

SEANKELLY

Halle, Howard. "James Casebere, 'Selected Works, 1995-2005,'" *Time Out New York*, November 2013.



James Casebere, "Selected Works, 1995- 2005"



James Casebere, Green Staircase #1, 2002

Sean Kelly Gallery is leading this month with Callum Innes's seductively reductive abstractions. But while his efforts have their pleasures, I was drawn more to the downstairs space's roundup of James Casebere's photos of prison cells and inundated manses.

Timing counts when experiencing art, and Sandy's recent one-year anniversary has given Casebere's images of flooded neoclassical-style hallways extra resonance. They are a reminder that the best artworks can relate to current events even while they transcend history.

Casebere was part of the '70s CalArts class that included Mike Kelley and Tony Oursler. Like them, he absorbed the low-cultural DNA of the school Walt Disney founded to train animators, while taking a more oblique approach than '60s Pop Art. He borrowed from Hollywood special effects, building and lighting tabletop sets to create worlds that appeared real and yet were obviously not.

The brooding tone of much of his output, however, suggested that he

thought of these trips into the uncanny valley as a kind of trap or prison. This view, that the pervasive saturation of media in modern society necessarily subjugated truth, was not unusual among Casebere's generation.

He brought a certain poetry to the idea, however, most notably in the interiors here resembling dungeons. Likewise, his scenes of high water evoke a culture drowning in its own illusions. But post-Sandy, they are also an admonition that nature's power will always trump human artifice.

—Howard Halle



James Casebere, Monticello #3, 2001



James Casebere, Tunnels, 1995



James Casebere, Abadia (from Lower Left), 2005



James Casebere, Arcade, 1995



James Casebere, Yellow Hallway #2, 2001



James Casebere, Two Bunk Cell, 1998



James Casebere, Flooded Hallway, 1998

Photo Credit: ©James Casebere