**The Sky is Falling**
1 April – 14 May 2017
Black Audio Film Collective, Laura Oldfield Ford, Clara Ianni, Dora Mejía and Carol Rhodes

The Sky is Falling is an exhibition, event programme and symposium that presents disparate visual imaginaries, looking at how we organise ourselves in some of the most challenging cities in our world. Exploring human desire and the promise of utopia, it contrasts the perspective of the city from above as envisaged by the modern planner, with the moveable, unfixed reality of living in urban space, and the contradictory senses of dubiousness and hope that we might feel as the sky appears to fall.

Aiming to understand the catalytic potential of civic space, we aim to examine what can emerge from different approaches to thinking around urban space. Exploring new horizons, as well as looking at the city in a form of documentation, we look at how space is controlled through various forms.

The exhibition departs from the UK's New Towns, a social and architectural form that offered a modern solution to the overcrowding of industrial cities like Glasgow. Crossing the ocean, we also look at the Americas as a political horizon in which to find large urban spaces that also defined our modernity. New and existing works from the UK and Latin America variously explore cartographies of power, spatial discrimination, and globalisation - mapping the effects of cities built for profit and gentrified ways of living.

**Carol Rhodes**’ early works were inspired by the changing landscape of Calcutta, India, where she lived as a child and witnessed the growth of the city and the creation of new (sub)urban space. Working slowly, Rhodes’ careful approach to composition is symbolic – a painter imagining and controlling space through her own approach to visual language, building an abstract space of river-like roads and uncanny landscapes; lines and forms which create an illusion of a space in which we might live, representing space as an imaginative construct. Her bird’s-eye view paintings provide an insight into the city as infrastructure, the winding, peopleless roads telling us something of the construction of the city as a subjective form. In this exhibition are two of her most recent paintings, and a selection of drawings.

**Clara Ianni**’s *Free Form* introduces us to the history of Brasilia – which in 1956 became the newly formed capital of Brazil - partly to move power away from the working people of the former capital in Rio Janeiro, but to also federalise power and create a new administrative zone for the country. Ianni’s film pans over the famous aeroplane-shaped plan of the city, as the city’s planners Oscar Niemeyer and Lucio Costa are interviewed about the social unrest caused by moving the capital inland. The planners’ wilful ignorance of the human cost of the project demonstrates many of the issues of these Modernist schemes, finding resonance with the New Towns in Europe and the reality of these movements around the world. Ianni’s *Class Drawing* series, the Sao Paulo version of which appears in the space, maps the mobility of housekeeper’s and their employers through cities, highlighting the disparity in movement of people from different places and incomes.

The artist, writer and psychogeographer **Laura Oldfield Ford**’s work explores the social effect of Modernist projects on modern-day Britain, as well as in other cities around the world. At once a Modernist critique and a punk resistance, her work focuses on stories and philosophy from the viewpoint of the street, finding a form in sound works, writing, painting and installation. Interested in the emancipatory qualities of space, Oldfield Ford creates poetic and visceral response to histories of gentrification, social housing and urban subculture. For the Sky is Falling, Oldfield Ford presents a new sound and sculptural installation, in collaboration with the musician Jam City (Jack Latham). Visiting Glasgow’s Gorbals and the new town of Cumbernauld as part of the research for this new work, Oldfield Ford produced a new text, mixing stories and moments from a series of dérives through these spaces and streets. The theory of dérive, or drifting, is at the heart of her practice, walking through space to elucidate moments of joy, rage and haunting. This iteration takes us on a journey through the former Gorbals neighbourhood of Hutchesontown C - to a demolition, an exodus to Cumbernauld and back to the remnants of the (new) Gorbals, infused with Detroit Techno (with its links to Glasgow’s post-industrial music scene).

**Dora Mejía**’s practice is entirely invested in understanding urban space and how we navigate the city through different perspectives and subjective responses. A trained architect, the city of Medellin is her subject as she uses the history of the city and access to it, as a starting point for her works. *The Garden of Eden* is a grid compiled of 98 square cushions. It alludes to a time where means of geographic information allow us to appreciate the flourishing of human civilizations and settlements, in which 'modern people’' still inhabit the same land of the mythical origins that bathed the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. The satellite images evoke the experience of a dream enchanted garden from the immaterial perspective of the most sophisticated digital technology, capturing satellite images from outer space. Dora Mejía asks what has become of humanity that has unleashed dark sins, clouding the modern Baghdad or New York and overshadowing a once splendid Garden.

