

## Sabine Hornig: This Is No Time @Tanya Bonakdar

By [Loring Knoblauch](#) / In [Galleries](#) / July 19, 2022

**JTF (just the facts):** A total of 13 photographic works, displayed against white walls in the main gallery space, the project room, and the foyer area on the second floor of the gallery. The photographs are framed in light grey with no mat; the glass works are framed in grey steel.

The show includes:

- 2 pigment print on archival paper, 2020, 2022, sized roughly 49×31, 56×40 inches, in editions of 10+2AP
- 4 silkscreen print on pigment print on archival paper, 2020, 2022, sized roughly 55×41, 56×39, 56×42 inches, in editions of 10+2AP
- 2 silkscreen print on pigment print on archival paper diptychs, 2022, each pane sized roughly 61×36 inches, in editions of 5+2AP
- 5 ceramic silkscreen print on glass, 2022, sized roughly 32×24, 33×24, 34×24 inches, in editions of 5+2AP

**Comments/Context:** The long overdue rebuilding of the obsolete terminals at LaGuardia Airport has finally brought some much needed improvements to a key transportation gateway for New York city and the surrounding areas. And as part of the new Terminal B, a handful of large scale art installations were commissioned for locations in the departures and arrivals areas. Works by Jeppe Hein (shiny balloons scattered along the ceiling throughout the halls, as well as a few sculptural benches), Laura Owens (a huge mosaic tile mural near the escalator down to baggage claim), and Sarah Sze (a towering globe-shaped photo sculpture near the check-in desks) now dot various public areas.

The fourth artist included in this group of commissions was the German sculptor/photographer Sabine Hornig, and her contribution to Terminal B takes the form of a massive glass wall that can be seen from both inside and outside the building. And while all of the commissions take life in New York city as their underlying inspiration, Hornig's effort is the most literal in its connection making to the airport's namesake. *La Guardia Vistas* is essentially a photocollage on a grand scale, merging more than a thousand individual images of the city into a pair of densely interlocked cityscapes that fill a space some 40 feet high and 250 feet wide. Architectural vistas and details are restlessly recombined, the resulting visual frieze then populated with quotes from Fiorello La Guardia, New York City mayor from 1934 to 1945 and founder of the airport.

This gallery show gathers together a selection of smaller works that leverage Hornig's work on the commission and repackage it in more manageable sizes. Since the airport installation is continually activated by light passing through it, making the colors pop and dance like stained glass in a church, Hornig has had to rethink how to translate her process into more static pieces that still thrum with the same kind of visual energy.

One solution Hornig has offered is simply to recreate the transparent effect of the big windows by printing smaller slices of her imagery on sheets of glass and hanging them from wires in the middle of the gallery space (in this case, from the struts of the skylight above.) These are the tightest and most pared down compositions on view, with flattened curtain walls of windows seen at night, and then again in disorientingly reversed tonalities of mostly invisible white, and layers of stair-stepped building edges that climb up into waves of repetition and echo. Another composition on glass mixes night and day more freely, leaning on the pink afternoon glow and its inversion to jumble various buildings together like geometric puzzle pieces. The title of the show comes from yet another of these glass works, where an angled nighttime view of a building with the fire escapes, windows, and scaffolding interlocked into a scratched pattern sits underneath a fragment of a famous quote from Fiorello La Guardia ("this is no time for political fence building"), almost like a Jenny Holzer projection or a biting Barbara Kruger phrase.

Longer quotes from La Guardia become a more prominent compositional element in Hornig's pigment prints; these works lack the inherent sparkle of the glass works, but compensate for that lack of brightness with more complex and layered compositions, many of which incorporate a layer of silkscreening on top of the underlying photographs. By cropping out any notion of sky or ground, and inverting (or reversing) many of the included building forms, Hornig creates a sense of floating uncertainty, where individual structures (some of which are recognizable NYC landmarks, from the Chrysler building to One57) pile atop one another in impossible ways. From there, La Guardia's inspirational words (about immigration, money in campaigns, inclusion, and progress) hover above the architectural fray on scrims and veils, like pronouncements from a higher authority. The resulting works amplify the energetic uplift of the city, exaggerating its complexity for effect, but in ways that feel optimistic and aspirational.

In the two diptychs hung in the side gallery, Hornig adds silkscreen layers of gold and silver to her pigment prints (this time without the addition of overlaid words) in another attempt to replicate the gleam of the original windows. Clustered city views of night and day (or their inversions) are laid atop one another, combining right side up and upside down worlds in one frame, like two sides of a closing clam shell. Silhouetted buildings reach up and down like sharp teeth in a mouth, the gold and silver inks adding shimmer to the already blinking lights found in the windows. It's like the city has competing identities or lives, and Hornig's images have attempted to visualize them both (light/dark, night/day, up/down, positive/negative) simultaneously.

While countless photographers have made images of the architectural fabric of this city, Hornig's layered composites call out and repurpose recognizable landmarks and neighborhoods without becoming gimmicky, which is much tougher than it might sound. Her airport commission is both immediately familiar and wholly original, infusing the city with the ghost of its former (and arguably best) mayor. Her subset artworks channel some of that same innovative energy, but with more intimacy, trading impressive scale and enveloping color for more controlled interaction and communication – her glass wall at the airport is an experience, while these works are conversations. A few even find a sense of the elusive magic of this great city, where something altogether unexpected just might happen.