

ANAT EBGI

ARTFORUM

“Gordon Matta-Clark, Suzanne Harris, Tina Girouard: 112 Greene Street Years”

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View of “Gordon Matta-Clark, Suzanne Harris, Tina Girouard: The 112 Greene Street Years,” 2013.

Strip away the thick nostalgia that lards our collective memory of the art scene tied to SoHo in the early 1970s, and the vital attributes of the exhibition “The 112 Greene Street Years” at Rhona Hoffman Gallery shine through with a revelatory freshness. This is in large measure because curator Jessamyn Fiore (the daughter of Gordon Matta-Clark’s widow Jane Crawford) has opted to focus on the collaborative working relationships that existed between Gordon Matta-Clark, Suzanne Harris, and Tina Girouard, thereby keeping faith in the substance from which much of our present-day romanticized mythology of the time period derives.

By counter intuitively giving equal weight to each artist (and not solely focusing on the well-known male of the trio), the exhibition presents each of the artists’ work on its own terms, even as it provides the vivid atmosphere of the art’s context. Throughout the show there is a lightness of touch and commitment to whimsy, as well as something like a nonconformist politics of play—a taste of which can be found in Matta-Clark’s *Open House, 1972*, a film that documents a quasi-architectural installation in a Dumpster along with a group performance in the rain with umbrellas that occurred on the day of the opening. All of this suggests another mode of being in the world together, an alternative to the dominant sociopolitical paradigms of a time scarred by the Vietnam War and racial strife.

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Defying gravity in her film *Flying Machine*, 1973, Suzanne Harris suspends herself and another participant off the ground by an intricate pulley system, engaging in a trapeze artist-like dance. Tina Girouard's linoleum floor piece and fabric screens combine ornamental floral patterns with a Minimalist compositional logic that feels almost more than contemporary, despite the fact that their motifs have an air of the anachronistic about them, evocative of early-twentieth-century wallpaper and the Victorian-era art of pressed flowers. In a 1973 interview in *Avalanche* (quoted in the press release), Girouard stated, "I want [art] to be still breathing." Here in Chicago, almost a half a century later, it is.

Rhona Hoffman Gallery
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