

Contemporary Materialities

Authors : Fabian Saptouw

Abstract : In the past decade there was a resurgence of interest in the value of 'process' and 'craft' within the social and artistic community. Theorist like Barbara Bolt and Paul Carter have eloquently argued for the importance of 'theorizing out of practice' and 'material thinking' in response to this trend. Time and labour intensive artistic production processes are however not generally included in this bracket and often labelled as either obsessive or absurd. Neither of these terms adequately conveys the conceptual importance of labour in relation to 'process' as manifested through this production method. This issue will be addressed by critically assessing the work of eight South African artists through the lens of contemporary process-based production. This will result in a more integrated view of the art-object, its art-historical trajectory, its materialisation as well as its production process. This paper will conclude by tying the characteristics of these artworks to international trends and provide a platform for the overall reconsideration of unalienated artistic labour.

Keywords : materiality, process art, practice-led research, unalienated labour

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