

Spencer Finch

POSTMASTERS

12 Wooster Street

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Spencer Finch has pursued the boundaries of perception doggedly and imaginatively for the better part of a decade, and his longstanding interest in transposition (often involving installations in which he recreates the qualities of natural light found at a culturally or historically charged site) is paired in this show with examples of text-to-image translation. Without downplaying his emphasis on bright light and brighter color, Finch predicates several works here on an eclectic group of texts: an excerpt from Werner Heisenberg's *Uncertainty Principle*, a passage from Yasunari Kawabata's novel *Snow Country*, a 16th-century proto-haiku by Arakida Moritake, and a line from an Emily Dickinson poem. He applies Nabokov's synesthetic theory of the alphabet to a section of Heisenberg's tract, representing it in a thirty-six-panel mural-scale rainbow of watercolor dots, each corresponding to a particular letter. Stare for too long and the splotches dilate, approximating the look of the ten watercolors, hung on the opposite wall, that Finch made by copying images of butterflies glimpsed via his peripheral vision. (Nabokov was a lepidopterist as well as a synaesthete.) Finch uses photography only rarely, but the best work in the show is an unassuming series of seven small pictures, taken from the same vantage point seven minutes apart, cataloging a windowpane's shift from transparency (the landscape outside) to reflective opacity (a simple interior) at dusk.

—Brian Sholis