



Photographs by
James Mollison

Toured by
Curatorial Exhibitions

In this revealing series of photographs, James Mollison invites us into the diverse stories of children in many different countries and circumstances. Each studio-style portrait is accompanied by a detailed study of the child's "bedroom," which can range from elaborate sanctuaries to the barest spaces set aside for sleep.

The photographs and their related didactic materials convey the story of a universal childhood, full of insecurity, hope, pain, comfort, and doubt. Economic inequality, children's rights, and how we are defined by our possessions and formed by our circumstances are some of the complex social, typological, and cultural issues that resonate in Mollison's work.

The project, in all its diversity, is frankly observant and often surprising. Mollison's subjects convey the simple truth that all children, whether from a first- or third-world economy, need to be nurtured and protected. His call to action is that we might walk away changed, viewing every child we meet as an individual in need of love and care. As the very concept of sleep and personal space conveys, *Where Children Sleep* is, above all else, a portrait of vulnerability.





Indira, 7, Kathmandu. Nepal

Indira lives with her parents, brother and sister near Kathmandu in Nepal. Her house has only one room, with one bed and one mattress. At bedtime, the children share the mattress on the floor. Indira is seven years old and has worked at the local granite quarry since she was three. The family is very poor so everyone has to work. There are 150 other children working at the quarry, some of whom will lose their sight because they do not have goggles to protect their eyes from stone splinters. Indira works five or six hours a day and then helps her mother with household chores such as cleaning and cooking. Her favourite food is noodles. She also attends school, which is a thirty minute walk away. She does not mind working at the quarry but would prefer to be playing. She would like to be a Nepalese dancer when she grows up.





Jazzy, 4, Kentucky, USA

Jasmine prefers to be called by her nickname, Jazzy. She lives in a big house in Kentucky, USA with her parents and three brothers. Her house is in the countryside, surrounded by farmland. Her bedroom is full of crowns and sashes which she has won in child pageants. She is only four years old and has already entered over a hundred of these competitions. Her spare time is completely taken up with preparation and rehearsal. She practises her stage routines every day with a trainer who teaches her new steps. Each weekend, she participates in a different pageant, arriving on Friday afternoon, performing on Saturday, and attending the crowning ceremony on Sunday. By the end of the show, she is quite exhausted. Jazzy enjoys being pampered and treated like a princess — having her hair done and wearing pretty clothes and make-up with false nails and a fake tan. It is a very expensive hobby and can cost her parents a thousand dollars for each pageant she takes part in. Jazzy would like to be a rock star when she grows up.





Romanian boy, 4, Rome, Italy

Home for this four-year-old boy and his family is a mattress in a field on the outskirts of Rome, Italy. The family came from Romania by bus after begging on the streets for enough money to pay for their tickets (100 per adult and 80 per child). When they first arrived in Rome, they camped in a tent, but the police threw them off the site because they were trespassing on private land and did not have the correct documents. Now the family sleep together on the mattress in the open. When it rains, they hastily erect a tent and use umbrellas for shelter, hoping they will not be spotted by the police. They left Romania without identity documents or work papers and so are unable to obtain legal employment. This boy sits by the kerbside while his parents clean car windscreens at traffic lights, to earn thirty to fifty cents a time. No one from the boy's family has ever been to school. His parents cannot read or write.





Justin, 8, New Jersey, USA

Eight-year-old Justin is passionate about sport, and his bedroom is decorated with a sports theme. He plays American football, basketball and baseball, and is active throughout the year, changing sports according to the season. During the football season he has to practise three times a week. This is his favourite sport. He has played for his local junior football team since the age of five. Justin's parents give him a lot of encouragement despite the expensive kit they have to provide for him. He goes to school on the school bus with other children from his neighbourhood. The family lives in New Jersey, USA, in a four-bedroomed house, and they spend two weeks each summer on holiday on the Caribbean island of St Thomas. Justin has high expectations for his future. He would like to become the mayor of New Jersey. But if not, he would settle for being a poker player.





