

**Josh SPERLING**

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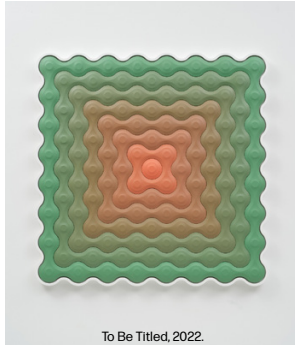
*Inside Josh Sperling's 'Daydream' at Perrotin in New York*

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# Inside Josh Sperling's 'Daydream' At Perrotin in New York

The artist's newest works are on view at the Lower East Side gallery. BY KRISTEN TAUER



To Be Titled, 2022.

In 2012, Josh Sperling lived in Ithaca, N.Y., and was looking to get out of town to better establish his art career.

"I had applied to a bunch of grad schools thinking I might do it if I got a scholarship, but I didn't," says Sperling on a recent spring afternoon in downtown New York. "So I was like, 'I'm going to figure something else out.'"

Sperling, who earned his BFA from SUNY Potsdam, reached out to his childhood best friend, the artist Sam Friedman, who helped link him up with a job working in Kaws' Brooklyn studio. Sperling moved to the city intending to stay for five years; in 2017, he had a show lined up with Galerie Perrotin and moved back upstate to Ithaca to establish his studio. So yes: that "something else" worked out in a big way.

"It was super important for me to be exposed to an artist at that level and see how he was running a studio," says Sperling of his experience working with Kaws, aka Brian Donnelly. "And I was very influenced by his use of color," he adds. "Color is one of the main things I investigate with my work."

The artist, who's also been exhibited by Brussels' Sorry We're Closed and Library Street Collective in Detroit, had come down to New York for the installation of his latest gallery exhibition, "Daydream," and the first visitors were already trickling through the doors of Perrotin shortly before the show's official opening.

"Daydream" marks Sperling's most expansive and comprehensive solo exhibition, featuring new paintings created over the last year installed across all three gallery floors. His works on view on the ground floor are rooted in minimalism. Each wall is anchored by a large-scale piece reduced to one of the four primary colors. The shape of his sculptural canvases guided his color



HERE AND BELOW: Views of Josh Sperling's exhibition "Daydream" at Perrotin New York, 2022.

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selections: an extended loopy scrawl was inspired by a Cy Twombly painting and assigned red; a circular swirl reminded Sperling of water and the sky and was painted blue; viewers might also recognize its similarity to the emoji.

The gallery's second floor features two immersive room installations: the first is a collection of colored shapes arranged in a spectrum of light to dark through unusual and stunning shades. The adjoining room riffs on Josef Albers' color theory paintings, with Sperling transforming Albers' squares into nested wavy canvases as a vehicle for his own color experimentation.

The work of formative artists like Albers and Frank Stella resonate throughout Sperling's work, which calls upon a mathematical sensibility



embraced by the Bauhaus-Black Mountain College creatives that Sperling is drawn to. Similarly, he pulls inspiration from architecture and design, including the Google aesthetic ubiquitous in roadside Putt-Putt golf and motels.

This influence is most apparent in Sperling's composite works on the third floor of Perrotin, which incorporate a textured stucco effect. Sperling collages the various shaped canvases and colors he's used in the past, inspired by Roy Lichtenstein's geometric composite paintings from the late '70s and '80s.

"I like how his career is very linear," says Sperling of the pop artist. "In the '80s, he took all his previous ideas and collaged them together. So after seeing that, I wanted to do that, [too]."

In 2021, Sperling released "The ABC to XYZ of Josh Sperling (Volume A)," a chronological index of his work from 2013 through 2020 that reflects

that tendency toward tracing a linear narrative in his career.

"If you look through the book, you can see a natural and logical progression. A lot of the next work is based on the past work," he says.

Sperling notes that the lines in his latest pieces have become more gestural, a quality likely to appear in subsequent pieces; he also plans to continue color experimentation in a similar vein of the nested canvases on the second floor, perhaps using a different shape.

Although most of his works currently on view at Perrotin are untitled, they live under the collective show title "Daydream."

"As an artist, you're always in your head thinking about stuff," offers Sperling. "The work is different from one floor to another; that title encompasses it all."

"Daydream" is on view through June 11, 2022.



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