Paul Mellon Centre for generously and graciously supporting today's event, as well as acknowledging my colleagues, Philippa Douglas, Shannon Charlesworth, Catherine Masters, Craig Parr, Olu Taiwo and Jordan for making this event possible. Although we will keep an informal atmosphere throughout the evening, our talks, performances and screenings seek to create challenging environments where open mindedness and respect for each other's approaches and perspectives can foster growth. So please be mindful and respectful of each other's opinions. So without further ado, I would like to introduce today's guest. A trained political scientist and urban planner based in Basel, Switzerland, Gabriela Burkhalter, was a guest creator of Architektur für Kindern: Zürichs Spielplätze (Architectures for Children: Zurich's Playgrounds) at gta exhibitions, which took place from November 6 to December 10 in 2014. Before that, she created The Playground Project for the 2013 Carnegie International at Carnegie Museum of Arts in Pittsburgh. And since 2008, she has documented the history of playgrounds on www.architektur fuer kinder.ch and her articles and reviews have appeared in magazines and catalogues.

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And you can still kind of look at the website, and then see kind of new additional information and new press clips and so on and so forth if you would like to kind of see the contemporary takes on it as well. An advisor to public agencies for the renovation of historic playgrounds, she's also an activist engaged in revitalisation of community spaces. So without further ado, Gabriela, I'll let you deliberate. Thank you so much for accepting our invitation and being with us this evening.

Gabriela Burkhalter 04:39

Thank you, Canan and Nottingham Contemporary for having me here this evening. So as you introduced me, I will have give a lecture in three parts, you forgot one part, I added spontaneously. So I will first trace the development of The Playground Project. Then I want to situate the work of Assemble that you can see in the exhibition upstairs. So their approach to play, I want to situate it in the history of playgrounds, or see where it where it's come from. And finally, what I call the workshop, where I hope that we will have a nice discussion. I will show five film clips with the idea to, to discuss with you autonomous play in the city. How is it possible or not? So, The Playground Project, an exhibition in progress. Here, I want to draw the stages of The Playground Project, that's a travelling exhibition on the history of playgrounds, and at the same time, it's a stage for free play. As an urban planner, I always was interested in how to build and how to activate public space. That's how I came to read this book, by Susan Solomon, an American art and architecture historian. This book is from 2006. In there, she gives a comprehensive overview on the history of the modern playground, that's about between 1930s and 1980. So, I was completely fascinated to discover this forgotten space, the playground, and because playgrounds are not preserved as part of the urban and social history of the city. So they are not considered as urban heritage, they constantly disappear and are replaced. That's the reason why we are not aware of playground designs of the past decades. So, my interest was sharpened by the discovery of a series of very well designed books. And they present the topic in a very unconventional and even artistic way. For example, Play and Interplay by the landscape architect M. Paul Friedberg, from New York, from 1970 or Playground and Recreation Centre, here in a German edition, a book from 1959. And there are several more books in this style from these years. So the will to share

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the experience of building playground made a very strong impression on me. So that not only to build playgrounds, but also to share it in publications was seemed to be quite exceptional to me. In a second step, about in 2008, I started to build the website Architektur für Kinder, architecture for children, as a way to structure my research, to share it with others and to deepen my understanding of the playground as a part of the social and urban history. I became aware that by taking the viewpoint of the playground, I gained a particular insight into the realities of urban, of the cities. I gained, I better understood things like the segregated urbanism in the US or the rise of participation in planning, or the roots of urban problems in France, so the playground functions like a focal glass on the society and the city. The discovery of some rare vintage play sculpture in my hometown Basel in Switzerland was another important step in my research. For example, this school yard with its concrete play landscape, by This artist Michael Grossert that so that schoolyard is still in function today. It was it has been renovated in 2009. Even if it doesn't fit to current safety standards, or this modular place culture designed by Michael Grossert as well. And then when I had the chance to meet the artist, we organised a small show in off space in Basel where we presented models, play modules, photographs and film. The project then made a big step in advance when my husband Daniel Bauman, was appointed as a curator of the 2013 Carnegie International, taking place every five years at the Museum of Art in Pittsburgh that you can see here, with sculpture by Richard Serra. The idea to build a playground in front of the museum was born with the intention to have a better connection between the museum and the city of Pittsburgh. That's how the so called Lozziwurm, a Swiss designed from 1972 was shipped to Pittsburgh and built in front of the museum. That's how it looked when it was built up. A good coincidence made it possible to organise a small show on the history of the modern playground at the architecture centre that was part of this museum and as a part of the 2013 Carnegie International. We keep we decided to keep the spirit of research not only by the title that was sort of the working title that became the definitive title, but also by opting for a casual and DIY presentation with these plywood boards, where we applied the images with this duct tape, and The Playground Project also served as an inspiration for the annual summer camps for children and teenagers at Carnegie Museum. To us, to us, The Playground Project at

