

SPENCER FINCH

DECOY

May 3 – July 5, 2025

Spencer Finch was born in New Haven, CT, in 1962, and currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. He has participated in the Folkestone Triennial, UK (2011), Venice Biennial (2009), Turin Triennial (2008) and the Whitney Biennial (2004). Since the early 1990's Finch has exhibited extensively in the US and internationally. A major survey exhibition was on view at MASS MoCA, North Adams in 2007-2008. His long-term installation *Cosmic Latte* was installed at the museum in 2017, and *Moon Dust* at the Baltimore Museum of Art, MD in 2019. Recent major solo shows include Hill Art Foundation, New York, NY (2022-2023); Utah Museum of Fine Arts, Salt Lake City, UT (2018-2019); Seattle Museum of Art, WA (2017); Turner Contemporary, Margate, United Kingdom (2014). Finch has been commissioned for a site-specific installation at the Obama Presidential Center, Chicago, opening in 2026. Other public commissions include installations for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA (2023); Elizabeth Line Paddington Station, London (2022); International Pavilion, Fundació Mies van der Rohe, Barcelona (2018), and The Morgan Library and Museum, New York, NY (2014). In 2014 *Trying To Remember the Color of the Sky on That September Morning*, a special commission for the 9/11 Memorial, New York, NY was installed at the museum. His work can be found in collections including the Hirshhorn

'In this exhibition I am intentionally trying to slow down the viewing process and open my eyes wider, and I am asking the viewer to do the same. When we return to the world, maybe we will look a bit more carefully, maybe we will find more beauty and difference out there in the wild.'

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In his sixth solo show in Berlin, Spencer Finch continues to explore the meaning of color, the passing of time, and the relationship between science and poetry. The exhibition entitled *Decoy* includes new and important older works that in their radical reduction create a dynamic movement between abstraction and a precise rendering of the ephemeral. In the works on paper, paintings, and a large light installation for the gallery's windows, he succeeds in making the fleeting and evanescent palpable and in documenting perspectives that often escape our notice.

Finch's engagement with light and color always refers to the impossibility of reaching a singular truth. The series of bright monochromatic diptychs that gives the exhibition its title plays with the telling ambiguity of doublings, reflections, and deception. The two square panels in each diptych show the same secondary color. Each panel of each diptych used a different four pigments to arrive at almost the same final color. These different pigments can be seen on the outer edges of each square and thus reveal the composition of the final color; orange, green or violet. The marginal differences require a slowed perception and determine the speed of reception for the exhibition as a whole.

His *Scent* drawings generate a synesthetic experience with their sensually interlaced representation. Slowed vision is also necessary to recognize these drawings, in which Finch refers to paintings by Monet, Matisse, and Hasegawa. What initially appears as blank sheets slowly reveal an image, that fades in and out as the viewer's attention shifts. They generate the sensation of a discreet scent and seem like fragments of a sensory impression that is scarcely nameable. Finch underscores the complexity of a perceived moment, questioning at the same time the dominance of the visual in the emergence of our memories. In his works, he captures what escapes our automatic perception. Fleeting phenomena, like the refraction of Emily Dickinson's garden in a single raindrop on a window pane, become poetic approaches to something that is impossible to return to. He thus creates sensual links between past and present.

Finch takes a comparable approach in his new work on the gallery window. Using color filters, he reconstructs the light and the color of the sunset that he observed from his studio in Brooklyn. The gaze here is toward the west, just like the window in his studio. But instead of a clear view, our vision here is blocked. This results in a superimposed simultaneity of memory and the present. Finch succeeds in reproducing this moment in a way that goes beyond the fragile indexicality of a photograph. His interest in making fleeting visual phenomena palpable is expressed in a special

Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA; LACMA, 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, New York, NY, among others.

way in his *Fog Studies*. He turns to the depiction of fog to capture the natural phenomenon and at the same time points to the limitation of our vision, a paradox that enables us to reflect upon the opening of new layers of perception that this allows.

Just like a decoy, the works in this exhibition capture our gaze to direct it to something that pretends to be something else, a playful game that tricks our senses. Finch demonstrates how scientific approaches to phenomena such as light, color, and memory are inadequate. His restful, poetic engagement creates a form of recognition that lies beyond the measurable. It slows our perception to focus on the beauty of our surroundings that otherwise passes by unnoticed.