

DOLBY CHADWICK GALLERY

John DiPaolo

The modern artist ... is working and expressing an inner world—in other words—expressing the energy, the motion, and other inner forces.... Today painters do not have to go to a subject matter outside of themselves. Most modern painters work from a different source. They work from within.
—Jackson Pollock

There is no formula, no method, just a compulsion to experiment.... The paintings tell you what they need. The interaction with painting is so primal. It's the way we relate to the tactile world.
—John DiPaolo

F. Scott Fitzgerald once joked that there are two types of people: those who divide the world into two types of people, and those who do not. It's an elegant aphorism, and, used with some restraint, accurate. The philosopher Isaiah Berlin posited two types of creatives: opportunistic, omnivorous foxes, who embrace the complexity of the world and shun grand unifying theories (Aristotle, Shakespeare); and obsessive, burrowing hedgehogs who subsume reality into comprehensive universal principles (Plato, Dante).

There are, however, visual artists who combine both open-minded experimentation and an almost monastic commitment to their art practice. In our current culture of falsity, pretension and marketing, it is heartening to discover painters like John DiPaolo who refuse to be anything but real, i.e., humanly large and full of contradictions, to summarize Walt Whitman; who go into the studio to paint, sometimes not knowing what will emerge, but trusting to impulse, imagination, experience, and the "inner feeling" or "inner necessity" extolled by Kandinsky—and cited by DiPaolo in his filmed PBS interview praising the painter-hedgehog Clyfford Still.

DiPaolo, who has painted in an Abstract Expressionist style for forty years, proves, with his powerful orchestrations of color and gesture, which art historian Peter Selz characterizes as "rhythmic dispositions of color and shape in space," that the art world, with its reflexive love of callow novelties, and its slavery to fashion, should take a longer and deeper view. A stylistic fox, i.e., versatile and experimental, he's also a temperamental hedgehog, committed to and obsessed with "physical, experiential engagement" (Frances Malcolm) with oil paint—with Philip Guston's beloved "colored mud." (Other hybrids: Picasso, with his protean versatility, and the renegade Guston, who abandoned abstraction ("all that purity") to take up the banner of messy, human narratives.

Born in Brooklyn in 1946, DiPaolo studied in the mid-1960s at the School of Visual Arts with Janet Fish, Eugene Karlin, and Francis Criss, and he found his artistic horizons vastly expanded in the heady, experimental New York art scene, with Abstract Expressionism, Pop, Minimalism and

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conceptualism in spirited competition. While he made paintings under the influence of Pop artist James Rosenquist, and the Surrealist René Magritte, he discerned in Frank Stella's revolutionary pin-stripe paintings (improbably, since they defy AbEx orthodoxy), "a larger understanding of space, form, and reality" that would influence his later abstractions. After moving to the Bay Area in 1971, Di Paolo enrolled at the San Francisco Art Institute, where he studied with Jack Jefferson, Carlos Villa, Julius Hatofsky, Rupert Garcia, Helene Aylon, and Sam Tchakalian. In the mid-70s, he enrolled in graduate school at San Francisco State University, studying with Robert Bechtle, Karen Breschi, Richard McLean, and the figurative sculptor Stephen De Staebler (whose work is represented by Dolby Chadwick Gallery, as are the paintings of Guy Diehl, DiPaolo's classmate at SFSU). De Staebler's physical, AbEx-style engagement with clay might be seen as similar to DiPaolo's visceral combat/collaboration with paint in the abstract paintings he began making in grad school.

