



Paper moon: Dumbo exhibit will leave visitors moonstruck



Moon walkers: Guests wanders underneath Jarrod Peck's giant sculpture "The Moon," at the the Smack Mellon gallery in Dumbo.

By Alexandra Simon

Brooklyn Paper

Photo by: Etienne Frossard

Moon landing: Jarrod Beck's art exhibit "The Moon" occupies the Smack Mellon gallery from floor to ceiling.

Talk about the dark side of the moon!

A gigantic model of the moon, 60 feet in diameter, is now hovering ominously over visitors to the Smack Mellon Gallery in Dumbo. But "The Moon," on display until Feb. 26, is no glowing silver sphere — instead, it is roughly textured moonscape of black and gray. Artist Jarrod Beck says that the enormous dark display perfectly demonstrates his goals.

"I always wanted the project left up to the viewer to interpret — it's overwhelming with scale and tonality and the moon absorbs all the space around it," said Beck. "If they expected a lighter moon or a full moon, what you get is a huge sculpture really pressing down on you."

He spent two months handcrafting the sculpture from paper pulp, then added urethane for a luminous effect and other material to darken it.

"It started with its natural color and slowly I added more pigment, and by Christmas it was five pounds of charcoal," he said.

The giant paper moon is the visual counterpart to an epic poem Beck wrote about environmental devastation, set in a world where the Earth starts orbiting the moon. The multimedia project includes a reading of the poem and several dance performances during the exhibit's run. About ten performers, led by choreographers Abigail Levine and Danny Dolan, will perform their interpretations of the text. Beck thinks the performances will help visitors understand the environmental message of his sculpture.

"The decision to have the reading along with choreography — I really wanted people to learn as much as possible from the exhibition, with a show of provocative landscape and the environmental threat going on around them," he said.

Visitors can circle around the moon installation, which breaks up along its edges, to explore its underside and its composition. Those who arrive during the Feb. 10 dance performance can also get involved in the show, said Beck.

"That whole space is open to the audience and there's no backstage area," he said. "In Danny's piece the audience is encouraged to move to him and move to the dark side of moon. The exciting thing for me is to see performances in front of the moon and see them do different things."

"The Moon" at Smack Mellon Gallery [72 Plymouth Ave. between Washington and Main streets in Dumbo, (718) 834-8761, www.smackmellon.org]. On display through Feb. 26, Wed-Sun, noon-6 pm. Dance performances Feb. 10 at 6 pm. Feb. 11 at 2 pm and 6 pm. Free.

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