Bio:

Karen Schifano is a painter living and working in NYC. She received a BA in Art History from Swarthmore College, an MFA from Hunter College, and fellowships from the MacDowell Colony and the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown. She has exhibited widely in this country, Europe, Australia and Japan. Recent exhibition venues include Conn. College, Indiana University, Kathryn Markel Fine Arts, DC Moore Gallery, Deanna Evans Projects, Rick Wester Fine Arts, Minus Space/MoMA PS1, New Jersey Center for the Visual Arts, Alfred University, and CB1 Gallery. She was elected to membership in the American Abstract Artists organization in 2018.

Karen also worked as a painting restorer at Simon Parkes Art Conservation for the last 37 years, before retiring at the end of 2024.

Statement:

My work has undergone many changes over my fifty years of being an artist, but what always remains is the use of simple form and shape to convey content in a reductive, abstract fashion.

In earlier periods, the work alluded to recognizable narratives, with image shapes derived from theater stages, screens, and signs. In the last two years, I have returned to a more pared down reductive style. I brought gesture back into my vocabulary, with an interest in creating tension with boundaries, often painted in a more hard-edged style. Space recedes and expands with strong linear strokes of paint, always flashe, with its matte surface and ease of re-application. Pentimenti are now also part of what the viewer sees, leaving a history that slows down the viewing time. During this last year, I have mainly worked on paper, in order to move quickly and keep my process open to new inspiration, always trusting intuition to make decisions. I hope to eventually make some of these works on paper more permanent, possibly using mounted clayboard in large sizes.