

# VICE

FREE  
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## PLAYGROUND

James Mollison

*Aperture*

Each time you open this book, it seems to change depending on your mood. These frozen moments, landscapes dotted with tiny figures, are like a Litmus test for one's outlook on any given day. The first time I opened it I found it uplifting: the unifying chaos of clusters of children, in school playgrounds from London to LA, Bolivia to Japan, Mexico to Kenya, felt reassuring. The screaming, laughing, ragtag gangs seemed unaware of their surroundings—whether they were decrepit (guard towers, piles of refuse) or glorious—and that seemed nice. But the next time I looked, all I could see were the lonely children in the corners, separated from the rest—or crying faces, or violence. Once I saw one lonely child, they were everywhere, in almost every photo—sad, small humans, destined to be sad or angry adults. Or maybe they were wandering off to pick up a stick. Who knows? Maybe it's my problem not theirs.