

ARTFORUM

Marc Swanson

INMAN GALLERY

3901 Main Street

July 8–August 20

This small but impactful exhibition offers a seductive sampling of Marc Swanson's work from the past four years. The well-edited selection manages to show off Swanson's fluid range of materials and to introduce several visual and conceptual motifs, which transcend his greater body of work. Using diverse media including mirrors, wooden beams, lightbulbs, and collage, Swanson references his own personal history as well as more universal themes including fractured self-image, masculine stereotypes, and voyeurism/exhibitionism.

Networks of overlapping and intersecting lines (one of Swanson's most persistent motifs) appear in the most straightforward fashion in an untitled drawing from 2011. Here, threadlike pencil lines transect three sets of disembodied collaged eyes, suggesting an all-seeing and all-seen network. Crisscrossing lines are echoed, but used to different effects, in two other works on view. In *Untitled (Light Bars)*, 2009, Swanson slants and intersects track lights to create a glowing linear formation on the wall. The familiar, but decontextualized, incandescent bulbs simultaneously evoke old Hollywood glamour and tawdry peep shows. By combining these references, the intertwined-light abstraction calls attention to the subjectivity of distinguishing between sexual allure and vulgarity. In the case of *Psychic Studies III*, 2008—a large mirror fragmented by a geometric lattice of thick wooden beams straddling one corner of the gallery—the viewer must confront his own fragmented reflection caught in Swanson's web.

Perhaps one fault of the show is that it leaves you wanting more.

Luckily the Museum of Contemporary Art, Houston, has a concurrent solo exhibition, "Second Story," featuring seventeen of Swanson's works—most from 2011—that will satisfy this itch.



Marc Swanson, *Psychic Studies III*, 2008, wood and mirrored acrylic, 95 1/4 x 49 x 49".

— Mara Hoberman