

February 3–9, 2005
Issue 488

MUSIC

Backstage with...

TRACY + THE PLASTICS

Time Out New York: We're sitting on top of a large wooden structure that's currently covered in sawdust, but will soon be transformed into a finished model of a living room where Tracy + the Plastics will perform. Can you explain exactly what the two of you are up to?

Wynne Greenwood: It started out when the Kitchen asked Tracy + the Plastics [Greenwood's one-woman band] to do a residency. I'd come build a set in which I would videotape a performance and then perform. So I'm collaborating with [sculptor] Fawn [Krieger]. This is going to be a living room—an installation during the day, and then at night there will be a Tracy + the Plastics performance inside.

TONY: Did the two of you know each other before this project?

Fawn Krieger: We went to graduate school together.

Greenwood: At the Milton Avery Graduate School for the Arts. It's at Bard, but I like to say "the Milton Avery Graduate School for the Arts." We just finished in August.

Krieger: I had been working with ideas of architecture and space—in particular the space for the female. It was an ideal set of emerging concerns.

TONY: Can you explain the performance?

Greenwood: Throughout the past year of touring, it became important for me to break down the weird barrier between the performer and the audience. For Fawn to come in and assess the actual construction of a stage, and how that physical struc-

ture creates a way for people to interact, became really intriguing. I was also thinking about the consciousness-raising groups of the '70s feminist movement—that idea of people being in a closed

room together, talking honestly and openly. During the performance, people can sit up front if they choose to, and there will also be microphones set up in the audience.

TONY: Did the idea of holding the concert in a fake living room come from the stereotype of a '50s housewife?

Greenwood: Last year, I did a performance about punk shows. I got really into the idea of how these shows can happen in any space. Growing up, that usually meant being in a living room or a basement. The living room is a place of community—and, of course, it's such a women's space.

TONY: Last year, Tracy + the Plastics performed at the Whitney Biennial; now you're working on this project. Oftentimes, when pop musicians step into the high-art world, it can seem like somebody's thesis fleshed out with music. How do you avoid this perception?

Greenwood: Singing is the one thing that never gets conceptualized for me. I can be like, "This is my feminist reimagining of the



Wynne Greenwood

space of a stage." But I don't think about those things when I write a song. When I step onto the stage as a performer, my identity calls me to be responsible for that space. Does that make sense?

TONY: Um...I'm not sure.

Greenwood: Well, no offense to you, but some white, straight guy can be easily critical of taking music into the art world or taking identity into music. I don't have the luxury of separating those things when I perform. And I don't want that luxury.

TONY: Okay—but doesn't performing inside a museum create a dry atmosphere for a pop performance?

Greenwood: I'm a lesbian. I come from a lesbian punk community that's so strong. That community makes walls disappear and makes stiffness melt.

—Jay Ruttenberg

Tracy + the Plastics' Room is exhibited at the Kitchen Monday 7–February 12.

Tracy + the Plastics perform at the Kitchen February 10–12.