



PRESS RELEASE

Confiscation Cabinets

Until 1 June 2014

Confiscation Cabinets is a display of artefacts confiscated in 150 London schools over the last three decades and collected by artist and teacher Guy Tarrant. The homemade games, keepsakes, toys, weapons and other forbidden objects characterise the flotsam and jetsam of school life, and highlight the distracted behaviours often played out in the controlled school setting where children spend much of their time. The display opened at the V&A Museum of Childhood on 9 November 2013 and runs until 1 June 2014.

Each Cabinet focuses on the everyday actions of school students, with objects including homemade playthings such as pen tubes used as pea shooters, toy guns, colourful plastic toys and jewellery, make-up, gadgets and improvised missiles. Many confiscated artefacts have been made from found paper, carefully decorated and looked after. The majority of items on display were donated by senior and head teachers, while others were collected by Guy Tarrant while working as a teacher in primary and secondary schools, and in centres and schools for pupils with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties.

“Since qualifying as a teacher my art practice has concentrated specifically on school pupil interactions involving play and resistant behaviours. The objects in the cabinets evidence playful activities that reject and evade rules, activities that are impulsive, free and with a touch of danger. These types of items may often reveal an insight into the elaborate lives of young people.”

– Guy Tarrant

Guy Tarrant has been making artworks since 1987, always seeking to reflect the situations he finds himself in. He has been a school teacher for more than 15 years and is dedicated to trying to improve the education system.

Each school has its own policy for returning confiscated items: the objects that feature in the display represent the small percentage of cases where pupils were given the opportunity to reclaim their property but chose not to do so. In many cases these objects have been held by schools for years without being claimed. The exception to this is where weapons, stolen items, or items believed to have been used to cause damage to a person or property are involved.

V&A Museum of Childhood, Cambridge Heath Road, London E2 9PA

Admission free. Open daily: 10.00 – 17.45, last admission 17.30

Nearest tube: Bethnal Green. Tel: 020 8983 5200 www.museumofchildhood.org.uk