

POTENTIAL SPACE

A SERIOUS LOOK AT CHILD'S PLAY

This visual index of play from around the world is a stunning exploration of the human relationship to play, captured through the lenses of culture, tradition, and economics.

NANCY RICHARDS FARESE



ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

It's time to look seriously at child's play.

This documentary photography exhibition by award-winning author-photographer Nancy Richards Farese focuses on child's play in over fourteen countries. Farese proposes that play is where we learn creativity, collaboration, and the emotional flexibility to survive in a chaotic and ambiguous world. She invites us to consider how this universal activity—and the concept of “free play” as a self-governed and joyful exploration—is threatened by the unrelenting forces of technology, consumerism, and over-parenting.

Nothing lights up the brain like play. What happens when we invert the notion of adults teaching children and instead ask what children can teach adults about the basics of resilience, tolerance, and wellbeing?

Perhaps there has never been a more salient time to remind ourselves that we've had these tools since birth. When we take play seriously, we understand that this mundane and often overlooked activity offers a look within, and beyond, the challenges of our time to recover a new and possibly more resilient perspective.





WE DON'T STOP PLAYING BECAUSE WE GROW OLD



WE GROW OLD BECAUSE WE STOP PLAYING



WORKS

- 54 photographs designed for a playful installation
 - (34) 16x24" framed prints
 - (9) 27x40" unframed prints installed with hangers
 - (3) 43x64" and (4) 27x40" banners for indoor or outdoor display
 - (4) 20x30" vinyl prints with adhesive for wall or floor
- Checklist can be curated by venue

EXHIBITION SCHEDULE

Carrollton Center for the Arts, Roush Gallery
Carrollton, Georgia
(August 31 – October 16, 2023)

PROGRAMMING & BOOK-SIGNING

Potential Space is available as a hardcover book and
Nancy Richards Farese is available for
book-signings, panel discussions and presentations

PRESS

[Visit the *Potential Space* site](#)

INQUIRIES

Contact: Nancy Richards Farese
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Free Play, California: Race to the Top, California, 2017



My Face, La Gonâve, Haiti, 2017



Playing Monopoly, Havana, Cuba, 2017

“Potential space” is a concept developed by D. W. Winnicott, the British pioneering expert on child development, who maintained that all of human culture is derived from play. From the moment of birth, we begin pushing the edges of the psychic “potential space” between our inner world and outer reality.

Play is a series of experiences that are not at all frivolous but are actually the serious work of personality development and foundational to much of our physical, emotional, and social capacities. Play is how we expand and test our human potential, and is vital to our survival, and our well-being.



Free Play, Tiananmen Square, China, 2013



Swinging, California, 2018



Playing with Lipstick, Bangladesh, 2018

Play is recognized by the United Nations as a Fundamental Human Right to be nurtured and protected everywhere in the world.

How are we promoting play in our communities, and in our lives?

PROGRAMMING CONCEPTS

- Play is one of the purest examples of our shared humanity, fundamental to being alive; the power of play is that we know it when we see it, anywhere in the world.
- Humans are the only animal built to play throughout our lives, and play is key to our ability to adapt to a changing world. **Why then does this essential activity disappear in our adult lives?**
- We look at children at play to remind us of its essential nature as a tool for creativity and wellbeing. Farese composes her images, deciding what to leave in the frame and what to leave out, analogous to how we each compose our worldview, deciding what to leave in and what to leave out. **What do we see when we widen the frame?**
- Free play develops essential skills for democracy—collaboration, self-governance, and a shared higher purpose. **What happens to our ability to live cooperatively if we don't let kids take practice the low level risk taking, problem solving that happens naturally in free play?**
- Are we inadvertently promoting the opposite of play?
- Are toys the language of play? **How has technology and consumerism affected the key benefits of play?**
- How does child's play affect who we become as adults?

