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**Ignant**

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The Whimsical, Absurd Furniture Design of Sam Stewart

By Rosie Flanagan



In imagining a domestic space for his most recent exhibition ‘Cryptid’, New York-based designer Sam Stewart has created an immersive experience that is wonderfully mad and beautifully executed.

Stewart has transformed a space in New York’s Meatpacking district into an artisanal S&M flat — which you wouldn’t realize at first glance. Zoned for residential use, the space is required by the Department of Buildings to include a shower in the bathroom, a sleeping surface, and a working kitchen, amongst other prerequisites for safe habitation. Drawing upon these codes, Stewart has created a series of subversive objects that realize the personality of the imagined occupant of the space. In a recent interview about the show, Stewart cited prison reform, psych

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wards, cat castles, and exercise equipment as inspiration. On viewing his exhibition — which consists of everything from shrunken clay heads to exercise apparatus — the correlations between such strange and disparate sources and his work are immediately obvious. His furniture pieces are detailed and thoughtful, and in this show particularly, have more than a hint of darkness to them. Bed posts have been utilized as the legs of a weight machine, vinyl has been draped across chairs in mimicry of current fashion trends, and red has been used in abundance: a reference to passion and the complexities of power. Some might think S&M and traditional craft odd partners, and while their joint manifestation in this series certainly elicits strange feelings, they're more often delightful than irksome. You can visit 'Cryptid' until the 24th of March 2018 by appointment with Fort Gansevoort.



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