

Author: Penelope Haralambidou
Research Output 2: *The Blossoming of Perspective*

Output Type: Design

Design and Production of Artefacts for Solo Exhibition and Edited Catalogue with Authored Essay: *The Blossoming of Perspective*

Location: DomoBaal Gallery, London

Dates of Exhibition: 10 – 20 January 2007

Catalogue Title: *The Blossoming of Perspective: A Study by Penelope Haralambidou*

Editor: Penelope Haralambidou

Publisher: DomoBaal Editions, 2006

300 Word Summary

This project consists of an exhibition of sole-authored design work, *The Blossoming of Perspective*, London, Domo Baal, 2007, including three new research artefacts, as well as drawings, paintings, collages and models, studying the underlying architecture of Marcel Duchamp's secret pornographic assemblage, *Given: 1st the waterfall, 2nd the illuminating gas ...*, 1946–66 ('Given'). The exhibition was accompanied by a catalogue of selected drawings, including a sole-authored essay, 'Given: The Corridor, the Tower and the Fall ...'; and essays by four invited critics from art and architecture: T. J. Demos, Jonathan Hill, Lorens Holm and Brigid Mc Leer; see Penelope Haralambidou (ed.), *The Blossoming of Perspective: A Study* (London: domoBaal Editions, 2006).

Questions/Aims/Objectives

The project aims to critique a mode of architectural drawing still dependent on a Cartesian understanding of space and closely connected with the Renaissance invention of linear perspective and the monocular visual pyramid.

Contexts

This exhibition of drawings studies the spatial arrangement of *Given* in search of an alternative understanding of visual space. The work is inspired by Jean-François Lyotard's reading of *Given* as an incarnation, but also inversion, of the rules of linear perspective. Drawing on Duchamp's term 'blossoming' which, in this research project, is connected with stereoscopy, *The Blossoming of Perspective* analyses *Given* as a physically constructed stereo-drawing, attempting to unlock the erotic potential of spatial representation.

Methods

The exhibited work lies between architectural design, art practice/history and critical theory and uses drawing as a critical method. A new work, a full-scale drawing of Duchamp's *Given* in steel and waxed thread entitled *The Act of Looking*, merges the boundary between sculpture and drawing, using Duchamp's seminal piece to provide a research tool to inform a wider study of stereoscopy and binocular perception.

Dissemination/ Esteem

Related essays have been published in *Dialogue*, n. 106 (2006), pp. 46–47 and *Critical Architecture* (2007), pp. 225–236. The exhibition was previewed in *Blueprint* and *Time-Out*.



Image 1
Gallery entrance.
Photograph: Penelope
Haralambidou.

General Description

This project consists of an exhibition of sole-authored design work, *The Blossoming of Perspective*, London, domoBaal, 2007, including five new research artefacts, as well as drawings, paintings, collages and models, studying the underlying architecture of Marcel Duchamp's secret pornographic assemblage, *Given: 1st the waterfall, 2nd the illuminating gas...*, 1946–66 ('Given'). (image 1) The exhibition was accompanied by a catalogue of selected drawings, including a sole-authored essay, '*Given: The Corridor, the Tower and the Fall...*'; and essays by four invited critics from art and architecture, T. J. Demos, Jonathan Hill, Lorens Holm, Brigid Mc Leer; see Penelope Haralambidou (ed.), *The Blossoming of Perspective: A Study* (London: domoBaal Editions, 2006).



Image 2
Stereoscope, 2007.
Photograph: Andy Keate.

General Description

The exhibition consisted of the following drawings:

(1) Stereoscope

Steel, wood and front surface mirrors, 2007.

Marking an introduction to the research's subject matter – Duchamp's *Given* – and theme – stereoscopy – the piece is positioned so as to be the first thing viewers see, before entering the main gallery space. The piece is a wall-mounted stereoscopic viewer, a reconfiguration of the device designed by Charles Wheatstone. Taken from the two peepholes, two photographs of the scene beyond the door in *Given* are placed opposite each other, on either side of a two faceted mirror in the middle. Viewers position their eyes in front of the mirrors between the two images placed perpendicular to the wall. Successful merging of the two views offers the illusion of depth and the scene blossoms in three dimensions. (image 2)

(2) Folding Model of Stereovision

Wood, piano wire, and acid etching on nickel silver, 2007.

An early sketch model features in the catalogue, but this version of the piece was constructed specifically for the exhibition. (images 3–4)

