

Preface to Practice-Based Research

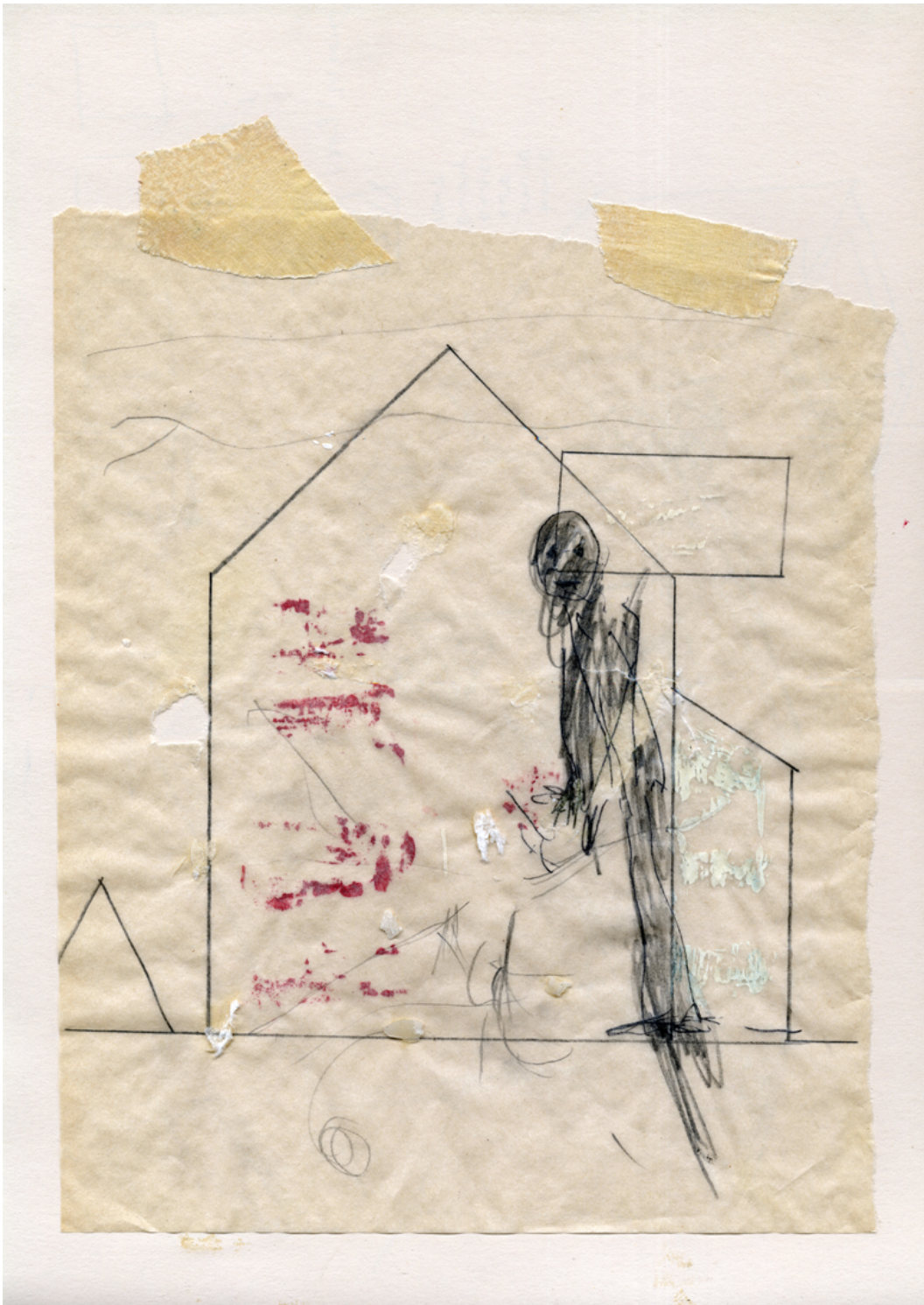


Fig. 1 Research design. Mixed media.

