Devening Projects

GARY STEPHAN
Historically Accurate

November 22 - January 9, 2027

Devening Projects
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Gary Stephan, the steadfast New York-based abstract painter, brings new paintings — and a few from the 70s — to Devening Projects in *Historically Accurate*, his fourth solo show with the gallery. The exhibition opens with a reception on November 22 from 3 – 5PM and continues until January 9, 2027.

A quiet persistence runs through Gary Stephan's recent paintings, and indeed through the work made during his entire career. Doggedly pursuing the innumerable ways picture space can be constructed, inverted, folded and unfolded, and ultimately reinvented, his paintings tirelessly engineer how one recognizes and processes the pictorial phenomenon — and challenge — of acknowledging and depicting space. He has been doing so successfully since the late 1960s. Historically Accurate not only offers a view into his most recent series of acrylic paintings, it also features works made in 1976 that reveal an early foray into ways to construct a visual field. This show offers an opportunity to recognize Stephan's dedication and belief in painting as both an idea and a material construct that, for him, remains the single most important concern of his practice.

The work from 1976, all ink on paper mounted on panel, takes a signature shape and mirrors, reflects, spins, and reverses the image to read simultaneously as figure in the ground and void in the plane. It's this continual reverberation between hovering mass and recessive interiority that drives the engine of Stephan's thinking and his visual architecture. In these older works, the formal language is spare: a casual support, simple painting medium, and neutral picture proportion result in a deceptively hermetic image. The spareness of the formal construction puts the onus on the dynamics of the form and its place in the picture. The energy comes not from the evidence of the artist's presence, or facture, but from the highly complex delineation of visual form and its potential to manifest spatial movement through the stillest and most poetic compositional choices. These are elegantly moody paintings that reward deliberate and unhurried looking.

Similarly, the paintings in *Historically Accurate* (2025–2026) read at once as architecture, with windows and doorways that cast light and shadow outward, and as figurative, with torsos and skirted lower bodies. Viewed as interiors with passageways, the paintings feature a link between the vertical entry and the diagonal or horizontal lower plane that comes together at a hinged point, activating a satisfying folding mechanism. An angle of planes hints at a shifting perspective or a change of viewer position. There is a subtle nod here to Paul Cézanne's still-life paintings and his dismantling of single-point perspective.

Switching gears and adding mass to those tilting rectangles brings the figurative element forward. Like the work of Gary's exhibition partner Christina Zimpel, whose own flat-shaped figures suggest rich, storied narratives, his figures twist and twirl in the narrow rooms they occupy. Both the archtectural and figurative readings are layered with possibilities; neither is still or quiet.

Color also comes into play and falls somewhere between earthy and elegant. The muted greens, rich burgundies, violets, and yellows point to autumn but also lead to the regality of velvets, brocade, and damask. The hues are calming; they settle the viewer when uncertainty about what and how we're experiencing the image takes over.

As with each of Gary Stephan's exhibitions at Devening Projects, we experience an artist who thinks not only about the production of the work, but also about the deep conversation the work has in the space of the gallery. Like the architecture that delineates his compositions, the architecture of the room is also reflected, enfolded, and embraced.

"What strikes me is the ways to get at a "mobile" space, one that changes from part to part. This pursuit has been open to so many expressions over the years; the core remains intact.

