

Hello

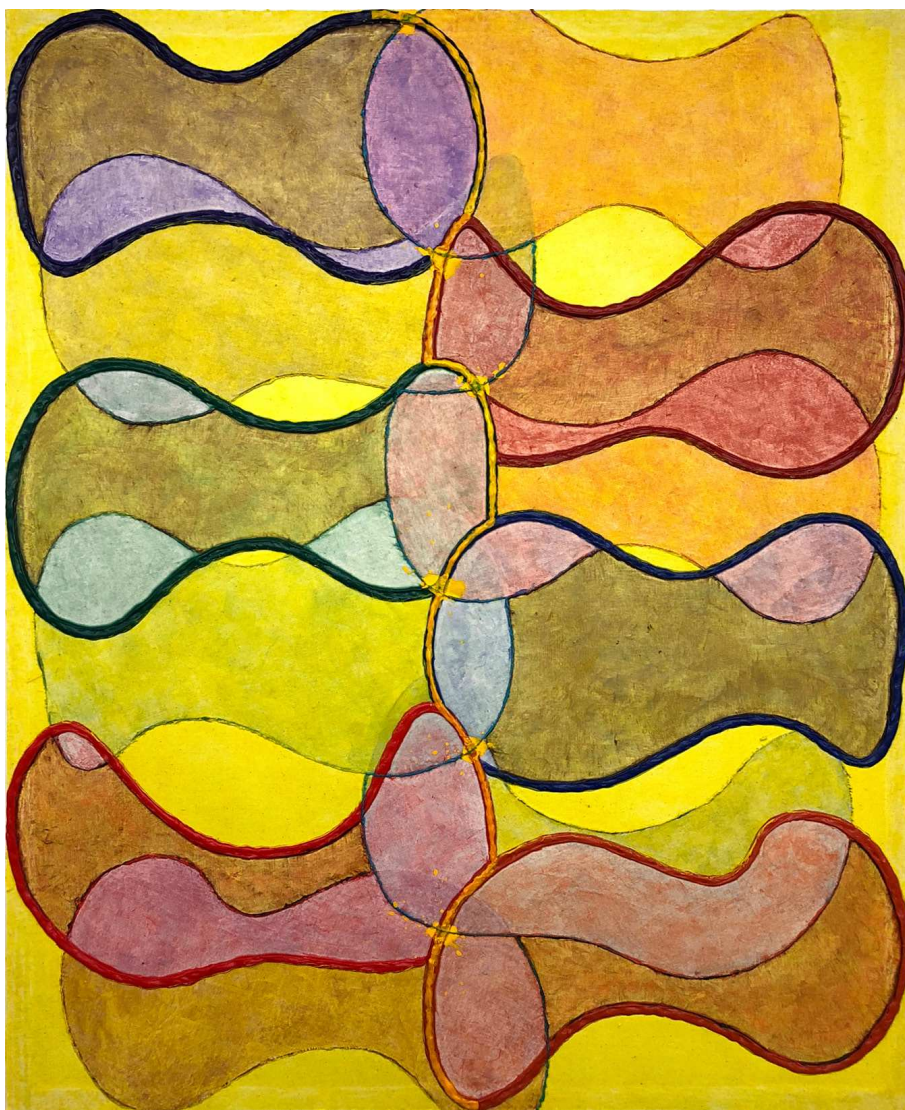
Stranger(s)

Mark Schlesinger

Hello
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essay | Michael Schreyach



Time and Again, 2017
acrylic, canvas, wood
39 x 32"

MEETING SPACES

Michael Schreyach

Although in size and shape they more closely resemble traditional easel pictures than do some of his previous works—specifically those on uniquely fashioned supports, which patiently display their constructed aspect, or his large-scale public commissions on concrete—Mark Schlesinger’s recent paintings nonetheless convey the impression, like those prior works, of having been *built*. Not only do the wooden frames upon which he mounts his canvases project his surfaces away from the wall at a noticeably greater distance than do conventional stretchers, but Schlesinger has made an effort to render his auxiliary supports conspicuous. Observe that the light-weight cotton duck underpinning the abstract array—and thus *holding* it for our view—is not wrapped around the unpainted, one-by-two-inch braces and tacked to them with staples or nails, as is standard for easel paintings. Rather, the canvas is pulled tautly and glued to the one-inch sides of the planks. The absence of fabric around the stretcher bars exposes the plain lumber to view, making explicit the support’s matter-of-fact structural function and drawing our attention to the physical materials out of which the *painting*, as a work of art, is made. Further inspection reveals frayed edges of cotton duck around the perimeter of the facing plane, as if to further highlight the discrepancy between the object’s actual materials and the virtual image or fictional world the painting projects for a viewer.¹

Perhaps “discrepancy” is excessively categorical: too polarizing a characterization

of the relation between the *actual* and the *virtual* in Schlesinger’s work. It might be better to say that the taut suspension of the image (a visual projection) on its primary and secondary supports (canvas and wood stretcher) exposes something like the dependence or the reliance of the image on its physical foundation as the condition of its possibility. And that in turn allows Schlesinger’s art to declare the mutual relationship of *materials* and *meaning*.



Time and Again

Time and Again (p. 3) reveals the significance—or what we might call the metaphysical content—of Schlesinger’s constructions. The painting contains twelve sinuously contoured shapes with bulbous ends and relatively slender middles. Their unitary simplicity evokes primitive, amoeba-like organisms, or perhaps basic skeletal forms (like ballooned femur or humeral bones). The pods are arranged in two columns of six. The ends of the forms

overlap at midline to create a vertical stack of secondary shapes balanced from top to bottom, like a spine's vertebrae or the cladodes of a prickly pear cactus. To varying degrees, the long sides of the primary units lay over or under those above and below, and because both the color and internal modulation of the shapes change wherever they cross the apparent boundary of another, the cellular bodies seem transparent. Moreover, since the contour lines that define each discrete shape remain visible or are even reinforced despite their overlapping, the interior of each cell is intricately partitioned by the bodies of the others. The effect—not quite of merging, but of *touching* by means of translucent layering and interpenetration—overcomes the separation of the shapes from one another that their complete outlines would otherwise assert. The construction is connected throughout its parts, from top to bottom, from side to side, from surface to depth. The painting feels itself.

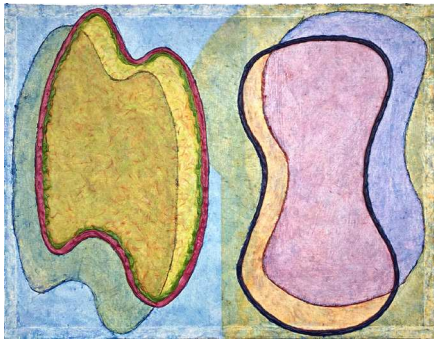
Coming to understand Schlesinger's canvases—any one of them—demands a degree of sustained attention, reflection, and interpretation that prohibits generalization and reduction. Each painting is a world. *Time and Again* needs to be seen time and again, described and discussed time and again. So, to meet the demand: observe that the paired shapes in each row are mirror images of each other. Each dyad, in fact, comprises morphological twins. Schlesinger has cut out six shapes from a larger stretch of canvas, and glued the pieces to the surface. But before affixing them, he flipped each portion of fabric over and used it as a drafting template. By tracing around its silhouette, he rendered in each case the image of a reversed counterpart. In just one instance (the top pair), he overturned the stencil and rotated it 180 degrees. Thus, from six prototypes, he reproduced six shapes. The relationship of one (real canvas) to the other (drawn shape) is complex. By gluing the cut-out pieces to his working surface, Schlesinger physically modified its notional flatness. The collage technique effectively creates a layered plane, with some shapes in low, but palpable,

relief. By contrast, the drawn counterparts are virtually coincident with the plane. As if to reduce their qualitative disparity, Schlesinger visually interleaved them, weaving the collaged and drawn shapes together by controlling and varying their outlines. The contours of the cut-outs are literal ridges, buttressed in both their physicality and delineation by accumulations of paint that have been deposited by a brush or flexible knife dragged against their perimeters. Conversely, the traced elements (going forward, think of them as *depicted* shapes) do not materially interrupt the flatness of the planar surface. Yet Schlesinger emphasizes them by reinforcing their silhouettes with thick outlines that restore a sense of tangibility to their ostensibly virtual dimensions.

