

Tauba Auerbach: *Shatter V*

Sarah Herrera



Tauba Auerbach, *Shatter V*, 2009. Acrylic on paper, 30 x 33 in (76.2 x 83.8 cm)

Shatter V, created by the artist Tauba Auerbach in 2009, is one out of many paintings in a series called *Shatter* in which Auerbach utilizes different arrangements of gradient sections to imitate the effect of shattered glass on paper. Like many of Auerbach's works, *Shatter V* seeks to distort the viewer's visual perception of the piece and does so by using a unique arrangement of color, size, and line work. Auerbach is someone who frequently employs techniques in their work to warp our visual and spatial perceptions.

Shatter V is a 30 by 22-inch framed piece, on which acrylic paint is sprayed onto a sheet of paper and divided into multiple sections of gradient values. *Shatter V* was created by laying down a panel of glass on paper and breaking it. Auerbach would then lift each section of broken

glass and proceed to spray paint underneath it. The lines formed from the division of gradient sections are jagged and sharp, similar to the edges of shattered broken glass material. The colors are darker near the top of each section and lighter near the bottom. This gives the illusion of a light source coming from below the piece. The lines of division are all pointed towards a certain point in the piece, much like glass that is shattered from a certain point in its material. The sections nearest to the center point are smaller in size whereas the sections furthest outward are larger. The illusion of depth and light by usage of the gradient values, and the use of differing sizes for each of the sections, work together to create and imitate the effect of broken glass. The piece itself has a smooth surface, unbroken and unshattered despite all these properties bending the audience's perception otherwise.

Tauba Auerbach was born in San Francisco, California in 1981. They are known for utilizing multiple mediums such as painting, photography, weaving, sculpture and typography. They currently live in New York owning both an apartment in Manhattan and a studio in Brooklyn. A lifelong math student as well as a typologist, much of Tauba's inspiration draws from topics of math, physics, language, and other systems as well. They are someone who is inquisitive with regards to these topics and aims to give their audience an experience that allows them to explore complex topics as well.

Shatter V is a work that successfully allows the audience to explore a new realm of possibility in relation to how they perceive texture and material. In that sense, Auerbach is successful in distorting the audience's perception of reality and calling into question much what we know. Normally, sharp jagged lines and sections of varying sizes are properties associated with shattered glass and are identifiers that we use to perceive the material. However Auerbach uses

these identifiers in order to warp the paper which without these modifications, would otherwise appear smooth and flat.

Auerbach's ability to imitate the effect of shattered glass is creative and is not only successful in distorting the audience's perception of the material but also creating a work that is striking and interesting on a visual level. Tauba Auerbach's piece, with its use of color, lines and composition, Helps the audience explore a realm in which what we perceive and identify is different from reality. It is a piece that encourages its audience to look beyond the immediately obvious and explore other options.

Bibliography

Fanny Singer, (2022). Tauba Auerbach's Architecture of Connectivity. Frieze.

<https://www.frieze.com/article/tauba-auerbachs-architecture-connectivity>

Tausid Noor, (2022). In San Francisco, Art That Unspools the Mysteries of the Universe. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/27/arts/design/tauba-auerbach-sfmoma.html>

Guggenheim <https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/artist/tauba-auerbach>

SFMOMA <https://www.sfmoma.org/exhibition/tauba-auerbach-s-v-z/>