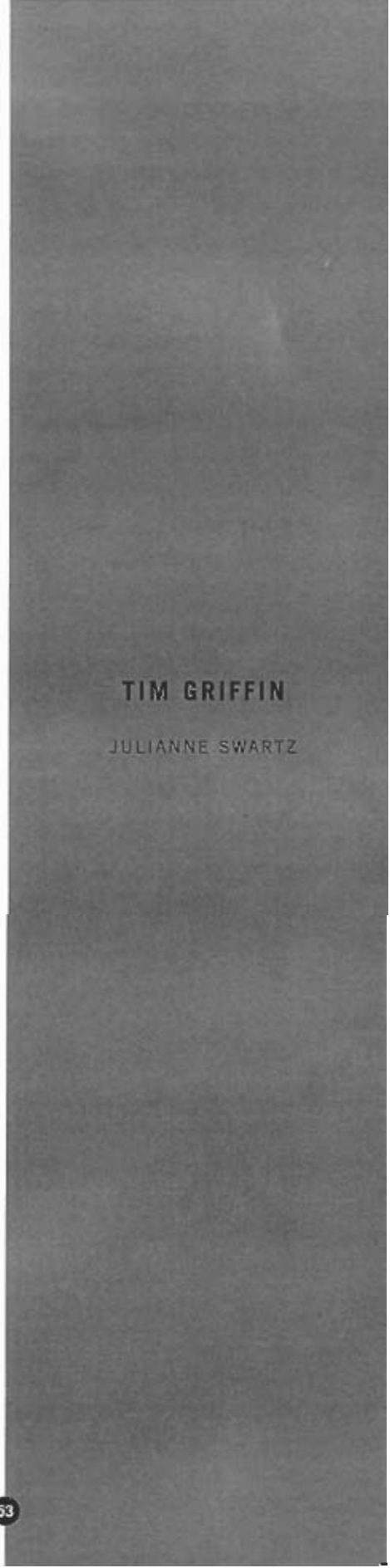
The importance of the visible world seems to erode. Objects are still there, all around us and before our eyes, but they are completely woven into an unseen fabric that binds everything: We hear catchphrases about networks and systems providing innumerable global links that render previous conceptions of near and far irrelevant, and we imagine a wireless age. Thin air itself now contains unseen spectra of wavelengths that are saturated with flows of information, which download into Palm Pilots and cell phones with the prescience of modern-day oracles. Power resides in what you can't see or touch. Computers lose cooling units, becoming ever smaller, and distill into abstract cubes; designers now encase them in translucent shells—creating objects that apparently rest on the very border of the sensual.

Julianne Swartz peels away the envelope of the unseen. But instead of adopting sleek, designed forms that threaten to vanish or dematerialize, her sculptures offer the sparest compositional threads. Dark fiber-optic cables run across the floor or dangle over open areas like partially constructed spiderwebs, susceptible to the subtlest air currents created by an audience's passage through a room. Lights might hang by elastic strings among the cables, shining into these conduits that reach delicately through space; their bright emanations emerge, amazingly, on the other end as intimate and elastic, oscillating, expanding and contracting, almost organic projections upon empty walls. (With an eye to an industrial age, you might call this a Rube Goldberg contraption of nothingness, or a year-zero, millennial Eva Hesse.) Light, like information, becomes a material to direct, manipulate, and guide. And, in fact, the quality of light *is* transformed during its passage, as the wires' mirrored interiors produce a strangely intense and diffuse optical texture, a netherworld's visuality—all in order to bring the intangible to the edge of materiality.

As when milky calcium is injected into the bloodstream to make the circulatory passages visible in X-rays, so Swartz's sculptures inject light into sculpture in order to materialize the idea of transmission. "Transmission" is often passed off as an arid term. Technology is supposed to be a dry territory. It's quite the opposite for Swartz.

She recalls her youth in Arizona, where an unabated sun baked open terrain. Life existed only where there was water; and water existed only where irrigation systems carried it from well-supplied areas to depleted ones. The visual signs of life depended on networks buried deep in the earth, hidden from light that fell in merciless abundance across everything—in other words, on connections that were impossible to view. With Pynchonesque lyricism, the tangible only offered evidence of the intangible; the unseen was inextricably embedded in the seen. And today she inverts the equation, burying (and pipelining) light to once again make it into a metaphor of life.

In fact, ask her about the Internet, and Swartz might playfully bring up the communications theoretician George Gilder, whose humanist approach to technology crystallizes in a passage from *Life after Television*. Gilder envisioned "a crystalline web of glass and light, a computer in every



home attached to a global fiber network." And this network offered a new sense of the spiritual, or mediated, world filtering into our own. This is how you might also think of Swartz's cameraless videos, which she calls "interior projections": works that provide glimpses of a kind of light that seems buried within light, or an example of light's malleable substance and material weight, when it comes to its effect on the appearance of things. In these pieces, Swartz arrays small sections of plumbing pipe dangling on strings before a window; their shafts are roughly eye-size and contain convex lenses. At first, the exterior scene—whether of apartment-building rooftops or sea-level landscape—will seem concrete and static, the very stuff of reality. But Swartz's camera-obscura-style reflections within each pipe section shimmer with unreality, and soon destabilize everything: Walking before the window, one catches split-second glimpses of its pocketed, slightly washed, upside-down images of the concrete world. The pipes are like hovering peepholes, creating delicate perforations in the field of vision; they seem to be portals from real to mediated worlds, where the open-air differences in qualities of light create an invisible wall that is simultaneously traversed. If Swartz takes transmission as her subject, then her greatest success occurs when she blurs the material and the immaterial—and makes viewers feel they are moving freely between these realms, seemingly without moving at all.

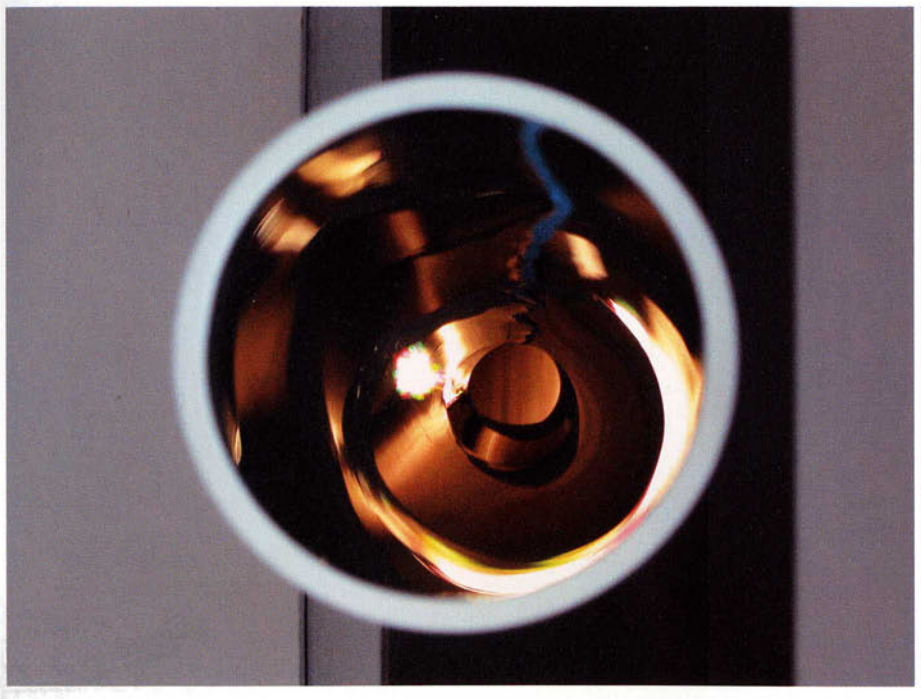
whitney biennial 2004

Julianne Swartz
Born 1967, Phoenix, AZ
Lives in New York, NY

Julianne Swartz creates site-specific sculptural interventions in typically underutilized architectural spaces. Her installations integrate elements such as sound, light, fans, optical devices, and linear strands that unify the disparate components of a particular site. Swartz adeptly transforms everyday space into something extraordinary and unexpected, turning stable structures into ethereal, ambiguous environments. Infusing vitality into mundane objects, Swartz thrives on the fulcrum between the fragile and the structurally sound, between the poetic and the prosaic. She achieves this balance through an economy of select materials and processes.

In *Line Drawing* (2003), a site-specific installation at Artists Space in New York, Swartz bored small, circular holes in the wall of the gallery—an act that calls to mind the work of Gordon Matta-Clark, one of the first artists to deconstruct an architectural structure. By inserting lenses, mirrors, and PVC pipes into these holes, Swartz produced provocative portals that distorted the spaces visible on the other side of the wall. A continuous blue line threaded through the gallery and unseen spaces behind the walls focused the viewer's sight on distant, out-of-reach places while linking the isolated areas of the gallery. As the blue line continued through hallways, bathrooms, offices, and exhibition galleries, it merged public and private spaces, rendering transient, illusory visions within commonplace reality.

For the 2004 Biennial, Swartz takes as her site the Whitney's winding, six-story stairwell. Swartz anchors her project in a remote crawl space (previously known only to the museum's engineers) located on the landing between the third and fourth floors of the museum. The hidden space is visually excavated with brilliant light, while speakers inside emit a cacophony of voices humming "Somewhere over the Rainbow," that familiar utopian song of longing and transcendence. The discordant sounds emanating from the piping heighten the evanescent quality Swartz manages to elicit from a site that is inextricably grounded in the real. As visitors descend and ascend five flights of stairs, they encounter different voices at varying volumes, carried through strategically placed tubes that cascade down through the stairwell from the crawl space. Swartz visually and sonically transforms the Whitney's stairwell through her imaginative exploration and beckons the viewer to an isolated, forgotten area of the building's structure. AD



Corridor Transfer #3, 2002. Site-specific installation at the Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York. PVC pipe, mylar, mirror, lenses, pinwheel, fan, and light, dimensions variable. Courtesy Christinerose/Josee Bienvenu Gallery, New York

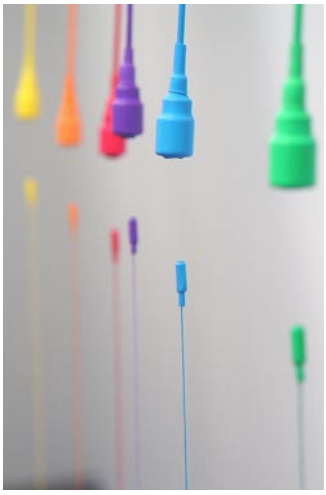
Time Out New York
October 14–21, 2004
Issue 472

Julianne Swartz,
"Speculative Mechanics
***persistent optimism"**
Josee Bienvenu Gallery, through Oct 23 (see Chelsea).