Mejía’s *Wandering Stars* explores a great paradox of the civilized world in which, more and more, city lights prevent the possibility of seeing the stars. Humanity loses visual contact with the universe, while the streets of the city light up and the immediate material world occupies the entire capacity of human perception. The theme of the twelve constellations of the ecliptic, repeated on both sides under twelve bridges over the Medellín River, provokes the pedestrian under the highway to take a glimpse at this paradox.

*Twilight City*, a film directed by Reece Auguiste in 1989 as part of the **Black Audio Film Collective**, maps a particular version of London's social and cultural operation. Introduced by a poetic, rhythmical narrative, the video essay binds personal stories with the constant pressure of London’s changing form. Through a range of interviews, London residents share their memories of a city which has been changed radically by modernisation, capitalism and gentrification. Now, some thirty years later after Twilight City has been made, its narratives, propositions and analyses can be re-interpreted to its significance today.

Black Audio Film Collective (which disbanded in 1998) was always based on working collectively, dividing the work and ideas and working close to home, involving friends and accessible networks. In this film, now well-known thinkers, educators, artists and activists like Homi Bhaba, Paul Gilroy and many more give their honest personal views on their experience of London. The film offers insight in the process of making sense of one's backgrounds, relations to the city, immigration, race and new political forms within the world. A part warning and part document of reflection, the narrator seem to tell us not to return to London. At the same time it might be irresistible.

Event Programme July 2016 – March 2017

In the nine-months prior to the show, Curator Ainslie Roddick programmed a series of film screenings and discussions publicly addressing concerns raised by The Sky is Falling. This ‘primer’ approach was about sharing research ideas and developing a discussion about the history and disposition of urban space as an aesthetic and as ‘space of appearance’.

A monthly discussion group explored Sarah Schulman’s The Gentrification of the Mind, Kathy Acker’s Don Quixote, Keller Easterling’s Extrastatecraft, Martha Rosler’s Culture Class: Art, Creativity, Urbanism Part I, Judith Butler: Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street, Etel Adnan’s Of Cities & Women, and Blanca Pujala’s Bodily Cartographies from the Funambulist magazine.

The film programme included Chantal Akerman’s News from Home, Andreas Dalsgaard’s Life Is Sacred about former Bogota mayor Antanas Mockus, Patrick Keiller’s Robinson in Space, Fritz Lang’s Metropolis, Jean Luc Godard’s 2 or 3 Things I Know About Her, Lino Brocka’s Manila in the Claws of Neon, Rubén Mendoza’s La Sociedad del Semaforo (The Stoplight Society), Jonathan Glazer’s Under the Skin, William Cameron Menzies’ and HG Wells’ Things to Come, Helke Sander’s The All Round Reduced Female Personality (Redupers), and a selection of works by artist Martha Rosler. Artists Kari Robertson and Abigale Neate Wilson also curated their own programmes in March, with talks by Douglas Murphy, films by Beatrice Gibson, Gilles Pate, Charles Atlas, and performances by lightreading and Giles Bailey.

With thanks to Film Hub Scotland’s Audience Development Network for supporting this programme.

**The programme ends with a lunchtime curators’ tour with Remco and Ainslie on Thursday 27 April at 2pm, which is free and open to all.**

Exhibition Reader
The Sky is Falling Reader was printed and bound in-house with CCA’s Publication Studio equipment. The reader collates some of the texts and ideas encountered throughout the research process of the show. It can be purchased at the CCA Box Office for £5. The texts included are:

Susan Buck Morss - The City as Dreamworld and Catastrophe, 1995
Peter McGurn - GLASGOW 60 YEARS HARD LABOUR, 2016
Remco de Blaaij - A view, 2017
Ainslie Roddick - Cool cold, 2017
Laura Oldfield Ford - DETROIT: TECHNO CITY, 2017
Lucas Ospina - Mockus the Artist, Mockus the Idiot, 2016
Paul Gilroy - “A London sumtin’ dis”, 1999
Beatriz Colomina - Battle lines : E.1027, original version 1996

    