



Manifestations of the Voyage: Liz Nielsen

April 2026 | By MTA Arts & Design Commission

ABOUT THE PROJECT

In *Manifestations of the Voyage*, ten photograms by artist Liz Nielsen open a portal into shifting landscapes of color and geometry, evoking the fleeting impressions that accompany any journey. The exhibition's title, borrowed from poet and artist Etel Adnan, gestures toward the inner worlds that emerge in moments of transit.

Working with the photogram, one of photography's earliest techniques, Nielsen creates her images without a camera. In the darkroom, she layers materials and objects over photosensitive paper and directs light through multiple exposures to build compositions that balance careful planning with spontaneity. The resulting artworks explore the intersection of color perception, physics, and the intangible forces that shape how we move through the world.



Manifestations of the Voyage (2026) located at Grand Central Madison, New York, NY. Commissioned by MTA Arts & Design, photo courtesy of Jason Mandella.

Arranged to align with the daily ebb and flow of Grand Central Madison commuters at dawn and dusk, the installation positions nocturnal color fields along the corridor leading travelers toward Long Island. On the opposite side, customers heading into the city encounter compositions that evoke daytime glows. Each photogram becomes a vivid moment within the corridor's daily rhythm, with shifts of color and light that reimagine the familiar path between departure and arrival.

The exhibition is curated by MTA Arts & Design in collaboration with the artist and will be on view through September 2026.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Liz Nielsen (b. 1975) is a New York-based artist celebrated for her innovative approach to photography, which she refers to as "light painting." Using photograms—a technique that predates traditional photography—Nielsen creates one-of-a-kind compositions in the darkroom. Her process involves a complex layering system of materials and objects to project light onto photosensitive paper, building intricate, multi-exposure images that combine detailed planning with moments of spontaneity. Her vibrant photograms, ranging in size from intimate to monumental, feature bold colors and geometric forms, evoking themes of duality, movement, and transformation. Speaking about her medium, Nielsen has said, "Light is like love—you can know it, but you can't hold it," a sentiment that resonates deeply in her practice.

Her work has been exhibited extensively both nationally and internationally, with solo exhibitions at Miles McEnery Gallery in New York, Black Box Projects in London, SOCO Gallery in Charlotte, and Hexton Gallery in Aspen. Nielsen's work has been featured in major publications, including Artforum, The New Yorker, The Financial Times, and The New York Times. Additionally, Nielsen is the recipient of numerous awards including the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Grant, New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) Grant, and the Chicago Academic Achievement Program (CAAP) Grant.



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