'Holy Blood' by Cat and Eimear McClay for CCA Derry~Londonderry | Beginning Monday 25 October

Friday 22 October, 2021

Holy Blood

Digital residency by Cat and Éiméar McClay

Monday 25 October–Sunday 31 October 2021

Posted daily at ccadld.org

Holy Blood by Cat and Éiméar McClay is the second digital residency of 2021 hosted by CCA Derry~Londonderry. Throughout the residency, Cat and Éiméar will create a digital sketchbook by sharing new and existing work including moving image, writing and digital renders inspired by their research into the legacy of Magdalene Laundries and mother and baby homes across Ireland; this will act as a stepping stone towards a longer video, which they hope to complete in the future. The artists will publish excerpts of their research to help people both engage further with the themes behind the work and see the process behind it. Links to resources will be shared with each passing day, and a list of the duo's inspirations/references will be shared at the end of the week to contextualise the work and allow you to engage with the subject matter on a deeper level.

Cat and Éiméar chose to begin their residency around the 25th anniversary of the closure of the last Magdalene Laundry on the island of Ireland. They were inspired by the concept of hauntology that refers to the return or persistence of elements from the past, like an ever present spirit. The title of the residency invokes the significance of blood in Catholic rituals and miracles over millennia, and alludes to the historical harm inflicted upon those that were institutionalised across the island.

Some of the subject matter may be upsetting/triggering. Content warnings will be given each day to preface the work.

Artist bios

Cat McClay and Éiméar McClay are Irish-born collaborative artists currently based in Glasgow. In 2020, they each graduated from Intermedia BA (Hons) at Edinburgh College of Art. Their practice considers ideas of queerness, abjection and patriarchal systems of power and oppression through an interdisciplinary body of work comprising video, 3D models, installation and digital collage. Studying contemporary queer and experimental literature has greatly influenced their respective writing practices. Following this research, they have developed their recent collaborative prose into narratives for moving image work. Currently, they structure their video work using a combination of animation, popular culture and cultural theory to challenge demarcations between high and low cultural material. This anti-hierarchical approach also attempts to make abstruse theoretical and philosophical ideas more accessible to a wider audience by demonstrating their material effects within everyday narratives. Their work often takes a critical approach: through appropriation and reinterpretation, they subvert the heterocentric narratives of popular cultural texts, including fairy tales and the Bible. An analysis of the mechanisms of power in Western society is central to this practice: they are interested in considering both how queer and marginalised bodies fit into capitalism and how they are excluded. Recently, their research has focused on the cultural, social and political influence of the Catholic church, particularly in Ireland. Through this study, they question the persistent link between the Irish state and the church. This is reinforced by their exploration of the potentiality of magic and witchcraft as queer and anti-capitalist symbols of resistance, through which they imagine a futurity predicated on a radical break from the dominant logic of late capitalism. They often harness eschatological imagery (disastrous weather, fire, etc.) to invoke the idea of end times associated with capitalism, and attendant premonitions of catastrophic or redemptive futures.

ENDS

Centre for Contemporary Art Derry~Londonderry, 10–12 Artillery Street

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Opening times: Tuesday–Saturday noon–6pm

Free admission

About CCA Derry~Londonderry: The Centre for Contemporary Art (CCA) is a publicly funded space within the historic city walls of Derry~Londonderry. CCA creates opportunities for audiences to experience ambitious, experimental and engaging art and for emerging artists to develop successful careers. CCA fosters a wide range of artistic, curatorial and critical practices through five programme streams: research and production, exhibition- making, public programmes, publishing and residencies.

CCA is a shortlisted organisation for Art Fund Museum of the Year 2021. CCA was recognised for its resilience and adaptability throughout the pandemic, and their continued effort to support audiences and artists including creating paid opportunities for artists and freelancers when they needed it most.

CCA is a member of Plus Tate: Plus Tate is a network, which comprises 35 cultural institutions – including the Tate galleries – that have strong artistic vision, a focus on contemporary art, outstanding public programming and a commitment to local community engagement through art. Plus Tate aims to support the development of the visual arts across the UK.

Safety: CCA has a range of safety measures to ensure staff and visitors can enjoy exhibitions with the knowledge that every precaution is taken. This includes hand sanitisers at entrances and exits, track and trace, screens and heightened cleaning schedules. All who are able to wear a mask are invited to do so and a dedicated isolation room is available in the event of the onset of symptoms.

For media enquiries: Fiona Allan, Marketing and Digital Programmes Coordinator for CCA Derry~Londonderry 10-12 Artillery Street, Derry~Londonderry, BT48 6RG, Northern Ireland
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