BELLWETHER

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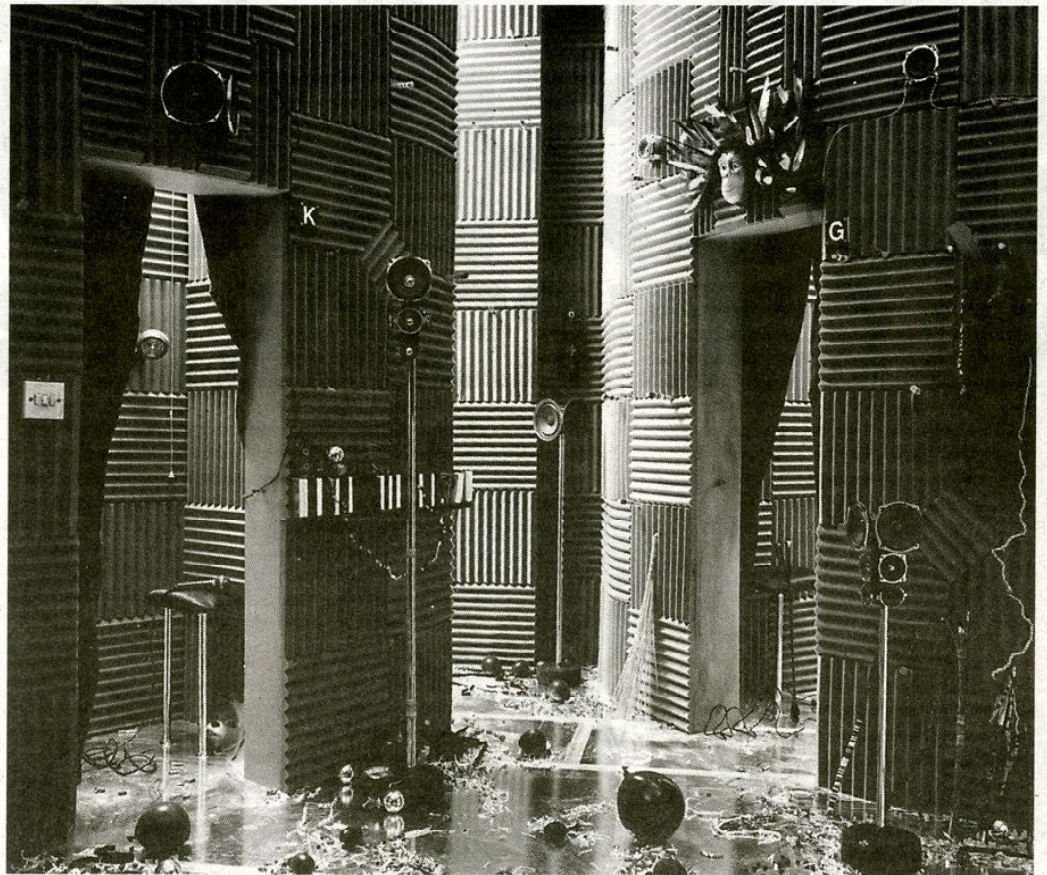
GALLERY HOPPING

Constructive Photography
And a note on proper gallery beverages

BY JOE BENDIK

Anne Hardy is a British artist who is making her solo debut in New York. Her method of creating art is highly unusual. She constructs entire scenes using objects that she found or that had been thrown away. Doing this, she creates installations/sculptures for the sole purpose of being photographed. According to her press release, her vision is to show how "behavior and personality are carried in the accumulation and arrangement of objects and detritus left behind."

One piece, *Cabin*, was filled with old recording-studio equipment. There were speakers mounted on soundproofing panels, microphones and even a couple of vocal booths. It was a meticulously created scene, a room within a room within a room. Inside the vocal booth, a dog could be seen hiding. Cassettes lined a shelf. Pencils were jammed in the structure. Lines of a certain white powder could be seen on the floor. Hanging on one of the soundproof panels was a monkey's head with feathers. Cigarette butts (a theme in many of her pictures) were strewn all over the place. The piece represented a recording studio from a long-gone era; it was a time when decadence was a major ingredient for making records, and musicians were pampered and plied with all kinds of substances.

Anne Hardy, *Cabin*, 2008, Diasec mounted c-type print.

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND BELLWETHER, NEW YORK

She does all of these constructions in her London studio. I imagine it must get pretty claustrophobic in there.

Anne has to dismantle each installation after she photographs it. I asked her if this is a painful process, since it takes months to complete each one. She said quite the opposite: that it is liberating and that the image is always more powerful than the real-life structure. She told me that the photo is really where her compositions live.