

Morgan Presents

Studio Visitor: Rebecca Ness & Joel Shapiro
February 24th—April 7th, 2022
155 Suffolk Street, New York, NY 10002



Studio Visitor presents a new body of paintings by Rebecca Ness in dialogue with a singular Joel Shapiro sculpture installed in the center of the gallery. These monumental works by Ness are all portraits of artists in their studios, individuals who represent her artistic community and circle of dialogue, friendship & critique. The Shapiro sculpture, suspended in animation, looks in on each of these intimate vignettes; its universal figurative identity in stark contrast to Ness' particularly rendered characters.

A studio visit is an intimate ritual of the art world, where each of the participants reveals some part of themselves in an exchange about the work. These paintings lift the veil, in part, to reveal elements of the process that go into each artist's respective practice. Within Ness' highlighting of various stages of creation, from digital composition building, to the taping of canvas and splattering of material, is a continuation of her investigation of *world building* and the assertion that the objects we surround ourselves communicate unspoken parts of our individual identities. Every artist's studio portrayed as a setting for action, is thereby simultaneously a portrait of their spirit and character—revealing further insights about their practice.

The installation of the figurative, wooden Shapiro sculpture provides a counterpoint to Ness' narrative of individuals. Mediating between geometric abstraction and figuration, Shapiro's hand painted wooden blocks assert a material priority. Although ostensibly Shapiro's language of universality stands in contrast to Ness' representation of a specific community of individuals, both artists share a common investigation into process and how material traces left behind from mark making, in both painting and sculpture, may communicate larger ideals.

The animated spirit of Shapiro's sculpture can be identified in Ness' employment of dynamic compositions: a mutual focus on action, communicated through light, touch and movement. We stand alongside Shapiro's faceless form, peering in through each of these windows Ness presents in her cinematic compositions.

Rebecca Ness (b. 1992, Salem, MA) lives and works in New Haven, CT. Ness received her BFA from Boston University and her MFA from the Yale School of Art. A selection of public collections include Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven; Long Museum, Shanghai; The Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami; Kistefos Museum, Jevnaker, Norway; M Art Foundation, Shanghai; Dangxia Art Space, Beijing.

Joel Shapiro (b. 1941, New York City, NY) has for over fifty years created work that activates and reconfigures space with his iconic vocabulary of geometric forms, shifting figural and non-referential implications, and subtle manipulations of scale. Shapiro has been the subject of numerous one-person and retrospective exhibitions, including at 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); and the Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas (2016). 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.

Morgan Presents is a New York exhibition space founded and directed by Morgan Aguiar-Lucander, an independent curator, writer, dealer, and advisor to both artists and collectors.

Morgan Presents invites pairs of artists to create an exhibition that offers a new perspective into their practice. Morgan Presents is not a representing gallery, and no one artist will exhibit twice during the run of the program. Morgan Presents intends to offer an insight into today's emerging vanguard of painting and sculpture in collaboration and dialogue with established artists and galleries both domestically and abroad. A hardback publication, cataloguing each exhibition, will be published at the conclusion of the project. The curatorial program will be presented out of 155 Suffolk Street in Manhattan, commencing from September 2021.

For press inquiries please contact Alan Gutierrez at alan@morgan-presents.com

Images: Rebecca Ness, *Ana*, 2021, oil on linen, 80 x 90 inches

R: Joel Shapiro, *Untitled*, 2019, wood and oil paint, 68.5 x 47.25 x 30 inches