

GLADSTONE GALLERY

Andrea K. Scott, "Seeing Stars," *The New Yorker*, November 30, 2015

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SEEING STARS

A young New Yorker brings her space odyssey to the Whitney.

BY ANDREA K. SCOTT

A still from Rachel Rose's video "Everything and More," which includes footage shot at a space-station laboratory.

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It's still early for best-of-year list making, but best début of 2015 is a lock: Rachel Rose's transfixing video "Everything and More," conceived for the Whitney at the invitation of the sharp curator Christopher Y. Lew. The nonnarrative collage, on view through Feb. 7, combines footage that Rose shot of a space-station research facility, of a vast crowd at an E.D.M. concert, and, in her studio, of low-tech galactic abstractions. (Imagine a drifting Milky Way that involves real milk.) The soundtrack sifts together wordless vocals by Aretha Franklin (extracted from "Amazing Grace") and a recording of the American astronaut David Wolf, talking to Rose on the phone about the pleasures and perils of space. The result is an ecstatic epic about gravities, literal and figurative, which unfolds onscreen for eleven minutes and orbits in the mind's eye for days. When Wolf describes earth as "a jewel floating in blackness," it's as if he were describing Rose's piece itself.

I entered the show as a skeptic. The art world is a flavor-of-the-month club, and the twenty-eight-year-old artist, who has an M.F.A. from Columbia and a studio on the Lower East Side, arrives at the Whitney ensconced in consensus: features in the *Times* and *Artforum*, prizes from art fairs (Frieze and Artissima), the support of the inescapable tastemaker Hans Ulrich Obrist. But, as was the case a few years ago with another young video artist, Ryan Trecartin, Rose's talent outpaces the hype.

There is no doubt that Rose is ambitious, and "Everything and More" has affinities with the work of another filmmaking artist, Sarah Morris, whose true medium is access to power, whether she's inside the White House or behind the scenes at the Oscars. But Rose's work is more soulful and more audacious, as she slips between the hyperreal and the hypnagogic, using an arsenal of effects, from high-tech to D.I.Y.

Rose pulls off one special effect at the Whitney that's remarkable in its simplicity. The "black box" gallery where the video is installed is not what it seems. Instead of four walls, it has three and a window; the glass is sheathed in scrim. At unpredictable intervals, natural light casts silhouettes of the view on the museum's terrace outside the window—notably, of a sculpture of a dark star by Frank Stella—onto the screen, collapsing dimensions and fusing inner and outer space. ♦