

ARTFORUM

Liz Nielsen

Over the Influence Los Angeles

By Annabel Osberg

The twenty monumental photograms comprising Liz Nielsen's show here, "I'd Like to Imagine You're in a Place Like This," are like mosaics of liquefied jewels. The artist refers to them as "light paintings," and her early training in painting and printmaking certainly shines through. Evoking Helen Frankenthaler's blocky fields of poured color, the saturated hues of her photographs seem to simultaneously protrude and recede into space, yielding surprisingly tactile visual sensations. Nielsen achieves these effects via her own systematically ordered methodology of layering transparent and opaque objects, papers, and plastics atop light-sensitive photo paper and selectively exposing the arrangements to various types of illumination.



Sailor's Delight, 2020, Analog chromogenic photogram, 49 1/4 x 67 7/8 inches

Executed in brilliant gradational tones, the otherworldly realms of her abstract landscapes feel as though they've been collaged from shards of glass kissed by light. It's easy to get lost in works such as *Island Cruiser, 2021*, where sharply delineated forms are made to resemble glaciers, mountains, ice sheets, and lakes. Each landscape depicts a composite of two or more places and was synthesized via a multitude of exposures, sometimes more than a hundred. This laborious process subtly nods to the slow geological evolution of these sites over millennia. Tiny details, including scratches, splatters, and polychromatic seams, further intimate a sense of accumulated time and activity. Playful moments, such as those sparked by the serrated jaws of *Alligator Landscape, 2021*, encourage one's mind to wander in realms both splendid and treacherous.

In *Sailor's Delight, 2020*, a multicolored schooner glides across a turquoise sea against a ruby-red sky ruled by a dreamy full moon. To imagine oneself in such a place is so pleasurable that I'd like to cast my lot with that boat and see where it will take me. Nevertheless, here I am, stranded in this desert island of a real world, watching the vessel skim by as I make my way out of the gallery.