

KENNETH BAKER *Galleries*

Odd spatial rifts carefully placed in Ratio 3 space

Berlin artist Miriam Böhm could not travel here to install her exhibition at Ratio 3, but gave explicit instructions for its hanging.

She wanted her color photographs placed singly and in pairs and trios — though they do not form diptychs or triptychs — with the bottom edges of their uniform black frames aligned around the room.

A sort of visual synecopation makes itself felt even before the visitor can notice the rhyming of Böhm's decisions with the content of her pictures.

"Inventory XIV" (2010), a representative example, shows three packaged objects — they might be framed artworks — two covered in brown paper, a third in

bubble wrap, leaning upright against a burlap-lined wall. It takes a moment to register the odd spatial rift in the picture: The wrapped objects actually sit within a separate photograph that forms part of Böhm's subject.

She apparently photographed the stack of forms against the fabric surface, made and mounted a print of that shot, and then photographed *it* from a slightly different angle against the same background.

She even gets the viewer's eye to entertain for a moment the possibility that the internal image is a mirror, not a second photograph: The pictured objects rest on bubble wrap and so does the picture of them, but a slight difference in scale, as with the burlap ground, gives the game away.

Böhm's images bring to mind the work of Imi Knoebel, whose installations often look more like storage areas than sculptural installations.

But powerful metaphors emerge from the fractures of image space that she contrives. Beyond pointing out a sort of infinite regress implicit in photographs of photographs, her pictures might serve as figures for self-consciousness: the inner displacement, the slight self-division, neces-



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sary to hear oneself think.

Böhm's body of work may open itself to dismissal as merely tricky, but it touches on something profound.

"Inventory XIV" (2010) chromogenic print, above, by Miriam Böhm is a photograph of a photograph.

Miriam Böhm: Inventory: Photographs. Through April 24. Ratio 3, 1447 Stevenson St., San Francisco. (415) 821-3371, www.ratio3.org.