Since value implies an agreement – a consensus – between two or more people, it may happen that something that is valued within a circuit lacks value outside. The performance _VALUE! PATRIMONIAL AUCTION_ challenges this problem by recreating (with all the needed paraphernalia to make it convincing) an art auction in which the pieces on offer have evidently no value: literally, bags full of dust.
Who participates in the construction of heritage value? Who quantifies it? How is this value exchanged, negotiated or traded? As an answer to these questions (and to instigate others at the same time), VALUEN Patrimonial Auction was an exercise to ponder the economic value of that which has no value: dust or plaster molds with the shape of the theater’s slope of the former Teatro Italia in Santiago, where the original intervention took place.

With strings and nails, the theater’s slope was transformed into a sort of pre-archaeological site with a grid of 700 squares (the number of seats in the old theater), each being understood as a ‘lot,’ following the real estate custom of subdividing land to speculate with its value.

Then, for a month, we exhumed the dust adhered to the slope to deposit the contents in envelopes that were weighed, signed and identified with their coordinates. In order to ensure exclusiveness, with a brush, we applied thin layers of liquid latex to 15 of the 700 lots until a 0.5 cm thick membrane was obtained. Once dried, we carefully removed it to use it as a formwork inside 5-cm-deep
cardboard boxes; then we poured plaster and created replicas of each lot.

Both the dust bags and the plaster molds were publicly auctioned on July 5, 2015, at 7:00 p.m., on the same site of the former Teatro Italia. The auction was directed by Pabla Ugarte, renowned auctioneer from Christie’s, and had 56 attendees who auctioned 30 of the 700 samples or exhumed lots, paying values ranging from USD 8 to 80 for pieces which, in practical terms, have no value. ARQ
Carolina Ihle
<carolina.ihle@uach.cl>

Architect, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, 2001. Master of Science in Advanced Architecture Design, Columbia University, USA, 2013. Applied Architecture Research, Columbia University, USA, 2013. She explores interdisciplinary strategies that problematize heritage value by conducting studies in its multiple representations and constructions. Her work has been exhibited in Santiago, Valdivia, Barcelona and New York. She is an academic of the Institute of Architecture and Urbanism, Faculty of Architecture and Arts, Universidad Austral de Chile.

María José Contreras
<mcontrel@uc.cl>

Psychologist, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, 2001. Laurea Specialistica in Discipline Semitiche, University of Bologna, Italy, 2004. PhD in Semiotics, University of Bologna, Italy, 2008. Performance Artist. She studies the relationship between body, memory and performativity in the artistic practice. She has published in Chile, Brazil, Argentina, France, Italy and USA. Today, she is the Head of the Doctorate in Arts Program, Faculty of Arts, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile.