

Julianne Swartz

Speculative Mechanics * persistent optimism

September 17–October 23, 2004

Opening: Friday September 17, from 6 to 8pm

Josee Bienvenu Gallery is pleased to present *Speculative Mechanics* persistent optimism*, Julianne Swartz's first solo exhibition. Julianne Swartz is known for her sculptural installations that subvert traditional social conceptions of space.

Her invasion of the six floor museum staircase for the 2004 Whitney Biennial was received to wide acclaim: "*Best Sound sculpture, Site Specific Installation, and Most promising Emerging Artist: Julianne Swartz's stairwell sound-piece uses plastic tubing to disperse various versions of 'Somewhere Over the Rainbow'...Sound becomes water, electricity, blood.*" (John Perreault, Arts Journal)

Her work gently twists the power dynamics in place by activating transitional spaces rendered invisible by their function, and entangling the viewer physically and perceptually. In "*Can You Hear Me?*", commissioned this summer by the New Museum of Contemporary Art, she built a bright yellow conduit of plastic pipe that scaled the exterior of the building that houses Sunshine Hotel, one of the last flophouses on the Bowery. This low-tech periscope-phone enabled passers-by to engage in intimate conversation with the hotel residents.

The exhibition consists of eight new works. Three sculptural installations portray a precarious technology. *Un-Time Structure*, suggests a huge clock or sundial but instead of telling time, morphs and dissolves it. *Excavation* is a spindly tube system (a fiber optic "telephone" line) that winds through the entire gallery in order to transmit a miniscule miracle.

Four *Hybrid Periscopes* turn surveillance into introspection. Looking through a portal, falling down a rabbit hole, these optical machines project a reality that is no longer objective, impartial and firm. With ordinary materials such as mirrors, PVC piping, fiber optic cable, hardware or magnets, Julianne Swartz turns stable structures into ethereal environments.

In *You Are Here*, revolving convex and concave mirrors import and morph the room. The body loses a sense of gravity. The instinctive experience of receiving and processing data becomes visible and palpable. By perpetually disorienting, Swartz's re-enacts that magical moment of discovery, when you realize a transformation has taken place. Mechanical assemblages where optical device and observer are no longer distinct entities, reveal a new form of intimacy. Technology is humanized. Her speculative machines can convert any slogan into a password and any conventional perspective into infinite view-points. Her work initiates a durable vertigo and a contagious wave of persistent optimism.

Julianne Swartz received her MFA from Bard College and currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. Her work has been widely exhibited throughout the United States. She is currently preparing for exhibitions at the Colby College Art Museum in Waterville, Maine, and the Angles gallery in Los Angeles, California.