



Nina Chanel Abney, *Seedphrase*, 2024. Acrylic on canvas. 121.9 × 121.9 cm | 48 × 48 in. Photo: Guillaume Ziccarelli. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.

THE SYSTEM IS ALIVE

NINA CHANEL ABNEY, IVÁN ARGOTE, SOPHIE CALLE, BERNARD FRIZE, NANCY GRAVES, GREGOR HILDEBRANDT, BHARTI KHER, BARRY MCGEE, TAKASHI MURAKAMI, PAOLA PIVI, JESÚS RAFAEL SOTO, JOSH SPERLING

May 21 – August 2, 2025

Perrotin is pleased to present *The System is Alive*, a group exhibition showcasing the work of twelve contemporary artists whose practices engage with a broad range of systemic frameworks. Working across varied media, these artists dismantle and challenge the systems that shape everyday life, be it by addressing constructed logics, probing into personal or emotional infrastructures, engaging in cultural rewiring, or subverting the sociopolitical status quo.

From Josh Sperling's sculptural compositions, grounded in pattern repetition and modular forms, to Bernard Frize's paintings that oscillate between rule-bound and chance-driven pendulum swings, and Gregor Hildebrandt's minimalist works that explore the embedded cultural memory in medial imprints, the first cluster examined in the show reflects the inherent logic of abstracted systems, its repetitions, processes, and material encoding.

A second cluster veers into the spaces of personal and emotional infrastructures, exemplified by the investigative works of Sophie Calle and Bharti Kher. Calle's photography blurs the lines between

documentation and surveillance, exploring the private worlds of transient strangers, imagined rituals, and her own intimate spaces. With a similarly interrogative edge and a sharp eye for the peculiarities of daily ritual, Kher's sculptures challenge even the most hardened rationalists by animating her works with a metaphysical, surreal, and spiritual charge.

Systems of cultural rewiring take center stage in the works of Nina Chanel Abney, who disrupts the dominant visual codes of contemporary media with her vibrant, haphazardly composed paintings that critically engage with the construction of race and gender within social and political discourses. Takashi Murakami's singularity blends hyperreal vocabulary, references to pop culture and consumerist aesthetics with his training in traditional Japanese painting styles, while Paola Pivi reconfigures the logic of everyday objects to subvert expectations and perceptual norms, resulting in barrier-breaking excursions into surreal inversion and absurdity.

A final cluster involves protest gestures of Barry McGee and Iván Argote, both aimed at subverting the systems that shape



Josh Sperling, *AbExDubBub S*, 2023. Acrylic on canvas, walnut frame. 95.7 × 278.6 cm | 37^{11/16} × 109^{11/16} in. Photo: Farzad Owrang. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.

public spaces. In this sense, Argote challenges established political narratives, often conveyed through monuments on public pedestals, by applying a subtle visual language of resistance, laden with humor, affect and softness, to counter pervasive revisionism. Barry McGee, drawing on urban graffiti culture, creates socially charged interventions in public spaces, often in the form of observational commentaries that expose social inequalities and challenge the authority that governs these spaces.

In *The System is Alive*, highly relevant artistic approaches converge to reveal the intricate web of systems that structure daily life, shape our logic, and inform our cultural and political realities. By placing these practices in dialogue, the exhibition invites the audience into a dynamic interplay of perspectives, encouraging them not only to witness systems being unraveled but also to actively participate in their reimagining.

The *System is Alive* opens 21/05/2025 at Perrotin London.