

As if to counteract the spectacular, Desperate Optimists' Leisure Centre is an exercise in understatement. Its slow meanderings confound the expectations of viewers familiar with their other work or of viewers who detect the film is set in Ballymun, where the striking iconography of the tower blocks and the sight of their demolition by explosion, is arguably the most spectacular urban landscape in contemporary Ireland, but which does not feature as a backdrop to this film. Instead, the gleaming interiors of the new leisure centre are the foil to preconceived perceptions.

Acknowledgements

Denise Reddy, Project Manager,
Breaking Ground
Ballymun Regeneration Ltd
Dublin City Council
Department of the Environment,
Heritage & Local Government
Project Arts Centre
The British Council
Film London

Breaking Ground sincerely thanks the many local people who participated in the film as members of the cast or as production assistants, Rhoda Smith and her baby Layla, Louise Lowe and the members of Roundabout Youth Theatre, Dorothea Ondrejova and Alen Anic, and Cineworld.

Still photography by
Susan Gogan.

Design by Carton LeVert.

Leisure Centre is not synonymous with Ballymun. It is a gentle and thoughtful allegory of hope and optimism in the face of major personal challenges, and could therefore be seen as a metaphor for the regeneration of Ballymun and of other places undergoing enormous change.

Aisling Prior

Artistic Director, Breaking Ground,
Ballymun Regeneration Ltd per cent
for art programme.

LEISURE CENTRE

Christine Molloy and Joe Lawlor
(desperate optimists)

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Commissioned by Breaking Ground, the Ballymun Regeneration Ltd Per Cent for Art Programme, Dublin.

Breaking Ground is funded by the Department of the Environment,
Heritage and Local Government's per cent for art scheme.

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