

PAULA COOPER GALLERY

JOEL SHAPIRO

524 W 26 Street, New York
November 4 – December 23, 2021

Paula Cooper Gallery is pleased to announce a special exhibition focusing on Joel Shapiro's exploration of color, spanning historic works on paper to new sculptures completed this year.

In the largest gallery and the front window, irregular geometric volumes are placed on the floor or tethered at various heights, suspended in a complex spatial arrangement that must be moved through to be perceived. Titled *Yellow Then, Really Blue (After All), Orange* and *Flush* after their radiant tones, each asymmetric mass brings a disquieting presence that informs an other-worldly environment.¹ Originally exhibited at the Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas, in 2016, this show will present the artist's monumental installation to New York audiences for the first time.

Complementing the sculptures are playful works on paper that use color to transition from representation to abstraction. Dating to the early 1970s, these intimately-scaled studies are contemporary to Shapiro's first one-person exhibitions at Paula Cooper Gallery, and similarly embrace themes of buoyancy and flight. Bold blocks of color abound in a group of gouaches from an important period of chromatic exploration, some of which were part of the first presentation of this body of work at the gallery in 1984.

In the surrounding rooms, new suspended and floor-bound sculptures project color into space, upending perspectival expectations with their apparent weightlessness. Shapiro's impulsive assembly is laid bare by the tenuous connections between parts, and their chromatic complexity is enhanced by the shadows and reflections that produce new and unforeseen tones.

Joel Shapiro has exhibited with galleries around the world, starting with the Paula Cooper Gallery in 1969. Born in 1941 in New York City, Shapiro has executed more than 30 publicly-sited sculptures across Asia, Europe, and North America, and has been the subject of numerous one-person and retrospective exhibitions, including at the Whitechapel Gallery, London (1980); the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (1982); the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (1985); the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (1995-6); the Museum Ludwig, Cologne (2011); the Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas (2016); the Kunstmuseum Winterthur, Switzerland (2017) and the Yale University Art Gallery (2018). Shapiro's work can be found in international public collections including the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York; the Tate Gallery, London; and the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.

¹ Jed Morse, "Joel Shapiro: Waking Dreams," in *Joel Shapiro* (Dallas: Nasher Sculpture Center, 2016), p. 29.