

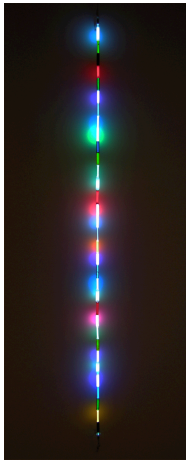
ART & DESIGN

Laddie John Dill: 'Elementary'

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Art in Review

By KEN JOHNSON



*Nyehaus
358 West 20th Street,
Chelsea
Through July 26*

At the end of the 1960s the West Coast [Light and Space](#) artist Laddie John Dill began producing electric light works out of custom-made, blown-glass tubes in a lush palette of jewel-bright colors.

[Here](#) nine of these works, all from 1971, are installed in one room at regular intervals, each recessed into the wall. The finger-thick, seven-foot-long verticals are made of differently colored tubular segments of varying lengths. Some are made of many short pieces, some of longer parts and fewer colors. They glow beautifully like strings of illuminated glass beads. Mr. Dill called these works “Light Sentences,” likening the segments of color to words grouped in phrases and sentences. This suggests that light itself could be a transcendental language. But the effect of these works in concert is less verbal and more like trippy visual chamber music.

Mr. Dill’s spiritual inclinations are more explicit in another installation, in which a set of rectangular glass panes is arranged in an arc and partly submerged in a small, dark pool built into a knee-high wooden platform. Lighted from below by hidden fixtures, the panes glow blue along their edges, as if tinged by supernatural light. With a single, green vertical light piece on the wall like an icon, the ensemble creates a futuristic, ecclesiastical ambience.

A set of recent, small-scale works consists of illuminated glass panes in syncopating geometric configurations embedded in mounds of sand or darkly painted plaster. They could be models for updates of [Stonehenge](#), monuments for a new cosmic paganism.