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Nancy Richards Farese is a photographer, writer and entrepreneur whose work promotes visual storytelling as an essential tool for social good. She is the author of recently published *Potential Space; A Serious Look at Child's Play*. An award-winning documentary photographer, she has worked extensively for international development organizations including the United Nations High Commission on Refugees, CARE USA, RefugePoint, and the Carter Center. Farese holds a master's degree in Public Administration from the Harvard Kennedy School and was a Fellow at the Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics, and Public Policy. Her writing has been published in the *NiemanStoryboard*, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, and *San Francisco Chronicle*. She is the founder of the San Francisco- based visual storytelling nonprofits PhotoPhilanthropy (2009) and CatchLight (2015). Originally from Georgia, Farese now lives in California. For more information, go [here](#).

16x24" framed prints

(34 total)



Finding a Safe Place for Sudanese Refugee Children to Play, Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya, 2009



Free Play, Léogâne: Dealing with the Earthquake, Haiti, 2010



Playing Cars, Montana, USA, 2012



Playing Dolls, California, USA, 2013



Free Play, Cité Soleil, Haiti, 2013



Free Play, Tienanmen Square, China, 2013



China, 2013



The Disabled Refugee's Camp: Kite Sites, Haiti, 2014



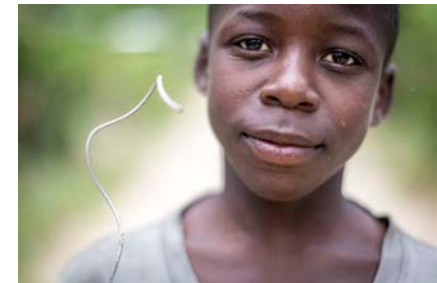
Toys, Haiti, 2015



Free Play, Mexico City, Mexico, 2018



Playing Dolls, Jérémie, Haiti, 2017



The Cercle Player, Portrait, Haiti, 2017

16x24" framed prints

(34 total)



Malian Refugees Playing with Tires, Burkina Faso, 2017



Juggling Palm Nuts for Fun and for Snack, Burkina Faso, 2017



Playing Monopoly, Havana, Cuba, 2017



Technology on the Playground, Havana, Cuba, 2017



Playing Cercle, La Gonâve, Haiti, 2017



Free Play: Gonâve, Haiti, 2017



Finding a Safe Place for Syrian Refugee Children to Play, Jordan, 2018



Finding a Safe Place for Syrian Refugee Children to Play, Jordan, 2018



Praise Discovering Snow, Massachusetts, USA, 2017



Rohingya Children, Bangladesh, 2018



Making Mud Pies, Bangladesh, 2018



Rohingya Girl, Portrait, Bangladesh, 2018

16x24" framed prints

(34 total)



Rohingya Boy Playing with Water Jug Pull Toy, Bangladesh, 2018



Free Play, Campeche, Mexico, 2018



Marbles, Campeche, Mexico, 2018



Free Play, A Mayan Version of Tug of War, Honduras, 2019



Playing Dolls, Spain, 2018



Flipping Out, California, 2018



The Swing, California, USA, 2018



Glasses, California, USA, 2022



Waiting for Practice, Havana School of Ballet, Cuba, 2015



Waiting for Practice, Havana School of Ballet, Cuba, 2015 (16x16" square)

30" vinyl prints

for wall or floor application



Free Play, Jacmel, Haiti, 2013



My Face, La Gonâve, Haiti, 2017



Playing Marbles, Mexico, 2018



Children Playing

40" prints

installed with wooden bracket



At The Cricket Field, India, 2013



Cercle Players, Haiti, 2014



Free Play, California: Race to the Top, California, 2017



Free Play, Port-au-Prince, Haiti, 2017



Playing with Lipstick, Bangladesh, 2018



Shadow Play, Spain, 2018



Playing Dolls, Syrian Refugee Camp, Jordan, 2018



Syrian Refugee and Mancala, Jordan, 2017



Honduran Boy Playing with Fish, Honduras, 2019

64" banners

for indoor/outdoor installation



Bangladesh, 2018



Free Play, On the Road to Lalibela, Ethiopia, 2014



Rohingya Children Waiting Their Turn, Bangladesh, 2018

30" banners

for indoor/outdoor installation



Masks, Peru, 2013



School House: Cité Soleil, Haiti, 2013



Free Play, Havana, Cuba, 2017



Swinging, California, 2018



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