



Dome Melt Glo-Pod

SURFACE TREATMENT

What: *Gisela Colón: PODS*
Where: International Museum of Art & Science, 1900 Bicentennial
When: Through August 7. Hours: Tues.-Wed., 9am-3pm; Thurs., 9am-8pm, Fri., 9am-5pm; Sat. 10am-5pm; Sun., 1-5pm
Contact: 956-682-0123 or www.imasonline.org
General admission is charged.

Glow

With its new *Gisela Colón: PODS* exhibition, IMAS introduces us to the California-based fascination with light as art. Installed in the central gallery, the series of blow-molded acrylic forms exist as floor pieces and wall mounted bubbles, asking that you move closer to view their ever-shifting colors. Colón's style has been categorized as *Atmospheric Abstraction*, the title of a recent show in which her work was included. She is part of a lineage of California artists who have worked in a non-figurative format with light and space as their primary subject, such as Larry Bell and James Turrell, whose concepts with light and space produce quasi-spiritual experiences. Colón reins it in slightly with her blow-molded acrylic forms.

Each Pod is an experience in its own space, existing within its diffused-light plastic surface; each one features a different shape and color combination. The bubble shapes reference geometric forms, albeit curvy and a bit skewed in their final manifestations. Mounted across the gallery walls, each Pod contains a shape within a shape reminiscent of ova and a dominant central color, such as Iridescent green, iridescent hot red, iridescent blue, and so on. Sometimes the inner shape contains the same colors as the surrounding area, as in the lilac "Ultra Spheroid Glo-Pod," but more often there is a startling color contrast as in the "Skewed Square Glo-Pod" with its mean, red, center and flashing lilac perimeter. The floor-mounted pods seem more fully blown. From a distance, with their mechanically domed surface tension, the neutral-colored acrylic domes half conceal the bursts of color inside, seeming at once protective and suspicious. What is inside? Shifting colors. The floor piece, "Dome Melt Glo-Pod" suggests containment.

These works focus on the phenomena of light. Colón's "Ultra Spheroid Glo-Pod" contains more than just its identifying color of lilac. Move in front of the object and the interior iridescence is altered. Even knowing that iridescent colors appear to move and change as the angle at which they are observed changes, the Pod's sensitivity to coloration via motion has a surprising effect. As you lose yourself in the shifting internal light and color sensation, each piece communicates an organic impression that might suggest sci-fi life forms. You might imagine story lines in that genre, or for the lesser inclined, simply enjoy a quiet meditative state. But the obvious question remains - how are these made?

Colón points out that she makes these pods herself and does not job-out like many other contemporary artists whose works rely on technology. Her studio is her own site for industrial fabrication, and she has her own industrial oven and equipment where she can heat and form sheets of acrylic into their final blown shapes. Her intriguing coloration process remains her secret.

This is a good family exhibit, and children will probably be the most appreciative of Colón's light manifestations.

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