Julianne Swartz's techie bricolage has had so much museum exposure recently that it's hard to believe this is her first solo show. Six months ago, she strung a tangle of cables up the stairwell at the Whitney Biennial and piped in "Over the Rainbow"; viewers were left to debate whether the museum was Kansas, Oz or both. In July, under the aegis of the New Museum, she built a periscope onto the Bowery's Sunshine Hotel, enabling residents to use the tube to visit with passersby.

The eight freestanding pieces in "Speculative Mechanics *persistent optimism" include several smaller periscopes, one of which offers the viewer a reflection of his or her own face. Another (balding gentlemen, beware) peers down at the top of the viewer's head. The title's "optimism" is most immediately visible in a rainbow-colored line of plugs and sockets, construcuted from magnets and thread, hovering tantalizingly close to one another along the wall. The "mechanics" make themselves noisily known in a tower of raw wood and clock parts, ticking and tocking away frantically, hands whirling and wobbling, without telling the time.

If the artist's larger, site-specific installations detect the anxieties of a place and broadcast them, these more contained pieces communicate the concerns of the drawing room, taking their subjects-self, time and the yearning for connection-very literally. Some of these works may endure on their own, but others are more effective as portraits of the artist noodling around in the studio, assembling the machinery for her next public project. With any lock, Swartz will get to put that clock in Grand Central, where its ticking will really resonate.*-Sophie Fels*



Julianne Swartz, detail of *Spectrum*, 2004.

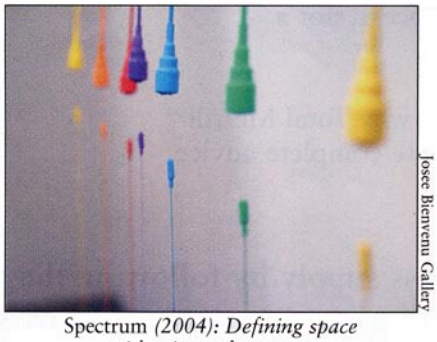
ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT EVERYTHING THAT MATTERS
THE WEEK
OCTOBER 22, 2004 | THE BEST OF THE U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA | VOLUME 4 • ISSUE 179

Where to buy ...

A selected exhibition in a private gallery

Julianne Swartz, Speculative mechanics* persistent optimism

at Josee Bienvenu Gallery, New York



Josee Bienvenu Gallery

Spectrum *(2004): Defining space with wire and magnets*

Brooklyn-based artist Julianne Swartz commandeered the stairway of the Whitney Museum for the biennial there last spring. But she seized space with her typical tact and aplomb, installing a thicket of clear pipes that wound their way up four stories. Whispers seemed to seep out at the openings. Turns out, she had piped in layered voices singing "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" from the top floor. Swartz makes plumbing demure and alluring. But her work isn't just another pretty assemblage. Her *Un-time Structure* is an elaborate mobile made of Plexiglas, lenses, clock motors, wood, tiny microphones, and speakers. Sound filters through the instruments like echoing crickets. Light pings around inside the PVC tubes of another work, *Hybrid Periscopes*. Swartz's whimsical machines twist sound, space, even time, slowing things down to keep them fresh. Prices range from $4,000 to $22,000.

529 W. 20th St., (212) 206-0297; Joseebienvenugallery.com

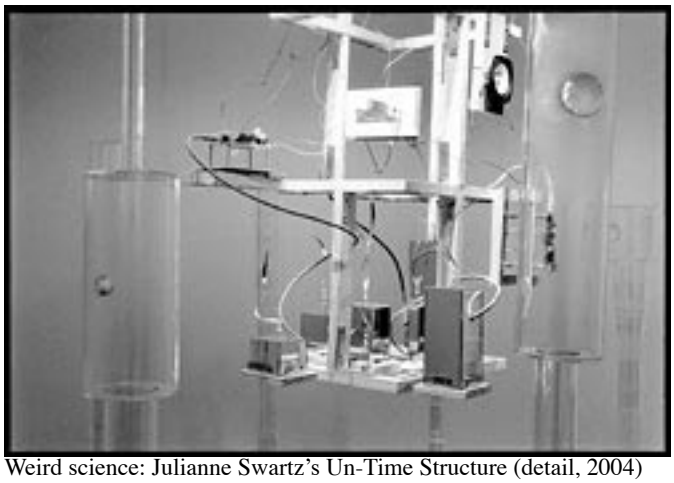
the village VOICE

October 1, 2004

Assessing the new season: Highs, lows, kitsch, shtick, and one flamboyant failure

Critical Call

by Jerry Saltz



Weird science: Julianne Swartz's Un-Time Structure (detail, 2004) (photo: Robin Holland)

New York's new art season got off to a rousing start a few weeks ago when more than 80 exhibitions opened within 10 days. I was raring to go, but ended up more disappointed than not. Last month, I wrote that the New York art world had turned into a "giant sponge"—it sucks things up, including, it turns out, energy. Good exhibitions and bad are absorbed and rendered more or less equal. Almost everyone in the art world has passionate opinions—they like this or loathe that—yet these peppery tête-à-têtes often go wishy-washy in print. Art criticism ought to be at least as lively as the conversations you have in galleries, at parties, or on the phone. Consequently, think of this as an e-mail, hopefully not too superficial or snarky, or a message on your answering machine from a touchy friend who's been to galleries and wants to vent.

On an up note, there's Julianne Swartz, 37 and still a newcomer, who impressed at the New Museum and the Whitney Biennial last season. At Josee Bienvenu, she employs her already signature plastic tubing, PVC piping, and mirrors to let you see the back of your head (I didn't know my hair was so thin on top) and behind doors. The result is a cross between a watchmaker's workshop, a science lab, and a hospital. Swartz excels at excavating interior space. Her ethereal seeing machines connect to Sarah Sze a bit too much, but like Sze, Swartz has a magical way of making the sensed world visible. Her art is charmed and pixilated, but is already becoming routine. She's got skill, vision, and smarts. All she has to do is not pull similar rabbits out of slightly different hats.

THE NEW YORKER

OCTOBER 25, 2004

GALLERIES–CHELSEA

JULIANNE SWARTZ

Swartz's constructions, made of PVC pipe, Mylar, magnets, fiber-optic cable, and wee amplifiers, wrap around the gallery, inviting the viewer to peer into mirrored periscope openings or listen for the music in a motorized metronome. The sculptures are deliberately fragile, even precious, but they effect some genuinely surprising perceptual displacements, and the silvery, transparent materials have a whizbang chic. Through Oct. 23. (Bienvenu, 529 W. 20th St. 212-206-0297.)

the village VOICE

VOICE CHOICES OCTOBER 20–26, 2004

Reviews by KIM LEVIN unless otherwise noted

Pick *Voice* Pick

GALLERIES

Pick JULIANNE SWARTZ

Josee Bienvenu, 529 W 20th, 212.206.0297

Her stairwell sound installation in the last Whitney Biennial was memorable. The optical devices and systems of transparent tubing in "Speculative Mechanics* Persistent Optimism" are fine too. If only it were all one piece instead of eight. Through 10/23.

The New York Times

Exhibit Offers a Peek Inside the Lives of Outsiders

Suzanne DeChillo/The New York Times

A tube designed by Julianne Swartz, above, allows people on the sidewalk to see and converse with residents inside the Sunshine Hotel.

By COLIN MOYNIHAN
August 1, 2004

At the Sunshine Hotel, a Bowery flophouse that opened in the early 1920's when a night's shelter cost pennies, resistance to change is practically an article of faith.

Only a few dozen men stay at the hotel, between Prince and Stanton Streets, down from about 200 just 10 years ago, when the nightly rate rose to its current level of $10. But from year to year - or even decade to decade - much else remains the same.

For instance, its sign, which consists of bright yellow letters that suit the hotel's name, was hung above the front door in the 1980's, and replaced a similar sign put up a generation earlier. The residential rooms on the second and third floors are still about 4 feet by 6 feet and feature chicken-wire ceilings, just as they have for decades. The halls, layered with countless coats of paint and redolent of tobacco, have a dusty, timeless feel. And some men who live along those halls still occasionally take a drink, just like thousands of their predecessors.

So, last month, when a 29-foot section of bright yellow PVC pipe appeared at the front of the building, snaking from a spot next to the front door and into a corner of the second floor lobby, it was cause for plenty of comment.

"Nobody really knew what it was at first," said Earl Simpson, 67, a resident. "They thought it was some kind of weird periscope."

They were right, sort of. The tube, which was commissioned by The New Museum of Contemporary Art as part of an outdoor exhibition on and near the Bowery, allows people on which people who are far apart can have an intimate conversation," said Julianne Swartz, 37, from Williamsburg, the artist who designed and built the tube, which allows people who might otherwise never speak, to communicate.

Anton Bari, a member of the family that has owned the hotel and the restaurant supply store on the ground floor of the building for 20 years, said at first he was leery of the tube idea. but was persuaded by Ms. Swartz and staff members at the museum.

"It's just a neighborly thing to do," he said, explaining why he agreed to the project. "They're dynamite people."

While some in the hotel pay little attention to the tube, others say they have grown fond of it. One resident, Nelson Castro, has been entrusted with the job of capping and uncapping both ends of the installation at night and in the mornings.

Last Thursday afternoon, some residents lingered in the Sunshine's lobby, where Michael Horan, 53, was using the tube to talk to Kenny Everton, 47, who had recently moved out of the hotel. Downstairs, Mr. Everton said that the tube had provided a new experience for some hotel residents, a few of whom rarely leave the premises.

"It lifts their spirits a little bit," he said. "It gives them a chance to interact with the community." A short while later, Loren Schwerd, 33, a sculptor and an art professor from South Carolina, wandered up the Bowery, then paused at the tube's mouth. She spoke a greeting, then listened to the response. Afterward she deconstructed her experience.

"It flip flops the roles and expectations," she said. "I'm looking into their space, but I'm the one who's blushing."

Back upstairs, Bruce Davis, 56, was minding his own business when a young reedy voice came piping through the tube and the lobby, asking, "Anybody up there?" Mr. Davis quickly approached the tube and answered affirmatively.

"Hey, how you doing?" Mr. Davis called. "It sounds like we're right next to each other on the street." After a brief exchange of pleasantries, he said goodbye and returned to his seat.

"I won't get up for just any Tom, Dick or Harry who yells something up," he said. "But when it's a kid I try to answer.

THE NEW YORKER

JULY 12 & 19, 2004

Julianne Swartz's installation at the Sunshine Hotel, in the New Museum's "Counter Culture." Opens July 10 (see Art).