Alyssa, Appalachia, Kentucky, USA

Alyssa lives with her parents in Kentucky, USA. She is an only child but her grandmother, uncle and orphaned cousin live close by. It is a beautiful, mountainous region known as Appalachia but one of the poorest parts of America. Their small, shabby house, heated only by a wooden stove, is falling apart. The ceiling in Alyssa's bedroom is beginning to cave in. The family would like to buy a caravan instead, if they could afford it. Alyssa's mother works at McDonald's and her father works at Walmart, and everything they earn goes towards bringing up their daughter. She is lucky that her parents have jobs, even though they earn very little. Many local families are unemployed and have to rely on charity. There is a huge problem with drug misuse in the area, and two of Alyssa's relatives have already died from drug-related problems.





Ahkôhxet, 8, Amazon Basin, Brazil

Ahkôhxet is eight years old and a member of the Kraho tribe, who live in the basin of the river Amazon, in Brazil. There are only 1,900 members of the tribe. The Kraho people believe that the sun and moon were creators of the universe, and they engage in rituals that are many centuries old. The red paint on Ahkôhxet's chest is from one of his tribe's rituals. The elders teach Ahkôhxet's generation to respect nature and their surroundings. Their huts are arranged in a circle, leaving space in the middle for gatherings and ceremonies to take place. The nearby river provides water for drinking and washing. The tribe grow half their food in the poor soil using basic tools. They also hunt. The rest of their food is bought using money earned from film crews and photographers who visit their camp. There is one car shared between the whole tribe.





Dong, 9, Yunnan, China

Dong is nine years old. He lives in the province of Yunnan in Southwest China, with his parents, sister and grandfather. He shares a room with his sister and parents. They are a poor family who own just enough land to grow their own rice and sugar cane. Dong's school is twenty a minutes walk away. He especially enjoys writing and singing. Most evenings, he spends one hour completing his homework and one hour watching television. His parents have to pay for his books and uniform but his tuition is free because he comes from a rural area. Dong's mother is pleased that her son can have an education, something she herself never had. Dong's favourite food is pork, sweets and ice cream, but the family also eat other meat, fish and vegetables. When he is older, Dong would like to be a policeman, because he'll be able to "catch thieves and run around".





Delanie, 9, New Jersey, USA

Nine-year-old Delanie lives with her parents and younger brother and sister in a large house in New Jersey, USA. The children all have their own bedrooms. Delanie is very fussy about her appearance and she often takes hours in the evening choosing what to wear the next day. She and her brother travel to school together on the school bus, a journey of about ten minutes, but she does not like to sit with him. She enjoys seeing her friends in class but hates schoolwork. She only has fifteen minutes of homework each night but always leaves it until the last moment. Delanie's hobbies are shopping and dancing. She goes to church regularly and enjoys the happy atmosphere. When she grows up she would like to be a fashion designer and design her own clothes.





Tzvika, 9, Beitar Illit, the West Bank

Tzvika is nine years old and lives in Beitar Illit, an Israeli settlement in the West Bank. It is a gated community of thirty-six thousand Haredi (Orthodox) Jews, who live their lives according to a strict religious code set out in the Jewish holy book, the Talmud. Televisions and newspapers are banned from the settlement. The average family has nine children, but Tzvika has just one sister and two brothers, with whom he shares his room. Like all good Haredi boys, Tzvika reveres God and wants to become a rabbi when he is older. He lives in a modern apartment block and is taken by car to school, a two-minute drive away. Religion is the most important subject, followed by Hebrew and maths. Sport is banned from the curriculum. Tzvika goes to the library every day and enjoys reading the holy scriptures. All the books in the library are religious books. Tzvika also likes to play religious games on his computer. His favourite food is schnitzel and chips.





Jamie, 9, New York, New York, USA

Jaime is nine years old. He lives in a top-floor apartment on Fifth Avenue in New York. His parents also own luxury homes in Spain and in the Hamptons on Long Island. He has a younger brother and sister who are twins. Places at Jaime's school are greatly sought after, even though the fees are very high. Jaime had to pass several tests before he was accepted. He is doing very well at his studies and particularly enjoys computer class, spelling and woodworking, but not geometry. He has an hour's homework each night and often finds it hard to fit this in with his other after-school activities. Wednesdays are particularly busy as he has judo and swimming lessons. In his spare time, apart from playing the cello and kickball, Jaime likes to study his finances on the Citibank website. When he grows up, he would like to be a lawyer like his father.