The practice element of the thesis mirrors the structure of the written research, each element made in response to the ideas and examples explored in each of the chapters: *House*; *Redrooms and other Bedrooms*; *Whiteroom*; *Glasshouse*; *Study* and *Tent*.

The development of the work has been in parallel with the writing and has evolved and changed as the ideas in the written research have, but the final form has been in some part dictated by its location and is therefore site-specific. The location is the exhibition area of the Faculty of Art and Design building of Swansea Metropolitan University, where I am employed and study. The physical nature and characteristics of the architecture have suggested final forms for the work, but it is also important that this is my place of work – my visual analysis of the domestic has left home, where it was devised, and has entered the unambiguously public architectural space of the university. In parts it mirrors the smooth lines and bland dynamics of the space, in others it introduces the intimacy and particularity of the domestic.

House

The design of the written research was initiated and developed through drawing and small-scale three-dimensional models. Visualising the plan of the thesis as the house plan produced chapters relating to room-spaces, the whole cohering within the image and notion of the house. Making three-dimensional *maquettes* provided a useful method and model for the visual artist engaged in written research. Some of these preparatory works will be exhibited, and in this way *House* is integrated as an element within many areas of the exhibition.



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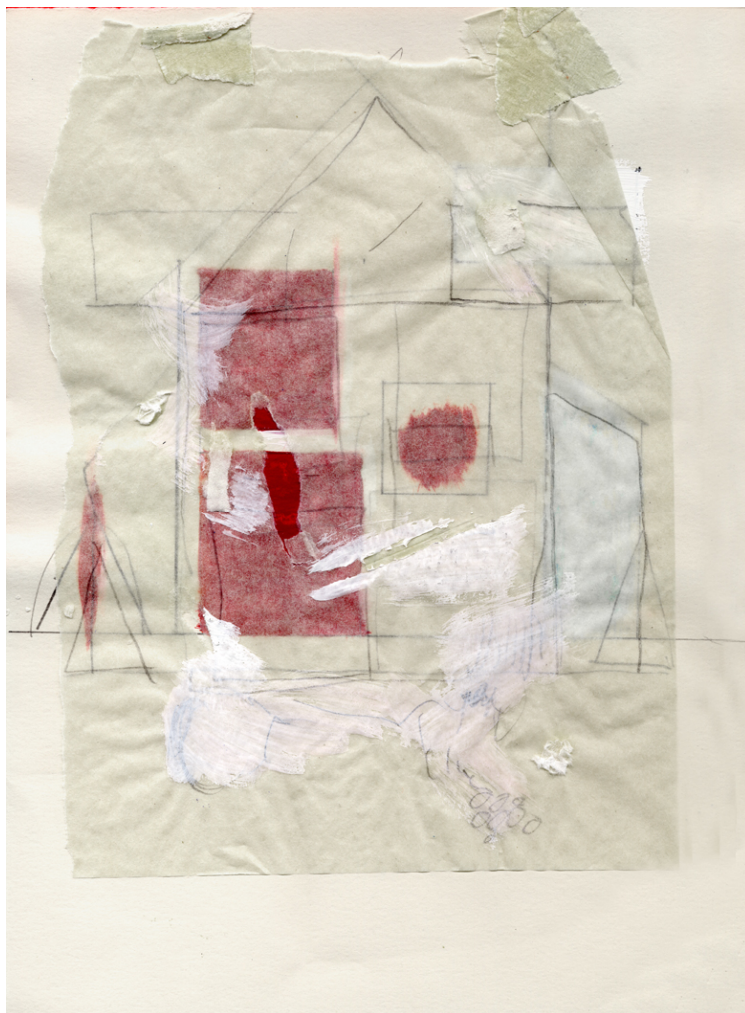


Fig. 2 & 3 Research design. Mixed media.

Bedrooms and other Bedrooms

Several elements refer to this title:

An 'archipelago' of tables, reshaped and re-arranged so that the rigid hierarchy of the rectangular table is disrupted and a variety of encounters suggested, from close intimacy to communication across and around its re-ordered edges.

