

# JASON MCCOY GALLERY

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**HYPERALLERGIC**  
Sensitive to Art & its Discontents

## Making Art Feel at Home

By Alix Taylor, July 23, 2014



Installation view, 'Domesticity' at Jason McCoy Gallery (image courtesy Jason McCoy Gallery)

The two rooms of Jason McCoy Gallery currently feature works spanning a wide variety of styles and mediums — from functional design objects, such as wallpaper and stools, to charcoal drawings and fine art textiles — for the group show *Domesticity*. All the art on view is bound by a shared inspiration: notions of domestic life. Curators Stephanie Buhmann and Samantha McCoy ask visitors to the Midtown gallery to meditate on how domestic space and the feelings of familiarity it brings can be conceptualized in art, a field that still draws a line at functionality. They also ask whether the traditional divide between decorative and fine arts remains plausible in a digital age. Walking through the space, however, I was more taken by questions of intimacy, what makes an art object feel personal.



Installation view, 'Domesticity' at Jason McCoy Gallery (image courtesy Jason McCoy Gallery)

Most of the work on view in the show springs directly from investigations or discussions of material culture in the home. "Lamp I" (1977) by Roy Lichtenstein and vase-like ceramics by Keiko Narahashi avoid the fate of becoming tokenized design objects in a fine-art show through seamless integration into vignettes of domesticity littered throughout the space. One of my favorite pairings was the placement of Aaron Poritz and Noka Taubinsky's untitled stools beneath a wall that features two Man Ray works on paper sandwiching Wilfred Zogbaum's photograph of Lee Krasner and Jackson Pollock outside their studio in East Hampton.

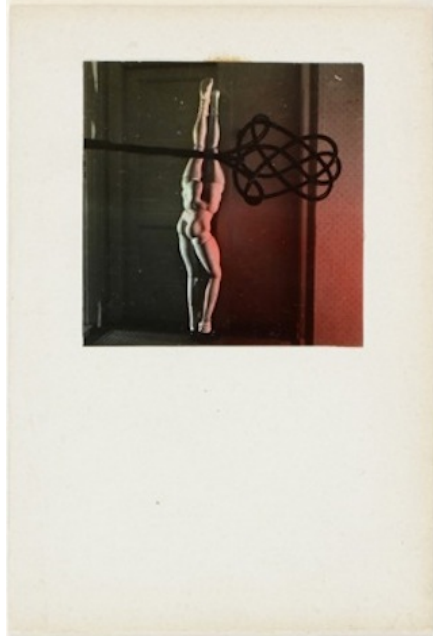
In fact, the persona of Jackson Pollock weighs heavy in the show. A ladder and stool from his and Krasner's studio sit covered in paint on opposite sides of the main gallery room. The figure of Pollock, with his notoriously explosive temper and well-documented philandering, isn't one that seems to fit with the "notion of comfort that characterizes the privacy of domestic life." The pedestrian objects from Pollock's studio may be in keeping with the show's theme by their physical nature, and in a way, they do raise questions pertaining to the line between functional and art object, especially with regards to artistic celebrity, but their inclusion feels hollow. Despite the former proximity of these objects to this person, and obvious visual markers of that closeness, the stool and ladder seem like sterile offerings to some artistic deity compared to the intimate quality of some of the other artworks on view in the show.

Craft techniques that have become emblematic of “women’s work” — weaving, textile, etc. — also play a prominent role in *Domesticity*, through the inclusion of sequined linen fabric pieces by Polly Apfelbaum, carpets woven by Stanley Bulbach, and the flat hanging “baskets” of Josh Blackwell. A nearly wall-size tapestry by Anna Torma, “Vanitas I” (2011), is especially striking.



Anna Torma, “Vanitas 1” (2011) (photo by the author for Hyperallergic)

The size of “La Poupée” (1935, printed 1938 or earlier), which translates to “The Doll,” makes the hand-colored gelatin print feel like the well-kept secret of a lived-in home — something you might find tucked away in a hollowed-out tree trunk or forgotten in an old jewelry box. Bellmer places the surreal, mashed-up human form of the doll against the familiar backdrop of a domestic doorway, making the work appealingly eerie without edging into disturbing.



Hans Bellmer "La Poupee [The Doll]" (1935) (image courtesy Jason McCoy Gallery)

In different ways, the small-scale Bellmer and the large-scale Torma both capture best the warmth and privacy of the domestic setting that Buhmann and McCoy are aiming to convey, employing technical processes that have become dated in the digital age. They're all the more compelling for that quality.

[Domesticity](#) continues at Jason McCoy Gallery (41 East 57th Street, Midtown, Manhattan) through August 15.