

## **SPENCER FINCH**

### *La Grande Jatte*

April 7 - May 13, 2023

*La Grande Jatte*—Spencer Finch's sixth solo exhibition at Rhona Hoffman Gallery—borrows its title from 19th century post-Impressionist Georges Seurat's iconic painting, *A Sunday on La Grande Jatte* (1884-86), at the Art Institute of Chicago. The painting was groundbreaking for its time due to its Pointillist technique developed by Georges Seurat and Paul Signac, wherein dots of paint were applied to the canvas, creating an optical mix of color in the viewer's eye. For *La Grande Jatte* at Rhona Hoffman Gallery, Spencer Finch responds to Seurat's pseudo-scientific artistic method to create 17 new paintings. Contrary to Seurat's optical mixing method, Finch physically mixes the paint. These paintings continue and expand upon Finch's legacy of exploring color, perception, and light.

Finch's monochromatic irregular polygon paintings were formed by zooming in and cropping out identifiable or memorable moments of the historic painting, e.g., the monkey, parasol or top hat. Those crops were then analyzed to determine the number of colors used, as well as the quantity of that color used, to form that particular shape or motif. To create each painting, an ultra-high resolution photograph of the Georges Seurat painting was consulted. The total number of distinct paint colors found within each crop determined the number of sides of the corresponding painting as well as which colors were painted onto the sides of the shaped panels. Each crop was then overlaid with a 400 square grid and the amount of each paint color used was tallied and percentages calculated. The smaller the percentage of color, the shorter that side's length. The percentages of the paint colors were then mixed together to produce the front facing color for each painting. Finally, when added together, the surface area of the 17 paintings on view, equals the surface area of the original Seurat canvas.

Whereas Seurat developed the technique of Pointillism, Finch has invented his own mathematical process to dictate the painting's colors and panel shape, with the shape being theoretically malleable, in that there are many possible forms one can make from the given sides. Finch's shaped panels clearly relate to monochromatic works by Ellsworth Kelly and Imi Knoebel, but also to Robert Morris, whose *Box with the Sound of Its Own Making* (1961) — with its recording of the sound of the making of the box playing within the box — serves as a structure that tells its own story, as do Finch's paintings.

Finch's *La Grande Jatte* exhibition delves deeply into an art historically significant painting, but one that is also particularly dear to Chicago. The renowned painting was acquired in 1924 by Frederic Clay and Helen Birch Bartlett of Chicago and gifted in 1926 to The Art Institute, where it continues to live today. Viewers who have seen this painting may also recall the gray painted wall behind it. The same Benjamin Moore 'Gray Showers' paint has been applied to the Rhona Hoffman Gallery walls, recreating the viewer's experience at The Art Institute albeit with Finch's deconstructed, stunning monochromes.

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**Spencer Finch** was born in 1962 in New Haven, CT and lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. He studied at the Rhode Island School of Design, Hamilton College, and Doshisha University in Kyoto, Japan, and has exhibited extensively in the US and internationally since the early 1990s.

Recent major projects include *A Cloud Index*, a site-specific commission for the new Elizabeth line station at Paddington in London (2022); *Orion*, permanently installed at the San Francisco Airport, CA (2020); *Moon Dust (Apollo 17)*, Baltimore Museum of Art, MD (2019); *Fifteen Stones (Ryoanji)*, an intervention in the International Pavilion at the Fundació Mies van der Rohe, Barcelona, Spain (2018); *Lost Man Creek*, his project with the Public Art Fund, Brooklyn, NY (2016-2018); *Trying To Remember the Color of the Sky on That September Morning*, a special commission for the 9/11 Memorial, New York, NY (2014); *A Certain Slant of Light*, The Morgan Library & Museum, New York, NY (2014); *Peindre la nuit*, Centre Pompidou, Metz (2018- 2019). Significant solo exhibitions include Utah Museum of Fine Arts, Salt Lake City, UT (2018-2019); MASS MoCA, North Adams, MA (2017); Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach, FL (2017); Seattle Museum of Art, WA (2017); Turner Contemporary, Margate, United Kingdom (2014); Rhode Island School of Design Museum of Art, Providence, RI (2012); Art Institute of Chicago, IL (2011); Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, La Jolla, CA (2011); Emily Dickinson Museum, Amherst, MA (2011); Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (2010); Frac des Pays de la Loire, Carquefou, France (2010); Queensland Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane, Australia (2009) and MASS Moca, North Adams, MA (2007).

Finch was included in the 2004 Whitney Biennial, the 2008 Turin Triennale and the 53rd Venice Biennale (2009). His work can be found in collections including the Brooklyn Museum of Art, Brooklyn, NY; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA; Morgan Library, New York, NY; Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt, Germany; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Australia; Kemper Museum of Art, St Louis, MO; Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, IL; National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, amongst several others.