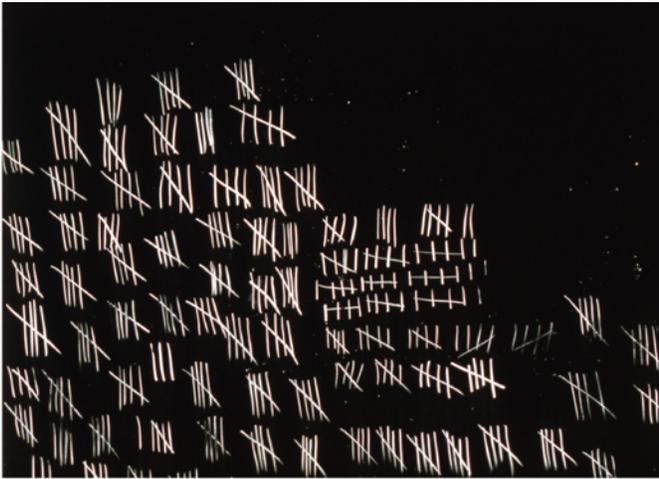


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At Bureau, Erica Baum's Blackboards Keep Teaching Us

Blake Gopnik, Thursday, March 3, 2016



THE DAILY PIC (#1453): There's a long history of looking at old blackboards as gorgeous Modernist palimpsests – found Twomblys, you could call them. (Or is it Twomblys that are merely “elevated blackboards”?)

This photograph of a blackboard, shot by Erica Baum in 1996, is one of several on view now in [her solo show at Bureau gallery](#) in New York. What makes Baum's pieces different from their modernist predecessors, for instance by photographers such as Aaron Siskind, is that they preserve more traces of their blackboards' original use – to teach counting, in the case of today's Pic. Baum's early, little-known blackboard photos lead directly to the more recent images of books and texts that have won her a following – and, as it happens, a prominent place in the [Guggenheim's current “Photo-Poetics”](#) show.

Baum's words, you could say, are already there in her blackboards, if only *in absentia*. (Image courtesy the artist and Bureau New York)

For a full survey of past Daily Pics visit blakegopnik.com/archive.