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Aurora Robson, *The Great Indoors*, 2008 Commission, Rice University Art Gallery, Houston, Texas Photo: Nash Baker nashbaker.com

Rice Gallery: The Great Indoors

Aurora Robson

September 18th – October 26th

Delivering nightmares writ large against a tranquil tableau of recycled materials, Aurora Robson makes the banal beautiful in her show *The Great Indoors*, on view at Rice Gallery from September 18th through October 26th. Her installations reside in a space that speaks of the visceral while entirely constructed in plasticity. The effect is part David Cronenberg and part wonderland improv.

Robson speaks of her elaborate work as turning a negative into a positive. That origin may refer to the abundance of non-biodegradable plastic that she uses as source material or it may refer to her childhood plagued with nightmares. The artist strikes a chord either way in that *The Great Indoors* inspires an emotional response, due in part to the visceral allusions and also to the notion of waste being transformed into art. This latter aspect contains in it a sense of hope, due to a built-in eco sensibility but also to the artist's shrewd use of plastic. The fantastical constructions so convincingly speak of organic formations that the link between the man made and nature becomes sutured through Robson's hand.

The installation contains several chandeliers-like hanging ensembles that are fabricated out of strips of plastic. They have been frosted with spray paint so that the surfaces are tinted but still translucent. With lighting inside, the various amoebic forms are suspended around a larger tunnel-like apparatus. This main component of the show feels like a splayed-out intestine gone wrong. The dimensions are appropriately childlike, forcing adults to stoop upon entry, mocking a reverent bow into the hallowed halls of Robson's fear-inspiring imagination. Beautifully crafted with precise rivets holding the articulately cut bottles into folds and spirals that at times appear like large fingernails and at others like sea coral, Robson delivers an insightful display of horror show grandiose.

Garland Fielder