

Playground

Shirazeh Houshiary and Pip Horne

Gloucester Primary School

Inaugurated September 16, 2004

Playground is a new and innovative play space created by Shirazeh Houshiary and architect Pip Horne. It opened at Gloucester Primary School in the London Borough of Southwark in September 2004. The project was developed as a collaboration between Art for The World and Creative Partnerships and brings art, architecture, design and creativity directly to the lives of children.

Nick-named the "Sunlight Cube" by the pupils of Gloucester Primary School the cube-like structure encompasses a five square meter steel frame with a suspended maze of fabric. Shirazeh Houshiary and Pip Horne describe the playground as "a suspended cube of sunlight filled with rays of translucent yellow fabric that oscillate with wind, sunlight and child participation, animating the ground beneath it with playful shadows. It is a place of regeneration and optimism, of imagination and wonder, a framework for infinite play."

Pupils and teachers at Gloucester Primary School have worked closely with the creative teams at every stage of the project. It has inspired many educational and creative activities across all parts of the curriculum including poetry, artworks, models, and a sound animation for the cube. Roger Redgate, Head of Composition at Goldsmiths conducted workshops with pupils to create a sound animation for the cube.

This special playground will also be open after school for the whole community to enjoy. It will be a significant addition to Southwark's changing environment which is noted for its innovative architecture and work by leading artists and designers. These include Will Alsop's award winning library in Peckham, and street furniture and features by Anthony Gormley, Tom Phillips and Zandra Rhodes in the Bellenden renewal area.

Mark Robertson, Creative Director of Creative Partnerships London South, says "pupils and teachers rarely get the chance to work with and alongside artists and practitioners of the calibre of Shirazeh Houshiary, and Pip Horne. What has impressed me most is the way that the whole school community has seized upon this opportunity to inspire and support their own creative work and demonstrate to us that there are always new ways that pupils, teachers and creative professionals can work and learn together."

The playground has been conceived for Art for The World and has been generously supported by Creative Partnerships London South and the MA Creative Curating Course, Goldsmiths College, University of London and sponsored by The London Borough of Southwark, London Diversified Fund Management, Price & Myers and Sir Robert McAlpine, and Presence Switzerland.

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