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the Heinz architecture Centre in Pittsburgh functioned as a test version, since we understood that there was much more material to go much bigger. And we hoped to find a location or a venue in a museum in Switzerland after our return, or after we left the US. First, I received an invitation to realise an exhibition at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich in 2014. And I was able to draw on the rich resources of the archives of this institute. So the institute, the Architectural Institute. And so I decided to focus this exhibition on the playgrounds of Zurich, on so landscape architects and architects who designed playgrounds in mostly in the 1960s. So this is exhibition view with film, projected on the windows or we also reused stage where that students had built for a previous project. We displayed a lot of documents from the archives. And so this yeah, this was this exhibition in this academic context. Then, Daniel, my husband was appointed as the new director of the Kunsthalle Zurich. So that gave us the great opportunity to stage The Playground Project on a large scale in 2016. So I added a new finds, new documents, films. And we also included a series of real playgrounds. Because our curatorial concept was twofold. We wanted to test out the possibilities to address children as an audience without locking them up in separate children workshops. For instance, we directly built in the children workshop into one gallery. And secondly, to build an exhibition with ambitious content, and playful entertainment like these ropes hanging from the ceiling that were also appreciated by adults. I'm sorry that I don't have images with people in it, but it's always a little bit of a problem. We didn't have an educational intention for this for the children. So we didn't expect them to learn something. The only intention was to have a space for free play. And we again opted for a DIY approach by using spacing and material from previous exhibitions, like here in the gallery dedicated to the adventure playground. We reused an existing space or we demounted it and just let the cardboards where they are and use it to display the material on adventure playgrounds. We programmed the exhibition for the winter spring term and we were overwhelmed by families but also grandparents came with their grandchildren, students, school classes, planners and architects. The exhibition then travelled to other venues, to Baltic in Newcastle, to Ireland, to Russia. Here an image from Gorky Park with the advertisement or the poster for the exhibition at Garage Museum of Contemporary Art. Here an exhibition view, so this exhibition

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design was completely in charge, taken in charge by the team of Garage. And they invested a lot of work to also to rebuild playgrounds from historic plans that I had from a playground from a designer collective. In Venice in a space near the Giardini, during the architecture biennale, we organised a local version together with curators and artists from Venice. It included just two positions from The Playground Project, the German group KEKS, and the Italian architect Ricardo Dalisi so we choose just two position that were in relation with Venice or with Italy. I will come back to these positions later. And so they proposed to print the material on this sort of fabric and to build these platforms in this semi-public Garden. That's when you walk to the Giardini from the Via Garibaldi and they also organised summer play activities for children that you can see here, so it was very completely taken in charge by them, the whole design, that's also the way we work that we always want to get in touch with local people and also add new finds for every exhibition, local finds besides the so called standard content of the exhibition. The project also had two venues in Germany, at Bundeskunsthalle, Bonn. Here I included play sculptures in polyester by German designer Gunther Beltzig also from the beginning of the 1970s. They were also playable for children. And this, and here this Tribune by Beltzig where people could sit on and browse through books, and in the background, again, the Lozziwurm. So this play sculpture is really like the heart of the exhibition and it is a must, a must be. So we, I mean, there can be another place culture, like for instance in Moscow, but there must be a play sculpture, that is really a very important condition of the exhibition when we get a request from a museum. That's always what we, our first our first answers, let's say. And then the second venue in Germany was the Deutsches Architektur museum. So that was for the first time that I moved in the context of architecture, before it was always art. Even if it's probably rather a subject or topic of architecture, or urban planning, but I guess that art is just or museums of art are just more opened to a large range of topics. At the beginning, people would rather a bit laugh at me when I tell that I do research on playgrounds, so they wouldn't take it very serious. Here at the German architecture Museum. Again, we have these polyester sculptures. We often work with colours because we have always four sections to structure the history because you can't do so much timeline because everything happened a bit of the same time. And here for the first time, we also included contemporary positions by

