



## Re Place

MATT MORRIS // SEP 26, 2007

Darkness has fallen over a large corner of the main gallery at The Carnegie Visual and Performing Arts Center. The artist responsible is **DEANA ANN RENNICK**.

The installation is called **RE PLACE**, and it deals with perceptions of space. Certainly, this issue is a popular one in installation art: Looking at Rennick's piece, one might recall James Turrell's dark, ambiguous rooms distorted by colored light and shadows. But rather than employing sophisticated smoke and mirrors, Rennick uses vast amounts of simple or cheap materials (in this case, black mesh window screening) to voluminous, encroaching effect.

The semi-transparent screen is sewn into many square columns that are anchored into the ornate ceiling of The Carnegie's Great Hall, hung close together and dropped to different lengths. At their most concentrated, the repeated modules read as solid darkness, ominous and alien in their descent around the viewer.

Many of the columns hang low enough that viewers can be closely engaged with the materials; in other words, it never stops being window screening. While remaining an everyday material, it conjures up dramatic visual power with the raw material itself. This piece is a gathering storm, stuck into the top edge of an interior space.

In both the current art world and society at large, there is a real resistance to didacticism, a growing distaste for the misuse of sermons and soapboxes. Enter the power of Formalism: the sensitive manipulation of form, color, texture, opacity and placement in a work such as Rennick's elicits poetic questions about forces within our current socio-political landscapes without limiting the power of its inquiry with overly specific references.

"Re Place" is about occupation and thin layers of darkness adding up to an atmosphere that is thick and pregnant. It raises questions about the nature of forces that are above individuals. It shows the viewer a mass constructed from a single repeated form. This installation is about all of these things because it is physically all of these things. It suggests meaning that is extrapolated from its physical, formal presence.

Part of the exhibition *Installations and Performances*, "Re Place" is on display at The Carnegie through Oct. 12.

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