

REGEN PROJECTS

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A R T O B S E R V E D

DON'T MISS- LOS ANGELES: DAN GRAHAM AT REGEN PROJECTS THROUGH DECEMBER 8TH, 2010

-E. Fodde-Reguer



Dan Graham, Installation View, Courtesy of Regen Projects

A new pavilion by conceptual artist Dan Graham is currently on display at Regen Projects. The pavilion, like most of Graham's prior architectural environments, uses corporate architectural forms as a means to discuss theories of perception and social experiences of art. The tear drop shaped pavilion *Penultimate Curving Pavilion* (2010) is the centerpiece of the exhibition. The work combines two-way glass with mirrors that alter and confuse the viewer's perception of the gallery space, the space within the work, as well as glimpses of the other gallery visitors.

Pavillions, in the true architectural definition, are meant to be open and oftentime temporary structures, that are used for performances. In this case, the performance is the activation of the work by the viewer walking through the piece and looking at other visitors and at the pavillion at different stages of invisibility and visibility. The usage of two-way glass and mirrors stresses a certain type of looking: that of looking at objects without focusing on them. It does this by allowing visitors outside the pavillion to experience what it is like to become part of the ignored or unseen object, as visitors inside the pavillion gaze out at them, unable to see them. Once the viewer is inside the work, the shape of the pavillion becomes distorted as a result of the choice of construction materials. This distortion and disorientation experienced within the work is intended to bridge the gap between the viewer and the art object, which is something of great importance to the artist.

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In an interview with Chrissie Iles from 2003, Graham explains how his use of materials ties together with corporate architecture: “Now corporations want two-way mirror glass because it’s transparent- reflective on the outside, which means the corporation looks like the sky, and transparent inside, because light is flowing outside, so people from inside can see outside without being seen – it’s a kind of surveillance. So I try to deconstruct that. It’s an emblem of the city, but I make it both transparent and reflective simultaneously. It’s about people’s perception process, otherwise known as ‘the mirror stage’.”

Other works in the show are two films: *Classic and Recent Pavilions*, which surveys the all of Graham’s prior pavillion pieces, thereby providing an important background for the work on display, and *Death By Chocolate: West Edmonton Mall*, which is a meditation on a major Canadian shopping mall featuring a water park, mini golf, theatres, and an ice skating rink, all within glass trappings. The film frames the mall within Graham’s created universe of glass pavillions, which shifts the context of the mall towards one “the duality of the observer and the observed.”

A third medium represented in the exhibition are landscape photographs of New Jersey, where Graham was raised. Graham has often shown an interest in ignored landscapes as inspirational. The photographs act in conjunction with this theme of perception and awareness of our surroundings.