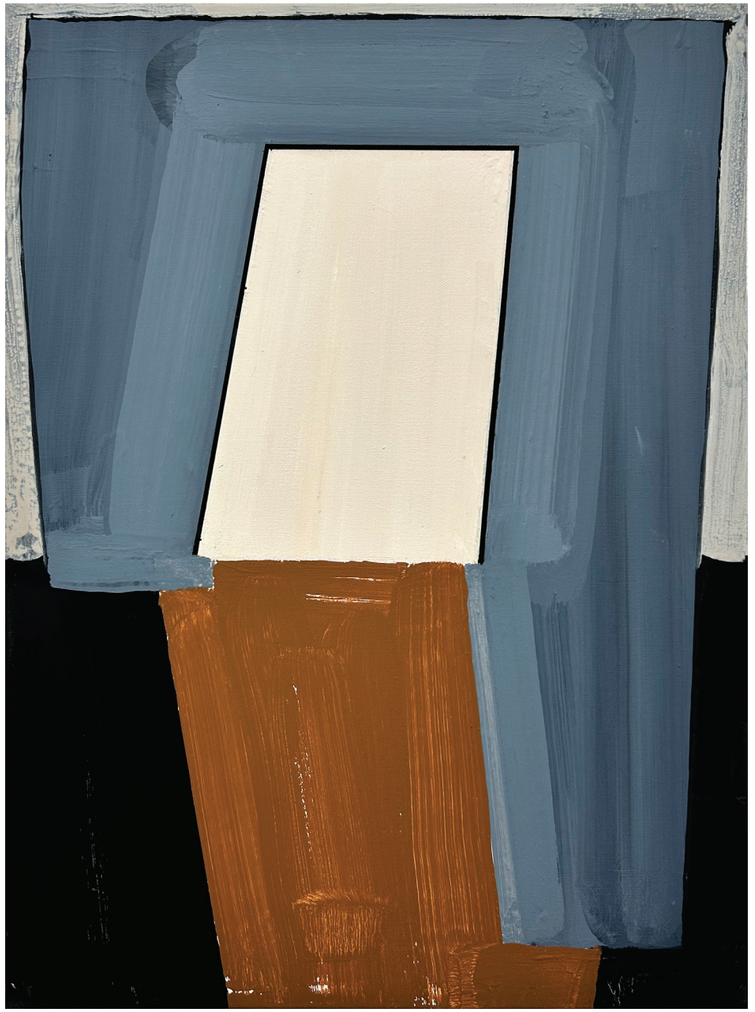
So, with my paintings, were they all frames in a 60-year movie, the transitions would be clear, but as jump cuts between new paintings and old works on paper, fifty odd years apart, the task needs imagining." — Gary Stephan, 2026

Gary Stephan is a New York-born painter whose work has kept viewers destabilized for more than half a century. He moves freely between painting, drawing, sculpture and photographyand divides his time between New York City and Stone Ridge, New York. His recent exhibitions include *Cohere and go There* at Thomas Park Gallery in Seoul (2025) and *Tape on Paper* at Anders Wahlstedt Fine Arts (2024). In 2023 he showed recent paintings in Jersey City, and in 2022 he presented *This There* at both Furnace Art on Paper Archive in Connecticut and Grölle Pass Projects in Germany. Earlier solo shows include *The Machine in the Ghos*t at Devening Projects in Chicago (2019), The Future of Reading at the Kienzle Art Foundation in Berlin (2017), and a 2016 exhibition at Susan Inglett Gallery in New York. The Berlin presentation was also a retrospective that ran into January 2018. He has also shown at the Drawing Center, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, and the Whitney Museum.

His honors include a Joan Mitchell Foundation Award, along with awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Guggenheim Foundation, and the American Academy of Arts and Letters. His work is held in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. Today he teaches in the MFA program at the School of Visual Arts and is represented by Devening Projects and the Kienzle Art Foundation. His work has been reviewed in Artforum, The New York Times, Art in America, Flash Art, The Village Voice, and the Brooklyn Rail, among others.

Stephan studied at Parsons School of Design and the Art Students League (1961), then Pratt Institute (1964), and earned his MFA from the San Francisco Art Institute in 1967. Back in New York, he worked as a studio assistant to Jasper Johns until he began showing with the David Whitney Gallery in 1970. That start, along with his appearances in the 1971 and 1973 Whitney Biennials, led Roberta Smith of The New York Times to describe his work as "among the most closely watched developments of the early '70s." Over the following decades he showed with Bykert Gallery, Mary Boone Gallery, Hirschl & Adler, and Marlborough Gallery in New York, and Margo Leavin Gallery and Daniel Weinberg Gallery in Los Angeles.

www.garystephanstudio.com



Gary Stephan, Trojan Horse, 2026, acrylic on canvas, 24 x 18 inches
$12,600





Gary Stephan, Closing a Box That Will Not Open, 2026, acrylic and gouache on linen
24 x 18 inches $12,600



Gary Stephan, Untitled, 2025, acrylic canvas, 24 x 18 inches
$12,600

8.



