

SEAN KELLY

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The Artist Creating Barragán's Bright Buildings in Miniature



Vestibule, 2016© James Casebere, Courtesy Sean Kelly, New York

Miniature prison cells, empty suburban homes, looming archways, vacant corridors: New York-based artist James Casebere has long been preoccupied with abandoned spaces, which he recreates in miniature on a table-top and then photographs for posterity in a neat inversion of the architectural protest. Where previously he has sought to evoke angst and isolation with these images, however, his new series takes a different direction. *Emotional Architecture*, a new collection of works on display at New York's Sean Kelly Gallery, draws again on feelings of confinement, but this time to produce spaces which allow their viewer to get lost in their own thoughts. This is a body of work about escapism and serenity, and it's defiantly optimistic.

The series is based, crucially, on the work of Mexican architect Luis Barragán who, "frustrated by the cold functionalism of Modernism, embraced space, colour and light to create buildings that engendered warmth," Sean Kelly Gallery explains. The capacity of these buildings to counteract contemporary frustration served as a source of inspiration for Casebere. Faithful to his method of 'constructed photography,' he recreated parts of Barragán's large-scale buildings by constructing incredibly precise models. But instead of turning those miniature constructions into life-size architectural masterpieces – as an architect would usually do – he set about photographing them. The resulting miniature models are made out of everyday materials and are pared down to their essential elements, devoid of any furniture or living beings, to bring their architectural beauty and precision to the fore.

Casebere's intention was not only to celebrate the beauty of Barragán's buildings; most importantly, he sought to use the architect's unique sense for colour and dramatic light to create a new narrative for his photographs.

The resulting images invite the viewer to dive into a meditative space. It is difficult not to lose oneself in the composition of bright colours, warm light, and simplicity of design – all elements which work harmoniously together to create a kind of emotional respite. What better eye candy for a dreary Monday morning?



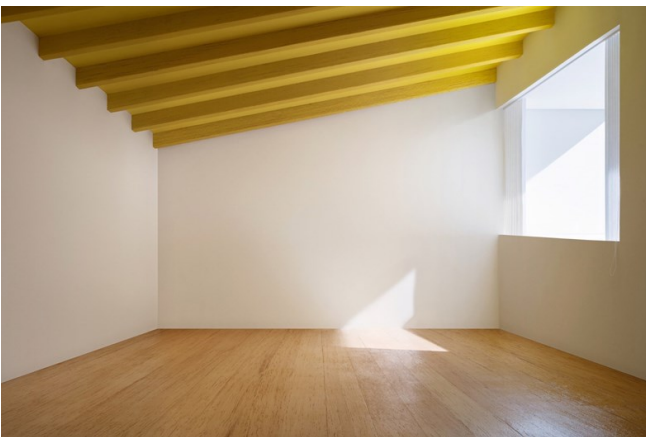
Yellow Overhang with Patio, Casa Galvez, 2016 © James Casebere, Courtesy Sean Kelly, New York



Reception Room, Casa Galvez, 2017 © James Casebere, Courtesy Sean Kelly, New York



Courtyard with Orange Wall, Casa Barragán, 2017© James Casebere, Courtesy Sean Kelly, New York



Empty Studio, Casa Barragán, 2017© James Casebere, Courtesy Sean Kelly, New York



Library, Casa Barrágan, 2017© James Casebere, Courtesy Sean Kelly, New York

Emotional Architecture by James Casebere is on display until March 11 2017 at Sean Kelly Gallery, New York.