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TEXT IN SPACE

Not unlike architecture and landscape architecture, the programme in interior architecture at the University of Pretoria draws on and develops both the natural and human sciences. Students in interior architecture are required to cultivate these spheres and to synthesise their collective application through studio-based design modules. This approach is specifically pro-active and contextual and thus enables generative decision-making, where strategy, argument and concept inform and guide the process and product of design.

Early in 2003, three students¹ of the programme in interior architecture, as well as two recent graduates² were invited to participate

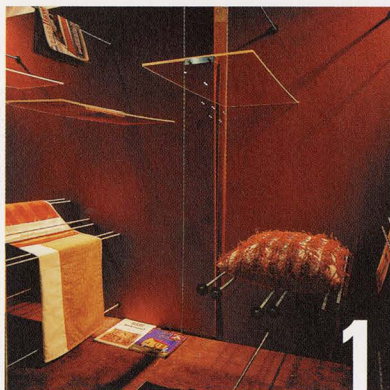
in the inaugural Young Designers' Installation at Rooms on View, an annual design and decor trade show held in the Sandton Convention Centre in Johannesburg.³ The intention of the organisers was to show patronage to student design with the support of the trade and media. In their rationale, the sponsors,⁴ *Designing Ways* (Young designers 2003:84) and *VISI* (Jong talent 2003:27), refer to European precedents where the work of design students debuts at trade fairs. An example would be the Milan Design Week where prototypes from, amongst others, the Design Academy Eindhoven were exhibited in 2003.⁵ In an attempt to distinguish the student work from the trade stands, the media sponsors

developed a theme for the installation: this was simply the word LIBRARY.⁶ Seen in retrospect, this probably raised expectations more in the line of shelving and storage solutions⁷ than what was eventually exhibited. The five designers chose to interpret the brief from a broader view through conceptual arguments, text and images.

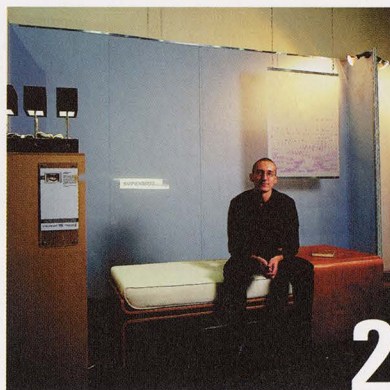
The discipline of interior architecture can be broadly considered as the investigation of relationships between user, object and architectural space. In this sense designing an installation, albeit with a theme, is no different from designing a retail outlet or a transportation interior. The process of producing a proto-

type and setting up an exhibition results in phenomenological expression and embodied knowledge, invaluable to the learning curve of any young designer.

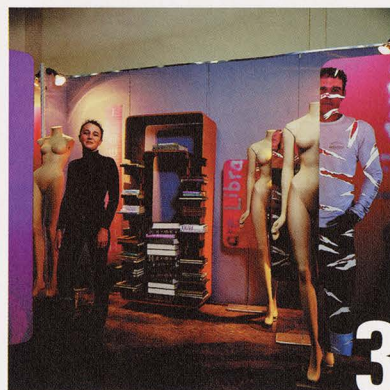
As celebration of the tenth year of the programme in interior architecture at the University of Pretoria, the installation was titled 'LOUP'. In their displays all designers chose to interpret text as independent design elements in space through its role of originator, indicator and communicator. The five installations are shown below. Each designer's full text⁸ and selected images are reproduced on the following pages.



1



2



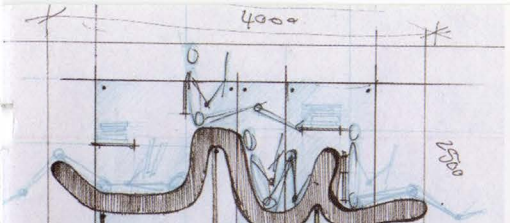
3



4



5



Drawing on the spatial experience of the library user, the installation reflects an

1 APPLIANCE FOR READING,

layered between fantasy and reality. Introverted and womblike, it is a place to sit, to recline, to curl up. It is: a reading table surrounded by shelves a (bay)window on the world a chaise longue a hot tub

Anneke Dearlove

Printed Matter and Gender

2

Western literary theory focuses on the importance of print, but texts are only a translation of the elements that were important to the original storyteller/creator. The importance of the subjective or sensual in the writing/creative process cannot be underestimated. We should remember that subjectivity is based on current cultural ideology. Texts should always be read in context, but different personal and collective agendas, presuppositions and juxtapositions alter meaning.

u r e f i r e m a n e v e r s a y d i e r e v e r

Pluralism and diversity resulting from a richly creative society (Global Village) leaves people feeling free, but longing for more predictable times. The intellect cannot cope with the amount of analyses needed (to understand the context). Personal intuition and values are more important. Concepts are removed from their context and receive a personal definition. The over abundance of information results in selective reading.

