

Mika Tajima: ‘Negative Entropy’

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From Mika Tajima's Negative Entropy series, on view at Eleven Rivington. Credit Eleven Rivington, NY.

Eleven Rivington

195 Chrystie Street,

near Rivington Street,

Lower East Side

Through April 13

These days, it is fashionable in painting, as elsewhere, to avoid making basic aesthetic decisions, especially where composition is concerned. Randomness, natural decay, audience participation or existing systems are among the strategies employed, while the results range from fatuous to brilliant. With an effective one-two punch, two groups of new work by Mika Tajima, an erstwhile sound artist, pursue this tendency along different routes — labor-intensive versus instantaneous, fuzzy versus slick — that yield equally gorgeous paintinglike objects.

To achieve the dense, richly hued woven paintings of her Negative Entropy series, Ms. Tajima recorded the sounds of endangered technologies, including weaving machines. Not unlike the music rolls for a player piano, these become templates for softly optical Jacquard patterns that suggest waves of both sound and light and also have a quaint, modern, wall-hanging numbness.

For the Furniture Art series, shiny plexiglass box frames, which have a similar retro-modern air, were sprayed with hazy bands of enamel, mostly in sunset-sunrise oranges and yellows. This striking update of the reverse-glass painting technique conjures cheap Rothko clouds and West Coast Finish Fetish art, surfboarding and go-go boots with sardonic but seductive efficiency. The series title is a hat tip to Erik Satie's "Furniture Music," a deliberate form of background music and thus an avant-garde precursor to Muzak.

There is nothing very groundbreaking here, but contributions are made to the continuing discussion about beauty and the diverse ways it can be achieved and the hands-off legacy of Jackson Pollock. Object making has never been Ms. Tajima's thing, but these imply a promising trajectory.

-Roberta Smith