



Party on the Patio

The Core Fellows make themselves at home in the Glassell

BY KELLY KLAASMEYER

A guard is sitting on the front porch of the Glassell School of Art, resting his elbows on his knees in the fading afternoon sun. Greenish light glows through the corrugated fiberglass roof and onto the bare wood of the floor planks. Everything has the fresh-cut-lumber smell of unlimited potential. There are built-in benches, but someone has helpfully dragged out battered office chairs with exposed stuffing for extra seating. All that's missing is a moldy hide-a-bed. But, you may be thinking, the Glassell doesn't have a porch. Well, it does now, thanks to Core Fellow Allison Wiese, who created the incongruously warm and folksy touch for the sleek institutional building.

The raw lumber is distinctly at odds with the Glassell's crisp modernist architecture. But strangely, it is the building that seems out of place, not the porch. You see Wiese's

structure and think, wow, more buildings need porches. On a practical level Wiese has provided a friendly place to hang out in pleasant weather, but on a conceptual level she has drawn attention to a disjuncture between institutional architecture and human social tendencies.

This concern with things human crops up a lot in the **2003 Core Exhibition**, which contains works that are empathetic, quietly poignant and even romantic.

My Moist Kisses by Danny Yahav-Brown is the essence of ephemerality. Yahav-Brown kissed a piece of Plexiglas 182 times with Vaseline-coated lips. The greasy prints in perfect O's are clustered together in a cloudlike shape. The barely perceptible marks cast very visible shadows on the wall when light from a slide projector passes through them. The piece is tucked under

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the stairs, creating an intimate alcove that lures the viewer to crouch down and share in the intimacy.

Yahav-Brown's magic of understatement is apparent in the projection piece *Mouse Hole* as well. The white light from a slide projector strikes an empty can lying on its side on the floor. Two tiny circular holes are punched in the bottom. The resulting shadow creates a black hole at the base of

if the houses look the same, two quintessentially Houston bungalows are exactly rendered side by side. In the middle, a woman hides her face in her hands and leans against the clapboard, levitating a couple of feet in the air. The unobtrusive figure feels like an apparition manifesting the unsettling emotions contained by the seemingly placid homes. *One never knows, after all, now does one now does one now does one* shows a Calvary-like drawing of a hill with a central cross flanked by the stumps of two others. A simple little figure dangles from the arm of the central cross, doing chin-ups or clinging desperately, we don't know which.

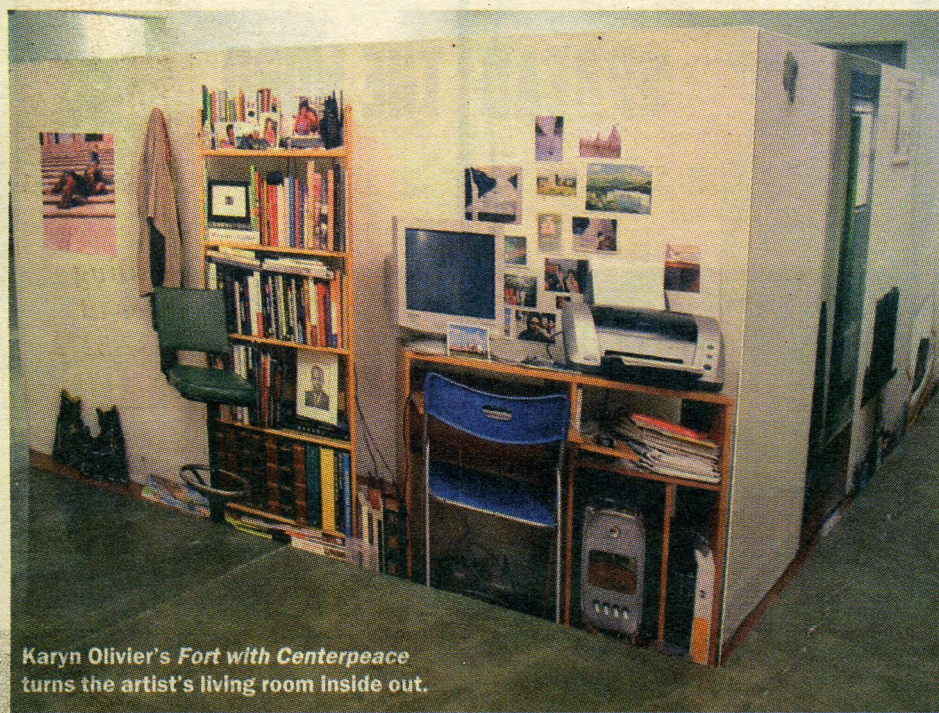
Working within her own emotional tenor, Palais de Tokyo exchange student Julia Rometti has turned the Glassell auditorium into an installation, with a pale pinkish-purple glow filling the room. On a gray-painted side wall is *Last Love - Lost Heart*: White script vinyl lettering spells "Lst"; the space between the letters is filled with a pink neon heart. I suppose the heart could also read as a "u" for "lust," but the piece seems too melancholy for unbridled passion. On the auditorium's screen is Rometti's video *Coeur Perdu*. Slo-mo city scenes lurch along to a mellow soundtrack, moving at an inconsistent speed, as if being run through a video player with a hand crank. A willowy, fashionably dressed Asian woman is shown walking through city streets and a grassy expanse. Is the lovesick camera stalking her, or is it empathetically recording her movements? The video feels like the interim scenes in movies, when the main character is in movement or reverie between emotional events.

You can be a guest in someone's home and take only cursory note of their pictures, books and decorative objects. But personal spaces presented publicly suddenly become riveting. They are transformed into an abstract set of clues from which you struggle to glean information about the occupant. Karyn Olivier's *Fort with Centerpeace* lays out the artist's living room for all to see. Life-sized photomurals of the artist's living room are adhered to a space the exact size of said living room. We see a hand-me-down orange couch, coffee table, IKEA bookshelves, family photos, art books, Mac G4...But the images are on the outside of the rectangle, not on the inside. We are presented with the face of a personal environment; we can look, but we can't come in. And the images are cut off at six feet, creating a sense of constraint. Seen from the second floor, the rectangular space becomes a minimalist slab with an empty courtyard in the middle, inaccessible behind thick protective walls.

Wiese leads us into the show with a residential alteration to an institutional building. Olivier shows us a residential space but doesn't let us come in. Along the way, the other Core artists remind us what it's like to be human. ●

2003 Core
Through April 1
School of Art,
713-639-7500

"The History of Japanese Print"
Through April 2
of Fine Arts, H
Bissonnet, 713



Karyn Olivier's *Fort with Centerpeace* turns the artist's living room inside out.