Tomorrow belongs to nobody

Amelia Crouch

The output, *Tomorrow belongs to nobody*, is a moving image artwork that explores our relationship with Coventry’s post-World War II architecture. It was commissioned by Coventry Artspace.

Research Process

Crouch’s research is primarily carried out through her artistic practice, the creation of exhibitions and site-responsive public artworks. She is interested in meaning-making as an embodied and indeterminate process. The work combines research interests in site-specific art, artists moving image and narratives of subjectivity. Producing this work involves reading spanning art, cultural studies, cognitive linguistics and sociology. The research explores subjectivity, as an historical construct and a lived, phenomenological experience, and the relationship between visual and verbal modes of representation.

Research Insights

Referencing City Architect Donald Gibson’s aspiration to cultivate “a healthy body, a cultured mind and a radiant soul” (1943) *Tomorrow belongs to nobody* queries this idea of rational agency and considers the increasing individualisation of society over the years since the inception of modernist Coventry. Whilst we may now question modernist ideals of rationality and progress ought we still value the utopian social ideals embedded in Coventry’s buildings?

Dissemination

The output was screened at the following:


November 2016 Screening, Turning Point West Midlands re-launch event, Eaton House. Programmed by Ryan Hughes.

Video:
Digital video, 11 minutes
Available at: https://vimeo.com/150990273

Video stills:
Accompanying publication (Designed to be read from front to back and back to front).
Coventry - A Modernist Vision

Coventry can be taken as an exemplar of the Modernist belief in technology and progress. Its rebuilding following extensive bomb damage in World War 2 was a visionary venture. City Architect Donald Gibson drew on the work of Modernist pioneer Le Corbusier and sociologist Lewis Mumford to design a rationally planned city for a better society. He sought to furnish citizens with "a healthy body, a cultured mind and a radiant soul."

Crucially, Gibson's vision was predicated on an idea of the collective good. The modern, machine age would free people from the endless drudgery of work, ultimately providing more time for leisure and creativity. Society was going to improve for all.

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In practice, many residents found the new city disorientating. People's actual behaviour may not equate to those supposed by a planner's gaze. Gibson's overarching design can be criticised for its implicit assumption of rationality and, ultimately, that people ought always to behave in ordered and somewhat pre-ordained ways.

A counter-argument to modernism in art and architecture emphasised instead the irrational and allowed as a true representation of the human spirit.
A CULTURED MIND

A HEALTHY BODY

IDENTITY IS A TASK
the global economy. Today the city's new architecture comes from private accommodation providers.

In this context it's worth looking back at the post-war period, its visions and aspirations, to see what lessons we might draw from the past.
I'm fine. Thanks. Don't mention it.