

shfap

Press release:

Two exhibitions at:

steven harvey fine art projects

Front gallery:

Robert Harms: Some Trees

Rear gallery:

Richard Morrison: Die

January 3rd - January 31st, 2018

Reception: Wednesday, January 3, 6-8pm



Robert Harms, *Washington Square*, 2016, oil and pencil on canvas, 52 x 60 in

SHFAP presents two exhibitions at 208 Forsyth Street in January. In the front gallery, we will show new paintings by Robert Harms, the abstract painter based in Southamptn, N.Y. In the rear gallery we will show works in different media from the estate of Richard Morrison (1948-2015.)

Front gallery: ***Robert Harms: Some Trees***

For his second exhibition at SHFAP, Harms continues to paint subtly optical, nature-based abstractions. During the last two years he has spent more time in New York City and much of his new work responds to trees in the city's parks. His reading of light, color and atmosphere seems to dissolve into almost a mist. Where his earlier work was denser, more thickly painted, his new works impress themselves with a watercolor-like softness, residing like after images. Curator Klaus Kertess, addressing the relationship of Harms' abstractions to their landscape, describes them as "more caressed by light and brush than tightly described..." Poet, Eileen Myles wrote in response to Harms' last exhibition at SHFAP:

"Robert Harms paintings are light and deep. There's almost an oval to them. An implicit feeling of stepping in and losing this for that. Yet his darkest marks make the import safe and palpable. For me he is one of the most feeling of painters. His work is thing-less. His paintings yield is pure aura, each colorful wash being both evanescent and experienced. The white demarcation on the border of the painting matter-of-factly ensures the painting is formal and true. Somewhere it's just a white piece of paper. The honest state of his art is the day. And he is bravely idle in it."

Harms attended The School of Visual Arts in New York City and the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine. He is the recipient of awards from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, and the National Arts Club, and his work is in the permanent collections of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Guild Hall Museum and The Parrish Art Museum.

steven harvey fine art projects

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Rear gallery: *Richard Morrison: Die*



Richard Morrison, Paris Riots, 1968, Photostat, 22 x 52 in

In the rear space of the gallery we present *Die*, an exhibition of works from the estate of Richard Morrison (1948-2015.) Morrison worked in a variety of media including drawing and painting, photography, artist books, installation and performance. This exhibition includes paintings on paperboard, black and white photography, photo-static prints, Xeroxes and artist books.

Richard Morrison was part of a group of East Village artists in the 70s and 80s, many of whom were gay, who crossed over in between theater, film and visual art. His friends and collaborators included Bill Rice, John Lurie, Peter Hujar, David Wojnarowicz, Barbara Ess, Jeff Weiss, Zoe Leonard and Jack Smith. His life partner was writer, publisher and sociology professor Larry Mitchell. Mitchell was author of *Terminal Bar*, a roman a clef about “the bar” on 4th street and Second Avenue, which served as the local watering hole.

Morrison was born and grew up in Detroit. He attended Wayne State University where he studied art education. After moving to Boston he worked at the Fernald State School for the developmentally disabled. This was the beginning of a life-long, part-time career in social services. He moved to NYC from Boston in 1976, and within his first year was performing with Robert Wilson in *Einstein on the Beach* at the Metropolitan Opera, which then toured in Europe. Richard was a silent Einstein writing calculations in the air.

In the late 70s, he made an installation/performance piece at the New York Studio School called *Die*. With dark rooms, jarring lighting, aggressive film/sound elements and naked performers, *Die* evoked a foreboding, dystopian urban reality that he also probed in his more formal visual art. In photographs and photo-static prints he captured images from television of political prisoners and street confrontations. Without attempting to create a branded identity or art career, Morrison dissected the control mechanisms of early 80s urban reality, with a special awareness of race and sex relations. He was a fellow traveler of the Pictures Generation artists, who were his peers, yet he embraced a near anonymity, which radically diverged from the careers of future art stars. He showed his work in Bill Rice’s studio and at Gallery 303 when they were in the East Village. In 1984, he curated with Bill Rice and Steven Harvey a sprawling group show called *Salon/Saloon* in Bill Rice’s decrepit East Village studio, across from the Men’s Shelter on 3rd St. In 1991, he made an installation in collaboration with David Wonarowicz for *Social Sculpture*, an exhibition at the Vrej Baghoomian Gallery.

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In a catalog to accompany the present exhibition, Gary Indiana writes:
“His pictures catch a reality continually slipping away, erupting in chaos, fracturing into incoherence; the most disturbing thing about Richard Morrison's work is often that the artist seems as much a hapless spectator of the world he pictures as the viewer is--sometimes a dire, intolerable realm, where figures drizzle into the surrounding landscape or blur beyond recognition.”

Barbara Ess once commented that Richard's work was part of a “mystery school.” Richard Morrison's inexplicable images of decay and transition await our rediscovery from the marvelously fertile territory between the mid-70s and the 1980s in downtown New York City.

Please contact Lauren Fowler at lauren@shfap.com or call 917-861-7312 for images or further information about the exhibitions.