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ART

Mariah Robertson

The jewel-tone abstractions—aqueous blobs and swooping bands of color, set in deep frames—in this New York artist’s current show at the Van Doren Waxter gallery, titled “Difference and Repetition,” look like paintings made without paint. In fact, they’re photographs made without a camera. Working in a darkroom with colored filters, Robertson exposes large sheets of photosensitive paper in two-second bursts, embracing both chance and the calculated results of her movements. Each photogram, as expressive as it is aleatory, reflects the process of its making. Although the multipart images are not exactly handmade, they have the appearance of handled objects, and their wavy cut edges and curling corners lend them a daredevil nonchalance. These imperfections underscore the exploratory and intelligent nature of Robertson’s approach, insuring that the show’s glossy vibrance comes off as more than merely chic.

— Johanna Fateman