

DAILYSERVING

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“Rocks & Clocks” at Ambach & Rice

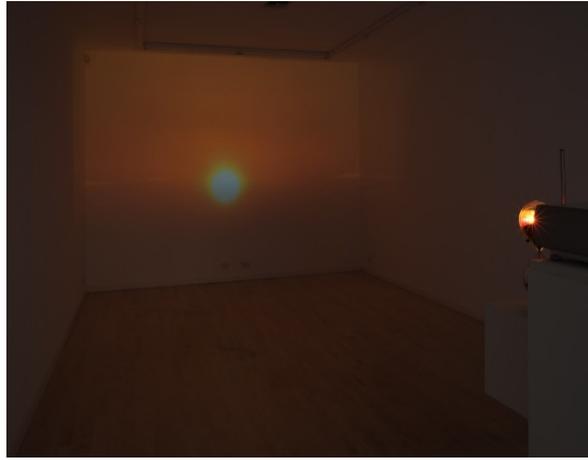
Since sitting down six minutes ago, my iPhone has buzzed no less than eight times. E-mail. E-mail. Text message. E-mail. Breaking news notification. Follow up text message. Reminder alarm. E-mail. Approve the attached contract to begin production. Bombing suspect hospitalized. What’s the address for tomorrow? Please send details for exhibition. Go to bank. John Doe wants to be your friend!



Installation View

Despite this electronic outburst, I am making every attempt to focus on the meditative installation in the back gallery of [Ambach & Rice](#), and it hits a poignant nerve. The ability to concentrate on any singular thing has become an art form within itself. We are unremittingly multi-tasking, documenting, transmitting beings to which space – between thoughts or plans alike – is uncomfortable. Even in the face of social atrocities that beg for grave respite, we are cursory in our reflections because of a shared, trained inability to pause, to simply be present. *Rocks & Clocks* takes umbrage with this compulsion through a purposefully minimalist and elemental selection of works by Cameron Gainer, Mark Hagen, Emilie Halpern, and Mungo

Thomson. On view through May 18th, the group show confronts our collective anxieties about modern time and space in an elegant and quietly plaintive way.



Installation View

The aforementioned meditative installation – *Sunrise/Sunset* (2013) by Cameron Gainer – features a projected image through a sand-filled hand blown hourglass. What is initially a black wall gradually becomes a rich, citrusy sunset as the diminishing sand reveals the vista sliver by sliver. Within eighteen minutes, the last granule tumbles into the bottom half of the glass, and I am left with a stillness that is both comforting and unnerving. This artificial, static sunset has managed to seize more of my attention than the actual Los Angeles dusk does on a daily basis; not necessarily because it is more visually alluring, but because its manifestation of mortality is so precisely articulated.



Mungo Thomson's "Untitled (TIME)" (2010)

With a contrasting technique, Mungo Thomson's *Untitled (TIME)* (2010) delineates a similar regard for the ephemeral by parodying our progressively accelerated attention spans. Over a mere two minutes and thirty seconds, eighty years' worth of TIME Magazine covers flash upon the gallery wall in violently rapid succession. A maelstrom of pop cultural personalities and events eclipse one another before the eye can fully register their form, as if the relative notoriety of each cover's subject has fallen from a center to peripheral view. An expedited impersonation of our fleeting interests and concerns, the work feels astutely topical in a moment when social media feeds vie for (often misinformed) headlines.



Emilie Halpern's "Big Dipper" (2010)

Mark Hagen's *To Be Titled – Subtractive Sculpture #11* (2013) bears a likeness to a prehistoric Larry Bell work, a rainbow obsidian slab balancing atop an elegant steel pedestal. Hagen displays how removed we have become from our utilitarian roots, as if the inky block is an artifact from an era in which craft and function superseded perfection and immediacy.

Similarly, Emilie Halpern's *Big Dipper* (2010) critiques our distance from cognizance. Suspended from the ceiling, a collection of found beach rocks stand in for the constellation's stars, and vary in wire length relative to their distance from the earth. From an initial vantage point, the rocks appear completely abstract in their formation; but a quick glance to the mirror below their arrangement displays Halpern's true composition. The distinctive constellation's shape is reflected back at the viewer, revealing our present tendency to experience the world through mediated agencies as much as our oversights. Increasingly, we capture and observe moments in time through a series of screens and displays – simulacra of conscious actuality. From this perspective, the sunset is prolonged, the headline is bygone, the material is

flawed, and the arrangement is random; but from a place of authenticity, we see the stars.



Installation View