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Another last-minute viewing opportunity

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Installation shot showing “Toward Great Becoming (blue/blue)” and “Toward Great Becoming (orange/pink)”, both 2014, by Jim Hodges [photo: Keith Petersen]

Here is the latter half of last Saturday’s unpublished (don’t ask) review column:

Jim Hodges: Wall works in mirrored panel. Through April 25. Anthony Meier Fine Arts, 1969 California St., S.F. (415) 351-1400, www.anthonymeierfinearts.com.

The five new works by New Yorker Jim Hodges at Anthony Meier’s have an almost formalistic bent for someone who made his name using materials such as silk flowers, gossamer scrim, gold leaf and cast glass.

Hodges came to prominence during the grief-clouded aftermath of the AIDS crisis’ first decade, working in a key avowedly elegiac, even sentimental.

But the sentimentality in Hodges’ work, like the irony-free sweetness in that of his friend Felix Gonzalez-Torres (1957-1996), stood not for false feeling but for the inescapability of feeling, against which synthetic emotions and their triggers serve as futile defenses.

Hodges began using the sort of mirror mosaics that adorn disco balls years ago. When he blankets flat forms with them, as in the works at Meier, the faceted surfaces suggest flayed, flattened disco balls, evoking an end, perhaps a fatal end, of festivity.

The disco reference has subsided in the new work, and with it the key of mourning associated with club scene erotic reverie vanquished by a plague.

“Toward Great Becoming (blue/blue)” (2014), like several other pieces here, consists of irregular polygons tessellated with tiny mirrors, meeting at the corner of a room so that their overall shapes reflect and distort one another.

The adjoining panels in three works here differ in color and the reflections they pick up multiply those differences.

Often in Hodges’ past uses of mirrors, he has confronted viewers with themselves — atomized. The huge “Untitled (grey ellipse)” (2013) offers something of this experience. Its shimmering grey darkness can suggest a portal to some magical elsewhere or merely, as gang slang would have it, “getting smoked.”

The corner polygons might symbolize the crippled symmetry of people who try to discern themselves reflected in one another. Might that be the best we can hope to do?

The intricate designs and shatter patterns of Hodges’ surfaces reprise his use of spider web imagery, but they also recall the more abstract interest in surface geometry of much older artists such as Robert Mangold and Dorothea Rockburne, who have long used ingrown composition to figure forth the integrity of a self.