

DEE SHAPIRO

THE HUDSON LINE

Paintings

APRIL 27 - MAY 29, 2010

ANDRE ZARRE GALLERY

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## The Hudson River School Revisited

Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going? Gauguin's unanswerable questions are modern art's catechism. We begin with certainties but end in mysteries. Dee Shapiro's enigmatic work starts in places we think we know only to lead us from conclusions. Up river, down tracks, nothing coming, nothing going. What's missing amid the water, bridges, boats, stations, docks, and towns are the narratives that might satisfy our attention and permit us to move along.

Paintings are inert when they leave us alone. The energy of a work comes from how it engages us. Shapiro keeps her paintings open so we might complete them. In between the nouns we supply the verbs of our own stories. Why do we look at these stations and docks? Are we leaving on a train? Waiting for a ferry? Has someone just departed? Have we just arrived? Or are we just watching? Are we seeing a vision through someone else's eyes? The more we look the less we know.

Shapiro has been drawing small her entire career. In the landscape work of the last several years, she has compressed a CinemaScope vision into diminutive scale. The resulting images, in exquisite detail, contain as much information as you might expect from much larger paintings. What differs is our proximity to it. Shapiro compels us to look at her work up close. The absence of monumentality, like the ambiguous narrative, pulls us in, encouraging a personal exchange with the work. When we approach, we come to occupy the painting, physically, with our own size.

Each decade of art in New York has its own spirit. The art of the 1970s, when Shapiro came of age, had a soul. The cool supremacism of the 1960s gave way to a studio-based culture that reconnected with the processes of making art. Since the Bauhaus, modernism has sought to elevate craft to the level of painting. In New York



the legacy of the Bauhaus weavers combined with a new interest in homespun folkways to create a movement called Patterns and Decoration, or P&D. The 1970s women's movement gave P&D a political timeliness. An artist working in abstract geometric pattern, Shapiro became a founding member of Central Hall, the first women's gallery on Long Island. Her early work, exhibited at Andre Zarre Gallery in the mid-1970s and now in the collection of the Guggenheim Museum, used the artist's own color system to draw and paint intricate abstract patterns based on the Fibonacci Sequence, the numerical basis for Golden Spirals and Rectangles. The process, laid on a grid, recalled textile designs and needlepoint.

P&D was a more tradition-bound movement than its political associations might suggest. It was not radical enough to be sustained by academic theory, nor bold enough to be noticed in the macho celebrity culture that took over art in the 1980s. Yet the extreme of the middle, as Jack Tworckov called it, has well suited Shapiro. Today, she continues to develop the artistic idioms she first took up forty years ago.

Shapiro's interest in small detail that we find in the early abstractions continues through her representational paintings. The smallness of the paintings recommends them to intimate environments. Unlike the Hudson River School landscapes of the nineteenth century, with their imperial awe, Shapiro's paintings seek out the more quotidian emotions of modern life. In response to Gauguin, one might only say, we come, we are, we go. Little else is certain.

James Panero

*James Panero is the managing editor of The New Criterion.  
He collects his writing at [supremefiction.com](http://supremefiction.com)*



*Fibonacci Piece, 1976, Collection S.R. Guggenheim Museum, NYC*



*Cruising the Hudson, 2009*



*View From Chelsea Pier, 2009*



*Toni's View of Lacawanna, 2010*



*Looking Down on Riverdale, 2010*



*Katoahah Pier, 2009*





*Station at Dobbs Ferry, 2010*



*Spuyten Duyvil, 2010*



*Blue Fin With View of Tappan Zee, 2009*



*Athens Light*, 2010



*Station at Hudson, 2010*



*Tying Up in New Baltimore, 2009*



*Bridge to Poughkeepsie, 2010*



*Highland Falls Station, 2010*





*Down to the River in Kingston, 2009*



*River House in Esopus, 2010*



*Bear Mountain Bridge in Autumn, 2010*



*Sunset at the River Park, 2010*



*Ferry Near Rhinebeck, 2009*



*Turn at Coeymans Creek, 2010*



*View of Breakneck Ridge, Storm King Mountain, 2010*



*Full Moon Over Ossining, 2010*





*Taking the River Road Home, 2010*



*River Road in Albany, 2009*

All images are oil on board, 3 1/2 x 10 inches

## DEE SHAPIRO

### Selected Solo Exhibitions

- 2009 Andre Zarre Gallery, NYC  
George Billis Gallery, NYC
- 2006 Harrison Street Gallery, Frenchtown, NJ
- 2004 The Mercy Gallery, Loomis Chaffee, Windsor CT  
Andre Zarre Gallery, NYC
- 2002 Andre Zarre Gallery, NYC, 2001, 2000, 1997, 1994, 1988, 1985, 1983, 1982, 1980, 1979
- 2000 Principle Gallery, Alexandria, VA
- 1998 Nassau County Museum of Fine Art, Roslyn, NY
- 1984 Ana Sklar Gallery, Miami, FL
- 1983 Everson Museum, Syracuse, NY
- 1981 Dubins Gallery, Los Angeles, CA  
Zenith Gallery, Pittsburgh, PA
- 1978 St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, IN
- 1977 University of Arkansas, Little Rock, AK
- 1976 Andre Zarre Gallery, NY
- 1975 Central Hall Gallery, Port Washington, NY
- 1973 Nassau County Museum of Fine Art, Roslyn, NY

### Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2009 "A Book About Death," Queens Museum, NY, "Diverse Interludes," Andre Zarre Gallery, NYC  
"Summer in the City," George Billis Gallery, NYC
- 2008 "The Last Book," Buenos Aires, Argentina, Zurich, Switzerland
- 2007 "Goodnight Sun," George Billis Gallery, NYC
- 2006 "Street Scenes," Gallery North, Setauket, NY
- 2005 Insider's Gallery, Cornwall Bridge, CT
- 2001 Uta Stebich Gallery, Lenox, MA  
Jay Etkin Gallery, Memphis, TN
- 2000 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Show, Andre Zarre Gallery, NY
- 1996 "Central Hall Retrospective," Museum at Stony Brook, Stony Brook, NY
- 1993 "Artists Books," Islip Art Center, Islip, NY
- 1986 "Let's Play House," Bernice Steinbaum Gallery, NYC
- 1983 "Criss-Cross en la Cuidad de Mexico," Galeria Pecanins, Mexico City
- 1981 "Recent Acquisitions," Albright-Knox Gallery, Buffalo, NY  
"Abstract Art in the '80's," Randolph-Macon College, Lynchburg, VA  
"New Acquisitions," Everson Museum, Syracuse, NY  
"Homework," Women's Hall of Fame, Seneca Falls NY & elsewhere  
"Women and Art," Suzanne Brown Gallery, Scottsdale, AZ

- 1980 "Pattern Painters of New York," Albright-Knox Gallery, Buffalo, NY
- 1979 "Patterns Plus," Dayton Institute of Art, Dayton, OH
- 1977 "Pattern, Grid and System Art," Lehigh University, Bethlehem, PA
- 1977 "Pattern Painting," P.S. 1, Long Island City, NY
- 1976 "Contemporary Reflections," Aldrich Museum, Ridgefield, CT
- 1975 "Works on Paper," Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY
- 1974 "I8," CUNY Graduate Center, NYC

### **Selected Museum and Corporate Collections**

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, NYC  
 Albright College Collection, Reading, PA  
 Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY  
 Amoco Corporation, Denver, CO  
 Birmingham Museum of Art, Birmingham, AL  
 Brown-Foreman, Louisville, KY  
 Chrysler Museum, Norfolk, VA  
 Citibank Collection, NYC  
 Owens-Corning Corp., Corning, NY  
 Corporate Collection, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia  
 Dartmouth Museum of Art, Hanover, NH  
 Dayton Art Institute, Dayton, OH  
 Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, NY  
 General Electric Company, Fairfield, CT  
 Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Ithaca, NY  
 Hoffman-LaRoche Collection, Zurich, Switzerland  
 IBM Corporation, NY  
 Lehigh University Collection, Bethlehem, PA  
 Lehman Brothers, Kuhn Loeb Inc, NYC  
 Louis-Dreyfus Financial Group, NYC  
 Mint Museum of Art, Charlotte, NC  
 New York University Collection, NYC  
 Oklahoma Art Center, Oklahoma City, OK  
 Pepsico Corporation, NY  
 Sage Gray Dos Lynch & Castro, Miami, FL  
 Southeast Banking Corporation, Miami, FL  
 Spencer Museum of Art, Lawrence, KS  
 St. Mary's College Collection, Notre Dame, IN  
 Texaco Corporation, NY  
 The New Museum Collection, NYC

The Newark Museum, Newark, NJ  
United States Department of State, Washington, DC  
University of Arkansas, Little Rock, AK

### Selected Bibliography

Ellen Lubell, "Watercolor Electricity," *Soho Weekly News*, Feb. 16, 1975  
John Canaday, "Talent Blooms," *The New York Times*, May 9, 1976  
Malcolm Preston, *Newsday*, September 18, 1976  
Gordon Brown, *Arts Magazine*, September 1976  
April Kingsley, "Opulent Optimism," *The Village Voice*, Nov. 28, 1977  
Peter Frank, "Pattern Painting," *ARTnews*, February 1978  
Judith Tannenbaum, *Arts Magazine*, April 1978  
Madeline Burnside, *ARTnews*, April 1978  
Ellen Lubell, "Lush Complexities and Visual Indulgence," *Soho Weekly News*, Feb. 13, 1979  
Peter Frank, *The Village Voice*, May 1, 1979  
Harald Szeeman, "Pattern Paintings," *DU Die Kunstzeitschrift*, Zurich, June 1979  
Carol Donnell-Kotrozo, "Women and Art," *Arts Magazine*, March 1981  
Helen Harrison, *The New York Times*, April 11, 1981  
Barbara Colin, "Pattern of a Painter," *New York Arts Journal*, Oct-Nov 1981  
Charlotte Rubenstein, *American Women Artists*, Avon, 1982  
Phyllis Braff, *The New York Times*, 1989  
Helen Harrison, "Challenges to the Viewer's Imagination," *The New York Times*, Dec. 22, 1996; "Confronting Social and Political Issues," April 12, 1998  
James Kalm, *NY ARTS*, International Edition, April 2000  
Barbara Flug-Colin, "Sightings: Paintings by Dee Shapiro," *Frigate*, June 2002  
Maureen Mullarkey, "The Last Time I Saw Cuba," *The New York Sun*, April 15, 2004  
Steve Starger, *Art New England*, Feb/Mar 2005

### Teaching and Residencies

Visiting Artist in Long Island Schools, 1975-1978  
Gallery Director and Curator; North Shore Community Arts Center; Great Neck NY, 1978-82  
Lecturer; Hofstra University, LI, NY, 1980  
Co-teaching, Adelphi University, LI, NY "Saying, Seeing" Poetry and Arts, 1980  
Artist in Residence, St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, IN, 1981  
Lecturer; John Jay College of Criminal Justice, NY, 1981  
Artist in Residence, Bowling Green State College, Bowling Green, OH, 1986  
Editor; Stylist, Rebus Inc., 1987-1994  
Photo Editor; Reader's Digest Books, 1995-96  
Faculty Tutor; Empire State College, Old Westbury, NY, 1977-present



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