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Art in Review

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UTA BARTH

Sundial

Tanya Bonakdar Gallery

521 West 21st Street, Chelsea

Through Nov. 24

Uta Barth's recurring subject, the passage of light across calm interiors, is the very definition of quotidian. It should not make for interesting photographs, but does because Ms. Barth has a seemingly limitless fascination with the edges of optical perception.

It helps that the sense of movement is not strictly cyclical, but accounts for the natural interruption of retinal overload. Ms. Barth captures the natural light streaming through the windows of her tastefully modern Los Angeles apartment; she then digitally inverts the photograph to convey the sensation of an afterimage, and strings the prints together. In the five-panel sequence of "Untitled (07.2)," blindingly bright windowpanes go dark at the edges, as if projected, by memory, on closed eyelids.

Ms. Barth's photographs are often likened to the backgrounds of Vermeers. The reference seems particularly apt, given the palette of this particular series, all milky grays, minty greens and murky yellows. But some of the most painterly effects occur in the images without computerized intervention, which can read as white-on-white minimalist canvases, or as smoky James Turrell-like illusions. One such triptych hangs near the gallery's front window, where it has a disorienting, frame-within-a-frame effect.

Ms. Barth is on familiar ground here, but she continues to find forgotten or overlooked corners of her home and our field of vision. **KAREN ROSENBERG**