



Claes Oldenburg - Clip 9

“This room had a history” Showing the Bedroom in New York and Ottawa

But of course, Janis, at that time, had a gallery that was very much like an apartment. It had several small rooms, and I think he believed that this was conducive to collectors buying work, because they could see it at a kind of indoor scale that would fit their apartments. And he had reserved this one room which meant a great deal to me because it was the room where Duchamp had shown, and deKooning had shown his *Women* (?) for the first time. This room had a history, and it had a door on the side which was marked “private” – this was the door to Sidney’s office, and this was made a part of the Bedroom Ensemble. The Bedroom Ensemble was not just a construction from Los Angeles, it was a construction from Los Angeles placed into a New York context. So that the colours of the walls came from Sidney Janis and the door marked “private” was reconstructed each time the Bedroom was shown – and you had the feeling that in there was Sidney, working on some new Mondrian deal. So many wonderful shows had been in this room, that it was nice to come in there, especially with the Pollock yardage, you know, because Sidney had, of course, once been the person who showed all these Abstract Expressionists, and then he shifted his interest to Pop Art, they all left the gallery.

Those venetian blinds were so important. No matter what, these venetian blinds were always there, and then he consented to build a little wall there which made the wall look a little larger before the venetian blinds. But the air conditioner was always there and the venetian blinds were there until the air conditioner was reproduced as well as the venetian blinds. And even the pipe that runs through there is always reproduced, and the moulding which becomes more and more difficult to match because it is not available anymore. And even the outlet plugs are there.

In the case of the Ottawa installation, even the wall as you look in is reconstructed, which is not done in, say, the Frankfurt installation. The Frankfurt installation and subsequent museum installations opened the whole space, took away the wall, but the original idea was to reproduce that wall, too, so that you could not look into the bedroom, except through a fairly limited aperture.

