

PAULA COOPER GALLERY

Joel Shapiro

MARCH 24 – APRIL 28, 2018

521 W 21ST STREET

NEW YORK – Paula Cooper Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of recent work by Joel Shapiro. On view will be new sculptures demonstrating a breadth of material, scale and form, as well as a selection of ink drawings on paper. The exhibition will be presented at 521 West 21st Street from March 24th through April 28th, 2018. There will be an opening reception on Saturday, March 24th from 6 to 8pm.

Since his earliest one-person shows, presented at Paula Cooper Gallery in 1970 and 1972, Joel Shapiro has created work that activates and reconfigures space using his iconic vocabulary of geometric forms, shifting figural and nonreferential implications, and subtle manipulations of scale. Constructed from wood and painted a lustrous blue, his new monumental sculpture surges upward from the ground, bearing traces of gestural improvisation. Composed of four irregularly stacked polyhedral shapes, the work invites the viewer to engage with the gallery space, as its multifaceted planes advance and recede out of view. Similarly, Shapiro's wall relief and suspended sculptures are assembled from geometric wood elements joined to form multiaxial projections. Unfolding in time and space, the works externalize thought in material, form, and color. Leaving the striated texture of the underlying wood structures partially visible, Shapiro covers the works with supersaturated casein paint. In the catalogue to his 1982 exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, Shapiro stated: "The idea of thinking in color always interested me. If you are a sculptor and you use color, the color has to mean something, do something to change your perception of the piece. Cobalt violet obfuscates form and blue withdraws.

Cadmium red and black both add density.”

In another room of the gallery, small cast bronze works—evoking a charred table and created from a dismembered draftsman’s mannequin—are presented on an intimate scale, recalling early works of Shapiro’s from the 1970s. Their scarred surfaces and mutated forms invoke melancholic psychological narratives. And yet, the works maintain an obdurate sense of object-ness, translated to schematic abstract forms: “There’s a spatial or temporal proximity that induces the mind to perceive it in relation to its surroundings, while on the other hand [the work is seen] as a complete volumetric structure on the surface.”^[1]

Also on view is a selection of recent ink drawings, for which Shapiro employs loose, expressionistic brushwork to build a shifting, atmospheric dimensionality. Creating some as pairs by overlaying a clean sheet of paper onto a wet drawing, Shapiro transfers its mirror image—which he then develops further through the addition of ink or the reorientation of the paper. Applying a range of tones from buoyant vivid chroma to bereaved grays and blacks, the works explore a multiplicity of affectual and perceptual associations.

Born in New York City in 1941, Joel Shapiro received his Bachelor of Arts (1964) and Master of Arts (1969) from New York University. Since 1970, his work has been the subject of many one-person and retrospective exhibitions, including the current show, *Joel Shapiro: Plaster, Paper, Wood, and Wire*, on view at Yale University Art Gallery in New Haven, CT, through June 10, 2018. Other important one-person exhibitions include those at the Whitechapel Gallery, London (1980), that traveled to Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld, and Moderna Museet, Stockholm; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (1982); the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (1985); the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (jointly with the Nelson-Atkins Museum, Kansas City, 1995-6); the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Roof Garden, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (2001); the Museum Ludwig, Cologne (2011); the Portland Art Museum, OR (2014); Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas

(2016); and Kunstmuseum Winterthur, Winterthur (2017). Shapiro has executed more than thirty commissions and publicly sited sculptures in major Asian, European and North American cities. His work can be found in numerous public collections in the United States and abroad, 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 Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. Shapiro was elected to the Swedish Royal Academy of Art in 1994 and the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1998. The French Minister of Culture awarded Shapiro the Chevalier in the Order of Arts and Letters in 2005; and in 2013 he was honored with the National Art Award for Outstanding Achievement by Americans for the Arts. The artist lives and works in New York City.

1. Bui, Phong. "In Conversation: Joel Shapiro with Phong Bui." *The Brooklyn Rail*, November 4, 2007. ↩

For more information, please contact the gallery: (212) 255-1105 or info@paulacoopergallery.com

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