NEW MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART 235 Bowery (212-219-1222)—New neighbors often bring each other casseroles to break the ice; the New Museum, which will be moving into its new building, at Prince and Bowery, in 2006, is bringing "Counter Culture," a collection of site-specific pieces that incorporate businesses near the museum's new home. Julianne Swartz, for instance, is building a network of pipes rigged with mirrors from the Sunshine Hotel down to Bari Restaurant Supply, which will allow people on the different levels to catch visual and aural glimpses of each other. Other artists include Jean Shin, Flux Factory, and Raul Vincent Enriquez, who is making a self-guided audio walking tour of the whole thing. Opens July 10. (For information and to download the walking tour, go to www.newmuseum.org.)

Time Out New York
August 5–12, 2004
Issue 462

ART

Treasure hunt

To get a sneak peek at the New Museum's new digs you'll need a map and sensible shoes

By **Linda Yablonsky**

Shake hands with the Bowery. It is there, at number 235 (near Prince Street), that the New Museum of Contemporary Art will soon break ground on its new home, slated to open in spring 2006. The model by Tokyo-based architects Sejima+Nishizawa/SANAA resembles a tall, uneven stack of six white shoeboxes. The design bears little relation to the 19th-century structures the museum will claim as neighbors, and it is certain to provoke strong feelings from locals and visitors alike. In September, the longtime Soho institution will temporarily relocate to Chelsea. But at the moment the museum is open to the air as well as the public in the form of a walking tour intended to introduce contemporary-art aficionados to the Bowery and the neighborhood to the incoming wave of art.

Marion Wilson, installation view of *This Store Too*, 2004.

The project's focus on subversion and fair-trade accounts for its title, "Counter *Culture*." What is actually on display, aside from the area itself, are five installations hidden in plain sight at cooperating businesses near the museum's future location, currently a parking lot. (Maps of the sites are available there.) The tour is what one wishes the discovery of all art could be: a treasure hunt. Its true value, however, lies less with object-oriented aesthetics than with a social idealism pragmatic enough to acknowledge the consumer as its central figure. The result is a series of impromptu exchanges of cash, conversation and culture at each stop along the route, experiences unpredictable enough to keep one coming back for more.

Review

"Counter Culture"
The New Museum, through Aug 14 (see Museums)

The artists—Julianne Swartz, Jean Shin, Marion Wilson, Ricardo Miranda Zuñiga and the three-member collective Flux Factory—work in very disparate media, from air ducts to video to kitchen sinks. A sixth artist, Raul Vincent Enriquez, has provided a rather tedious Acoustiguide program (available as a $2 CD or a free MP3 download from www.newmuseum.org), consisting of you-are-there interviews with the artists during the planning stages of each project.

Ambling among the five art sites, the temptation to patronize local businesses is almost irresistible, especially with summer sale signs in every window. This may be an intended consequence of the New Museum's effort to ingratiate itself with a community in whose gentrification it is now deeply invested. Recent high-rises and high-end pubs crowd from memory the pushcarts that ruled the area a century ago.

For her part, sculptor Marion Wilson is keeping the street-vending tradition alive by parking a pushcart of her own design in front of the Bowery Mission. If her plastic-flower-bedecked blue umbrella is more Little Lulu than Sabrett, her wares—$20 coconut goblets, $30 printed T-shirts and small resin paperweights inlaid with locks of hair contributed by the mission's male residents—are a stark contrast with the $500 evening bags for sale just a block away.

Visitors to the recent Whitney Biennial may recall Julianne Swartz's installation of sound conduits and tiny lenses filling the museum's stairwell. Here, she runs fat, bright-yellow tubing up the façade of the Sunshine Hotel and into a second-floor lounge. Passersby who pause to look into a street-level opening may find themselves gazing into a periscope at the upside-down talking head of a resident named Nelson at the other end. During my visit, nearly everyone walking past stopped to chat with him—the tube doubles as an intercom, of sorts—about the art.

The most elaborate (and amusing) work is Flux Factory's mock-espionage command center set up behind a makeshift door in the storeroom of a martial arts supply store. There, willing "operatives" can pick up coded missions instructing them to spy on the neighborhood and report back their findings. (As one operative noted, most people are "too busy shopping" to notice they're under surveillance.)

Inside the front entrance of Public, a restaurant in a former Elizabeth Street parking garage, Shin has transformed industrial sinks from Bowery kitchen suppliers into suds-filled wishing wells. Intrepid explorers who venture into a garagelike gallery on an alley off Rivington Street will find a duct-work sculpture by Zuñiga, whose digital animations capture three Bowery denizens as they testify to the neighborhood's changes over the past 150 years.

Most of the work in "Counter Culture" has a similar earnestness but, unlike Zuñiga's piece, seeks audience participation—and that is a good thing. If the show's value as art is debatable, as an experiment in cultural diplomacy, it is a welcome success. ■

The New York Times

July 25, 2004

The New Museum's New Non-Museum

By RANDY KENNEDY

WHAT does a museum do when it suddenly finds itself without a museum to live in?

If it is the Museum of Modern Art, which has been homeless during its $850 million renovation on West 53rd Street, the answer is the art-world equivalent of an expensive New York real estate shuffle: purchase an apartment while your town house is being gutted. In the Modern's case, of course, the apartment was very pricey: it cost almost $30 million to buy and convert a former staple factory in Queens into an exhibition space to use for only a couple of years.

So when the New Museum of Contemporary Art decided in 2001 to pack up its home of 21 years on Broadway and board the art bus rolling out of SoHo, a temporary pied-à-terre was out of the question. It simply could not afford one it considered acceptable. Its yearly budget is less than $4 million, and the new home, designed by Kazuyo Sejima & Ryue Nishizawa of the Tokyo firm Sanaa, that it plans to open on the Bowery in 2006 will cost $35 million, not that much more than the Modern spent on its outer-borough outpost alone.

But as the New Museum pondered the best ways to exist without walls for more than two years, money was not the most important factor, said Lisa Phillips, its director. More crucial were questions about the identity of the museum itself. Founded by Marcia Tucker in 1977 in rented office space on Hudson Street after she was forced out as a curator at the Whitney Museum of American Art, the New Museum's radical mission was to question the whole idea of the museum. What should one be? Should one be? And if so, what kinds of art qualified as "museum-quality" art?

"I wanted to see if this museum could provide a model for an institution to work that wasn't institutional," said Ms. Tucker — who decreed, for example, that all full-time staff workers, including herself, would receive the same salary, that decisions would be made (at least in theory) democratically, that there would be no permanent collection, that more contact between artists and visitors would be encouraged and that accepted boundaries between art and life would be attacked at every turn. Her motto, she said, was "act first and think later, so you actually have something to think about."

Over the next two decades, she tried hard to live up to the motto, in the process helping to redefine the role of the museum even as the New Museum's own shows were sometimes ridiculed, sometimes actively loathed. (Enraged viewers threw trash cans through the plate-glass windows of one infamous show that included do-it-yourself flag-burning kits.)

In the 1980's, the museum put together shows that examined the pressing problems right outside its own doors, like AIDS and — appropriately for the museum's situation now — homelessness. It also explored how some artists make their lives into art, the kind that does not fit into museums: one show described the "work" of the artist Tehching Hsieh, who lived outdoors for an entire year, during which time he vowed not to "look at, make, read about, or talk about art, or enter a museum or gallery."

As the museum aged and Ms. Tucker stepped down in 1999, the museum's iconoclasm waned, perhaps necessarily. In 2000, it accepted its first corporate donation of artworks. It is now considering the once-heretical idea of maintaining a permanent collection, and its most recent fund-raiser was held at Cipriani 42nd Street, the cavernous mess hall of the well-heeled.

Suzanne DeChillo/The New York Times

The New Museum, temporarily homeless, has turned to outdoor art: Julianne Swartz's periscope-and-telephone installation "Can You Hear Me?" at the Sunshine Hotel.

But Ms. Phillips said that she and the museum's curators were still acutely aware of the need to use the transition to the new building as an opportunity to think again about the definition of the museum. And so, while it has taken 7,000 square feet of space on the first floor of the Chelsea Art Museum on West 22nd Street for a year, its curators decided that the first major show would not be within walls, but outside them.

Called "Counter Culture," the show, which remains in place until Aug. 14, features five works that visitors will be able to find, if they are somewhat intrepid, on or around the stretch of the Bowery where the new New Museum will rise on what is now a parking lot.

One work, by Ricardo Miranda Zuñiga, will be installed in an alley behind the site. Another, by a group called Flux Factory, invites viewers to enter a martial-arts supply store, walk up to the counter and say a special password, "Gert Frobe," to gain access to a part of the store usually off limits to the public. (For non-James Bond fans, Gert Frobe is the name of the actor who played Goldfinger; Flux Factory uses its "installation" to imagine a kind of alternate Bowery history involving espionage and intrigue instead of flophouses and gin mills.)

Julianne Swartz, whose work was recently in the Whitney Biennial, built a bright yellow conduit of plastic pipe that stretches up the side of the Sunshine Hotel, one of the Bowery's last flophouses, which will be the museum's odd next-door neighbor. The conduit, outfitted with mirrors, allows passersby to peek into the hotel's lounge area, and gives the residents themselves, all men and some very isolated and lonely, a chance to engage in conversation with those below (echoey but intimate, in a tin-can telephone way) if they want to.

Another artist, Marion Wilson, has bartered with residents of the Bowery Mission, an organization for the homeless that is just down

the street from the hotel, and has incorporated items donated or sold to her by some of the men there — a faded T-shirt, locks of dreadlocked hair, a bright religious drawing — into her own artwork, which she is selling from a cheery, flower-festooned cart she has begun pushing around the neighborhood like a hot-dog vendor. Not long after she started, she even took on one of the mission's residents as a helper and, in exchange for his work, she is using some of her profits to help him meet his child-support payments.

After a recent church service at the mission, followed by a fried-chicken lunch, Ms. Wilson said she was intrigued from the beginning by the thought of a no-walls show and had even figured out a way to store her art after hours, with no museum nearby to help her.

"The attendant for the parking lot has been very nice, and he says he'll keep it in his booth overnight," she said, explaining that she sees many parallels between her work and the nomadic state of the museum itself.

"I'm like a store without walls," she said. "And I'm going to be very transient, the way the museum is now."

In some ways, the show harks back to a braver world of urban art in New York City in the 1970's, when the museum really was new — for example, to the guerrilla works done by Gordon Matta-Clark, the most famous of which landed him in legal trouble after he sealed off an abandoned Hudson River pier and cut crescent shapes into the walls of a warehouse he did not own. It also brings to mind the dances that Joan Jonas choreographed and filmed amid landfill piles that were later to become part of Battery Park City.

But the New Museum's show is guerrilla art in only the nicest, new-millennium sense. The show's organizer, Melanie Cohn, said that the museum planned to spray-paint a logo near the site of each work, to make them easier for visitors to find. "But it's going to be temporary paint," she said. "We want people to be able to wash it off."

