I have, I have not

**Installation, recycled garments**

**Antoinette Karsten, Canberra, ACT**

**2016**

*I have, I have not* is an immersive installation which comments on the social issue of clothing waste. At first glance it may look like it is only intended to be visually pleasing, since the fabric is arranged according to colour and tone, but at closer inspection reveals quite a challenging statistical and personal view on the chasm between privilege and poverty.

There is a stable source of reject clothing at the Green Shed, and I found it shocking that so many good garments are thrown away, some still unworn, with their price tags on. I lived in Africa and travelled extensively in India, where the lack of basic needs and social imbalance is acute and overwhelming. My purpose is to engage the viewer in an informative and possibly challenging narrative, to help create awareness in a privileged society of a world outside of their own.

The use of colour in pleasant and graded tones suggests that we see the world through our own filters of a blessed life, and often overlook the uncomfortable realities that the majority of people in the world face. When we choose to interact with these realities (or choose to climb through the openings in the screens), and see the world in perspective, we become aware that we are indeed fortunate and that maybe there is something more that we can contribute to help correct this imbalance. There is also a short quiz for the viewer to take home, to reflect about how many articles of clothing they own, which further involves the viewer on a personal level.

The openings in the three 5x2m screens are spaced to guide the viewer through a passage of discovery, which may be both fun and informative. It can be approached from either side. The presence of the installation in an important walkway forces a choice form the public: engage with the work by allowing it to guide them through it, or avoid it by walking an alternative route. Further studies may be done to collect statistics, for instance mounting an action camera to record people’s choice and behaviour.

The work can be classified under the frame of materiality by the use of a relevant material and general associations with this material to convey a message.