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here by Mexican artists architect who designs play spaces for public housing estates in Mexico City. Again, the Lozziwurm, I have to say that it's really like a safe value. It's always very well received by children and also teenagers. And it gives really a very nice atmosphere. Then the last venue in the spring of this year was in the city of Lund in South Sweden. I was very pleased to be invited to Sweden because Scandinavia is such an important inspiration for the playground history or for the renewal of the playground. Here again, local position by Swedish sculptor Axel Nordal in the courtyard of the museum. Then here again, we displayed all the material and added some new sculptures by Swedish artists. So we always print these large images so from the files and we always adapt it to the space, so they can be larger or smaller depending on how big the space is. We also have some original material from a French designer design group. So that's how it evolved in this very nice museum in Lund. Here again, the Lozziwurm in the entrance hall of the museum and yeah, it was nice to hear or I was very pleased to hear that children came by after school to play on the Lozziwurm, they came without their parents and just had some playdates at the museum. Yeah, so that's the first part of this itinerary of The Playground Project, I also have a catalogue I brought it here. I will leave it for you for the library. So this is the second edition of the catalogue. I'm currently working for third edition with new content so I just now saw that Assemble is such an important collective who, thought of bringing play back to the city. And I mean, it was such a great honour for them to receive the Turner Prize and also to give play a more visibility and more importance. So that's for this reason, I thought that I would like to contextualise a bit a little bit where their ideas are coming from or what I think they are coming from, I didn't talk to them so. So they are interested in how to connect children to the environment and how to make children part of the society, how to provide space for free play in the city. In this interest for participation, and perception of the environment, I see a clear proximity to Colin Ward that your programme also dedicated one talk to Colin Ward, because he's very important for the UK but also beyond, and but also proximity to other collectives from the 1970s. So I would just talk about some of these collectives, like some examples, and why are the 70s so important. So in the 1970s in the aftermath of 1968. That's so these events that happened then, critiques came up denouncing the lack of play opportunities, and of places where children could manipulate their

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environment, where they could actively be, where they could have a real impact and an output. And as in other areas of society, more participation was demanded. So groups of artists citizens and educators, set up multiple forms of self organised play spaces, workshops and play activities. So in the 1970s, and educated discovered the power of the environment in general and urban environment specifically. And the trust in the institutions such as the school and in play equipment, so like standardised, fixed play equipment faded, because these people understood that the city offered enough learning experience and possibility of interaction. So in England, Colin Ward, here his most important books of the many he has written, *The Child in the City*. So Colin Ward was an important figure who saw children as an integral part of the society and of the city. In 1971, he was employed as an education officer for the Town and Country Planning Association, the TCPA, and this association was formed to improve town and country planning in the UK and also to enable participation. An important goal was to empower people and especially children to become experts in their environment. So, that is also an important moment in the 70s this idea of empowerment, that you don't have specialists anymore, that you tell what to do, but you are, you are human, French is coming in, you are yourself able to, to judge about your environment, your neighbourhood or whatever. And Ward also provided material and guidance for teachers and invited them to look at the city to explore and understand and understand it. So, the point of his initiative was to get children out of the school and bring them into the communities to talk to local people, explore the neighbourhood and understand how buildings streets, landscape and social life interact. So later in the workshop section, I will present one of the films that he that Colin Ward advertised in his main communication or magazine, the BEE, Bulletin of environmental education. So that was magazine with material for teachers of how to work with children. And he was the co-editor of this magazine from 71 to 79. So, in this same spirit of Assemble, of participation and perception, I see the Italian architect and Professor Riccardo Dalisi. I will also present a film from him, and he held the design studios with his students outside. So instead of staying at the campus at the University, he went in this poor neighbourhood in this low income neighbourhood in Naples. And the students built besides the children and with the idea to offer them space of freedom and of self empowerment. So it is special that

