

Following on the heels of a September reopening, Artspace filled its new gallery space, almost literally, last November and December, with Marcia Huyer's sculptural installation *Wayfinding*.

*Wayfinding* is a sort of soft sculpture-cum-architecture made of air-supported Tyvek fabric ballooning out in soft geometric shapes that cover about half the gallery floor and fit snugly into some of the gallery's front windows. The sculpture is lit from within and is inflated by blowers inside, which makes it move slightly. Although the use of Tyvek and the sound of the ventilation system suggest something industrial, its softness, subtle movement and translucency (which reveals a network of veins) imply organism as much as construction. There is an undeniable sense of play, innocence and nostalgia, but not frivolousness, in the installation. It is reminiscent of an inflatable bouncy castle and seems a bit like a utopian adult playground, yet the sculpture is remarkable in the way it engages the viewer mentally and emotionally. It seems distinctly otherworldly, ethereal, and calming, so that walking through it becomes a form of meditation. Furthermore, the piece speaks to issues of shelter, privacy and intimacy and troubles ideas about how architecture and bodies share public space. It also engages with the viewer in a physical, real way, with its vast soft crevices into which you can walk and even hide, crevices that warmly surround and embrace you in an oversized hug.

In *Wayfinding*, Huyer cleverly plays with the tropes of modernism. She inverts the idea of the modern gallery's "white box" format by creating light-filled "white pseudo-boxes" that act as the physical positive to the surrounding, *negative* space of the gallery's white box. The adaptability and flexibility of Huyer's installation to various spaces and her use of light, energy and space to create an interactive and affective sculpture also transcends modern sculpture's typical visual language. Instead of hardness, immutability and visual autonomy, Huyer offers softness, temporality, emotion and interactivity. Also, instead of ignoring the body, she engages with it, but not so that her work would ever be called "body art" or (arguably more pejoratively) "woman's art."

Huyer's *Wayfinding* functions and succeeds on both aesthetic and conceptual levels and does neither halfway - a notable feat by an artist who just completed her MFA. Conceptually the installation is rich and fraught; aesthetically it is slick, seductive and bang-on. With *Wayfinding*, we see Huyer doing just that, finding her way.

[A review of *Wayfinding*, by Tara Marshall, to be posted on Artspace's webpage.] November 2006

