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Art in Review
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Jesse Bercowetz, Matt Bua and Carrie Dashow: "Pent-Up and Under Gone"
Jessica Murray Projects
150 11th Avenue, near 22nd Street
Chelsea
Through tomorrow

Jesse Bercowetz and Matt Bua often collaborate on obstreperous installations, usually with strong architectural and social connotations. Here they continue the exploration of Roosevelt Island – its history, decay and weird vibes – that they began in 2004, working with the video and performance artist Carrie Dashow. The effort has already yielded "Under Island," an installation exhibited at P.S. 1 last fall.

The return visit conjures up a sinister sense of abandonment and encroaching nature, telegraphed to the street by the gallery's exterior. It has been boarded over with jagged lumber and evokes an abandoned mine shaft, a madman's shanty or the urban hideout of a street gang.

Nothing inside quite matches the startling facade, but not for lack of trying. Dim lights and a floor covered with dirt provide the setting for a large, glowing podlike sculpture by Mr. Bua and Mr. Bercowetz. It looks like a spaceship but actually represents a fallen lighthouse that is also home to assorted insects. (Most of the larger, scarier ones are sculptures, but not the giant millipede.)

Like a sacred vessel at the center of a shamanistic rite, the sculpture is surrounded by Ms. Dashow's "Informants," five robotic, spiderlike steel sculptures. Their heads are small monitors playing videos that explore various bits of landscape and dank undergrowth to ambient sounds that include the music of the Albany Harp Singers. One video documents the Albany band Evolution Revolution, performing as they are wont, in wolf masks..

In the back gallery, relatively small but still prickly wall pieces by Mr. Bua and Mr. Bercowetz convey the complexity of the history that is at play here. These works maintain a credible degree of obstreperousness, but the progression from the unsalable facade treatment to portable objects is striking and something of a letdown. ROBERTA SMITH