



## **Review: Laura Hughes The Span of an Instant at Appendix Project Space**

Lisa Radon – published 08.29.2010

I have thought and felt many things in the course of experiencing a work of art, but Thursday night was a first. My experience, a momentary epiphany, really, was so startling that when I left I fell down a rabbit hole considering the relationship between perception and existence. Hello, Mr. Husserl. What happened is this: I became invisible, a ghost. *I* could see me alright, my hand in front of me in the darkened space of Appendix Project Space. But in the pale patterns of light cast on the three walls of the space apparently through its open rollup door, I cast no shadow. I passed my hand across a dim shaft of light to no effect; no shadow, no me. And I felt for a second, that feeling I sometimes get when I stand at the edge of something very high, that all of me, blood, muscle, and bone, from the very top of my head rushes down through my body, and I fall through my own feet.

I can't show you Laura Hughes installation at Appendix. I can't imagine photographing the faint vertical bands of light, leafdappled expanses, little idiosyncratic lines and trapezoids Hughes painted in fluorescent paint on the walls and floor, corners and beams of the garage space, so subtle were the glowing forms. But I can tell you that the longer we stood in the dark, the more heightened our sense of light and shadow, even if it was all illusion...a sliver of light spilling onto the concrete floor from a crack between door and frame, a brighter line at the edge of the garage door where hot afternoon sun must have slipped in. And the more we looked, the more we saw, as the artist had spent weeks in the space painting echoes of natural light that reached into the space at various times of the day, playing across the three sheetrocked walls. That sense of heightened awareness in the viewer felt very much to me like something Robert Irwin would hold to be one of the most pure aims of artmaking.

Further invoking Irwin, periodically the space would be lit by a single window shape of opaque plexi in the south wall, back-lit with a warm evening-like light. Coming in during a lit period, one might have assumed that that, as it were, was that...with its question of is it a real window, a light box, or light cast on the wall in the shape of the window? Primarily the window was a device to recharge the fluorescent paint while reminding us with a capital L that we're talking about light here, even in the darkness that follows.

One could dismiss this as decorative sleight of hand, but then, one would have to dismiss a whole lot of art for its use of technical cleverness. Alternatively we can say this is about light and shadow and how it shapes our perception of a space and our presence (or lack thereof) in it.

## 2 Comments

1. *SJPC* wrote:

[31 August 2010 at 12:56 PM](#)

Well done, Laura. Thanks for the review, Lisa – I was out of town during the opening and haven't had an opportunity to see the show!

2. *Lisa* wrote:

[1 September 2010 at 3:13 PM](#)

You must see.

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