

The Placement Arts

In *The Everies Book*, I explained a little about Spiritual Housework. I've since discovered this term can have a social science usage [1] in discussions of class & gender distinctions. That is definitely not the way I'm using it. The term could also convey ideas of religious practices requiring a belief system, or even defying some belief system. That may well be an aspect of one's own practice of Spiritual Housework, but as a blanket term I'm not using it that way either.

I mean any housework, done by any human being, which is not purely for cleaning, maintenance or decorative purposes, even though it may well involve cleaning, maintenance, decorating, gardening, repairs, renovations or any household-enhancing activity. What makes the housework 'spiritual' is the fact that the action is not mere labour. It is being done to grace the home with a figurative 'magic touch', if you like. It has the specific aim of generating a positive effect on the inhabitants, their environment, or their affairs.

Many actions considered Spiritual Housework are not even housework as such. They may be habits, rituals, paperwork or interpersonal activities. Indeed, they could be any category of thing, as long as they're to do with enhancing the inhabitants' experience of home, or supporting their lives and aspirations outside it. Any sort of intentional household enhancement is all that is meant by 'Spiritual Housework' in *The Everies Book*.

Note that the person with the intention should be the one to impose it through their own labours, unless delegating aids the intention. If you want a teenager to benefit from a cleaned room, it would be better to have them clean their own space. Makes sense, right? Yes, I know: you'll probably need to do your own Spiritual Housework to increase the odds that your teen will go along with you. The object, though, is to empower household members to take charge of their own areas, not override them. Additionally, tasks outside your legitimate skill set, such as wiring or plumbing, should definitely be outsourced!

Spiritual Housework as used in this text is more like Space Clearing, associated with the Placement Arts. These usually have building science at their roots. The best-known of these arts are [Feng Shui](#), [Vaastu](#) and [Wabi Sabi](#), but there are other arts or sciences designed to enhance the home's harmony with its environment and occupants. Simple decluttering is a sub-study of such Placement Arts.

Sustainability is rightly popular in design, building and everyday living. Passive solar design as a component of this is something we especially value here in Australia, while cooler countries now bring us the arguably next-level passive design. We think of these as scientific, relegating the Placement Arts to something more vague. I consider that building practices from perhaps even earlier than Vaastu right up until our current engagement with sustainability are less competing ideas than elements in a continuum of built environment knowledge. That might be contentious. Bear with me.

I believe those earlier Arts began as sustainable design for their region at that time, incorporating what bodies of knowledge and beliefs were available to them in an attempt to create the sturdiest environment possible against the ravages of time, the elements, enemies, and the unforeseen.

Wherever technology and understanding ended during the ongoing development of these Arts, factors which were perhaps less sound when viewed from today's knowledge base were also introduced. Similarly, when talking about placement, location is everything! What works in one climate, culture or microcosm may not work in another. We can still learn from these by trying to understand what problem those homemakers were

trying to solve or what connection was, however inaccurately, being made between a cause and its effect. From that, we can examine our current knowledge and substitute a reasoned action that better suits the purpose. In 100 years' time, that too may compare with superstition. Well, okay. If we use what we know for now, and be willing to keep on learning, we'll be in good company. For example, the Building Biology movement stemming from Europe [2] is an application of modern health knowledge being coupled with sustainability to improve outcomes for occupants.

Summing up, then, that's how I developed *The Everies*. I started with the above respectful attitude to all related fields discussed above, and then got serious about studying how to use these in a modest way that could help anyone. Eventually, I was able to bundle together tasks, habits and routines which a wide range of building approaches and household enhancement fields seemed to agree on, and which I found enjoyable, beneficial and practical in an everyday way. That is, I didn't need to draw on special training or faith or superstition to make sense of what I was doing or get a nice result. While I would have loved to build my own straw-bale house and live off-grid, I didn't do that, either. I just practice *The Everies* wherever I am.

I am comfortable for readers to disagree with me on any of these ideas, and I hope you won't let it stop you from getting all the benefit you can from applying the tools in *The Everies Book*, your way.

I'm a keen researcher but I'm not formally trained in any of the above arts or sciences. My ignorance may show. I do love them and find them fascinating and beautiful. Flicking through pictorial books on these topics is one of the best instant fixes I know. They are so aesthetic and transporting. The images alone seem to have a decluttering effect on my state of mind. The *Everies* help you start creating that sort of vibe in your home even if you are flat broke and know nothing about the background to the tools. If you are familiar with any of the above fields, you'll be able to practice *Everies* with even more skill. Newbie or old-hand, you'll be taking proactive steps from within the home to harmonise your entire life, and I believe that is the essence of Spiritual Housework.

However, I could be wrong about all that theory. Let me know what you find, okay?

I would also love to hear from you if you think I have overlooked an *Every* that might apply broadly to others, or have covered one twice, or included one that isn't widely useful for some reason.

Send additions/amendments/deletions through my contact form www.inspectorross.com.au/contact, using the subject line, "Everies suggestion".



References:

[1] Roberts, Dorothy E. *Faculty Scholarship*, Spiritual and Menial Housework, Paper 1282.

http://scholarship.law.upenn.edu/faculty_scholarship/1282, 1997, accessed 5 April 2016.

[2] Building Biology & Ecology Institute (New Zealand). <http://www.ecoprojects.co.nz>. Undated, accessed 7 April 2016.

©Heidi Ross 2017-22

Original citation:

Ross, Heidi. Appendix A: The Placement Arts, in *The Everies Book*, p.74. Perth: Inspector Ross Publications, 2009-2020.