

IDEA symposium 2012 *Interior: a state of becoming*

Curtin University



TITLE: INTERIOR ARCHAEOLOGIES

Belinda Mitchell and Trish Bould

An artwork, *The Value of Things*, was part of a wider exhibition that took place in the, City Space Gallery, UK. The project started with a visual artist bringing together a collection of threads, objects, maps, elastic, a teapot, books, which were ordered and reordered and placed in relationship to each other. The objects, become a landscape of provocation for others to make connections, to have conversations of, express views they hold and acted as a starting point for discussion.

The work established visual and physical relationships between the collection of objects and their contained meanings and memories. The objects contained personal memories, of use, maps, ways of navigating space, and references to the loom as a set of actions involved in making and to relevant physical locations. The artefacts and drawings acted as maps, as '*snapshots of defining moments*' and became '*tools*' in the developing discussion (Brotton 2010). A glass box became the frame for the collection creating an interior landscape, a world within a world. Books, thread, pages, relationships were woven together as a fabric through a loom.

The Value of Things acted as a site of exchange, it enabled an inter-disciplinary conversation between an artist, archaeologist and interior designer. Through discussions and drawing activities they opened diverse approaches to looking and used different words and gestures to draw, interpret and re-interpret through the other and the said landscape. The aim was to '*materialize discourse itself*' (Cazeau 2009). This process of materializing discourse, of the to and fro backwards and forwards zig-zagging between conversations, moving from one description to another is according to Carter '*like the shuttle ducking and weaving across the warp*' of a loom (Cazeau 2009).

The artwork acted as a laboratory, incubating ideas and discussions, making connections in the present, exploring past material, to model future thinking. The exchange moved between viewpoints forming knots and entanglements both within and between, forming '*a meshwork of interwoven lines of growth and movement*' (Ingold 2010) where knots have threads that '*trail beyond, only to become caught with other threads in other knots*' (Ingold 2010).

Archaeology identifies different contexts of social activity by unearthing, hidden space. Through the confusion and difficulty of interpreting what was an exposed landscape the archaeologist was provoked to cover the glass cabinet in paper returning to fundamental concepts in archaeology. The action transformed the perception of the material landscape for the artist and the interior designer causing them to see through a curtain of paper onto a stage of activity. The apparent walls of the cabinet exposed views through the space of the interior to picture their entanglement in it.

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The conversations formed an interior archaeology, where a spatial discourse around ideas of soil, finds, and fragments became woven into the conversation through the entanglements of interpretations. These conversations acted as open-ended set of activities, of drawing and re-drawing, which Catherine de Zegher, has described in her essay 'On Line, Drawing through the twentieth Century' as 'drawing is characterized by a line that is always unfolding and becoming'.



Image 1. *Reflected Entanglements.* Photograph taken in response to the conversations and discussions around the artwork. Taken by Belinda Mitchell, interior designer/visual artist, of the installation, *Things of Value*, originally created by Trish Bould, visual artist with a background in weaving who is also a curator. The archeologist, Mark Barden, is now a curator for City Space Gallery.



Image 2. *The soil.* In conversation the archaeologist was provoked to cover the glass, the action transformed the perception of the material landscape for the artist and interior designer causing them to see through a curtain of paper onto a stage of activity.



Fig 3. *Fabric of experience.* The paper wrapped the cabinet pulling in new surface qualities and reflections activating a connection between the walls of the gallery and the cabinet. The apparent walls of the cabinet exposed views through the space of the interior to picture their entanglement in it.

Photographs taken by Belinda Mitchell in conversation with Trish Bould, Visual Artist/Curator and Mark Barden, Archaeologist/Curator.

References:

- Professor Jerry Brotton, 2010. *Maps: Power, Plunder and Possession*. London BBC.
- Butler, Cornelia and de Zegher, Catherine ed. 2010. *On Line, Drawing through the twentieth Century*. The Museum of Modern Art, 2010.
- Cazeau, Clive. 2010. "Inherently interdisciplinary: four perspectives on practice-based research," *Journal of Visual Arts Practice Volume 7*. Intellect: London. 107-132
- Ingold, (2008) "Bringing Things to Life: Creative Entanglements in a World of Materials", www.reallifemethods.ac.uk/.../vital-signs-ingold-bringing-things-to-life.pdf.