

Angela Silver's shredded dictionary-archives begin with an already rich accumulation of labour. "Etym" is an ultimate act of deconstruction, where an object—a book, a dictionary—with very legible habits of use is rendered useless through this daring physical undoing. The undone dictionary also makes fresh space for new meaning, and we approach it as Neville approaches a familiar narrative in *The Waves* by Virginia Woolf. In deep introspection he finds places for his well-tread texts, thoughts and lived experiences to expand: "...now in this room, which I enter without knocking, things are said as if they had been written. I go to the bookcase. If I choose, I read half a page of anything. I need not speak. But I listen. I am marvelously on the alert."⁵ By changing the book's form, Silver simultaneously destroys the conventional architectures of the text and inscribes new layers in our physical relationship to reading.

In his work "The Wonderful World of Ants" Chris Gillespie sets up a pseudo-scientific experiment where the artist's collection of information follows closely behind the ants as they carry on with their day-to-day business. A symbol of collective and highly organized work, the patterns and topographies of the ants in the studio become yet another code to unravel. "If we consider that we have to grope through a fog even to understand the very things we hold in our hands, then we find that it is not knowledge but habit which takes away their strangeness,"⁶ and in Gillespie's studio, the self-contained studio space becomes a magnifying glass to those sights that might be rendered imperceptible if they were loose in the city.

ditdahditdit rejects the recent construction of the studio space as a vista of unrelenting toil or out-modeled method: it's a reclaimed territory, a space where open-ended questions and layers of meaning piled-high are declared game for decoding.

SOURCES:

¹ "That it is madness to judge the truth and the false from our own capacities," *On Friendship*, Michel De Montaigne, Penguin Books, London, 2004. pgs. 22 - 29

² *Relational Aesthetics*, by Nicholas Bourriard, les Presses du Reel, Dijon, France. 2002 English version, 1998 French version.

<http://www.gairspace.org.uk/html/bourr.htm> and

http://www.strecher.org/archives/il_a/2003_02_25_il_archive.php accessed July

2005.

³ *Invisible Cities*, Italo Calvino, Vintage Classics, Great Britain, 1997. p. 14.

⁴ Calvino, p. 34.

⁵ *The Waves*, Virginia Woolf, Penguin Books, Middlesex, England. 1966. p. 170

⁶ De Montaigne, p. 26

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