Notice that none of the shapes is encompassed by a continuous, stylistically unchanging line: each loop consists of segments of various types. A single example will suffice to illustrate the point. The outline of the third shape from top (on the right side) is given by six different pieces: a sweeping curve of dark red along its top register; followed (working clockwise) by a less emphatic segment, also red, that from a distance appears almost scored into the thick paint on the surface; then a downward scoop of dark purple-blue; another short "scored" ridge; an emphatic blue line that, in sweeping upward to nearly vertical, seems to drag along its length small strands of cotton fabric and to accelerate them to velocity; and finally, a tight arc of thick green, half covered by yellow, that defines the vertex of the shape's topmost node. Meanwhile, the passage through the shape's interior of five more curved segments—which properly belong to the edges of under- or overlapping forms—lends to the element an internal complexity analogous to that of a cellular organism.

Compare the relative simplicity of the figures in *Giving Oneself* (p. 18), where each of the two primary units is made of a template paired with an emphatically contoured twin. The combination of firm outline and transparency produces a perceptual problem: how

are the shapes, taken as three-dimensional forms, directionally oriented? When attending to the weightier lines (blue or red/green), the palette-like shape on the left will appear to be seen from slightly below, making the form face upward; while the hourglass-like shape on the right will appear to be seen from above, making it face downward. But like a Necker cube, paying attention to the less emphatic outlines of either figure will cause their orientation to change in a glance: now it is the palette which descends, the hourglass which ascends. The muddled problem of orthogonal projection leaves us uncertain as to whether the bodies in *Giving Oneself* are aligned in their relative positions, or momentarily discrepant. Like ourselves with partners, they phase in and out of coordination.²



Giving Oneself

Return once more, patiently, to *Time and Again*. The “actual” cutouts are interleaved in a zig-zag pattern with their “virtual” partners, starting at top right and cascading left-to-right. (The scare-quotes are meant to indicate that the distinction heretofore expedient for technical description is transcended when beholding the completed painting, since both the real and traced elements jointly establish the *totality* of the image.) The twelve shapes come together, like the interlaced fingers of a pair of hands. The painting, obviously, is not meant literally to depict hands, but the incorporation of its constituent elements suggests that Schlesinger’s imagery is motivated on some fundamental level by his sense of the possibilities of representing, through abstract pictorial form, the body’s infinitely variable *modes* of touching, feeling, and being.

Plainly, this cannot be a matter of literal reference or narrative. For instance, note that there are twelve shapes (identical to the number of ribs on one side of the body); they meet at the middle (forming a structure like a sternum); the picture’s format is vertical (mirroring our erect posture); and its pulsating colors meet diaphanously expanding perimeters (the painting “breathes”). But *Time and Again* is not a picture of our lungs. Rather, Schlesinger’s gambit is to express *embodiment* as such: to create a painting that evokes and corresponds to our body’s affective and physical powers, our generative agency and our capacity to connect. Interlacing fingers, of course, is handholding: a generous sign of everyday intimacy between two bodies, between two “others.” The approximate meaning of that gesture of familiarity and care becomes available in *Time and Again* not as the clichéd image of two lovers strolling down a lane, but through our reflection on the work’s rigorous, self-reflexive, pictorial inquiry into the conditions of human content as it may be represented within an abstract idiom. (Tellingly, all the paintings in this series derive their titles from poems published in 1962 by Robert Creeley, in a book called *For Love*.)

It should by now be obvious that for Schlesinger, the qualitative manner in which painted (or constructed) shapes appear *visually* to touch (or *actually* touch) is central to the pictorial logic of his art. There is exceptional variety in how this might happen. A depicted shape touches another one, or touches an actual shape; a collaged template touches the real plane of the canvas (its literal surface) or its real frame (its objective limits), while the depicted shape appears to do so. Together, these interactions create pictorial space, establish the limits of the work of art, and declare the distinction between the *painting’s* meaning and the *object’s* materials. It is equally clear that Schlesinger’s logic of touch is analogous to human contact, and to the meaning contact generates and is felt to bring to one’s separate self. Understanding the canvas as a kind of a skin—an organ interposed between an interior and an exterior—is both historically accurate

and metaphorically suggestive. If skin is the medium of touch—and if canvas, brushes, and pigment are the means of figuring a painter's touch—then Schlesinger's covered surfaces are the medium by which a viewer can grasp the palpable yet mysterious exchange between embodied self and world.³ It is an ineluctable feeling.

On the Other Hand (p. 17) amplifies some of the strategies employed in *Time and Again*. This canvas, too, is stretched and glued to the one-inch sides of the auxiliary support, a framework of certain objective dimensions. The wood's material existence on the other side of the surface we are beholding—its *actuality*—is indexed on the facing plane by its physical impression through the fabric. Schlesinger has literally handled the contact of support and surface by pressing, rubbing, or scraping the canvas (with brush, fingers, or plastic knife) against the under-armature. The result on the painting's face is an edge in low relief, set an inch inside the definite limits of the array and tacking the perimeter. The impressed outline functions as a frame-within-a-frame. As we have seen already with collaged canvas templates and their outlined twins, the move is typical of the series: the actual has been manipulated to create a virtual surrogate, like an offspring.

Both the real and the pictorial frames in *On the Other Hand* bear upon the forms depicted within the imagistic array, or which are attached to the canvas surface. There initially appear to be four pairs of matching shapes (each consists of a template and its double), with the addition of two anomalous shapes (the purple form at upper left and the peach one at lower right). The templates in the other two corners—of purple/green and green/blue—were used to trace the outline of transparent progeny, which seem to float over each parent. After serving their multiplying role, however, the templates have been sliced, almost surgically, across their mid-sections by a sinuous cut and moved slightly apart. A similar operation, although more complex to parse, involves the remaining shapes (those in the upper left and lower right quadrants). Close inspection

reveals that each of those shapes—although I just said they seemed anomalous—are, like the others, related to a larger template. The apparent irregularity is easily explained. In both cases, Schlesinger cut the templates first, then used only *one* piece from each to trace a second outline. Thus, two shapes have twins (the purple pair of Hershey's kisses and the pinkish scythes), and two don't—leaving those individuals to hold their own, somewhat independently of the pairs procreating nearby, but still part of the family. Another consequence is that by moving the collage pieces apart, Schlesinger produces paths or channels running through the formerly intact bodies. And while two of those routes are crossed by thick lines (they belong to the contours of the depicted shapes that issued from their corresponding template), the passageways that the separation of the templates open up seem nonetheless to proceed uninterrupted along their courses. The channels serve as conduits, funneling into the interior of the array not just the color of the ground upon which all the members take their places, but also the enclosing or bracing force of the work's edges, which secures the burgeoning world without inhibiting it. In other words, the painting absorbs into itself the power or energy of its limits to fuel but also to manage the image's irrepressible propagation.



