

**POP UP  
SECTION  
DISPLAY**

**Issue 01**

**You Display  
I Display  
We Display**

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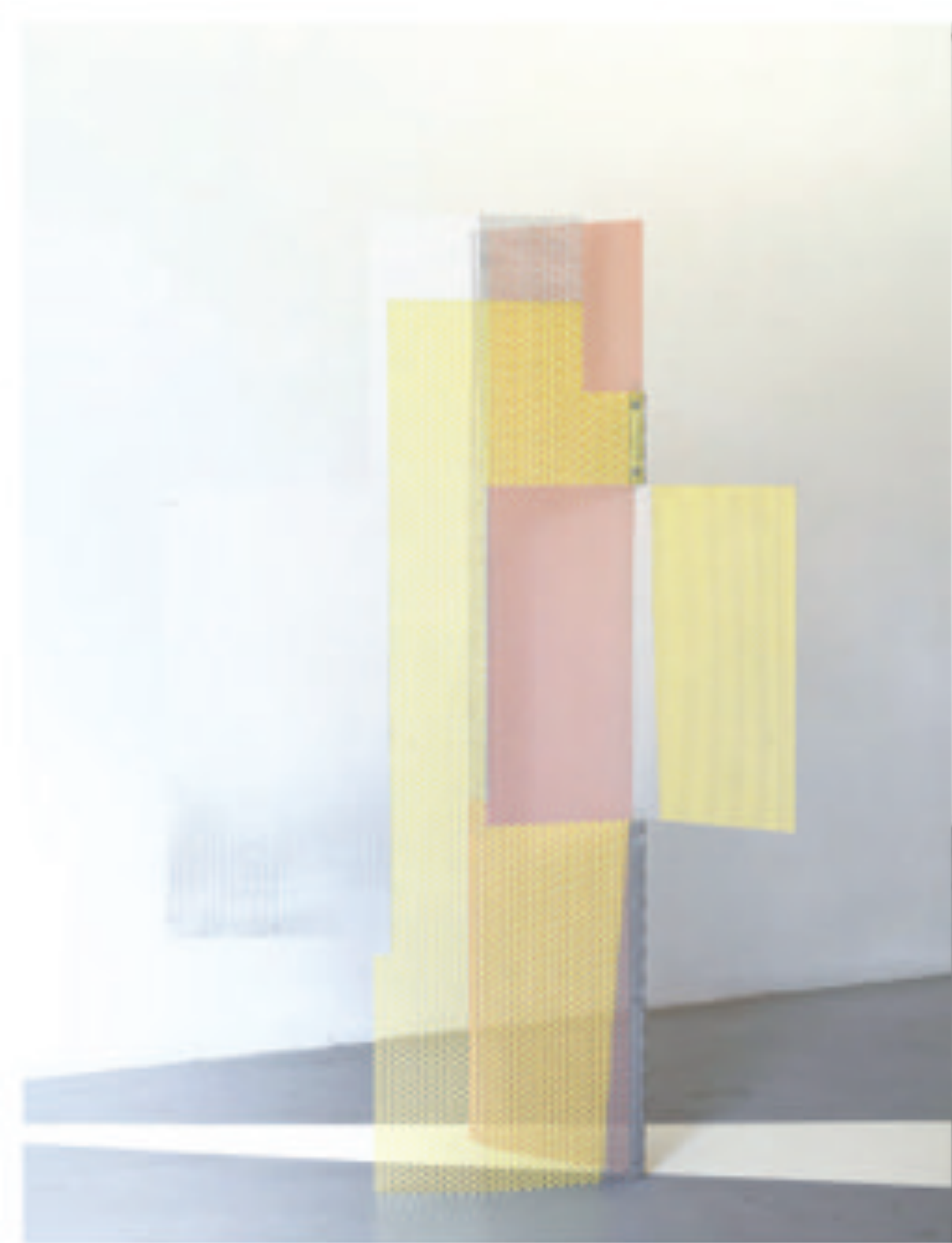


















Celia Cusack's books explore and offer support through a variety of social and artistic methodologies, histories and architectures dependent on an artistic use and articulation of display. Responding to and sharing what she calls 'existing conditions,' in recent years the artist has produced a double play of papers set in front beds set against Charlemaigne's view with the Mallory, semi-transparent curtains made of space blanket that move like jellyfish, a museum where visitors see her functional art objects as instruments with further medical purposes, a 20-minute soundtrack of her studio with all the windows open to bring city air in. Frederick Kieser's interest was important for exhibition, domestic, and designed the call at Galeria St Zdzisława Krasiński. Łódź. Cusack resumed the call 'You had' bringing together a sequence of historical and legal narratives in the form of furniture, chairs, lights and interior architecture. Each narrative element talks about how objects are determined by the way in which they are used, created, displayed, viewed and discussed – Cusack uses the term 'support structures' to describe these, and they are also called 'Dwellings', objects, which, according to an English common law, valid until 1848, were implicated in legal arguments. Back in the complex world of Cusack's compelling objects and narratives of display, support, friendship and recycling?

