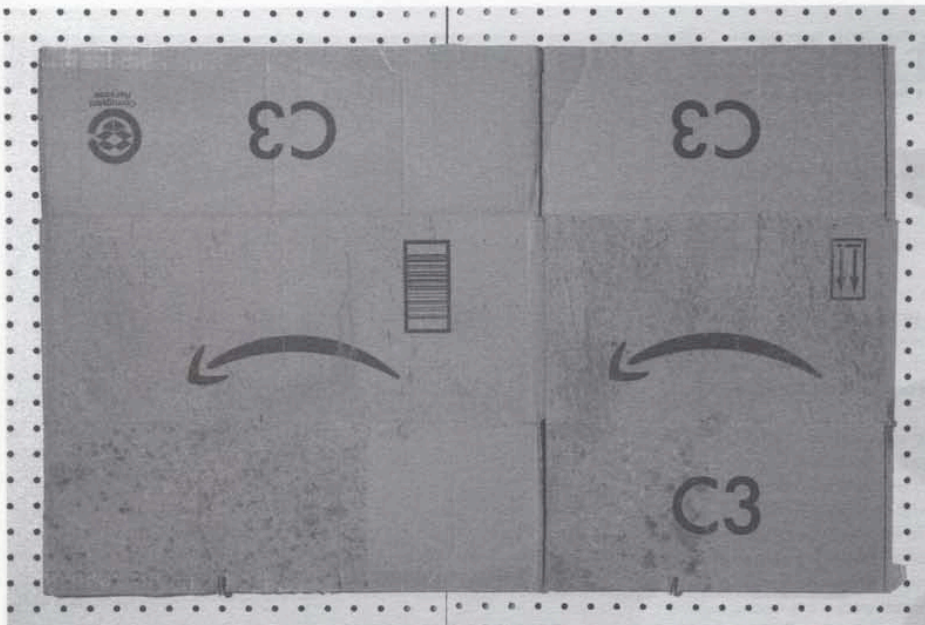


Dambrot, Shana Nys. "Amanda Ross-Ho: Nothin Fuckin Matters," *Art Review*, Issue 10, April 2007, p. 144.

# Art Review:



Double Tragedy, 2006, c-print, 62 x 91 cm. Courtesy Cherry and Martin, Los Angeles

## AMANDA ROSS-HO: NOTHIN FUCKIN MATTERS

CHERRY AND MARTIN, LOS ANGELES  
17 FEBRUARY - 31 MARCH

Los Angeles artist Amanda Ross-Ho combines a bare-bones DIY formal approach with a jaunty, high-minded conceptualism, employing sculpture, photography and installation to construct dimensional meditations on how humans occupy space. The exhibition includes several examples of her mixed-media 'leaning' pieces – very large rectangles of Sheetrock leaning against gallery walls, on which are hung various photographic and canvas-based images, so that the Sheetrock panels function both as sculptural elements and as display walls themselves. There's a great range to the imagery in these works, but not great profundity; a disinterested selection of fairly monochromatic, low-contrast fashion ads, diagrams and random snapshots, placing the attention back on the white Sheetrock. Further reinforcing that directive, Ross-Ho cuts sections out of the sheets, small ovals and squares no more than a foot in area, and those holes each reveal the presence of a hidden object behind the panel. Those things – prosperity fish, water bowls for pets, red bandanas, ritzy fabric swatches, have colour and symbolic meanings, and contain the most salient emotional engagement and narrative of the work's compositions.

Pieces like *White Goddess* (all works 2007), made from cut and painted canvas, and *Gran Abertura*, cut from Sheetrock, reverse the usual roles of those materials – of pigment and graphic surfaces – achieving a flat sculptural effect with shallow mass, like cut-out snowflakes or paper dolls. These languid monuments to pattern-based abstraction also make

use of negative space as an element of composition, like the mock walls themselves, but move from the architectural to the craft realm. The masterpiece of the exhibition is the site-specific installation *Mantle* in the project room. Built like a paper sculpture, the gallery wall is pierced and folded out at angles, the structure formed of planks pried out rather than built up, forming a legible scale representation of a fireplace with a mantel. The obligatory trophies on the shelf are the cut-out sections from the panel pieces in the main room – the ones removed to create the peekaboo reveals; and since every mantel needs art over it, a black-and-white ink-jet print of the planet from outer space, *Negative Earth*, hangs coolly above.

The scars left by this de-renovation reveal the guts of the building, exposed wood beams, installation, jagged edges and, in a surprise twist, a Polaroid that had fallen behind the wall during Ross-Ho's previous installation in the same space. No better expression of the exhibition's purpose could be engineered to express her theory about how humans create personal histories by papering their habitations, and how enduring and significant even the small attachments thus formed can be. Adrift in a sea of impersonal rooms and overlooked details, life is portrayed in this work as a discursive series of non sequiturs. Nothing matters because everything matters; and all gestures are equally impotent, equally moot – and equally pregnant with personal synchronicity, hidden meaning and unexpected private discoveries. *Shana Nys Dambrot*