

ARTFORUM

“Voyage Around My Room”

NORMA MANGIONE GALLERY

Via Matteo Pescatore 17

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In 1790, French aristocrat Xavier de Maistre was caught dueling and placed under house arrest. During the forty-two days he spent in his cramped quarters in Turin, de Maistre produced what would later become *Voyage Around My Room*, 1794, a witty travelogue detailing his adventures within his own apartment. The aristocrat's flights of domestic fantasy merely flirt with the kind of interior obsession at play within the neighboring Casa Mollino, an extravagant *garçonnière* entirely outfitted by Carlo Mollino in the 1960s. The prolific designer created every last detail of the apartment, which provided a setting for his private Polaroid photo sessions with Turinese townswomen but also, perhaps even more provocatively, was intended to serve as the artist's tomb.



View of “Voyage Around My Room,” 2011.

If Casa Mollino was conceived as an entryway between two worlds, the works in “Voyage Around My Room”—a group exhibition curated by artist Becky Beasley as an ode to Mollino's apartment—are suitably intermediary, crossing genres with a slyness that does not immediately reveal itself. Photographs by Anne Hardy and Annette Kelm appear closer to the surfaces they depict—a denuded event-listings wall and floral-patterned fabric. In deference to de Maistre (who never took the straight path from the bed to the armchair, preferring instead to “follow every line possible in geometry”), Beasley has built the exhibition on irregular angles. Her own sepulchral black-lacquered cedar plinth, *Perinde Ac Cadaver*, 2011, is cut with deceptively tapering corners. On the next pedestal, Robert Ellis's water-colored carton sculpture *15323*, 2011, departs from an architectural model toward something of a Rubik's cube gone awry.

All of the imperfect angles seem to lead back into the second room, where a dark patch of pubic hair punctuates the cocked hips at the center of a Mollino Polaroid. The purported genesis of the exhibition, the photograph is framed against Thomas Demand's red curtain wallpaper. Beside this ad hoc altar, Kim Schoen's clever *A Work Made from Bed*, 2010 (filmed within Proust's reconstructed boudoir in Paris's Carnavalet Museum), reminds us that while we can never truly get into the imagination of the artist, at least we can get into his room.

— Kate Sutton

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