‘How can everyday life be defined? It surrounds us, it besieges us, on all sides and from all directions. We are inside it and outside it … It is at the heart of the everyday that projects become works of creativity.’

Henri Lefebvre, 1961

Some aspect or other of everyday experience is the concern of each of these exhibitors who work across the spectrum of art and design. Raquel Figuiera and Nick Mobbs probe the more disturbing aspects of ordinary domestic life, with the home shown to be less a haven from the world than the restless universe of the psyche. While Figuiera employs humour and exaggeration as defusing strategies to keep the neuroses she depicts at bay, Mobbs’ images of the home leave viewers uncertain as to whether they should be amused or not. They are imbued with a sense of the ‘uncanny’, identified as an aesthetic property by Sigmund Freud, one which produces a kind of fearful sensation by means of material ‘which is familiar and old established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression’.

Jon Harrison takes a different approach. His informal, at times playful adaptations of everyday artefacts question the logic of existing designs and propose ways in which things might work differently – and often a little bit better. This project offers an example of a modest design practice, operating at an easily overlooked, but nonetheless profound level of creativity.

**Jon Harrison**

Product designer Jon Harrison regards his Dual Purpose objects (from 2007 and ongoing) as sketches, assisting him to reflect on how we use objects in everyday life. He writes: ‘When designing, I believe it’s important not only to focus on the product itself, but to also concentrate on the environment in which the item will live, taking inspiration not only from the function of the object but also from all the varying components which surround and interlock with the product.’ The resulting objects bring related things and activities together with the aim of allowing the user to act effortlessly and unconsciously. Viewed left to right the functional combinations include:

**Shelf**  
Washing-up bowl with plug and plug hole

**Table**  
Post-it note pen holder  
Spectacle case and penholder  
Rubber pencil holder  
Masking tape and labels  
Masking tape and tape measure  
Ruler and letter opener

**Wall**  
File with shelf stop x 2  
Plug and cable tidy  
Broom and window hook  
Broom and duster holder

**Table**  
Make-up jar and mirror lid  
Hairbrush and hairgrip holder  
Torch and candlestick  
Matchbox for new and used matches  
Paintbrush and paint tin opener
Nick Mobbs

Printmaker Nick Mobbs’ Dens and Lairs series was inspired by the kinds of temporary structures many children make around the home. In the screenprint Red Leather Sofa (2009) the doorway can be read as a vaginal opening, a notion that sits uncomfortably with the otherwise child-like transformation of a domestic space. He comments: ‘I like the idea that a structure made from cushions and blankets might protect us from fears that the brick walls and locked doors of the house cannot keep at bay. However dens are also easily subverted to become lairs, and so harbour the imagined horrors from which we sought to hide ... At the heart of this work is an anxiety, a feeling that we are not secure and our position of safety (physical or emotional) is threatened by some keenly felt but vaguely perceived source.’

Left to right:
Folding Mattress, 2009, photo-etching, 25 x 34 cm. Edition of 10
Two Camps, 2009, lithograph, 76 x 38 cm. Edition of 15

Raquel Figueira

Illustrator Raquel Figueira’s artefacts and photographic images, collectively titled Philia, Mania, Phobia [2010], were inspired by a ‘found’ list of names for obsessions, covering a spectrum of neuroses. She represents each Philia (obsessive affection), Mania (obsessive compulsion) and Phobia (obsessive fear) by an aptly altered everyday object that is presented both before and after use, as evidence of the enactment of a particular obsession.

Philia, Mania, Phobia: Sets of 3 C-Type prints on Fuji Crystal Archive Matt paper. All editions of 5:
Basiphilia - obsessive affection for falling
Sitophilia - obsessive affection for food
Pyromania - obsessive compulsion to start fires
Photophobia - obsessive fear of light

Philia, Mania, Phobia: Artefacts left to right:
Basiphilia - obsessive affection for falling. Altered walking stick.
Sitophilia - obsessive affection for food. Multi-tined plastic fork.
Hyelophilia - obsessive affection for glass. Glass hammer.
Ablutomania - obsessive compulsion to wash hands. Hand-shaped soap.
Pyromania - obsessive compulsion to start fires. Multi-headed match tool.
Bruxomania - obsessive compulsion to grind teeth. Altered toothbrush.
Chaetophobia - obsessive fear of hair. Altered comb.
Photophobia - obsessive fear of light. Altered light bulb.
Symmetrophobia - obsessive fear of symmetry. Altered eye glasses.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Raquel Figueira studied Graphic Design at Escola Superior de Artes e Design, Caldas da Rainha in Portugal and for an MA in Communication Design, specialising in Illustration, at Central Saint Martins, graduating in 2010. Her practice includes a mix of self-initiated personal projects and commissioned work, the results of which have been exhibited in Portugal and the UK. www.raquelfigueira.com

Jon Harrison studied Furniture and Product Design at Buckinghamshire New University and graduated from the Royal College of Art with an MA in Design Products in 2008. He has a freelance design practice and regularly exhibits in London and Milan. He has won a number of awards including Liberty, Design UK: Most Iconic Design (2006); the British Council Top 10 (2007); and most recently the Homes and Gardens Classic Design Award for lighting (2010). www.jon-harrison.com

Nick Mobbs first studied Physics before taking a degree in Fine Art at Loughborough University. He graduated from the Royal College of Art with an MA in Fine Art Printmaking in 2009. His recent exhibitions include New Contemporaries [2010] ICA, London and A Foundation, Liverpool; the Northern Print Biennale, Newcastle (2009). He won the British Institute Award at the Royal Academy Summer Show (2009) and a Juliet Gomperts Trust Award (2010). www.nickmobbs.co.uk

Marsden Woo Project Space is curated by Tessa Peters

The Marsden Woo Project Space runs alongside our programme of solo and small group exhibitions by gallery artists. The Project Space allows us to respond quickly to significant bodies of innovative work by emerging artists and designers and fresh directions in the work of more established artists. The exhibitions are organized at short notice, so please check our website regularly for news on forthcoming shows and events.