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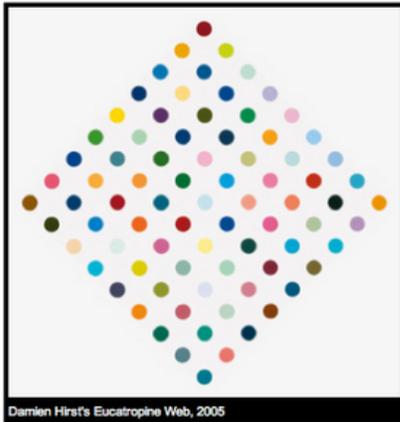
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EDITED BY
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DAMIEN HIRST LETS HIS SPOTS SPEAK FOR HIM

by JULIE D. ANDREWS
on JANUARY 11, 2012 - 3:39 PM

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Damien Hirst's Eucatrophine Web, 2005

Artist Damien Hirst exuded a certain rock-star quality at New York's Gagosian Gallery today, on the eve of his buzzy, blockbuster retrospective's opening. Starting tomorrow, his famous dot pieces will appear in eight different cities at the same time, borrowed back from his devoted collectors.

"Damien's fascination with spots is about their visual impact, how they relate to each other," said

Millicent Wilner, director of the Gagosian Gallery in London, who was on hand at the press preview. "He was looking to move along from abstractions."

Amid flashing cameras, Hirst, wearing an unbuttoned white blazer over an un-tucked pink tee with jeans and shiny loafers, playfully tossed his safety-orange skull cap from his head, as he stood amid canvases riddled with peppy dots of all colors and sizes. "This show is a genesis of two ideas," said Wilner. "The spots retrospective was Damien's, and the idea showing a single exhibition in multiple locations, the gallery's."

The candy-colored spots, painted with indefatigable precision "range in size from half-inch to five feet in diameter," said Wilner. The largest canvas, 40 feet long with 25,000 dots, is on display at 522 West 21st Street—and it's worth noting that, as with all of Hirst's spot paintings, no one color of dot is replicated in a single canvas. "This gallery space is ideal for showing the difference in the scale of the dots in Damien's work, the enormous range," said Wilner, who added that the most recent works in the collection were created in 2011, with the first paintings dating back to 1986.

Indeed, Gagosian's enormously high ceilings and bright white walls are ideal for showcasing the minimalist pharmaceutical canvases—and their silent creator.

"Cheers. Thank you," said Hirst, flitting out of the gallery—the only words he spoke all morning.

"Funny he doesn't, or isn't allowed to?, say much," I said to the reporter next to me.

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