

Joel Shapiro

July 22 – September 11, 2021
 2/3F, 267 Itaewon-ro
 Yongsan-gu
 Seoul

Joel Shapiro, *Untitled*, 2019 © Joel Shapiro
 / 2021 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



Seoul – Pace is pleased to present an exhibition of Joel Shapiro’s sculptures at the gallery’s recently expanded space in Seoul. Spanning two floors of the gallery, the presentation spotlights a selection of the artist’s bronze works alongside smaller-scale, vibrantly colored sculptures made of wood.

The exhibition, which features nine new works and a selection of sculptures dating back to the mid-1990s, showcases the American sculptor’s longstanding investigations of color, form, and movement. With its inclusion of two freestanding wood figures, a selection of wall-attaching sculptures, and both large and small cast bronzes, the show traces the artist’s investigations of different materials and processes. The presentation examines not only Shapiro’s interest in exploring—and occasionally erasing—the line between abstraction and figuration, but also his preoccupation with engaging and energizing space and architecture.

On the gallery’s second floor, an installation of smaller-scale sculptures foregrounds Shapiro’s use of color to animate and energize his works. “Emotional color is what interests me,” Shapiro said in a 2001 interview coinciding with a solo exhibition of his drawings and sculptures at PaceWildenstein in New York. Utilizing bright, mostly primary colors in the sculptures exhibited in this installation, Shapiro imbues his works with a sense of buoyancy and elation. Wooden sculptures painted in varying blue, red, and yellow tones, as well as bronze works in varying finishes—mounted on plinths and the gallery’s walls in different orientations—create an elegant, seemingly choreographed sense of motion throughout the gallery space.

The third floor features three freestanding bronze sculptures displayed together as well as a blue painted bronze work from 2019 situated on the adjacent outdoor terrace. Upon entering the gallery, one is greeted by a dazzling bronze work from 2006–07 whose shimmering surface further dynamizes the work’s churning, rectilinear forms. This work’s densely compacted energy finds its complement and efflorescence in the taller, more ambulatory bronzes nearby. A 1995 cast bronze sculpture is the oldest and largest sculpture in the exhibition. Its pose, which might suggest a figure with outstretched arms, presages smaller-scale bronze works dating to this year on view in the

second floor installation. Echoes of form and gesture can also be traced between the 1995 work and the sculpture from 2007–08, whose elongated limbs and flailing form seem to embody, as poet Peter Cole writes in his 2014 Pace catalogue essay on Shapiro, “that feeling of precarious poise, the sensation that one is, at the same time stumbling *and* being uplifted.”

As evinced by the blue painted sculpture installed on the gallery’s terrace, as well as the unpainted sculptures on the third and second floors, Shapiro’s bronze works often retain the qualities and characteristics of the wood patterns and forms from which they were cast, making the artist’s process visible and ever-present in the work. In a catalogue essay accompanying Shapiro’s 2018–19 solo exhibition at the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, Wisconsin—organized by the institution’s erstwhile director Stephen Fleischman—curator Peter Boswell writes that “the evidence of wood grain and saw cuts in Shapiro’s rectangular elements evokes heavy timbers, impressing upon us a sense of their weight and making their suspension aloft seem all the more unlikely. The woodiness of Shapiro’s bronze elements is also important for its reference to his working process, and it contributes to his sculptures’ sense of immediacy.”

In an interview with the art historian Thierry Dufrêne in 2005, when he presented the exhibition *Correspondances: Joel Shapiro/Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux* at the Musée d’Orsay, Paris, Shapiro shared of his sculptures: “I like injecting life into the inanimate: using stone or wood to express life.” The works on view in his latest exhibition collectively highlight Shapiro’s enduring exploration of the dynamic possibilities of sculpture, rendered through distinct yet interconnected formal compositions. This interplay has been central to the artist’s practice over the course of his storied career.

“Shapiro’s sculptures generate emotion-inducing images like those we encounter through novels, a parallel form of figuration,” the art historian Richard Shiff wrote on the occasion of Shapiro’s 2007–08 solo exhibition with PaceWildenstein in New York. “Fictions or figured things expand people’s consciousness, the range of their feelings, and their awareness of their feelings.”

Shapiro has previously been the subject of solo exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; the Institut Valencià d’Art Modern (IVAM), Spain; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; the Museum Ludwig, Cologne; the Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven; the Kunstmuseum Winterthur, Switzerland; the Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas; the Portland Art Museum, Oregon; and other international institutions. His work can be found in many public collections around the world, including those of the Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois; the National Gallery of Art Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, California; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Storm King Art Center, New Windsor, New York; the Ho-Am Art Museum, Seoul; the Kunsthaus Zürich, Switzerland; the Centre Pompidou, Paris; and Tate, London.

Monumental public projects have also been a major part of Shapiro’s practice. Among his over 30 major commissions are large-scale works for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C. and the US consulate in

Guangzhou, China. His work can also be found outside the US embassy in Ottawa, Canada; the Denver Art Museum, Colorado; and the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

Pace is a leading international art gallery representing some of the most influential contemporary artists and estates from the past century, holding decades-long relationships with Alexander Calder, Jean Dubuffet, Barbara Hepworth, Agnes Martin, Louise Nevelson, and Mark Rothko. Pace enjoys a unique U.S. heritage spanning East and West coasts through its early support of artists central to the Abstract Expressionist and Light and Space movements.

Since its founding by Arne Glimcher in 1960, Pace has developed a distinguished legacy as an artist-first gallery that mounts seminal historical and contemporary exhibitions. Under the current leadership of President and CEO Marc Glimcher, Pace continues to support its artists and share their visionary work with audiences worldwide by remaining at the forefront of innovation. Now in its seventh decade, the gallery advances its mission through a robust global program—comprising exhibitions, artist projects, public installations, institutional collaborations, performances, and interdisciplinary projects. Pace has a legacy in art bookmaking and has published over five hundred titles in close collaboration with artists, with a focus on original scholarship and on introducing new voices to the art historical canon. The gallery has also spearheaded exploration into the intersection of art and technology through new business models, exhibition interpretation tools, and representation of artists engaging with technology.

Today, Pace has nine locations worldwide including London, Geneva, a strong foothold in Palo Alto, and two galleries in New York—its headquarters at 540 West 25th Street, which welcomed almost 120,000 visitors and programmed 20 shows in its first six months, and an adjacent 8,000 sq. ft. exhibition space at 510 West 25th Street. Pace was one of the first international galleries to establish outposts in Asia, where it operates permanent gallery spaces in Hong Kong and Seoul, as well as an office and viewing room in Beijing. In 2020, Pace opened temporary exhibition spaces in East Hampton and Palm Beach, with continued programming on a seasonal basis. In fall 2021, Pace will continue to expand its European presence with the opening of a larger gallery space in London.

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