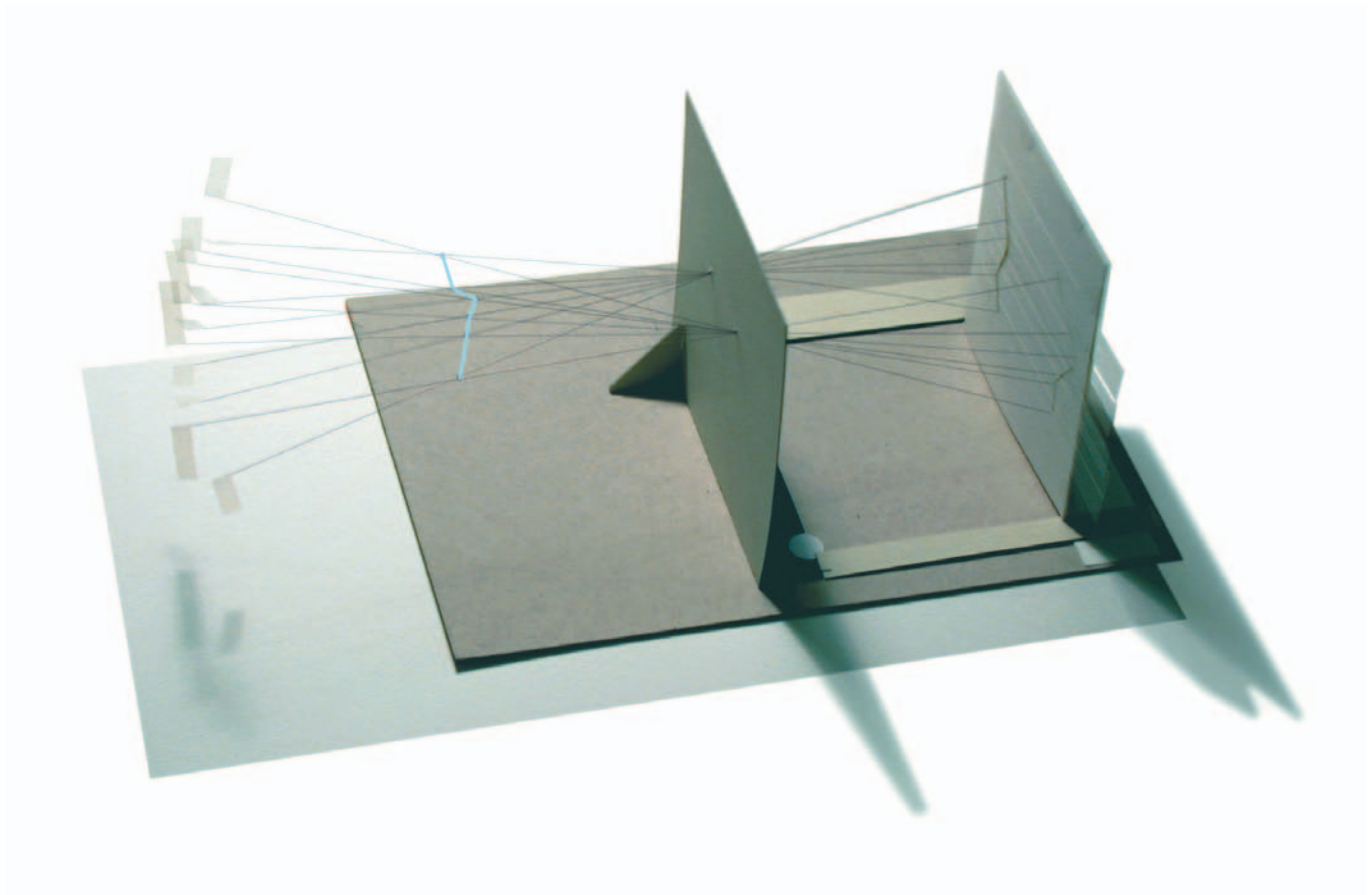


Image 3
Sketch Model of Stereovision,
2001.
Composite image.

