



**Project
Space**

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Roomies

Jenine Marsh

November 22 – December 14, 2013.

For her exhibition *Roomies*, Jenine Marsh has created an installation for Xspace's Project Space that evokes tension between dimensionality and surface. Distinctions between interior and exterior, inhabitant and the inhabited are hazy.

Terracotta partitions cluster throughout the perimeter of the space. The surface corrugation is echoed and amplified in the walls' overall undulations. At once warming and obscuring, this two-tiered pattern vibrates the space. Plywood spines fix the cardboard in its wobbled state and at times these supports back into the room, conceding a possibility for further shifts. At turns confronting and coy, these walls have disengaged from architecture to act as backdrop, participant, and observer in the goings-on of the space.

A feeling of simultaneous construction and dismantling permeates. Walls are coaxed into the room, while objects collapse into less space than they are accustomed. Materials that favour surface are propped into a fuller dimension. Ordinarily voluptuous objects are compelled into flatness. Flowers, once beckoning and open, are dried and shellacked into pictoriality. Stacked and deflated terracotta pots languish on the floor like a distilled incarnation of the ribbed structures that surround them. A pair of gloves performs a mirrored self-portrait, showing the flip sides of gloveness.

Seams of construction are often frank, particularly in the plaster and plexiglass works that face each other. They each bear an image of a plant that is sensed more than seen outright. Their bookend configuration declares an earlier correspondence but despite this starkness, an origin narrative remains slippery. Like charmed snakes, material identities perform somewhere between coercion and willingness.

Through sidelong attempts at camouflage and emulation, the inhabitants of this space mingle traits. Like roommates, they are not simply bodies sharing a space. They express a confluence of behaviours and vibes, and adjust themselves in relation to each other. The question of who brought what becomes contestable. We are in a zone of flexible dimension, where the conditions for a settled existence are just out of reach.

- Nikki Woolsey



Thank you to the Toronto Arts Council