

(An Appropriate Distance)

FROM THE MAYOR'S DOORSTEP

By Piri Halasz

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FROM THE ATTRACTIVE TO THE INTERESTINGLY UGLY

Conceptual artists interest me occasionally, particularly when I feel that they are commenting on modernism. Loren Munk has done this in the past, from time to time, and so, in his current show at **L & M Arts**, does **David Hammons** (through February 26). Or at least it appears that way to me. In this show, “Obstruction” would appear to be the theme, though the exhibition has no title (beyond the artist’s name) and eschews a press release (at the artist’s request). In this luxurious space, the two bottom floors of a huge town house on the upscale Upper East Side, one may see a group of large unframed canvases, covered up almost entirely by casually draped sheets of black plastic or fabric (or, in one case, by a piece of furniture turned to the wall). Every work is listed merely as “untitled, mixed media,” but from the glimpses of paint visible through the holes in, or around the edges of, these sheets, I deduce that these paintings may be abstracts in the gestural style of vintage **de Kooning**. Though I can’t be sure about this, if indeed it’s true, then the presentation may be read as traditional art being obscured or obstructed by non-traditional art, or, to put it the way I see it, as modernism obscured or obstructed by dada, aka postmodernism, aka anti-modernism --- in any event, a cogent commentary on the situation at present.