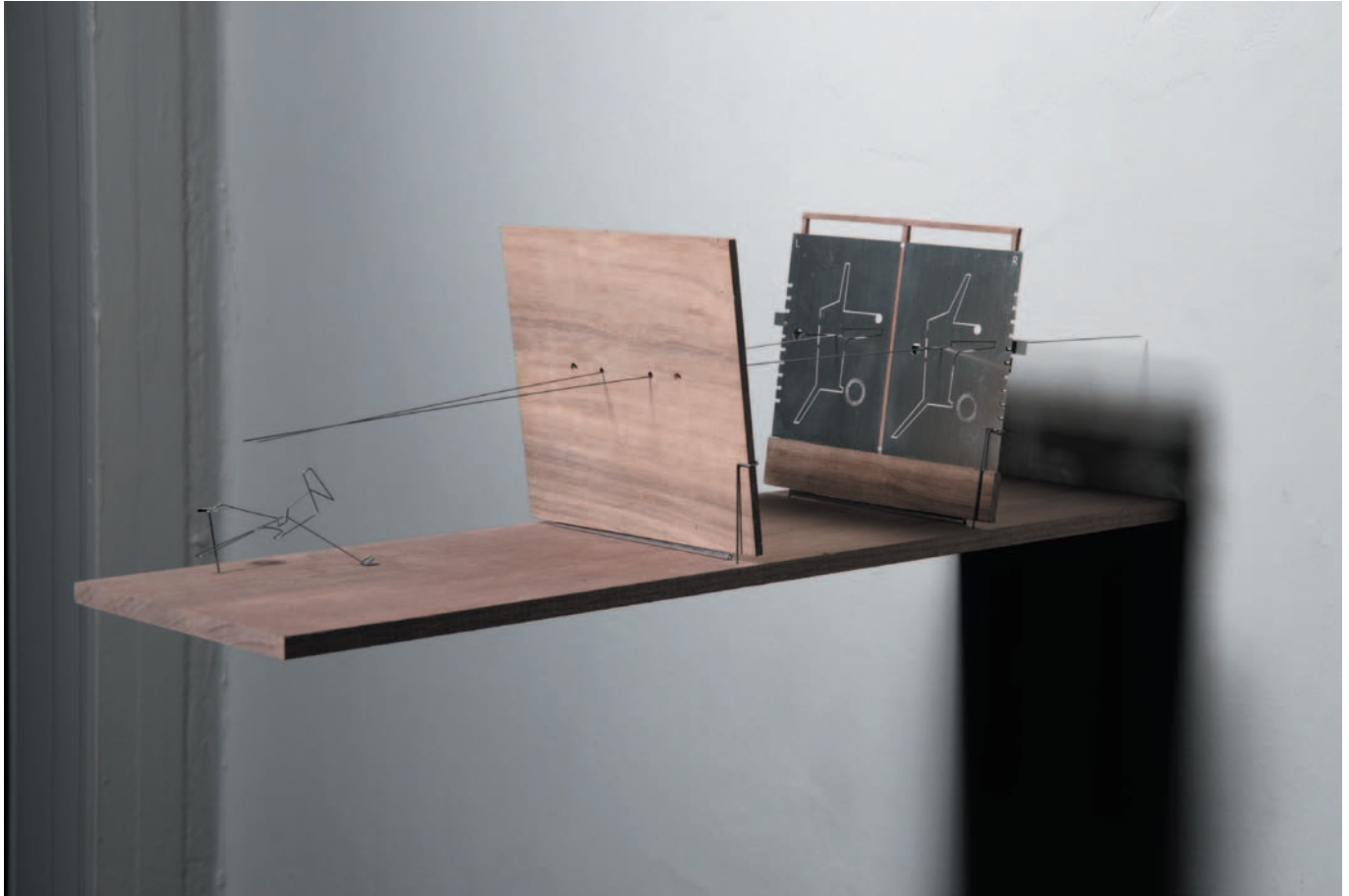


Image 4
Folding Model of Stereovision,
2007.
Photograph: Andy Keate.



Image 5
The Fall, 2004.
Photograph: Andy Keate.

(3) *The Fall*

Mixed media on wood panel, 2004.

Part of a series of three drawings recounting the allegorical narrative of the project. (image 5)

(4) *Model of The Act of Looking*

Wood, piano wire and acetate, 2006.

This is a scaled, 1:20, model of *The Act of Looking*, see drawing n. 6. Placed opposite its full-scale equivalent, this creates a mirroring effect between the two exhibits. (image 6)

(5) Four Sketchbooks

From left Philadelphia Sketchbook, The Fall Sketchbook, Early Sketchbook and Blossoming Sketchbook.

Instrumental in the development of the research is my use of notes, sketches and collages in sketchbooks. Here these depositories of thought process are displayed alongside three-dimensional drawings on the wall and drawings on paper presented horizontally on tables. (images 7–9)



Image 6
Model of The Act of Looking,
2006.
Photograph: Andy Keate.

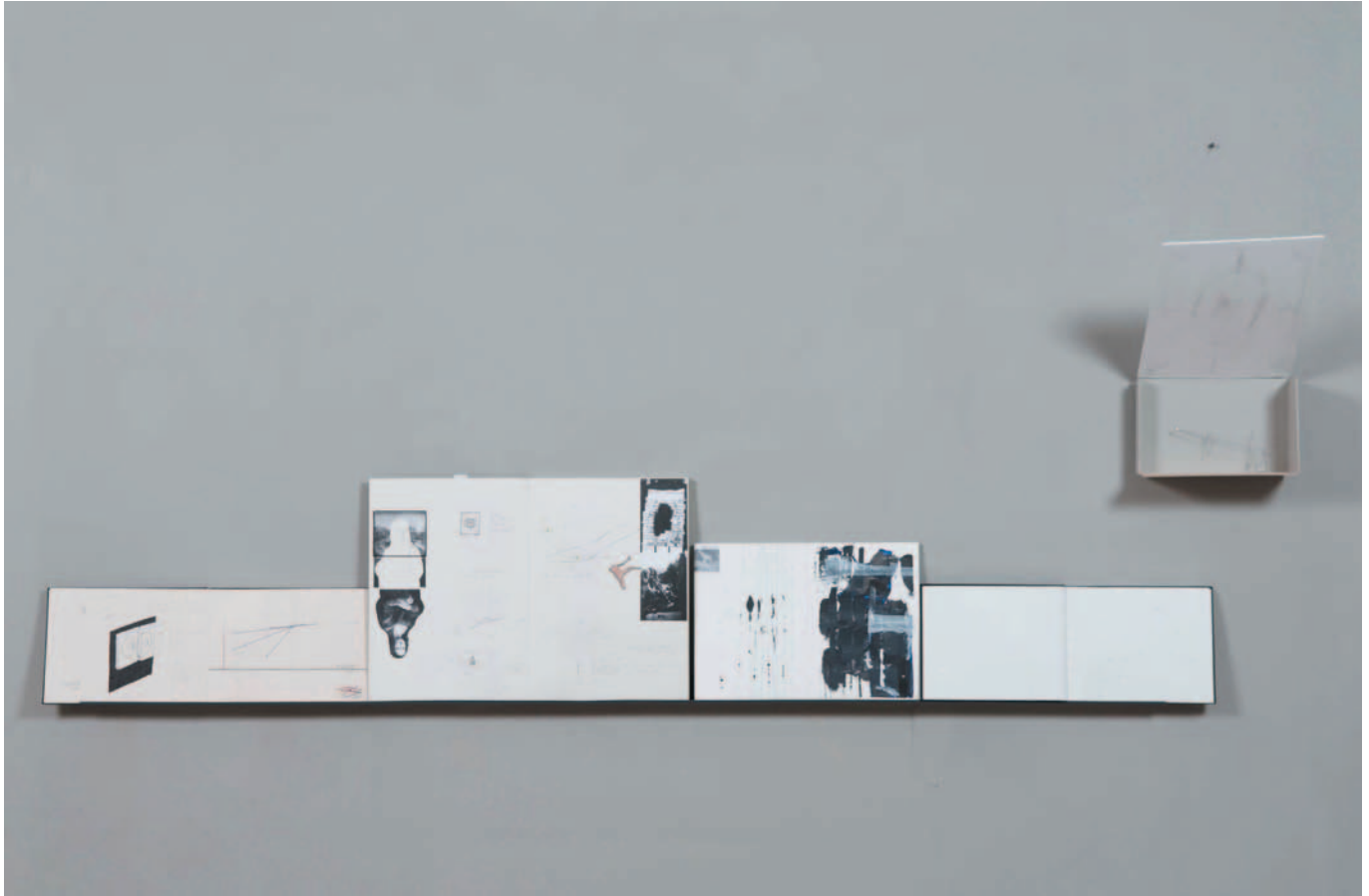


Image 7
Four Sketchbooks.
Photograph: Andy Keate.

