

HEIDI WOOD

THE HOUSE IN THE SUBURBS

These last few years, due to the increase in the number of art centers and museums, we had almost forgotten that painting is not meant as a cultural icon alone, but that its function is also, more prosaically, to decorate the inside of our homes. Somewhere between the “impeccably” white walls of cultural institutions and the cramped space above the sofa in the living room, many artistic ideals have no doubt been shelved. This reality, which we often prefer to ignore, comes back like a boomerang in Heidi Wood’s work. The artist bluntly and humorously questions the paradoxes of painting, both objet d’art and consumer product. In her most recent works, entitled “Serving Suggestions”, she presents her paintings in indoor set-ups that comprise furniture and flooring. Displaying them as if in the showrooms of interior decoration stores, Heidi Wood gallantly plays the seduction card, showing us a possible environment for her work. Superimposing artistic and marketing strategy approaches, Heidi Wood brings about the convergence of two apparently very different views and succeeds in dismantling the machinery of a consumer system that everyone agrees is perverse (although unable to propose a better one) whilst implacably demonstrating its efficiency.

Although of the same nature, the installations designed for the Camille Lambert Art Center do not follow the same consumer logic: with the furniture gone, the “display area” illusion gives way to that of the display home. The exhibition entitled “La Maison de banlieue” (The House in the Suburbs) brings us back to the art center’s geographical context. Even more assertively than before, the artist transposes us to a world she possesses completely. Her works invade the walls and floor, just as the painted motifs on the canvas appear to spill out of their frames, projecting themselves outwards. This reciprocal contamination of forms and colors, answering each other in negatives, keeps alive the confusion the artist has been subtly elaborating for several years now. The marriage between architecture, art and decoration is well and truly consummated here. Stage designer of her own work, the artist uses the painted walls that accommodate her paintings to make them look their best. They are luxury caskets, which may or may not be part of the jewels. Demolishing the hierarchy of genres, Heidi Wood, disturbingly, makes us wonder about the “decorative” in painting, introducing “basely material” concerns into a public institution.

Fabienne Fulchéri

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