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***The Forgotten Zoological Garden:
A Photographic Study of the Heterotopic Museum Taxidermy Display***

The natural history museum is a heterotopic space - it is a place governing time, separate from the external world surrounding it. The nineteenth century museum space also reveals its brilliance in hegemonising visibility between its public and private spaces, controlling what is seen, thus influencing perceptions of its taxidermy displays within. Inside the museum space, Michel Foucault's heterotopology represents a complexity between a site that is both one and also other, or as this paper proposes, between binary expressions of the seen (known) and unseen (unknown).

This paper considers the influence of the museum space on its taxidermy collections as their own heterotopic sites of expression, that of a lost or forgotten metaphorical zoological garden. The taxidermy specimen is ambiguous, it is both of itself and something other - in its skin of likeness its materiality is present, but also absent, wrapped in metaphor and construction.

These same ambiguous and binary expressions can be attributed to photography as something material, constructed and metaphorical, so an appropriate visual tool and method of inquiry in re-representing the re-constructed animal. The complexity of the taxidermy specimen as something both seen and unseen is examined via two photography projects, *Specere II: Fixing the Shadows* and *Specere II: Tableaux Vivants* - both offering contrasting expressions of the zoological garden.

Fixing the Shadows explores the taxidermic displays at the Natural History Museum, London via the nineteenth-century salted paper print process. I explore the display construct surrounding the taxidermy specimen which preserves the specimen, but also obstructs our perceptions of the animal it once was. The fragile skin of the print too, is constructed and preserved - salt being used as a preservative ingredient in both nineteenth-century printing and taxidermy practices - the print's materiality thereby becoming synonymous with that of the specimen.

Tableaux Vivants, with its large-scale colour photographs of ecological dioramas from different museums, provides a contrast to the smaller salt prints, where the taxidermy specimen is only part of a more complex stagecraft. Via the hidden mechanics of camera and print, the photographs remove any visible form of dioramic construction - they mimic the crafted lifelikeness of the dioramas to excel it, sustaining the illusion and suspending viewer disbelief. Thus, it is through these contrasting photographs of taxidermy displays, that I come to apprehend a hidden microcosm of visibility - an inert zoological garden.