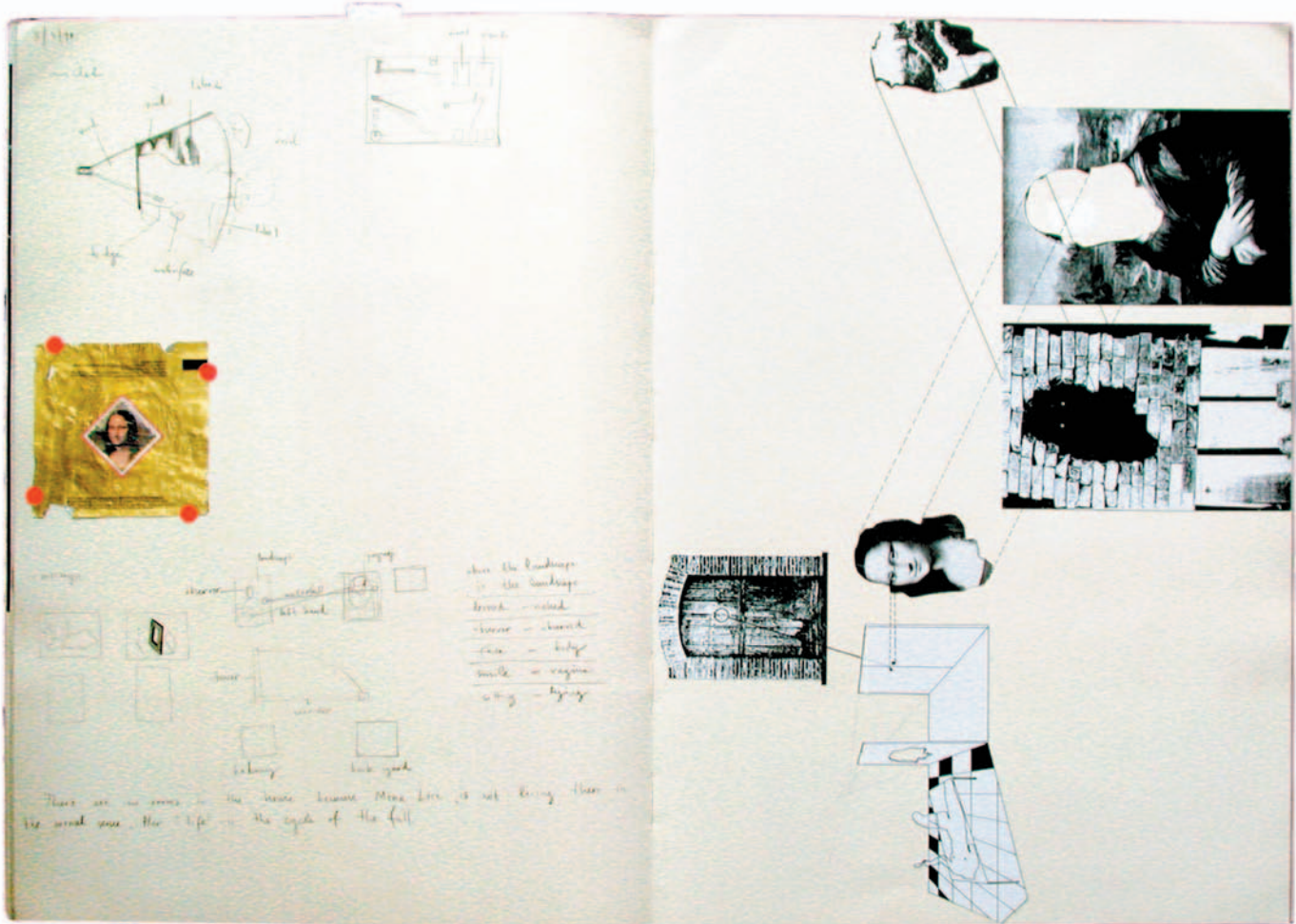


Image 8
 Double spread from *The Fall*
 Sketchbook, 1998.

