

ARTFORUM

CRITICS' PICKS

New York

Noguchi Rika

D'AMELIO TERRAS

525 West 22nd Street, Ground Floor

May 2–June 20

Walter Benjamin famously associated the rise of photography with the decline of spiritual authenticity in the work of art; however, for Benjamin, the earliest photographs retained a vital connection to spirituality, chiefly through their facilitation of the cult of remembrance. In her recent series "The Sun," Noguchi Rika returns to one of the oldest and most basic of photographic technologies, the pinhole camera (an extension of the classical camera obscura), in an attempt to reinvest photography with a sense of metaphysical significance.

Each photograph in the series presents a direct or indirect view of the sun—captured through windows, down hallways, over buildings, and between clouds. The overexposure of the images, coupled with the soft focus of the pinhole camera, lends each picture a dreamlike, evanescent quality, which is heightened by the installation: The gallery space is darkened, and each photograph is lit by a single spotlight, creating a glare that produces the uncanny impression that one is actually staring into the sun, rather than its photographic equivalent. This dexterous manipulation of the viewer's perceptual experience allows Noguchi to re-create something of the sensual, emotional, and epistemological shock that must have been experienced by photography's earliest audiences. Meanwhile, the artist's banal, almost touristic compositions evoke the snapshot of amateur photography, which has perpetuated the cult of remembrance through the twentieth and into the twenty-first century. By deftly synthesizing the extreme familiarity and the essential otherworldliness of the photograph, Noguchi prompts reflection on the sense of mystery that continues to pervade our experience of photography in the digital era.



Noguchi Rika, *The Sun #1*, 2005–2006, color photograph, 18 x 26".

— Michael Paulson



THE NEW YORKER

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

ART

MAY 13, 2009

NOGUCHI RIKA

This Japanese-born, Berlin-based photographer shows a series of modestly scaled color images of landscapes nearly blotted out by the sun that were included in the 2008 Carnegie International. Shooting into the sun is usually an amateur photographer's mistake, resulting in a brilliant, starlike flare and uncontrolled overexposure, both of which are further exaggerated in these pictures by the artist's use of a homemade pinhole camera. Barbara Ess has been here before, but the low-tech expressionist effect remains seductive—dreamy and quasi-visionary, all the more so in this dramatic installation, with each picture individually lit in a darkened gallery. Through June 20. (D'Amelio Terras, 525 W. 22nd St. 212-352-9460.)