

**JOEL SHAPIRO**  
**15 January - 14 February 2009**

**Reception for the artist:**  
**Thursday, 15 January, 6 - 8 p.m.**

L.A. Louver is pleased to present an exhibition of new work by Joel Shapiro. The exhibition includes both small and large-scale sculpture made of bronze, wood, or painted wood. Together, they illustrate the full range of language that Shapiro has developed in his work. The sculptures are accompanied by a new series of works on paper.

"Shapiro's sculptures are figurative... the sculptures "figure" the artist's internalized experience, both sensory and emotional."

- Richard Schiff



Figure 1: *Untitled*, 2007, bronze (cast 3 of 3)  
 33 x 17 1/2 x 15 1/4 in. (83.8 x 44.5 x 38.7 cm)

Five bronze works of varying scale imply reductive figures of elegant gesture and energy. The forms convey movement - they bend, twist, pivot and stretch - and possess an interior tension and force that reaches outwards. They are expressive and expansive. Individual shapes and surfaces retain anonymity, and yet are emboldened and transformed when married together (fig. 1).



Figure 2: *Untitled*, 2005-2007, wood and casein  
 47 1/4 x 53 1/8 x 39 3/4 in. (120 x 134.9 x 101 cm)

"My sculpture is more about touching down on the ground than building up from the ground."

- Joel Shapiro

The bronze sculptures are presented alongside seven complex wood forms comprised of multiple panels and blocks of wood that are juxtaposed in dynamic order. Shapiro allows some of the wood elements that make up each sculpture to remain in their natural state, uncoated, while other elements he paints in oil or casein.

Shapiro uses color to highlight and differentiate individual elements such as *Untitled*, 2005-2007 (fig. 2), where the entire sculpture is in a single color but of variegated hue, which either partially or fully conceals the wood's character. One sculpture, *Untitled*, 2006-2007, (fig. 3) Shapiro leaves unpainted, thereby giving the variegated colors and grain of the natural wood - fir, spruce and cedar - the opportunity to interact and play off each other.



Figure 3: *Untitled*, 2006-2007, wood  
75 3/4 x 78 x 48 in. (192.4 x 198.1 x 121.9 cm)

Shapiro uses color both to effect “temperature” and to dislocate and delineate form. This aspect is seen at its most sophisticated in *Twenty Six*, 2008, 82 1/2 x 96 1/2 x 68 3/4 inches (fig. 4), the largest and most complex sculpture of the exhibition. Here, the wood blocks seem to be held together by a centrifugal force that infuses the work with an internal dynamism. Further, Shapiro has painted several of the flat panels a dense inky black that either masks or reveals aspects of the wood, and dramatically contrasts with unpainted counterparts.

Joel Shapiro (b. 1941, New York City) received both a B.A. (1964) and M.A. (1969) from New York University. Since he first began showing in the early 1970s, Shapiro has been the subject of almost 150 solo exhibitions and retrospectives worldwide. Significant early traveling museum exhibitions include *Joel Shapiro: Sculpture and Drawing* at the Whitechapel Art Gallery, London (1980); a major mid-career survey organized by the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, (1982-84); *Joel Shapiro*, an exhibition of drawings and sculpture, that originated the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (1985-86); *Joel Shapiro* organized by IVAM Centro Julio Gonzalez, Valencia, Spain (1990-91); and *Joel Shapiro: Outdoors*, the first major outdoor exhibition of the artist's

bronzes that was co-organized by the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, and Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City (1995-96). In 2005 his work was seen at the Musée D'Orsay, Paris, France in the exhibition *Correspondances: Joel Shapiro/Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux*. In addition, Shapiro's work has been exhibited regularly in prestigious international group shows including the Whitney Biennial, New York (1977, 1979, 1981 and 1989); Documenta, Kassel, Germany (1977 and 1982), and the Venice Biennale (1980).

Joel Shapiro was elected to the Swedish Royal Academy of Art in 1994, and the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1998. In 2005, France awarded Shapiro the Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts and des Lettres.

Shapiro's work is included in numerous public and private collections worldwide. A new suspended bronze sculpture was recently installed at 23 Savile Row in London. This public commission, which floats above this landmark street in the city's West End, relates to the suspended site specific work Shapiro created for L.A. Louver's Skyroom in early 2004. For details and images please visit: [www.lalouer.com/shapiro-savilerow](http://www.lalouer.com/shapiro-savilerow).

*L.A. Louver is open Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Validated parking available.*



Figure 4: *Twenty Six*, 2008, wood and casein  
67 3/4 x 60 x 54 in. (172.1 x 152.4 x 137.2 cm)

For further information and visuals please contact:  
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