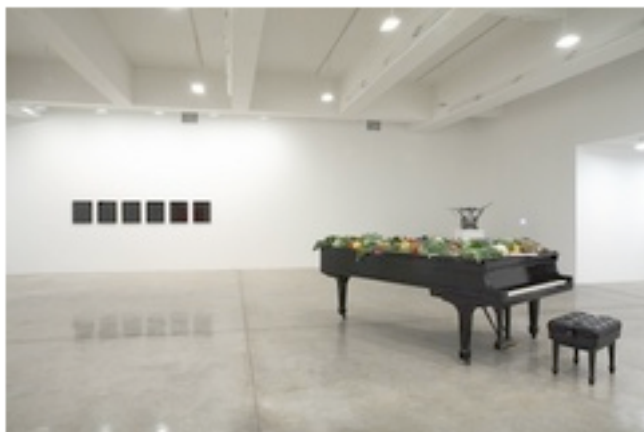


Allison, Genevieve. "Ambient." *Artforum*, July 23, 2013

ARTFORUM

"Ambient"

TANYA BONAKDAR GALLERY
521 West 21st Street
June 20–July 26



View of "Ambient," 2013.

In the liner notes of his 1975 composition *Discreet Music*, [Brian Eno](#) shares that music, even at barely audible levels, will affect the color, frequencies, and timbre of its surrounding environment. Eno's work, largely considered the benchmark of ambient music as a genre, is taken up by curator [Tim Griffin](#) as a proposition for considering modes of artistic production that are less aggressive to the senses and arguably more passive in authorship. Visually and operatically, the works included in this twelve-artist exhibition could be described as low-intensity: They are not pitched to make fixed, expressed demands on perception but rather to work at a level receptive to discrete sense-datum and scarcely perceptible phenomena.

Concerns with sound, light, color, and reflection give the show a formal cohesion. The absorbent surfaces of [Liz Deschenes](#)'s photograms appear in a state of limbo between translucency and opacity, projection and reflection—a dualism that occurs in [Sherrie Levine](#)'s series "Black Mirrors," 2004, and again in the depicted suspension of reflected images in [Nathan Hylden](#)'s acrylic paintings on aluminum. Works by [Alex Waterman](#) and [Haim Steinbach](#) incorporate found objects that are at the periphery of lived experience: music sheets, decanting liquid, a salt and pepper shaker, notes retelling a completed activity.

Works by [Olafur Eliasson](#) take a more diagnostic approach (as do [Susan Goldman](#)'s mathematical paintings). Layers of subtly graded washes in Eliasson's watercolors produce radiant yellow forms, demonstrating that, rather than a surface or fact, color is the reconciliation of a depth of field. In his installation of mirror strips, shadow and reflection are used to form the illusion of objects, collapsing the difference between medium and effect. Such outcomes perfectly illustrate Eno's apperception that ambience is, if anything, a synthesis of object and subject.

-Genevieve Allison