

# The New York Times

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ART & DESIGN

## What to See in New York Art Galleries This Week

By WILL HEINRICH and MARTHA SCHWENDENER DEC. 12, 2017



### Kelly Akashi

*Through Dec. 18. SculptureCenter, 44-19 Purves Street, Queens; 718-361-1750, [sculpture-center.org](http://sculpture-center.org).*



An installation view of "Feel Me," one of Kelly Akashi's works, also being shown at SculptureCenter. Kyle Knodell/Ghebaly Gallery, Los Angeles

The basement of SculptureCenter proposes a challenge to artists. Divided into narrow passageways by heavy walls, the space offers a series of nooks for displaying art at unusual viewer proximity. Kelly Akashi occupies it with aplomb in “Long Exposure,” her current exhibition.

Glass, bronze and wax sculptures sit on ad hoc brick shelves or on wooden supports that resemble Ikea end tables. Some of the glass works look like spores or futuristic organisms; some of the candles do creepy things like spiral around a tree branch. A few bronze body parts crop up: human hands, fingers and such. The work might be described as restrained-psychedelic or an art-craft-science experiment from the 1960s, retooled for the present.



**“Image of a Thing” (2017) by Ms. Akashi.**  
Kyle Knodell/Ghebaly Gallery, Los Angeles

What makes Ms. Akashi’s presentation noticeably contemporary, in addition to its resemblance to Carol Bove’s early work, is that, as the title of the exhibition suggests, photography is used as a guiding logic — particularly, its digital form. Ms. Akashi started as a photographer, and a suite of classically black-and-white photograms is installed in a corner of the basement. Each coyly titled “Image of a Thing,” the amoeba-like photograms have a formal similarity to sculpture.

It goes further than this, though. In the era of 3-D printing, flatness and volume are closer than ever on a continuum. A picture on a screen can quickly morph into a sculpture, and vice versa. Plants are now like photographs or sculptures, too: They're engineered by humans just as often as they "naturally" occur. Ms. Akashi's exhibition functions as a dusky symbolic and underground laboratory for exploring some of these ideas.

MARTHA SCHWENDENER