

Exploring *The Park* and Collaborative Art Activity by Megan Scott

This art activity is inspired by one of the pieces in the *Worlds Without End* Exhibition at the Hugh Lane Gallery.

Worlds Without End is a visual dialogue on the impact of borders on individuals and communities. It deals with themes of borders, barriers and surveillance. How do borders engender new perceptions, create enemies from neighbours, and change our behaviours? The exhibition presents encounters that are thresholds for us all – to go beyond the mindset of borders and recognise the world's circuit of connectedness. It causes us to reflect on the lines we have drawn in the sand for ourselves.

The Artwork

The Park by Ari Marcopoulos is the inspiration for this art activity. Marcopoulos is an artist, film-maker and photographer who was born in Amsterdam in 1957. He moved to New York City in 1980, where he now lives and works. This artwork is a one-hour video piece which consists of a single long shot of a basketball court adjacent to the Walt Whitman housing projects in Fort Greene, Brooklyn, New York. The court is unfenced, there is no barrier between spectator, player and passer-by. The game has no set beginning or end with players leaving and joining at



Worlds Without End

Stories Around Borders

Curated by
Michael Dempsey
Sara Reisman



Ari Marcopoulos *The Park*, 2018,

Exhibitions at the Hugh Lane Gallery, Michael Dempsey writes: “*Where the game begins and where it ends we cannot see. It is a way of life – the kind only dreamt of by the social revolutionary artists of the International Situationists (1957–72)*”.

The **Situationist International** was a movement made up of avant-garde artists, intellectuals, and political theorists. Situationism valued the decentralization of creation, with artists working in collaboration or under shared names to undermine the notion of the single genius or visionary. This reflects the movement's view that art belonged to everyday life and any individual could produce art. It was the process of making that was important to emphasise rather than the concept of “the artist”.

Random. Wanderers cut through the action with ease, appearing not to hinder the flow of the game.

Pianist and composer Jason Moran responded in real time to the work with an improvised piano soundtrack that spontaneously translates the visual rhythms of *The Park's* unscripted choreography. In an interview about the work Marcopolous describes how the collaboration with Moran causes him to see the film in a different way.

While discussing this work in his essay for this exhibition's catalogue, co-curator and Head of

Art Activity

Let's make a piece of art inspired by the Situationists and the collaborative nature of this artwork. For this exercise each member of the class or group must write a short instruction for a performative action around the theme of borders and boundaries (max 10 seconds). During the upcoming week, using a notebook to record ideas, reflect on the theme of borders and boundaries and how they are relevant to your life at present. Like in *The Park*, borders or lack of borders might be something very local or it might have wider resonances or connotations.

During the next art lesson, each person performs their own action, then the others in the group repeat that action to the best of their ability, until all participants have performed. The order of performance should be random but decided ahead of time by the teacher or group leader.

For example, one person might make a sound or a clap, all others repeat, another tears a piece of paper, everyone repeats and so on. The resulting compositions of actions make up the collaborative work.



18 Happenings in 6 Parts, Allan Kaprow, 1959

Example of Collaborative Performance

Another other example of collaborative performance is the 90-minute *18 Happenings* by Allan Kaprow. In this piece Kaprow constructed three rooms, each containing six separate, simultaneous actions. There was, for example, a woman seated and squeezing oranges, two performers proclaiming a nonsensical series of single-syllable words, and painters painting shapes on either side of a canvas.

Kaprow orchestrated the events with the help of a meticulously planned script of stage directions and scores. Invitations had been sent out informing spectators that “you will become part of the happenings; you will simultaneously experience them.” Entrants to the gallery were given instructions such as when and how to move seats or applaud.

Some questions to consider...

Do you enjoy this type of art, why or why not?

How did collaborating change the nature of the artwork *The Park*?

How does collaborating change how you make art?

Who is the viewer and the artist in the artwork you have made?

Why do you think this form of art become popular in the mid-late 20th century?

Let's be creative together,
for more art ideas see www.hughlane.ie/education

