

DOMESTIC ARCHAEOLOGY

An installation by the Light Surgeons

Tuesday 25 April to Monday 28 August

Domestic Archaeology is a mixed-media installation that will take visitors through a kaleidoscopic, audio-visual investigation of the living room and its meanings. This installation has been conceived and created by The Light Surgeons, a cross-disciplinary art collective based in London who have pioneered many ground-breaking digital arts projects over the last ten years.

Domestic Archaeology aims to discover a sense of our collective yet diverse identities through the excavation of various domestic living spaces and artefacts. From the perceived value of family heirlooms to mantelpiece photo frames conveying our genetic legacies, the show explores the personal spaces, histories and uses of the living room.

This innovative installation combines photography, print, video, sculpture, sound and smell to communicate its homespun narratives. The everyday threads and extraordinary stories are woven into a multi-sensory installation where the visitor is immersed in a many-faceted domestic experience. Just as our living rooms themselves extend into personal galleries, the show reinvents our understanding of the gallery, art and the artefact.

The project incorporates documentary investigations into a variety of different domestic spaces and interviews with a broad range of Londoners. With the living room in focus, its evolving presence begins to unfold and be retold through issues of identity, gender, and the eyes of different generations. The interviewees project a fascinating light on the cultural and ethnic diversity of the city of London. The artists have worked with this material to create absorbing print and audio-visual works that seek to peel away the layers of meaning and reveal the common identities and shared experiences of home life.

The gallery will be filled with a collage of large projected pieces, objects and sculptural works created through workshops with the public. These works divide the space in two, creating two installations or rooms. "The Parlour" explores a very familiar sense of the living room, the dominance of the hearth and a rich nostalgic web of meanings that surround the cosy beauty of the mundane. This room plays with the idea of exchange and oral tradition, and creates a warm, friendly environment. "The Annex" delves into the more contemporary aspects of the living room and our domestic rituals. This transient space is an extension and reflection of our modern lives. It is a place of mixed uses and conflicting messages that extends out through the electronic hearths of computers and television. A corridor space connecting the two rooms exhibits a collection of print and photography work that explores our identities through the various domestic shrines and objects we collect. The perimeter walls of the gallery feature further print and graphic pieces that provide a textual framework for the exhibition as a whole. Visitors will be encouraged to interact with the pieces and physically engage with the installations, sofas and furniture.

Situating this work by The Light Surgeons within the context of the Geffrye Museum allows rich connections and reflections to be made between the two very different approaches to the domestic space. Visitors will find an interesting play between the Geffrye's social and anthropological aspects of the home, and The Light Surgeons' private, domestic vignettes projected into a multi-faceted public arena.

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The Light Surgeons

The Light Surgeons are a respected collective of artists, designers, filmmakers and musicians, known for their highly innovative, multi-media, interdisciplinary art-based installation projects. Founded in 1995, the core members of the collective are:

Chris Allen is a multi-media artist working with audio and visual media and sculpture. He has worked on many collaborative projects with The Light Surgeons including exhibitions of cross-media art at the Guggenheim Museum and the Moderna Museet in Stockholm and installations for leading designer Ron Arad.

Robert Pyecroft-Rainbow is an artist operating with a variety of media. His early creative applications drew from a need to visualise concepts/ideas. His involvement in community arts projects at a local level greatly informs his own work, whether printed, photographic or digital. He has collaborated on internationally toured exhibitions and films.

Brede Korsmo is a Norwegian-born artist working mainly in two-dimensional printed media. His experience spans the public arts and commercial world, including projects with Ron Arad and Olympus, and he has exhibited his work internationally.

Notes to Editors

1. The exhibition DVD and website makes the exhibition further accessible beyond the geographical and temporal limitations of the museum.
- 2.. The public programme of events and activities will include the following:
 - two Saturday afternoon seminars presented by artists from the collective will be targeted at young adults, art and design students, and practitioners, particularly in the local art and design communities, art and design historians and the general Geffrye Museum visitor interested in the home. These will explore the issues raised by the installation.
 - Holiday activities during the summer half term (30 May-2 June), *Lively Living Rooms*, will encourage children to engage with the exhibition and new ideas about home. These workshops will be targeted at 5 to 15 year olds and families, and will use the exhibition to inspire young people to explore ideas about the home and the meaning of objects through art, design and craft activities.
3. The Geffrye Museum specialises in the domestic interiors and gardens of urban middle-classes. Its displays span from 1600 to 2000, forming a sequence of period rooms, which capture the quintessential nature of English interior style. An award winning walled herb garden and a series of period gardens complement the displays.
4. For further information or images, please contact Nancy Loader, Press and PR Officer on 020 7739 9893 or nloader@geffrye-museum.org.uk.

7 February 2006