

Art in America

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Jean Shin at Frederieke Taylor

Jean Shin has recently earned a reputation for her transformative installations that imbue castoffs of our consumerist society with a new vitality. Several ambitious installations (all 2004) engaging sculptural assemblage, architecture, painting and drawing were the focus of the artist's first one-person exhibition at Frederieke Taylor Gallery.

For a large installation titled *Hide*, Shin dismantled hundreds of discarded leather shoes and sorted, sewed and assembled them into 13 sculptures that she suspended from the ceiling like flayed animal pelts, using an intricate system of tied shoelaces. Walking through the surreal forest of hanging "skins"—with their richly tex-

ured surfaces penetrated by apertures of their unmaking, like faces with their mouths wide open—became a complex spatial experience that invoked aspects of both abstract painting and architecture. Worn, wrinkled, torn, faded and stained, the splayed shoes bore traces of their pasts in the colors, grains, buckles, fringe, perforations, straps, patches, stitching and other intricate detailing. Through a laborious process, the animal hides had been initially transformed into functional footwear which, in turn, was recycled by the artist into a new entity that retained and yet transmuted its lineage.

Another installation, *Clothesline*, employed a series of white button-down shirts stripped down to their mere seams. Strung across a corner of the gallery, the work produced an evocative drawing of

linear shadows on the wall while deconstructing the uniformity of corporate dress.

From a distance, *20/20* appeared to be a beguiling cluster of floating, glistening objects. Upon closer inspection, it revealed itself to be an agglomeration of differently shaped and colored prescription eyeglasses, inserted into a thin wall built in front of a window. Viewers could peer through the lenses onto the landscape of urban architecture beyond, which was modified by the lenses in various ways. Looking through objects once worn by various anonymous individuals made the viewer conscious of the act of seeing and the relativity of experience. Here, as in much of her work, Shin brings together disparate histories in order to set new ones in motion.

—Susan Harris

Jean Shin: *Hide*, 2004, cut leather and suede, dimensions variable; at Frederieke Taylor.

