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Art review:

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JORDAN BASEMAN AND HENNA-RIIKKA HALONEN: COMMONWEALTH SUITE

COLLECTIVE GALLERY, EDINBURGH

In Commonwealth Suite, Jordan Baseman and artist Henna-Riikka Halonen were commissioned to make films about Edinburgh's Royal Commonwealth Pool, built for the 1970 Commonwealth Games and closing for refurbishment this month.

The Commonwealth Pool, designed by Edinburgh architects RMJM in the 1960s, is a classic piece of Scottish modernist architecture. Halonen was struck by the similarity of the building's interior, particularly its platforms and diving boards, to the set used for the Russian Constructivist play *The Bathhouse*, staged in 1930.

Mayakovsky's "drama in six acts with a circus and fireworks" was a satire on state bureaucracy, featuring a time machine rather than a bathhouse, but Halonen's reworked version, starring Edinburgh's Junior Diving club, is plotted around the swimming pool, from the boiler room to the public gallery, ending with an elegant sequence on the diving boards.

In fact, she turns the building into a kind of time machine. It is striking how easily the pool's interior evokes the Communist era, how her performers look like Soviet gymnasts, and the direct, austere style recalls the aesthetics of that particular branch of modernism.

By contrast, Jordan Baseman focuses his film on one regular user of the pool's gym, Ian Colquhoun, who lost his legs in a fire at the age of 24. The building, where he learned to swim as a child and played with his friends growing up (when it still had flumes), then came to play a crucial part in rebuilding his life, physically and psychologically.

While his candid, deadpan voiceover tells his story, images of flickering light on water depict something of his interior world. Because of his injuries, he can no longer swim, but a recurring dream of light on water comes to suggest acceptance, an affirmation of himself, in place of resentment. In telling the story of the building, Baseman has created a compelling contemporary portrait of a man's life.

- The Great Bear runs until 30 September (for more information see

www.mountstuart.com); Commonwealth Suite runs until 19 July.