

BIO

Born in 1955, Karen Schifano received a BA in Art History from Swarthmore College, an MFA from Hunter College, and fellowships from the MacDowell Colony and the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown. While working full time as an art restorer, she has doggedly pursued her art practice for over four decades, exhibiting widely in this country, Europe, Australia and Japan.

Solo venues include Tobey Fine Arts, Melville House and Wagner College in New York City. Group exhibition venues include MoMA PS1, the Hudson River Museum, New Jersey Center for the Visual Arts, Sydney Contemporary Project Space, Alfred University, the National Arts Club, CB1 Gallery, McKenzie Gallery, Transmitter Gallery and Deanna Evans Projects. Last year, she collaborated with choreographer Julia Gleick, creating a set for a new dance piece, "See Through", as part of the Counterpoint series, sponsored by Norte Maar, at the Actors Fund Art Center in NY.

Karen's work was recently featured in Lula Japan, Issue #7, and included in New American Painting, #134, Northeast Edition. She was elected to membership in American Abstract Artists in 2018.

ARTIST STATEMENTS

Shape is the major motivation behind my impulse to paint, a formal element that can articulate meaning from a complex tangle of thought and feeling. The shapes that catch my eye are usually openings: mouths, theater stages, circus arenas. These openings are bounded by edges, like lips or curtains, that reveal and partially conceal, the void at the center. The center sometimes flips back and forth between an experience of field and of a sign or symbol of something we feel but can't identify for sure. Something is about to happen in this space and we watch in anticipation.

for "Fear" section of Recent Paintings

I'm an abstract painter who is flirting with narrative subject matter. I feel an urgent need, in these difficult times, to make painting that relates to underlying issues in politics and public life. The work is reductive and simple: black and white, or "flesh" color, ie peach and white, etc., bringing the idea of race to the forefront. Eye holes, ghost eyes, and the KKK are references and the paintings can read as masks, heads, bullet holes - all circling around feelings of fear, hiding, deception, threat. I hope that wit is evident as well as a good punch.