Lamine, 12, Senegal

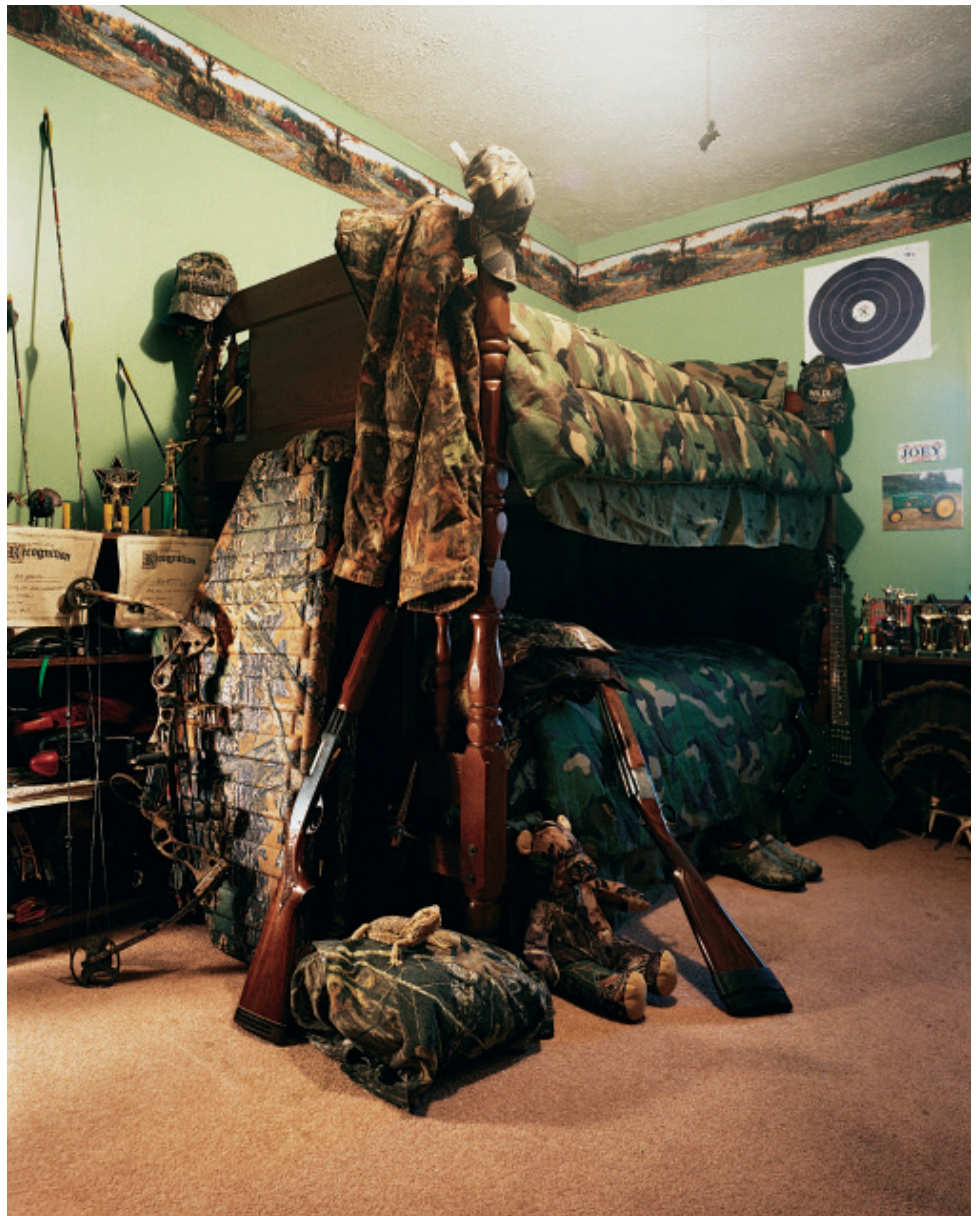
Lamine is twelve years old and lives in a village in Senegal, western Africa. He is a pupil at the village Koranic school, where no girls are allowed. He shares a room with several other boys from the school. The beds are very basic and uncomfortable, some supported by bricks for legs. At six o'clock every morning the boys begin work on the school farm. Depending on the season of the year, they are taught digging, harvesting maize or how to plough the fields using donkeys. In the afternoon, they study the Koran, the holy book from which Islam is derived, learning to recite its verses from wooden tablets. They have the same teacher for all their lessons. Lamine enjoys school but finds the farming lessons hard work and very hot. In his free time, he likes to play football with his friends. When Lamine grows up he would like to be a teacher.





