Domestic Bliss @ Gallery of Modern Art – Review – The Skinny

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**Domestic Bliss @ Gallery of Modern Art**

Gallery of Modern Art deconstructs home life in Domestic Bliss, a huge group show from the Glasgow public collections

★★★★

Review by Adam Benmakhlouf | 13 May 2019

For Domestic Bliss, the Gallery of Modern Art furnishes its top floor gallery full of works from Glasgow’s renowned civic art collection that touch on homelife and domesticity.

In a wide format photograph from Nick Waplington across the back wall, a recent mother tilts the new baby’s head as it vomits, with the frame of the photography taking in the entirety of the small living room’s details, as a frank and exceptional insight into private family life.

There are also drawings of Jane Topping’s own studio wall with fragments of research on the playwright Carson McCullers, particularly a period when McCullers left her husband to live in a queer commune of sorts in the 40s. They show sketches of intimate photos along with quotidian itemised lists ('cigarettes, dirty plate, war news…') and poetic annotations or quotations: 'choice', 'Plus, I crave'.

Like the photo of Jacqueline Donachie’s own hectic studio wall, there’s an analogy subtly drawn between the artist’s desk and the build-up of things and papers familiar from well-used coffee tables or fridge doors, and the fortuitous connections and gatherings that might take place there.

Documentary photography takes on a poignant bent in the work of Jane Evelyn Wood, who provides a disarmingly intimate record of Jean Louis, a French man dying of Aids, in his final months. The photos of him passionately kissing, then shaving in the mirror are warm, close-up, inviting and vulnerable.

As well as moments of tenderness, there are the sumptuous perfume bottles designed by Niki de Sant Phalle, and the eccentrically colourful and elegantly formed vases and glasses of Ettore Sottsass.

Entering and exiting, there’s what sounds like the noise of a basin of dishes in water, or the rhythmic rumble of a washing machine. It’s Ilana Halperin’s recording of melting ice crystals in an Icelandic lagoon. At once, the familiar everyday humdrum is made sparkling, and connected global rhythms and radical shifts.