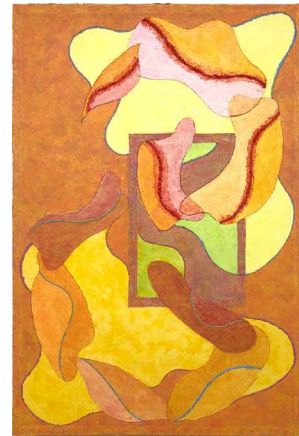
On the Other Hand

In *Bemused* (p. 22), the dual function of the auxiliary support is unmistakable: it structurally holds the canvas surface, of course, but

it also produces on the facing plane a physical impression of a frame-within-a-frame. Here, the external armature is joined by a miniature version of the same proportions within the picture's interior (to the right of center, under template-shapes that evoke falling leaves). The sides of the smaller rectangle are textured and slightly raised, a feature that at first seems to be the result of multiple applications of paint around its perimeter. We perceive it "haptically," with that sense of our sight that "feels" the materiality of visual forms. The reason why Schlesinger included the internal frame is not obvious, but neither is it exactly surprising. Given the regularity of the structural frame's role in the other works of this series, a viewer might even predict that there must be an *actual* frame of the same size as the depicted one on the underside of the canvas, below the painted surface. And indeed there is. It, too, impresses: the real wooden box subtending the one we see stamps its shape into the canvas, physically compromising the notional flatness of the cotton duck. As it disrupts our sense of the surface as an ideal plane, the embossed rectangle vies for the tangibility we might ascribe more readily to the nearby templates. Schlesinger has pursued the logic of collage to a recto/verso extreme: not only does he paste material on top of a surface, but he affixes it underneath, where it works out of sight to establish the physical conditions of the virtual pictorial order.

Although the internal frame in *Bemused* is, in a way, "caused" by the physical imprint of a component that is hidden from view under the canvas, its painterly elaboration exposed to view on the front renders it a pictorial element of key significance. A meandering passage against its green ground serves, like before, as a kind of funnel that transfers into the depicted shape's interior the holding force of the enclosure itself. Yet there is more. By playing on the theme of "framing," Schlesinger calls our attention to something like a frame's role in delimiting a portion of space broadly construed. Traditionally, we might say, the bounded quadrant of an easel

painting presents a view of a fictional world. In *Bemused*, the small frame's constraining power becomes a token of the painting's capacity of the *artist's* capacity to delimit and to describe that world by putting the convention of framing to use. Complexly put: the depicted frame, which isolates in the work of art a small area of the world imagined by the artist, is a metaphor of the literal frame, which demarcates the artist's area of operation during his ongoing task of describing and defining the fictional world itself. Thus understood, *Bemused* not only gestures toward the conditions of painting's autonomy (the independence of its projected world from the world at large): it also insists on the work of art as fundamentally the expression of an artist's vision of pictorial reality and the relationships it might figure or embody.



Bemused

From an art historical perspective, Schlesinger's recent achievements are usefully placed in the context of a longer line of modernist artists who investigated relationships of materials and meaning, line and shape, touch and space, framing and view. Schlesinger approaches his antecedents with seriousness and sincerity. An obvious model is Paul Cézanne, whose signature technique of handling the contours of depicted objects through continual re-inscription has the enigmatic effect of making it ever more difficult for the viewer to discern precisely where "bodies" end and surrounding "space" begins. The imbrication of "solid" matter and "intangible" volume is strengthened by Cézanne's tendency to



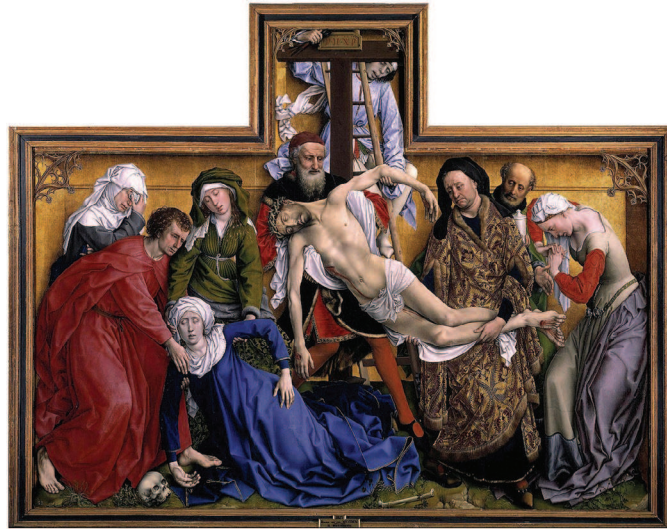
It Always Is

render both with consistent, regulated brushstrokes: his small, rectangular touches cover the canvas with a tessellated pattern of facet planes. Superimposed like tiles, and carefully adjusted to those nearby, the structural brushstrokes create a surface of hallucinated uniformity that paradoxically suggests both a woven textile and a crystalline mineral. The haptic palpability of the marks can be so insistent that it nearly cancels our awareness of the residual likeness of whatever subject or scene the artist chose to represent. The technique reveals the mutual relationship of materials and meaning: Cézanne's constructive method is the determining condition for capturing and disclosing what he thought was the essence of his motif.⁴ While it would be mistaken to characterize his surfaces as resembling those of Cézanne, it nonetheless seems appropriate to think of Schlesinger's exacting adjustments of his templates and their surrogates to each other and to the frame as recapitulating—at the level of *whole shapes*—the play of Cézanne's infinitely adjusted touches.

Like Cézanne, cubist painters (I think especially of Georges Braque's still-lives) routinely compromised the description of objects by contours, and in so doing tested the proper limits or boundaries of discrete things. Cubist technique renders outlines diagrammatic and masses semi-transparent, and its constructive brushstrokes of small, regular

planes (adopted from Cézanne) restricts whatever remains of the illusion of spatial extension to a very narrow register nearly coincident with the picture plane. The contraction of the illusionistic corridor between near and far institutes a flattened world of objects and volumes so intimately connected that the mutual external isolation of bodies in coordinate space (one thing abutting another) yields to a sense of the interpenetration of everything, hollow and mass alike. In addition, both Cézanne and the cubists bequeathed to modernist art the idea that the limits or constraints of the medium—the flatness of the surface, the shape of the support, the techniques by which a painter adjusts his marks, lines, and forms to both—are material factors that the artist must acknowledge as the very condition of his effort to realize his expressive intent. *Acknowledge* means something more than simply recognizing that, as a painter, one necessarily plies a physical medium; it also means to build into one's art a recognition and acceptance of one's responsibility to the conventions of the medium—even as one seeks to transform them anew, to re-create pictorial content from one's own perspective and within one's own historical experience (as Schlesinger has done).⁵

More proximate to his own time are the works of Barnett Newman (1905-70), an artist to whom Schlesinger feels a special kinship. Newman's disarmingly straightforward



Rogier van der Weyden, *Descent from the Cross*, c.1435

technique of using strips of masking tape to make the predominantly vertical bands that traverse his canvases has obvious affinities with Schlesinger's strategies: the tape is a kind of template to produce a "zip." In *Onement I* (1948), Newman bisected a small canvas of about 27 x 16 inches by affixing to its surface a one-inch wide band of masking tape. He then painted the field with a relatively even coat of cadmium red medium. The central vertical, of brighter cadmium red, was applied over the strip of tape with what looks to have been a stiff-bristled brush or a palette knife. Initially, Newman meant only to test the color with the application; pleased with the result, he decided not to remove the tape. Its continued presence embeds into the formal structure of the painting a sense of the material conditions for the establishment of its meaning. Of his decision not to pull the tape upon which he had applied his test color to make the picture's central band, Newman said in 1970: "That stroke made the thing come to life for me."⁶ In *Onement I*, the actual and virtual are subsumed into the totality of the work of art Newman created, an achievement that Schlesinger also targets—and persistently hits.

