

GREENE NAFTALI

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Spangled Mind

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8th Floor

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This exhibition takes its title from the first line of Anne Carson’s translation of a Sappho poem addressed to “deathless Aphrodite of the spangled mind.” Sappho invokes the goddess’s *poikilophron*, though other versions of the text have it as *poikilothron*: the spangled thing is either Aphrodite’s mind (*phron*), or her chair (*thron*). Sappho’s writing has come down to us only in fragments. The blanks (_____) are for us to fill in. *Poikilos*, the adjective Carson translates as *spangled*, might mean *many-colored, spotted, dappled, variegated, intricate, embroidered, inlaid, highly wrought, complicated, changeful, diverse, abstruse, ambiguous, or subtle*. So variegated are the meanings of *poikilophron/thron* that this exhibition might also have been titled *Abstruse Chair*, or, even more ambiguously, _____ **adjective** _____ **noun**. Similarly, the good thing about looking at an abstract painting is that, unlike reading, it’s very _____ **adjective**. The nice thing about looking at colors is that they make you feel like a _____ **noun**. The annoying thing about exhibition texts is that they are so _____ **adjective**. So we’ll do this one like a group show or Greek chorus. The word *spangled* is most commonly applied to the American flag, which represents an association of different things: things in the shape of stars. To associate thoughts means to _____ **verb** them. When I close my eyes, I don’t see stars; I see _____ **noun:proper**, a _____ **noun:concreteobject**, and a _____ **noun:abstractconcept**. When I open my eyes, I might see *rose* (2024). Blue always reminds me of _____ **noun**. I remember _____ **noun:person:pasttense**. I remember the day I _____ **verb:pasttense**. And I blink slowly. Ideally, following the _____ **verb:gerund:likelightonwater** path of your thoughts will lead you away from a _____ **noun**. For example, in *Untitled* (2024), the _____ **noun:plural:technicalterm** _____ **verb:disobedient** from figure to something more _____ **adjective:LewisCarroll**. Color is the only thing distinguishing an inside from a _____ **noun**, preventing them from forming one _____ **noun:abstract**, like the difference between a multicolored chair and a mind. So the idea of a _____ **noun:abstract** has always confused me: what is an abstract noun, anyways, and does the goddess Aphrodite count as an abstraction? I never realized that I look for _____ **noun:plural** in the _____ **noun:plural:artificial** when I walk. In my peripheral vision I _____ **verb:discreet** something like a shadow. At the border between sleep and waking I often come upon a _____ **noun**. In the corner of those dreams I sometimes see a _____ **adjective:laughter** shape. It twists and _____ **verb:patterned**, it becomes a _____ **noun**; or perhaps it is a _____ **noun:childhood**, or perhaps it is a _____ **adverb** _____ **verb:gerund** _____ **adjective** _____ **noun**. A shape is merely a _____ **noun:cross-stitch** of which texture is an _____ **adjective:cinema** effect. A figure is always _____ **adjective**; a field is always _____ **adjective**. A painting should _____ **verb** and _____ **verb** us, like a _____ **noun:animal**, _____ **noun:vegetable**, or _____ **noun:mineral**. A colorful painting is a _____ **noun**. A painting is a _____ **noun** without _____ **noun:plural**. In the end, a painting is a _____ **noun**.

—Olivia Kan-Sperling