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By BENJAMIN GENOCCHIO

Quiet Dazzle and Chaotic Chimes

The 41-year-old New York artist Alyson Shotz, whose solo show runs across two floors and outdoors at the Aldrich, is enjoying newfound success. Not only has she been recently exhibiting all over the country, but the Guggenheim Museum has bought the "The Shape of Space" (2004), the central work here. Everyone wants a piece of her.

It is not hard to see why the Guggenheim snapped up "The Shape of Space," for it quietly dazzles. Luxuriantly visual, it is a 15 by 40 foot translucent wave-like screen made from an amalgam of oval-shaped bits of concentrically grooved plastic fixed together with metal staples.

Light fluctuations and viewing position change its appearance. Up close it looks like a shower curtain or wall of frosted translucent glass bricks. But standing back, especially when the sun shines through the gallery windows, it shimmers like a waterfall or wall of ice. Take away the light, however, and it can seem unrelentingly bleak.

The work also distorts and multiplies space. Each of the plastic ovals reflects the world beyond it as upside down and backward, thus fragmenting and jumbling what we see when looking through the work. Looking at the piece is like looking into another, invisible dimension, or some fantastic, hallucinogenic space composed of a kaleidoscope of abstract shapes.

Equally impressive, and on view in the upstairs galleries, are a series of digital prints. Here the artist niftily draws on her own, earlier paintings, sculptures and installations as source material, combining images of them with a computer program to create pictures of hybrid, hive-like, organic structures. They look like DNA strands from an artificial life form.

Nearby is "The Simple Forms" (2004), an interactive installation involving a narrow walkway lined with dozens of epoxy-resin tipped strips of piano wire. Making your way through this prickly installation the wires rub and knock against each other, creating "a chaotic, chiming sound," as the exhibition's curator, Jessica Hough, puts it in her succinct catalog essay.

"Mirror Fence" (2003), the only outdoor work at hand, is a picketlike fence made from mirrored Plexiglas. A little conservative for my taste, it cuts a safe path across the museum's back lawn, while making a nod to Ridgefield's many white picket fences and historic clapboard homes.

Over this, any day, I'll take the batty, sensual stuff inside.

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"Shannon Plumb: Behind the Curtain" and "Alyson Shotz: Light, Sound, Space" are at the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, 258 Main Street, Ridgefield, through June 22. Information: (203) 438-4519 or www.aldrichart.org.

