

Bookatz, Karen. "Christine Hill's Volksboutique Armory Apothecary." Style.com, March 6, 2009, <http://www.style.com/stylefile/2009/03/christine-hills-volksboutique-armory-apothecary/>



Christine Hill's Volksboutique Armory Apothecary

March 6, 2009 3:01 pm



Among the arsenal of gallery stalls gracing this year's Armory Show, one booth from New York's Ronald Feldman Gallery stands out. Instead of abiding by the usual art fair protocol of exhibiting works, Berlin-based American artist Christine Hill has transformed the space into a functioning apothecary. Standing before an elaborate store installation—complete with furniture, a cash register from a newly defunct stationer, vintage apothecary items, and the artist's own watercolor posters—Hill mans the counter. Visitors are encouraged to chat up the artist, who implores them to tell her what's on their minds. The resulting disclosures are not actual ailments, but, as Hill likes to call them, "contemporary existential anxieties." For a predetermined fee, Hill will write up scripts and even prepare an apothecary package, both of which have been signed and sealed by the artist. Says Hill, "I'm really inspired by old-school mom-and-pop stores, especially the ones I see around Berlin. I love the idea of these stores being a part of your daily exchange." In addition to dispensing remedies, Hill will simultaneously assume the role of a model over the next three days, sporting a variety of frocks from Brooklyn-based designer Caroline Woolard. In another reversal, instead of taking money for her duds, Woolard swaps her garments for comparable goods and services (in this case, relief for whatever existential anxieties ail her, presumably). Hill's Volksboutique is a continuation of a nearly decade-long series of the artist's "organizational ventures," all of which blur the line between art and commerce. Past projects include an operable New York City tour guide service, a late-night talk show, and a secondhand clothing store.

—Karen Bookatz