

Cabinet of Curiosities Commission



Richard Wentworth, *A Confiscation of String*, 2009

Situated at the heart of the gallery's Education and Research Tower, the Study Studio is an environment for thinking and talking about art. The studio is the context for a yearly curatorial cabinet-based commission, for which the inaugural artist-curator is sculptor, photographer and collector Richard Wentworth. In the spirit of the original Wunderkammern, the cabinet's contents might include found objects from nature, science, culture and technology. Wentworth curates the cabinet's contents for one year.

The title for Wentworth's year long project is *A Confiscation of String*. The phrase encapsulates the word 'fiscal' denoting an interest in currency and exchange whilst also referring to 'a treasury', a collection of valuable artefacts. The cabinet will contain a collection of string, both natural and manmade, brought to the space by the artist. Some items have been gathered by Wentworth on his personal trips and journeys, and the contents of his father's own string drawer sits within the collection. The artist will also invite additions to the Cabinet from others, including string manufacturing companies around the world, to submit examples of their own yarns. Wentworth is interested in the aesthetic properties of string in its different manifestations, whether it takes the form of a knot, or a plait or a ball, and the emotional resonances that these objects trigger.

"There are countless things of great modesty which help us to survive. The way we save a paperclip, a safety pin or thumb tack for future use is something which joins us to each other. My first reaction to the Whitechapel invitation was to privilege the elastic band, but then I thought, its formal characteristics and the limit of its size were not enough to give it a starring role.

'*A Confiscation of String*' will gather together string and cord during the year ahead into a single display case in the Study Studio. Donations and exchanges will be invited and there will be special presentation events as well as an Etymology Evening and a Knots Night.

The curatorial anxiety associated with presenting the material will be the main provocation for adopting varied formal arrangements as the year progresses."

- Richard Wentworth