



BROOKLYN NYC

Mir2 at
Smack Mellon
Studios

Ana Hongman celebrates New York's New vibrant art scene

Brooklyn's sensibility arises from a sense of community largely absent from Manhattan since the SoHo of the seventies....

.....A Brooklyn sensibility also flourishes in DUMBO's Smack Mellon Studios, which was developed in 1995 as a non-profit space. Smack Mellon consistently shows provocative, layered and multi-media work. Recently, it hosted *Mir2*, a large-scale complex spacecraft installation where artists lived suspended in the gallery's two-storey warehouse space. As Kathleen Gilrain, Executive Director of Smack Mellon, explains, the show was less about a curated, formulated project than a concept which developed organically through the artists' open access to the space. *Mir2* was neither a sensational press play nor a staid saleable piece. Instead, what was most appealing about the project were the playful risks involved as the artists took advantage of their opportunity to engage the space without restraint - an opportunity artists too rarely enjoy without massive grant funding or museum support.

Another significant element in Brooklyn's sensibility is the number of gallery directors who are artists themselves. Because they relate empathetically with the process of making art, their focus can be more centred, their understanding of the work they present extending beyond art market tastes and academic. For this reason, galleries like Smack Mellon Studios have strong artist-in-residency programs which allow them to support local artists in more constructive and connected ways than traditional artist/dealer relationships permit....

