



Run, Run, Run (Gold), 2014, corner cube reflectors and natural crystal beads on aluminium frame, 95 x 95 x 20cm

DANI MARTI
RUN, RUN, RUN
15 July - 16 August 2014

Portraiture has been one of the enduring genres in Western art. Traditionally, they were commissioned by the church, the aristocracy and then the propertied middle class. However, with the invention of the camera in the 19th Century, the means of portraiture was placed in the hands of the ordinary subject.

In the 21st Century the genre of portraiture has taken a liberating but disturbing turn, with an infinite digital archive created of fascinating and troubling autobiographical works known as 'selfies'. While Dani Marti's previous work constituted a confronting encounter, challenging conventions around self-portraiture, his new series *Run, Run, Run* pushes the idea of portraiture even further with the use of old-fashioned reflective devices: mirrors.

Marti pays twisted homage to the classic *Alice in Wonderland* story with his preoccupation with the mirror, which functions as an analogue for the modern day camera, and which both reflects and distorts us and our desires to capture our ideal ourselves. In this show, mirrors are not simple reflections but rather function as portals to another dimension. Indeed, this sense of passing through a wormhole metaphorically suggest Alice's fascination in *Through the Looking Glass* with what is on the other side of a mirror's reflection.

Unlike ordinary mirrors where we ostensibly believe in the reality of what we see, these works - '*Run, Run, Run*' (2014) - amplify the distorting effect of mirrors, highlighting the way reality breaks down with ever-changing circles of colour - reflecting, refracting - with light and movement. These multitude of convex mirrors are obvious abstract constructions generated to delude the viewer.



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Dani Marti, Golden Years, 2014, 4k video, 8'23", sound design by Alex Macia

In a much more intimate encounter with the mirror, however, 'Golden Years' (2014) is a video which portrays a man in his 60's holding a hand-held looking glass. It is a simple image of a man engaging with his own reflection, or so it seems. In keeping with the narcissistic theme of contemporary screen culture, he is engaging with his image as a tool for masturbation. But this is no emotionally benign moment. We see him cycle through a range of ambiguous feelings: from confrontation; to self-hatred; to a strangely maternal sense of comfort. In the end, his extreme act of narcissism dissolves the linguistic skin between his self and the world and he falls into the mirror, his reflection an empty surface.

Like Alice in her Wonderland, Michael, occupying a psycho-active headspace, appears to be on a deluded, impotent voyage of self-discovery, an internal trip beyond the figurative - a phenomenological experience that reflects the viewer's experiences witnessing 'Run, Run, Run'.

Alice's own relationship to herself is unstable; she finds herself getting bigger, getting smaller. This slippage of her apparent reality creates the discomfort she feels - that we all feel in selfie culture - at having the tools at our disposal to be our ideal selves but at the same time never able to be 'just right' because the reality that the self is a fiction is always apparent.

All the while, Marti, through his remarkable and intensely intimate biographical works, returns the gaze of the viewer, and all its longing, with unblinking conviction.

- Carrie Miller, 2014