

Cade Tompkins Editions • Projects
198 Hope Street Providence Rhode Island 02906
www.cadetompkins.com cadetompkins@mac.com
Telephone 401 751 4888

ARTFORUM

Providence

Kirsten Hassenfeld

CADE TOMPKINS EDITIONS AND PROJECTS

198 Hope Street,
September 25–November 14



View of “Kirsten Hassenfeld,” 2009. From left: *Blueware (Cloud)*, 2009; *Blueware (Garden)*, 2009; *Blueware (Bouquet)*, 2009.

Paper gains mass and volume in [Kirsten Hassenfeld](#)'s exhibition of recent sculpture: It shimmers and swirls in the low-lit gallery at David Winton Bell, drawing the viewer into a luminescent world of alabaster baubles and dangling airy chains. Part Aladdin's cave and part dollhouse, Hassenfeld's sumptuous installation *Dans la Lune* (In the Moon), 2007, is constructed entirely of paper that has been cut, folded, rolled, and glued to form suspended sculptures that call to mind enormous snowflakes magnified to reveal their crystalline structure or massive lanterns strung with rivers of pearls. Hassenfeld toys with scale in this elaborate installation—lunar not only in its weightlessness and its spectral glow but also in its call to Dionysus and the gods of all paper party favors—inflating gems to the size of boulders and making cameos for a giant.

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Yet despite the nimbuslike aura summoned by both the work and its title (meaning, idiomatically, “to have one’s head in the clouds”), both beauty and lust circulate freely through this fantasy space of platinum light and paper diamonds. Hassenfeld’s enlarged bibelots speak to a grotesque desire for objects: as if a penumbra of insatiability—the dark side of the moon—lies just beyond the visible in these delicate, ethereal forms, whose ghostly silhouettes gesture to the elusiveness of possession.

Hassenfeld’s penchant for consummate craft similarly marks her recent freestanding sculptures in which paper beads, now painted in washy cobalt and aquamarine inks and petrified by acrylic, masquerade as glossy ceramics. Confounding our sense of materiality, these works evoke a craft as historically gendered as the embroidery and wedding-cake decorations of her lunar phase. Hassenfeld’s “blueware” continues in delicate ink-on-vellum drawings on view at Cade Tompkins Editions, which return this protean artist to her papery origins in drawing and printmaking.

This exhibition is also on view at the [David Winton Bell Gallery](#) at Brown University until November 1.

— [Leora Maltz-Leca](#)