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inform p.84 Jennifer Angus' A Terrible Beauty exhibition catalogue



An exhibition catalogue can operate as a souvenir and a document. It can spur memory if one has seen the exhibition but can rarely replace that experience. But with this catalogue you get more than a pale substitute. Over a four year period in four different locales Jennifer Angus, using insects as both media and image, has created room after room of empty fictional Tableaux vivants with wall decor, set pieces, cabinets, props and calling cards' in which aspects of the life of her unnamed protagonist — a fictional Victorian explorer, entomologist and collector could have passed time.

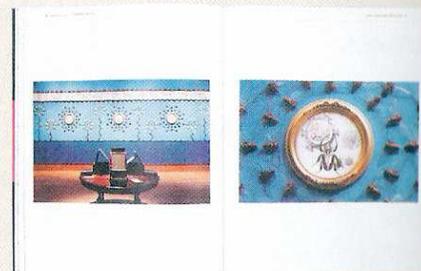
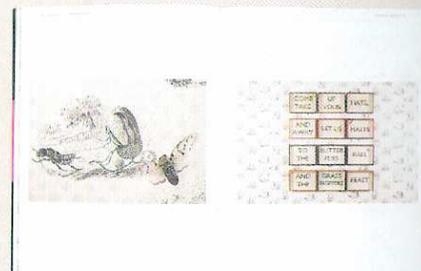
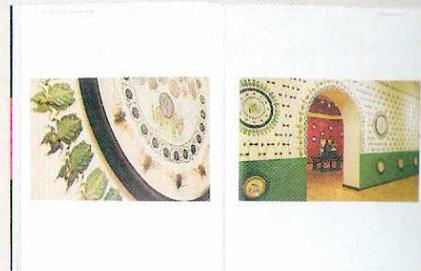
Installation work exists in a specific location and time. It has a planning stage; it can be experienced, viewed and entered for a time, then it has an afterlife. It's longer and more permanent legacy resides in its documentation and critical evaluation. With the publication of this catalogue, the afterlife of these works are well served. Following a short introduction, there are three sets of texts: Sarah Quinton seeks to locate the use of insects in an array of Victorian philosophical and socio-political movements. Eve-Lyne Beaudry puts Angus' work into a contemporary context by identifying artists using the natural or nature as either subject matter or material. Jennifer Angus' own writing gives small glimpses of her personal journey as a collector.

The catalogue has page after page of full colour photographs of these complex, heavily patterned, richly detailed and astounding installations from all three Museums. Whether you experienced one of exhibitions, if you were lucky, all of them, if you just read or heard about the work, this catalogue is a thoughtful exploration of her work and a visually rewarding production ••• Joe Lewis

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