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Dalisi didn't want to educate children. But just he wanted just to offer a free space. So for this, he's really exceptional, I didn't find another experience or experiment where there were no intention to educate children. Here another initiative from the 1970s, the collective KEKS from Germany. KEKS is for stands for art, education, cybernetic and sociology. And the group formed in the context of the School of Fine Arts in Munich in 1968. And they criticise that the art education was only focused on reproducing but didn't foster a self judgement of the children or so they wanted to provide an aesthetic education for children. So they had a clear educational intention compared to Dalisi. And they started to organise art actions with children and teenagers in the context of the schools. And what you can see here is that the body is very important, so how how children would perceive their body in the environment. They were invited to the 1970 Venice Biennale where they turned parts of the Giardini park into a space where children could experiment with simple materials such as paint, paper, wood, and transparencies, that was another important ingredient of the work that they would always bring tonnes of materials to places like here. So later on, they would move from art action to play activities in housing estates around Munich here, they would just bring a lot of material like paper and poly I don't remember I don't can't say it in English like this white block, polystyrene yeah. And it would be very chaotic. We will also see that on a film later, they ran a play bus. And so they offered mobile play activities. And they also saw wanted to give free, a place for free play, but also for a place for autonomous learning. So they also had some of educational background but still it was a very chaotic activity. So recently, I started to do research on the socialist context in the GDR. And I was very surprised to see that even there, but you expect that all the leisure activities of children and teenagers are organised by the state, even there, there were some adults who would organise play activities in the housing estates and to allow children to have this space for creativity. So yeah, that's what I think that are like, inspirations for the work of Assemble. And when we look at the context of today, it's very different. I mean, we can not return to this sort of very free spaces. Today, we live in a risk averse society, a play, and especially unsupervised play doesn't have a big priority for parents. But more and more people are getting aware of how important free play is. And they have engaged to make play and playgrounds relevant again, such as Assemble. So today, we have on the

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one side, we have classical playgrounds with mass produced play equipments. And on the other hand, but I mean, it's not an equilibrium, the it's a small part of, of groups, people's people and association who offer play activities, adventure playgrounds, play bus and, and things like that. So you know that also in the UK, the adventure playground is very heavily under pressure because of funding. But this is an important part of this free play requirement. So then I would move on to the third part. So for this part, I have chosen five films. One, the oldest one, it's very short one, a place in 1948. And the others are all from the 70s. And I want to use these films to engage you in a discussion about children and their relationship with environment. Questions about autonomy, freedoms, safety, question about locking up children out of public space for the sake of safety. And I want us to question the role of adults in these films. So maybe if you could just I hope that we can, we can also take your experience of maybe you work with children or whatever, or you are a parent, to discuss these questions. I think that adults always want the good and even the best for their children. And therefore they control them more and more. So it's like a movement going in in two directions. So that's the clip's from In the City by American photographer Helen Levitt, a film from 48. but I think it should. With film, with scenes in New York City with children playing very widely, the children are totally autonomous and don't let the adults tell them anything. Children are sometimes superior to adults. And the play has at times a destructive character and then it's again imaginative. Then the second excerpt is from, from Dalisi what I told you before that this architecture professor, professor who went to this Rione Traiano in Naples during four years he went there with the students and they were just trying to build these structures and the children would play or build with them. So, it was no, there was no programme, no intention. So, it was quite chaotic and these children often they would not attend school anymore. So, it was really quite also a difficult situation. And these people also went to the what we call in German the Schmer screntze, so the limit of the what you can when it's too much or not, beyond the limit because this neighbourhood was so unstructured, there was no landscaping, it was really no play opportunities. And Dalisis later, he would become a designer, and he was all what he was most inspired was to see the children being creative without having any background of artwork or he was he was just enthusiastic to see that it came out of

