

**Susan Graham and Julianne Swartz  
Schroeder Romero  
Through October 21**

Susan Graham and Julianne Swartz offer two different visions of ethereal, tenuous realities that meet momentarily in passing. Graham presents small, dreamy cyanotypes, delicate sculptures, and hypnotic videos. Swartz assembles an elegant installation with a pitiable life span out of simple elements.

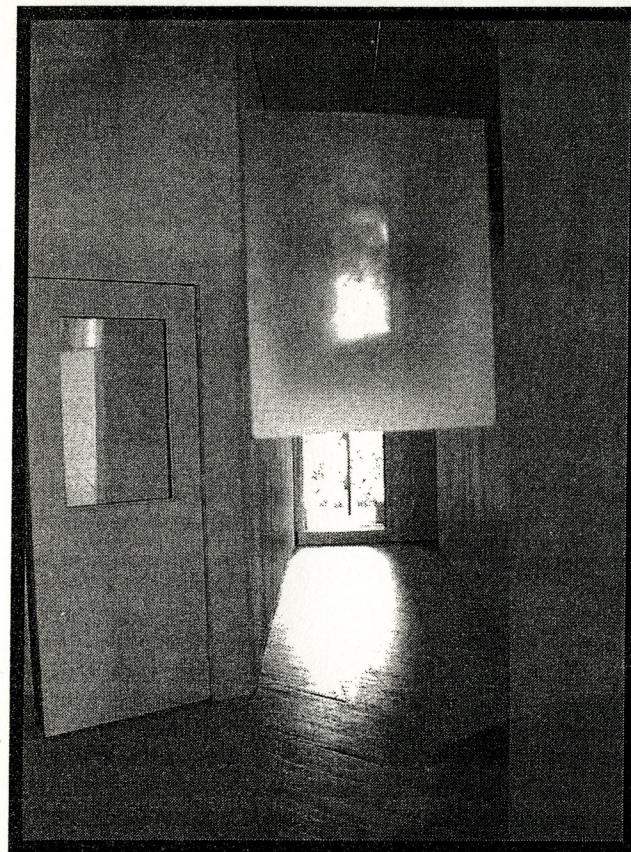
Graham's show, *New Small Works*, is dominated by fifteen attractive cyanotypes of romantic Sci-fi dreamscapes. The spare, monochromatic images, done in small editions of 3 and 5, depict futuristic devices in a barren, desert like landscape. Planets, satellites, observatories, and skyscrapers shimmer in the atmospheric vistas. Graham's grainy images, as if pulled from a live video feed, evoke a real sense of place, however imaginary.

Her two videos, super-8 transfers, add to the cinematic feel of the cyanotypes, and extend the narrative possibilities. In *Approximations-Dream Sequence 1*, a woman looks blankly at a mysterious, darkened doorway. In the flickering light, her features appear apprehensive. Nothing happens, only the possibility of passing through or beyond. Meanwhile *Squall*, a video projection on a small transparent cube, captures a storm of color and light in Graham's odd world. Both films appear to be made very simply. They speak to the economy of Graham's process, as she makes a world out of simple means, without expensive technology.

Similarly, Julianne Swartz spins a delicate web of illusion and perception out of a garden, mirrors, lenses, and glass. The site-specific installation, *Garden Details, Imported and Compressed*, creates an ethereal reality out of the commonplace. By merging two separate gardens into the gallery space through mirrors and lens focused on translucent glass, Swartz creates "painterly" compositions. On three progressively smaller glass plates, inverted views of two rooftop gardens are projected by small lenses. The projection devices are delicately hung with filament. As the viewer approaches the gardens, the faded illusions retreat, growing smaller. The installation engages art history on a surprising number of levels, from its relentless comparison of image and reality to painting's relationship with photography. The installation seems to grow out of the very real confines of New York living, and the necessary invention of distorting, stretching, and moving space. Swartz brings the garden around corners, an impossible view made real, and this is exactly what Graham does in another way.

Both shows engage time and notions of reality, but they start and end in very different places. Graham travels through her imagination, capturing a reality through photography and sculpture. Swartz inhabits the everyday, transforming it, however briefly, into something poetic. Swartz's installation provokes a deeper reaction by its brief life span. Even though temporary art is a trope, that the unique perspective will disappear without being experienced by a larger audience is a shame. It's actually reassuring to know that Swartz's sculpture, *Camera-less-Video*, a distillation of her idea, is on sale. The artists' are generous, making the exhibition easy to like. The real strength is not in the immediate attraction but in its haunting impression and the desire for more.

—William Powhida



Julianne Swartz, from "Garden Detail Imported and Compressed," 2002