Despite his rank within a certain modernist chain of command, it would not be unreasonable to look even further afield for Schlesinger's inspirations. Of course, there are numerous examples in the history of art

of painters who have tacitly or explicitly acknowledged the mutual determination of materials and meaning. In some of those cases, they have capitalized on the codependency to accrue massive gains for metaphysical symbolism. For example, in Rogier van der Weyden's *Descent from the Cross* (c.1435), the shape of the support itself exerts a decisive influence over the forms depicted within the framed boundaries of the altarpiece. Observe the position of Christ's body as it is lowered to the ground: his arm hangs left of center, continuing the vertical compositional line established by the left side of the crenellated painting's single merlon. If the connection at first seems surprising, keep in mind that Schlesinger is an admiring student of Northern Renaissance painting, its iconography, and its classic structural form—the single or multi-panel altarpiece. The diptych *It Always Is* (p. 24) evokes that form in more ways than one.⁷ In Van der Weyden's masterpiece, Christ's limb seems to stretch toward—but just fails to touch—the fainting figure of Mary. Yet because their bodies are nearly identical in composition and silhouette (the key difference is Christ's lolling head), their shapes are transposable—like a template and the tracing that replicates it. That formal correspondence secures the poignancy of the symbolic union of mother and son, even as their failure to reach each other across the divide of life and death—to touch each other—declares the insuperability of parturition and

the separation it entails. But the possibility of their connection is preserved, too, since Van der Weyden guides our vision from one to the other with a strong compositional diagonal that directs us from Christ's wounds to Mary's limp right hand. It thuds against the ground at the very base of the lower framing edge, next to the skull of Adam, whose obliquely aligned eye sockets ricochet the viewer's gaze back to the crucified Christ.⁸ Thus, by virtue of the formal transposability of their shapes, Van der Weyden distributes to the fainted and "passive" Mary and to the crucified and ostensibly "lifeless" Christ a form of agency they share in the economy of Christian iconography. They are *coordinated* in their actions (recall here the visual dynamics of *Giving Oneself*).

Under modernism, pictorial coordination has its metaphysical dimensions, too. It makes the responsibility of building a painting analogous to the care, concern, and composure it takes to build a relationship. Mark Schlesinger believes and his art demonstrates his belief in the power of constructed, painted surfaces to institute, in concord with a sensitive and receptive viewer, an ethics of beholding. That attitude aligns him with his mid-century models, painters who also reached for an audience on similar terms. A writer too, Newman helped his friends and colleagues, Mark Rothko and Adolph Gottlieb, draft this defense of the metaphysical content of abstraction: "We do not intend to defend our pictures. They make their own defense [. . .] No possible set of notes can explain our paintings. Their explanation must come out of a consummated experience between picture and onlooker."⁹ Schlesinger's convictions concerning the (possible) ethical dimension of a viewer's encounter with his paintings are inseparable from his commitment to making a statement: to expressing himself and to communicating with another by virtue of pictorial order and effect. As he put it in another context:

[My] paintings exist frontally—they are in front of you, you in front of them. [...] What is seen in a painting is there to hopefully be seen and thought about and its meaning

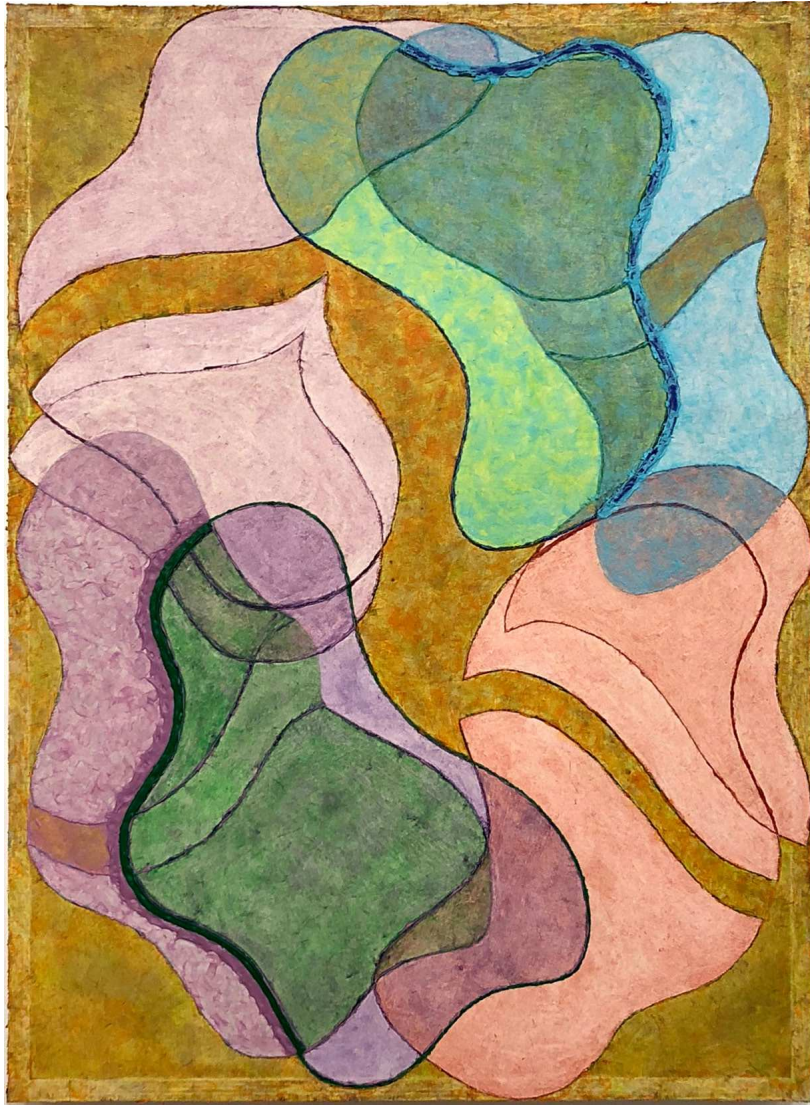
*guessed and shared, if only with one other person who also finds looking carefully and thinking clearly important and interesting. [...] Looking and talking together [we might come to] recognize what [we] have to know in order to guess, perhaps even to realize, what can be known, how it is known, and why knowing it is so vitally important.*¹⁰

The idea carries us backward, in closing, to establish yet one more instance of *close-ness*. Newman spoke to an interviewer in terms that provide a template for understanding Schlesinger's meeting spaces. Asked by the art historian Dorothy Seckler, "How would you define your sense of space?," Newman replied with a question to keep the possibilities of defining "space" open: "Is space where the orifices are in the faces of people talking to each other, or is it not [also] between the glance of their eyes as they respond to each other?"¹¹ In Schlesinger's art, too, painting transforms prosaic communication into an elevated pictorial expression of responsive seeing and feeling. That attitude toward *contact*—a willingness to gear into it and to prepare the conditions for its consummation in and through the work of art—discloses Schlesinger's allegiance to public, sharable meaning, to *open-ness*.

