



OBSOLESCENCE and RENOVATION

20th Century Housing in the New Millennium

Conference: 14-15 December 2015

Abstract / Initial Proposal Form:

1. Paper / Proposal Title: Language and the Production of Space

2. Format: Written Paper

3. Author(s) Name: Campbell Drake

4. Email contact details: Campbell.drake@uts.edu.au

5. University Affiliation: University of Technology Sydney

6. Abstract (300 words):

This paper is a critical investigation into the relationship between language and spatial production within the context of post war social housing in the UK. Adopting an obsolete council estate in north London as an exemplar of British social housing of this

period, this paper provides a critical reflection on a collaborative arts project titled 'The Market Estate Project' produced in 2010, just prior to the estates demolition.

Coordinated by artists collaborative Tall Tales, backed by the Southern Housing Association and financed by the British Arts Council, 'The Market Estate Project' called for site specific artworks that celebrated 'a colorful and rich last memory of the estate', with an emphasis on collaboration and participation with residents and the local community.

Combining theoretical research and site specific intervention, this paper explores the notion of 'effective historical analysis', in which the singularities pertaining to the transformation of language of social housing reveals parallels between the forces and networks which govern its transformations.

The imagery presented within the paper is the documentation of practice led research comprising of two large-scale site specific interventions. The first project titled 'Embodied Text' (2010) was installed in the corridor of the Market Estate and explores the relationship between language, the body and the city. The second project titled 'Rise and Fall' (2010), is an investigation into the relationship between social and architectural space and involves the reproduction of a council estate flat reconfigured within a white cube gallery.

Through an investigation of the complex networks, multiple logics and rich contradictions inherent in the field of social housing, this research suggests that language produces space and conversely space produces language echoing Henri Lefebvre's proposition 'that space and the political organization of space, expresses social relationships but also react back upon them.'

7. Author(s) Biography (200 words maximum for all authors): _____

Campbell Drake is an architect and a lecturer of Interior and Spatial Design at the University of Technology, Sydney. His research is focused on performative strategies of spatial practice and the relations between spatial context, spectatorship and action. Drake completed a Masters of Research Architecture at Goldsmiths University, University of London and is a PhD candidate at in the School of Architecture and Design at RMIT University. Drake is the co-founder of Regional Associates – an architecture practice specialising in sustainable eco tourism development in environmentally sensitive locations. His architectural works have won a number of awards including the hotels category of the International Interior Design Association Global Excellence Awards in 2014.