

New York's Next Instagram Obsession Is This Bodega Made of Felt at The Standard

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"We had a girl come in here this morning with a real red-eye hangover asking for Tylenol," Lucy Sparrow said with a laugh yesterday as she wore a felt apron and cap. "We don't have the real thing, but I showed her ours. She didn't find it as funny as we did." The 30-year-old London-based artist known for her felt sculptures was on hand to debut *8 Till Late*, an installation 9 months in the making and produced in conjunction with the adjacent Standard, High Line hotel. In its first iteration, Sparrow debuted a similar storefront in 2014 located in East London entitled *The Cornershop*, and after much acclaim, she sought to produce it again across the pond. Now, with over \$50,000 in backing from her loyal fans on Kickstarter, *8 Till Late* has finally come to pass.

The concept, located just around the corner from the bustling Standard Biergarten, is a convenience store with a twist. Inside, shoppers will find all of the usual sundries stocked at your local bodega like pre-packaged deli meats, Ben & Jerry's pints, and yes, even Tylenol, except they're all rendered in felt. Entirely hand-sewn by Sparrow, the 9,000 items were shipped from the United Kingdom over the course of four commercial flights, and include large-scale appliances like a cash wrap and a soda fridge.

Throughout the display are hidden messages. Some of the items—from fruits and vegetables to rotisserie hot dogs—have a smiling face, used as a way to show that these were once alive before they landed in-store. In another room, a felted metallic shopping cart filled to the hilt with a seemingly random assortment of items like frozen prawns and Brillo pads, acts as a centerpiece. Entitled *Shoplifting*, it showcases the items most often stolen from supermarkets in the United Kingdom. The 1 of 1 work can be yours for \$18,500.

As a whole, *8 Till Late* feeds into the zeitgeist of experiential—or perhaps Instagrammable—artworks. Similar examples in recent years include Daniel Arsham's cave lined with thousands of purple plaster basketballs in his "*Circa 2345*" solo exhibition, and **Christopher Chiappa's** 7,000 fried eggs placed throughout the Kate Werble Gallery. Both may have required a dedication to replicating a single process, but remained untouchable thanks to their fragility. Sparrow is taking her immersive experience one step further. *Shoplifting* notwithstanding, the plush artworks for sale start as low as \$5, making them easily plucked from the shop's shelves and accessible to the masses.