



Fiona Connor

1301PE Gallery, Los Angeles

New Zealand-born, Los Angeles-based artist Fiona Connor has a thing for displacing environments so that we may experience them as new, as strange. For her contribution to last year's inaugural *Made in L.A.* 2012 biennial, she recreated the lobby steps leading into the UCLA Hammer Museum and then cleverly placed her facsimile a few yards over, transforming an ordinary museum stairway into sculpture. Her 2009 work *Something Transparent* (*please go around the back*) directed a similarly critical light on the contexts through which we view art, replicating the exterior walls of the Michael Lett Gallery in Auckland fourteen times, wittily putting the gallery itself on display. In *Bare Use*, her first solo exhibition at 1301PE Gallery, Connor turns her attention away from the institutional mechanisms of the art world and toward the health spa, presenting a series of fastidiously fabricated objects — Jacuzzi signs, lounge chairs, plush towels, patio umbrellas — based on the Rancho La Puerta Spa in Baja. Founded in the 1940s, Rancho's star-studded clientele come not only for the organic food and yoga, but for the sacred slopes of Mount Kuchumaa, which envelop it. Aldus Huxley, who sought to open perceptual doors in our minds with his literature, was a fan. One might argue that "the spa" as a sort of ideology has something in common with the gallery; its aim is to transport you to a world away from your commonplace existence. I go up to *Object #6, Bare Use* (*telephone hut*) (all works 2013) and dial the "front desk." A prerecorded voice answers, leading nowhere. Removed from their lush green mountainside surroundings, Connor's resort equipment sits austere on the gallery floor, prompting art historical readings. *Object #5, Bare Use* (*water fountain*), for instance, suggests the late conceptual provocateur Michael Asher (1943-2012), who similarly re-contextualized a commercial drinking fountain. I lie atop Connor's *Object #10, Bare Use* (*lounge chair*) and stare out at the gallery's Wilshire parking lot as a Bentley rolls in. Equally elitist and luxury-laden, is the spa a doppelganger for the white cube?

by YAEL LIPSCHUTZ



Fiona Connor, "Bare Use," 2013. Installation view at 1301PE, Los Angeles. Courtesy 1301PE, Los Angeles.

