

Dean Dempsey, *Ain't Dead Yet*, SFAQ, January 17, 2013

Ain't Dead Yet

Drew Conrad's first solo exhibition in New York City, *Ain't Dead Yet*, has been extended at Fitzroy Gallery probably because it's fucking impressive. His installations are really depressing but curious and eccentric in that Louis Nevelson sort of way, and unbalances boundaries between interior and exterior domestic spaces.



Installation view, Courtesy the artist and Fitzroy Gallery

The fragmented and seemingly burnt-up material has a decay and wear that remind me of hanging out under freight train bridges when I was a kid, smoking pot as I carved my name in the excess tar. They are ghostly monumental, like bowels of crashed ships, the debris left behind parades or the remains of a county fair that never reopened.



Installation view, Courtesy the artist and Fitzroy Gallery

The triangular flags feel like a carnival in the dark, the lampposts like bad (and painfully good) film noir and the blinking round bulbs like sin city gone bankrupt.



Installation view, Courtesy the artist and Fitzroy Gallery

Last night I rewatched Alfred Hitchcock's "Psycho" and noticed striking similarities with Drew's interior constructions with the haunted house on the hill in which the quite skeletal Mrs. Norma Bates posthumously torments her very pervy son. Drew's use of

hanging family portraits, taxidermy and candle light chandeliers all set the plot for the perfect nightmare, or a creepy uncle's den, and string together a narrative of memory and the collective promise of our future: doomsday.



Installation view, Courtesy the artist and Fitzroy Gallery

Drew Conrad quite successfully pulls together a show that creates an undeniable sense of time and place. *Ain't Dead Yet* is an installation on life support, and I think that's a good thing.

On view through February 22 at Fitzroy Gallery, 195 Chrystie Street in New York Fucking City.

Contributed by Dean Dempsey