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ART

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Don't Miss 'Never Missing A Line'



(Jennifer Manley)

Berlin-based Monica Bonvicini at her first U.S. museum solo show, which consists of two massive text works now on view at the SculptureCenter in Long Island City.

by Jennifer Manley
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The latest installations at the SculptureCenter in Long Island City is, as always, a fascinating nexus of art and the space it occupies.

Headlining this latest batch—in giant, demanding, blinking letters—is a piece by internationally renowned artist Monica Bonvicini. The imposing sculpture, which is installed in the center's cavernous main gallery, consists of the words "Built for Crime." Each letter is cut from safety glass and adorned with a series of lightbulbs, blinking on and off in unison.

Much of Bonvicini's work over the past decade has centered on themes of architecture as a powerful, political and specifically masculine statement. This work follows along that line, and is particularly poignant set as it is here, against the backdrop of a rising Long Island City skyline; several massive construction projects can be seen from the center's courtyard, where Bonvicini's second piece is installed.

Bonvicini's work tends toward the edgy and even risqué. An installation in 2004 consisted of a toilet enclosed in one-way glass on a London Street. Her award-winning 2005 installation "Never Again" involved a room full of leather, S&M style hammocks hung from heavy chains.

While Bonvicini's installations at the SculptureCenter are far less shocking, both welcome—practically insist upon—participation by the viewer on some level.

The polished metal of the billboard-style word "Desire" fills the courtyard and reflects the face of the observer, while the lights of "Built for Crime" force the viewer to share the physical space of the piece, as it alternatively illuminates the gallery, then plunges it back into darkness.

While Bonvicini's impressive work may well draw one down Purves Street to the SculptureCenter, the winter In Practice Projects presented in the other gallery

spaces make it well worth the walk.

Seven of the eight works from emerging artists can be found interacting with the curious space of the lower galleries of the center, which once served as a trolley repair shop and power station. Remnants of these past lives are present, if not part, of each installation.

They include Lucy Raven's exploration of American copper mining and a puppet animation film by Karen Yasinsky inspired by the 1934 film "L'Atalante," among others.

A video installation by Garrett Ricciardi and Ross Cisneros takes viewers on a thrill ride, IMAX style, on a roller coaster and other less kid-friendly experiences.

Karen Schneider's "Two or three things you should," involves a closed-circuit camera, a strobe light and a blurring of the line between the center's functional space and its exhibit space. It's a piece clearly built to be experienced, not described.

Amy O'Neill's "Forest Park Forest Zoo" is a series of found objects. It was inspired by a former petting zoo she discovered in Pennsylvania that was long abandoned and being overrun by the encroaching natural environment. O'Neill literally sourced the park, relocating its parts—such as animal cages, shed roofs and cartoonish displays—into the long, narrow gallery space.

The last word on this particular installation is left to the viewer, as it ends with a small hole cut into a wooden wall. Speaking at Sunday's opening, O'Neill offered this explanation for that decision: "When you look through a keyhole maybe you're trying to arrive at some sort of answer."

Monica Bonvicini's *Never Missing a Line* and the *Winter 2007 In Practice Project* exhibits will remain on view through March 25. Gallery hours are Thursday-Monday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Suggested donation \$5. SculptureCenter, 44-19 Purves St., Long Island City. (718) 361-1750, www.sculpture-center.org. □