offers a subtle provocation. I am interested in how we relate to objects, in what we know about objects, and how detached we have become from the process of making. I think your toaster project addresses those concerns.

TT: The discussion went towards capitalism and economics. I wanted to talk about the provocation in my work, as a designer making stuff, and I didn’t emphasise that enough perhaps. There is value in going back to the source. The project was interesting for me. I got to talk to miners, a plastics recycling guy, and many different people at all levels, academics, blokes on the ground, those who set up the business then to go to conferences run by the Institute of Business – completely different places for a person like me to be.

JH: Your interest in making was revealed in the video. There was a real engagement with materials and when you were lying on top of the mould, that was a very beautiful image. One of the final questions was ‘What is the end product, is it the toaster or is it everything else?’ The toaster is an excuse for talking to these people.

TT: Maybe for a wider audience? Having talked to students and as a student, I know there is an interest in the making. I don’t have all the answers.

JH: Yes, they really wanted to know.

TT: I’m more interested in that. It might sound floppy or weak but as I was trying to say, the issues around it – capitalism, globalisation, poverty, environmentalism – are so complicated. If there were easy answers, then it would make sense. If there was a definite solution, then it would make sense if we could position (and I do have a position). I guess that’s one of the outcomes of any project that is meant to produce a debate. You’re going to be asked what you think and it would be churlish to say I don’t have an opinion.

KB: It’s always difficult territory when you’re doing something both developmental and cutting edge.

TT: That was why I spoke about the libertarian blogger who commented on the project, assuming that because I was from art school I had a particular stereotypical view.
thought were his questions. I don’t mind looking stupid [laughs]. You
get it on every kind of course; there is always somebody who wants to
ask something that no one else understands. It’s also about the
legibility of questions…. some people compose their questions
in a way that you can pick them up. But that one I couldn’t grasp,
which seemed to be about what it is like to make an object that isn’t
art. I never did all that art stuff.

KB: You came from a different
background.

TT: I’m not interested in going
over that kind of question. I’m
more interested in looking out
from my discipline as opposed to
looking into it.

KB: Did you feel you had to
defend your discipline position in
a fine art environment today?

TT: I was forced to be more rig-
orous – as Sharon said at the end
‘You really need to brush up on
your Marxist critique.’ She’s prob-
ably right [laughs].

JH: It is a critical audience. Last
week the questions were equally
challenging to Mark McGowan.

KB: After the talk two people
walked out, then there was some
laughing and constant chatter
coming from part of the audience
and I wonder what affect that had
on you.

TT: I noticed a few walked out.
I couldn’t hear the chatting but I
didn’t take it personally because
I’m sure it happens all the time.

KB: But the audience was engaged?

TT: Yes, there is always that horrible
moment when ‘Any questions?’ is asked and no one puts up
their hand. Oh God, that can be
embarrassing.

KB: The question time was unusu-
ally long. I’ve noticed that when
there is a lot of time and many
questions, it can put the speaker
under more pressure.

TT: One person asked three or four
questions and I didn’t understand
him. I attempted to answer what I

TT: You are forced to be more
rigorous, which is good, because
it’s easy to swan along.

JH: It’s quite difficult coming in as
designer to another environment
though there is something about
your practise that is quite familiar
to an art audience. At the same
time you’ve got different concerns.

KB: How did you react when
asked to talk about provocation?

TT: It was interesting to think
about my work and provocation. I
was talking to a curator yesterday
who is opening a gallery. The
subject of art versus design raised
its head and they said they were
not interested. I don’t know how
the commercial art world works.
We were talking about where
work sits in history and culture, so
maybe that’s where the provocation
lies. Why did you invite me,
Jerome?

JH & TT: Yes!

KB: That seems strange, particu-
larly from the point of view that
your work is full of antagonism.

TT: It’s slightly disguised in
my work, I think. The humour
disguises it a bit but that’s why

JH: It’s OK! Sharon told me
the same thing the other day [all
laugh].

TT: You don’t seem any stranger
to provocation and yet you were
both provoked this afternoon.

KB: You came from a different

background.

TT: I’m not interested in going
over that kind of question. I’m
more interested in looking out
from my discipline as opposed to
looking into it.

KB: Did you feel you had to
defend your discipline position in
a fine art environment today?

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