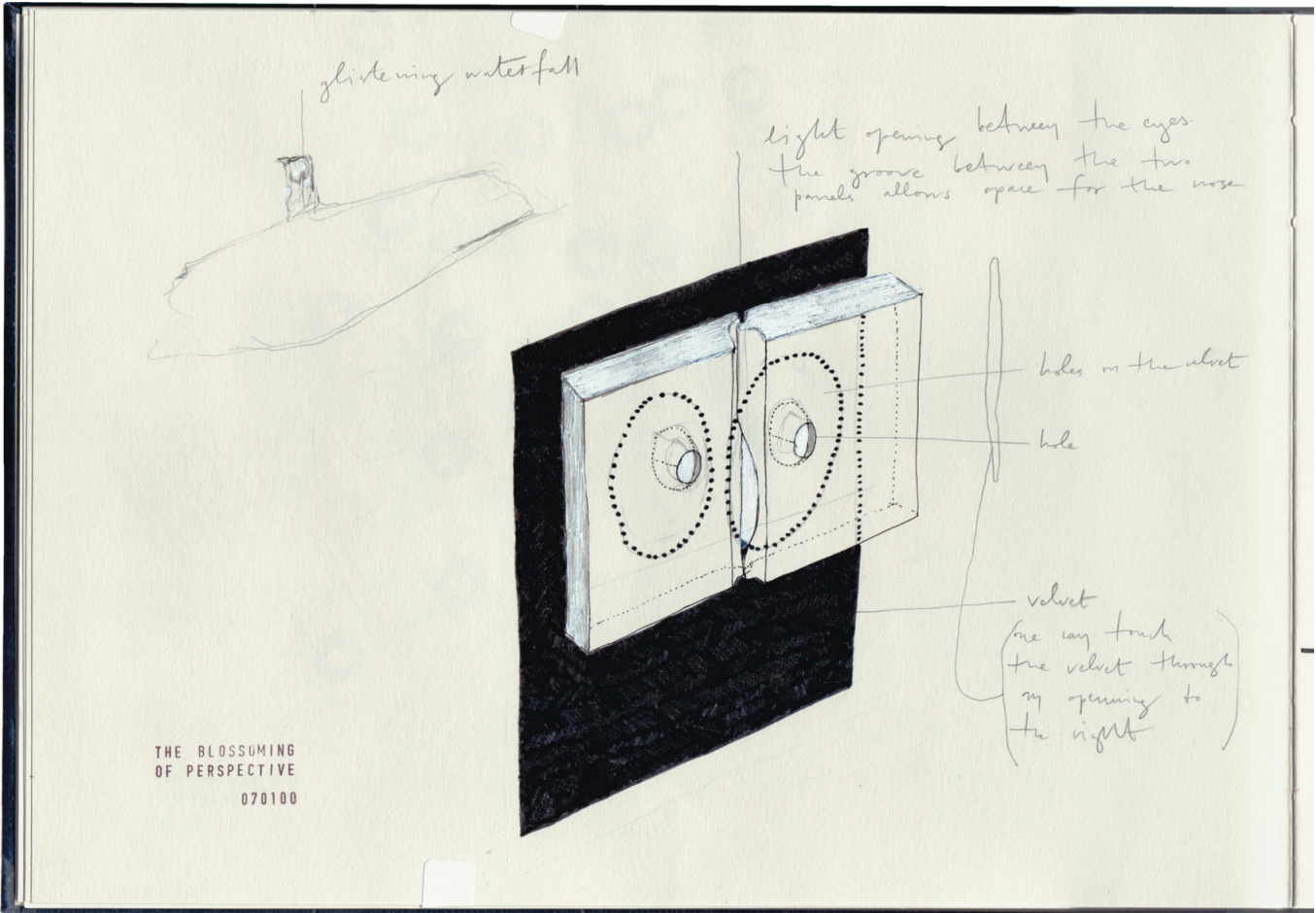


Image 9
Page from *Philadelphia
Sketchbook*, 2000.



Image 10
Undressing, 2007.
Photograph: Andy Keate.

(6) *Undressing*

Mixed media on wood panel, 2007.

Part of a series of three drawings recounting the allegorical narrative of the project. (image 10)

(7) *Landscape*

Mixed media on wood panel, 2004.

Part of a series of three drawings recounting the allegorical narrative of the project. (image 11)

(8) *The Act of Looking*

Steel, perspex, waxed thread and acid etching on nickel silver, 2007.

A detailed description of this piece is on p. 17. The piece was constructed specifically for this exhibition. (image 12)



Image 11
Landscape, 2004.
Photograph: Andy Keate.



Image 12
The Act of Looking, 2007.
Photograph: Andy Keate.



Image 13
Illuminated Scribism, 2007.
Photograph: Andy Keate.

(9) Illuminated Scribism

A selection of research drawings combining drawn with written material displayed horizontally on tables in the middle of the gallery space. Rather than demand contemplation in front of an image, their horizontal placement favours reading and accentuates their role as a research tool combining drawing and writing, sketching and making notes. (images 13–15)