Forty-plus years on in his "long haul" practice, DiPaolo continues to find visual meaning and excitement in his longtime Hunters Point studio. His ninth solo show (in twenty years) at Dolby Chadwick Gallery features eight large oils on canvas that demonstrate his versatility and virtuosity (although the heavily worked paintings are never about mere skill). *Direct Current* and *Highwire* (both 2017) feature criss-crossed, interwoven wide paint strokes arranged in layers. Two white bands or layers ('registers' in art-history terminology) enfold a yellow register, set against a black background, in the former; in the latter, set against a beige background, a multicolored layer of 'woven' or 'thatched' strokes is bent into a shallow V-shape, suggesting a corner, or a turn in space. In *Light in Our Darkness* and *Revolver #3* (both 2018), DiPaolo eschews the horizontal layering, creating visually weighty central forms with flat brushstrokes painted in different colors and orientations. *Aurora #5* and *Serpentine* (both 2018-9) return the horizontal structure, but less strictly; the foreground visual elements, painterly, ambiguous, imaginary objects, push against and escape confinement. *Silhouette* and *Untitled #20* (also from the past two years) flirt with imagery and interpretation: a profile, and a kind of animated manuscript, respectively, to my mystical eye, anyway. As JoAnne Northrup, former curator at San Jose Museum of Art wrote, DiPaolo's centrifugal/centripetal paintings, are transcribed, reified "controlled chaos, a harnessing of natural forces."

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John DiPaolo

b. Brooklyn, NY 1946

EDUCATION

- 1975- 1977 San Francisco State University, San Francisco, CA, M.A.
- 1971- 1974 San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, CA, B.F.A.
- 1965- 1966 School of Visual Arts, New York, NY

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2017 John DiPaolo: Four Decades of Painting, Museo Italo Americano, San Francisco, CA
- 2016 Dolby Chadwick Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 2012 Dolby Chadwick Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 2010 Dolby Chadwick Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 2008 Dolby Chadwick Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 2006 Dolby Chadwick Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 2004 Dolby Chadwick Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 2002 "Visions 1982-2002 John DiPaolo Retrospective," Bank of America, San Francisco, CA
- 2001 Dolby Chadwick Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 1999 Dolby Chadwick Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 1997 Andrea Schwartz Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 1992 Andrea Schwartz Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 1990 Bank of America World Headquarters, San Francisco, CA
- 1982 Museo Italo Americano, San Francisco, CA
- 1979 Lucien Labaudt Art Gallery, San Francisco, CA

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2017 ARTIST AS SUBJECT: 20th Anniversary Celebration, Dolby Chadwick Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 2013 Hello, Goodbye, Dolby Chadwick Gallery, San Francisco, CA
Selections from Permanent Collection, Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, CA
- 2010 Juicy Paint, San Jose Museum of Art, San Jose, CA
- 2003 Di Napoli Skybridge, San Jose Museum of Art, San Jose, CA
- 2002 Spring Exhibit, The Heritage Fine Arts Collaborative, San Jose, CA
- 1999-2000 At the Millennium Contemporary Paintings from Northern California, Monterey Museum of Art, Monterey, CA
- 1995 D.P. Fong Gallery, San Jose, CA
- 1991 Allan Stone Gallery, New York, NY
- 1989 Six Italian-America Artists, Museo Fort Mason Center, San Francisco
- 1988 Ivory/Kimpton Gallery, San Francisco, CA

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1996	San Francisco Art Commission Gallery, San Francisco, CA
1984	Faculty Spring Exhibit, De Young Museum Art School, San Francisco
1981	New Artists, Dana Reich Gallery, San Francisco, CA
1980-83	San Francisco International Airport, San Francisco, CA
1980	The Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco Downtown Center, CA
1979	Italian-American Artists, Museo Italo Americano, San Francisco, CA
1976	Bi-Centennial Landscape Exhibition, Capricorn Asunder Gallery, San Francisco, CA
1973	Almond Rod Gallery, San Francisco, CA
1964	Lever House Museum, New York, NY

SELECTED PERMANENT COLLECTIONS

Achenbach Collection, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, de Young & Legion of Honor, San Francisco, CA
Adobe Inc., US Corporate Headquarters, San Jose, CA
Alza Pharmaceuticals, Mountain View, CA
Crocker Museum of Art, Sacramento, CA
DLA Piper Rudnick Gray Cary, San Francisco, CA
Don Sebastiani and Sons Corporate Headquarters, Sonoma, CA
Genentech, Inc, South San Francisco, CA
KPMG, San Francisco, CA
Magley & Associates, San Francisco, CA
Morgan Stanley Dean Witter & Co., New York City, NY
Oracle Corporation, US Corporate Headquarters, Redwood Shores, CA
San Jose Museum of Art, San Jose, CA
VeriSign Inc., US Corporate Headquarters, Mountain View, CA
Charles Schwab, Inc., San Francisco, CA