



Museums

Site Aperture **Editors' Pick**

**Artists
want you
to look
up, or
down**



By Michael O'Sullivan Work by Talia Greene/Photo by Michael O'Sullivan | [More photos](#)
Friday, Oct. 14, 2011

Architecture, for the installation artist, is the ultimate blank slate. It can provide a thrilling opportunity, a maddening roadblock or both.

Four artists were invited to create site-specific artworks for [Flashpoint](#), a long and somewhat pinched gallery space in downtown Washington. Selected by curator and writer Danielle O'Steen (an occasional freelancer for The Post), the artists include Margaret Boozer, Mia Feuer, Talia Greene and Mariah Anne Johnson. The results of the show, called "[Site Aperture](#)," are mixed. But two of the women - Boozer and Johnson - more than succeed by confronting the space, and its idiosyncrasies, head on.

One makes you consider the ground beneath your feet; the other, the space above your head.

Boozer's "Line Drawing" consists of soil and rocks that the artist collected from the City Center construction site, a mammoth pit under development on the site of the former D.C. Convention Center, just one block north of the gallery. (It's worth a side visit, as long as you're in the neighborhood. The hole itself is a work of art.)

Laid lengthwise down the center of the gallery's floor, the carefully arranged, 59-foot-long strip of earth and stones has an inherent artfulness to it. Boozer, a ceramic artist by training, sure knows how to make dirt look good. It's like a Martha Stewart centerpiece made from clods of raw clay. But Boozer's interest isn't just aesthetic. In a city of sleek high-rises - like the one the gallery is in - where our connection with nature is often denied, the artist wants to remind us of what lies beneath.

Johnson holds our attention by hiding from it. The artist, who is known for meticulously color-coordinated installations of stacked, folded bed linens - that's right, sheets and pillowcases - takes a page from the Easter Bunny's book, by concealing her art in plain sight. Most of it is well above eye level, tucked into odd little voids and recesses around the gallery's overhead conduits and ducts. Some of it spills, drapelike, into your line of sight here and there, but the bulk of Johnson's installation, called "Station Fire," makes you work for it. In the words of the artist, "it flirts with" being overlooked.

Event Information

DETAILS: Sept. 30-Nov. 5:
Noon-6 p.m.
Tuesday-Saturday
INFORMATION: 202-315-1305
» [Web site](#)

PRICE: Free

Flashpoint
916 G St. NW
Washington, DC

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Location



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Like Boozer, Johnson's subject isn't just the material. In a traditional gallery, she says, "You're not supposed to see the room. You're supposed to see the art." Here, Johnson turns that notion on its head, and makes something ugly - something invisible, even - beautiful. If you like her stuff, you can see more of it at [Harmon Art Lab](#). (See "The Story Behind the Work.")

Feuer and Greene's art is visually interesting but with less staying power. That's probably because the work connects less with the space itself than with a vague, generalized notion of inside/outside. In Feuer's case, that's expressed through a hanging, mobile-like assemblage of black pipes capped with papier-mache animal heads. For Greene, it's an installation of trompe-l'oeil ants - printed on wallpaper and on a kind of ticker tape that's strung around various corners of the gallery.

"Site Aperture" is worth a visit. As the name implies, it means to kick a hole, metaphorically, in the gallery wall, and to make us look outside our comfort zone. Greene and Feuer accomplish that by bringing something that's a little bit wild inside, where it doesn't belong. For Boozer and Johnson, that's accomplished by getting us to open our eyes, and to see what's already there.

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