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ARMORY WEEK 2017 ARTISTS NEWS

Horsing Around: Patricia Cronin Presents 'Tack Room' at the Armory Show

BY *John Chiaverina* POSTED 03/01/17 1:59 PM



Installation view of Patricia Cronin's Platform commission at the 2017 Armory Show.

MAXIMILIANO DURÓN/ARTNEWS

After exiting the elevator and walking past one of the fair's many V.I.P. lounges (this one presented by the German furniture designer Rolf Benz, for those keeping score), the first piece of art I encountered at the Pier 92 section of this year's Armory Show was the fantastic Tack Room—a fantasy replica of the storage part of a horse stable created nearly 20 years ago by the artist Patricia Cronin and shown as part of the fair's Eric Shiner-curated Platform section.

"I was trying to be prophetic about my future—someday I'll be a successful artist and I'll get to finally have a horse," Cronin, who was on hand today, said of the piece, which was first shown almost two decades ago at White Columns. When asked if she ever got that dream horse, she answered with a resounding "no," going on

to further explain that Tack Room was, among other things, a way to “relive an adolescence that I never had. I didn’t grow up with horses. Anyone who grew up with horses doesn’t need to make this,” she said with a hearty laugh.

The piece is a wooden room filled with often sexually-evocative ephemera and media related to the equestrian arts. One wall was covered with photos that the artist referred to as the “Ralph Lauren fantasy,” which also included one page from a horse-related magazine that looked both pretty British and pretty racy. “Look at these two girls,” Cronin said, “they look like porn stars, the text says ‘our bottoms are still tops,’ I mean you can’t make this stuff up.”

Elsewhere in the room, Cronin—who, it should be noted, has actually sponsored a mustang and competed in the sport for real as a way to get closer to the subject matter—had on display a ’70s-era horse-related cover of Playboy, a print of Rosa Bonheur’s *The Horse Fair*, and a variety of whips and crops. “[Some] were actually bought in equestrian tack shops, some of them are bought in other kinds of stores,” Cronin said, suggestively. On the installation as a whole, the artist commented that it “all gets woven together into this space about female autonomy, power, desire, [and] class aspirations run amuck, clearly.”

A newer update to the piece shows framed press notices from the show’s first run in magazines like *Artforum* and *Sculpture Magazine*. Cronin seemed excited about the ability to show as part of the Platform section. “I don’t think a gallery would actually ever present this because it’s too big and too complicated and would take up too much of their booth,” she said, calling the piece “a shrine to how we create value or how we deny value in the art world. It’s like, 20 years later, I still own this thing, and it’s quantifiable in its critical acclaim.”

“So,” the artist said, “I’m just thrilled to see it up.”



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