

RHONA HOFFMAN GALLERY

SPENCER FINCH: *Saturated Sight*

February 26 – April 16, 2016

Opening reception:
Friday, February 26
5:00 – 7:30 pm



The sensation as I sit down in my studio chair #8 (after Beckett), 2016, pastel and pencil on paper, 18 x 18 inches

synesthesia (sɪnˈiːs-thēˈzɪə) is a neurological phenomenon in which stimulation of one sensory or cognitive pathway leads to automatic, involuntary experiences in a second sensory or cognitive pathway.

The works that comprise Spencer Finch's fifth exhibition at Rhona Hoffman Gallery, *Saturated Sight*, are inspired by synesthesia and the ability to see beyond the visible spectrum of the human eye. Finch is not a synesthete, but he established parameters in his studio in order to explore the limits of expanded sight; Manet's still lifes, Bach's Goldberg variations, fog, and Samuel Beckett's description of Murphy's fourpenny lunch are among the chosen conceptual frameworks for the works on view.

In the novel *Murphy*, Beckett describes the protagonist's ritual lunch experience. "The sensation of the seat of a chair coming together with his drooping posteriors at last was so delicious that he rose at once and repeated the sit, lingering with intense concentration." Murphy attempted to relive the satisfying "sit" only to find that the second was "a great disappointment." Finch mimicked this action in the studio where he responded with a sequential series of 16 pastel drawings, *The sensation as I sit down in my studio chair #2 (After Beckett)*, in which two lines in two differing colors emerge from a white ground to allude to the meeting of the artist's body with the chair.

Another sensory transfer occurs in the fluorescent light work *Goldberg Variations 4 and 5*, in which Finch has translated Bach's Goldberg variations into color according to Isaac Newton's correlation between the visible spectrum and the musical scale. Each colored filter represents a different note, and the width of each band corresponds to the note's duration. Where rich harmonies are heard in the musical composition when two notes overlap, two colors coinciding yield unexpected jewel-like tones. Through an efficient application of precise variables, Finch allows his viewers to come a little closer to experiencing synesthesia.

Spencer Finch was born in New Haven, Connecticut in 1962. He currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. Recent solo exhibitions and commissions include: *Trying To Remember the Color of the Sky on That September Morning*, National September 11 Memorial and Museum, New York, NY (2014); *A Certain Slant of Light*, Morgan Library and Museum, New York, NY (2014); *Ulysses*, Marfa Contemporary, Marfa, TX (2014); *The Skies Can't Keep Their Secret*, Turner Contemporary, Kent, UK (2014); *Following Nature*, Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis, IN (2013); *Painting Air*, and Rhode Island School of Design Museum of Art, Providence, RI (2012). Upcoming exhibitions include projects at the Corning Museum of Glass and Seattle Art Museum later this year.