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ART IN REVIEW

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JORDAN WOLFSON

Untitled False Document

Swiss Institute, 495 Broadway, third floor

Through Oct. 25

Jordan Wolfson's first New York solo is an enigmatic, echoes-within-echoes installation. It opens in a kind of anteroom gallery, empty except for a wrap-around line of low metal benches that suggest institutional seating. A pair of windowed double doors, transported from the artist's Brooklyn apartment, open onto a second room, though immediate entrance to it is blocked by a high cinderblock wall that the visitor has to walk around.

On the other side, in a dimly lighted space -- it's hard to know how far back it extends -- a short video loop plays on a small screen. It shows, among other things, a young woman standing in the prow of a moving boat on a windy day. Facing the camera, she holds up a stack of photographs for inspection, each a painterly looking fruit-and-vegetable still life. One by one she discards the sheets, which blow overboard and into the water, leaving a floating paper trail.

Then the scene changes. We are looking at the same video, but now seen playing on a monitor in Mr. Wolfson's bare apartment. And we're watching it from a distance, through an entryway flanked by windowed doors. All through this a soundtrack plays, with computer-created voices droning on about reality and its conundrums.

Mr. Wolfson offers no explanations about what he's up to. But he has a good sense of theater and gives us a lot to work with, imaginatively. You could think of the first gallery as an existentialist waiting room for appointments never honored; the second as a kind of dream cinema, in which images and meanings alike are at sea. Whatever his ideas, his barebones visuals work.

HOLLAND COTTER