

INTERSTITIAL

Interstitials are the gaps between things – there are interstitial spaces in our bodies, in the molecular structure of matter and in deep space. Both spatial and temporal, the concept often embraces those phenomena and those moments not assigned a place in the order of things.

The word conjures textbook images of atoms stacked in the regular three-dimensional grids of crystalline structures. All the hard, tiny particles that the world is made from, each complete in itself and forever alone, despite its proximity to others.

Such images have their origins in Newtonian physics and have been extended to the structure of the solar system – a clockwork mechanism of spheres moving frictionless through a perfect vacuum. They have also served to describe human societies as collections of alienated individuals acting according to calculations of rational self-interest.

Such models have been undermined by post-Newtonian developments in physics and by alternative understandings of how the human mind operates. Things have become much fuzzier and the hard line between object and object, object and space and between object and being has begun to dissolve. Contemporary thought suggests a self that is highly contextual, a knot at the intersection of histories natural and unnatural, objects, technologies and other beings. It suggests not a world of instruments to command and discard, but an inseparable and evolving interpenetration of self and object and world.

The works in this exhibition speak to this shift in thought. A shift in which “things” are no longer lifeless instruments or remnants. Rather, they are our fellow travellers, making us as we make them, or as we attempt to make something of them.

By Peter Hughes

Senior Curator (Decorative Arts) Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery