



## Review of Hi/Lo by Ryan Turley

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The ArtBridge Drawing Room  
526 W. 26th Street, 502a, NY, NY  
September 6 -- December 6, 2012

The ArtBridge Drawing Room is not much more than a closet—size wise—under the curatorial supervision of up and comer Jordana Zeldin. However, it packs a punch with Zeldin consistently doing a lot with a little. On the heels of her head turner *MsBehavior*, which included the work of abstract casualists Amy Feldman, Polly Shindler, and Amanda Valdez, she invited recent Pratt MFA grad Ryan Turley to transform the space into an immersive environment. Having explored queer content in prior work, it's interesting that a closet has ended up home to his wacky, shimmering sanctuary.

Only three people can enter *Hi/Lo* at a time, which made for a very long line during the opening reception. On a hot night like that, or perhaps any time in Manhattan, the cool and quiet of the curtained space was worth the price of admission, so to speak. With *Giant Psycho Tank* (2000), on exhibit not long ago at the New Museum, Carsten Höller offered a similar moment of contemplative, semi-solitude, but Turley does it without all the pesky wetness and nudity. And that's not to say you couldn't take your clothes off while visiting *Hi/Lo*. After all, the feeling is of privacy and expansiveness, not of rules and regulations.

Something of a psychedelic indoor treehouse—without the tree—the installation's sincere, DIY clumsiness gives it an adolescent charm. Reminiscent of the Pink Floyd *Dark Side of the Moon* album cover, it is predominantly black with crisscrossed diffraction film casting crystalline shards of prismatic light like a UFO landing strip. False perspective and a faint vertigo are created by a ramp carpeted with earthy woodchips inviting visitors to climb five feet up to sit.

## CONTINUED

You have a choice between twin black satin box seats that look a lot like urinals and consequently summon up another enclosed black space: Untitled (Medusa) (2006), Terence Koh's black urinal in a black box. If you don't want to sit with someone, a little additional ladder can take you up to a solo corner perch. There are stainless steel handrails to assist with your ascension.

On high, you look out on the blend of disparate materials, references, and sensations. The barn, the bar, and the strip joint as well as the theater, the jewelry box, and the photography darkroom are all evoked at the same time. Brightly colored electrical cords coiled on the walls contrast with the dung brown of the woodchips while the latter's smell disrupts the usual urban musk of car exhaust and ambition. It's easy to find dirt in the city but hard to find earth. The only other place I know of is Walter De Maria's Earth Room (1977).

Hi/Lo does not achieve the overwhelming wonder of Fireflies on the Water (2002), Yayoi Kusama's mirrored infinity on view this past summer at the Whitney Museum, but it's a start for an artist testing his chops in the challenging arena of installation art. If you need a time-out from Chelsea's bright white showrooms over the next three months, Hi/Lo is for you.

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