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CURATOR'S PICKS

Part of the role of being a curator at the New Museum of Contemporary Art is to stay aware of what is happening in all areas of contemporary culture. In this section of the web site, the New Museum curatorial staff shares some of their favorite gallery exhibitions, films, book, plays and more! This section is frequently updated, so check back regularly.

Josiah McElheny

Brent Sikkema
Through April 19

Josiah McElheny continues to use his glassblowing skills as a conceptual tool. In the 2000 Whitney Biennial, he displayed supple vases shaped like couture dresses as relics through an elaborate fable-like backstory that he penned himself.

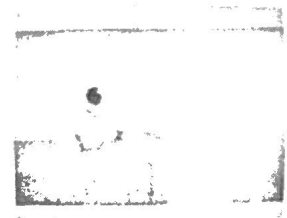
He uses this trademark technique in this show to great effect in *Buckminster Fuller's Proposal to Isamu Noguchi for the New Abstraction of Total Reflection*. Here, he investigates Fuller's declaration that Noguchi had invented a new type of abstraction of "total reflection." McElheny explained to me that there is no basis to Fuller's assertion but this got him thinking about what Noguchi's art would like look if the statement were true.

This work-and all the others in show entitled fittingly *Theories about Reflection*-are reminiscent of McElheny's 2001-02 re-creation of a 1929 party organized by students of the Dessau Bauhaus. McElheny's performative installation, *The Metal Party*, included a hyper-reflective environment of metallic surfaces, including silvery Mylar costumes for each visitor. The opening party was quite a scene-art world glitterati wearing clothes that made them look like strange, otherworldly creatures.

The resulting work at Sikkema is powerfully poetic. The viewer sees himself reflected/distorted in a series of Noguchi-like works of mirrored glass that McElheny has placed on a mirrored pedestal. He also creates a pleasurable fictive reality that is, ironically, hyperreal. What's most enjoyable is that he reconciles the fine art/decorative dichotomy so gracefully.

-AP

CURRENT EXHIBITIONS ////

**Living Inside the Grid**

February 28, 2003 - June 15, 2003
First, second and mezzanine level galleries

Living Inside the Grid explores how contemporary artists around the world are redefining the grid, one of the most significant motifs of 20th century art, in response to major cultural shifts sparked by the convergence of art, new media, architecture, and urbanism. ////

Photo Credit

Top: ABSALON, *Propositions d'Habitation* (1991), Color video minutes, Courtesy Galerie Chant Crousel, Paris

INFO ////

MUSEUM HOURS

Tuesday - Sunday: noon - 6 pm.
Thursday: noon - 8 pm.
Closed Monday

STORE HOURS

Monday-Sunday: 12pm-6:30pm
Thursday: 12pm-8pm