

ARTFORUM

January 24, 2011



Katrín Sigurdardóttir, *Boiseries (detail)*, 2010, mixed media, dimensions variable

Artforum.com Critic's Pick: Katrín Sigurdardóttir

The Metropolitan Museum of Art
1000 Fifth Avenue, at 82nd Street
October 19, 2010 – March 9, 2011

There is something magical happening in Katrin Sigurdardottir's work, where architectural scale and space are re-presented as if Alice has returned from Wonderland, bringing evidence of a world full of alternative interiors. Sigurdardottir uses as source material the eighteenth-century French polyhedral boudoir from the Hôtel de Crillon, as well as another space from the Hôtel de Cabris—now period rooms installed and preserved in the Wrightsman Galleries at the Met. Location is key. Sigurdardottir plays with the relationship of the “original” rooms to their displaced versions.

The show consists of two sculptural installations that expand the idea of a room. The works, made in 2010, are both titled *Boiserie*—French for wood paneling, the material that serves as a primary building block for the sculptures. They occupy two separate galleries, at a distance from the period rooms they reference. Their placement investigates how we recall and connect things we see within the museum environment. In the first work, Sigurdardottir eliminates all color, pattern, and texture, producing a white-on-white space not unlike Rauschenberg's “White Paintings” of 1951, in that both are reduced to the most basic formal elements. The second sculpture takes on a different sensibility than the period room inspiring it by inducing a heightened sense of space and form. The varying shades of white are broken up by stark negative space and, more significant, are countered by the greenish one-way glass through which visitors peer to see the work. Here, the question of what is viewed—and indeed, the act of viewing itself—are surely under surveillance. KATHLEEN MADDEN