

## *You Live Here, Too*, Friday at the Brick

Posted by [Kent Szlauderbach](#) on Mon, Nov 7, 2011 at 12:23 PM



The Charlotte Street Foundation's 2011 **Rocket Grant projects** are becoming, to some extent, realities. Last Friday, artist and social worker Julia Verling performed her final piece.

The image above will need unpacking. It happened at the Brick on a First Friday. Called *You Live Here, Too*, Verling's performance was a surreal, plotless one-act that starts when a mannequin sits down to watch a 30-minute self-help video. Elderly women in the video play the role of a fourth-wall-demolishing data-entry specialist, whom Verling — in the absurd, impossible role of playing a mannequin — talks to, watches and self-helps her lifeless self into empathy with.

The medium: one split-screened projection, one 10-foot panel, one figure (human), one chair (plastic), and a low humming soundtrack (electronic) for mood. The humanlike figure: Julia Verling, stiff and upright in the chair. On her head, a tousled bouffant wig, and over her face, projections of Barbies, machinery, audio-visual flotsam and jetsam that washed in and out the right side

of the screen. The mood: deadened, detached, disembodied. The colors: day-glo, hard candy, the dark hues of too much makeup.

The Brick only mildly tolerated it. While the images demanded attention, the sound was low and distorted, mostly absorbed by bodies and glasses of beer.

Earlier that day, Verling appropriately performed at Presbyterian Manor Senior Center, where *You Live Here, Too* originated and where Verling works. Verling seems to see the elderly she cares for there as a conduit to bring art back into universal places for ageless people. But if the Brick is a local place for imbibing age-accelerating alcohol, I can't help but think that this First Friday crowd was the intended audience, people whose reason for being at a bar is almost always distraction from that aging process, that great reminder that we're finite humans.



<http://www.pitch.com/wayward/archives/2011/11/07/you-live-here-too-friday-at-the-brick>