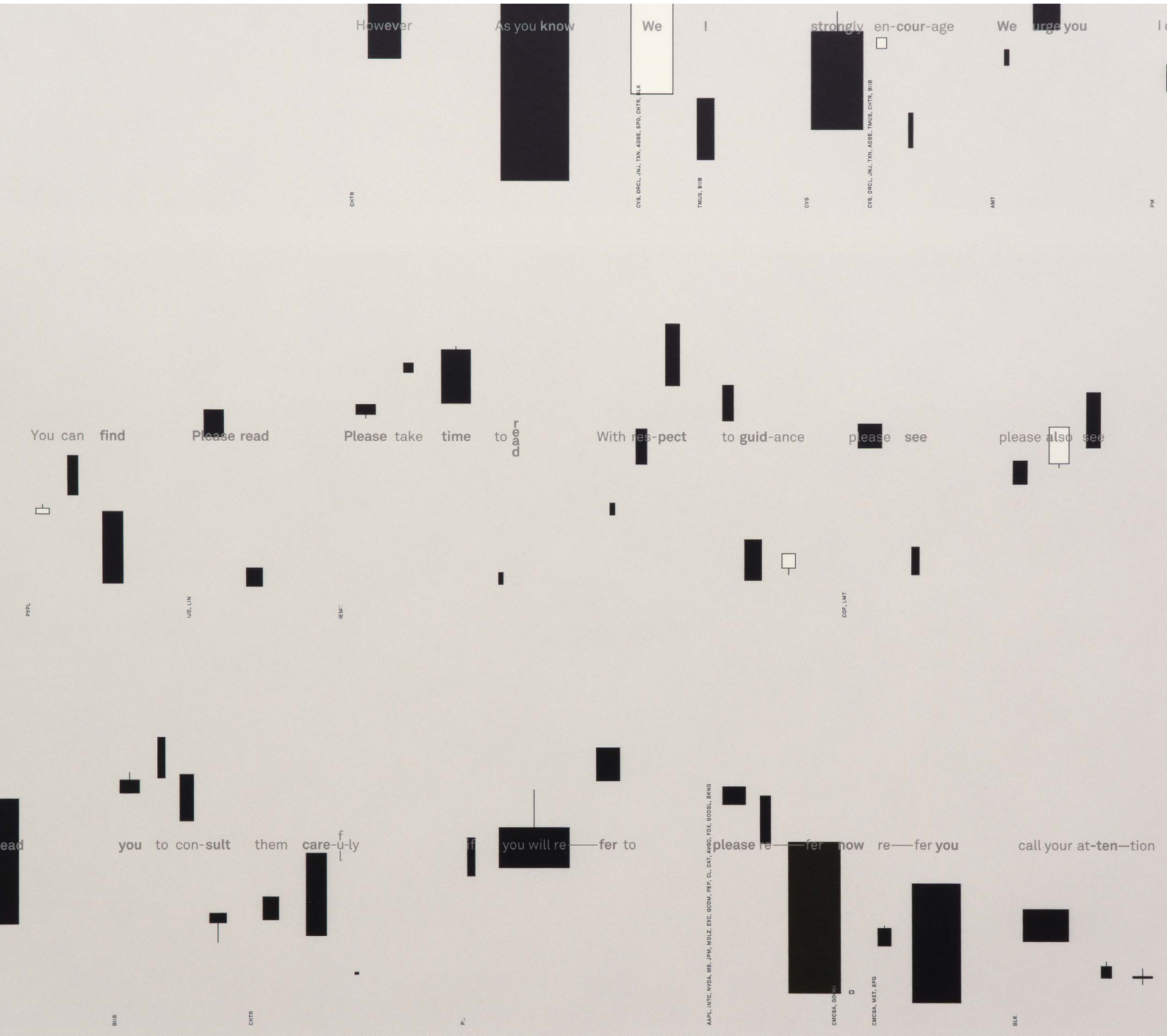


PUBLIC



Russell Perkins, *Safe Harbor*, 2022-26 (detail)

Russell Perkins

Fear of Falling

April 30 — June 7, 2026
89 – 91 Middlesex St, London E1 7DA, UK

Public Gallery is pleased to present *Fear of Falling*, the first UK solo exhibition by Chicago born, London based artist Russell Perkins. His practice examines the increasing financialization of culture, considering how risk, precarity, and economic imperatives register at the level of the individual. Engaging with the logics of prediction and control, Perkins adopts the aesthetics of administration to explore how speculation operates on visual, sonic, and spatial registers. Across the exhibition, political and financial structures are restaged as systems of belief, sustained by a desire for stability in the face of an uncertain future.

