

Dam, Stuhltrager Gallery
38 Marcy Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11211

June 2007

“The Secret Arch,” (2007) by China Blue appears under a white-covered canopy. Two hidden microphones are deployed to recreate the Whispering Gallery at the end of the Oyster Bar ramps in Grand Central Station. The artist utilizes the trajectory of sound to carve space, while implicating the gallery visitor as an eavesdropper on brief, whispered secrets from persons unknown. Sometimes the voices can be heard with a clarity that diminishes the sense of illicitness that seems to be the intention of the work. A laptop and a microphone are provided in a corner of the room for anyone who would like to add his or her own thoughts to the computerized flow of consciousness. While sound sculpture is still marginalized by the mainstream due to its object-less nature, it is ironic that stodgy formalists are not more interested in the data-mining techniques involved in creating such works of art.

As new media gradually shifts sculpture away from the object and more toward sensory experience, such displacement not only counters the conspicuous consumption over saturating the contemporary art market, but it also raises the question of whether the very concept of art will gradually move away from the tangible sphere. Despite some slight weaknesses, these exhibitions succeeded in placing new emphasis on architectonics and realigning the boundaries of space with immaterial means.

Jill Conner