

**Josh SPERLING**

*Whitewall,*

*A Daydream of color by Josh Sperling at Perrotin*

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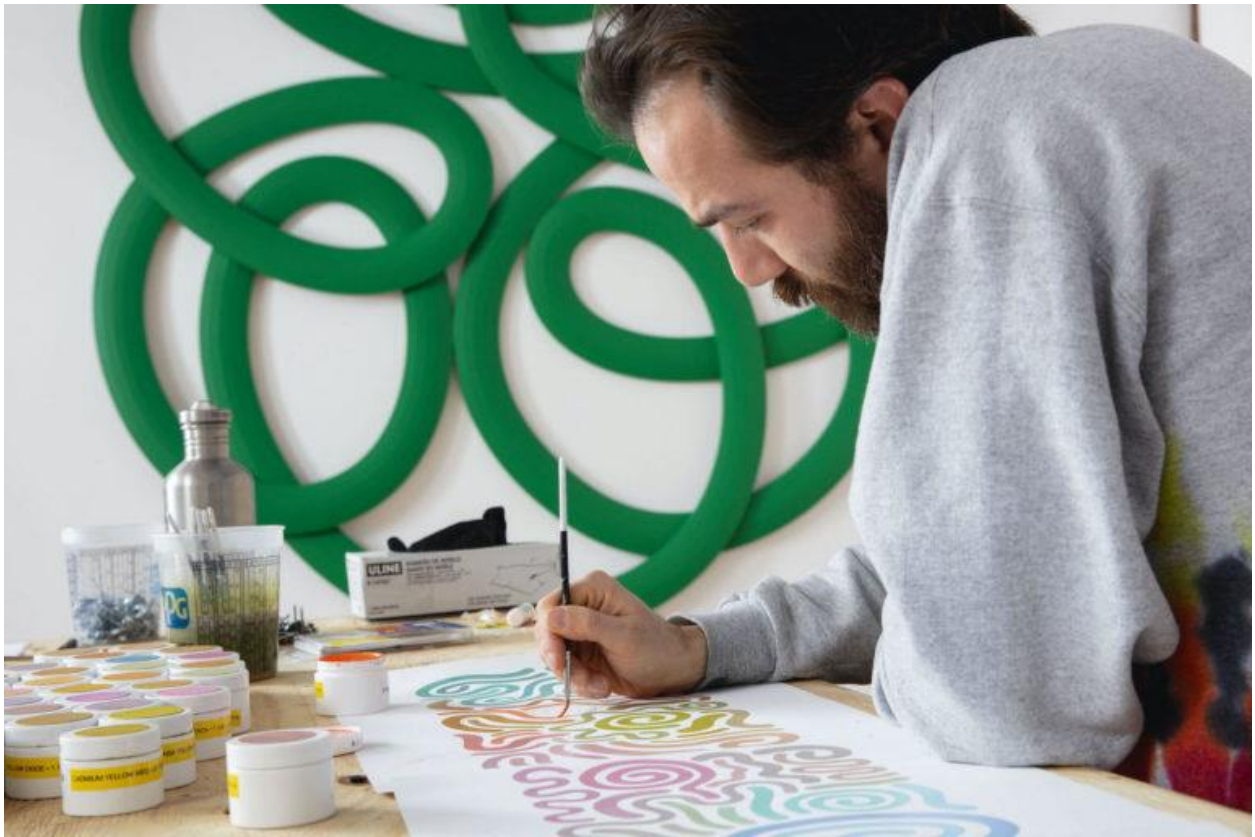
# A Daydream of Color by Josh Sperling at Perrotin

10.06.2022 by Eliza Jordan



Courtesy of Josh Sperling.

At [Perrotin](#) in New York through tomorrow, "[Daydream](#)" by the Ithaca-based painter [Josh Sperling](#) is on view. For his solo exhibition at the gallery, large-scale motifs created in the past decade are seen across three floors. Squiggles and fluid shapes, known as key motifs in his practice, make a return, and a new series continues his investigation of form and color, too. Ahead of his solo show at [Sorry We're Closed](#) in Brussels in September, *Whitewall* spoke with Sperling about why his love of color has grown over the years, how MTV impacted his idea of art, and how his art studio in a backyard barn became home to his creative practice.