Four 'jumping towers', made of plywood and hardboard obelisks, ladders, boxes, and found objects, are the children's quarters; the '*other bedrooms*'. The image of the tower was developed through drawings depicting a child jumping from a makeshift tower. The image represented the freedom and separation sought by children in the selected novels, and their need for imaginative play in the attics and eyries they are given or find as bedrooms or dens. The natural colours associated with these spaces in literature are evident in the work, as is the improvised nature of these rooms.

The parental bed is suggested by the adaptation of an existing element in the exhibition area; a rectangular, tile-covered bench is covered in red carpet. The domestic quality and bright colour of the carpet are highly visible in the public space of the foyer.

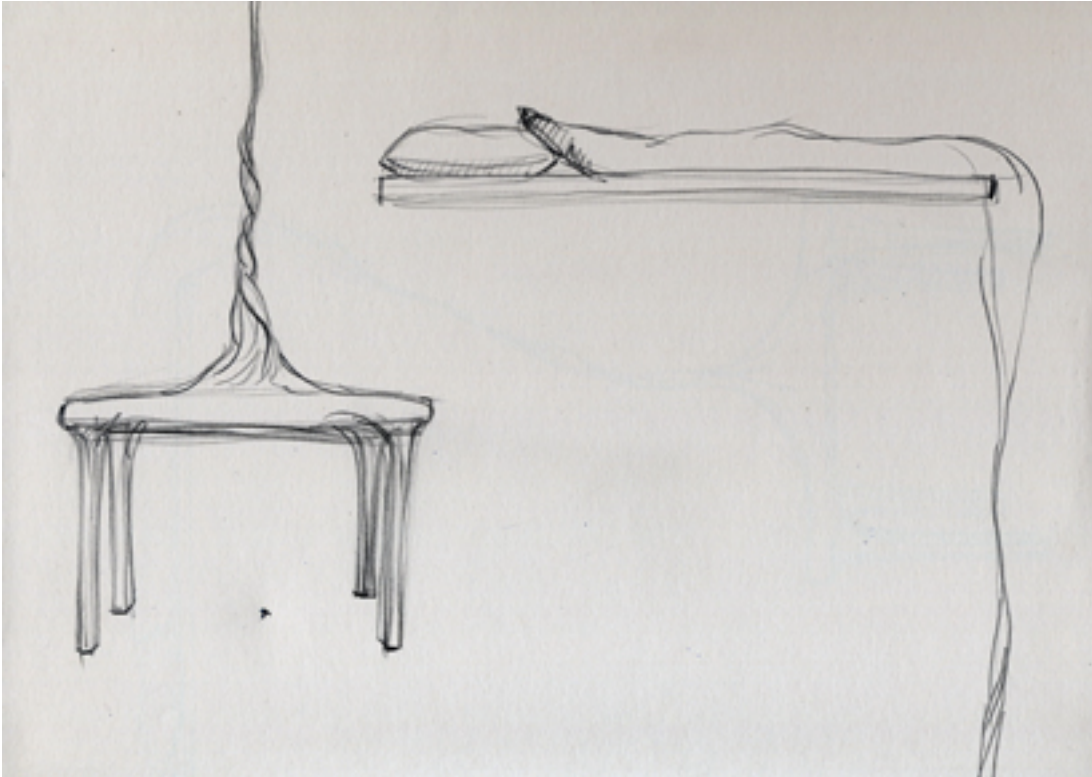


Fig. 4 & 5 *Redrooms and Other Bedrooms*. Mixed media.

