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ART IN REVIEW

'Abstraction in Photography'

Von Lintel Gallery
555 West 25th Street, Chelsea
Through March 22

Once it was widely assumed that photography was about representation; no matter how off-register, its subject matter was shaped by our sense of objective reality. Yet within recent years, the camera's potential for unclued abstraction has come more and more into play. This show, focusing on fresh explorations in the field, is an intriguing demonstration.

Working in color and in black-and-white, the 16 exhibitors have approached abstraction in very different ways: some by exploring realistic subjects from odd angles; others by constructing or finding an image abstract in its very nature; and still others by making cameraless photographs. Their modes range from geometric patterning, like the all-over grid imposed on a field pulsing with shades of blue in Vik Muniz's "After Yves Klein (From Pictures of Color)," to the convoluted, free-flowing sculptural forms in black and white of Winfred Evers's "Moving Still."

David Maisel's stunning "Butte, Montana No. 7," an aerial photograph of a mountainous terrain, shows blobs of hot color and deep trackless white dispersed among peaks, valleys and ridges as curved by nature as those of a man-made structure. Juan Uslé's "Early" makes an epic from what seems to be the slats of a tightly strung orange-red blind, punctuated by long slits of bright white daylight slipping through the cracks. William Eggleston's Iris print "Untitled (Cloud in Sky, California)" is a subtly nuanced study of an ethereal formation in grays and whites. Good group shows of abstract photography are hard to come by, and this is one not to miss.

GRACE GLUECK