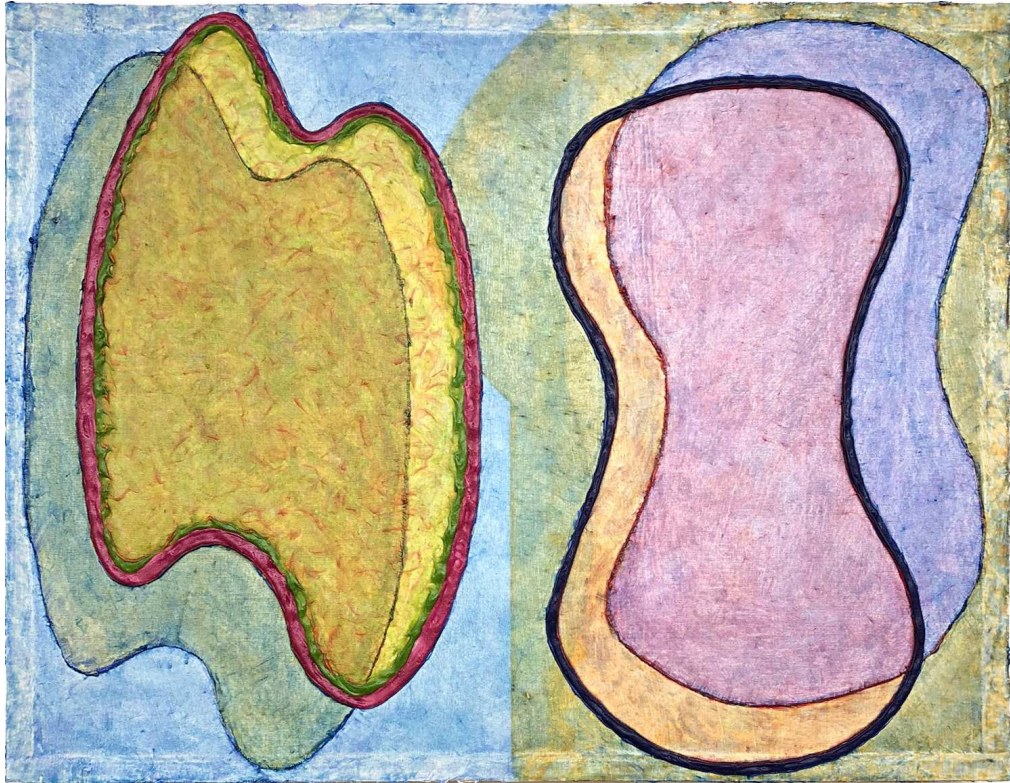
ENDNOTES

- 1 Modern, pre-fabricated supports are also made from one-by-two inch braces, but they usually are joined so that the two-inch side of the plank faces the underside of the canvas. A margin of fabric on all sides is then stretched around and tacked or stapled to the one-inch side of the auxiliary support. The two-inch facing bar is milled at a thirty degree angle to prevent any part of the slat except its outside edge from touching the canvas. Otherwise, the two-inch bar might produce the physical impression of the support on the painting's surface as a ghost image. In orienting his stretcher bars to the canvas at a ninety-degree angle (that is, utilizing the one-inch side to face the underside of the canvas), Schlesinger in effect rotates his braces ninety degrees in relation to the wall. That maximizes the possible distance that can be achieved between the wall and the surface with one-by-two inch slats. And by gluing the canvas to their one-inch sides rather than wrapping fabric around the frame, Schlesinger announces that he is unconcerned about the ghost image of the stretcher bars that will be produced on the front of the painting by virtue of physical contact. In fact, he relies on that impression: it becomes, on the painting's facing plane, a *virtual* representation of *actual* touch.
- 2 Since Schlesinger replicates the "palette" and the "hourglass" in the diptych *It Always Is* (where they appear in the upper right and left corners), a viewer might reasonably conclude that the shapes have some unspecified symbolic meaning for the artist, or harbor a kind of proto-iconography (my guess is "male" and "female," but the precise gender identification is less important than understanding that together the two shapes are a *couple*).
- 3 On the relationship between pictorial meaning and metaphors of touch in modern art, see especially Richard Shiff, "Breath of Modernism (Metonymic Drift)," in *In Visible Touch: Modernism and Masculinity*, ed. T. Smith (Sydney and Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 184-213. Schlesinger is an avid reader of Shiff's work.
- 4 In light of my remarks about handholding in *Time and Again*, I find it irresistible to mention Cézanne's signature gesture for indicating that he had found a motif: he would slowly join his hands together by interlocking his fingers. That act seems to grasp the totality toward which Schlesinger reaches. See Joachim Gasquet, *Cézanne* (Paris: Éditions Bernheim-Jeune, 1921), 80.
- 5 These issues are to my mind best articulated by formal criticism and particularly by Clement Greenberg, whose insight into the problem constitutes the tacit background against which I think any account of Schlesinger's art must be written. See Clement Greenberg, "The Decline of Cubism" (1948), in *Clement Greenberg: Collected Essays and Criticism*, ed. John O'Brian, 4 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986-93), 2: 211-16. But also important (and very important to Schlesinger) are the thoughts of Stanley Cavell; see especially "Knowing and Acknowledging," in *Must We Mean What We Say?* (1969) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 238-266.
- 6 Newman, "Interview with Emile de Antonio" (1970) in *Barnett Newman: Selected Writings and Interviews*, ed. John P. O'Neill (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990), 306.
- 7 As an undergraduate student at Harpur College from 1967-71, Schlesinger studied Northern Renaissance painting with the art historian James Marrow. Additionally, he studied experimental film with Ken Jacobs, a former student of Hans Hofmann.
- 8 The connection of Adam to Christ, mediated through the figure of Mary, is central to the typology of the Crucifixion, since Christ is understood to redeem through his sacrifice the sins of the first Man (see Gertrud Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art* [1968], trans. Janet Seligman, 2 vols. [Greenwich, CT: New York Graphic Society, 1972], 2: 130-33 and 160-64). Thus, the compositional line in *Descent from the Cross* confers upon the deposition the almost literal *gravity* of its theological significance.
- 9 Mark Rothko and Adolph Gottlieb [with Barnett Newman], "Letter to Edward Alden Jewell," *New York Times* (June 13, 1943): Section 2, X9.
- 10 Mark Schlesinger, "Q&A with Carina Plath," *Mark Schlesinger: Paintings 1993-2003: New York-Texas* (Exh. Cat., Westfälischer Kunstverein Münster, 2004), n.p.
- 11 Newman, "'Frontiers of Space': Interview with Dorothy Gees Seckler" (1962), in *Barnett Newman: Selected Writings and Interviews*, 249-50.