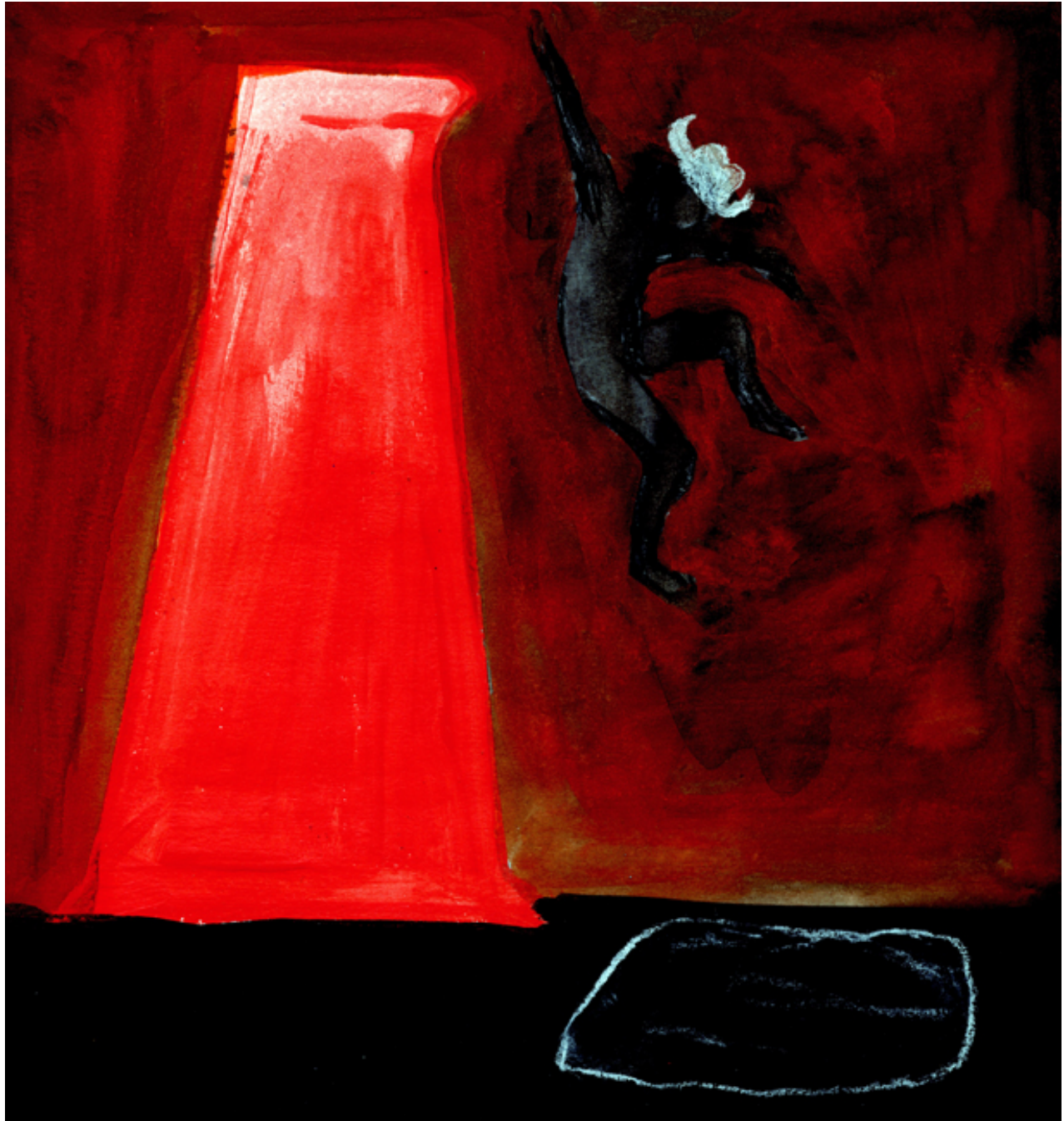


Fig. 6 *Redrooms and Other Bedrooms*. Mixed media.

Whiteroom

A small light coloured cubicle containing one seat; this is a solitary space, the cube/chair suggesting waiting, but for events that are as yet unknown. The busy corridor is audible; this room is an annexe off the main thoroughfare, but not a completely isolated cell.

Study

A space is created by a wall extending at an angle from the main white wall of the reception area, lined in red carpet. A small seat of the same texture and colour fills the acute angle between the red and white walls, creating a private area to read and think. As with the *Whiteroom* cubicle, this space is connected the area around it and has a view of the glass doors, and through them the courtyard outside. Opposite one of the built in glass fronted cabinets is filled with books, their front edges pressed against the glass, visible but inaccessible.

