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NEW RELEASE

plot

BOOK

ISBN: 978-1-85924-219-3

2008

250 x 180 mm landscape

Sbk with blue and silver cover

35pp full colour with 30 illustrations

Essays by Fernando Palma, Maria Thereza Alves, Jean Fisher and Simon Read, with an introduction by Martha Fleming.

Editor: Simon Read

Series Editor: Nicky Coutts



A collection of essays on cultural perceptions of land exploring ways in which the visual arts may act as a catalyst and a component in a wider debate on contemporary aspects of land use and abuse. The editor, Simon Read, is an artist who, as a matter of his way of life and patterns of work, has become increasingly interested in the implications of climate change for coastal communities. He sees this as a cultural issue as much as a matter of geophysics, engineering and politics. To widen the scope of this debate, he has brought together representatives from within the visual arts community who represent a range of concerns where assumptions about the integrity of land or territory are central. Through close discussion with Jean Fisher, Professor of Fine Art and Transcultural Studies, the artists Fernando Rodriguez Palma and Maria Thereza Alves were invited to bring to this edition a richness of exploration that confirms that what exercises artists on a local level has global implications.

'Plot' connotes the question of ownership as much as that of the aggravated relationship between land, people and political determination. Simon Read opens the discussion with the question of how the principle of beauty in landscape has become an inhibitor in the development of a sense of understanding and ownership for the public. He enlarges upon this theme with particular case studies concerning current issues of coastal defence.

Jean Fisher provides a context for both Fernando Rodriguez Palma and Maria Thereza Alves. Fernando Palma is an artist from Mexico of Nahua origin; with a group of professionals from a range of disciplines, he has established the Tecalco NGO that is committed to establishing an understanding and accommodation of the indigenous character of the land and communities around Mexico City, in the face of an apparently unstoppable tide of urban development. Maria Thereza Alves has developed an intriguing study of how the proliferation of exotic plant species has been inadvertently made by the transport of seeds carried in ships' ballast to be deposited on sites far from their country of origin. Through approaching this process as metaphor, Alves simultaneously promotes other narratives such as that of the slave trade in Bristol, inviting the reader to reflect on the complexities of cultural mobility and colonisation.

The publication is introduced by Martha Fleming, an artist who speaks from long association with the scientific establishment.