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ART IN REVIEW

### **Jimmy DeSana: 'Party Picks'**

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*Salon 94 Bowery*

243 Bowery, Lower East Side Through Aug. 16

Jimmy DeSana (1949-90) made funny and mysterious sadomasochistic pictures as a denizen of New York's bohemian downtown scene in the late 1970s and '80s. There are a number of them in this show, including a black-and-white image of a man wrapped in masking tape leaving only his genitals exposed. He stands against an empty, shadowy background like an Egyptian mummy.

One of his best-known images is "Marker Cones (Blonde, legs close together)" (1987), in which a naked man bends over; his feet and hands inserted into red cones. Luridly illuminated by green and red lights, the figure looks like a quadruped in a dream David Lynch might have. Equally strange and comical is "Sweatshirt" (1980-82), which shows two pantless men wearing motorcycle helmets, their bodies joined back to back by a single, stretchy red shirt. One bends over and thereby lifts the other up as if they were performing some kind of goofy gymnastic exercise.

DeSana also had excellent commercial chops. His portrait of Debbie Harry in big sunglasses is infectiously effervescent. But my favorite picture is "Bubblegum (Self-Portrait)" (1985), a grainy, pink-tinged print that views him from a low angle, wearing a shirt and pants that appear to be inflated so that he looks monumentally fat. His little head peers out from above his bulging chest, and he blows a gum bubble. Had his life not been cut short by AIDS, DeSana, I'm sure, would be among today's most admired living photographers.