



Don't Step On The Cracks

Christopher Abrams, Harald de Bary, Niamh O'Connor, Hazel Ramsay, Catherine Ryan, Bernie Masterson, Carol Wood and Jessica Zekus
Curated by Amanda Jane Graham

Don't Step On The Cracks

Don't Step On The Cracks presents the work of eight contemporary artists working across a range of media, including video, installation, drawing, painting, collage and sculpture. The title is mindful of a game, rhyme and superstition that has been recorded in print and reenacted from as far back as the 19th century. Don't Step On The Cracks might initially appear as a carefree and amusing activity but there are very dark undertones associated with it and any mistake could have had a potentially detrimental effect on a Mother's health and a child's life in general. Today this game and rhyme is now a memory however, superstitions are culturally and collectively shared and handed down through families for many generations, for many others such as athletes, gamblers and actors these customs are rituals.

Stuart H.Blum and Lucille H.Blum speak at length about superstitions stating that, 'It is suggested that, particularly in current times, the sense of control inherent in superstitious belief and practice has a therapeutic value in the reduction of anxiety. This value may account for the survival of common superstitions in spite of centuries of advance in scientific knowledge. The existence of considerable belief in various common superstitions may occur as a form of anxiety reduction even among the well informed and highly educated.' [i]

Don't Step On The Cracks refers not only to superstitions and childhood games but to fearful environments that so many within our history and culture have experienced. The exhibition addresses issues of abandonment and oppression, memory and narrative, play and humour creating a chain reaction of fret and fortune, charm and conflict that is both unnerving and uplifting at the same time. Bernie Masterson and Niamh O'Connor remind us of institutional anguish while Hazel Ramsay emphasises the dark undercurrent of global exploitation in a manner that is like this age old game, both spirited and solemn. Harald de Bary's triggers unease with Carol Wood causing us to consider separation and longing, Jessica Zekus highlights the

complexities of childhood and bittersweet memories that resonate within it. Christopher Abrams and Catherine Ryan playfully challenge and rework common place materials, the artworks are light hearted, funny and receptive of childhood freedoms, encompassing the liberty and contentment that every childhood deserves. Lemn Sissay eloquently reminds us that, 'Harry Potter was a foster child, Cinderella was a foster child, Batman was orphaned, Matilda, Moses and Luke Skywalker... How have we not made that connection? – between these incredible characters of popular culture and religions and the fostered, adopted or orphaned child in our midst.' [ii]

Amanda Jane Graham

Amanda Jane Graham exhibits both nationally and internationally with many upcoming exhibitions. Her work has featured in many publications. Graham completed an MA Fine Art at National College of Art and Design, Dublin in 2011.

Art work by Bernie Masterson

You are invited to the exhibition launch on Friday October 30th from 7.30pm.

The exhibition runs until November 20th, 2015.

Solas Gallery Ballinamore

Opening times during exhibition:

Tuesday–Saturday 10am–6pm

Solas Art Gallery

Main st.

Ballinamore

Co. Leitrim

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email: info@solasart.ie

[i] Do's And Dont's: An Informal Study Of Some Prevailing Superstitions

Stuart H. Blum And Lucille H. Blum @ Psychological Reports Psychological Reports, 1974 1974.35, 567-571

[ii] A Child Of The State

Lemn Sissay, TED

https://www.ted.com/talks/lemn_sissay_a_child_of_the_state/transcript?language=en

