

METRO PICTURES

Vogel, Wendy. "Critics' Picks: Sara VanDerBeek," *Artforum.com* (October 7, 2016).

ARTFORUM INTERNATIONAL



Sara VanDerBeek, *Hourglass, Dusk*, 2016, acrylic on fiberglass-reinforced plaster and water-based reactive dye printed on cotton voile, 48 x 12 x 12".

Sara VanDerBeek's work mirrors the changing techniques and cultural status of photography. A decade ago, her practice was broadly curatorial, especially as a partner in the artist-run gallery Guild & Greyshkul. We saw this in her museological photographs, too, which brought together cultural artifacts from pre-modern eras to today. Now, she has turned inward and observational, tracing the perceptual effects of light and time on simple sculptural forms. In "Pieced Quilts, Wrapped Forms," VanDerBeek zeroes in on the geometric vocabulary of textiles. She returns to her palette of daybreak pinks, hazy purples, and twilight blues, taking them to decidedly hypersaturated ends of the spectrum. VanDerBeek's six photographic works, three of which are diptychs, include ghostly patterns of diagonals, triangles, and curvilinear designs, created through an analogue-meets-digital process. She shoots shadowy medium-format images, scans the negatives, and collaborates with digital colorists to finalize the prints: a contemporary version of the creative partnership required in quilting.

VanDerBeek's allusions to women's work are intensified by historical references. The eye-popping magenta-on-magenta photograph *Camino Real*, 2016, features a field of rectangles against an even more high-key background. The title is borrowed from Anni Albers's textile commission—a patchwork of red triangles, from blush to burgundy—for Ricardo Legorreta's 1968 landmark Hotel Camino Real in Mexico City.

Along with the photographs, the main gallery contains three modular sculptures in brilliantly pigmented concrete that hug the floor. The back of the space, however, feels like a storeroom, with fifteen totemic sculptures crowded together, made of wood or plaster and painted white. This excess is a mistake, as it makes it easy to overlook a delicate new invention for the artist: prints on gauzy cotton voile, which cover several of the objects. The most intriguing oddball of the group is *Hourglass, Dusk*, 2016, an irregular form under a tightly pinned textile densely patterned with polka dots, loose grids, and other motifs.