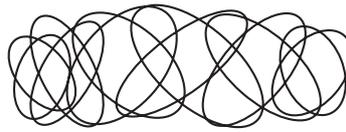


COCOON

BY KATE BROWNE

Following the Removals
2017-2019

COCOON Miskolc: Sculpture and Performance by US Artist Kate Browne Explore Trauma and Resilience of Hungary's Roma Communities

Date and Time: **July 27, 2019 at 8pm** (*Press visit during the day and the day before*)

Location: The Numbered Streets, Miskolc, Hungary

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Two months ahead of the local elections in Miskolc, the artist Kate Browne and the photographer Eric Etheridge will launch "COCOON Miskolc" in memory of the hundreds of Roma families evicted by local authorities. In the former industrial neighborhood of the "Numbered Streets," Roma families had been living for decades, working in the now-closed-steel mills that used to be the main economic activity of Hungary's northeast.

"Following the Removals" is a performance installation that will begin with an illuminated procession at dusk through the Numbered Streets. Current and former residents will carry lanterns bearing the names of the Roma who have been forced from their homes and neighborhood. The processioners will start from the various sites of the homes the city has destroyed in the last four years, and pass 36 large black-and-white portraits of residents. When they arrive at the Cocoon, which they have built with the artist, they will hang the lanterns inside, illuminating it. A soundtrack will play, drawn from more than 80 interviews with Roma about life before the forced evictions, the struggle to find new places to live, and the attempts of many -- some successful, some not -- to seek asylum in Canada.

"The performance and installation is a way to remember and honor the neighborhood that existed before the removals, and the families who lost their homes as well as those who still live in the Numbered Streets," said artist Kate Browne. "Sometimes when memories are expressed it is too late to react, or a generation has died and there is no record. Sometimes it is important to hear these memories while they are still happening, before a neighborhood is completely destroyed and people are scattered".

The artist has been working in the "Numbered Streets" with a local team since 2017, and she will continue over the course of the summer with a creation of a Cocoon sculpture. After Miskolc, she hopes to exhibit COCOON Miskolc in Toronto to bring the stories of the Numbered Streets to those former residents who have found asylum in Canada.

About the project

“Following the Removals” traces the struggles of Hungarian Roma who had lived and worked for generations in the established neighborhood of the “Numbered Streets” and are now being forcibly removed from their homes, becoming de-facto migrants in their own country.

From 2017 to 2019, the artist conducted more than 80 interviews for this work, including with families who have fled to Canada for asylum, those who have migrated to other European Union countries as well as to other parts of Hungary and those families who were still living in the Numbered Streets.

The houses in the “Numbered Streets” were built by the iron and steel mills in 1909: 100 quartered flats -- 100 houses, 400 flats -- over a seven-street area. It was built to be a progressive self-sufficient neighborhood with cottage gardens and one-story houses, their casement windows facing a grid of streets lined with trees.

Many of the Hungarian Roma the artist interviewed are from families who have lived in the “Numbered Streets” for generations, and worked in the steel plants LKM and DIGEP, which suffered in the global steel crisis. But the reason most often given for destroying the neighborhood was not the collapse of the steel industry but to make space for construction of the new DVTK stadium.

Originally built in 1939, the footprint of the new stadium, which opened in 2018, is about the same size as the old stadium plus a new small parking lot on half of 10th street, where three houses once stood. Most people do not understand why the entire neighborhood is being destroyed for a tiny parking lot and small stadium. In fact, in 2019 DVTK was the smallest stadium ever to be awarded first prize in the global stadium of the year competition, and the first for Hungary, which paid a large amount, 41.2 million euros, on construction.

Even with DVTK stadium finished removals and bulldozing continues with no date or apparent reason. Residents who have permanent contracts,

which are rare, have to be relocated by the city government, others have no recourse but to migrate.

About the artists

Artist Kate Browne creates performance installation art. Since 2008 she has worked on her international series COCOON that focuses on sites of forced and voluntary migrations and the epidemics that follow. As part of this series, she has created five performance installation works called Cocoons in Paris, Mexico City, Greenwood and Jackson, Mississippi and most recently in the South Bronx. Previously, she created plays in various New York City theaters. Browne grew up in rural Pennsylvania, graduated from Hampshire College, and now lives in New York City.

Photographer Eric Etheridge’s work is integral to the COCOON series. He takes the portraits of local people, photographs the neighborhood and every detail of the artwork. He is the photographer and author of Breach of Peace: Portraits of the 1961 Mississippi Freedom Riders. He has worked as an editor at a number of magazines, including Rolling Stone, 7 Days, the New York Observer and Harper's magazine. He has also worked online, creating and running websites for Microsoft, the New York Times and others. A native of Mississippi, he lives in New York City.

<https://www.bykatebrowne.com/removals>

Kate Browne’s storyboard for “Following the Removals” performance and Eric Etheridge’s photos and portraits from The Number Streets.

<https://www.bykatebrowne.com/blog/tracing-the-bullet>

Two minute video by Noriko Sugiura of Kate Browne’s Bronx Cocoon: Tracing the Bullet.