On the ground floor, the sound of wind whips across a six-channel audio installation, recorded from within a tree outside the artist's bedroom. An accompanying film samples archival footage from various electoral celebrations, taken from American TV broadcasts from the 1970s to the present. The colors red, white, and blue flicker across the screen in cascades of confetti and balloons, settling over galvanized crowds. Titled *Static* (2024), the work was made in partnership with longtime collaborator Charlie Culbert, and frames political performance as a kind of weather system. The low rumbling of the wind simultaneously evokes a distant detonation, echoing the dissonance between contemporary political protest and depictions of overt patriotism. As the decorations and inflatables inevitably descend, the viewer is reminded that what goes up must always come down.

From one mode of forecasting to another, the upstairs gallery turns to financial uncertainty – at once a condition to be acknowledged with caution, while also the very premise that enables speculation. *Safe Harbor* (2022-6) is a multimedia installation comprising an audio recording and a graphic score. The work is printed across twenty-four digital prints, seven of which are presented here. Quarterly earnings calls from every company listed on the S&P 100 are collaged together into a found-language poem, assembling a corporate lexicon used to describe the future. The work's title references the "safe harbor" disclaimers read at the outset of these calls, in which, in their own terms, companies acknowledge the fundamental unknowability of what lies ahead.

Perkins adapts the visual language of stock market prediction tools to map the text's prosody – its poetic and musical qualities. Designed in collaboration with Hoang Nguyen and David Gobber, the text is performed by the actor Athanasie across computer speakers which punctuate the space. Here, 'falling' references the logic of the stock market, its volatility underpinning both an economic reality and collective perception of risk. Recalling banknotes or security papers, the individual pages readily confirm two lists of usual suspects through depicted repetition: the industries that uphold the American economy (oil, gas, insurance, finance, tech), and the demographics of their leadership.

A proprietary fragrance used at the Wynn Casino in Las Vegas diffuses through the corridors. Titled *Stay* (2018), the work extends the exhibition's atmosphere of seduction and control, drawing attention to the sensory strategies through which environments are engineered to retain attention and shape behaviour, moving from financial instruments into logics of gamification. In its entirety, *Fear of Falling* situates the viewer within political and financial systems, where knowability is continuously anticipated and deferred, and confidence is performed as a means of maintaining authority, exposing the forces that choreograph both ascent and decline.

Russell Perkins (b. Chicago, IL, USA) lives and works in London, UK. He received an MA in Philosophy from the University of Oxford, where he was a Rhodes Scholar, and an MFA from Hunter College in 2018. Recent solo and two person exhibitions include *Static*, La Seine Musicale, Paris (2025); *Ecstatic*, Shmorévaz, Paris (2024); *Outrageous Orange* (with Candystore), Project Art Distribution, New York; *Safe Harbor*, Artists Unlimited, Germany (2023); *The Future Tense*, Frac Ile-de-France Les Reserves, Romainville (2021); and *Ordinary Time* (with Luke O'Halloran), OCD Chinatown, New York (2019). He has participated in group exhibitions at CAPC Museum of Contemporary Art, Bordeaux; Thermes de Royat, Clermont-Ferrand; Kunstmuseum Gelsenkirchen; Kunstverein Bielefeld; the Art Museum at the University of Toronto; Galerie Martine Aboucaya, Paris; Public Gallery, London; Centre Culturel Jean-Cocteau, Paris; Le Beffroi, Montrouge; Abendspaziergang, Bielefeld; Kunsthalle Basel; the Abrons Art Center, New York; and Leslie-Lohman Museum, New York. Recent residencies include Artistes en résidence, Clermont-Ferrand (2025) and Fondation Fiminco, Romainville (2021). Perkins received the Lumen Prize 2022 Futures Award, the 2022 Elephant Trust Award, and the Most Beautiful Swiss Books Award 2022.

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