

Urs Fischer, *you*

UF, *you*, Time Out NY, 2007

★★★★★

Gavin Brown's Enterprise, through
Nov 24 (see Elsewhere)



Installation view

You enter Urs Fischer's new installation, *you*, through a half-height portal, crouching as if you were peeking into the half floor of John Malkovich's mind in Spike Jonze's film or following Alice down the rabbit hole. You emerge in a perfectly white cube, fluorescently lit, its walls windowless and bare, its concrete floor

ripped open to reveal a gaping cavity of rubble and dirt. Plunging through the building's structural foundation and the bedrock below, the scene brings to mind less an excavation than the enshrined site of an explosion.

Though Fischer has tested the gallery's boundaries before—a 2003 show included a large wall removal—*you* carries echoes of the earthworks of Robert Smithson and Michael Heizer. The exhibition also bears a close resemblance to Chris Burden's 1986 installation *Exposing the Foundations of the Museum*, in which Burden burrowed through a museum's floor to reveal both the institution's structural support and the constructed nature of the gallery space itself.

Though Fischer's work plays with these precedents, it carries a more ominous charge. In lieu of a press release, visitors are met by a warning: "The installation is physically dangerous and inherently involves the risk of serious injury or death." Though you can certainly imagine losing your footing, the warning works as more than a legal disclaimer; it is a reminder of mortality. Fischer's precarious void has the feeling of an inverted monument or an open grave, though who it is for—the art world, the dead of our ongoing war, or the viewer—remains unclear. —*Alex Kitnick*