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nothing almost. And also what is special that they were on eye level. So there was no, the students and the children and the professor were all on the same level, there was no superiority of knowledge or, or whatever. And he would write a diary, Dalisi, and he would also make a series in the renowned magazine Casabella in Italy, where he would talk about this space for creativity and to work with this poor material, he called them like this scrap wood, paper and things like that. So here it's interesting also to see the position of the adults I think for this one it's it's it's also interesting to also to have this this idea of self empowerment the children get confidence in what they are doing so there is no right and no wrong. Then the next film is from this group KEKS that I was talking about so, it started that the children have only these very boring standard playgrounds, so, I will skip this because it's very boring, they only have the sandpit and they are bored they are they are quite aggressive and then they come, they do this spiel aktion at this playground and they also link it to political claim to say that there are not enough playgrounds and they bring this type of material like these tyres and then late they would, and also these boxes and it's it's very chaotic, there is no direction given by, there are people present from this group, the they are like educators but they are young, often young people and they are present but they do not give a direction of play. And later they would, a tractor would come and would dig a big hole into the playground and then this would be like initiation to further play and I mean what it's also interesting here that often the boys have a very active role when it's this wild form of play, that's often I mean here you have two girls, but often the girls they have clothes that are really not made for play, here you have tractors who comes. I mean today we would be already shocked to have it with children beside and then. And so this group, they later they would split off in several groups, doing several activities in Munich and they are still, this form of play is still present in Munich. So then it would be financed by the city of Munich by agency for use. And it's still today, so they still have huge play activities. For instance, in the summer they do like a play city. And it's really, it's nice to see that it's still there. It got more civilised though. So yeah, you see that the children are very much excited to. Here you have this hole. What is also quite special that they would really very well document all what they did, that's why we have these type of films. So I will go to the next film. So that's in relation with the work of Colin Ward. It's like a very

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political story. Because it's in this Islington in London where mothers would request an adventure playground on a vacant lot and they would fight against the council to get it.

Film 52:28

"everyone behind the door. Some of the children get tore up by the people in the flats."

Gabriela Burkhalter 52:35

So you see the conflict with the adults.

Film 52:39

"Get your hair cut. Go home. We ain't got nowhere to put it. Sooner play football out here, play on the swings, all the old bags open the window. Can't play football can you? The caretaker they'll know if we play near a car we get told off."

Gabriela Burkhalter 53:05

Then the mothers would organise a walk to this vacant lot.

Film 53:11

"They could understand but why a large car park and anyway the contractors wouldn't need the whole site immediately. So why shouldn't the children have a corner of it for the next six weeks, their patience had run out - they were going to make the site there's whatever the council said." "I'm not going in, oh yes you are, I'm in enough trouble." "When it comes to working really hard, there's all the difference in the world between a place that's provided for you and a place you make yourself." "Next morning while the children are at school, some of the mothers met on the site discuss what next needed to be done. Unexpectedly two well dressed gentleman appeared. They were officials from the council sent to find out what on earth was going on." "trying to have happen, I mean we are intending to take this piece of ground ourselves." "You're trespassing." "We know that we're trespassing." "Well come seven days time they will really set to demolish this. So there is no place for children." "We are going to see that you don't develop that piece of ground down there we need that for our children. Why can't we have it for our children? The workmen left all holes there! They left

