

PAUL THIEBAUD GALLERY

Cornelia Schulz: Synthesis

November 9, 2025 – January 11, 2025

Opening reception: Saturday, November 19th, 3–5pm

Artist talk: 3:30pm

Paul Thiebaud Gallery, in association with Patricia Sweetow Gallery, is pleased to announce the opening of *Cornelia Schulz: Synthesis* on Saturday, November 9, 2024, from 3-5pm, with an artist talk at 3:30pm. A veteran painter from the San Francisco Bay Area, where she has lived and worked for over sixty years, Schulz's exhibition will feature eleven recent gesturally abstract paintings on her signature shaped canvases. Richly textured with thickly applied oil paint, Schulz's paintings reveal her continued exploration of juxtaposing organic, abstract passages of paint against the formal rigor of geometric compositional structures. The exhibition will be on view through January 11, 2025.

Long under recognized for her contributions to the history of abstract painting in the United States, Cornelia Schulz's newest paintings advance not only the legacy of abstract expressionism, but also those of Hard-edge geometric abstraction and shaped canvas painting. Schulz begins each of her works by hand cutting the underlying irregularly shaped wooden panels that she then bolts together and covers with canvas. After applying a ground layer of black acrylic, Schulz then begins adding thick polychromed layers of oil paint using palette knives, scrapers, and other tools. For Schulz, the process of applying and layering the paint is one of experimentation and discovery. If she does not like the results, she scrapes the paint away and starts again. The resulting works are sumptuously textured, rigorous paintings where each pigmented passage plays off the other. Cumulatively, these areas coalesce into a dense, topographical impasto, where each painted shape, color, and detail appears to influence the shape of the canvas support. At the same time, however, the shape of the canvas also appears to influence the movement and direction of the paint, creating a dynamic tension within each painting. Exploring the interrelation of organic, serendipitous mark making with formal geometric compositional structures has been a throughline in Schulz's painting for the past 50 years.

Cornelia Schulz was born and raised in Pasadena, CA, in 1936, and initially studied at Pasadena City College, where she earned her AA degree in 1955. Immediately following this, she enrolled for two years at the Los Angeles County Art Institute (now known as Otis College of Art and Design), and later took a summer session with Richard Diebenkorn at the University of Southern California in 1957. At this point, before committing herself fully to art, Schulz worked at the Institute of Living, a mental health center in Harford, CT, for ten months. Finding this path was not for her, Schulz returned to California to attend the California School of Fine Arts (later

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known as the San Francisco Art Institute) where she earned her BFA in painting in 1959 and her MFA in welded steel sculpture in 1961. Shortly after graduating, she married fellow classmate Robert Hudson (1938-2024) and began a family, which would lead her to set aside her career for most of the next decade.

Schulz returned to sculpture in 1969 and continued making it for the next few years, all while her marriage to Hudson was coming to an end. In 1972, Schulz began her teaching career with a one year position teaching fundamental sculpture at the California College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland (now California College of the Arts in San Francisco). The following year (1973) she took a position in the Art Department at the University of California at Davis, where she would be a professor for the next three decades and become the first female chair of the department from 1988-1992. She would also serve as chair of the department from 1995-1996. Upon her retirement in 2002, she was named Professor Emeritus. Around 1974, Schulz turned to painting as her primary mode of working and has continued on that path for the last 50 years.

Among the awards and honors she has received as an artist and educator, Schulz was the recipient of the 1975 SECA Grant Award from the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. She also received the UC Davis Distinguished Public Service Award in 2000 for bringing to the university the landmark K-12 arts outreach program, *ArtsBridge*, which sees UC students teaching in the community.

Schulz's works have been exhibited across the United States and can be found in numerous private, corporate, and public collections, including the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA); Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, CA; Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAMPFA); di Rosa Center for Contemporary Art, Napa, CA; and the Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem Museum of Art at UC Davis, among others. *Synthesis* is Cornelia Schulz's debut solo exhibition with Paul Thiebaud Gallery.

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