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Abstract Art Online

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Robin Hill

This artist has long been associated with creating conceptual installation art and this exhibition is characteristic of that. Here she has combined cyanotype photographic imagery (objects placed on photosensitive paper and subsequently exposed), in a huge banner piece that surrounds the room in a one hundred foot length. Actual plastic grocery bags used to create the banner's imagery are included in the installation.

What is most striking about this work are the ghostly and animated aspects of the banner figures combined with the bags themselves floating throughout the space. The surreal quality of this combined imagery suggests a variety of references everything from microbiology to a long, long row of teeth to, well, plastic bags as an iconic imagery to any number of other possibilities. Crucial to this aspect of the piece is the undulating blue background upon which the bag forms are placed. There is something about the smoky blue color that imbues the piece with a satisfying sense of dreamlike mystery.

The actual plastic bags seem to float through the space with an ephemeral weightless quality, which is replicated in the banner imagery. Simultaneously both are weighted and grounded - the bags by their tactile reality and the images by the blue ground plus the shadows and contours that define them. The contradictory handling provides the real and depicted forms with a rich complexity. The result is you are forced to look at these ubiquitous, familiar and highly disposable objects in some new and different ways.

But Hill is not content to merely depict, rather the entire space is utilized and transformed to elevate to these forms. Though the subject matter consists of a radical view of plastic bags, content is defined by using that view to challenge how we see and engage the world. In short, Hill seems to ask two things of us: Appreciate these simple and disposable forms, actual or depicted, for the beauty they contain. Then, extend that appreciation to an understanding, a way of *seeing* the world at large.

Drawing Rooms: Carl Palazzolo,
Denyse Thomasos, Robin Hill
January 16 - February 10, 2001