

MIGNONI

Joel Shapiro: *Works on Paper 1988-2022*
MIGNONI | New York City
May 4 - July 1, 2023



Untitled, 1988, Pastel on paper, 53 7/8 x 48 3/4 in. (136.8 x 123.8 cm)

NEW YORK, NY – Mignoni is pleased to present the gallery's first solo exhibition of the work of Joel Shapiro (b.1941) on view from May 4th through July 1st. The exhibition consists of vibrant, colorful works on paper spanning from 1988 - 2022.

Although Joel Shapiro is known for his sculptures, he has also developed a significant body of works on paper throughout his career. His paper works include drawings, woodcuts, and collages. Many of these serve as studies for his sculptures, exploring different ways to represent movement and balance within a two-dimensional space. Although highly stylized and fragmented, Shapiro's works on paper often feature

abstract shapes and lines that suggest the human figure. They are kinetic, using a limited palette of bold colors which enhance the sculptural qualities of the forms and figures in dynamic compositions.

The fluid and expressive qualities of Shapiro's work in this medium contrasts with the static stability of his sculptures and also serve to deepen our understanding of the works in three dimensions. In an interview for the *Artist Profile Archive* he stated "I think that the capacity to, sort of, externalize your interior into the work is critical, and to find some mechanism that allows you to do that, and I think that's what artists struggle to find- some means that is individual that allows them to express their thought..." He is interested in how form is organized, the immediacy of expression, and how conditions affect that.

Throughout his work Shapiro seeks to find a fresh way of joining one element to another so it becomes an independent event where they conjoin capriciously rather than logically. This sense of play can be experienced in his works on paper- the flexibility of drawing allows him to explore and experiment with new ideas and techniques. Shapiro's works create a dialogue between form and space, abstraction and representation, artist and viewer.

Overall, Shapiro's works on paper are an important part of his oeuvre and demonstrate his understanding of the medium. They offer a fascinating glimpse into the mind of one of the most influential sculptors of the 20th century and showcase his innovative approach to the artistic principles.



Untitled, 2022, Pastel and chalk on paper, 40 x 34 ¼ in. (101.6 x 87 cm)

About the Artist

Joel Shapiro was born in New York in 1941 and grew up in Sunnyside, Queens. He received a B.A. in 1964 and an M.A. in 1969 from New York University. During a trip to India he became acquainted with that country's sculpture, which he described as "generous outpourings of work, representing the whole range of human experience" [From: D. Wheeler, *Art Since Mid-Century*, New York 1991, p. 304]. This experience had a defining influence on Shapiro's approach to sculpture.

Shapiro's sculptures, exhibited since 1970, have been influenced by Minimalist and Post-Minimalist styles, but exhibit a stronger psychological effect compared to traditional Minimalist sculptures. While Minimalism often emphasizes detachment and form over content, Shapiro's work deviates from this approach and instead presents a more intuitive and expressive variant of Minimalism. He consistently explores space, volume, surface, and the interplay between open and closed forms, infusing his sculptures with a sense of expressive power. Over the course of his artistic career, Shapiro's work has evolved from extreme abstraction to forms that begin to reveal discernible human figures.

Shapiro has executed more than thirty commissions and publicly-sited sculptures in major Asian, European, and North American cities and has been the subject of more than 160 solo exhibitions and retrospectives internationally. In 2011, the artist energized the monumental forty-three-foot-tall gallery at the Museum Ludwig in Cologne, Germany with fifteen vibrantly painted wooden elements. His work has recently been exhibited at the Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas (2016); Kunstmuseum Winterthur, Switzerland (2017); the Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven (2018); and Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, Wisconsin (2018). His work belongs in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Tate, the Stedelijk Museum, Moderna Museet, and the Centre Pompidou.

About Mignoni

Mignoni, based in New York, specializes in works by prominent European & American post-war artists with a focus on minimalism.

The gallery advises institutions and private clients in acquiring works by a renowned group of artists, including Alexander Calder, Donald Judd, Rudolf Stingel, Ed Ruscha, John Chamberlain, Adolph Gottlieb, Lucio Fontana, and Eduardo Chillida, among others.



The gallery presents two to three high-quality exhibitions each year. Past exhibitions include solo presentations by Donald Judd, Sol LeWitt, and Frank Stella and group shows featuring the work of Dan Flavin, Donald Judd, On Kawara, Robert Mangold, Kenneth Noland, Joel Shapiro, and Christopher Wilmarth.

Fernando Mignoni founded the gallery in January 2017. Previously at Christie's London for nearly a decade, he left as Director of the Contemporary Art Department in 2007 to join his family's gallery, Galeria Elvira Gonzalez, Madrid. From 2007 to 2017, he ran the secondary market program both at the gallery and art fairs. He also organized shows by Donald Judd (2009), John Chamberlain (2010), Alexander Calder (2010), Dan Flavin/Donald Judd (2013), and Robert Mangold (2017). Mignoni is an expert in the work of Donald Judd, Agnes Martin, Alexander Calder, Robert Mangold, Lucio Fontana, and Eduardo Chillida.