



“FANTASIE II – CLEAR” (DETAIL)

2011

**Mayumi Nishida**

MIXED MEDIA

10” x 10” x 3½”

PHOTO: COURTESY 222 SHELBY STREET

### SANTA FE

#### **Mayumi Nishida: “Luminous” at 222 Shelby Street**

Continuing her explorations of elusive phenomena and illumination, Mayumi Nishida’s solo show at 222 Shelby Street Gallery welcomed the Santa Fe spring with a brilliant sprinkling of luminous rain and some surprisingly interactive glass-marble devices. To best observe the optical effects of the glass-bead relief, you move around. The odd way the slightly elongating grid of tangential circles, formed seemingly of light, glides across the framed rectangle of closely and carefully placed glass marbles is transformative. The experience is more like viewing sculpture in the round than viewing a wall piece. The marbles are glued to a glass front a few inches in front of a mirrored back and the circular net of light is only the most obvious of the subtle effects that the pieces cast depending upon where you stand before them. The clear glass marbles of various sizes in white and silver frames recall the early work of Piero Manzoni in his connection with Düsseldorf ZERO, while the pieces composed in translucent colors seem richly baroque, almost decadent in comparison, adding nuances of painting, mosaic and stained glass.

Nishida’s installation in the back room, titled *Introduction to Water*, is inspired by her recent move off the grid. It seeks to make imaginable a new harmony between the natural world and a technology premised upon clean energy, a technology that functions as a natural part of the ecosystem alongside wind, sun, rain or earth. That message takes on even greater significance in light of the complex disaster in Japan (Nishida’s homeland) where we recently learned that nature and technology are one whether we like it or not. The installation consists of a large, round, galvanized steel tub with a black interior filled with water gathered from the roof of Nishida’s home. In its center, suspended as if sitting on top of the dark water’s still surface, is a ceramic pot. Three wooden ladles float on the rim of the tub; by filling the pot, you complete an electrical connection, activating a wireless signal, modulating a welcome rain of sequential LED bulbs wired from a monofilament grid near the ceiling and powered by a solar-charged battery. The electric rain falls more heavily or softly in accordance with the volume of rainwater that flows through the ceramic pot as it drains slowly from the bottom and is refilled. The experience is immersive, like the calming effect of welcome rain in the high desert.

—JON CARVER