Glasshouse

The three remaining display cabinets contain representations of paired people, framed and revealed amongst a number of objects. The miniature scenes behind glass reflect both the full-scale framing of the human form in architecture and the notion of display, preservation and confinement found in examples of the *glasshouse* from the Wardian case to the conservatory.

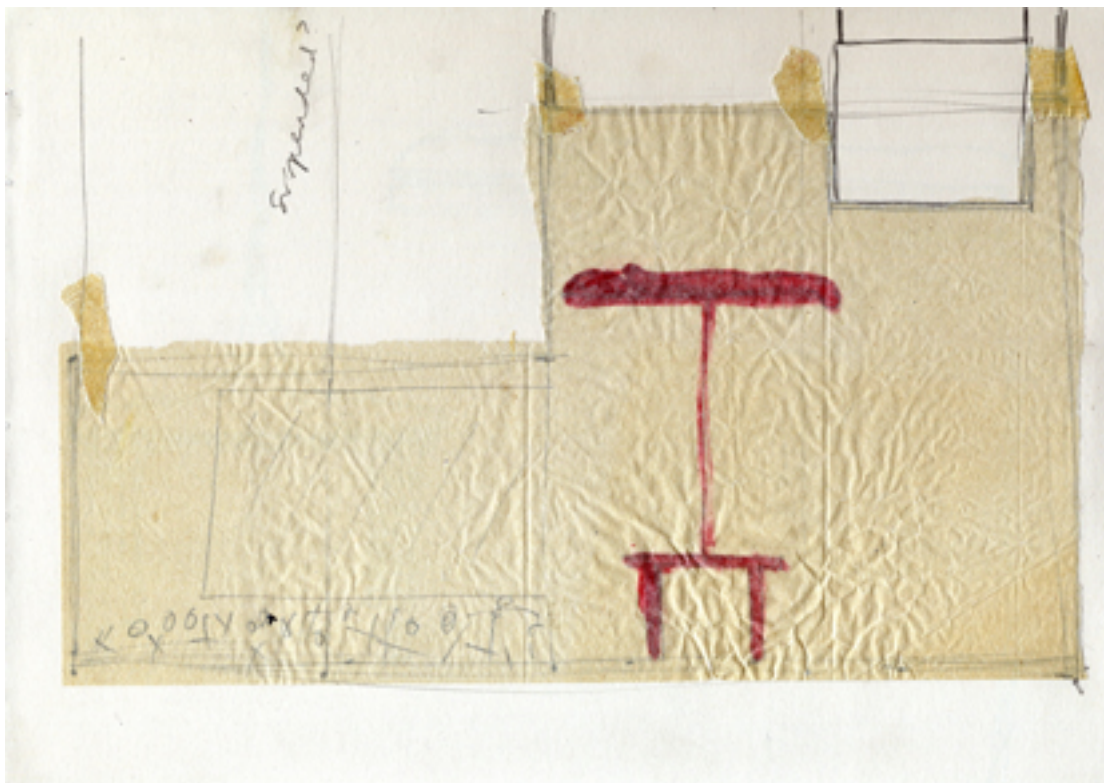


Fig. 7 & 8 Research design. Mixed media.



Fig. 9 *Tent*. Mixed media.

Tent

The plasma screen, permanently present on the wall of the reception area, shows two adults, male and female, erecting a tent. Perched on the top of one of the 'jumping towers' a book is propped to form a tent-like shape, inside are two bundles that might be sleeping children.

Each of the pieces is a minimal intervention in the space, requiring varying degrees of interaction and gently extending the possibilities for occupation of the area. Some offer moments of privacy (*Whiteroom* and *Study*), or impose altered interactions with other users of the space (tables, *Redrooms*). The work, references the improvised and diagrammatic quality of the preparatory drawings, and is constructed using found objects, plywood, hardboard and materials familiar from the home, such as fabrics and carpet. The installations propose ideas about domestic space, physically introducing them into the workplace, making the domestic public and modifying the nature of the communal reception/exhibition area.

Drawing, in both two and three dimensions, provided a way of 'seeing', understanding and constructing the written research, and became the basis for the practice element of this thesis. I anticipate that this integrated working process will continue to shape my practice.