The show is not intended to be confrontational or to underscore the area's disintegration. In fact, it is trying to do the opposite: to say hello to a neighborhood that is rapidly changing from skid row to a row of condos and bars, a gentrification that will be speeded by the museum's arrival there. And the intention is also, while exploring a museum without walls, to introduce its visitors to their new destination.

"Otherwise," Ms. Cohn said, "people really have no reason to go down there and look at a parking lot. But it challenges us to do this, and it also challenges the people who go to see it. In a museum it's easy. But out in the world you think: `Am I going to be able to find it? What am I supposed to do when I find it? Am I trespassing?' You don't know."

Ms. Phillips, during an interview at a coffee shop near the new site, said the museum's staff had been inspired to do the show in part by the Moderna Museet in Stockholm, which was forced to think on its feet when it found a virulent mold in its new building in 2002 and had to close for repairs. Its way of keeping itself alive in the interim was to allow curators at other Swedish museums to dip into its collections and stage shows around the country using its works. It also opened a temporary space in an old post office near a train station and held exhibits that lasted only two weeks.

"We knew we weren't MoMA and we weren't going to go that route, but we very much wanted to keep our presence alive in the city," she said, mentioning the Morgan Library, which decided last year to close completely until expansion is completed in 2006, with very little programming until it reopens.

"Willingness to embrace risk and uncertainty is a positive thing," she said. "And it's especially good for us."

Whether it will be good for longtime visitors to the New Museum or for the Bowery remains to be seen, as art lovers begin to trek eastward, with maps in their hands, and the residents of the Sunshine Hotel await them. Bruce Davis, who has been living in the hotel for many years, said he is keeping an open mind about Ms. Swartz's low-tech communications conduit.

"I couldn't see any reason for it at first," he said the other day, rolling a cigarette in the sparse hotel lounge, as a fan labored weakly against the heat. "Then I realized it must be for some kind of artistic touch."

James Carrow, the hotel's manager, said the residents ignored the bright-yellow contraption at first. But in the first week after it was installed, they slowly began to wander over, stick their heads inside the bell-shaped end of the tube and respond to the strangers, mostly tourists and teenagers, calling up to them.

"I'm surprised people are that curious about us up here," Mr. Carrow said, shaking his head. "But you never know what people are going to like nowadays."

NY ARTS

October 1, 2004

Telephoning From Skid Row: A Conversation with Julianne Swartz
By David Markus

Julianne Swartz, Can You Hear Me, 2004
New Museum of Contemporary Art - Installation for Counter Culture
July 10 - August 15, 2004.

Photograph by Jason Mandella

As part of the New Museum's recent "Counter Culture" exhibit, artist Julianne Swartz was commissioned to do a site-specific work that would help introduce the museum to its new neighborhood–that segment of lower Manhattan formerly known as "skid row." In recent years, several upscale nightspots and boutiques more commonly associated with the Bowery's chic neighbors to the west have come to dapple the tedious stretch of restaurant supply stores that have been the area's distinguishing feature for over fifty years. Of the flophouses that originally gave the street its ominous moniker, few remain. One such residence, however, happens to be located directly adjacent to the parking lot upon which the New Museum will build its future homestead. It was here, at the Sunshine Hotel, that Swartz chose to install Can You Hear Me, a work allowing passers by to "telephone"–by way of a periscopic PVC pipe– the residents above. The device itself is but a slightly more sophisticated version of the old tree house favorite involving two tin cans and a piece of string, yet it holds the potential to open dialogue between past and present, between the marginalized inhabitants of a transient neighborhood and the cell phone touting SoHo crowd that betokens our city's perpetual gentrification. I recently met with Ms. Swartz at her Williamsburg studio do discuss her project.

David Markus: Why did you choose the Sunshine Hotel as the site for your work?

Julianne Swartz: I felt that the show was about getting to know the neighborhood, but it was also about the effect it would have on the neighborhood. So that was one impetus. Another was that this was a really interesting opportunity to merge two social groups that wouldn't necessarily have any connection with each other.

DS: To what extent does the piece distort as much as it catalyzes communication between those groups?

JS: I think the piece is more a symbol of communication. Most of the conversations taking place may not have been terribly meaningful, but what was meaningful to me was the possibility that person A could have a conversation with person B that would not otherwise occur. I was interested in bringing together these two very disparate social groups, but also turning the table on a social construct. In some ways the men who live in that hotel are the invisible men of our culture, and I wanted to make them seen and give them voice. There was a lot of controversy over the piece and people who read about it but didn't experience it, thought that it could be potentially exploitative. But my main goal throughout the process was empowerment of the residents of the hotel. And also to change the power dynamic in that the person on the street calling up was in some ways more vulnerable than the person at the Sunshine who could choose whether or not to engage in conversation.

DS: Being a resident of the neighborhood myself, I had the opportunity to witness the interactions of both random by passersby and larger groups–for instance the tour groups set up by the New Museum. I must say, your work seems to resist the participation of the latter.

JS: Well you're right. The piece is basically about intimacy. I can have this two-minute interaction with someone I don't know and probably never would have known. So in a group situation it doesn't work as well. It's not meant as spectacle per se, although the exterior of the piece has a certain look to it, and was visually spectacular enough to draw people to it; though really the piece is about that moment of one face seeing another face and one person interacting with another person.

DS: The design of the piece seems to riff on the institutional design of public facilities.

JS: I made the sign as an ironic nod to the phone booth–that public signage look. And I do want this to be something that's for the public, but also something that's fun. The piece is called Can you hear me?, which is a nod to the telephone, and the telephone being this device that we use every day, but really was initially invented and does exist to bring people closer and to create intimacy.

DS: Your project opens up communication lines with a segment of the community that might soon be exiled by the institution that is sponsoring you. What do you make of this irony and how aware was the New Museum of this irony?
JS: They supported my piece because it doesn't necessarily say that the New Museum is bad and the Hotel is good. It doesn't polarize. It makes the issues evident, but it doesn't necessarily take sides. The intention is to bring questions to the viewer's mind, to your mind, to the men at the hotel, to the people who work at the museum. So, I think the museum sponsored me because the work stimulates questions.

DS: How do the connections you made with the men at the Sunshine hotel influence your perception of the project retrospectively?

JS: I realized very early on in the project that in order for it to be successful it needed to be a collaboration with the residents. So I made it a priority to work with them and to have them feel an ownership of the piece, and I think they did.

DS: Is that part of the notion of them being empowered also a part of the piece?

JS: Yes, the residents have the keys to open and close the piece. They took care of it.

DS: Were there any residents who objected to the piece?

JS: There were some who said, "Oh I can't be bothered," but there were none who flat out objected. And there were many who really embraced the piece. There was one who really made it like his baby. This was a man who had been through a lot. And here were people talking to him, asking his name. But he bloomed in this context, because he felt desired in a social way.

DS: What is the future of the Sunshine Hotel?

JS: Some of the men have been there for years and they have squatter's rights. But I think they will eventually get bought out. I don't think it will stay. I don't think it can stay.

DS: Do you have a name for the device itself?

JS: We've just been calling it "the tube" [laughter].

DS: Are we going to see the tube in any future contexts?

JS: I'd like to, yeah.

DS: Can you think of any other local sites where it might work well?

JS: Well, I mean it would be great to have it, like, going from the Israeli Embassy to the Palestinian Embassy...that would be my ideal place to put it [laughter].

Ah, Wishful thinking.

The Villager Since 1933
Volume 74, Number 15 | August 11 - 17 , 2004

Through a tube starkly: Connecting on the Bowery

By Deborah Lynn Blumberg

Peering through a skinny yellow tube from the second floor lobby of the Bowery's Sunshine Hotel, resident Nelson Castro smiles at pedestrians on the sidewalk below and shouts, "You're upside down!" Jean, another longtime resident, yells into the tube in fluent French, "Hello! Do you speak a little French?"

Seven days a week throughout the day and early evening, a handful of the flophouse's 55 male residents greet passersby and discuss everything from the weather to the Yankees through the special tube, an art installation project entitled "Can You Hear Me," on display outside the hotel through mid-August.

Residents and pedestrians gaze at upside-down images of each other as they introduce themselves and speak through the mirrored tube, which runs from the building's ground-floor entrance to a window in the second-floor TV room. New York artist Julianne Swartz designed the contraption in conjunction with the New Museum of Contemporary Art's Counter Culture project, an exhibition that explores the diversity on and around the Bowery.

"Some of the men were skeptical at first, and we were worried it could be too intrusive in their lives," said New Museum curator Melanie Cohn. "But overall it seems like they've adapted to the piece and enjoy it."

From 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. until Aug. 14 the hotel's colorful characters can interact via the tube with curious New Yorkers and tourists who pass by the hotel at 241 Bowery St. Jean, a jazz musician from Haiti who has lived in New York for the past 30 years, moved into the Sunshine in 1992 and has met 15 or 16 people through the tube over the past few weeks. "It's nice because it changes the dreadful feeling of living here — [the hotel] is better than the streets, but it's the bottom of the bottle," he said.

The Sunshine Hotel opened in 1922 as a boarding house. Men can pay about $10 a day for a small room with a bed and a locker and use of a communal bathroom. In 1999, radio documentary producer David Isay drew attention to the hotel and the men when he created an audio portrait of the Sunshine.

Each of the six contemporary artists participating in Counter Culture chose their own neighborhood installation site, with locations ranging from bodegas to Noho boutiques. Swartz chose the Sunshine Hotel in part because the New Museum's new home will open in 2006 directly next door to the building. She thought the museum's construction would have a more direct impact on the Sunshine residents' lives than on other neighbors.

Above , pedestrians communicate with residents of the Sunshine Hotel by means of an art project.

"I wanted to draw some attention to the hotel and the people who live there," Swartz said, "and make a device to encourage communication between two parties that wouldn't necessarily communicate otherwise — the residents and the people going to see the art show."

She amassed 26 feet of tubing, mirror, Plexiglas and wood to create the sculpture, whose title refers to the first voice message heard through wire transmission during Alexander Graham Bell's experiments with telephone communication. Along with Cohn, Swartz visits the hotel every few days to check on the device and to replace a bouquet of sunflowers left near the tube that residents put out when none of them are around to interact with pedestrians.

"What I was trying to get at was a simultaneous distance and intimacy — the sound is very intimate, but the face is upside down, far away and has a kind of distance," she said. "Some residents have enjoyed the interaction a lot, others haven't really cared. But I haven't heard any overtly negative reactions."

During the project's planning stage, Charlie, a wheelchair-bound hotel resident who frequently uses the pay phone adjacent to the tube's outside entrance, advised Swartz on the installation's ramp. Swartz constructed the ramp to look and feel like a small stage, but it also covers the crumbling sidewalk and has improved access to the pay phone.

