

David Cotterrell: Moulding History

Collaborators: Javier Flores Blanquet

Date: 30th August 1996

Dimensions(m):12.0, 10.0,

Materials:

Victorian terraced houses, newspaper & wallpaper paste

A public intervention whereby two derelict Victorian houses functioned as the canvas for a newspaper collage

Produced in collaboration with Javier Flores Blanquet, Moulding History's documentation featured in the Becks New Contemporaries in 1997. One of Cotterrell's first forays into the public realm, the piece carried with it a concern for both site and community. A local housing association in Lambeth contacted Fourth World Arts Network, which Cotterrell and Blanquet were both members of, suggesting they create an artwork for the Bonnington Festival.

The artists selected two council-owned properties on Bonnington Square for their intervention. The houses, the only derelict properties on the square, were owned and managed by Lambeth Council, which had ordered the internal stripping of the buildings in an attempt to keep squatters out. The remaining Bonnington Square properties were all occupied and predominantly maintained by the housing association. The artists worked to create a collage, which would highlight the plight of bricks and mortar stripped of use value. Hermetically sealed, the buildings were a pungent reminder of inner London's housing crisis amid economic boom. Local children were encouraged to collect old newspapers for the papier mch, which, over the course of a weekend in August 1996, completely covered the faades of the two houses.

The illegality of the intervention served to highlight the council's neglect of the properties. The disposable nature of newsprint acted as a reminder of the slippery quality of time: the time the buildings had stood empty, the time since the paper on the building had been a hot story. Some of the papers that made it up onto Cotterrell and Blanquet's walls were years old, published when the buildings they now adorned had housed families. Newsprint was also cost-effective: the artists only expense was a great deal of wallpaper paste.



Bonnington Square, Vauxhall Credit: David Cotterrell (1996)



Doorways Credit: David Cotterrell (1996)



Paper Macheing from Ladders Credit: Linda Cotterrell (1996)