

ARTFORUM

Keith Wilson

SOFA

301 East 33rd Street #7

October 31–December 17

In this exhibition, Keith Wilson puts himself in dialogue with Ed Ruscha's early photographs of banal architecture. After touring the Hyde Park neighborhood of Austin, Texas, on foot, Wilson produced eighteen straightforward pictures of apartments in the area, works that are largely displayed in pairs here—one long shot of each Hyde Park apartment complex, and one perfectly centered shot of the complex's logo in situ on the building. The accompanying artist's book couples the images in the same way, creating a sequential part-whole relationship between graphic text (the logos) and architectural form and pattern (the buildings themselves). Eschewing the coolness that sometimes set apart Ruscha's early work, however, Wilson focuses on the buildings' obvious, often failed, and somehow endearing middle-class touches. Pastel-painted facades evidence halfhearted renovations. Letters in kitschy fonts cling to aging clapboard and stucco sidings. All these irregularities help to syncopate Wilson's formula, and the works feel sincere despite their art-historical freight.

The fact that this gallery is located inside an actual Hyde Park apartment reinforces this sense of reverence. One close-up, *The Jacksonian*, 2009, hangs above a green vintage couch. The work's titular and compositional focus is the complex's name, and the graphic qualities of the font eclipse the viewer's cynicism about the name itself (a nod to the Jacksonian era in American democracy; only a few viewers will know that the Jacksonian is also the name of a Baptist church on the same Austin street as the apartment). One can choose whether to dismiss this combination of aged, repaired, revered, and revisited material, or to enjoy the delights of Wilson's ad hoc tourism.

— Katie Anania



View of "Hyde Park Apartments," 2010.