

Martin Basher at Anat Ebgi

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Martin Basher, *A Guide to Benefits* (2015) (installation view)

As I entered Martin Basher's exhibit at Anat Ebgi, I had the feeling that I had been in this apartment before. The black velveteen pillows, glass and fluorescent surfaces, the scent of Drakkar Noir and other oils of murky purpose—I know this man. Probably from online.

The women's legs interwoven with gradient bands in a painting behind me suggest I'm not his type. The legs are a hair away from the sleekness of advertising, the barest suggestion of a varicose vein or two just under the surface. Basher's realistic flesh adds only the slightest depth to the otherwise flat texture of his subject: a certain kind of lifestyle based around seduction and the false appearance of effort.

Basher's installation ringed by a centrifuge of wall art is both sleek and seedy, desirous and joyless. The sculptural pieces consist of poor joinery, mid-shelf liquor, spotless free weights and kitschy set dressings. The commercial materials (extruded aluminum, display case glass) and domestic accents smear the line between each. A tumbler glass half full of ice and brown booze recurs as a well painted motif, carrying an air of celebration even as it appears on canvas marred by footprints, spill stains, and strips of cardboard. Basher's effluvia of repurposed and recreated consumerism is the final red flag in a date gone horribly wrong.