Fig. 10 and 11 Exhibition area.

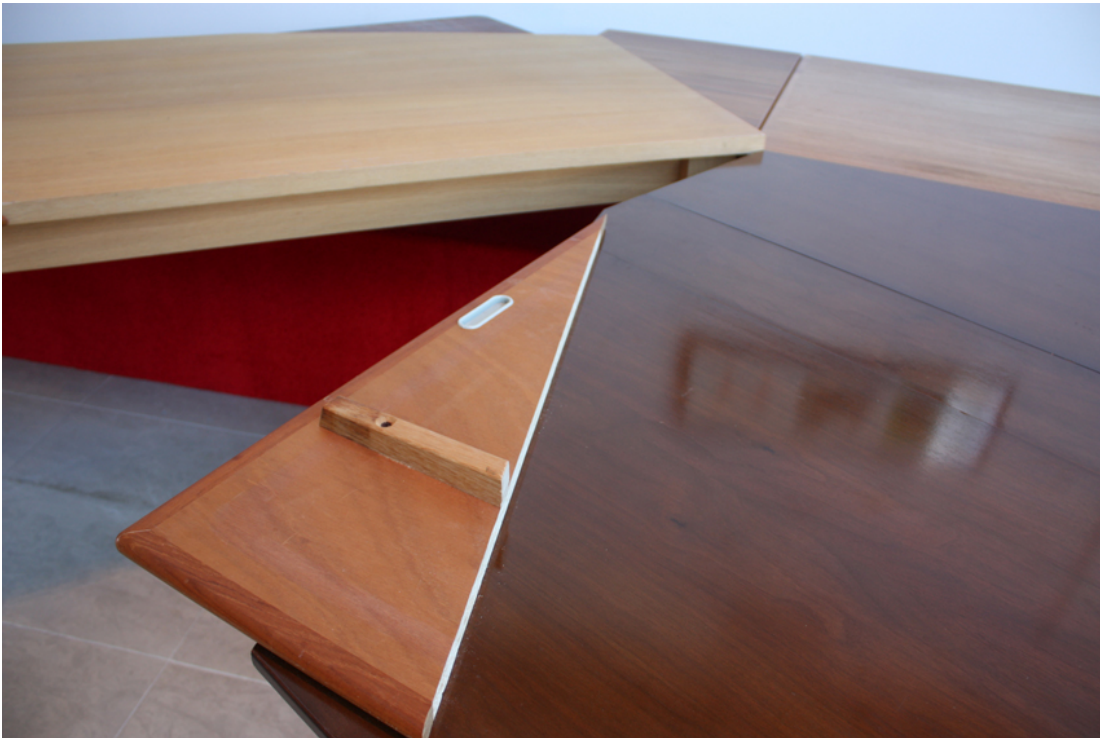


Fig. 12 and 13 Tables and bench, *Redrooms and Other Bedrooms*.
Wood and carpet



Fig. 14 and 15 *Jumping towers, Redrooms and Other Bedrooms. Mixed media.*



Fig. 16 and 17 Jumping towers, *Redrooms and Other Bedrooms* (detail).
Wood, hardboard and carpet.



Fig. 18 and 19 Jumping towers, *Redrooms and Other Bedrooms* (detail).
Mixed media.



Fig. 20 and 21 Jumping tower, *Redrooms and Other Bedrooms* (detail).
Mixed media.



Fig. 22 and 23 *Whiteroom.*
Plywood, paint and carpet.



Fig. 24 and 25 *Whiteroom* (detail).
Plywood, paint, carpet.



Fig. 26 and 27 *Study.*
Plywood, carpet and book.



Fig. 28 and 29 *Study* (detail).
Plywood, carpet, book/books.



Fig. 30 *Study, Glasshouse and Redrooms and Other Bedrooms.*



Fig. 31 *Glasshouse (detail).*
Mixed media.



Fig. 32 and 33 *Glasshouse* (detail).
Mixed media.



Fig. 34 and 35 *Tent*.
Video, fabric, wood and book.