

HYPERALLERGIC

Sensitive to Art & its Discontents

NEWS

Corin Hewitt & Molly McFadden Play Double at Recess

by Lyra Kilston on November 19, 2009 0

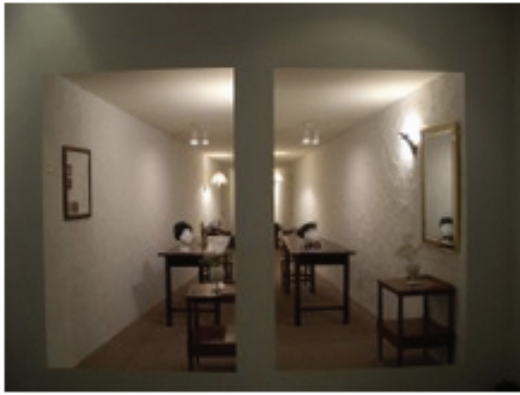
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Recess storefront (via the Recess Activities Inc. Flickrstream)

Recess opened on Grand Street in September as a storefront artist residency space open to the public. Embracing projects that use the space as both a site for creation as well as display and public interaction (the director describes its mission as proposing “a shared time span” between artist and audience), Recess’ inaugural show is *Double Room*, by Corin Hewitt and Molly McFadden.

I was introduced to Hewitt’s work just last winter with his solo project in the lobby-level gallery of the Whitney Museum. Titled “Seed Stage,” it was an elaborate circular system of gardening, cooking, canning, composting, sculpture, and photography, confined within a roughly 20 x 12 foot long built room. Hewitt, visible through slits cut into the corners of the room, worked inside, tending to seedlings, turning compost, frying up fragrant lunches in cast-iron pans, and taking pictures. His photographs were vivid still-lives made from the materials in the room (like fresh or rotting fruit), layered into collages of re-photographed photographs and plaids made from a computer program that digitally turns any photograph into a plaid with corresponding colors. The resulting images were stunning, and the parallels between cycles in plants and image-making provided a fresh and novel way to tackle the complexities of reproduction/recycling/replication that is often, in other hands, reduced to dry illustrations of discourse.



*A view of 'Double Room' at Recess
(click to enlarge)*

Currently, Hewitt and Molly McFadden have built two perfectly identical rooms that narrow at their far ends, as they would in a drawing with a vanishing point. Decorated with carpeting, lamps, a houseplant, and dark wood furnishings, they have turned the gallery into twinned domestic workspaces. Each artist has been using these rooms as studios during open hours, creating artworks out of view from each other (but visible to us). When the artwork is complete they document it with Polaroid photos, and then slide the photos under a door between the

double rooms. They then try to make replicas of each other's unseen objects, working only from the photographs. Thus, each room begins as a perfect copy, but begins to morph as each artist's replica inevitably diverges from the original. At the end of each cycle of object/replica, the artists trade rooms and begin the process all over again. It's a complicated ritual, but raises strong ideas about replication, authorship, documentation, labor-as-performance, and collaboration ... with style. Go see for yourself.

This project continues evolving through December 5...NOW EXTENDED UNTIL DECEMBER 19. Hours are Thursday – Saturday, 12-6.