

So Below

Claudia Tennyson. 2011

The gesture of care and repair has been a strong focus in my work for a number of years. Temporary fixes associated with household materials such as tape, string, and glue enhance and honor the fragility inherent in decay, rather than mask the effects of wear and tear. Investing the time and effort involved in patching together, however homely on the surface, brings value in things that otherwise might be given up on. This concept has led me to create a number of public art projects, including work with household items and the personal possessions of audience/participants, buildings, street repairs and communities.

For this installation, titled *So Below*, I have been involved in a process of drawing attention to the trash dumped at site near my home in San Francisco. The site is a convergence of freeway over ramps next to a residential area where a constant flow of trash is piled up as it is thrown over the side on weekly 'night drops'. The city clean-up teams are sent in to bag and haul away the trash eventually, but once the site is cleared it is usually only a day or two until another load is dropped. The short street under the freeway is a main artery for pedestrians to buses, shops and markets in the area. There is also a group of people living under the freeway who make this underworld their home. In *So Below* I have attempted to create an image of comfort and privacy in a place being viewed as a kind of 'no man's land'. The image of curtains is carried over into the interior of the gallery, considered a neutral space where a curtained window---- a representation of domestic life----might obstruct and distract.