

Daniel Poole presents ¡The New Curiosity Shop!

1st – 17th March 2012

¡The New Curiosity Shop! Concept An Interview with Daniel Poole, the curator

“The concept for the shop is that it challenges the notion of the retail experience in 2012. It sells things that are not necessarily useful or that everyone would like. It does not pander to either a niche or the mass market. It is anti-corporate and does not follow the rules of corporatism. To that extent it can unnerve the customer. It is a cosy and visually intriguing retail experience where there are no prices and you have to engage with the shop keeper, let him have his turn as an integral part of the shop.

There is a cornucopia of interesting and unusual things. Most of the products are old and have been used before, some are part old and part new. Many are highly evocative and evoke passed memories. The neon lights, the airline seats, the stuffed owls, the toy robots, and the bebe noir collection.

The shop appears as one large installation. The shop sells precious things that by their nature are not expensive. It makes us question throw away society and promotes the idea that objects can have value and store memories.

The New Curiosity Shop is inspired by a million childhood memories of rummaging through junk shops, by my work as a fashion designer and some seminal moments visiting the famous cockney boxer Henry Cooper’s greengrocers shop (in 1972), Vivienne Westwood’s ‘Mud and Sand’ in St Christopher’s place in 1984, Reginald Perrin’s shops and Ronnie Barker’s famous four candles sketch. Your imagination runs wild, thinking about what treasure could be found.

I am a child of the sixties, I loved the fashion and quirkiness of TV shows like The Avengers and The Prisoner, that Lady Penelope style - and Jason King too. Beautiful women in modernist clothes would often be filmed in quirky interiors that fused stuffy old country house interiors with Vernon Panton furniture. Diana Rigg in a leather catsuit would pose on a polar bear skin rug with a futuristic, metallic sofa in the background. Often in The Avengers a story line would evolve around a quirky antique shop. Steptoe and Son and the Antique’s Roadshow are huge influences on me.

My first job was in a rough greengrocers shop as a fourteen year old Saturday boy. The housewives would form an orderly queue and the boss would shout out their orders and I’d run around weighing the items in brown paper bags before putting them into their shopping baskets, "Four pound a King Edwards, a lettuce, a pound a tomatoes, half a cucumber", then "was that half a cue love, sorry what was that? I’ll fuck you, love." Servitude and irreverence all in one.

At 16 I would travel around the country for a boutique jeans company. In Swansea there was an old curiosity shop that sold stuffed animals, war medals and old spinning wheels. By 18 I worked for a designer in Carnaby Street and on the Kings Road selling Rock’n’Roll luxury clothes, furs, leather and diamonds. There I teamed up with an Egyptian antique dealer and started a little company trading fashion and smuggled antiquities between Paris, Cairo and London. The shops in Cairo would be packed full of items and from under the counter a mummified hand or duck would appear. We would buy Faience Ushabtis, amulets beads, roman oil lamps and Greek terracotta figures. We would open our suitcases to the traders at Clignancourt market in Paris - these shops were filled with treasure from all over the globe.

After university in the 90s I returned to fashion and won a Queens award for export. Later I opened my own shop in Neal Street, then Paris, then Soho, and a joint venture in Amsterdam. These shops were decorated with ephemera that I had collected over the years - neon signs, tribal artefacts and vintage robots. In 2000, I started to create interiors for private clients and like minded companies. In 2012 I was invited to work on the famous Pikes Hotel in Ibiza for Ibiza Rocks.

In 2009, the shop in Primrose Hill was created to showcase my art and interior design. Some days we are visited by more celebrities than civilians. They love the shop and seem to feel at home there. Jules and Jamie Oliver, Jude Law, Daisy Lowe, Sharleen Spiteri, Emma Freud. Eliza Doolittle, Nick Grimshaw, Helen Fielding, Pearl Lowe, have all bought things and Gwen Stefani, Lisa Snowden, Harry Enfield, Damon Albarn, Pixie Geldof, Gavin Rossdale, Garry Kemp, Ricky Gervais and numerous others have all been kind enough to say they love the shop.

The most important artist has been Chris Bracey. Chris's work, like mine in fashion, blurs the line between art and craft. He uses the visual language of the street, neon and sign writing to convey concepts and emotions. Since last Christmas we have been running a show for Chris and his 'God's Own Junkyard' which has achieved huge acclaim. I am also a big fan of Jennifer Louise Martin, the painter. I have sold a number of her paintings and received commissions for portraits. So much art is male centric yet Jennifer's work is so obviously feminine. To me art can be found in anything and as with my fashion, I like art to be decorative and not hugely intellectual." – Daniel Poole

Daniel Poole

Daniel Poole is one of the cult fashion designers of the 1990s and has won a Queen's award for export, for his avant-garde tailoring. He is credited as being one of the founding fathers of the European street wear industry. For those clubbing in the 90's the dp logo was a badge of honour. The logo would appear everywhere, from Take That videos, to a Tony Blair Party Political Broadcast and Star Trek.

Poole's anarchic politicised, anti-corporate clothes were sold all over the globe - the US, Japan and throughout Europe. In 2000 he licensed the dp brand to a Belgian company and stepped back from fashion. Since then, Poole has been concentrating on interior design and curating, working on Pikes Hotel for Ibiza Rocks & with Chris Bracey's Gods Own Junkyard, as well as searching for new talent to display in his Primrose Hill galleries.

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Londonewcastle Project Space

The Londonewcastle Project Space is a gallery and exhibition space in Shoreditch created by property brand Londonewcastle as a platform for creatives and artists to display their work and further their practice. The gallery is donated to users who might not otherwise have the opportunity to show their work and forms part of the ongoing local cultural discourse.

<http://londonewcastle.com/>