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Review: Patrick Jackson at François Ghebaly Gallery

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Patrick Jackson, "The Third Floor" Installation View, 2013 (Courtesy of the Artist and Fran?ois Ghebaly Gallery)

Patrick Jackson's show brought me to my knees—literally. The artist has remodeled François Ghebaly's split-level gallery, building an entry-level floor above the semi-subterranean main space. Carpeted like a model home in thick white wall-to-wall, it makes the space seem less vertiginous and more like a traditional gallery. That is, until you see the hole in the floor.

Stairs lead down to what is perhaps best described as a half-floor, laced with metal scaffolding and dirt-colored carpet. For anyone larger than a small child, standing upright is impossible. The basement-like space forces you to stoop or kneel, and then completes your obeisance by asking you to clamber unceremoniously over and through the metal bars.

Adding to the peril of the situation are many, many ceramic pots, clustered mercifully around the scaffolding's uprights. Most are black and charred looking, but several are brightly colored and textured, resembling oversize, grotesquely cheery coffee mugs. They are variously filled with what look like crystals, ice cubes, fingers or dung (complete with flies). The overall effect is of a crazy, long-neglected basement laboratory—perhaps once staffed by dwarves.

Upstairs on the walls are more docile abstract ceramic pieces titled "Blinds," "Window," and "Curtains," suggesting comforts of domesticity that mask roiling pots of chaos below.