

Ann Binlot
Contributor

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SculptureCenter Inaugurates Newly Renovated Space With 'Puddle, Pothole, Portal'

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After over one year of renovations and an expansion, the newly completed [SculptureCenter](#) — which holds its [annual benefit gala today](#) — in Long Island City, Queens, is finally open. Located in what was once a trolley repair shop that was built in 1907, the newly renovated space, designed by Andrew Berman Architect, includes a 2,000-square-foot, one-story entrance lobby with bookshop, coatroom, seating area, and restrooms; as well as new elevator and stairway to the lower level galleries. For the space's inaugural exhibition, [Puddle, Pothole, Portal](#), curator Ruba Katrib and artist Camille Henrot, conceived of a whimsical, playful group show using illustrator Saul Steinberg's drawings and the film *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* as a starting point. Judith Hopf has a video piece about a mischievous teenager titled Lily's Laptop, while Olga Balema contributed a sculpture of a latex glove titled Long Arm. I caught up with Katrib to ask her about Puddle, Pothole, Portal.



A view of *Puddle, Pothole, Portal* from SculptureCenter's main floor (@JasonMandella)

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/abinlot/2014/11/04/sculpturecenter-inaugurates-newly-renovated-space-with-puddle-pothole-portal/>

How did you come up with the idea for Puddle, Pothole, Portal?

The idea really came out of conversations between myself and my co-curator, the artist Camille Henrot. We were initially very interested in how digital technologies are changing notions of physical and virtual space, the expansion of the “screen,” and how that has impacted the relationship between sculpture and drawing. We were scouring her bookshelf in ecstatic conversation, and while we were leafing through Saul Steinberg’s *Illuminations* book we both became silent as we came across a drawing that perfectly encapsulated everything that we were thinking and excited about. The exhibition really started to take shape then, and expanded to include early 20th century cartoons and the film, *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* as touchstones.

Explain the title.

The title speaks to spaces that open up, temporarily, to reveal something both outside of and within them. The puddle is more natural, the pothole more urban, and the portal more virtual. Also, Steinberg uses a lot of puddles in his drawings, and for him, they also distort the exterior reality and disguise something beneath them. They are all windows into alternate realities, operating as transitory spaces, mundane but also fantastic.

The exhibition is the first in the newly inaugurated SculptureCenter space, when conceiving of the show, Was it your intention to connect the space’s architecture to the works?

The core of the exhibition really was formed out of the ideas Camille and I were thinking about, however the installation took the concept and the building into consideration. It was important to incorporate the new flow and timing within the building that our expansion created, which creates new potentialities for the artworks. About a quarter of the artists made new work and they also considered the building when developing their ideas, so there are many site-engaged artworks and commissions that also play with the architecture.



A view of SculptureCenter's new lobby (©Michael Moran)