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August 29, 2008

J.J. McCracken, *Living Sculpture*



Tonight is the final night to see J.J. McCracken's *Living Sculpture*, a performative piece by an artist who is, in my opinion, the best performance artist in the area. From the look of it she's got a very *Drawing Restraint* show going on. Which isn't so surprising—there are a lot of parallels to be drawn between McCracken and Barney. She draws from non-arts training (she has a degree in anthropology) and her performances, from what I've seen, are ordered, repetitive, and fantastical. She keys into the anodyne and the narcotic—like Barney, her performances are slow, languid, but not endurance oriented. McCracken uses many assistants and does not seem to hang her performances on her own person. Do I even need to say that Barney's a little bit more self absorbed?

I wrote about McCracken's last piece, *Stasis*, for the *Washington City Paper* last year: read that [here](#).

Haven't seen *Living Sculpture* yet, but I've been waiting all week for the opportunity: tonight, 7:30 p.m., Project 4 Gallery. It's the last performance/the conclusion. A few thoughts before the show:

- Is there any mid-Atlantic art award that would recognize McCracken or artists like her? There are a number of awards, annual awards, that are supposed to reward good new art. Performance is never on the docket. I don't think performance art *could* be considered, because I think these awards are for the most part very provincial.
- Which brings up a second point—there's more performance art in this area than it's given credit for. Given credit for in D.C., that is. When I was in Texas, I saw a mini-corner of a show at an Austin *kunsthau*s dedicated to D.C./Philly performance artists. It took that outside perspective for me to get it, but it's true. (Also was very much not aware that there's a *kunsthau*s in Austin.)
- D.C.'s glass art gets a lot of play, but D.C.'s clay scene is stronger and more versatile. Margaret Boozer isn't a self promoter, but her **Red Dirt Studios** has attracted a lot of talent, artists who take it as a given that while the craft/art distinction is a moot point, *beyond* moot, there is still something to be said for focusing on those media. [Laurel Lukaszewski](#)'s sculpture, McCracken's performance work, Boozer's own **two-dimension-ish** applications—Red Dirt seems more like a strong gallery program than a studios.

Posted by Kriston at 1:48 PM | [Comments \(1\)](#)