

The Empty Space

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Empty space is one of the founding elements of Taoism. The ancient concept of the void or emptiness, denotes the origin of being. Qi (Chi), a principal concept in Chinese culture, signifies spiritual energy and life force. This is represented by emptiness.

This emptiness is not absence but the presence of life and energy. It is believed that the empty spaces reflect the positive images within the composition.

It is precisely this activation and reflection which is explored in these sculptures. The space the objects occupy is simultaneously both present and absent, active and inactive. The multiplicity of space created through the reflective and the transparent surface extends the physical presence of the objects.

Reductive space, emptiness, the void, is the space in which our thoughts exist. It is the space we invest with meaning.

Francesca Mataraga
June 2006



Images

Front: *Untitled II (The Empty Space)*, mirror, acrylic and acrylic on MDF, 2006
Centre: *Untitled III (The Empty Space)*, mirror, acrylic and acrylic on MDF, 2006
Back: *Untitled I (The Empty Space)*, perspex and oil on MDF, 2005



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Francesca Mataraga
The Empty Space Project

Tin Sheds Gallery

The Empty Space Project is an ongoing investigation into imaginary and negative space. Solid forms act as brackets to the space between them. This usually empty space, is articulated as a solid object through the use of clear acrylic and mirror.

The space between two entities, bodies, buildings or objects is often seen as empty, devoid of meaning. And yet it is this very space which determines the way we experience the spatial relationship between the solid shapes. It is the negative space which activates the things it separates.

The void is not a dead space but rather a space in which we as the viewers are situated, an active and interactive space.

According to astronomy there is no such thing as 'empty space' anywhere in nature. There are only apparent 'voids' that seem not to contain matter or energy. At the level of the quantum world, even 'empty' voids are teeming with activity as particles come and go.

In Eastern philosophy the idea of empty space is an integral concept. "Clay is moulded into a vessel, but the usefulness of the vessel depends on the space where nothing exists."