In a society that yearns for binary opposites (for example, 'yes' or 'no'), a hierarchical man-woman model develops, where the norm for everyday man is set against the norm for everyday woman. The definition of 'man' therefore influences the definition of 'non-man' (woman). When we encounter a gendered word, it immediately states the gender-opposite of that word (if it can be found).

We are usually readers before we are writers and our personal constructs informs the meaning of that which we read. The easiest way to alter the meaning of gendered words we are assaulted with is to change the personal meaning of the word.

b e r i g h t w i n g e

APPLICATION IN OUR INSTALLATION

To investigate the thoughts surrounding selective reading owing to the over abundance of information, a graphic representation of text is used. Certain informative words are emphasised with colour. Initially the letters are distributed sparsely and as these are read over the poster they move closer together until they overlap. A contemporary library is thus seen as a collection of information, where the user seeks out the informative sections.

The coloured words are taken out of context by projecting them on the wall next to the poster. A bench is provided where viewers can sit and read the projections. The personal presuppositions and values of the viewer give meaning to these words.

Raymund König

son of a n u n o t p o w e r f u l l f a g g o t r u e t o

s t y l e l a b a s t a r d h e s m y h e r o b s c e n e d i s p l

a y o f o v e r t m a s c u l i n i t y p h o i d f e v e r r a p i s t t h e y w e r e v

m s o t t h e i r u p b r i n g i n g g i r l i e l o v e y o u r e m o t h e r s c o m i n g u n p r u

5

read

[r_d].V & n. **1.** Interpret mentally, declare interpretation or coming development of, divine,... **3.** Reproduce mentally or vocally, while following symbols with eyes or fingers, the words of (author, book, tale, letter, etc...)

The Concise English Dictionary. 1972. s.v. 'read'. London: Oxford University Press.

mind-space and text

Texts exist in a myriad of forms: print, electronic, visual, or auditory recordings. From this plethora the reader selects a text. Through the act of reading one creates a personal space, a private world of the **OTHER**. In the solitude of mind-space the imagination is liberated. The physical surrounding can be decorated, comfortable, even luxurious, crammed with objects, but ultimately all embellishments are non-essential. Reading requires a minimum: mind-space and text.

I have designed a bench stark in its simplicity and frugality, embodying the essence of the act of reading. The lines are pure and edges sharp. The exposed joints suggest strength and honesty. Its function is to facilitate the inviolable space needed and simultaneously created by reading.

There is no frigate like a book...

How frugal is the Chariot

That bears the human soul.

— Emily Dickenson

Brown, H & Randall, P (eds). 1983. *The SA schools book of verse*. (Volume 1). Cape Town: Juta.

Catherine Lemmer

SOURCES

Design Academy Eindhoven grouped exhibition. 2003. *L'Officiel 1000 models* (1), June:128-129.

Jong talent. 2003. *VISI* 12, Winter:27.

Young designers. 2003. *Designing Ways* 46, July:84-85.

University of Pretoria. 2003. *IOUP Exhibitor profiles*. Media pack for Rooms on View. Bound brochure, Departmental archives, Department of Architecture, University of Pretoria.

NOTES

- 1 In 2003 Chereen O'Mahony was enrolled for Blnt(Hons); Catherine Lemmer and Anika Grobler were both enrolled for MInt (by research).
- 2 Anneke Dearlove and Raymund König both graduated with the Blnt degree in 2002.
- 3 Rooms on View was held from 22 to 25 May 2003 in the Sandton Convention Centre.
- 4 *Designing Ways* sponsored the cost of the exhibition space and *VISI* acted as media sponsor. The Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology, University of Pretoria, paid for the manufacture of prototypes and the installation cost.
- 5 Design Academy Eindhoven grouped exhibition (2003:128)
- 6 Young designers (2003:84)
- 7 *VISI* (Jong talent 2003:27) published an announcement where the word 'library' was substituted with 'boek- en bêrerakke' [book and storage shelves].
- 8 Extracts of the text were displayed on each of the stands and published in a limited edition media information pack (University of Pretoria 2003).