

Do Ho Suh at Lehmann Maupin

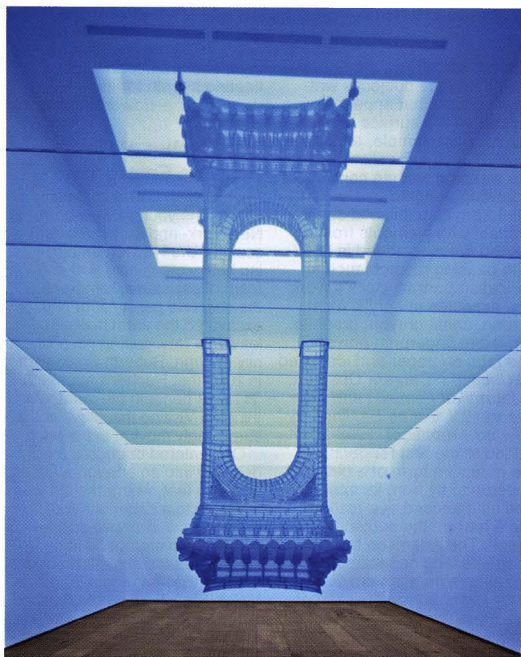
Do Ho Suh's simultaneous installations at this gallery's two locations were a study in contrasts: storm-tossed and serene, fiery colors and watery ones, brittle plastic and filmy cloth. *Cause and Effect* (2007), the main event at Lehmann Maupin's Chelsea gallery, was a mind-bending tornado of thousands of tiny identical acrylic figurines arranged in spiraling towers, each supporting another on his shoulders. Lined

gorgeous hive that evoked both Busby Berkley spectacle and a fixture from some over-the-top Chinatown banquet hall.

Inaugurating the gallery's Lower East Side location was *Reflection*, a traditional Korean ceremonial gate fashioned at full scale and in considerable detail in translucent aqua-colored nylon. First installed at the glass-walled lobby of the Hermès headquarters in Tokyo in 2004, it had not previously been executed in the U.S. In New York, it occupied a windowless high-ceilinged room, with an effect of pulse-slowing serenity. In both cases, the powerfully effective illusion is of reflection in water: at street level in New York, viewers encountered an inverted arched gate, its roofline slightly below eye level; aqua scrim stretched overhead across the entire room, dividing it horizontally, and a second, identical gate mirrored it above. Looking up, you had the impression not so much of being underwater as of somehow being upside down with your feet in the air, peering down into a body of water that floated beneath your head. A balcony at one end offered a second, more distanced view of the upright gate, and of the inverted one which seemed to float more sensibly below, where other viewers might be seen moving beneath the watery-blue scrim. (The gate represented is a faithful reproduction of one at the artist's childhood home, itself a finely crafted replica of a historical scholar's house, which adds another level of doubling to the project.)

Both new installations have established precedents in Do Ho Suh's work, the worker bees in his dazzling 2000 show at Lehmann Maupin (then in SoHo), which put thousands of little, near-identical plastic men literally underfoot, their upraised arms supporting clear flooring beneath unsuspecting viewers' feet; the nylon gate belongs in a series of actual-size architectural models of the artist's several residences, including an apartment in New York. In what begins to look like a Manichean universe, the benevolent, calming forces of tradition and domesticity are opposed to the workaday strivings of puny individuals, literally climbing on each other's backs to reach an ever-dissipating goal. Together, these mirror-image worlds infinitely extend the reflections and interior multiplications essential to each, trumping any inclination to irony with pure visual splendor.

—Nancy Princenthal



Do Ho Suh: *Reflection*, 2004, nylon and stainless steel tubing, dimensions variable; at Lehmann Maupin.

up in curving ranks across one big room's ceiling, they twisted inward, like the clouds around a hurricane's eye, to a dense inverted cone whose vertex was a single man, his feet just skimming the floor. The illusion was that this vast human maelstrom all rested on the back of a lone individual. But the energy of *Cause and Effect* was mostly sucked upward into the bogging profusion of drones. In colors that ranged from near-white pink through jujube shades of orange, red and yellow, they formed a