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Galleries

RICHARD WENTWORTH

Through Dec. 22. Peter Freeman, 140 Grand Street, Manhattan; 212-966-5154, peterfreemaninc.com.

I had to ask whether the sliding steel door in Peter Freeman Gallery, which dates to SoHo's warehouse days and has nine irregular weights hanging from its mechanism by a wire, was part of Richard Wentworth's new show, "Now and Then." The 18 works that are his include "Curtilage," a steel pipe draped in rings of razor wire and mounted 10 feet up; a small bundle of electronic garbage placed on top of an immaculate cherry-and-glass vitrine; pairs of bricks, blocks and lintels; and four careful lines of broken bottles sitting on brackets under the ceiling.

I should have known without asking, though, that the door didn't belong. It's designed to open and shut, while Mr. Wentworth's variously cantilevered installations, for all their airs of fragility and impermanence, are solid. The loops of galvanized cable in "Lives (Suspended)" are lit so they cast multiple shadows on the wall, each a different but equally correct projection of their pattern. But even as Mr. Wentworth highlights the object's potentially infinite ambiguity, he is also minimizing it, because the wires themselves, mounted in front of the shadows, remain exactly what they are.

The point is even clearer in "First and Last Word," in which a paperback dictionary, resting on a neatly folded bedsheet, is open to Page 206, "Lived" to "Lodgment": For better or worse, we're all just passing through.

WILL HEINRICH