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the holes there with water in them that one of the children kind of fell in and drowned, come in and fill us in to make sure our children don't die. Not giving us a direct answer why we cannot have the ground for our children" "Because it has been let to a demolition contractor who is paying to demolish it." "Now just a minute we had a child died because Islington Borough Council wouldn't call the asbestos roofing there. When we said that we were going to take this ground over as an adventure playground you moved in with your bulldozer and started demolishing it. Our children have to cross main roads and get killed when there's a piece of ground available there. There is a piece of ground. Enough room for cars doesn't it. There's room for motor cars." "You've seen the plan?" "Yeah, it's a parking lot. For the plans, why should there be parking space for 90 cars when there can't be a small area cut off for the children. Why don't you answer the questions that you're given? You're just avoiding them." "Oh yes I'm afraid I am, this is not my question." "No you should give us the direct answer" "The police inspector in charge of the local station was the next to appear. The mothers expecting trouble, had phoned the inspector earlier and got him on their side." "This is the trouble you see, you get onto one department to talk to you. And they say excuse me, I'd like you" "Hello darling, how are you? I'm very well Thank you. You telephoned me this morning, I told you what I was doing and I told you I'd come to see you. This site is being cleared by the demolition people and until it's cleared nobody will give any decision. So I have to ask you all to leave if you don't mind and then what you discuss with me on the telephone I'll come and see you about and."

Gabriela Burkhalter 57:37

So what yeah, what's nice here is that they really they engage in this quest for play opportunities that's also this thing of self empowerment and activism that is coming from everybody, it's not from politics or it's really from coming from the people. So the last excerpt is from Swedish collective that's called Aktion Samtal and just let you see Maybe I have to say so the, this group has formed in 68 in a very loose form. They started to organise, to engage children in the design of urban space in Stockholm, so they would take over like a courtyard and, and make a guerilla play space, like very spontaneous action. And it was in a larger idea to criticise that the city would become very dedicated to

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cars and no life quality and no space for children. But it would be a very peaceful action so it will not be no confrontation or no violence, but it would be very to engage in dialogue. That's why they call them action dialogue. And then they would. So it would be very spontaneous, but then they would have the idea that a bigger action would be needed. And they asked the director of the moderna museet if they could not have a play space there or an activity and he agreed, and that's how this very famous exhibition modellen came to exist, where this museum for contemporary art in Stockholm was turned into an adventure playground during three months or two months. And it really became the synonym for a new type of exhibition where the audience would really be part but it for them it was really the children were like unspoiled group of people so they would be like the model for a new society, the way they play, the way they behave or they socialise that would be like the model for the new society that's why it was it was called model for a new society that was the title of the exhibition and here you see some views of this exhibition but later on you will also see some how they would do these urban actions. These were activists. Okay, so I muted the sound and so, because we lost some time with our technology problems. Yes, here again you have this activity coming from the bottom and not waiting that politicians would bring solutions that's this self organised aspect also. So maybe we if you have questions or if you have remarks or what is what is examples to bring in, in motion in you are connected to you or your experience please do not hesitate to.

Audience member 1:05:39

It's really interesting. And I was just thinking in Britain after the Second World War, there was a lot of reconstruction. And I can remember living on an old, well, it was a council estate and we didn't have a park. And we got a petition. And we walked miles, got hundreds of signatures, and there's a little park now sort of 60 years on that we we got through a petition. But it was one of the things I've noticed is that there's a kind of a feeling of a democratic deficit from the very beginning. So that whole groups of people were not represented from the very beginning. And you were very lucky if you were able to, there was still this desire like those women on the car park, that there were active people that really did want to get involved in the 60s, 50s, 60s and 70s, the post war period but gradually that was being eroded. Very good, very interesting. Thank

you. I was just wondering, what is your view on on the health and safety standards in current playground? Do you think that they take away something from the children that is really very valuable?

