

ARTFORUM

Michael Snow

JACK SHAINMAN GALLERY | WEST 20TH STREET

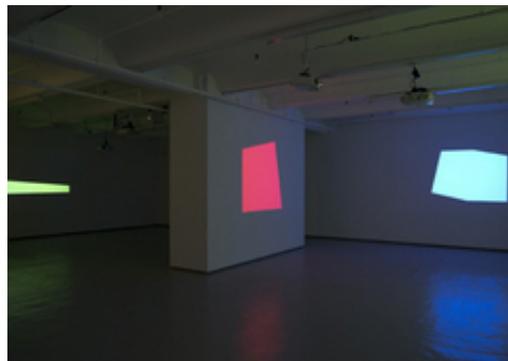
513 West 20th Street

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Michael Snow's latest exhibition finds the artist on familiar thematic terrain, playing with abstraction and perception through shifting, tautological strategies. *La Ferme* (The Farm), 1998, is a photo-based work depicting eleven successive frames of 16-mm film cut apart, blown up, and horizontally arrayed. As in the final moments of Snow's seminal *Wavelength*, 1967, the moving image becomes still. Film reverts to its structural components, the vertical vector of the filmstrip recomposed along the horizontal axis of the spectator, her left-to-right gaze recapitulating the camera's. Snow's nearly twenty-three-minute looped video *In the Way*, 2011, proves similarly literal. A series of continually panning tracking shots of the ground, shot from above and projected onto the floor, the work invites the viewer to realize its title, as the footprints clouding its surface make clear.

Snow's most recent installation, titled, with typical self-referentiality, *The Viewing of Six New Works*, 2012, furnishes the show's conceptual highlight. Seven projectors cast monochrome geometries onto seven whitewashed walls, each figure a stand-in for a wall-mounted piece. Stretching, rotating, and contorting in motions more organic than mechanical, the forms variously sweep and crawl across the wall, cropped by unseen frames and marked by subtle inflections. Now rectangle, now trapezoid, now rhombus, these endlessly evolving shapes mimic the act of viewing: the scans of the eye, pivots of the neck, and twists of the torso that make up the so-called art of looking at art, here performed using an interactive technology named TouchDesigner. Moving nonsynchronously, the figures, hypothetically whole yet visible only as fragments, affirm the avant-garde insight that objects are not as they are, but as they are seen. Never manifest in full, they preclude gestalt sensations—those all-at-once comprehensions of form championed by Snow's peer Robert Morris in his "Notes on Sculpture." The frame, here as in so much of Snow's work, trumps all.

— Courtney Fiske



Michael Snow, *The Viewing of Six New Works*, 2012, seven looped video projections. Installation view.

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