**EM** – What does it mean to consider display as a medium in its own right?

**CC** – The process in putting things on display starts from a very material approach, by giving something space, a place, and placing it in relationship to other things, like objects, light, gravity, information, politics. This process is generally understood as to judge from the work's suspension – which is not an accident of a certain intensity, but

constantly understood by the many 'tools' and ways that prompt us to frame it, hold it, present it, repeat it, explain it, stage it, move it. I would like to integrate the role of display, of what it means to show things, with what is considered 'the work,' as an essential part of its coming into being. Display is intrinsic to artistic production and interpretation, as the process of using things for exhibition is one of work and of exhibition.

I am aware that using the term in every highly specialised field – like philosophy, law, art history, and sociology – none of which I would claim to be an expert in! But I would like to clarify the specificity of this way of looking, counter-intuitively. It might turn out that some of display do not appropriately address the ontology of the object nor the nature of its content, but rather that they speak to the relationship between them, which is less complex, problematic and by definition centered on the edge of things to be taken up by any one specific discipline. In this question of display is taken up from an obvious vantage point, which is not that of a specialised understanding of any of the fields that diverges art, but is an artist, a producer of art objects and exhibitions, someone whose work is precisely to make things and put them on display.

**EM** – How are you approaching exhibitions as social contexts?

**CC** – One thing that explicit in any definition of exhibition is the notion that somebody needs to be there, at least potentially? Some might be physically present, others are there through their ideas. Which means that it is first and foremost their public aspect that characterises exhibitions, their capacity to qualify space as public. An exhibition is always for me a form of collective production, a collective articulation.

Working in the exhibition context shouldn't be taken in its widest sense, as a territory set up exactly in order to make things public (even if only in knowledge). We have, through Outside Projects, had many conversations about the nature of what can be designated as an exhibition programme, and how it is about all its public aspect that interests us. It would be interesting to hear your thoughts on this.

**EM** – I have been asking and thinking around the idea that in exhibit is not of being public. Exhibitions is always of the people, apart from the exhibition of awards and plans of course. They can do it themselves don't they? Closing and opening your curatorial home couldn't be considered an exhibition and I'm always interested in those exhibitions that escape out of function, out of need. This is how we have created Outside Projects, as a place to be used, and to promote and complicate the idea of art being a useful part of society. Curator is half the work, and the other half is exhibition? For this reason we started calling all of our exhibitions and projects 'public projects', whether within the gallery or outside the gallery. The collective articulation you mentioned is an important, or maybe as well school work to maintain? You seem to have picked up on this particular in your focus on friendship, emerging from ideas of support. How did this open up new approaches to collective practice?

**CC** – This was a way of acknowledging the voices of thinkers of the present and of the past, references and friendships that allowed me to think, to see more clearly into my work, explicitly. Undoing some of the collapse of the artist's role, and by the same time de-mythologizing it.

**EM** – There are parallels to how we have developed a practice of making work 'after'

other artists, designers and writers. In different ways we have approached separately, and together, the re-using, re-creating, re-displaying, sometimes re-viewing, sometimes re-viewing, of previous display and exhibition work. From El Lissitzky and Frederick Kieser's pioneering works in the 1920s through to the 1980s work by Adolf Krischanitz that I am exploring and the more recent pieces by Lisa Bealard and Carlo Scarpa work that you are discussing, we attempt to make art that includes the voices of others. Are we learning from these people? There is an element of fiction in how we both approach these works, and a relationship to design fiction that our other joint collaboration, James Langdon has explored with the School for Design Fiction of which we are both part of the faculty. I have written on the word 'recycling' to partly describe what we have done. How do you think about the 'after' work you are making, and the term 're-viewing' that we have referred to in relation to our current Display: Show public project?

**CC** – It is becoming a very efficient way to talk in the present, with a practice that is a historical. The After view comes out of the need, the desire to include voices and objects that might not be physically accessible, interest just our research, but our exhibitions-making too. And there are different ways of doing that, as an ongoing theme about through the game, the rehearsal, we also compare the 're-viewing' with copies, nations, photos, repetitions, institutions. These methods, or tactics, do produce new things that are result of other things, but in doing so also carry chains into the new, into a real and experienced as present. James' approach is very interesting in relationship to our own notion about doing this, let's ask him what he means by display as a process?

