

Koll, Juri, "Anna Sew Hoy: Life Is a Beach," *Huffington Post*, April 13, 2013.

Anna Sew Hoy: Life Is a Beach

I walked around the corner to Abbot Kinney last Saturday afternoon for the opening of Anna Sew Hoy's show at Various Small Fires, expecting to see Peter Frank there. He said I should see the show. I casually glanced at a key holder above the entry table, covered with press releases, the guest book, and various articles written about the artist. I took a second look at the key holder and realized it was the first piece in the show you were to see. The title of the show is Home Office.



Rear Entry 1, 2013; Glazed Stoneware, Keychains, Denim, Resin Fingerhook

Moving further into the gallery, to the left, there was a low bench with people sitting on it, chatting with drinks. At one end of it was a blue ceramic orb and on the other end a faceted vessel with a blue tissue hanging out. On further inspection, the bench was covered in vinyl wallpaper with imagery of computer attachments and cables. I brought my beer over to watch the show, and to sit and chat with people there, including the artists' husband and daughter. Two very nice, relaxed people to be sure. The urge was to pluck a tissue out of the blue orb.



Dialog Bench, 2013; Glazed Stoneware, Denim, Blue Tissues, Vinyl Wallpaper

The show quickly worked its magic as I walked around and through the sculptures, all on their own specially-created and coated bases, just like the bench. It was crowded, and people gathered around specific sculptures of their choosing, seeming not to lose the thread of the work in their conversations. There is a lot to see in them.



Inside, as much as outside, the sculptures work as places where one can go to relax, be safe, rest.

To quote partially from the press release, which I found refreshingly different and real, compared to most art gallery/art speak releases:

"Familiar objects loom large as you pace the room. The whole world is compressed to the studio....This is your universe, and you are a shuttle, blasted into space, processing from above. You caress your laptop with constant fingering, and your fingers also leave prints in the clay."



Mental Beach, 2013; Glazed Stoneware, Denim, Sand and Wood

As a longtime resident of Venice, I enjoy a nice pair of jeans, the feeling of sand between my toes. The delight looking at the comfort of the surface, of peeking into 'Mental Beach' and seeing bright glittery blue sand inside, ready to lie down in, is palpable.

"Cogitate", another of the multi-sided sculptures, has its own stippled glazing inside, and outside it is covered by a web of denim seams sewn together a kind of protector of the space within.



Cogitate, 2013; (Detail), Glazed Stoneware, Denim, Vinyl Wallpaper on Wood

The home office, live/work space as a nurturing, consuming environment is clear. Turning the character of a space itself outward is a continued practice of this exhibition, the first one-person for Anna Sew Hoy in her hometown of LA in five years.

Repeating the theme is 'olive vert/rouge red', a trench coat which has been relieved of its body, leaving only a skeleton of seams hanging from its hook on the left wall of the gallery, ready to put on before leaving with your keys.



olive vert/rouge red, 2013; Trench Coat, Glazed Stoneware, Resin Finger Hook

When I get back I'll make sure and sit down on the bench with a beer and study the work again alone.

The show is on view at Various Small Fires at 1212 Abbot Kinney Blvd., in Venice Beach until May 18.