

Spencer Finch, *Sunset in a Cup*
Stockholm, August 22 – September 28, 2024

And I could spend the rest of my life just looking at windows at dusk turning into mirrors. That sort of moment for me is related to the kinds of observations that Emily Dickinson made in connecting the inner and outer worlds.¹

Galerie Nordenhake inaugurates its new premises in Stockholm with *Sunset in a Cup*; a solo exhibition by celebrated American artist Spencer Finch. This marks a return to Stockholm for Finch, a city with which he has a longstanding relationship since his first exhibition in Europe in 1995, and Karlaplan specifically, where in 2003 he recreated the light outside Ingmar Bergman's front door, only a few meters away from the new gallery.

The exhibition evokes specific moments, places and events by recreating colour and light gathered using scientific instruments or personal observations. Titled after Emily Dickinson's poem "Bring me the sunset in a cup", Finch presents works that celebrate and explore iterations of sunlight, and not least, sunset, with a suite of new photographs, works on paper, a light sculpture, and a seminal video installation from 2007.

Recent works on paper inhabit the gallery entrance: *Sunlight on the Gowanus Canal*; *As blind men learn the sun Passing cloud on my body - (shadow/sun)*; and *Western Mystery (She sweeps with many-colored Brooms)* (all 2024). In his laboratory-like studio Finch endeavours to capture the elusive nature of light, at the same time acknowledging the inherent charms of our inability to adequately render natural phenomena. Three gold-leaf drawings *Sunlight on the Gowanus Canal* recreate the shimmering dance of the sun reflected in the murky industrial canal nearby his Brooklyn studio. *Western Mystery (She sweeps with many-colored Brooms)* recreates a changing sunset by gluing colored yarn on gesso, much like an action painting. The diptych *As blind men learn the sun Passing cloud on my body - (shadow/sun)* is as rigorous as it is contradictory: it is both a self-portrait and a visual rendering of the warmth of the sun as felt on different parts of the artist's body. Using an infrared thermometer to measure his surface temperature under passing clouds and sunshine, Finch uses "false color" to reveal what we cannot see.

Finch has made well over a dozen works inspired by Dickinson's poetry, as well as over six projects resulting from research at the Dickinson residence.² The series of 23 unique prints, *Sunset in a cup*, brings yet another dimension to the artist's exploration of Dickinson's poetry and legacy. In vintage ornamental porcelain teacups, of the same era that Dickinson herself collected, Finch has swirled wet on wet paint to conjure miniature tableaus of sunsets. As ephemeral as their subject, these paintings only prevail in their photographic record. The light work *Spring Haiku (Bamboo Grove, Arashiyama)* radiates its colors onto the walls and vaulted ceiling of the gallery in its own room. In this signature mode, Finch uses color filters on lamps to reproduce the exact quality of late afternoon sunlight from a visit to the famed bamboo grove in Kyoto, Japan, using the written haiku structure of 17 moras distributed as 5/7/5 over three vertical lines.

West (Sunset in my motel room, Monument Valley, January 26, 2007, 5:36-6:06 pm), is a video-installation from 2007. This seminal work has been extensively published and included in his retrospective at the MASS MoCA (2008), and the group show *Earthbound: Contemporary Landscape* from the Roberts Institute of Art, and was first presented to a Swedish audience in the same year at the gallery Brändström & Stene. In *West* Finch reenacts the fading sunset as measured from a motel room in Monument Valley using the reflected light of interchanging stills on screens from the John Ford Western classic "The Searchers" over the course of thirty-one minutes. John Wayne lived in the motel for the filming of the movie in 1956. In this starkly poetic and sensory work the brut physicality of nine analog television monitors contrasts with the ethereal evocation of dusk falling on a remote motel in another era.

¹ Spencer Finch in conversation with Marc Godfrey, Hill Art Foundation, September 9, 2022, Exh. Cat. *Lux and Lumen*, The Hill Foundation, 2022.

² RONDEAU, James. 366 (Emily Dickinson's miraculous year), 2009. In Spencer Finch, *The brain is Wider than the sky*. DelMonico Books Prestel and MASS MoCA.

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 *Bring me the sunset in a cup*, a two-wall commission for Massachusetts Institute of Technology (2023); *A Cloud Index*, a site-specific commission for the 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 & Museum, New York, NY (2014); *A Certain Slant of Light*, The Morgan Library & Museum, New York, NY (2014).

Significant solo exhibitions include Hill Art Foundation, New York, NY (2022-2023); 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 Art Museum, 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 many public collections including the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia; Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL; Brooklyn Museum of Art, Brooklyn, NY; High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; Kemper Museum of Art, St Louis, MO; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA; Morgan Library, New York, NY; Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, IL; Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt, Germany; National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY.

Opening: Thursday, August 22, 17.00 – 20.00

Exhibition period: August 23 – September 28, 2024

Opening hours: Tuesday – Friday 11.00 – 18.00, Saturday 12.00 – 16.00

Upcoming exhibition: **John Zurier**, *the mountain the cloud and the springs*, October 3 – November 1, 2024