

# Helen Cammock | behind the eye is the promise of rain

February 26 - May 22, 2022

Artist **Helen Cammock** (born in 1970 in Staffordshire, England) gives voice to unheard protagonists and tells their marginalized stories. Cammock explores complex, historical narratives and reflects on them in the exhibition "behind the eye is the promise of rain" in film, performances and large-scale text-based graphics. Her works often interweave different perspectives with her own view of history. The fragmentary and non-linear narratives make it clear that for Cammock, history is never finished, but always a basic premise - and therefore part of - our present.

## **Thematization of forced or voluntary migration**

The film "There Is a Hole in the Sky Part II: Listening to James Baldwin" (2016) centers on an imaginary conversation with writer and activist James Baldwin (1924-1987), whose writings address racism, sexism, and class distinctions in Western societies. The film addresses the forced or voluntary migration of black American writers\* and dancers who moved to Europe in search of work and greater recognition. Cammock layers multiple and diverse experiences, exploring the dynamics of appropriation and power.

"They Call It Idlewild" (2020) is a film and text installation that Cammock developed following her residency at the Wysing Arts Centre in Cambridgeshire, England. Inspired by the forgotten stories she found in the archive, the film reflects on the politics of idleness and what it means to be idle. In a time of massive overproduction, the artist invites us to slow down, linger and dream.

## **"If something is just political, then that's not enough for me ..."**

... Helen Cammock says. "I want to make people think and, in the process, feel." A series of posters is also designed to shake up the audience emotionally: In poetic statements on large-scale, colorful backgrounds, Cammock reflects on our human responses to contemporary global crises.

## **Performances at the opening, during the exhibition and at the finissage**

The architectural installation in the large domed hall serves as the stage for Helen Cammock's new approximately 15-minute opening performance, which will be repeated again during the exhibition's run. Entitled "Gathering," the performance will feature three spoken

and sung word texts that come together to form a reimagined conversation about freedom. In addition, Helen Cammock is developing a performance especially for the exhibition in cooperation with the initiative "Under One Roof" from Hanover, which uses innovative concepts to promote integration and participation. This joint performance will be performed at the finissage. This continuous interactive work process, consists of a total of three individual monthly rehearsals - as well as the joint group performance.

## **Biography**

Before studying photography at the University of Brighton and the Royal College of Art, London, Helen Cammock worked as a social worker. Issues of structural oppression and inequality that she encountered during this time continue to preoccupy her as an artist. Cammock's work has been included in numerous solo exhibitions, including Wysing Arts Centre, Cambridge, UK (2020); Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia, Italy (2020); Whitechapel Gallery, London, UK (2019); Turner Contemporary, Margate, UK (2019); VOID, Derry, Northern Ireland; The Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, Ireland (2019); and Cubitt, London (2017). Her work has been shown in many group exhibitions, including Kunsthau Bregenz, Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg, Somerset House, London, Hollybush Gardens, London, and Firstsite, Colchester, UK. Cammock received the Turner Prize in 2019, along with three other laureates\*, and the 7th Max Mara Art Prize for Women in 2018. Helen Cammock lives and works in London.

Curator: Adam Budak

## **Press conference**

Thursday, February 24, 2022 at 11 a.m.

## **Opening:**

Friday, February 25, 2022 at 7 p.m.