

Arts & Reviews

GALLERIES

The art of attraction

Images explore desire, politics, and advertising

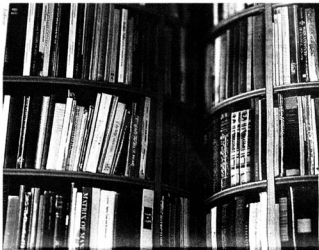
By Cate McQuaid
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

All about ads

Penelope Umbrico deconstructs ads in her witty photographs at Bernard Toale Gallery. She shoots images from Pottery Barn and Restoration Hardware catalogs, aiming to pin down these idealized home scenes. She has a funny series of photos, "Instances of Books as Pedestals," in which big coffee-table books are stacked, sometimes open, and hold tumblers of scotch and snifters of brandy.

Like the overstuffed pillows that litter the sofas in Umbrico's images, there's something swollen, cushy, and ultimately disturbing in the lifestyles these advertisements portray. As in the catalogs, Umbrico pulls us in with the lush pictures, but then she reminds us that it's all a construct by showing us the seams and edges of the catalog pages, or by blowing up the images to make them appear at lower resolution.

Tanja Alexia Hollander's gorgeous color photographs of Israel, also at Bernard Toale, are serene, endless landscapes. Hollander makes a practice of fuzzing out her



Penelope Umbrico's "Book Case #1 (2006)" from her "Private Residence" show.

horizontal line, giving her scenes a velvety, magical feeling. "Untitled 64408, Zohar, Israel" sets craggy, sandy rock in the foreground fading into a sandstorm. The photo across from it, "Untitled 64616, Ein Bokkek, Israel," is what you'd see if you stood on that rocky hill: a green sea, folded evenly with waves, drifting into a green sky.

Penelope Umbrico:
Private Residence
Tanja Alexia Hollander: Still

At: Bernard Toale Gallery, 450 Harrison Ave.,
through June 30. 617-482-2477,
bernardtoalegallery.com