Courtesy of Josh Sperling.

**WHITEWALL:** Your show "Daydream" at Perrotin is your largest to date, taking up the gallery's three floors. Was there a starting point for your new body of work?

**JOSH SPERLING:** I wanted to show off the different series of work I make. I have always had these divergent series that I have worked on. The minimalist monochromes, the immersive squiggle installations, and the maximal, collaged composites. They all share the common denominator of shaped canvases but they differ in form, color, and feeling. I wanted to start with the most minimal works on the first floor and finish with the most maximal works on the 3rd floor. Kind of like a wine tasting, start with the lighter stuff and work your way up to the more complex pieces.



View of Josh Sperling's exhibition "Daydream" at Perrotin New York, 2022, photo by Guillaume Ziccarelli, courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.

**WW: In an essay that the writer Max Lakin wrote about your work after visiting your studio, he mentioned there was a note taped to your fridge with seven "prompts" on how to understand color. What does color mean to you?**

**JS:** Color is a tool that can further the feeling of the work. I design all of my work in black and white first, only paying attention to the forms. Color is then added to accentuate and enhance that form.

**WW: When did you first take notice of how important color was in your life? Your practice?**

**JS:** It was a slow journey to get to where I am with my understanding of color. My first paintings were one color, then two colors, and then 87 colors. I am constantly learning new things about color, it is infinite.





View of Josh Sperling's exhibition "Daydream" at Perrotin New York, 2022, photo by Guillaume Ziccarelli, courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.

**WW: You're currently renovating a 19th-century barn in Ithaca to be your studio. What's that space like?**

**JS:** My barn is in the backyard of my house. My entire practice used to be based out of this barn but I outgrew and now only use it for my personal studio. This is where I do the creative processes—drawing, designing, and picking colors. It is a beautiful, church-like atmosphere with a lot of natural light.

**WW: For years, you worked as KAWS's studio assistant and credit him as a mentor. What did you learn from working with him?**

**JS:** I learned a lot about color. I learned how to run an efficient studio. He instilled in me confidence, especially with dealing with galleries. I learned how to package artwork and ship it. All sorts of practical things they don't teach you in art school.



View of Josh Sperling's exhibition "Daydream" at Perrotin New York, 2022, photo by Guillaume Ziccarelli, courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.

**WW: Can you tell us a bit about what movements have informed your practice—such as Memphis Modern and Shaker furniture—and why?**

**JS:** Memphis for sure. Mostly because I grew up in the late eighties and nineties and pop culture had co-opted the Memphis aesthetic. So, it's not like I was looking at [Ettore] Sottsass books when I was 10, but I was watching MTV. I grew up with shaker and mission furniture and always loved their beautiful, minimalist proportions. I have also always loved Google Architecture.

**WW: Your work shows a glimpse of consumer graphics. How do you feel the consumer world today, and mass media, impacts art?**

**JS:** Mass media is a large part of society and only seems to be growing. I worked as a graphic designer for over five years so I think it was these skills and exposure that influenced my work but I try to expose myself to the least amount of mass media I can. There is so much in the real world that is interesting.



Courtesy of Josh Sperling.

**WW: You recently published a catalog of your work with Perrotin. Can you tell us about putting this together?**

**JS:** I buy a lot of artist books and whenever I do I immediately see if the artist has a catalogue raisonne. I find it is the best way to understand an artist's career and thought process because everything is laid out in chronological order. Typically only older artists have *catalogue raisonnees* and this was another reason I wanted to make one for myself. It took 2 years to design. It required a lot of thought knowing that I would stick to this layout for the rest of my life. I am excited to see this encyclopedia grow over the years.

**WW: What relationship do you see between art and craftsmanship in your work?**

**JS:** I have always loved craftsmanship. I love the challenge of solving that problem. How to make something perfect, or seem perfect. I find the less you touch the work the better it looks so there is an inherent efficiency I am trying to figure out in the process that will yield the cleanest results.