Gary Stephan, Untitled, 2025, acrylic canvas, 24 x 18 inches
$12,600

9.





Gary Stephan, Untitled, 1976, ink on paper mounted on board, 22 x 22 inches
$7500



Gary Stephan, Untitled, 2026, acrylic canvas, 24 x 18 inches
$12,600

12.



Gary Stephan, Untitled, 2025, acrylic canvas, 24 x 18 inches
$12,600

13.





Gary Stephan, Untitled, 2026, acrylic canvas, 24 x 18 inches
$12,600

16.



Gary Stephan, House Time, 2026, acrylic canvas, 24 x 18 inches
$12,600

17.



Gary Stephan, Untitled, 1976, ink on paper mounted on board, 20 x 20 inches
$7500



Gary Stephan, Untitled, 1976, ink on paper mounted on board, 20 x 20 inches
$7500



Gary Stephan, Untitled, 2025, acrylic canvas, 24 x 18 inches
$12,600

20.



Gary Stephan, Untitled, 2025, acrylic canvas, 24 x 18 inches
$12,600

21.









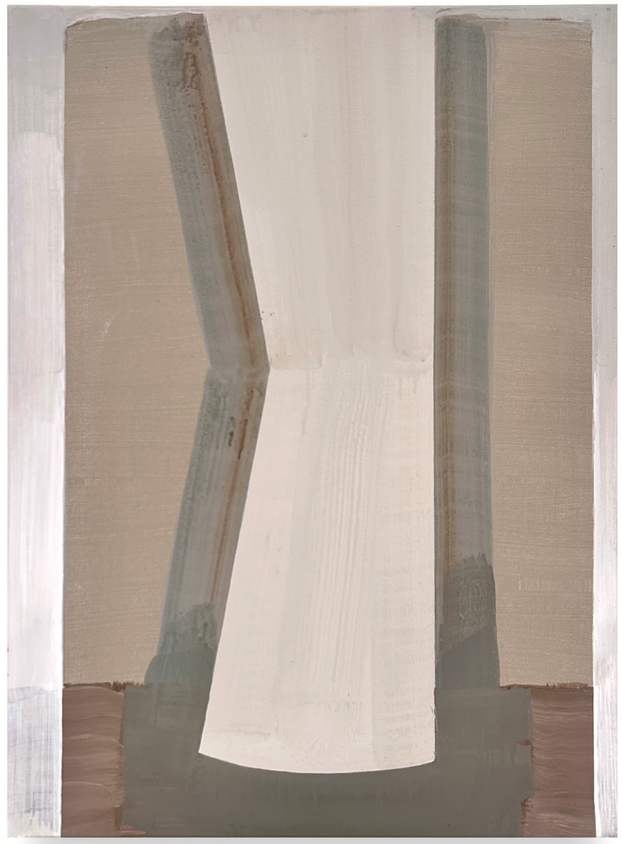
Gary Stephan, Historically Accurate, 2026, acrylic canvas, 24 x 18 inches
$12,600

24.



Gary Stephan, Human Salt, 2026, acrylic canvas, 24 x 18 inches
$12,600

25.



Gary Stephan, Untitled, 2026, acrylic canvas, 24 x 18 inches
$12,600

26.



Gary Stephan, Thinking the Pool, 2026, acrylic canvas, 24 x 18 inches
$12,600

27.





Gary Stephan, Vision Soot, 2025, acrylic canvas, 24 x 18 inches
$12,600

29.

