

Art in America

REVIEWS SEP. 05, 2013

Lucia Koch

by Leah Ollman

Brazilian artist Lucia Koch's first solo appearance in the U.S. was coyly titled "(a small show with a lot of space in it)." Self-consciousness and attention to size differential also prevailed in the work itself: a sculptural installation, five large color photographs and an audio piece.

Koch has staged architectural interventions internationally for more than a decade. These often feature passages and enclosures in which light is altered by colored filters or ornamental screens. Her photographs here didn't manipulate the actual space as much as they conjured extensions of it. Each image presents a view into the receding interior of a geometric container; each print seemingly transforms its plot on the wall into an elastic skin stretching inward.

In *Arquitetura de Autor* (*Church of Light*), 2010, we look into a boxlike chamber with two slits, one vertical and one horizontal, along its back wall, allowing light to seep through in the form of a white cross. In *Walldrawing* (2011), all five sides of a boxy interior are striped glossy plum and white, turning the space into a strangely seductive cell. Both pictures evoke charged architectural spaces, but nothing within them indicates scale or specific surface material. Koch pushes that illusionistic ambiguity further through the size and placement of two other photographs. *Riso Arborio* (2006) measures roughly 10 by 20 feet and positions us at the open end of a cardboard box on its side. A cellophane window on the box doubles as a skylight, bringing sunshine inside and a view to greenery above. Because of the immersive scale of the print, the image fills our field of vision and suggests an unlikely continuation of the gallery space

Lucia Koch:
Arquitetura de Autor
(*Church of Light*),
2010, inkjet print on
cotton paper, 29¾ by
26¼ inches; at
Christopher Grimes.



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916 Colorado Avenue Santa Monica, CA 90401 t: 310.587-3373 f: 310.587-3383 www.cgrimes.com

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into a warm brown niche, a shelter that effectively miniaturizes us by magnifying the familiar, modest container.

Oratorio (2013), a trapezoidal print of the receding interior of a rough concrete enclosure, was set in a corner of a small side gallery. The chamber's corners matched up with the seams between the wall and the floor so that the real and represented spaces converged, the photographed focal point serving as a slightly vertiginous, distended corner. Koch's photographs make engaging fictions of simple physical facts. They have a subtle sense of humor and reinvoke wonder at the deceptions we accept as part of the basic perceptual processing of visual, especially photographic information. The constructed photographs of James Casebere and Thomas Demand come to mind as cousins to Koch's gentle illusions, which also riff, in a domesticated idiom, on Minimalist cubes.

Koch's sculptural installation, a sinuous, 20-foot-long wall faced in white pegboard, offered less fuel for the imagination. Seen from a certain distance, its perforated surface induced a dizzying, moiré-like effect, indeterminate and unstable. But otherwise, *The Wrong Wall* (2013) posed only a simple opposition between fluid line and rigid material, bisecting the main gallery space but not animating it. The audio piece helped in that regard. Its seven-minute loop of traversing skateboarders sent arcs of audible motion through the gallery—another illusion, another sensory extension of the space.