"Part of the point of the piece is to change the power dynamic of the two parties," she said. "I wanted the person on the street to feel a vulnerability, to feel on display as they were speaking."

Other residents help maintain the tube by opening and closing the panel that covers the outside hole at night, and some have started to use the device to communicate with friends lingering on the sidewalk below, Cohn said. Castro has even become an unofficial spokesperson for the piece, Swartz said. "He's taken to the piece in an unbelievable way and I think he'll be upset when it goes," she said. "It's really given him a kind of connection."

But not everyone in the hotel feels the same way, as many residents are elderly and uninterested and others are preoccupied with their own lives, Jean said. "It's the wrong neighborhood for it. There are a lot of addicts here and art is not their top priority."

Hotel manager Milton Montalvo said he has heard positive feedback from residents, and that the project has even inspired in-person interactions. One group of 15 tourists entered the hotel after using the tube and spoke in depth with a resident about the hotel's history. "People in a hotel like this actually resist change, but I think it's growing on them," he said.

A number of residents and community members have requested that the tube stay longer than the one-month period, said Swartz, but as of now, mid-month she will disassemble the piece when the exhibit ends. But the effects of the project may be long lasting — communication has increased between the residents and those who pass by their home.

"It's not that interactions that are exchanged are very deep, but they're face to face, and they're pleasantries," she said. "What I made was just a device. The art is the interaction."

The Washington Post

Julianne Swartz

By Blake Gopnik
Washington Post Staff Writer
Sunday, March 14, 2004; Page N06

Julianne Swartz, a New Yorker born in Phoenix in 1967, has filled the Whitney's stairwell with a work of sound art. On the top landing, a small cupboard houses a complex grid of wiring and speakers. Stand near it, and you hear a cacophony of voices singing, humming or chanting Dorothy's lyrics from "Over the Rainbow." Each loudspeaker on the panel also feeds a separate clear-plastic tube, about two inches across, which runs along the stairwell's ceiling to an end point lower down, where it blossoms into a kind of modernist ear trumpet. As you pass down the stairs and stop en route to listen at each speaker's station, the confusion heard at the stairwell's top is pulled apart into its several different channels. The effect is to tie the different spaces of the Whitney's frigid Marcel Breuer building into a kind of warm community of singers -- almost as though the museum had become possessed by a ghostly barbershop sextet.

Time Out New York
March 4-11, 2004
Issue 440

American splendor

Every other year, the Whitney Biennial surveys the American art landscape. And every other year, the art world howls in protest. This spring, TONY finds some things to love in the show that everyone loves to hate.

By Jocko Weyland

As the 72nd Whitney Biennial is about to open, its ever-impossible task resurfaces: The curators must try to bring before their balkanized constituency a fair and balanced, hip but not too trendy mix that satisfies every faction's tastes. And since their choices can't help but reflect the arbitrariness of an art world that often bestows recognition on the undeserving as it ignores others more worth of attention, the event has historically been a whipping boy for critics and the public alike. That its curatorial decisions propel observers (consisting in no small part of omitted artists) into fits of righteous indignation is exactly what makes the Biennial an intriguing spectacle. In assembling this year's lineup, curators Chrissie Iles, Debra Singer and Shamim M. Momin have tried to counter the art world's endemic insularity and fashion-consciousness with a far-reaching, eclectic exhibition (see "Triple threat," page 15). A look at ten idiosyncratic younger artists and collectives in the Biennial helps illustrate some of the show's main themes-including the preponderance of nostalgia for the '60s and '70s, an "obsessive working of line, surface and image," according to the curators, and the highly touted but vaguely defined "gothic" resurgence that shows up less as a specific allusion to literature or the Cure than as a fascination with all things morbid.

Laylah Ali

A sinister edge and relentless attention to surface are apparent in Laylah Ali's cartoon-inflected paintings and drawings. Her work takes her violence-prone, mutated, enigmatically amputated figures into an ambiguous, racially charged narrative that recalls a nightmare version of Edwin A. Abbot's Flatland. DEBRA SINGER: "It might seem kind of lighthearted, but what belles that pretty surface is often a scenario that is a little more insidious."

assume vivid astro focus

On the lighter side and in the collective spirit that has been on the rise in the past two years, assume vivid astro focus samples a wide range of pop-culture influences, from Peter Max to karaoke-bar videos. Here, Brazilian-born Eli Sudbrack and his team of collaborators will install wallpaper and sculptural objects, including "theater props" of silk-screened Plexiglas and a balcony. A video featuring Los Super Elegantes (who are also in the show, debuting their new musical play at the Whitney's Altria space) will be on view, and AVAF will also put on one of the Biennial's site--specific outdoor works, presented in collaboration with the Public Art Fund. In mid-April, Sudbrack and company will cover a section of as-phalt in Central Park with a semi Art Deco, semipsychedelic design to brighten the long long-running daytime roller disco party. SINGER: "[The installation is] an immersive psychedelic environment-and a philosophy about the idea of creative community."

Mark Handtorth

Modernism and Minimalism are reworked in Mark Handforth's red-and--orange sunset made of gelled fluorescent tubes and a folded reflective highway sign. Instead of having the ready made aspect of Dan Flavin's light sculptures or Mark di Suvero's metal behemoths, Handforth arranges his objects in labor-intensive and slightly off-kilter evocations of popular culture and public space. SINGER: "It's like scavenged elements from the American roadside mixed in with modernist vernacular."

Christian Holstad

The concept of fictional alternate worlds with elaborate back stories is prevalent in a number of this year's Biennial entries. Christian Holstad's alcove will be extravagant, assembling a hand-sewn campfire and sleeping bags, wallpaper and an earlier piece that mixes references to disco, flower power, Jean Genet and Jack Smith (arguably the patron saint of the flamboyant DIY aesthetic), carrying on his memorial to rebellious spirit everywhere." SHAMIM M. MOMIN: "It has a very string radical political aspect and a kind of poignancy."

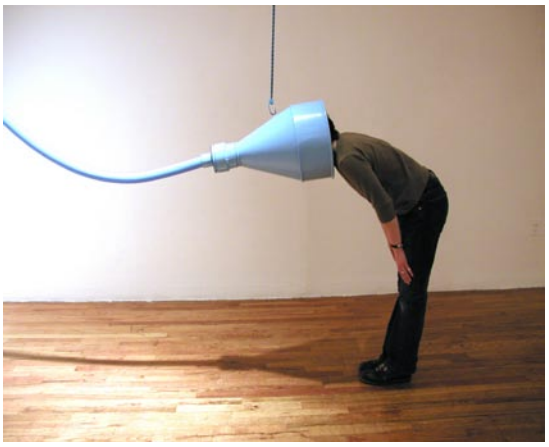
Julinne Swartz

Part of the Whitney itself will be altered by Julianne Swartz's intervention in the six-story stairwell. Known for creating bewitching environments using simple materials in unusual locales, Swartz will make an optical conundrum that mysteriously reflects other parts of the museum, accompanied by a recording of multiple voices singing-and saying-the words to "Over the Rainbow." The old chestnut will waft out of clear pipes through the bunkerlike space, prompting museumgoers to wonder what they are seeing and hearing-and where it's all coming from. SINGER: "She's interested in directing immaterial phenomena like sound or light, using very low-tech means."

THE BROOKLYN RAIL
Critical perspectives on arts, politics, and culture

From da 'Hood to da Whitney: 3 Artists from Williamsburg Make Good
by Ellen Pearlman
March 2004

Julianne Swartz


Julianne Swartz, "How Deep is Your" (2003), site specific installation with sound. Courtesy P.S. 1 Museum, Queens, NY.

Julianne Swartz uses light, motion, reflection, sound, and ambience as sculpture to take the ordinary and mundane and bump it up into the extraordinary and profound. She employs utilitarian and commonplace objects like conduits and condensers, mirrors, tubes, fiber optics, and lenses, and transforms matter that has no palpability or physical presence and gives it sculptural form. She works at the most delicate of intersections, where the fulcrum point of what is solid meets what is not.

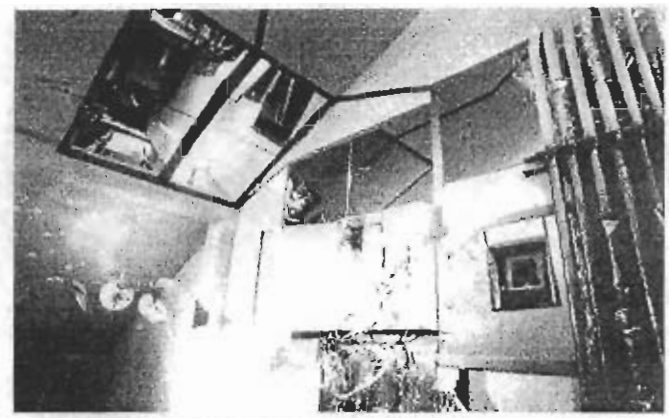
In an early work, Swartz took a single red thread and wended it across a small town in Pennsylvania, mapping the space where a hate crime had been committed. It stretched from the site of the offense and traced how a single action impacted the path of an entire community. A later piece focused on a quivering strand of tinsel blown by an oscillating fan. A spotlight shines down on the tinsel. The image could only be viewed through a punched out, grapefruit sized hole in a wall retrofitted with a convex lens. A recent installation took place through a series of indoor and outdoor mirrors reflecting a garden of whirligigs blowing in the wind. Swartz has used a fiber optic thread of glass to delineate the synaptic interconnections throughout a gallery space, wending it into hidden walls and forgotten cracks.

Sound and light are endemic to our daily experience, but remain essentially ungraspable. We know from engineering and physics that they break down into pulses and waves, but believe we can only hold pulses and waves if we make them into functional light bulbs or radios. Swartz describes their invisible, ephemeral quality as possessing "sensual presence," and believes we receive them through our senses. She delineates sculptural form by making sound and light more palpable to an individual's mode of interpretation, which means you can't see them, but you can see the pathway of transmission.

Her installation for the 2004 Whitney Biennial runs six flights through the Museum's stairwell, a functional system that "irrigates" the height and depth of the building with voices that run through clear plastic tubing. The sound, conveyed by relays of air, builds layers of voices singing that ultimate anthem of longing, "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" from The Wizard of Oz. The installation concerns itself with the "loss of innocence from childhood to adulthood" and a keen "longing for perfection." Using the people in her life, friends, co-workers, shopkeepers, even the superintendent of the building, she builds layers of digitized, unending waves of sound. The music invokes a fleeting intangible— memory and its overwhelming associative power— and taps into the "pneumonic part of the brain." At key points along the installation's traversal, there are also delicate diffused mirrors reflecting the movement of individuals in the stairwell back onto themselves.