Joey, 11, Kentucky, USA

Joey lives in Kentucky, USA, with his parents and older sister. He is eleven years old. He regularly accompanies his father on hunts. He owns two shotguns and a crossbow and made his first kill — a deer — at the age of seven. He is hoping to use his crossbow during the next hunting season as he has become tired of using a gun. He loves the outdoor life and hopes to continue hunting into adulthood. His family always cook and eat the meat from the animal they have shot. Joey does not agree that an animal should be killed just for sport. When he is not out hunting, Joey attends school and enjoys watching television with his pet bearded dragon lizard, Lily.





Prena, 14, Kathmandu, Nepal

Prena lives in Kathmandu, Nepal. Her room is a tiny, cell-like space at the top of the house where she is employed as a domestic worker. Her diet is mainly rice and vegetables. She is fourteen years old and one of thousands of child domestic workers in the country. Prena carries out household chores such as sweeping, cleaning, cooking and washing. She starts work at five in the morning and finishes at six in the evening. For this, she earns five hundred Nepali rupees per month (about \$6.50). She sends the money back to her parents, who have eight other children to support. Prena visits her family twice a year. She goes to school three times a week – which is the main highlight in her life. She admires her teacher, who has made it his mission to educate children like Prena. She would like to be a doctor when she is older.





Risa, 15, Kyoto, Japan

Risa is fifteen years old and lives with thirteen other women in a teahouse in Kyoto, Japan. She and five others sleep in a room that is also used as a dining room and tea room. She left her family in Tokyo a year ago after she saw a TV programme about geishas and decided she wanted to become one. Geishas are hostesses who entertain high-paying male guests by performing traditional Japanese arts. Risa is now a maiko — a young girl who has passed the test to train as a geisha — and has been given a new name, Tomoyuki. She will have to train rigorously, with daily lessons in singing, dancing, playing Japanese drums, tea-making and mastering elegant Kyoto elocution. She spends two hours a day practising how to wrap her kimono, arrange her hair and apply make-up. She is the youngest maiko in Japan. Risa has two days' holiday each month and visits her family three times a year. She often gets homesick.



From the start, I didn't want it just to be about 'needy children' in the developing world, but rather something more inclusive, about children from all types of situations. It seemed to make sense to photograph the children themselves, too, but separately from their bedrooms, using a neutral background.

— James Mollison

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

James Mollison was born in Kenya in 1973 and grew up in England. After studying art and design at Oxford Brookes, and later film and photography at Newport School of Art and Design, he moved to Italy to work at Benetton's creative lab, Fabrica. His work has been widely published throughout the world in Colors, The New York Times Magazine, the Guardian magazine, The Paris Review, The New Yorker, Le Monde, and elsewhere. Mollison has lived in Venice, Italy since 2003.

FEE

\$14,500 per 6 to 8 week period, plus prorated shipping

NUMBER OF WORKS

52 photographs (26 portraits, 26 bedrooms)

FRAME SIZES

Portraits: 23.6 x 28.8 in (60 x 73 cm)

Bedrooms: 43.3 x 53.5 in (110 x 136 cm)

SPACE REQUIREMENTS

288 linear feet (87.78 linear meters)

EXHIBITION SIGNAGE

CATE provides mounted text panels and item labels, and museums wishing to design and fabricate text panels and/or object labels can request digital source files.

SUPPORT MATERIALS

Publication, *Where Children Sleep* (Chris Boot, November 2010)

CONTACT

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As much as the project is about the quiriness of childhood, it is, more strikingly, a commentary on class and on poverty. But the diversity also provides a sense of togetherness.

— The New York Times



Installation view

Curatorial Exhibitions is a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating opportunities for access, outreach, and education in the visual arts through the origination and circulation of diverse and innovative exhibitions for museums and art organizations worldwide. Our organization fosters collaborations between public and private resources by developing traveling exhibitions that expand public opportunities to view and experience significant works of art. Formed in 2000, Curatorial Exhibitions has toured more than 400 exhibitions to over 850 art venues worldwide.