

Artillery Magazine Gallery Rounds
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Elliott Hundley
Echo
Regen Projects
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by Jody Zellen



Elliott Hundley's creations have always been superabundant. His dense canvases are usually filled with thousands of small cut-outs—shapes, figures, snippets from advertisements—pinned to the surface of the works and extended out at different heights to turn the two-dimensional paintings into three-dimensional sculptures. For *Echo* (an exhibition named after his parrot), he uses the gallery space as a grand “canvas” and fills it with both new and old paintings, sculptures, works on paper, neon and objects from his collection. The result is an immersive installation that invites viewers to travel through a carefully curated trajectory that culls together different aspects of his work spanning twenty years.

The poster for the exhibition features his parrot Echo posed in front of *The Plague* (2016), one of Hundley's densest compositions. The parrot was the inspiration and partially responsible for the piece *Echo* (2022), a mixed media sculpture and one of the first works viewers encounter, comprised of broken bits of light purple foam compiled into a dilapidated structure. As Hundley worked in his studio, his parrot also made art—tearing apart the foam—and these discards became the focus of the piece. Purple foam (he uses this material like a palette to support his pins) walls also encircle the front room of the gallery presented as readymades—combinations of paintings, framed works on paper and Hundley's now iconic assortment of pinned shards that are interspersed between the works, not as an afterthought, but rather as a connecting thread.

It is interesting to try to figure out which works are the most recent and which are earlier as Hundley has created abstract paintings throughout his long career, some covered with pins, others not. The overall motifs are swirling interlocking spirals, be it wires, paint or collaged fragments. The works are filled with literary references and often take their point of departure from Greek tragedies (Euripides) or other iconic writers like Jean Genet. One of the most spectacular pieces in the show is the multi-panel, forty foot long work *Balcony* (2021), titled after Genet's 1956 play set in an unnamed city in the throws of an uprising. The chaos within the play, brought to life within Hundley's work, is depicted as a cacophony of overlapping elements that explore the relationship between fantasy and reality, as well as issues of resistance, protest, hysteria and pleasure.

Because there is so much to look at in the exhibition, the experience becomes a colossal collage. The impact of the totality is greater than the power of the individual pieces. While it is interesting to see Hundley's development and the interconnections among the works, the real thrill is the discovery that comes with looking closely. To learn that a voluble parrot follows him around the studio and was a quasi-collaborator on one work inserts a human element into what otherwise can come across as impenetrable because it contains so much. By breaking things down and exhibiting his process and history, Hundley opens up a space for dialogue and conversation. This can be interpreted as a pause rather than a bombardment and thus invites close scrutiny and further contemplation.

<https://artillerymag.com/gallery-rounds-elliott-hundley/>