

## Sara Greenberger Rafferty

Through Oct. 28. Rachel Uffner, 170 Suffolk Street, Lower East Side; 212-274-0064, [racheluffner.com](http://racheluffner.com).



Sara Greenberger Rafferty's "Untitled" (detail), from 2018, inkjet-printed vinyl with grommets. via Sara Greenberger Rafferty and Rachel Uffner Gallery

What is a photograph? In the entrance to her new show, "[Testing](#)," at [Rachel Uffner](#) gallery, Sara Greenberger Rafferty offers a panoply of examples printed on a 35-foot-long sheet of vinyl stretching from floor to ceiling. In this 2018 work, "Untitled," a photograph can be a picture taken with a smartphone, a digital format (TIFF, jpeg or PDF document), Instagram post, selfie, meme, book cover, advertisement, screen saver or something else.

More than just an inventory, "Testing" demonstrates how contemporary photography is also a repository for ideas, a daily journal and a form of note-taking. A book you want to read? Take a snapshot of it. A funny meme in social media? Make a screenshot of it. Upset about something? Broadcast it via images on social media.

The caveat here is that images are spinning perilously out of control. Our smartphones can store pictures we don't even look at after taking. Archives and storage are thus more important than viewing or contemplation of individual images. Pushing back against this idea, Ms. Rafferty presents a series of near-abstract images, fragments or text, baked into glass in a kiln. These images are a bit random and cryptic, culled from archives or bought on eBay, but their process is notable: They essentially propose a form of printing — or a return to 19th-century methods — that challenges the history of photographs as images printed on perishable paper.

"Testing" raises both technical and theoretical questions for artists and educators, as well as for the average cellphone camera addict. How do you practice, explain or display technologically generated images in a moment when everyone is a photographer and images are beyond ubiquitous? This show functions as an update of the state of photography and a tutorial — but also, with the glass works, as a perverse proposal for achieving permanence in a warp-speed-changing, disposable-image culture. MARTHA SCHWENDENER