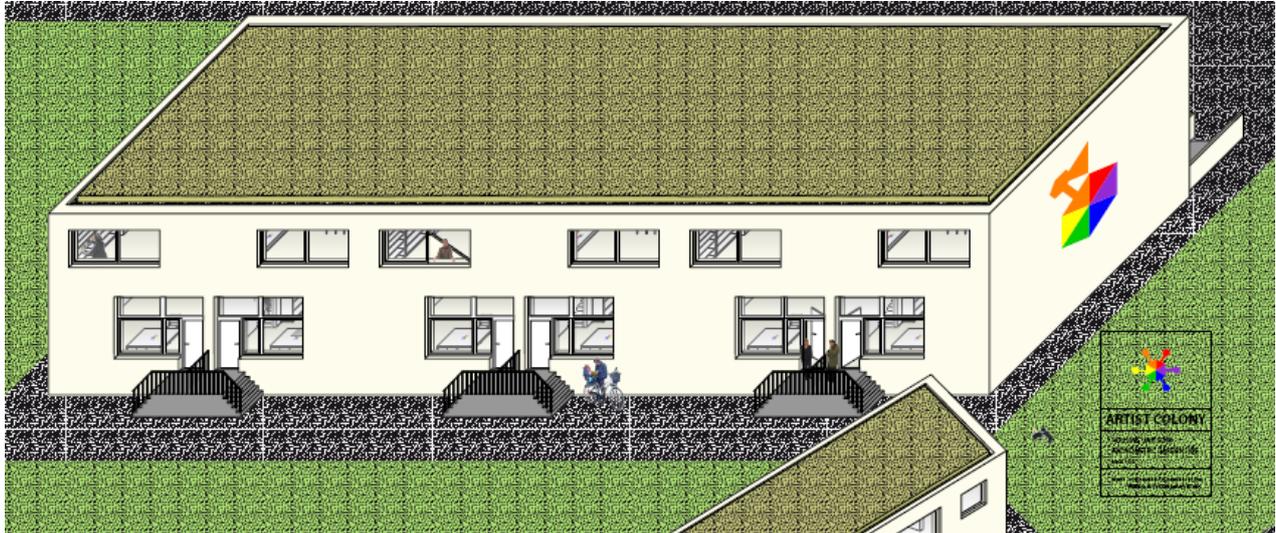


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PRESS RELEASE



LUCY HARVEY

WORKS FROM GUIDE TO LIFE

25 APRIL - 24 MAY 2008

Commenced in 1997, *GUIDE TO LIFE* is a constantly expanding reference work in which the information necessary for a successful life is collected and catalogued. It is both a work in its own right as well as the containing structure for every other work. *GUIDE TO LIFE* is organized in six chapters: I BASIC PHILOSOPHY; II NECESSARY KNOWLEDGE; III PRODUCTIVE LIVING; IV AUTOBIOGRAPHY; V BEAUTY; VI ART-MAKING.

Installed in the downstairs gallery is *GUIDE TO LIFE III(A).10 PRODUCTIVE LIVING (PRACTICAL STRATEGIES): LIVING IN AN ARTIST COLONY*. This grand design, presented as model, elevation, plan, axonometric, section, detail is an absurdity and a utopia. As a detail in Chapter III of *GUIDE TO LIFE*, it powerfully demonstrates the vast complexity of this great idea that underpins Harvey's work. This colony, this new Bauhaus idyll is set up as an ideal community where artists live, work, interact and fulfil their creative needs in perfect harmony. It seems born of a nostalgia for a lost golden age. But perhaps there is a hint of irony here. Laudable and laughable, such belief is always worth entertaining if never likely to be realistic. Look closely and somewhere in one unit in the heart of the colony we see the artist brushing her teeth; could anything more succinctly express the banal normalities lying at the heart of this grand fantasy of creativity?

In the second gallery space are two works; in one, *GUIDE TO LIFE V(A).15 BEAUTY (ANALYSIS): PAINTING WITHOUT CONTENT*, thirty-three canvases deploy paint, gesture, surface, composition, tone in an attempt, or absolutely no attempt, to make something meaningless. Of course, the result completely contradicts this intent. There is more interesting content to be discussed here, and more interesting visual stimulus in the result, than the majority of works that set out to do the opposite. In the second work a video camera scans the detail of the hair of the artist. Remorselessly, even absurdly, investigating the undergrowth in close-up, each strand is picked over. Again, the artist presents this analysis as a work without content. How should we take this? As an exercise in fascination with nothing of interest or as an affirmation of the rich interest inherent in a proper examination of anything? The video holds us in its thrall, drawing out our curiosity and provoking our need to find a telling idea. It isn't there; the video is what it is, and nothing more. But in that space between our expectation and Harvey's suggestion of contentless activity something is born that has a true beauty and intriguing independence.

"...Guide To Life offers me a feeling of security –or rather an illusion of security – within the almost unbearable arbitrariness and self-indulgence of an artistic practice, which in turn takes place within the otherwise almost unbearable pointlessness of life itself..." (*GUIDE TO LIFE VI(C).3(C): REPEATING WORKS (TEXT)*)

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