

Decoding Images

Sabine Hornig

Large Corner Window, 2012. Aluminum, wood, sublimation print on polyester and concrete, 71 3/4 by 122 1/2 by 135 inches overall. Courtesy Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York.

Berlin-based Sabine Hornig titled her exhibition at Tanya Bonakdar “Transparent Things” after Nabokov’s 1972 novel of the same name; both the show and the book address the overlap and interaction of time, memory and reality. Hornig’s large-scale photo/sculpture hybrids, incorporating images of reflections in shop windows, abandoned-looking interiors, miscellaneous objects and lush foliage, are at once seductive and mysterious. —LEIGH ANNE MILLER



1. Two in One

Großes Eckfenster [Large Corner Window] features a light, sheer fabric printed with fleeting images of window reflections stretched over door and window fragments. The material itself (polyester) is non-reflective; the subject nears the eye as if you're approaching it through a woven veil.

2. Viewer Experience

The sculptural space only becomes visible as the viewer walks around the piece and peers through it. The observer is led to reevaluate his perceptions of the image and the sculptural object via the experience of looking at a photo this way. The scale has been shrunken so the whole piece acts like a counterpart to the viewer's own physical presence and size.

3. Low Tech

I have always tried to combine image and sculpture in a direct way that doesn't involve technology (like projections, for example). My photos stand for a visual memory that confronts the spacial experience of objects so that the photograph becomes three dimensional as well. Because they're printed on transparent fabric, one is able to look through the photograph, and at both sides of it.

4. Visual Tricks

The photo in this piece shows the two adjacent windows on a corner in Berlin. The fabric is stretched around the corner of two attached freestanding frames, just stapled onto them. Because the fabric is transparent, you think you can see through a glazed window into an interior space under construction. The reproduction and the real image interact and then swap in our memory.

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5. Trash and Treasure

The rebuilt trash can, along with architectural fragments like the windowsill and corrugated tin roof, transform the sculpture into an open structure with see-through walls. I etched some leaves into the inside of the trash can, which you can see if you look down into it. A leafy tree is reflected in the window in the photograph; in a sense, the object flattens its information to become part of the image again.



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