

JDJ

Adrienne Wortzel

July 1-24, 2026

Opening reception: Wednesday, July 1, 6-8pm

JDJ

370 Broadway, 2nd floor

New York, NY 10013

JDJ is pleased to present our debut solo exhibition with Adrienne Wortzel (b. 1941, Brooklyn, NY).

The exhibition brings together paintings created between the late 1970s and late 1980s alongside a selection of geometric paper sculptures that reveal foundational ideas running throughout Wortzel's multidisciplinary practice. Although widely recognized for her pioneering work in robotics, artificial intelligence, and media art, these works demonstrate how many of her central concerns first emerged through abstraction.

Originally trained as a painter, Wortzel studied at the Brooklyn Museum Art School and Brooklyn College, where she worked with artists including Ad Reinhardt and Louise Bourgeois. Growing up in the Williamsburg Houses in Brooklyn, she was immersed in the visual language of modernism—from public housing architecture to the murals that filled its communal spaces. These early experiences informed a lifelong engagement with geometry, perception, systems, and technological change.

Wortzel's paintings employ layered fields of color and dense accumulations of tiny marks that coalesce into geometric forms—floating squares, pyramidal peaks, arches, and architectural frames. At first glance, the compositions appear crisp and orderly, yet their surfaces remain active and shimmering. Built from thousands of individual touches of paint, the works possess a pointillist quality that causes forms to emerge from a distance and dissolve upon closer inspection. In paintings such as *Two Squares on the Horizon*, *Acapella*, and *Peaks*, luminous geometric structures hover within atmospheric fields of blue, white, and gold, occupying a space between landscape, architecture, and abstraction.

Long before the ubiquity of screens, Wortzel was exploring how perception is constructed through systems of information. The paintings oscillate between solidity and fragmentation, suggesting the logic of digital imagery, where countless discrete units combine to create a coherent visual experience. Their granular surfaces anticipate concerns that would later become central to her work with robotics, artificial intelligence, and telepresence.

Across a career spanning more than five decades, Wortzel has examined how emerging technologies reshape communication, memory, identity, and human behavior. Her installations, performances, robotic works, videos, artist's books, and web-based projects often blur the boundaries between historical fact and fiction. In these early paintings, many of the same questions are already present. The canvas functions as a physical analog to the screen—a site where perception is assembled, disrupted, and reconfigured.

Bringing together paintings and sculptures from a formative period, this exhibition reveals the continuity underlying Wortzel's practice. These works illuminate the origins of an artist who would become a leading voice in media art while standing on their own as compelling investigations into abstraction, geometry, and the evolving relationship between human perception and technological systems.

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