

RHONA HOFFMAN GALLERY

Spencer Finch

Looking around, gazing intently, beholding

Sep 11 — Oct 31, 2020

To ensure the safety of visitors to our gallery, a limited number of individuals will be allowed into the gallery at the same time. Reservations can be made via exploretock.com/rhonaoffmangallery



Spencer Finch, *Color Notes (summer), I*, 2020

looking around, gazing intently, beholding—Spencer Finch’s sixth solo exhibition at Rhona Hoffman Gallery—borrows its title from a haiku by Matsuo Bashō (1644–1694), a celebrated poet of Japan’s Edo Period. The new works in watercolor, pastel, and fluorescent light result from Finch’s continued explorations of color, perception, and natural phenomena, embracing science and poetry in equal measure. The work communicates experiences of the world that are both universal and intimately subjective.

The exhibition centers four sculptures of filtered fluorescent light whose three-part structure, vertical orientation, and 17 color segments mimic the traditional Japanese haiku form. *Haiku (Spring)* is based on a light reading made by the artist at Kenrokuen Garden in Kanazawa, Japan; the first line is based on color observations of azaleas, while the second and third are derived from cherry blossoms and irises. *Haiku (Summer)* is based on the quality of light during a thunderstorm; *Haiku (Fall)* represents moonlight reflected on a pond; and *Haiku (Winter)* is inspired by the colors of a shadow on snow.

The works on paper visualize similarly poetic systems Finch has invented for observing the world around him. To create the large-scale *Following a Bee (Zinnias)* pastel drawings, Finch planted a patch of zinnias in his garden, then observed from above as bees pollinated the flowers. Each drawing maps the flight of an individual bee and the flowers of various colors on which it landed. The *Gutter* watercolors, meanwhile, are based on collections of objects observed by the artist in street gutters on his walks through different cities. Painted wet on wet stretched paper, each composition’s seven colors coalesce into a form reminiscent of a rainbow. Finally, *Color Notes (Summer)* is a suite of 25 small abstract studies of color and form, which Finch describes as “haiku-like observations of the world,” organized by season. The ongoing project draws inspiration from Emily Noyes Vanderpoel’s pioneering study of color theory, *Color Problems: A Practical Manual for the Lay Student of Color*, originally published in 1901.

In this moment of collective urgency and uncertainty, Finch encourages us to take a moment to find beauty and meaning in our everyday surroundings; to look around, gaze intently, and behold.

RHONA HOFFMAN GALLERY

Spencer Finch (b. Connecticut, 1962) lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. He studied at the Rhode Island School of Design, Hamilton College, and Doshisha University in Kyoto, Japan. Finch has exhibited internationally since the early 1990s, and recently completed large scale public projects at the Harvey Milk Terminal at The San Francisco Airport (*Orion*) and at the Paddington Crossrail Station in London (*A Cloud index*). His upcoming installations include *Secret Life of Glass* at the Corning Museum and *Moon Dust*, a long term installation at the Museum of Fine Arts Houston. His solo museum exhibitions include *A Certain Slant of Light* at The Morgan Library in New York City in 2014, *The Skies can't keep their secret* at the Turner Contemporary Museum in Margate, UK in 2014, *Following Nature* at the Indianapolis Museum of Art in 2013, *Painting Air* at the Rhode Island School of Design Museum of Art in 2012, *Lunar* at the Art Institute Chicago in 2012, *My Business, with the Cloud* at the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, DC in 2010, and *What Time Is It On The Sun?* at MASS MoCA in 2007. Finch was included in the 2009 Venice Biennale exhibition, *Making Worlds*, and the 2004 Whitney Biennial.

His public projects include *The River that Flows Both Ways* for The High Line in New York City (2009), the glass facade design for the Johns Hopkins Medical Center in Baltimore (2012), *Vital Signs for Quadrant 3* in London (2013), *Trying to remember the color of the sky on that September morning* for the 9/11 Memorial Museum in New York City (2014), and *When You Look on the River and Sky* (2019) as part of the Whitman at 200 celebration in Philadelphia.

His work is held in numerous museum collections including the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; the Glasgow Museum of Art, Glasgow; the High Museum of Art, Atlanta; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC; the Morgan Library, New York; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt; the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; and the Whitney Museum, New York.