**EM** – I see display as a verb to write graphics



displays with other forms of exhibition. It is a word that can be understood in multiple registers – process artifacts, commercial products, and personal belongings all submit themselves readily to display.

Display is an elementary gesture – a show, a transformation, a revealing. As you know, I have been collecting images of ancient architecture that somehow express the sense of gesture. There is a certain archetypal image that I am interested in – a photograph taken at the site of an archaeological dig, in which a hand presents a find to the camera. These images are extraordinary for their lack of abstraction. They show an object – implicitly identified as notable, display always confers value – they show something of who found it, and where, and how. The hand is directed to make a sense of the object's weight and speculative context – a fragment of object that might be held between thumb and forefinger to suggest its function as a tool. In the context of an exhibition, display can also be a bodily gesture suggesting in space – pointing, leading. We have looked at Herbert Bayer's graphic representation of exhibitions designed explicitly in anticipation of particular movements, and to emphasize certain points of view. And we have talked about the exhibition tour as an interesting kind – an extension of this gesture, or as a counter-gesture in which the conventional space is subverted and open. All of this suggests the agency of display, its appeal. It is a social exchange – I take this to you.

**EM:** I think this also connects to the particularity of the materials and laboring processes that you have been using. Cotton, and their relationship to display. How does material sit with the functional and social use of materials in your work?

**CE:** There's a lot that boils down to what something says, what an exhibition context

means, how a work speaks – and you I do work with specific materials that I find intriguing that capacity for speech. For instance that is the basis of my interest in puppets, or artifact objects they reveal, that is how articulate they speak too. It becomes particularly wonderful when thinking about sculpture. But puppets are another way of doing that. Each fabrication requires a form or how something appears (and not what it is), and there is a need to be very economical about how to achieve it. You know that puppets have to be made in the fastest, cheapest way in order to take their role, so skill their function, and that's quite a two way of working. It's very direct, and has a particular aesthetic. Maximal itself also speaks reflection – space makes for intention, which I have a total fascination with, is total life's pull is direct, very direct and simple and it tells of space travel and survival – science-fiction is present in whatever you do with it.

**EM:** Recently you have referenced objects that were found in previous centuries in history, notable objects that have been put through legal systems of various societies. What led you to these apparently strange situations?

**CE:** I became aware of how throughout history, the objects that exhibit human evolution have been ambivalent intentions, suspension and inclinations, sometimes languages, occasionally process. This may seem like a crazy conception, but is the result of simple observation that is neither new nor radical – most people have particular relationships with some of the objects that populate their everyday life; some people can make statues or churches speak, while objects in museums have been described as plain discourses and intentions through the inclusion of entire lifetimes of work.

But looking at the fascinating publication and exhibition on provenance made by Florie-Oriental-Straussmeyer – that I was lucky to contribute to – it happens obviously how much the life of the object, what happened to it, where it went and why, totally transforms how we give it sense (what does it mean?), significance (why is it important?), and what it is in the first place. By the same token, those very same objects might have been, throughout the second half of the twentieth century alone, located in dramatically different contexts in which to be encountered, and been allocated equally diverse discourses and intentions. Actually, we should remember that there is a highly respected and generously remunerated community of qualified people whose job it is to assess the best interest of artworks, antiquities, and other noteworthy or responsive entities like trees, animals, and words.

**EM:** You have mentioned in a recent piece that by an artist to take up the position of display carries the risk of falling out of attention all together, being essentially forgotten (illuminated areas of the art world). How are you negotiating this condition?

**CE:** One of all people knows how tricky that can be – our project Support Structure 2001-2009, took a long time for people to understand, partly because of its complicated subtext, and almost a large extent because it was touching on so many different things – creating, art-making, museum studies, and also construction, marketing, consulting, producing. But at some point people got it, and now support structures are everywhere... As I mentioned earlier, I would like to claim walking of disciplines and their complicated boundaries, but I am interested in the relationship between things, ideas, people, and how that takes

place in space – and in taking up a position that therefore still has some sense for movement.

What matters to me is that taking up display, or support, in the place to speak first offers the possibility to develop work that is relevant to both the discourse on objects and the discourse on containers. It is a possible way to address the conditions in which art discourse finds itself in relation: objects strategy critique thinking or design, a way to debate an art practice in reconstructing two things, that as Martin Heidegger says are understood as aspects of the question: form and the world.

\*Special appearance by Janet Lurie

Support Structure and people are growing things from Columbia Projects (October – December 2011) and from the New Jersey – New York

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