

Building Up- Not Tearing Down

I went to Cardiff yesterday with other west Wales friends to join in with December 11, a day of arts events and visits in Cardiff organised by WARP g39 and Chapter Arts. The day marked the end of an experimental collaboration of artists from Birmingham, Bristol and Cardiff.

We started the day at Tactile Bosch to see Building Up Not Tearing Down, an exhibition of residency work from Rhys Coren and Fraser Cook (Bristol), Alistair Owen and Jason Pinder (Cardiff) and Sarah Farmer and Joanne Masding (Birmingham).

The work involved subtle interventions into the gallery space – so subtle indeed that we were required to actively search them out. It's the sort of thing that can be quite intimidating if you're not comfortable in 'Artworld' and not a Tactile Bosch regular, there's a lot of scope for staring at details, trying to work out if they are art or not. Once I'd decided to embrace my self-consciousness, I really enjoyed it; the slight tension and discomfort became part of the experience; all part of the ongoing debate about the nature and function of art. The beauty of the experience was to intimately engage with this amazing, semi-decayed space with its peeling paint, cobwebs, buckets for the leaky ceiling (the most prominent objects in the room – and the first focus of enquiry), odd bits of ironmongery etc. I found myself watching other visitors to see if I could hijack their finds. I watched someone discover a really discreet piece involving guitar strings tautly installed along a number of beams and tuned to different notes – and then enjoyed pinging them myself in his wake. Delicately beautiful, intimate and democratic – the show was a gentle, funny celebration of the space and its artful decay.

Kathryn Campbell Dodd