This highly sophisticated work taps evanescent memory association to bring the invisible into form and then move it through clear tubing. She says her sculptures are narrative and sequenced, but are different from film in that film captures its audience through sequences dictated by time allotments. Her installation is fluid and contains sequences laced with narratives that allow the viewer to use the imagery of the audience itself, and float lazily through the space by allowing that moment, and that moment alone to direct the story.

Art in America
April 2002



Julianne Swartz: *Transfer*, 2001, mixed mediums, dimensions variable; in "Brooklyn!" at the Palm Beach Institute of Contemporary Art.

LAKE WORTH, FLA.

"Brooklyn!" at the Palm Beach Institute of Contemporary Art

Much attention has been directed of late to the shifting center of gravity of that half-mythical creature, the New York Art Scene. Last year "Chelsea Rising" at the New Orleans Contemporary Art Center focused on art exhibited in the Manhattan neighborhood that has supplanted SoHo as the heart of the gallery world. "Brooklyn!," organized by Palm Beach Institute of Contemporary Art director Michael Rush and independent curator Dominique Nahas, took a different tack. It showcased the products of artists who live and work in Brooklyn, though they may exhibit elsewhere. Thus, it was less about tastemakers' sensibilities than about the intersection of place and creativity.

"Brooklyn!" included works by 86 visual artists. They reflected the art world's current global makeup (there were artists born in Holland, China, Taiwan, India, Switzerland and Spain) as well as its pluralistic orientation. Meticulously realistic painting butted up against raucous videos, fine handcraftsmanship shared the stage with works assembled of found objects. Pieces in the show referenced Conceptualism, performance, Dada, realism and abstraction. The connection, if there was one, was less a matter of content, media or point of view than of an indefinable energy that is making Brooklyn one of the more concentrated incubators for emerging artists.

Of course, not all the artists here were young and emerging. Brooklyn also boasts a very respectable contingent of well-established artists, among them Vito Acconci, Martha Rosler, Roxy Paine, Nayland Blake and Xu Bing, all of whom were represented by recent works. But more striking was the number of less familiar faces. One of the most memorable works was a site-specific installation by Julianne Swartz, a mysterious moving light projection on the wall. A half-open closet nearby revealed the clunky mechanics and assorted flotsam and jetsam that had been cunningly arranged to produce ethereal effects. Also quite magical was a stroboscopic sculpture by Greg Barsamian, which coordinated flashing lights and revolving elements to create the effect of disembodied hands releasing eggs that drop into the mouths of equally disembodied heads.

Some works dealt specifically with the Brooklyn environment. These ranged from Richard Rothman's black-and-white photographs of residential yards and Danica Phelps's documentary charts of her walks through various neighborhoods to an opening audio performance by DJ Tom Roe (aka DJ Dizzy), which mixed sounds from traffic, subway trains and construction near the Williamsburg Bridge with musical samplings from Sonny Rollins's jazz classic *The Bridge*. And in one corner of the gallery, the curators literally brought in a piece of Brooklyn, transplanting artist/curator Paulien Lethen's Holland Tunnel, an actual potting shed that's used as a gallery. It was filled with a mini show of Brooklyn artists curated by Lethen.

Given that the show opened Sept. 9, there were some inevitable post-9/11 double-takes. The most striking was a video titled *Crash* by Christoph Draeger, which chronicled a series of spectacular plane crashes with a montage of images from news clips, amateur videos and Hollywood movies. Only slightly less unsettling was Kristin Lucas's

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New York
Susan Graham
Julianne Swartz
Schroeder Romero

In his 1994 novel *Sophie's World*, Norwegian author Jostein Gaarder uses the example of a father levitating off his seat at the breakfast table to illustrate philosophy. As the father floats above his family, the wife is shocked and understandably distressed but his son is amused. For the toddler, life is infinitely surprising, and his father's trick is only one of the riddles he encounters every day as he discovers his world. But mother sees that amazing world as a habit, so she is irritated and unsettled when her husband's illogical behavior upsets her preconceptions. Like Gaarder's example, Susan Graham and Julianne Swartz overturn stale assumptions with philosophical and child-like marvels.

Graham crafts guns and tiny space vehicles out of porcelain or a mixture of sugar, egg white, and resin. Her guns resemble intricate lacework or Victorian valentines. Just as Eva Hesse and Jackie Windsor use repetitive movements to combine high Modernism with handcrafts, Graham defuses the weapons' violent associations through feminine media and methods. Though strongly within feminist art's methodological tradition, Graham's impetus is less political than psychological. She began creating sculpture inspired by the insomnia she experienced after the birth of her child. In past work, Graham created unique, tiny beds out of her sugar mixture. The guns are products of the same nighttime anxiety. She sweetens them to nullify their significance as deluded fears pestering sleepless nights. In a final stage, she places some of her sculptures in dreamy cyanotype photographs created through hand-coating emulsion on printing paper, producing a contact print with large negatives, and then exposing the paper and negative directly to images, depicting satellites, space, and space travel, appear as soft as pastel drawings and recall the tender futurism of Ray Bradbury's story "Dandelion Wine."

BOTTOM: COURTESY SCHROEDER ROMERO, NY

Below: Julianne Swartz, *Garden Details, Imported and Compressed*, 2002. Mirrors, ground glass, lenses, string, mylar, and found objects, dimensions variable.

Swartz also uses prosaic materials, but where Graham creates fantasies, Swartz alters the way commonplace items are seen. In her site-specific installations, she exposes neglected brilliance in unremarkable spaces. At Schroeder Romero, a series of lenses and mirrors was set in the hallway leading to the gallery's second-story garden. The lenses themselves are sparse and unappealing, but through them a radiant hazy Eden was visible. Swans, a wooden owl, flowers, and glimmering light were reflected in the upside-down views. The mirrors placed by the garden entrance corroborated this sweet impression with disjointed perspectives of the outside splendor. In the lens, the garden was ideal. Through the mirrors, it seemed a less magical but an eclectically decorated, warm, and welcoming space.

Only outside did the deception become clear. Though the garden and its curious items were charming, they were far from the idyllic vision Swartz created. The gorgeous swan seen from the lens was actually a wrecked, cracked, plastic lawn ornament. The owl was in a similar condition, and while both were actually on separate sides of the balcony, they appeared together in Swartz's illusion. Yet the image Swartz produced was never divorced from reality. Changes in time, light, and movement were also reflected through the lens and altered the fantasy in real time.

In an accompanying installation, Swartz set a portal lens next to the gallery's outside window where it reflected a building across the street. At dusk a trainer on the building's roof released his pigeons into the sky, creating a rare, beautiful moment as seen in the lens. The moment was particularly moving because it was not recorded, only perceived through Swartz's unassuming object.

Swartz's lenses affect a space by creating a dreamy alternative to boredom, much like Graham's careful sculptures act as fragile substitutes for sleep. Both Swartz and Graham spark philosophical wonder with simple tools. They disrupt our blasé responses by validating the enormous beauty that can exist in small gestures and forgotten spaces.

—Ana Finel Honigman

ARTFORUM
FEBRUARY 2005 INTERNATIONAL

JULIANNE SWARTZ
JOSEE BIENVENU

PVC is one of those wonder materials, a plastic widely used in the building trade (though outlawed in New York State, perhaps because of its toxicity, its vulnerability to rats, or an union issue that rewards the Steam Pipe Fitters). It has also increasingly begun to appear in sculpture. Anish Kapoor's *Marsyas* installation in the Turbine Hall at Tate Modern in 2002 used a giant PVC membrane, but emerging artists tend to employ it raw, with the manufacturer's markings still visible.

One of the most celebrated recent examples of this was *Somewhere Harmony*, 2003-2004, Julianne Swartz's work in the 2004 Whitney Biennial, a rambling epic of clear plastic tubes installed in the six-story-high stairwell and connected to speakers located in a crawl space between the third and fourth floors, which transmitted spoken and sung versions of "somewhere Over the Rainbow." Turning Marcel Breuer's clean Brutalist stairwells into a site with "plumbing" exposed, Swartz transformed the space into something messier and altogether magical.

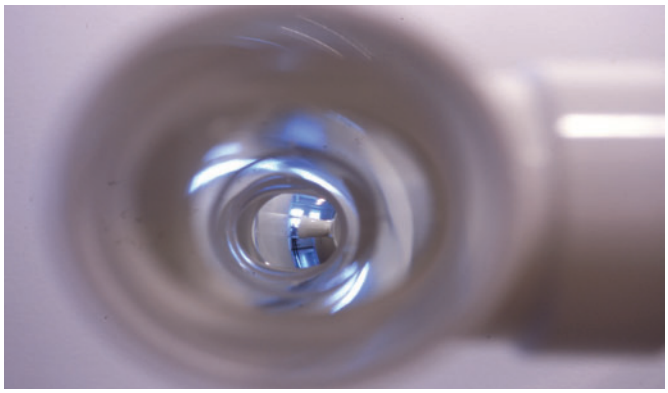
Swartz continued her use of PVC in this show, concentrating more on optical than sonic effects. Pieces like *In-Fill-Trait, In-Fill-Trait*, and *You Are Here* (all works 2004), used PVC pipe, Plexiglas tubes, and mirrors to create periscopes that distorted and extended the viewer's visual field. *Spectrum*, a spectral rainbow of magnets attached to wires issuing from the wall and rising up from the floor, was a delicate study in visual tension. *Deep Storage*, a hole in the gallery wall filled with a lens, shows an inverted projection of the otherwise hidden storage space. The peephole image is transformed by a fan behind the wall blowing on a miniature disco ball, which distorts the view and makes it kaleidoscopic. *Un-Time Structure* was the largest sculpture in the show. An altarlike construction of wood and electrical wiring, it is surrounded by a circle of Plexiglas tubes that project upward like stalagmites and are implanted with lenses that create a flickering kinesis. The amplified sound of clock motors provides an ethereal aural accompaniment, similar to –but more muted than- the eerie Whitney soundtrack.

Swartz's work has been compared to Gordon Matta-Clark's, mostly because of its interventionist strategies. But where Matta-Clark was interested in large-scale meta-architectural projects (or, as he called them, "anarchitecture"), Swartz is more of a miniaturist, entering with small incisions rather than gaping holes. It could be argued that her range was constricted in this show by the size of the gallery, but her works generally address the individual viewer; even her sprawling work at the Whitney was best experienced at close range in a private moment.

In this sense – and particularly given her interest in optics- Swartz's work seems aligned with older ideas and technologies: the imaged single viewer of one-point perspective, the camera obscura, or the stereoscope. Her work's use of rough-and-ready industrial materials counteracts any risk of preciousness (particularly the persistent references to rainbows). Yet there's a delicacy at its core, an enduring sense of wonder at the beauty and strangeness still achievable with optical and sonic tricks.

