

## ***Air Quotes***

*Air Quotes* by Louis Brown (East London Cable), cuts between a group of inner-city London teens who are regularly exposed to toxic levels of air pollution, and young people involved in a school Eco Committee in Helensburgh, Scotland, to explore young people's views on climate justice and the uneven impacts of air pollution and 'net-zero' climate policies.

Documenting workshops led by Louis Brown, the film's visual grammar and pace is reminiscent of children's television. Short segments, vox pops, and graphics, including drawings by the young people that have been animated and overlaid onto green-screen footage, concentrate hours of multi-faceted discussions that are at times impassioned, and at others reflect confusion or boredom.

In the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, conversations about net-zero amongst sixth-form students at Southbank University Academy in Elephant and Castle, London, centre around the intersections of race, class and health inequities that mark the impact of air pollution in the capital, and low trust in greedy politicians to take action on these outcomes. Members of Armitage Academy's Eco Committee who live around Helensburgh, a small semi-rural town, struggle to identify negative consequences of air pollution locally. An engaged, middle class community, they grapple with this disparity between their learnt knowledge of the environment and lived experience of the local one, questioning how policies such as a reduction of car use would be implemented in a place with limited access to public transport.

Mirroring repeated discussion about who has agency to influence air pollution and climate change policy, and dependencies on adult decision-makers, the youth collaborators are encouraged to take an active role in representing their own views. Taking a cue from Soren Hansen and Jesper Jensen's countercultural self-help manual *the little red schoolbook* (originally published in 1969), which encourages children to question authority and take an active role in 'improving things,' they hold round-table discussions about climate policies that researchers at Imperial College London are testing, interview activists, and take home a portable camera kit to interview adults in their lives.

The conversations they record reflect an intergenerational commitment to achieving climate targets, inflected with uncertainty about the impact individuals can make. The challenge of grasping net-zero and climate research is evident in the mistranslation that easily occurs amongst those sharing information. And there are conflicts of interest between the generations. As a 17-year old girl in London puts it: 'I'm going to die young and it's my mum's fault!'

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**Louis Brown** is a London based artist & member of collective *East London Cable*. His work is concerned with the politics of representation; using television and media formats to further explore this. His practice often relies on collaboration; working with young people, and previously, performance artists to produce and develop work that deals not only with “the live, in situ” performance, but also how documentation can operate beyond evidence of the work through choices in presentation.

**Jessie Krish** (she/her) is a cultural worker based in London. Her interdisciplinary research explores conflicts that shape the civic space, involving collaboration with non-artists in and beyond a gallery context. Jessie commissioned film and poster series *Cultural Field, Turf Projects* (2022); co-edited *e-flux Reader 'Loot and Looting'* (2020), and produced *GENDERS: Shaping and Breaking the Binary*, Science Gallery London (2020). She is the Gallery Manager at Cell Project Space.