

THE NEW YORKER

Goings On About Town



Courtesy the artist and Bortolami, New York

Barbara Kasten

Through Aug. 9.

Bortolami

39 Walker St.

Downtown

If the taut geometries of a Constructivist painting could give their canvas confines the slip, they might stage something like the eye-teasing setups in the photographs of Barbara Kasten. The Chicago experimentalist, who is still making exactly beautiful work in her early eighties, has been concocting architectonic scenarios from plexiglass, wire, and mirrors—and, especially, from light and shadow—for forty years. In her sleight-of-hand world, the appearance of a purple triangle, a red semicircle, or a blue square can be deceiving; the color is generally supplied by an off-camera source, and captured in reflection. Kasten has always achieved her effects through analog means, eschewing digital glibness. One of this summer's delights is an intimate show of eight of her earliest color pictures, from 1981-82 (including "Construct XI-B," above), on view at the Bortolami gallery (through Aug. 9), in the burgeoning Tribeca art district. The neighborhood will become even more exciting this fall, when the risk-taking nonprofit Artists Space and two strong galleries, Andrew Kreps and James Cohan, open new spaces.