Plastics facilitate the ruse, but their sturdiness is what allows Swartz, paradoxically, to make such delicate work.

--MS



Julianne Swartz, You Are Here (detail), 2004, PVC pipe, Plexiglas, mirror, motor, and hardware, 57 x 46 x 32"

ARTnews
FEBRUARY 2005

Julianne Swartz uses magnets and pipes string and mirrors to connect with her audiences

BY BARBARA A. MACADAM

Julianne Swartz

A passerby outside the Sunshine Hotel on the Bowery speaks with residents through a pipe in *Can You Hear Me?,* 2004.

Julianne Swartz has swiftly and quietly insinuated herself into the nooks and crannies of galleries and museums onto the streets of New York, Berlin, Madrid and San Francisco, among other places.

Dedicated to giving physical form to intangibles –light, sound, and air- Swartz has shaped through sound pipes and sculpted space with strings and magnets. “Science is like a magic we have access to,” says the artist, whose fascination with its everyday manifestations plays into her eagerness to make connections –among things, places and people.

This was evident in “Speculative Mechanics,” her fall show at Josée Bienvenu Gallery in New York, where visitors entered a forest of white PVC pipes and fiber-optic cables. The pipes were speckled with mirrors, magnifiers, and periscopes offering curious viewers surprising vistas, while a magnetic rainbow extended from the wall.

The slender, gentle-mannered, 37-years-old New York-based artist shares some of the conceptual concerns of her mother, Beth Ames Swartz, known for feminist earthworks and explorations of light and spiritualism. But Julianne’s work is more concrete and dependent on her audiences. Swartz studied poetry, not art, at the University of Arizona, Tucson, and then entered the M.F.A. program at Bard College, where she developed an approach to art that blended science, psychology, sociology, and poetry.

She began showing in 1993 and had her first solo exhibition, of suspended glass casts that created shadows of houses, in 2001 at New York’s ricco/maresca gallery. She is represented today by Josée Bienvenu, where her work sells for between $4,000 and $15,000. Current and upcoming shows are at the Colby College Museum of Art in Waterville, Maine (through February 19), and at the Tang Museum at Skidmore College (through mid-April).

The magnets for Swartz are both a medium and a metaphor for what she does. In 2000, on a fellowship in France, she recalls, “I was wandering around a hardware store in the south of France and saw some magnets, and the name was *aimants*, which is the word for lovers in French. And I was in love with a Frenchman.”

But while the physics of it all excites Swartz, what has most affected her was a 2001 project for the Susquehanna Art Museum in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. For the work, *Link/Line*, she ran a red thread though the city, extending from the museum and passing through businesses, synagogues, churches, shops, and homes, ending up at a Jewish community center four and half miles away. The project, Swartz explains, was a “response to a series of hate crimes in the city and suspicious circumstances surrounding the burning of a synagogue.” Community members agreed to “host” the thread and watch over it, inspired in part by the Jewish tradition of the *eruv*. “It was the first work I did where the participants were as important as the materials,” she says.

Swartz relates her art whenever possible to its surroundings. At last year’s Whitney Biennial, she worked in counterpoint with architect Marcel Breuer’s gruff structure, installing soft transparent tubing along the grooves of the stairwell walls. Walking up the stairs, visitors could hear different voices singing “Somewhere over the Rainbow,” from the 1939 movie *The Wizard of Oz*. Swartz had tape-recorded people in her life –her grocer, her family- performing the nostalgic song. “When you ask people to sing,” she explains, “it makes them vulnerable, and you can respond to that with empathy.”

This past summer Swartz created a project in a flophouse, the Sunshine Hotel, on New York’s Bowery. Titled *Can You Hear Me?*, it involved pipes with mirrors that led from the hotel to the street, where passerbys could speak and look up at the people inside. The residents could choose to use it or not. “I wanted their end of communication to be private –in the hotel- while the viewer speaks in public,” Swartz explains. “These invisible men see the viewer better than the viewer sees them.”

Sunshine resident Nelson Castro, the piece’s self appointed custodian, says of the project, “It kept my mind occupied.” Swartz recalls, “He always started conversations through the tube by asking: ‘Can you see me? Can you hear me? Can you see the flowers?’”

frieze
MARCH 2005

Julianne Swartz

Josee Bienvenu Gallery, New York, USA

Julianne Swartz must surely hate walls. Everywhere she goes she attacks and destroys them, poking, tearing, drilling and rending their placid surfaces. She opens them up, put things in, pushes things through and generally mucks around, without much respect for the sanctity of enclosure or the inherent goodness of what a wall does – namely, provide shelter and a bit of privacy.

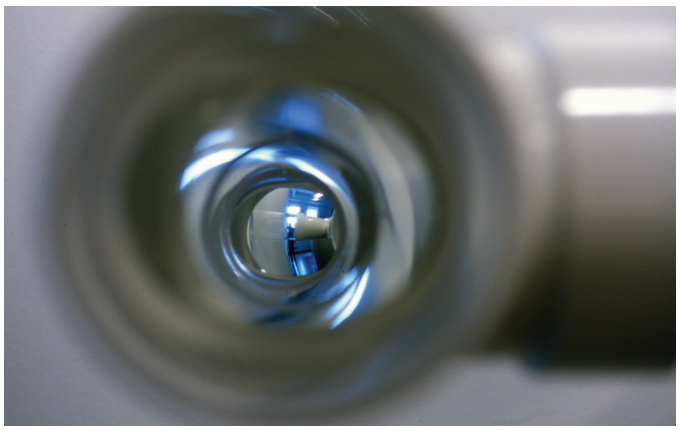
In other words, her work knows no bounds. In fact, it is devoted to boundlessness and to fluidity. Every attempt of containment is countered by an insistent rupturing, a preference for the playful destructiveness of leaks. Quietly worming their way into places they shouldn't go, Swartz' PVC piping, fibre-optic cables, wires, threads, lenses and tape collectively invade the body of buildings, spreading like indiscriminate infections, as in *Excavation* (2004), where a Perspex-encased fibre-optic cable snakes willy-nilly across the gallery space to embed itself into a far wall. A ragged opening next to the site of penetration reveals a minor conceptual miracle: a tiny beam of light aimed at a prism gives birth to a soft rainbow on the dark side of the plasterboard.

Sexually acute, Swartz' work trades in the rough interface between body and building. Architecture and its ordered, ordering imperative are consistently pitted against human frailty and our irrational impulses. The body and its sensorial extensions –the probing eye and the disembodied voice- are set loose to subversive, often poignant, ends. The most compelling case in point was Swartz ' 2003 installation at New York P.S.1 titled *How Deep is Your…* There Swartz ran baby-blue plastic piping throughout the massive, labyrinthine former school building and on the top floor invited visitors to insert their heads within a large blue funnel and listen to the faint, tinny audio of the Bee Gees' song. As we followed the circuitous trail of pipe and its sonic contents, Swartz pointedly forced us to go down into the basement of the building –its dirtiest, most abject space- and into the rusted iron boilers to locate the source of the music. Somewhat wickedly, Swartz seems to take pleasure in revealing hidden places – closets and storage rooms, toilets and barns –dark places where things that aren't necessarily meant to be seen are put or done. Yet there's a quality of innocent wonder at the heart of the work that prevents it from slipping into a morbid, forensic realm. In fact Swartz plumbs the depths only to instill a little levity: in the filthy cellar a love song plays; the hole in the wall reveals a nascent rainbow. Her interest is too complex and her vision too attuned to the fact that nothing is ever simply one way or another to rely on easy dichotomies. Interior and exterior, public displays and private activities, transcendence and abjection, containment and leakage: these seeming opposites exist in an uneasy, evocative alignment in Swartz' work, informing and transforming one another.

It's this quality of sweetness and light-heartedness that strikes one most immediately on encountering the work. The 'science' of her art is of the elementary-school variety, reminiscent of a time when a simple magnet or tadpole could hold us in rapt attention for hours or days. A place of everyday magic filled with the marvels of unseen forces such as electricity and magnetism, sound and air, her work's phenomenological edge is deceptively candy-coated, wrapped in Mylar and Day-Glo tape. Experiments in perception are modestly conducted, and questions regarding the way we exist in space are subtly probed, most notably in her series of periscopes and viewing devices constructed out of PVC pipe, mirrors, lenses and other common hardware. In *You Are Here* (2004), for example, we gaze into one end of a horizontal pipe to be treated to a distorted, slowly rotating view of the gallery until suddenly our own eye comes startlingly, disconcertingly into view. With *In-Fill-Trait* (2004) two people look into either end of a horizontal pipe, only for each to see the other's superimposed face over their own.

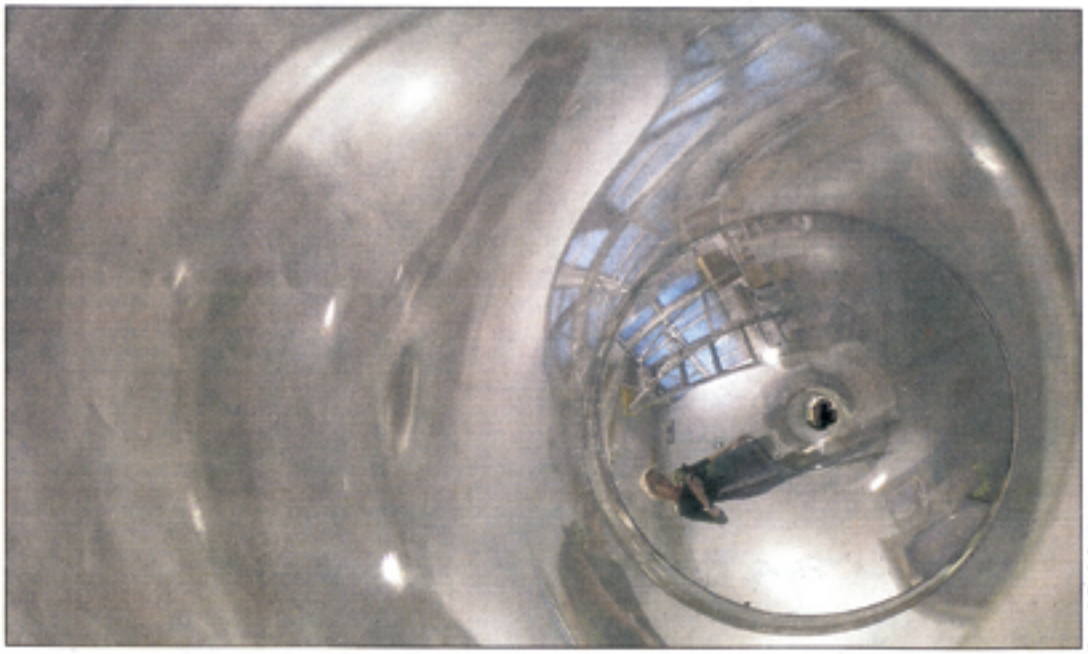
Wearing its heart on its sleeve and filled with gee-whiz effects, Swartz' art has a 'pay-no-attention-to-that-man-behind-the-curtain' quality that ultimately lends it greater depths of mystery and imagination. Her installation in the most recent Whitney Biennial, Somewhere Harmony (2004) featured multiple audio tracks of friends, acquaintances, family members and strangers all singing or humming Harold Arlen's 'Somewhere over the Rainbow' (1939). Piped through eight clear plastic tubes stretching up and down the museum's dim and grimly uninviting five-storey stairwell, this plaintive chorus called out to passers-by, who, pausing to listen, caused gridlock at an already jammed opening night. Efficient circulation was once again thwarted by the irreverent leaks instigated by an artist whose work manages to do the unimaginable: wed The Wizard of Oz to Georges Bataille. **Charles LaBelle**

