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PAUL SCHULENBURG

A visual exploration



A city is an examination of lines, right angles tilted and re-tilted, and shapes piled into and onto each other in repetitive towers of steel and concrete reaching into the blue void. In Paul Schulenburg's street scenes, a city—its frenzied entanglement of abstraction stacked into blocks of human achievement—is a playground for his paintbrush.

"My paintings are a visual exploration of the city: looking at the play of light between tall buildings and the shapes of the man-made urban landscape, and interpreting how the human figure fits into this scenario," he says, adding his works are more architectural in nature "with design and shapes, horizontal and vertical lines, diagonals that zigzag back and forth, shadows, clear light and interesting composition."

One of the key pieces in his new show at George Billis Gallery in New York is *Any Moment*, a street scene with a sidewalk perspective. "It is an arrangement of vertical and horizontal shapes, punctuated with stark diagonal sunlight and shadow," Schulenburg says. "The direction of these shapes leads your eye up and down and side to side within the composition. A



lone figure of a woman stands in the shadow, giving the viewer a sense of scale. The title is meant to reference the tension of what might happen next: a car coming to pick her up, a person walking down the sidewalk, or maybe a door opening to let her into the building. But really what's important is this particular moment of standing in the shadows."

Schulenburg, who lives in Eastham, Massachusetts—on the forearm that is the flexing arm of Cape Cod—was asked to come to New York and create works for gallery owner George Billis, who admired Schulenburg's delicate eye and geometric compositions. The show is a sequel to a similar show by the same artist. This time, the Massachusetts painter found new areas of the city to explore.

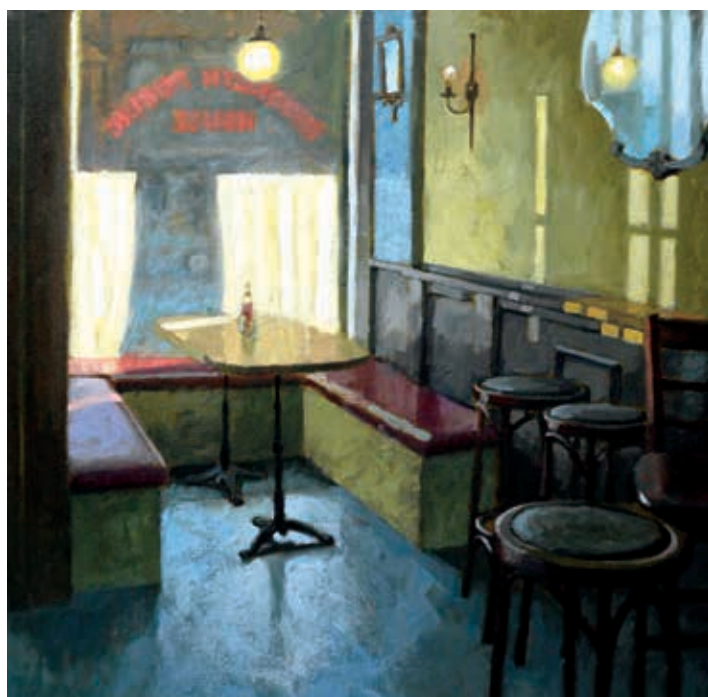
"I had been to Chelsea and SoHo, but never far into Brooklyn, like Fort Greene and other locations," he says. "You can walk by things many times and you'll never notice, and then you'll walk by one time and the light will be just right, and suddenly, it's perfect. Some things have to just come together. I also liked the movement of the elements: cars, trucks, people. Sometimes it's just about being lucky."

Besides visual evaluations of lines and shapes, his works are also experiments in light and reflection, something he uses to great effect on *Spring Street and Broadway*, a luminous piece that shows his strength in refracting light through his oils to create depth.

"It's a tricky thing trying to re-create a reality in two dimensions with paint. It happens with practice," he says. "For this show, I wanted to try some different things with brighter, more colorful shots. But, as I went along, I got more comfortable with the subtleties of light and color. It's a challenge, but every painting is a challenge." ●



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1
Any Moment, oil on canvas, 36 x 24"

2
Table for Three, oil on canvas, 24 x 24"

3
Espresso Bar, oil on canvas, 34 x 30"

4
Public House, oil on canvas, 20 x 20"

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