

BELLWETHER

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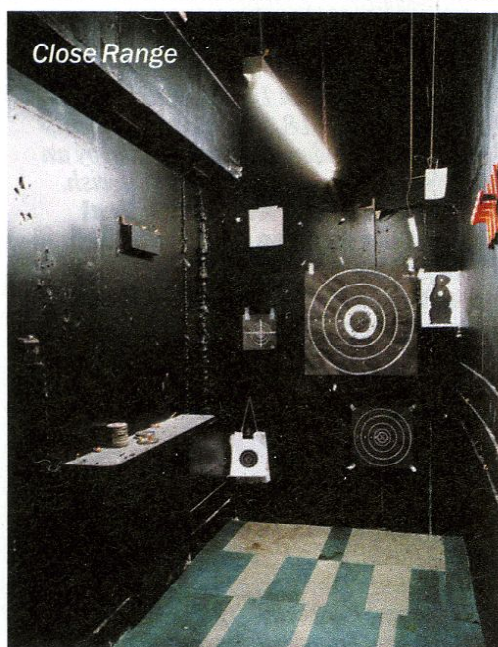
TimeOut
New York

Art

Review

May 1-7, 2008

Anne Hardy



★★★★★

Bellwether, through May 17
(see Chelsea)

Anne Hardy's interiors look aged, as if they were lived in or used for years and years in pursuit of some specific, perhaps obsessive, aim (say, weight lifting, feather collecting, or performing karaoke in an individual soundproof booth), and then photographed after everyone's left (whether briefly or for good is impossible to say). They are plenty of labeled cubbyholes, cigarette butts, trophies, assorted plants, phone numbers scribbled on a wall—things that almost tell a story, but don't quite. Like with a Cindy Sherman still, you can't help but try to put the narrative pieces together. The best part is, they don't exactly fit.

Hardy takes months to create each set in her studio, building entire rooms—walls, lights, flooring—around a found object and then surrounding them with uncannily well-suited details. *Close Range* (2006), for example, depicts a closet-size shooting gallery: The dented walls, along with bulging insulation foam and a radiator, are painted black, and the old, matted industrial carpeting shows just the right amount of wear and tear. Paper targets are pinned to the walls, as is a primitive pencil drawing of a deer—a very real room in an unreal realm.

Similarly, *Centre* (2007) resembles an entryway to an Indian temple/boathouse/mail room. Decorative swirls and yellow lightbulbs adorn red walls; sticks of incense scattered on the floor and other telltale traces of human presence—plastic cups, burn marks on the ceiling, puckering linoleum—give the place a melancholy feeling. But a doorway slightly smaller than normal size opens up to another room with a staircase and old wooden wallboards painted aqua. Appearing to be lit by the sun, it leads to another space, free, perhaps, from the heaviness of vacancy.—Amy Karafin