Un-Time Structure
2004 Perspex, lenses, clock motors, light, wood, speakers, amplifiers, contact micro-phones, Mylar 335x183x183cm



You Are Here (detail)
2004 PVC pipe, Perspex, mirror, motor, hardware 145x117x81cm

METRO LIFE



The hole truth: Julianne Swartz's periscopes and piping provide a distorted view of the outside world

Breaking boundaries

ART

Julianne Swartz presents her first installation in Europe, Breaches And Leaks

When Metro catches up with New Yorker Julianne Swartz, she is busy with a power drill, boring discreet holes in walls and feeding optic viewing and listening devices through them into the neighbouring rooms. However, she's not a secret government agent staking out a suspected al-Qaeda hideout, but a sculptural installation artist making her latest piece, Breaches And Leaks, at Sunderland's Reg Vardy Gallery.

Fascinated with the social and spatial barriers created by architecture, Swartz's work involves 'perforating' spaces, allowing external visual and aural information to seep into them. Working with lo-tech materials such as plastic piping, wire and scrap wood, together with lenses and mirrors, she creates 'participatory periscopes' that transmit sights and sounds from either outdoors or elsewhere in the building.

Previous work has included pumping pop songs from a basement into a museum via 400ft of plastic tubing; projecting images of an installation from a storage cupboard; creating camera obscura projections from holes in a barn door; and constructing a two-way audio-visual telecommunication device, facilitating conversations between residents of a New York hotel and passers-by.

"My work is about making people aware of the boundaries we exist in," explains Swartz. 'I'm composing with reality, painting with what's there.'

Visitors to Breaches And Leaks (her first show in Europe) will be able to view the café next door and the adjacent hallway, as well as listen to the radio in the security guards' office. But, the images do not arrive in the gallery uninterrupted; distorted by the crudeness of Swartz's devices, she manipulates them further by consciously angling the periscopes, mirrors and lenses.

'They're pretty low-tech, but their inefficiency is what makes it more of an aesthetic experience,' she goes on. 'I'm offering a quarter turn on reality.'

Swartz reckons the inspiration behind her work comes from her background in photography and sculpture, arising from what she perceives to be the strengths and weaknesses of these mediums. As a sculptor, she says she felt 'overwhelmed by the materials' traditionally used, and that 'it didn't make sense' to create such work when there was already so much existing source material. As a photographer, meanwhile, she is fascinated in the way it captures reality and the manner in which the artist is in control of how this reality is represented – however, she bemoans the fact it is limited to capturing a moment in the past.

'I'm much more interested in the present," Swartz reveals. 'In some ways, what I do is like real-time photography or video. Gallery spaces, in general, are very sterile and separate from reality. I want to pierce that and bring a dirtier reality into the space.'

You have to admire Swartz's shoot-from-the-hip approach to creating work. Having never seen the Reg Vardy Gallery prior to her visit, she has had only a week to make her installation from a standing start. But, she is more than happy working without any sort of safety net.

'I enjoy the challenge of being presented with the site and then having to come up with a piece for that place,' she continues. "At the beginning of a project it can feel really remote, then I'll come up with something that works – that is "art". When it comes together it's very exciting... like uncovering treasure.'

Christopher Collett

Tomorrow until Feb 17, Reg Vardy Gallery, University Of Sunderland, Ashburne House, Ryhope Road, Sunderland, Tue 10am to 8pm, Wed to Fri 10am to 6pm, Sat by appointment, free. Tel: 0191 515 2128. Metro: Park Lane. www.regvardygallery.org

ART

Turner: Tours Of Durham And Richmondshire

It was at the age of 22 that the then-budding artist JMW Turner made his first visit to the North-East, sketching in Yorkshire, Durham and Northumberland. This exploratory tour was enough to open his eyes to the inspiring landscape of the region, and he returned many times throughout his career. A new exhibition at Bowes Museum brings together more than 30 paintings of the region by the artist, offering not only an opportunity to view images of local interest, but also charting his development as he experimented with painting techniques. On display in the region for the first time is Turner's luminous painting of Barnard Castle, on loan from Connecticut's Yale Centre For British Art, as well as further loans from The British Museum and V&A. From Bowes Museum's own collection are two paintings of Gibside, commissioned by the Earl Of Strathmore to illustrate his country property. Depicted from the north and south vantage points, Turner's works capture the sweeping hills, grand woods and dramatic ravines of this stunning local landmark. *Amy Rudd*

Sat to May 14, Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle, County Durham, daily 11am to 5pm, £7, £6 concs, free under-16s. Tel: 01833 690606. www.bowesmuseum.org.uk

BALANCE: *The message is pretty clear*

BOONE — The initial impression of Julianne Swartz's exhibit is that it's a science project rigged up by Rube Goldberg.

On closer inspection, though, the piece reveals itself to be a thought-provoking metaphor for the precarious balance in which natural ecosystems exist, particularly when humans become a factor.

Tom Patterson

It was created before the catastrophic flooding in New Orleans, but that disaster has highlighted the relevance of the work to contemporary environmental issues.

Swartz's installation is titled *Managed Flow Echo System*, and it's on view through Nov. 19 in the sunlit Carroll Gallery at Appalachian State University's Turchin Center for the Visual Arts.

The piece is, in effect, an electrically powered system designed to continually circulate water through a number of interconnected tubes and containers. In the process, it hydrates a variety of plants.

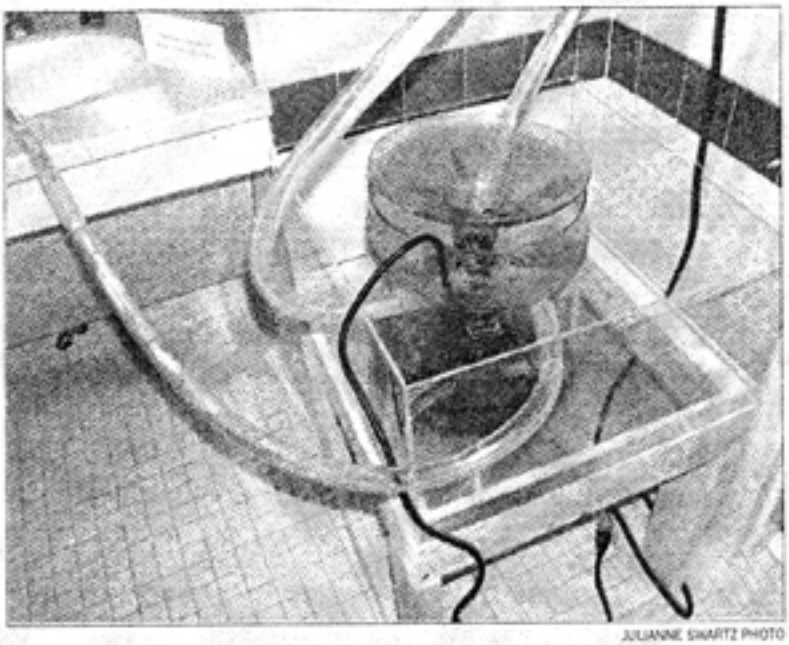
It's a mechanically complicated piece that required some delicate engineering. And it's all the more remarkable since Swartz didn't design it, and didn't know what materials she would use until she arrived at the university to start installing it.

The installation took place during her two-week residency in August. In a recent telephone interview, she said that she saw a floor plan of the gallery before her visit. The availability of ample natural light from windows in the gallery and the proximity of running water in a nearby restroom prompted her design, she said.

But she began her residency with no materials other than some plastic tubing and several electrically powered water pumps that she brought from Brooklyn, where she lives.

Swartz bought extension cords in Boone, and she scavenged the remaining components — recyclable plastic soft-drink bottles, Plexiglas boxes, plastic plumbing pipes, and plant specimens — on the campus.

The plants include water hyacinths, bamboo, algae and several types of moss. They are planted in six Plexiglas boxes that originally were custom-built as vitrines for use in protecting small sculptures for exhibition purposes. Swartz has transformed them into open-topped terrariums, interconnected by the plastic tubes that circulate the water.



JULIANNE SWARTZ PHOTO

Managed *Flow* Echo System was installed by Julianne Swartz, who fine-tuned the pipes and pumps so that a delicate balance is maintained and plants stay alive.

The piece was clearly designed for this gallery, which itself becomes part of the art. Swartz had to drill several holes through some of the walls to accommodate the various tubes and pipes.

Water from a sink in the nearby restroom is piped into the system that Swartz has devised, and five electrically-powered pumps continually recirculate the water at a rate of about 400 gallons per hour.

If the pumps fail to function evenly, the system will overflow, she wrote in a piece for the gallery. Should the water come in direct contact with the exposed wiring, it could create an electrical hazard. And if the water stops flowing through the pumps, the pumps will be destroyed and the plants will die.

"When the system is properly balanced, life, in the form of aquatic plants, is sustained, and the orderly, dry gallery space is maintained," she wrote.

Swartz created *Managed Flow Echo System* "to set order and chaos in opposition," she wrote. "It operates successfully, but on the edge of failure."

Getting the pumps properly calibrated and all of the other components to operate smoothly wasn't easy, Swartz said.

The gallery was flooded several times while she worked on the piece, according to Hank Foreman, the Turchin Center's director and curator.

At one point the building's custodian said that she didn't know whether the water on the gallery floor was art or the result of an accident to be cleaned up, Foreman said.

Eventually, though, Swartz fine-tuned the system so it worked even when the gallery is closed and the staff is away.

■ *Julianne Swartz's installation runs concurrently at Appalachian State University's Turchin Center for the Visual Arts with a sculptural installation by Stephen Hendee. Both artists are scheduled to present lectures about their work on Saturday at 7 p.m. at the Turchin Center, as part of a conference of the Tri-State Sculptors organization. The lectures are free and open to the public. The Turchin Center is at 423 W. King Street in Boone. For more information phone (828) 262 3017.*