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New York Critic's Pics

Do-Ho Suh  
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By Martha Schwendener

Is identity portable? If you've left the country of your birth, are you the same person you've always been, or a hyphenated hybrid of new identities? For immigrants, these questions are far from academic, and Do-Ho Suh, who emigrated from Korea in his late twenties, takes them to their logical conclusions. His notion of "transportable space" plays itself out in installations of translucent nylon, which he uses to re-create objects and rooms—in this case, his entire New York apartment. Walking through the installation, you get a sense of both being and nothingness: Every nook and cranny—down to the stove- and doorknobs—is carefully rendered in nylon, and yet everything is see-through, weightless as air, an apparition. You could pack this entire apartment into a suitcase. The antithesis of Rachel Whiteread's plaster space-negatives, which have become as heavy (literally and figuratively) as mausoleums, Suh's transportable spaces are both physically and psychologically light—paeans, perhaps, to the millions of people around the globe who are, by choice or necessity, on the move.

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