



O'DonnellBrown

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PRESS RELEASE

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL LAUNCHES 'RAINBOW PAVILION', A NEW OUTDOOR SHELTER IN STRATHCLYDE COUNTRY PARK, SCOTLAND

4/11/2021

Today, to mark Outdoor Classroom Day, a global movement to inspire and celebrate outdoor play and learning, North Lanarkshire Council has unveiled an exciting new addition to its facilities at Strathclyde Country Park: a large multi-use structure and artwork to accommodate and promote outdoor learning and events. It is the result of a creative collaboration between Glasgow-based artist Kate V Robertson and award-winning architects O'DonnellBrown, and the primary schoolchildren of New Monkland Primary School.

Strathclyde Country Park boasts Scotland's only 2,000 metre multi-lane international rowing course, where the 2014 Commonwealth Games and the 2018 European Rowing Championships were hosted. The new pavilion is an attractive outdoor space within the park, offering protection from the elements while immersing its occupants in nature and commanding views of sporting activities.

This is the first of a series of new collaborations to encourage innovative partnerships between artists, architects, and the community. It forms part of a wider arts strategy and ambition for the park.

The architect-artist team was tasked to create an inspiring, bespoke outdoor structure for year-round learning experiences for education groups, with the flexibility to be used for performances, workshops and private hires. The resulting pavilion, which fronts Strathclyde Loch, is robust, low-maintenance and built using environmentally sustainable materials and construction methods.

The supporting structure is an evolution of O'DonnellBrown's prototype Community Classroom, an adaptable, demountable learning environment which was developed as a self-initiated project and is now being manufactured by Spaceoasis as CC20. Following circular economy principles and built from a simple kit of parts to minimise construction waste, waste materials have been used to reduce the structure's carbon footprint. The pavilion is made of timber sections bolted together in repeated two column modules to support the timber structural deck above, which is contained within a bespoke timber and mesh screen, creating the sculptural envelope.

A series of 'rain screens' conceived by the artist using layers of metal mesh creates shadows across the interior floor which mimic the reflection and refraction of the water on the adjacent Strathclyde Loch.

Held together with timber battens arranged in a repetitive pattern, the rain screens draw on

works in Robertson's solo exhibition at Dundee Contemporary Arts in 2017, and more recently in her installation at Barclays' new Glasgow campus. Exploring the themes of obsolescence, waste, technology and the environment, the rain screens are made of recycled film from the inside of broken and discarded mobile phones, tablets and laptop screens. The large patchwork pattern reflects and distorts the sunlight, creating rainbow prisms that bounce around the interior, brought to life by the movement of people using the space.

Local schools have helped to shape the project, with workshops run by the architects and artist engaging local primary 7s in discussions on environmental issues and problem solving in the design process. This was augmented by a public campaign launched by the artist to collect broken or unwanted mobile phones, tablets and laptops from the community, which would otherwise have gone to landfill.

The collected material was then used by Robertson to create the structural artwork which integrates seamlessly with the timber structure – any remaining materials were recycled via Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Scotland. Across the whole structure from floor to ceiling, different sized screens feature in both horizontal and vertical orientations, echoing the variety of screens we encounter in our everyday lives – from widescreen TVs to handheld tablets to advertising displays.

As with the Community Classroom, O'DonnellBrown has partnered with Barnardo's Works, an employment programme for young people, to build the structure. Three local young people assisted the contractor, Bridgewater Building Solutions, gaining skills and improving job prospects through their involvement.

Michael McPake, Convener of the Environment and Transportation Committee, North Lanarkshire Council, said:

"The new pavilion is already proving a welcome addition to our outdoor learning programme for P7 pupils, creating an excellent new venue for activities. Its creative design and green credentials make it an inspiring feature for pupils and other visitors to Strathclyde Country Park, and it will become part of the art trail being developed as part of the council's long-term masterplan for the park."

Jennifer O'Donnell, Director, O'DonnellBrown, said:

"We are really proud to have worked with Kate to deliver the first outdoor shelter in Strathclyde Park for North Lanarkshire Council. Furthering our ideas for what a healthy and inspiring learning space can be, the shelter will be an adaptable resource to help schools deliver progressive outdoor learning experiences, and with these experiences, give people the emotional and mental wellbeing benefits that can come from being outside in the fresh air."

Kate V Robertson, artist, said:

"The process of integrating the artwork and the architecture was seamless, we began the process together from scratch and collaborated in tandem throughout, so it is hard to see where one ends and the other begins. As a result, the shelter has a unity of form, structure, and materials – and their effects. I hope the children and groups who use it will find it both useful and pleasing."

Patricia Fleming, curator, said:

"This innovative commission for Strathclyde Park is an opportunity for children and young people to experience a different learning environment, without the constraints of the four walls of a traditional classroom. We hope it will inspire fresh ideas to think differently about our environment and highlight the way artists can inspire and engage us in challenging subjects. We have both the architectural and artistic talent in Scotland to do things differently."

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Location: Strathclyde Country Park, 366 Hamilton Road, Motherwell, ML1
3ED
Site area: 200m² (events field)
Gross internal area: 80m²
Client: North Lanarkshire Council
Artist: Kate V Robertson
Architect: O'DonnellBrown
Curator: Patricia Fleming Projects
Structural engineer: Design Engineering Workshop
Building contractor: Bridgewater Building Solutions
Value: £35,000
On site: March – June 2021
Photos: © Ross Campbell, © Keith Hunter

Kate V Robertson is a Glasgow-based artist, completing an MA from The Glasgow School of Art in 2009. Robertson's artwork – particularly as mentioned above in the solo exhibition *This Mess is Kept Afloat* at Dundee Contemporary Arts in 2017, and her recent commissions for the new Barclays Campus, Clyde Place, Glasgow – has explored the illusion of 3D space experienced across 2D surfaces. Robertson began experimenting with the materials recycled from mobile phone, tablet and laptop screens in step with our rising dependency on such items and subsequently exhibited related works in the 2018 exhibition *Divided and Yet Mutual* and recently in the solo exhibition *Post* at Stallan-Brand Gallery, Glasgow. Robertson, like many, is drawn to the distorting and distracting quality of the optical effect, and endless promises offered from scrolling across an illuminated screen. Her work questions our relationship to technology – particularly the devices that are discarded in the name of technological improvement set against our responsibility to the environment.

katevrobertson.com



O'DonnellBrown is a multiple award-winning Glasgow-based architecture practice with experience across a range of specialisms, and a keen interest in what it takes to make a positive contribution to our built environment. With work across the UK – currently concentrated in London and Glasgow – O'DonnellBrown is committed to bringing about confident change in the places they know and love.

Built works to date include The Greenhouse, the studio's unique workspace in Pollokshields, and a new annexe building and outdoor learning space at Seven Mills Primary School in Tower Hamlets, London. The practice is currently working on two community-led redevelopment projects: Millport Town Hall on the Isle of Cumbrae, and Maxwell Park Pavilion in Pollokshields, Glasgow, as well as several residential developments throughout Glasgow.

Alongside Rainbow Pavilion, the practice has developed Calton Hill Play Shelter with Collective Edinburgh, which also launches this month. The original prototype Community Classroom is currently being manufactured by Spaceoasis as CC20.

O'DonnellBrown was a finalist in The Architectural Review Emerging Architecture Awards 2019 and features in The Architecture Foundation's New Architects 4 (2021). The practice has also been included in the Architects' Journal's 40 under 40 – a showcase of architecture's brightest up-and-coming talent (December 2020).

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Photograph © Keith Hunter