Gabriela Burkhalter 1:07:23

Yes, for sure. I mean, that that's evolution of our society where all of us we are always seeking more safety. We don't want to risk anything. So it's more than normal that we offer the same for our children. But for them, it's not a choice we can do a choice but they just have to take it and to yeah, it's it produces boredom, it's not interesting for them. So we are in a sort of yeah, we have a problem there.

Audience member 1:08:07

Do you think it makes them more vulnerable when they grow up and they are used to this approach that they are being taken care of? And suddenly they are found without the mummy and daddy looking after them? And they will do something that they are used to this level of protection. Do you think that this leaves them vulnerable when they grow up?

Gabriela Burkhalter 1:08:29

Yes, that's what also research has shown that children have to learn step by step what they can do with their body and if they don't have this possibility they maybe as a young adults, you sometimes have male adults who do very crazy stuff very, very dangerous stuff that really can kill them. So I think it's not the response responsible to not give the opportunity to children I mean, we have the adventure playgrounds and all that stuff. But there is now at least in Switzerland I can't tell for everybody there is a small return on that because we understood that can't go on like this because children they are completely unable to charge what they are able to do or they always have the parents behind who say don't do that, or don't do that. And they they hesitate and so now in the playground design there is the try to have more risk. I mean, it's never what I've seen here it's it's not nothing compared but still it's the knowledge is here to that we have to stop that crazy evolution.

Audience member 1:10:10

I don't know why it's Switzerland. But here is, here it is our class system.

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So if you go to St. Ann's or any of the estates in Nottingham, kids play a lot more freely than, say, the middle class kids. And it's that constant cushioning of the middle classes. And then I always remember being taken to adventure playgrounds, really enjoying it. And this was obviously years ago, but I don't know, if the other countries suffer as much with the class system.

Gabriela Burkhalter 1:10:49

I see, it's maybe not so strong in Switzerland, but I also saw this in the US that children from low income neighbourhoods, they would play much more outside, and the others would, you would never see them outside, it was really very shocking to see that. My children were in that they were 9 and 12, when we went there for this Carnegie show. And I was like, desperate to see that there are no children outside, maybe they will sometimes be in the front garden or in the backyard and have a play equipment there. But it would be so sad. So in Switzerland, what we then see that, for instance, the people in the better neighbourhoods, they again play in the street, because they have the play streets. So this is again, a privilege of middle class, that they have play streets in their neighbourhood. And, again, they play on the street, that was a very bad thing before. So this is again, even parents who have very, very high expectations, and all they would, again, think that it's a good thing. Maybe not all of them. But again, this is interesting that the street play is coming back as something you know, there are cars, but it's very reduced speed. And they can put some elements in the street to slow down and they can they're allowed to play football and whatever. But these are very calm streets already. But you have cars in there okay.

Audience member 1:13:05

I must have one question. How old do you think people are allowed to still keep playing?

Gabriela Burkhalter 1:13:14

Yeah, that's always a big question. But I think to, for instance, to move your body, it's always also a sort of playing and it's also pleasure. And what we saw in the Zurich exhibition, for instance, with this huge ropes there, the adults really loved to swing on them, because it was such a nice sensation. So sometimes we adults we are a little bit scared or

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not so, how do you say, comfortable. We are a little bit stressed. So but I think that was also a thing, this idea of the 70s to liberate, that play would liberate people to to come out of these of this closed behaviour. Very, I mean, like dancing is also a form of playing almost yeah. I think yeah, it's it's important. I don't think that you can go back to this very, for instance, role play or things like that, that children are very, if they really dig into it, and they completely forget, I don't think that we can forget what's around us but we still have a nice sensation of moving and things like that. Thank you for your questions.

Canan Batur 1:15:00

Thank you for everyone joining us. To be able to trace back some of the gems that has been shared here today, hopefully the recording of this event, this event recording will be available in the upcoming days. So do keep your eyes peeled on our socials and our website as well. Thank you so much for joining us today. And this has been quite an experimental one, I came back here and then also we have apologies for any technical difficulties we had as well. Thank you so much for bearing with us. So thank you. Have a lovely evening.

Colophon

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