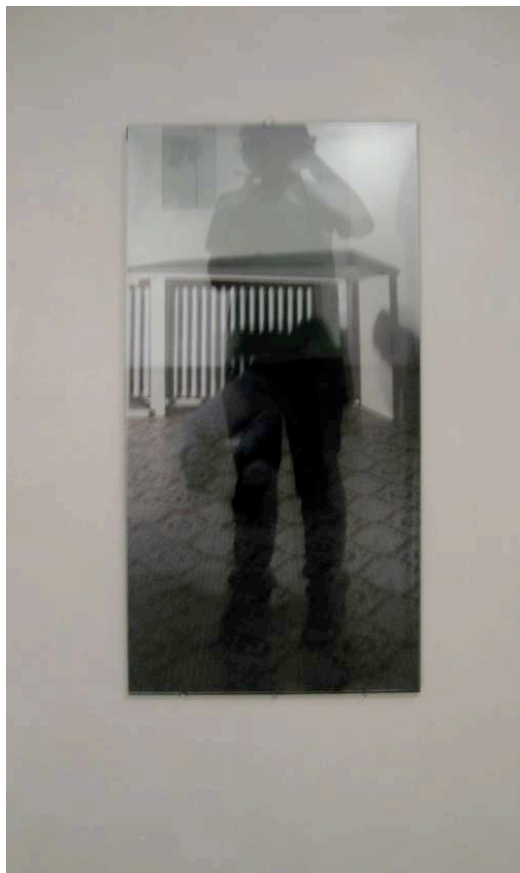


## The Name of the Game: You Are Out You Are In – Aniko Erdosi



I remember well when I first entered the small gallery of New General Catalog on Franklin Street in Greenpoint. The first thing that caught my attention was the beautiful space itself—not your typical white cube. I am positive that Darri Lorenzen can recall a similar encounter, how he must have been taken with its washed-out green tin ceiling and the almost domestic-looking mosaic floor. Offering Round Here, a site-specific installation for his first New York solo exhibition, the Berlin-based artist showed a sensitive, submissive yet potent approach. The result is a clear, compelling installation conjuring studied questions and theory about perception, spatial principles and metaphysical experiences.

Lorenzen's act was minimal in both concept and material. His process involved placing five narrow mirrors vertically on the walls, then taking photographs of the mirrored image from specific vantage points. All the pictures incorporate him as a mysterious, black-hooded character actively moving or doing something peculiar in different spots of the gallery. He installed the photographs exactly where the mirrors were before and covered them, unframed, with only a 3/8-inch thick clear glass. In the middle of the ceiling, he suspended a light bulb from a long, levered electrical cord. The mechanical arm conically spun the corded light bulb, non-stop, about 18 inches above the ground, creating dramatic shadow play with the visitor's body on the walls.

A mirror itself can be perceived as reference to a perfect visual trap: an immaterial image, which gives the illusion that it opens up a space, while closing it into itself at the same time. Lorenzen flips it back into a material image by giving it another twist by way of the thick glass. On the clear but reflective surface of the glass, one sees the mirror image of an identical but divided space, which, as the viewer stands precisely at the artist's original fixed spot, overlaps perfectly into a single architecture. The double mirror image thus becomes one, with a lone exception: Lorenzen's self-portrait and shadow in the photograph is missing from the present reflection.

This void is only partially filled by the viewer's physical presence in the space and by the casting of dancing shadows on the walls, leaving a narrow but clearly sensible gap in this playful narrative of mirrored and tripled images. It

is a non-linear, lifelike play (literally) based on our perpetual commute between visions, illusions and material perception, or the physical and metaphysical. Reflecting (literally) on these spiritual connotations, the bulb constantly orbits and makes smaller and bigger our shadows, repeatedly. The light object evokes the seemingly neverending cycles of life and its ritualistic tendencies.

As the shadow also represents the sometime imperceptible boundary between the material and the immaterial, it neatly completes the artist's subdued, mute "shaman-dance" installation. In Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*, the shadow is privileged and identified as what is real, known and safe, vs. the supernatural. The one without a shadow represents what we fear and avoid confronting. The mysterious character in Lorenzen's images has a shadow but does not have a face, an aspect of the work that is scary and enigmatic. It is this psychological realm that Lorenzen's silent installation guides us through.

The last part of the narrative is linear and belongs to the past. This is a narrative of the site itself, where one cannot help musing on what came before. Was the gallery once a home, a barbershop or maybe a restaurant? What stories did it play witness to? The space's present beauty is also its history, the footprints of everyday life. The humility that Round Here engages with New General Catalog is an act of quiet captivation, a collaboration whereby artistic idea and space bring one another to lively life.

Round Here is an exciting interactive experience that also reminds us of the body's physical and perceptual limitations. Of all art mediums, site-specific installation most emphasizes human scales and proportions. These are "proximity narratives" tailored to the human body in which the sensory experience of the artist and audience are also determined by physical potentials.

Lorenzen's low-key reflection to the architectural space and input of the optical illusion recalls the site-specific installations of contemporary artists such as Fred Sandbeck and Olafur Eliasson. But by including the unfolded and the hidden narratives Lorenzen extends the range of interpretation.

As I left the space, my thoughts clung to the idea of physical limitations, pondering, "where does shadow end and mirror image began?"

Aniko Erdosi is an independent curator and art critic based in New York.

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