DESIGN AND COLLECTION



This post is in a series of commentaries on a class running at Stanford, Winter Quarter 2010 – "Transformative Design" ENGR 231 – [Link]

I mentioned in a recent post about design and the everyday the little photobook "thoughtless acts" by Jane Fulton Suri and IDEO – [Link]

It is a collection of observations, documented in snapshot photos, of intuitive ways that people adapt, exploit and react to things, creatively, without really thinking. Tacit acts.

A collection – of course, designers don't just come up with artifacts. The research that is often at the heart of design, certainly human-centered design such as that practiced by IDEO, involves collecting and analyzing and interpreting observations – about people, what they do, what works and what doesn't work for people.



At IDEO some of this research is embodied in a fascinating collection of "designerly things" – interesting materials (squishy, hard, metals with a memory, temperature sensitive …), cool hinges, neat handles … . They've been collected from all over by IDEO people and are carefully curated in carts around IDEO offices, recorded in a database so that you can search for particular qualities, particular solutions to design problems.



Bill Moggridge with the IDEO collection

The Victoria and Albert Museum in London was set up as a design museum that would inform good industrial design, through encounter with its collections of things from across the world and through the ages.

Another connection between design and archaeology.