



DESIGN4 HEALTH

Extract of the
**Proceedings of the 3rd European
Conference on Design4Health**
Sheffield 13-16th July 2015

Editor: Kirsty Christer

ISBN: 978-1-84387-385-3

Curating art and design in the context of healthcare: sharing languages, intention and meaning

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Abstract

This paper explores the questions encountered in the curating of Art and Design artefacts, practices and experiences that foreground and respond to issues related to the provision of healthcare and wellbeing. The art theorist John Dewey discusses the complexity and ambiguity of meaning inherent in the reading of the art/design object (1), which we will argue is compounded and inflated when these practices are used to address contemporary concerns around health and healthcare. How should these artefacts be curated into the conventional 'white box' gallery space, which is loaded with validatory traditions and conventions (author). Moreover, does the placing of a healthcare inflected work on a white plinth or gallery wall presage our understanding and relationship to the piece, and how do other formal gallery codes of practice such as labelling, lighting and use of space influence our reading and contextualization of the health related art and design works we encounter in this context. Through the examination of case study exemplars of curated healthcare associated art and design works, and the recounting of personal experience of working as artist/designer/curator in a healthcare context the authors will share their own knowledge and reflect on how creative practice and the curation of creative practice might be used to inform personal and communal opinion, facilitate understanding, shift behaviours and influence policy in healthcare. Between them the authors of this paper have a number of years experience working as professional designers, artists, curators and academics in creative practices, health and healthcare related fields.

Keywords: Art and Design curation; creative practice and healthcare

Please contact the author for more information on this project