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CORIN HEWITT
Medium/Deep

October 30–December 23, 2011
Opening reception October 30, 6–8pm

Five staggered cast-dirt walls articulate the stage in Corin Hewitt's exhibition, *Medium/Deep*. Behind each, a surrogate figure – off-stage actors composed of concrete, steel, wood, aluminum, simulated pegboard, aprons, makeup, scents and pigments – anticipates an entrance, or its discovery. This minimal scenery, the ground literally up-ended, reveals itself as part of an anxious proscenium: the liminal space of wings, off-stage areas, and what is referred to as crossovers. In a 1927 lecture-demonstration at the Bauhaus, Oskar Schlemmer considered the importance of the theater stage as an "orchestral organism" itself, a space where the metaphysical needs of man are met through illusions that create a transcendent reality. Here, the gallery becomes the backstage of a stalled metaphysical play and its dramatic subjects: the studio space, the artistic performance, and material itself.

Merging anthropomorphic postures with natural and artificial architectural materials, Hewitt's works presuppose that self-performance is not limited to the living, and that the fixity of objects is also suspect. Following a series of recent performance-exhibitions, including *Seed Stage* at the Whitney Museum, Hewitt's installation dismantles the framing devices that have thus far characterized his durational performances. Absent from the stage himself, the artist's body is replaced by chimerical offspring, both sinister and playful confluences of raw material and dramatic pose – sculptural materials playing themselves.

The gridded, cast-earth screens are curious, fertile geometric blinds that not only conceal and bury, but also suggest growth and potential. Perfectly formed into uniform blocks for construction, Hewitt's dirt tiles function as temporal and material units of measure while still redolent of mortality. Soil, an aggregate field, is both origin and end, constantly in decay yet giving way to life. These tiles, however, function only as façade, revealing their unfinished plywood backs. Similarly, the dramatic space of the theater and our collective suspension of disbelief locate perception, simulation and projection at the center of the work, simultaneously rejecting the idea of origin or the possibility of any space as real.

One catches the I-beam in the midst of putting on its make-up, the gallery's column perfumed with the scent of its past, and the two-by-four caught in an awkward contraposto pose. The viewer becomes implicit in the stage as laboratory, and the unsettling consequences of the theater suspended in the wrong, unfinished moment.

Corin Hewitt lives and works in Richmond, VA and Vermont. Hewitt has exhibited widely, including solo exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Seattle Art Museum, and the Atlanta Contemporary Art Center. His work has recently been included in group exhibitions at P.S.1, New York; the Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Oslo; the Henry Art Gallery, Seattle; and Galerie Perrotin, Paris. In the past year, Hewitt was the recipient of the Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship in Fine Arts and The Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant for Painting and Sculpture. This is his first solo exhibition at the gallery.