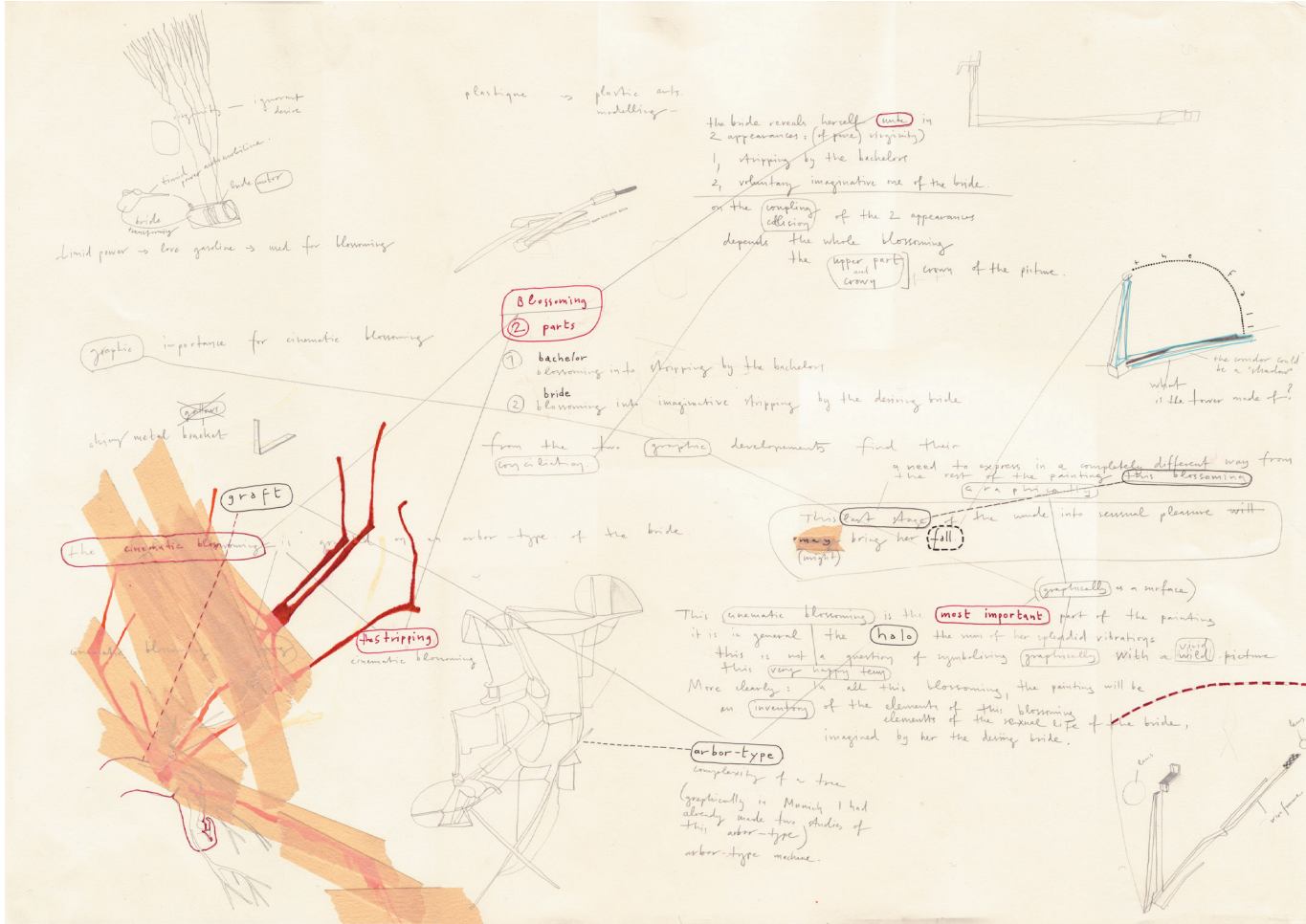


Image 14
 Drawing 1, 1999 in *Illuminated Scribism*, 2007.



Image 15
*Drawing 2, 2003 in *Illuminated
Scribism, 2007.**



Image 16
Catalogue display and view
through to the main gallery, 2007.
Photograph: Penelope
Haralambidou.

(10) Catalogue

The catalogue is part of the exhibit at the corridor outside the main gallery space. Two books spread open, one showing the drawing on the cover, the other the drawing in the centrefold, are displayed side by side. (image 16)



Image 17
View of main gallery.
Photograph: Andy Keate.

Questions, Aims and Objectives

The primary aim of the project is to critique a mode of architectural drawing still dependent on a Cartesian understanding of space and closely connected with the Renaissance invention of linear perspective and the monocular visual pyramid.

A secondary aim of the project is to test the potential of allegory and narrative as research methods. Deriving from the Greek *allos*, other, and *agoria*, speaking, allegory says one thing and means another; it signifies a doubleness of intention that requires interpretation. Northrop Frye, in *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*, 1957, and Angus Fletcher, in *Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode*, 1965, have suggested the formal affinities of allegory with criticism. In architecture I have seen the allegorical architectural project as an alternative critical practice which employs architectural drawing, the language of describing buildings, to articulate something 'other', *allos*: a critical idiom combining design with text to contemplate on architecture, art, science and politics. In this research the project allegorically encapsulated a set of ideas, which, although complete within the allegorical structure, were accepted as an enigma, a subgenre of allegory where the narrative is expressed as a riddle. The ensuing textual and drawing research aimed to interpret, verify and expand the intuitive links established by the project. Therefore, the importance of the allegorical architectural project, and the construction of the design enigma, is paramount within the boundaries of a research project in visual practice as a method of grasping meaning beyond analytical discourse. This is especially true in research about architectural representation and drawing – which, for architecture, is what language is to literature – where the difficulty of interrogating the substructure of architectural thinking cannot be faced directly and is easier to deal with through a metaphor or an allegorical narrative.

Finally the project operates as a critical analysis of Duchamp's work and especially *Given*, through the use of drawing as a research tool alongside textual sources.

The objective of this exhibition was to disseminate existing research, to produce new work to further the research by constructing five new pieces and to stage the exhibits in the space of the gallery, so as to create new juxtapositions between them and the gallery features. (images 17–18)



Image 18
View of main gallery.
Photograph: Andy Keate.

Contexts

This exhibition of drawings studies the spatial arrangement of *Given* in search of an alternative understanding of visual space. The work is inspired by Jean-François Lyotard's reading of *Given* as an incarnation, but also inversion, of the rules of linear perspective. Drawing on Duchamp's term 'blossoming' which, in this research project, is connected with stereoscopy, *The Blossoming of Perspective* analyses *Given* as a physically constructed stereo-drawing, attempting to unlock the erotic potential of spatial representation.

