

## CITY DOME

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Cauleen Smith

*H-E-L-L-O*

22.01.22 — 15.05.22

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Cauleen Smith and Collective present *H-E-L-L-O* (2014), a short film that signals a search for connection in a time of uncertainty and unrest.

*H-E-L-L-O* re-interprets the famous five-note musical motif from Stephen Spielberg's *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* into a greeting for sites around post-hurricane Katrina New Orleans, loaded with the histories of music and procession. At each site, musicians from the city play the sequence on a series of instruments, from trumpet, to cello and bass saxophone. Their interpretations of the sequence, originally written by film composer John Williams as a coded extra-terrestrial hello, speak mournfully of New Orleans' enduring spirit despite a troubled recent past and uncertain future.

Smith's work reflects upon the everyday possibilities of the imagination. For over three decades she has employed radical thinking

to envision a better world through film, video, sculpture, textiles, installations and drawings. Bringing together questions of historic erasure, presence and loss, Smith believes in the redemptive and transformative power of art, music and text. Drawing from the language of Third World Cinema, science fiction and Structuralist film, the artist regularly explores topics within the African diaspora, the environment and the human condition.

Presented in Collective's City Dome space, *H-E-L-L-O* sits alongside the rich history of the site as a place of astrological study and observation, monument, time and communication, ideas at the heart of Smith's practice. Although situated in the geography of New Orleans, the film allows us to contemplate Edinburgh's relationship to its own landscape, inhabitants and history in a time of turbulence and change. The architecture of the site brings together Smith's deep-

rooted interest in science fiction, Afro-futurism and public space. When the need for connection is increasingly imperative, Smith's faith in the importance of culture and trust in transformation is not only essential, it's how we might begin to heal.

*H-E-L-L-O* was originally commissioned by En Mas': Carnival and Performance Art of the Caribbean for CAC New Orleans. It is in part inspired by *Unfathomable City: A New Orleans Atlas* edited by Rebecca Solnit and Rebecca Snedeker.

Running time: 11 mins.

Produced by Emmie McLuskey.

COLLECTIVE

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**Cauleen Smith** is an artist and filmmaker living in Los Angeles. Smith received a BA in Creative Arts from San Francisco State University, and an MFA from the University of California, Los Angeles, School of Theater Film and Television. Her films, objects, and installations have been featured in group exhibitions at the Studio Museum of Harlem, New York; Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, California; the New Museum, New York; and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, Illinois. She has had solo shows for her films and installations at Los Angeles County Museum of Art (2020); The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2020); The Frye Museum, Seattle, Washington (2019); Institute for Contemporary Art at VCU, Richmond, Virginia (2019); Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (2018); Art Institute of Chicago (2017); Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (2012); and The Kitchen, New York (2011), among others.

**Emmie McLuskey** is an artist and producer based in Glasgow. She took part in the Satellites programme at Collective in 2018/19 and regularly works with other people to create exhibitions, publications, events, audio work and films.

**With thanks** to Cauleen Smith, Mar, Emmie McLuskey, Ima-Abasi Okon, Kimberley O'Neill, Ain Bailey, Sue McDiarmid, Charlotte Prodger, Siobhan Carroll, Rachael Simpson, Dave Simpson, Duncan Marquiss, Rob Kennedy, Colm Clarke, Thomas Aitchison, Casey Miller, Edinburgh Art Festival, and all of the team at Collective.



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