

CHINATOWN

### Pentti Monkkonen

Through May 18. Jenny's, 9 Pell Street, Manhattan; 646-861-1581, [jennys.us](http://jennys.us).



From left: “King Kong’s Visa” (2023) and “Mothra” (2023) by Pentti Monkkonen. via Pentti Monkkonen and Jenny’s, New York; Photo by Joerg Lohse

It’s been over a decade since New York has seen one of the grand, hyperrealist installations constructed by artists like [Mike Nelson](#), Christoph Büchel, [Gregor Schneider](#) or [Justin Lowe and Jonah Freeman](#). These large, psychedelic fun-house affairs functioned like surrealistic movie sets, à la Luis Buñuel or David Lynch, and came with warnings and waivers that visitors had to sign. The Minneapolis-born artist [Pentti Monkkonen](#) has created a much smaller but effectively unsettling environment with his new show, “[Oscillator](#).”

The setting is a wood-paneled office — but things are off at the office. The shelving units radiate an icy glow; a giant moth sculpted in epoxy hangs on one wall; an enlarged vintage Visa card, issued to King Kong, on another. Embedded in the fourth wall is an old desktop computer outfitted with a synthesizer that visitors can play, creating their own retro-futuristic soundtrack. “Oscillator” mimics not so much the contemporary minimal office cubicle as a hallucinogenic rendition of a ’70s Sidney Lumet movie involving contraband and hostages.

The overall medium here is nostalgia. Some appurtenances are outdated while others, like King Kong, have morphed over decades from movie monster to furry folk hero. The art world is similarly nostalgic: It used to embrace (and fund) epic installations; now we’re stuck with immersive Van Gogh or [Hieronymus Bosch](#) “experiences” and art fairs. In this sense, “Oscillator” serves almost like a mnemonic device, reminding us not only of pop culture past, but lost art worlds. *MARTHA SCHWENDENER*