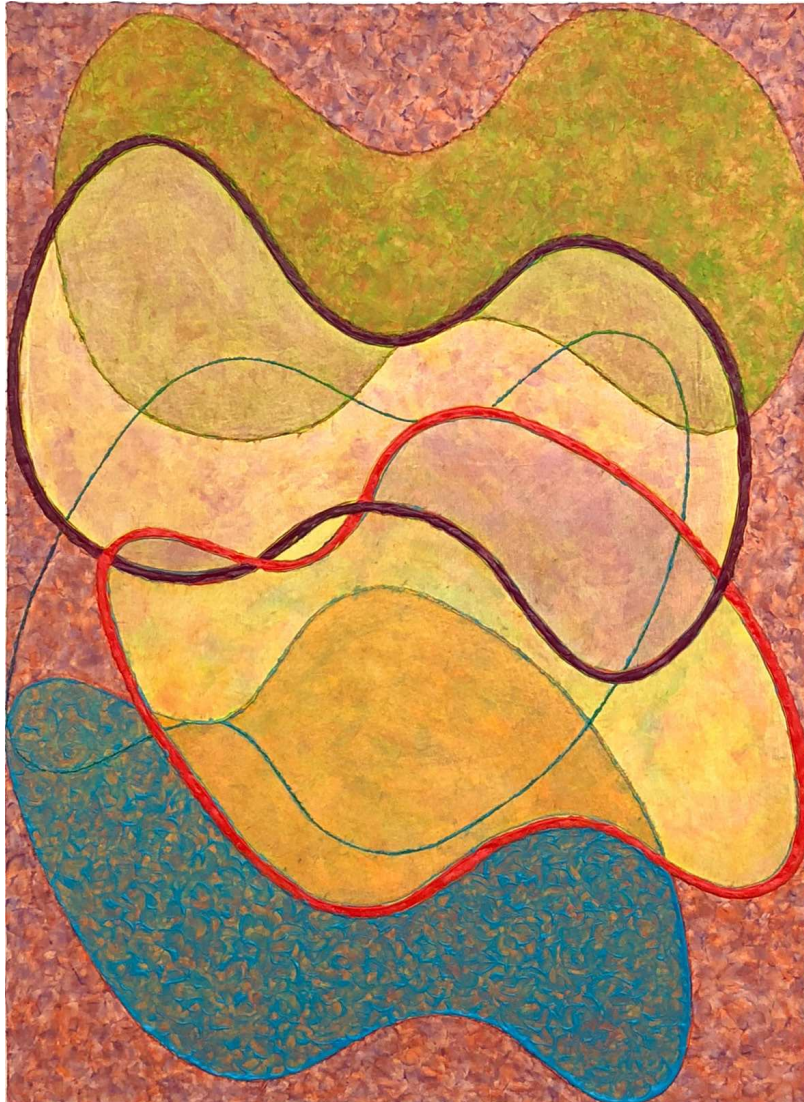
Paintings



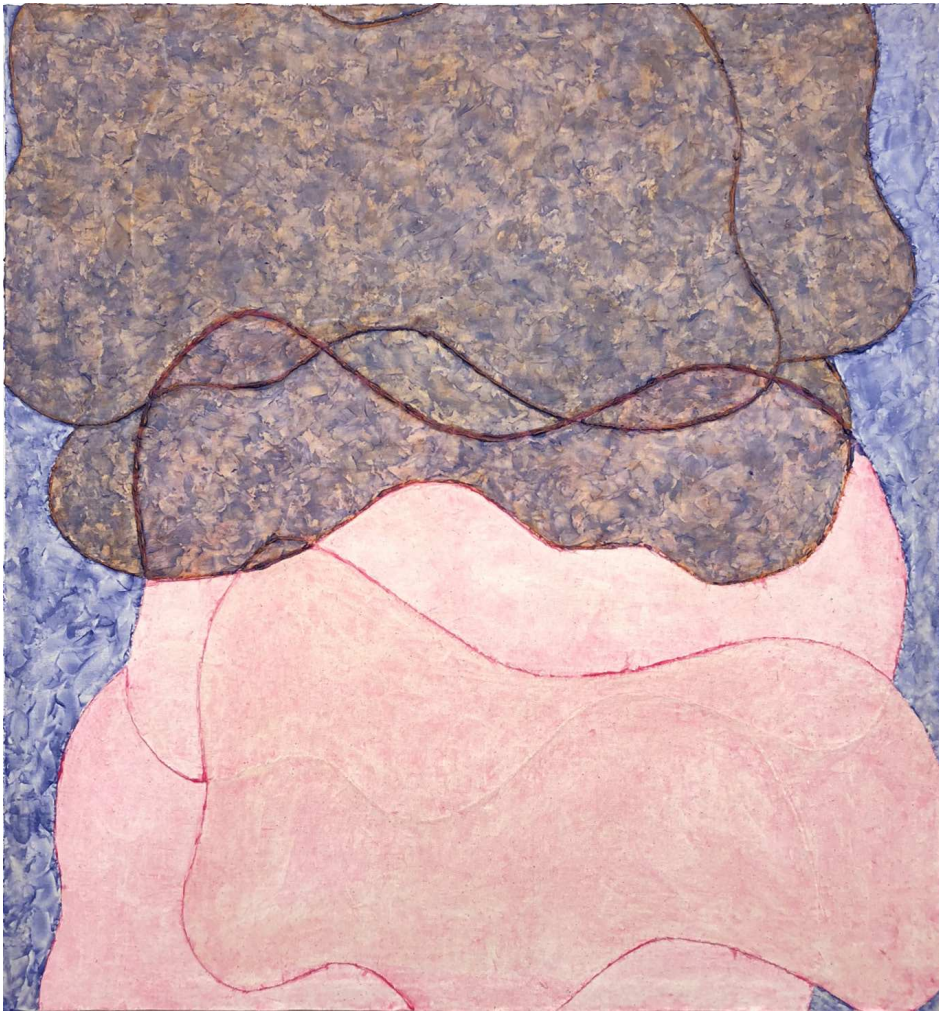
On the Other Hand, 2017
acrylic, canvas, wood
44 x 32"



Giving Oneself, 2017
acrylic, canvas, wood
24 x 31"



At Last Out Of, 2017
acrylic, canvas, wood
44 x 32"



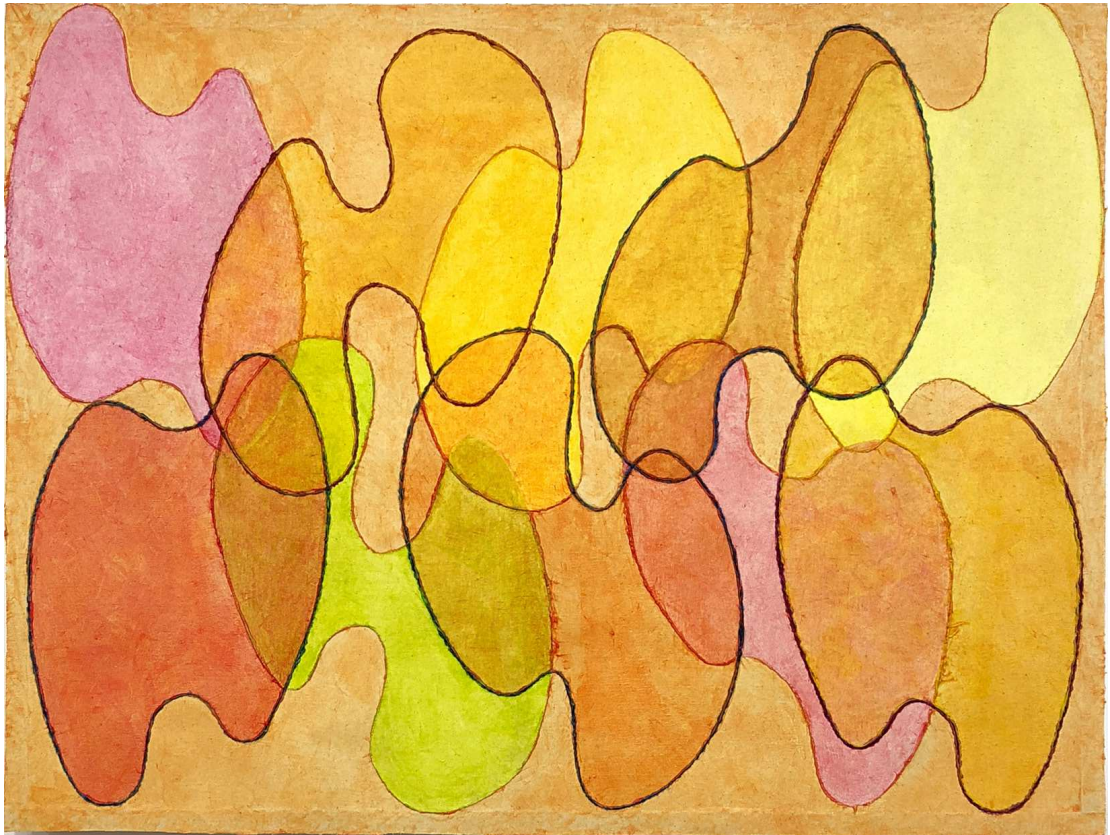
Above All, 2017
acrylic, canvas, wood
29 x 27"



