

## The New York Times

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HOLLAND COTTER, Art in Review

# Heather Rowe Leslie Hewitt

Heather Rowe's solo show is a magnum opus version of the architectural sculpture she has been giving us in a more fragmentary form until now. The basic elements are slender uprights with small shelves and alcoves, and irregularly placed strips of reflective materials. In the past the results have resembled free-standing barriers or openwork screens, dividing the space of the gallery. The single large work in this show, though, is a full walk-in enclosure that narrows to a sharp point.

The effect is like an image of a ship or an odd-shaped cage, but even more like a house fitted out with decorative detailing: pieces of cabinetry and ornamental molding, small mirrors and so on. Over the last few years, it seems, we have been watching this young artist slowly, step by step, build a home. Starting with a wall, expanding to a room, it's now an almost-grand enclosure. And the more ambitious it becomes, the more haunted it feels, as if it were also growing a secret history.

Half-hidden history is also the basis of Leslie Hewitt's work. Her recent photographs of collages — made from other photographs, newspaper clippings and handwritten notes — refer to African-American history from the 1960s onward, without claiming an obvious stake in that history. Her solo show here works in a similarly distanced way, but in the form of a walk-in installation.

It has three parts. One is a short, grainy video, vaguely ethnographic looking but actually a performance, of a black woman in an "exotic" setting walking with a stack of books on her head. The second is a typed first-person statement by the writer Rose Olu Ronke Ojo in which a woman describes seeing another woman, probably an immigrant to New York City, who reminds her of her own mother. The third is a photographic montage that includes dictionary definitions of words related to consumption.

The parts don't add up to an easily translatable whole, but pack all kinds of ideas about the not-at-all-hidden burden of neo-colonialism as an old story and a continuing reality.

*Through Dec. 23rd at D'Amelio Terras, 525 West 22nd Street, Chelsea; (212) 352-9400.*