PRESS RELEASE

THE EVERYDAY

24 March - 30 April 2011
Marsden Woo Project Space

Illustrator Raquel Figueira, product designer Jon Harrison and fine art printmaker Nick Mobbs offer three perspectives on the quotidian.

In his *Critique of Everyday Life*¹, the French philosopher Henri Lefebvre points to the ways in which we escape the everyday through such strategies as daydreaming, the pursuit of cultural interests and worldly pleasures, or through engagement with specialised intellectual and technical activities. And in the age of portable communication technologies we now have even more opportunities to avoid the quotidian; the possibility of diversion is ever-present. Like Lefebvre, the three artists and designers included in this exhibition invite us to pay more attention to the everyday. Each provides a focus on some aspect of everyday life to reveal something more extra-ordinary than ordinary, a life brimming with inherent contradictions and repressions, as well as ingenuity and potential for creative transformation.

Illustrator Raquel Figueira shows a collection of artefacts and photographic images titled *Philia, Mania, Phobia* (2010). The works started with her discovery of a 'found' list of names for obsessions, a catalogue of words covering a bewildering range of neuroses such as *basiphilia* (an abnormal affection for falling) and *chaetophobia* (the fear of hair). Each *Philia* (obsessive affection), *Mania* (obsessive compulsion) and *Phobia* (obsessive fear) is represented by an aptly altered everyday object that is shown both before and after use, as evidence of the enactment of a particular obsession.

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. As 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.’

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Product designer Jon Harrison regards his ‘Dual Purpose’ objects 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 amalgamation of ready-mades and sketched ideas are designed to show a group of possible ‘double products’ which are aimed at reducing the scanning of the environment ... My aim is to allow the consumer to act effortlessly and unconsciously.’ The results can be initially surprising, yet pleasingly functional combinations, such as a doorwedge-cum-umbrella-stand and a roll of masking tape that also serves as a tape measure.

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.raqueelfigueira.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.

For more information, images, or to arrange an interview with the artists please contact Tatjana Marsden or Alida Sayer
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