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The Art of Light

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PHOTOGRAMS, WHICH CAPTURE LIGHT on sensitive material without using a lens, predate photography and have attracted artists like Picasso and Man Ray. Artist Liz Nielsen specializes in highly stylized and colorful photograms of rainbows, landscapes, arches and groups of flat, stonelike, objects. Her work is on view at New York's Miles McEnery Gallery until Nov. 26.

Ms. Nielsen, 47, says that she plans meticulously before entering her darkened studio to create a photogram. The process can take up to eight hours, projecting rays of light through multiple layers of plastic. Often an object that looks monochrome from afar turns out to have brilliant edges of a clashing color.



Glowing Stone Arch (right) and Being with You (above)

In “Being With You” (left), two bright objects hang out together, their surfaces reflecting gold, magenta, white and turquoise. Their edges touch only at one small place, as if holding hands. As for the light that made them, “you can know [it] but you can’t hold it, says Ms. Nielsen. “It’s almost like love.”