The catalogue accompanying the exhibition includes four invited essays following my sole-authored introductory essay. The process of selecting the writers for the essays and discussing my work with them merged the boundaries between editorial work and furthering the research. The aim was to create new platforms for dialogue and place the work in different contexts:

- (1) Art history and theory with a particular interest in the work of Marcel Duchamp (T.J. Demos)
- (2) Architectural history/theory and psychoanalysis (Lorens Holm)
- (3) Architectural design and theory (Jonathan Hill)
- (4) Art practice, creative writing and critical theory (Brigid Mc Leer)

Demos's essay, entitled 'Seeing Double', placed the work within the art historical scholarship dedicated to *Given*. He saw my work as an expansion of the prevailing view of the piece as an incarnation of perspective.

Hill's essay, entitled 'Allegories of Architecture', discussed the role of drawing and design/*disegno* in establishing the status of the architect since the Renaissance and related this to my application of architectural drawing, which in his view goes beyond the usual use of drawing within the architectural discipline and instead establishes allegory as a means of investigation in architectural drawing.

Holm's essay, entitled 'On Being Duchamp and Maybe Alberti Even', brought in an autobiographical element, a recollection of his childhood frustration at the persistence of a messy 'other' eye that splits the image of a perfect single world in two.

In her essay entitled 'Empathetic Blossomings: The "Drawings" of Penelope Haralambidou', Mc Leer concentrated on the drawings displayed on tables in the middle of the gallery, seeing them from an art practice perspective but recognizing them as critical tools and as a way of writing notes at the margin of another 'text', here Duchamp's *Given*. Her term 'margin' and her discussion of 'empathy' were insightful observations, which I found particularly useful in the way I view and communicate my work.



Image 19
Short moving image of the
main gallery, showing *The Act
of Looking* placed opposite its
representation in a 1:20 model.
Video: Penelope Haralambidou.

Methods

The exhibited work lies between architectural design, art practice/ history and critical theory and uses drawing as a critical method. Apart from five new pieces constructed specifically for the exhibition, the process of arranging the work in the space of the gallery and the design of the catalogue were also perceived as part of the research.

Research methods employed for this research included:

- (1) Drawing, sketching and model-making as research tools.
- (2) Construction of a large new piece, *The Act of Looking*, using metal and perspex, in collaboration with Emmanuel Vercruysse.
- (3) Editorial work for the selection and review of the catalogue essays.
- (4) Catalogue design.
- (5) Curatorial work for the arrangement of the work in the gallery. (image 19)



Image 20
The Act of Looking, detail, 2007.
Photograph: Andy Keate.

Design, construction and installation of The Act of Looking.

A new work, a full-scale drawing of Duchamp's *Given* in steel and waxed thread entitled *The Act of Looking*, merges the boundary between sculpture and drawing, and uses Duchamp's seminal piece to provide a research tool to inform a wider study of stereoscopy and binocular perception. *The Act of Looking* gives material substance to the act of looking through the two peepholes of *Given*. The piece is seen as a ghost image of Duchamp's work, where all the main constituent elements lose their materiality. A restaging of the hidden interior space of the assemblage, it exposes the underlying geometry of the visual rays crossing to form the volume of the pornographic scene. The process of developing this work involved design and construction, what Jonathan Hill calls 'building the drawing' in his essay in the exhibition catalogue.

After making a model of the work at 1:20 scale, I noticed the growing similarities between my interpretation of *Given* and Duchamp's other major piece the *Large Glass*. This realization influenced further design decisions and became a physical testimony of the possibility that these two works by Duchamp might share the same palette of preoccupations and therefore be two versions of the same narrative. Consequently, *The Act of Looking* became a material evidence of this hypothesis, which I share with other commentators, such as Octavio Paz in his essay 'Water Writes Always in Plural', 1973, who have also found similarities between these two works by Duchamp.

Moreover the work played the role of a practice-led or design research-led analysis of Duchamp's *Manual of Instructions*, 1966, a folder containing annotated photographs for taking apart and putting together *Given*. Therefore, the construction of *The Act of Looking* is an experiment testing the immaterial function of stereoscopic vision in a material object and an embodied critical interpretation of Duchamp's work.

In particular, during the process of building *The Act of Looking* there was a phase when we had to determine the points of intersection of the visual rays forming the scene. During this phase *The Act of Looking* performed like a drawing-machine establishing points within the content of the representation in a way that is similar to Albrecht Dürer's famous woodcut *Man Drawing a Lute* from 1525 which depicts the demonstration of a drawing technique to a blind man. *The Act of Looking* performed a similar task in three dimensions.



Image 21
The Act of Looking, 2007.
Photograph: Andy Keate.

