

The New York Times

Vincler, John. "What to See in N.Y.C. Galleries Right Now." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 27 Apr. 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/article/new-york-art-galleries.html>.

What to See in N.Y.C. Galleries Right Now (Review)

Everyone is a photographer now. With cameras in nearly every phone, we're overrun with snapshots taken and either posted or forgotten, accruing in the cloud. Mary Manning's photographs in "Ambient Music" made me feel awakened to looking at pictures again. The New York-based photographer juxtaposes 35-millimeter prints in clusters and pairs to make beautiful and open compositions that playfully draw you in.

In "Genuflect" (2022), a swan's head disappears into dark water in the larger central photo. Below is a small photo that looks like a drain (but probably isn't), neatly scaled to match the diameter of the bird's neck. In "Bar Soap" (2022), a large still-life of peach tissue paper emerges plantlike from a nested stack of mint green baskets that typically hold berries. This is paired with a vertical arrangement of three images including two of Merce Cunningham dancers in a rainbow of monochrome costumes. In the top one, the dancers are in a line across the stage; below they are diffusely distributed in a variety of movements — from afar the figures are so small they are merely pointillist flurries of color. Like Cunningham, Manning shares a cultivated sense of ease and play that feels undergirded by practiced attention and discipline.

Surrounded by the work, I sensed an affinity with the immersive installations of Wolfgang Tillmans, but the effect here is less busy and more introspective. Manning conjures a careful, slow, and, better world for looking at photos, at least while you're in the gallery.



Mary Manning's "Genuflect (For/After Jonas Mekas)," from 2022. Credit. Canada, New York; Joe DeNardo