

POSTMASTERS

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David Diao at Postmasters

David Diao's concern for the modernist residence as endangered species is the central theme in his recent exhibition, "Demolished/At Risk," in which he lists a number of examples of domestic modern architecture in New Canaan, Conn., that have been destroyed or are thought to be endangered. Among them are designs by Marcel Breuer, Eliot Noyes, Howard Barnstone, Landis Gores and John Johansen. While Diao identifies Philip Johnson's Glass House as beyond the compass of that list, he regards it as an example of a species of architecture prime for the wrecking ball now that the newly affluent regard it as inadequate to their expansive needs.

The 6-by-9-foot painting *The Rug: It Shrank!* (2004-05) consists of abutting panels of blue and red acrylic applied in an almost burnished density that recalls encaustic. The left panel bears a silkscreen of Johnson's blueprint for the placement of furnishings by Mies van der Rohe in the Glass House: two Barcelona chairs, an ottoman and a chaise, and a glass-and-steel coffee table. Diao's representation of

the blueprint is surmounted by a reductive silkscreen of the same arrangement. The right panel repeats that diagram in diminished sizes on a red ground, a schematic visualization of the furniture's placement subject to the reduced size of a rug after cleaning alluded to in the title. While the furnishings are unchanged in size, they are placed in increased proximity. In *Sitting in the Glass House 1* (acrylic and silkscreen on canvas, 2005), Diao incorporates a photographic image of himself on site, at ease on one of the Barcelona chairs.

In *Figure/Ground* (2004-05), a large photograph back-mounted to Plexiglas, Diao extends the specter of the Glass House's demise by altering the photograph. He cuts away every part of the image that contains a built element—the furnishings, structural steel framing, an Elie Nadelman sculpture—retaining only the verdant landscape, as though the house and all it contains have disappeared. In the 7-by-9-foot *Endangered Species #2* (2004) Diao further contemplates architecture's loss in a replicated blueprint depicting modernist residences built in New Canaan in Johnson's day, many now at risk and others destroyed.

Diao bases a series of paintings on the roughly 6-by-10-foot *That Close!* (2002), a schematic of the Green River Cemetery on Long Island where Jackson Pollock's remains were interred in 1956. He maps the artist's proximity to the celebrated dead he predeceased, describing radiating circles with Pollock's plot at their center and numbered "1." Diao numbers the burial grounds of Stuart Davis, Frederick Kiesler, Frank O'Hara, Ad Reinhardt, Jimmy Ernst, Lee Krasner, Elaine de Kooning, Hannah Wilke

David Diao: *That Close!*, 2002, acrylic on canvas, 79 by 115 inches; at Postmasters.

