

The New York Times

Sam Falls: "Review: 'September Spring,' a Multimedia Memorial

By Holland Cotter

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Jessie Gold in "September Spring," at the Kitchen. Credit: Paula Court

The Kitchen is in the business of cooking up complicated multimedia work, as it does in the performance installation "September Spring." Conceived by the Los Angeles-based artist Sam Falls, it's a memorial to the poet and musician Jamie Kanzler, who died at the age of 24 in 2013, and whom Mr. Falls refers to as his godbrother. The two collaborated on music and book projects — as a poet, Mr. Kanzler used the nom de plume September Spring; as a musician he called himself Oldd News — and the collaboration continues in this show, organized by Lumi Tan.

Mr. Falls's art has always been about how touch and the passage of time alter materials. He's made paintings by leaving canvas out in the rain and designed sculptures that change with exposure to light and viewer interaction. At the Kitchen, two stacks of carpet-size canvases sit on the gallery floor, separated by a black scrim. The top canvas on one stack is marked with circles of smeared paint; on the other are thick dabs of bright color. Each day two performers — Jessie Gold

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and Elizabeth Hart, known as Hart of Gold — execute a 17-minute dance on the canvases to recorded music composed and sung by Mr. Kanzler. In a series of carefully choreographed sequences, they spread the paint with their steps, creating circular patterns and mixing the colors to near-black.

When a painting has been danced to completion, it's hung in the gallery. With six public performances a week (one a day from Tuesday through Friday, at 5 p.m., and two on Saturday, at 2 and 5 p.m.) through Oct. 3, a total of 24 paintings will be finished, corresponding to the years of Mr. Kanzler's short life. The whole piece is symbol-driven in this way, in terms set out by Mr. Falls in a printed statement. The terms themselves (circling patterns, color blending to black) are not particularly original, nor is the choreography (ballet plus some rock 'n' roll moves). But the overall effect is moving, the way ceremonies of mourning that call themselves just that can be.

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