aperture

Liz Deschenes at the Walker Art Center

Liz Deschenes's works exist as photographic objects and understanding of its realization at once. During the last three decades, Deschenes has sought to expand what defines the viewing of a photograph, her work inhabiting a space between image and sculpture. Over the years she has pared down the photograph to its most basic elements– paper, light, and chemical– and amplified them. Now, for a yearlong exhibition occupying the Walker Art Center's seventh-floor gallery, Deschenes presents a large-scale installation, or "photographic intervention." Of her work in the 2010 Whitney Biennial, she told *BOMB* Magazine, "What I am responding to is that photography is a translation of color and tones—a language." Her aims are more abstract than traditional photography, she explained, often to "enable the viewer to see the inconstancy of the conditions of display, which are always at play but sometimes hard to see."

In this most recent project, she shifts the contours of the room by letting in natural light and reorienting the layout with rectangular, colored panels, which consist of a combination of silvery photograms and digitally printed blue monochromes. She creates these photograms using a method for which she has become well known, in which she makes use of dim nighttime light on photosensitive paper, to be later washed with silver toner. Much like her new layout of the exhibition space itself, the result of the photograms depends on subtle shifts of light across space, here across surfaces. The other panels represent newer experiments with digital pigment printing on acrylic in various shades of blue. It's an intervention in that the display's parts alternately take in and reflect light, same as they intend to rearrange our movements. In that vein, Deschenes uses not just the materials of photography but also its usual setting for viewing– the show title, "Gallery 7," is the original 1971 name for the gallery space, now called the Medtronic Gallery.

"Gallery 7" is on view at the Walker Art Center, in Minneapolis, MN, through November 22.