

The New York Times

Siah Armajani: [Review]

Glueck, Grace. **New York Times**, [New York, N.Y] 15 Dec 2000: E.41.

'Glass Room' Senior & Shopmaker Gallery
21 East 26th Street
Manhattan
Through Jan. 6

Up two glass steps, and you are in this glass room, actually made of glass and plexiglass bricks and set on wagon wheels like a prairie schooner. It is equipped with an aluminum-frame Dutch door, a bronze folding cot and an oversize chair of slatted wood. It also has a kind of ship's figurehead, a toylike metal farmhouse on a platform that projects from the front wall near the roof.

Not exactly clumsy but, well, endearingly homespun, belying the sleekness of the glass, this evocative structure is packed with fanciful allusions and tributes: to country carpentry, old-style American farm life, vernacular rural architecture and, at the same time, the futuristic vision that glass seems to offer. Maybe, too, it offers a take on the American dichotomy of mobile homes and rooted domiciles.

Despite its transparency, it has a more private aspect than the long roster of bridges, houses, reading rooms, gardens and other structures -- some functional, some purely aesthetic -- with which Mr. Armajani has adorned the built world. Enigmatic and yet accessible, sturdily constructed but for contemplation only, "Glass Room" is a sparkling addition.

Also on view are sketches and models for other projects completed or still in process: "Glass Bridge" for Nashville, "Glass Garden" for Lanzarote in the Canary Islands and two beautiful large drawings of the Lannan Poetry Garden at Beloit College in Beloit, Wis., completed in 1992. GRACE GLUECK