

Candlelight (CIE 529/418) (2022), by Spencer Finch

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Hill Art Foundation

February 26th, 2024



Candlelight (CIE 529/418) (2022) (CIE 529/418)
Installation at Hill Art Foundation, New York, New York Stained glass and steel frame
Dimensions variable 2022

Spencer Finch's Candlelight (CIE 529/418) (2022) is a site specific artwork that is made of stained glass. Spencer Finch incorporates the everyday elements of the Manhattan skyline and busy High Line into a fully immersive experience. Once the sun comes in contact with the glass, it illuminates the Hill Art Foundation in the glow of a candle, and dims as the sun goes down. *Spencer Finch's Candlelight (CIE 529/418) (2022)* combines the cycles of life and death with the everyday structure of a window to illustrate warmth in human emotions.

When viewing this art piece during the day or at sunset, the window serves as the bridge between the outside world and the Hill Art Foundation. The two coexist through glimmers of colored glass, evoking feelings of warmth. The deep reds and oranges harmoniously compliment the space, encapsulating the essence of thanksgiving and autumn leaves. Colored glass is a common material across many of Finches' artworks including *Thank You, Fog (2016)*. This plays to the viewer's perception throughout the day, when viewing the world from a brightly lit place such as the gallery, the lines between reality and imagination become blurred. *Spencer Finch's Candlelight (CIE 529/418) (2022)* becomes a narration, a revisiting of complex emotions

situated with life and death and the cyclic nature it possesses. As time passes, the sun rises; as it sits upon the sky, most brightly lit, it illuminates the space. As the light dims, time progresses; the process resembling death, mourning and grief. This urges the audience to self reflect and cherish the illumination of the window in association to human warmth.

Spencer Finch is an American artist who was born in Connecticut, New Haven. He studied at The Hotchkiss School, and pursued comparative literature from Hamilton College. His interest with literature encompasses his yearning for self expression leading to his passion in the arts. He received an M.F.A in sculpture from the Rhode Island School of Design, graduating in 1989. His passions and aspirations are intricately interwoven within a multitude of career paths that all lead to fascinating artistic interpretations. This background led him to find a deep intrigue in astronomy, nature, and color. “Brooklyn-based artist Spencer Finch, creates mixed-media installations, photographs, and drawings that explore the limits of perception. Bringing together a scientific approach and a nuanced sense of poetics, Finch’s works call attention to various phenomena of the natural world through his investigations of light and color.”¹ This speaks to his artistic process, as it denotes his intrigue in finding an artistic vision within unconventional subjects, such as science and poetics. Susan Cross’s description of Finch's artwork in her book, *The Brain is Wider than the Sky* illustrates Finch's yearning to express emotions through nature.

Candlelight (CIE 529/418) (2022) was created with handmade stained glass called Lambert glass, and was made in Germany. Lambert stained glass is created by combining a

¹ “Spencer Finch: Following Nature,” Lisson Gallery, accessed February 26, 2024, <https://www.lissongallery.com/news/spencer-finch-following-nature>.

mixture of melted sand, limestone and ash in order to form the basic structure: molten glass. From there, it is molded into intricate shapes and colored with metallic oxide additives. In *Candlelight (CIE 529/418) (2022)*, pieces of glass are abstractly layered one on top of the other, creating a mixture of red, orange, and yellow hues. The artwork was featured in Finch's exhibition at the Hill Art Foundation, *Lux and Lumen: Spencer Finch*. At certain times of day, the building's atrium becomes bathed in saturated colors, “lux” turning into “lumen.”² Lux is the concept of illumination as it transforms into lumen, the measure of light. *Candlelight (CIE 529/418) (2022)* expertly intertwines aspects of luminance within the art piece. Finch expertly used a colorimeter to measure the temperature of a candle to create *Candlelight (CIE 529/418) (2022)*. The depth of the colors parallels a candle, “a stained-glass installation, makes the natural light from an upstairs corner of the exhibition space mimic the warmth of a candle's flame—another flickering of human yearning, another flash of the divine.”³

Spencer Finch's art breaks boundaries, as he intertwines natural light and architecture to create immersive experiences. His diverse interests in nature and art led him to create *Candlelight (CIE 529/418) (2022)*, which combines the cycles of life and death with the everyday structure of a window to illustrate warmth in human emotions, resembling this complex natural cycle of candles being lit and extinguished.

² Petersen, Stephen. “Spencer Finch: Seeing and Knowing .” *Sculpture*, February 7, 2023. <https://sculpturemagazine.art/spencer-finch-seeing-and-knowing/>

³ Ludel, Wallace. 2022. “Spencer Finch.” *Artforum*. November 7, 2022. <https://www.artforum.com/events/spencer-finch-9-250557/>

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