





The Secret Life of Fifi: the Sarasota Circus Dog

The Secret Life of Fifi: the Sarasota Circus Dog is an expression of an obsession with collecting that overtakes us to some degree. Some collect for sport, others for hobby and still others as a profession. In all of us, there is the secret will – that – if left alone to answer to no one – would begin to transform our lives – both physically and mentally. This doghouse is an investigation of that moment when you know that you have finally assembled the pieces of your obsession; that reality has merged with fantasy and the collection has now emerged as an object unto itself.

The Secret Life of Fifi: the Sarasota Circus Dog is rooted in a strong belief that the mundane – when reconsidered – should be used and reused in new ways. Our aim is to experiment with things that we typically discard – both in actuality and/or psychologically. We intend to advance recycling and reusing, but also recognize that history (as a collection in itself) – is a resource that can be mined for innovative ideas and reinvented to invigorate our spatial relationships of today.

As a design tool, a collection emerges in The Secret Life of Fifi: the Sarasota Circus Dog. Architecturally, the doghouse shares a relationship with the Sarasota School Architects and their innovative use of plywood in their work. John Ringling, who employed Ralph Twitchell to design and build his home, is undoubtedly a key figure in the story of the Sarasota School Architects and, being responsible for luring Paul Rudolph to Florida to work on his project, plays a lead role in the life of Fifi. This house is the culmination of the fantastic merging with the reality of one particular dog – and her collection.