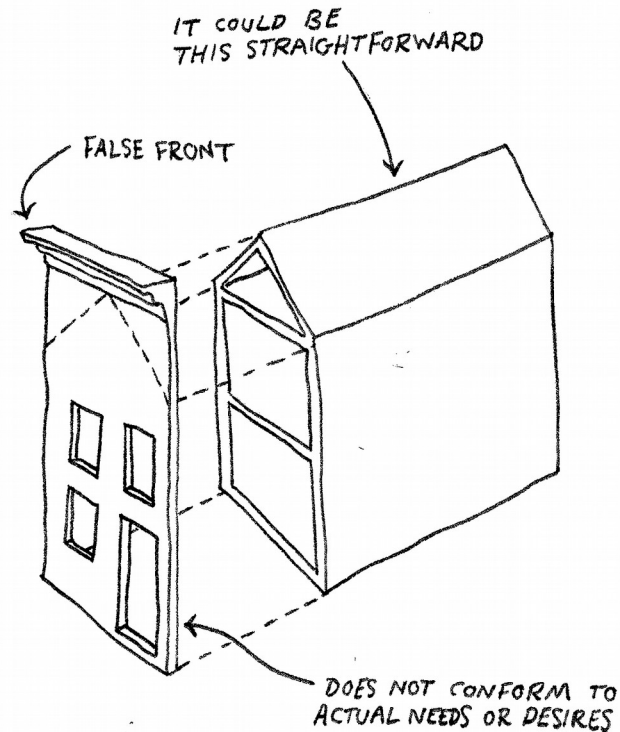


Alicia Puglionesi

AMERICAN SHELTER / FALSE FRONTS

A series of drawings and text pieces adapted from Lester Walker's 1981 encyclopedia of American houses. This work deals with the time scale of real estate in relation to that of human lives, asking whether houses hold our stories or if we merely clutter up their ongoing structural dramas.



Lester Walker's typology of American homes embodies one of the great tenets of the American dream: that only real estate is true and lasting. Human figures, clad in abstracted period costume, are sometimes present in his diagrams, but they indicate scale rather than use or habitation. In adapting his striking images of exploded buildings, I both reproduce the idealized notion of a house as a meaningful, permanent structure and comment upon the transience of residential development. The economic drive to build new houses, the historical drive to preserve old ones, and the collapse of the housing market and subsequent wave of foreclosures have all converged over the past decade to destabilize our perceptions of what a house means. Looking at vacant blocks in Baltimore, Las Vegas, or Modesto, we might ask: do people haunt houses, or do houses haunt people?

My interventions of text and gesture suggest voices for the houses themselves, and for the human figures, dwarfed by the fetish object of the house and its historical legacy. This project consists of a series of ten 5" x 7" line drawings accompanied by hand-lettered text.