

Caroline Cloutier, In-Between, The Invisible Dog Art Center, New York

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Caroline Cloutier

In-Between, site specific work,
The Invisible Dog Art Center,
New York.

Photos : courtesy of the artist

Caroline Cloutier

In-Between

Step inside the Glass House in the trendy Cobble Hill neighbourhood in Brooklyn and you might think you've walked into a luxury brand's most recent publicity stunt. Constructed in 2013 by Anne Mourier as part of a solo exhibition at the Invisible Dog Art Center, the building uses reclaimed wood and windows to create a delicate conservatory-like structure in a concrete and red brick landscape. Maintaining its DIY appeal, the space has continued to host artists willing to adapt their work to the unusual physical and aesthetic conditions of the site. For many New Yorkers, the project overseen by Invisible Dog director Lucien Zayan has become somewhat of a landmark—both a reminder of contemporary art's ability to surprise, inspire, and engage broad audiences, as well as a testament to Brooklyn's unsurpassed gentrification and *instagramification*.

It is in this context that Montréal-based artist Caroline Cloutier presented *In-Between*, a site-specific installation that thoughtfully plays on the basic premise of the house of mirrors. Capitalizing on the busy commercial area and the intriguing structure, the artist draws passers-by into what appears to be a vacant greenhouse. Once inside, viewers are treated to a provoking distortion of space. Inlaying roughly two hundred panels of hand-cut mirror into various sections of the Glass House's exoskeleton, Cloutier generates a series of new reflective surfaces in relationship to pre-existing transparent ones. In doing so, *In-Between* subtly transports an unsuspecting incidental audience into another architectural dimension.

Working for the first time in a heavily coded outdoor environment, Cloutier's interest in blurring the boundaries between architecture, image making, and sculpture take on new texture. From the street, where the interior's twist of the visual prism is barely discernable, the backing of mirror panels recalls photographic gray cards. Suspended along the

walls, these opaque surfaces compliment the glass openings by permitting different sightlines into the building—a grid of portals that mimic camera apertures. While the artist's previous work in white-walled galleries has engaged minimalist and conceptual art lineages, the volume(s) projected inside the Glass House open up new possibilities. The immersive installation, imbedded in a rich urban context, troubles the certainty of our experience of quotidian space. What initially appears to be a simple ocular detournement reveals itself to be a concerted introspective look at the performative power of architecture to engender critical reflections on subjectivity.

Inserting doubt as to what might be simulacra or real, the artist extends the Glass House beyond its original boundaries. Specifically, Cloutier breaks with the expectations of Cobble Hill's particular brand of hipster culture, carefully catalogued in the crisp images of lifestyle blogs. Instead, she produces a liminal environment in which the body and its surroundings are never whole. Both the viewer and Glass House are refracted and rearranged, melded into startling spatio-temporal compositions that defy perceptual logic. Continuously coming into being by refusing the satisfaction of an easily capturable moment and/or selfie, *In-Between* constructs a temporary enclosure that fragments the niceties of an otherwise easily consumable setting.

Didier Morelli

The Invisible Dog Art Center,
New York, September 8—
October 13, 2018