Two, but the One, 2017
acrylic, canvas, wood
30 x 40"



Bemused, 2017
acrylic, canvas, wood
45 x 30"



Like This One, Like That One, 2017
acrylic, canvas, wood
30 x 40"



It Always Is, 2017
acrylic, canvas, wood
44 x 64" | 44 x 32" each

Works on Paper



Hard Going 1, 2017
watercolor, acrylic, paper
30 x 22"



Ways of Water 1, 2017
watercolor, acrylic, paper
30 x 22"



All Was, 2017
watercolor, acrylic, paper
22 x 30"



Fortunate, 2017
watercolor, acrylic, paper
22 x 30"



Ways of Water 7, 2017
watercolor, acrylic, paper
30 x 22"



Ways of Water 3, 2017
watercolor, acrylic, paper
30 x 22"



Hard Going 3, 2017
watercolor, acrylic, paper
30 x 22"



Ways of Water 6, 2017
watercolor, acrylic, paper
30 x 22"

Biography



Mark Schlesinger

Born in 1949 in Brooklyn, New York. Currently lives and works in San Antonio, Texas.

EDUCATION

- 1972 Independent Study Program, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York City
- 1971 Bachelor of Arts, Harpur College, State University of New York at Binghamton

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2018 *Hello Strangers(s)*, Ruiz-Healy Art, San Antonio, TX (catalogue)
- 2007 *Clear Case*, Mandarin Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
- 2006 *Paintings*, Finesilver Gallery, Houston, TX
- 2005 *Paintings*, Finesilver Gallery, Houston, TX
- 2004 *New Paintings*, Galerie Rolf Hengesbach, Cologne, Germany
Paintings 1993-2003: New York-Texas, Westfälischer Kunstverein, Muenster, Germany; curator: Carina Plath
- 2003 *Artist Looking at Art*, McNay Art Museum, San Antonio, TX
Paintings, Finesilver Gallery, San Antonio, TX
New Paintings, Galerie Nusser & Baumgart, Munich Germany
- 2002 *Paintings*, Rolf Hengesbach/Räume für neue Kunst, Wuppertal, Germany
- 2000 *Paintings and Drawings: 1993-2000*, Galerie Zeidler-Mueck, Leipzig, Germany
- 1999 *Paintings*, Silverstein Gallery, New York, NY
- 1997 *Paintings*, Rolf Hengesbach/Räume für neue Kunst, Wuppertal, Germany (catalogue)
Mark Schlesinger, Michael Venezia: American Paintings, Rolf Hengesbach/Räume für neue Kunst, Wuppertal, Germany
- 1995 *Paintings*, Rolf Hengesbach/Räume für neue Kunst, Wuppertal, Germany (catalogue)
- 1994 *Paintings: 1993*, The Lipton/Owens Company, New York, NY (catalogue)
- 1991 *Paintings*, Amy Lipton Gallery, New York, NY
- 1984 *Paintings by Mark Schlesinger*, St. Peter's Church, New York, NY

- 1981 *Mark Schlesinger*, Acquavella Contemporary Art., New York, NY
 1979 *Mark Schlesinger*, Monique Knowlton Gallery, New York, NY

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2010 *Cosas: Art for the Built Environment*, Public Art San Antonio Studio, San Antonio, TX
- 2006 *Paintings*, Bernard Jacobson Gallery, London, England
Pulse Art Fair, New York, NY, Finesilver Gallery, San Antonio, TX and Houston, TX
- 2005 *One Night*, Finesilver Gallery, Houston, TX
Palm Beach Art Fair, Galerie Nusser & Baumgart, Munich, Germany
- 2004 *Jahresgaben 2004*, Westfälischer Kunstverein, Muenster, Germany; curator: Carina Plath
Art Cologne, Finesilver Gallery, Cologne, Germany
Heaven's Gonna Burn Your Eyes, Cartelle Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
Mixed Minds, Barbara Davis Gallery, Houston, TX
Paintings: Luis Gordillo, Walter Obholzer, Laura Owens, Mark Schlesinger, Galerie Rolf Hengesbach, Cologne, Germany
Pink: Works on Paper, Devin Borden Hiram Butler Gallery, Houston, TX
Spring Benefit, Austin Museum of Art, Austin, TX; curator: Dana Friis-Hansen
- 2003 *Art Cologne*, Galerie Rolf Hengesbach, Cologne, Germany
Paintings and Drawings, Galerie Rolf Hengesbach, Cologne, Germany
Basel Art Fair, Rolf Hengesbach/Räume für neue Kunst, Basel, Switzerland
ARCO, Galerie Nuser & Baumgart, Madrid, Spain,
San Francisco Art Fair, Finesilver Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 2002 *Art Cologne*, Rolf Hengesbach/Räume für neue Kunst, Cologne, Germany
Trade Show, Guggenheim Gallery, Chapman University, Orange, CA
Basel Art Fair, Rolf Hengesbach/Räume für neue Kunst, Basel, Switzerland
Drawings, Galerie Nusser & Baumgart, Munich, Germany
ARCO, Galerie Nusser & Baumgart, Munich, Germany
- 2001 *FFWD Miami*, Finesilver Gallery, San Antonio, TX
Art Cologne, Rolf Hengesbach/Räume für neue Kunst, Cologne, Germany
Not Your Father's Paintings, University of Texas at San Antonio, TX; curator: Frances Colpitt
TFAA, traveling exhibition: Art House, Austin, TX, Inman Gallery, Houston, TX, Dunn and Brown Contemporary Art, Dallas, TX
New Abstract Paintings in San Antonio, Purple Orchid, Dallas, TX; curator: Frances Colpitt
- 2000 *Art Cologne*, Rolf Hengesbach/Räume für neue Kunst, Wuppertal, Germany
Snapshots, Contemporary Museum, Baltimore, MD; curator: Gary Sangster
Basel Art Fair, Rolf Hengesbach/Räume für neue Kunst, Basel, Switzerland
- 1999 *Works on Paper: Luis Gordillo, Klaus Merkel, Mark Schlesinger*, Kunstverein Freiburg, Germany
Art Cologne, Rolf Hengesbach/Räume für neue Kunst, Cologne, Germany

