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A Concentrated Rectangle of Glitz: Rob Hickman in Dumbo

by David Brody

Rob Hickman: DMMDIA at Smack Mellon

January 18 to March 2, 2014

92 Plymouth Street at Washington Street

Dumbo Brooklyn, 718 834 – 8761



Installation view: DMMDIA at Smack Mellon 2014. Photo: Etienne Fressard

The factory floor that is Smack Mellon's Piranesi-like main space cannot but play itself and many remarkable installations have issued from the challenges of its remote nooks and crannies. The space seems particularly filled up in Rob Hickman's empty-ed-out installation, DMMDIA. Spanning an enormous wall, Hickman's 3-D polyhedral mirror sculpture reflects infinitely fragmented in its pyramidal teeth, one of the most extraordinary art spaces in the city not forgetting its spectacular view.

Hickman adds no extraneous glitz—just a concentrated rectangle of it. Museum-scale horizontality is emphasized by the artist's careful treatment of the sculpture's 48-foot long top and bottom edges—cleanly sliced off by concident planes of polyhedra. A regular march of spikes reveals itself at this surgical boundary. If the interior is somewhat "soft" in its razor-sharp geometry, these rows of protrusions bring to mind the rhythmic menace of a diamond-studded dog collar.

DMMDIA's combination of savagery, elegance, and gaudiness can stand for a legacy of subterranean Brooklyn clubland, in which, for a quarter century, mirror-ball party culture has gotten enthusiastically satirized by D.Y. artist-entrepreneur participants. Hickman is a first-wave insider of the Williamsburg scene, at any rate, and visitors are free to imagine DMMDIA lording it over a dark, noisy warehouse—a rave *avant la lettre*. But silence and broad daylight work just as well; the sculpture casting a glittery, fracturing spell over the eternal now—like "retina shrapnel" in the vivid words of the press release. Therefore, a suggestion to Smack Mellon: In the spirit of Warhol's *Empire* and Marcays's *The Clock*, why not schedule an all-night viewing of DMMDIA? Begin with a wild party and end with sleeping bags and hangovers.