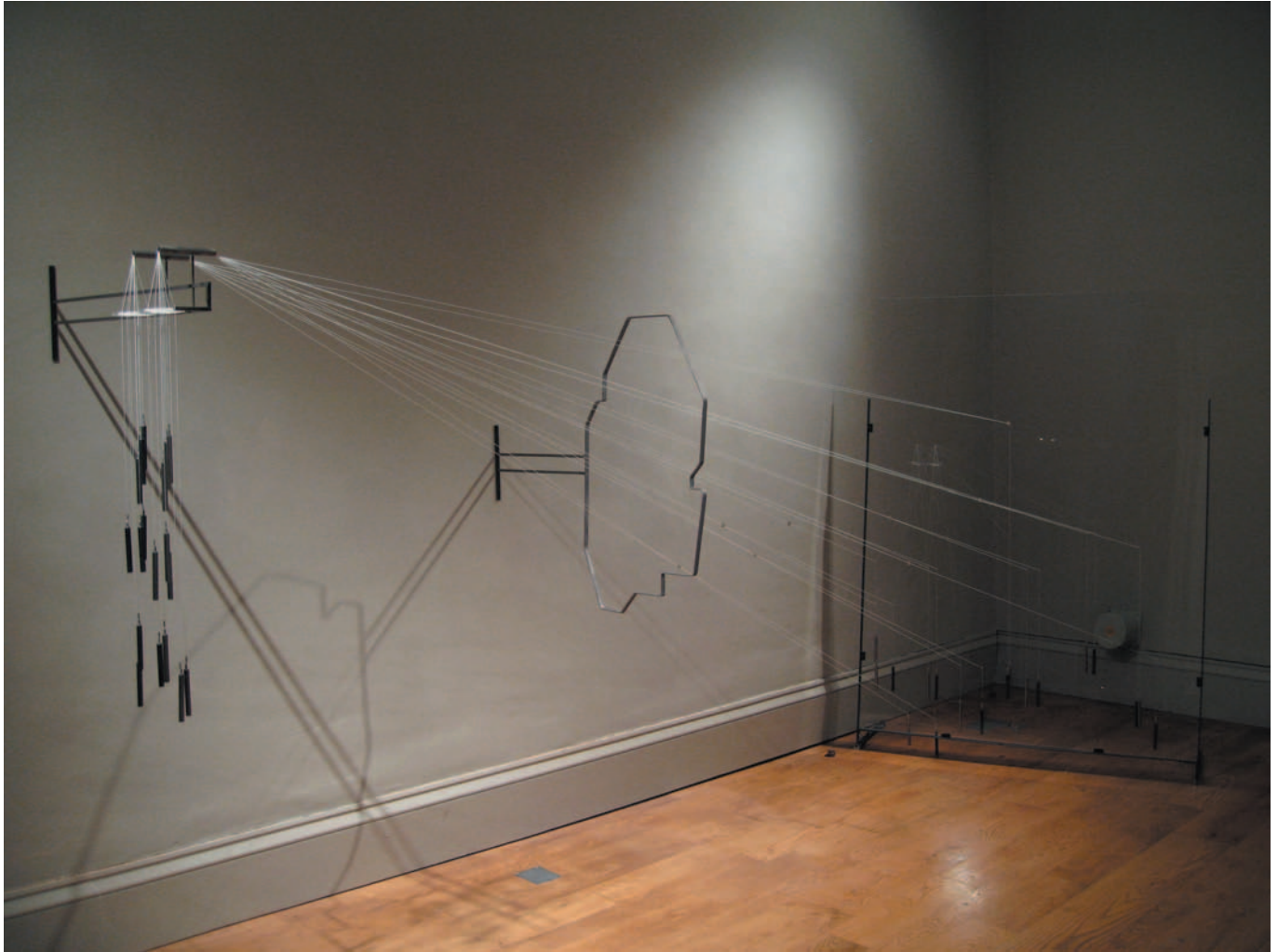


Image 22
The Act of Looking, 2007.
Photograph: Penelope
Haralambidou.



Image 23
Catalogue 'mise en abyme', 2007.

The design of the catalogue

The catalogue accompanying the exhibition was designed as one of the exhibits and includes two new drawings, both of which became connected with notable features of the gallery, such as the floral ceiling and the colour of the walls. (image 23) These two drawings act as a bridge between the ideas of the project and the physical traits of the space that frames and creates new links between the exhibits.

The first drawing shares the title of the catalogue and the exhibition, *The Blossoming of Perspective*, 2006, and wraps around the body of the catalogue to form its cover. It is a drawing of a geometric figure grafted on a stereoscopic photograph of a tree. When the catalogue is held open the image can be stereoscopically merged so that the geometric figure 'blossoms' in three dimensions held by the tips of the branches. The colour of the outer cover attempts to match the warm grey of the gallery walls while the colour of the inner sleeve resembles the tint used for a publication designed by Duchamp entitled *Prière de Toucher*, 1947. (image 24)

The second drawing placed at the centrefold is entitled *Please Touch*, 2006, and is a stereoscopic photograph of the ceiling in the main gallery room. The ceiling is significant in the manner in which it encloses the exhibits under a blossoming pattern. When the photograph is stereoscopically merged, the floral pattern 'blossoms' in deep space. (image 25)

The catalogue was displayed as one of the works in the corridor leading to the main gallery room signifying the entrance and exit, an introduction and physical object for the visitor to take away.



Image 24
Please Touch, 2006.



Image 25
The Blossoming of Perspective,
2006.



Image 25
View of main gallery.
Photograph: Andy Keate.

Dissemination and Esteem

The exhibition was previewed in *Blueprint* and *Time-Out*.

The research has been the topic of four conference papers, two invited talks and a refereed paper.

Michael R. Taylor, The Muriel and Philip Berman Curator of Modern Art at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, has expressed an interest in my work in relation to a major show on *Given* which he is organizing for 2009.

Related essays have been published in *Dialogue*, n. 106 (2006), pp. 46–47 and *Critical Architecture* (2007), pp. 225–236.

Appendix 1: Related Articles by Penelope Haralambidou

(1.1) Penelope Haralambidou (ed.), *The Blossoming of Perspective: A Study* (London: domoBaal Editions, 2006). [see original enclosed]

(1.2) Penelope Haralambidou, 'The Allegorical Architectural Project as a Critical Method', in Jane Rendell, Jonathan Hill, Murray Fraser, Mark Dorrian (eds), *Critical Architecture* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 225–236.

(1.3) Penelope Haralambidou, 'The Blossoming of Perspective: An Investigation of Spatial Representation', *Dialogue* (September 2006), n. 106, pp. 46–47.

Appendix 2: Critics' Reviews

Previews

(2.1) *Blueprint* (January 2007), n. 250, p. 84.

(2.2) *Time Out* (10 January 2007), n. 1899, p. 37.