- Basel Art Fair*, Basel, Switzerland, Rolf Hengesbach/Räume für neue Kunst
- 1998 *From Here to Eternity; Painting in 1998*, Max Protetch Gallery, New York, NY; curator: Ruth Kaufmann
- Basel Art Fair*, Rolf Hengesbach/Räume für neue Kunst, Basel, Switzerland
- View Three*, Mary Boone Gallery, New York, NY; curator: Klaus Kertess
- 1997 *Art Cologne*, Rolf Hengesbach/Räume für neue Kunst, Wuppertal, Germany
- Basel Art Fair*, Rolf Hengesbach/Räume für neue Kunst, Basel, Switzerland
- The Art Exchange Show*, ESSO Gallery, New York, NY
- 1996 *Basel Art Fair*, Rolf Hengesbach/Räume für neue Kunst, Basel, Switzerland
- 1995 *Art Cologne*, Rolf Hengesbach/Räume für neue Kunst, Wuppertal, Germany
- Basel Art Fair*, Rolf Hengesbach/Räume für neue Kunst, Basel, Switzerland
- Benefit Exhibition*, White Columns Gallery, New York, NY; curator: Bill Arning
- 1994 *Sour Ball Paintings*, Sue Spaid Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
- 1993 *BOMB Magazine Benefit*, Fawbush Gallery, New York, NY; curators: Saul Ostrow and Betsy Sussler
- 30th Anniversary Drawing Exhibition*, Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, NY
- Family Ties*, Lehman College of Art, New York, NY; curators: Sigmund Balka and Susan Hoeltzel
- Chicago International Art Exhibition*, Amy Lipton Gallery, Chicago, IL
- Benefit Exhibition*, White Columns Gallery, New York, NY; curator: Bill Arning
- 1992 *Image/Abstraction*, Amy Lipton Gallery, New York, NY
- There is a Light That Never Goes Out*, Amy Lipton Gallery, New York, NY; curator: Terry R. Myers
- Painting*, Shoshana Wayne Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
- 1991 *Abstract Painting: the '90s*, Andre Emmerich Gallery, New York, NY; curator: Barbara Rose
- The Lick of the Eye*, Shoshana Wayne Gallery, Los Angeles, CA; curator: David Pagel
- Just Painting*, Trenkman Gallery, New York, NY; curator: Saul Ostrow
- 1990 *Fluid Geometry*, Cummings Arts Center, Connecticut College, New London, Connecticut; curator: Stephen Westfall (catalogue)
- The End of Paintings: The Edges of Abstractions*, Shoshana Wayne Gallery, Los Angeles, CA; curator: David Pagel (catalogue)
- 1989 *Small Paintings*, Nina Freudenheim Gallery, Buffalo, NY
- Four Painters*, The Institute of Art, Flint, MI; curator: John Yau (catalogue)
- 1988 *Five Painters*, Nina Freudenheim Gallery, Buffalo, NY and Ruth Siegel Gallery, NY
- Works on Paper*, Nina Freudenheim Gallery, Buffalo, NY
- 1987 *Chicago Art Fair*, Michael H. Lord Gallery, Milwaukee, WI
- 1986 *Chicago Art Fair*, Michael H. Lord Gallery, Milwaukee, WI
- Galleria Carini, Florence, Italy (catalogue)
- Chicago Art Fair*, Michael H. Lord Gallery, Milwaukee, WI
- 1985 *Paintings*, Michael H. Lord Gallery, Milwaukee, WI
- More Than Meets the Eye: Nine Painters from New York*, Fabian Carlsson Gallery, London, England

- Chicago Art Fair*, Michael H. Lord Gallery, Milwaukee, WI
The Nancy Graves Collection, Drew University, NJ
- 1984 *Luxe, Calme, et Volupte*, One Penn Plaza, New York, NY; curator: John Yau
From A to Z, Acquavella Contemporary Art, New York, NY
Drawing with Respect To Painting, New York Studio School, NY; curator David Reed (catalogue)
- 1982 *Paintings from the Houston Museum*, National Museum of Greece, Athens (catalogue)
- 1981 *Paper Works*, Acquavella Contemporary Art, New York, NY
Drawing Show, Nina Freudenheim Gallery, Buffalo, NY
- 1980 *Drawings*, Leo Castelli Gallery, New York City, NY
Paintings, Loch Haven Art Center, Orlando, FL
Paintings, Toni Birckhead Gallery, Cincinnati, OH
The Continuing Tradition of American Abstraction, Gallery 700, Milwaukee, WI; curator: Donna Harkavy and Holden Luntz (catalogue)
Works on Paper, Acquavella Contemporary Art, New York, NY
Paintings, Monique Knowlton Gallery, New York, NY
- 1979 *New Painting*, Monique Knowlton Gallery, New York, NY
Peter Robbie, Mark Schlesinger, Catherine Warren, Acquavella Contemporary Art, New York, NY
New Talent, Harold Reed Gallery, New York, NY (catalogue)
Mark Schlesinger, Rutgers Barclay Gallery, Santa Fe, NM
American Paintings: The Eighties, Grey Art Gallery, New York University, NY; curator: Barbara Rose (catalogue) Traveling Exhibition: Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, October to November, 1979; Musee des Beaux Arts, Nantes, France, February to March, 1980; The American Center, Paris, April to May, 1980; Helsingin Taidetelo, Helsinki, Finland, August 27 to September 15, 1980; Neue Galerie Sammlung Ludwig, Aachen, Germany, September 27 to October 20, 1980; Museum Moderner Kunst, Vienna, Austria, November 1980 to January 1981; Tel Aviv Museum, Tel Aviv, Israel, February 4 to April 5, 1981; National Gallery, Budapest, Hungary, September 2 to 27, 1981; Galeria Studio, Warsaw, Poland, October 5 to 31, 1981; Pinacoteca Provinciale, Bari, Italy, November 7 to 29, 1981; Teatro del Salcone, Genoa, Italy, December, 1981 to January, 1982; Palacio de la Virreina, Barcelona, Spain, February to March, 1982; Calouste Galbenkian Foundation, Lisbon, Portugal, April to May, 1982; Galeria de la Caixa, Madrid, Spain, June to July, 1982

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- . "Art in Review." *The New York Times*, May 1, 1998: E43.
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CATALOGUES

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Yau, John. *Four Painters*. Flint, MI: The Institute of Art, 1989.

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MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

Drew University Museum, Nancy Graves Collection, NJ

Houston Museum of Fine Art, Houston, TX

Israel Museum of Art, Jerusalem

Kameyama Museum, Tokyo, Japan

The San Antonio Museum of Art, San Antonio, TX

The Marion Koogler McNay Art Museum, San Antonio, TX

The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, NY

The Newark Museum, Newark, NJ

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

The Amerada Hess Corporation, New York, NY

The Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia, Canada

AT&T, New York, NY

AT&T Center, San Antonio, TX

Billy W. Francis, Inc., Los Angeles, CA

California Mart, Los Angeles, CA

Chase Manhattan Bank, New York, NY

Chemical Bank, New York, NY

The City of San Antonio, TX

European Fine Art Foundation, Geneva, Switzerland

The Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts, New York, NY

Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, TX

First City Capital Corporation, New York, NY

Holt Industries, San Antonio, TX

Interfin Corporation, Houston, TX

Lehman Brothers Kuhn Loeb, New York, NY

Owens Corning Fiberglas, Toledo, OH

Progressive Corporation, Cleveland, OH

Prudential Insurance, Newark, NJ

University of Texas Health Center, Dallas, TX

Vesti Corporation, Boston, MA

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