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LIGHT IT UP: (From top) "Forest for the Sea" at Smack Mellon in Brooklyn and "Extended Afternoon Phase Three" at the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art in Ridgefield, CT

## Cast a Shadow

Brooklyn artist Mary Temple lights up a room (or at least pretends to) with her trompe l'oeil installations

Writer LUCY MADISON

Mary Temple has, quite literally, mastered the art of deception. In "Recalesce," her series of trompe l'oeil murals, the Brooklyn-based artist employs the subtlest of paint jobs to project the impression of light and shadow onto the walls of a windowless room. The effect is an eerily convincing silhouette of an outdoor environment that isn't there. Temple, who trained as a traditional painter before beginning her experiments in 1999, meticulously measures, photographs and analyzes an interior before ever dipping her brush. After refinishing the room in the original shade of paint, she stencils in the impression of faux light filtered through trees or a window.

While the illusion is a feat in itself, the artist finds less satisfaction in her technical prowess than in a viewer's reaction to a piece. From the initial response – a triggering of memories associated with a similar environment – to the moment of revelation that one's been fooled, the process of understanding the work becomes an emotional one. "For me, it's about getting the viewer to that moment of confusion," Temple says. "I believe that sense of doubt is the beginning of a learning process." **LM**



PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND MIXED GREENS, NY