



## Absence Presence @ Transformer



The tiny room that makes up [Transformer gallery](#) is currently displaying contrasting work by [Richard Chartier](#) and [Paul Vinet](#) that explores the ideas of absence and presence. The title of the show, *Absence Presence*, plainly explains the intent of the exhibition.

Mostly known for his work in sound and recording, Chartier extends his minimal tendencies to his paintings found in *Absence Presence*. Chartier uses a process where simple line drawings are erased and then painted over using very minimal color. The layers of paint obscure the faint markings of the erased pencil drawings, and the hints of structure within his compositions force the viewer to investigate the painting up close. The result is delicate and subtle, but in reaching the depths of minimalism, his

work feels old hat.

Chartier's work seeks to communicate what once was, ranging from more overt presentations of the once complete pencil drawings as in *Field Variation 4* (pictured), to more obscured lines in the majority of his work. Much of his paintings are also devoid of color, continuing the theme of non-being, but a few pieces do incorporate it; *Presence 2* and *Addendum 2, 3 and 4* being the exception. They do not stray far from their minimal tendencies, but do add a bright point of interest to the collection.

Conversely, Paul Vinet's work showcases "presence." In large high-gloss prints, Vinet offers ordinary and mundane street scenes where his subjects are surrounded by "white noise" made from gold-leaf. The idea of a gold-leaf background, taken from Renaissance painting, represents an omnipotent presence.

His compositions are very dynamic and play with scale and perspective. Devoid of buildings and the clutter of the everyday, the result is eerie. The subjects are transported to the middle of a sand storm or dunes in a desert with no end. They are in the middle of nowhere, unconcerned and continue to go about their daily lives.



Small details within the photographs emerge from the swarming backdrop. An isolated shopping bag or a street lamp lends some grounding and a little sense of space within the gold void. In one composition, an edge of a bridge extends up the left side of the photograph and a line of people stretch out towards the other side, resembling a line of queued ants from a distance.

*Images courtesy of [Transformer](#)*

*Absence Presence is on display at Transformer now through March 8. The gallery is located at 1404 P St NW and is open Wednesday through Saturday, 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. or by appointment.*