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CRAFTSUMPTION: disrupted life cycles of transitional matter

Discarded acts of making, found lingering in second hand shops, cupboards and shoeboxes invite investigation into what we get from making (or not making) home crafts. This paper uses halted, unwanted and incomplete creative activity as a lens through which to question the confluence of process, experience and outcomes associated with domestic hobby craft making. Glenn Adamson (2010, p. 10) suggests that apparent deferred productivity is important as an indication of how creative undertakings play a largely aspirational role in our lives. Taking on board Adamson's theory, and as well as speculating on what motivates us to make, this paper opens up a discourse about what demotivates us to make. Be it limitations of space, time or skill, abandoned craft debris can be used as a rich entry point for material conversation initiated by tangible examples of human frustration/dissatisfaction and physical tokens of accomplishment/success.

The life cycle of an everyday object typically starts with production, then distribution and consumption, to end with disposal or depletion. However, Karin Dannehl (2013, p. 127) points out, 'if an everyday object is defined by being inconspicuous, then what are we to do on those occasions when they do appear... by dint of appearing, the humble object has become conspicuous.' The unwanted craft object becomes conspicuous because its expected life cycle has deviated somewhere between the production and depletion stages. This ordinary object survives unexpectedly as a static reminder of suspended human endeavor.

This paper conceptualizes how discarded handicraft materials are at the same time potent and problematic for artifact-centric research because of their supposed transformative purposes and uncertain narrative. By checking in with the abundance of dismissed DIY projects, how-to literature and fragments of craft material, I use Dannehl's 'life cycle model' as a method for further inquiry. The life cycle study is employed as a tool to decode possible life stories embedded within the mundane or common object (Dannehl, 2013, p. 123). For purposes of this research project, common artifacts and objects of community debris have been collected from the fall out of Western culture's lasting enthusiasm for making things - things that we don't need.

Second hand craft items offered for resale in disparate bundles and muddled combinations creates a confused fragmentation. In my studio practice a study of jumbled up instructions and wrong things placed in wrongly labeled packaging sets up a framework for wrong making. By applying these somewhat chaotic systems to making artwork, affordances of wrong making are celebrated. Studio interventions use strategies of trace, relocation and excess to elucidate tipping points between defeat and success. Appropriating rejected craft rubble plays equally to the risk of impending failure that lingers when going by the instructions and the joyous free fall of imagination when you don't.

REFERENCES:

Adamson, G (ed.) 2010, *The Craft Reader*, Berg, Oxford/New York.

Dannehl, K 2013, *Object Biographies, from Production to Consumption*, in Harvey, K (ed.) 2013, *History and Material Culture*, Routledge, London and New York, pp. 123 - 134