



Pervy Snapshots and Fallible Machines: Around Openings in Tribeca



Barbara Kasten, *Parallels I*, 2017. Fluorescent acrylic, 81.5 x 249 x 244 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Bortolami, New York

Filling the impeccable new Bortolami space—pristine white walls, elegant black Corinthian columns—with a riot of sharp-angled color, the 81-year-old Barbara Kasten splits the difference between photography and sculpture in new reliefs that append pieces of tinted Plexiglas to photos of arrangements of the same materials. The work confounds easy perception. At first or even second glance, it's hard to tell the three-dimensional, "real" elements from the two-dimensional, pictorial ones; shadows also become significant to the abstract compositions—both those cast by the objects in the studio and recorded by the camera, and those produced "live" by the gallery's lights. Kasten makes puzzlements out of the truism of photography's utter dependence on light. While she does so with formal means that hark back to Russian Constructivism, she also evokes the brash colors and dynamic planes of 1980s design, as if Memphis had rejiggered El Lissitzky.