



Left: Jacqueline Kiyomi Gordon, installation view of “No Touch,” with *Untitled (Fantasy II)*, 2012; foam, felt, cotton, wood, ultrasonic speakers, mp3, and speaker stands, dimensions variable. Below: Jacqueline Kiyomi Gordon, *Searching for Vespers (LD 1–4)*, 2012. Glass, steel, plaster, cement, wool, wood, carpeting, and speakers, dimensions variable.

## SAN FRANCISCO

### Jacqueline Kiyomi Gordon Eli Ridgway Gallery

Though Jacqueline Kiyomi Gordon’s exhibition “No Touch” explored the interrelationship of space and sound, it was the translation of sound into visually beautiful, “fine art” objects that acted as the siren’s call, luring us in for a closer look and listen. Stepping off the hustle and bustle of Minna Street, viewers entered the quiet of the lobby, which has become an important transition space in which gallery owner Eli Ridgway orchestrates a program of rotating installations. The narrow hallway, with its dark reverberant flooring leads to a storefront, aluminum frame door, which, for Gordon’s show, opened to reveal her first installation, *Untitled (Fantasy II)*.

At the center stood an object with all the telltale signs of an abstract sculpture—angular lines, larger-than-human size, simple, non-decorative forms—but rendered in the stuff of a

suburban corporate interior: acoustic foam, felt, and wood. Two speakers, pointed toward opposite sides of the object, played an array of popular music, though no one was listening. The directed-sound technology projected a focused beam of sound akin to the beam of a flashlight in which light tunnels directly ahead rather than illuminating an entire space. In this case, the sculpture’s sound-absorbing materials deadened the soundtrack, which was pointed directly at it. The only way to hear the music piece was to plant oneself directly between a speaker and the central form. Two abstract wall works created from melamine foam acoustic panels completed the elements in this space. Though “colored” in the non-color of a construction product that typically slips anonymously into ceilings, these large-scale “tiles” took on a presence of their own.

A series of steps led down into the space below for Gordon’s second installation, *Searching for Vespers*

(*LD 1–4*). Here, she playfully inverted the relative positions of object and speaker. Four speakers pointed outward from the center of the space, facing four objects of differing acoustic properties: glass, steel, plaster, and cement. Gordon amplified their differences by taking recordings made within each of the four objects and directing the sounds back to their original materials. In so doing, the high-pitched sounds of glass and steel became higher, the muffled sound of concrete lower. The “viewer” literally heard an auditory representation of the visual object.

*Wall Panels VII*, a series of sculptural acoustic panels, was installed across the length of the lower gallery. Here, a subtle “rose-blush” palette distanced the pieces from the everyday. The acoustic properties of the “reliefs” created a unique zone of quiet that expanded the territory of the installation.

Gordon’s final installation occupied the project room, the innermost

space in the gallery. For *Untitled (There nor Here)*, a lowered ceiling busy with exposed plumbing was painted white to become part of the space. Shapes particularly suited to sound absorption surrounded the room, creating a chamber with reduced reverberation. Not dissimilar to the modulated walls of a recording studio, the work trapped sound within an eerily quiet space.

Like John Cage’s infamous orchestral piece *4’33”*, Gordon’s installations beckoned one to listen closely to the physical properties of space. After leaving the show, while hearing my footsteps echo through the entry, my memory was jerked back to a Gothic cathedral in England where I had marveled at the reverberations created by massive stone pillars and soaring ceilings. Sound is inextricably connected to space, an insight that Gordon captures aurally and visually.

—Donna Schumacher

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### David Middlebrook The McLoughlin Gallery

Wood, stone, and metal may have been supplanted by newer materials (e.g., chocolate, tofu, and frozen blood), but some artists enjoy both the technical and aesthetic challenges of traditional, “noble” materials. David Middlebrook, who emerged on the Bay Area gallery scene only relatively recently—with a 2010 retrospective at the Triton Museum in Santa Clara and now this solo show—has had a long career making public sculpture and

