

ADVERTISEMENT  
**SPRING SAVINGS SALE!**  
**BUY ONE WINDOW**  
**GET THE 2ND WINDOW**  
**40% OFF**  
 PLUS NO INTEREST UNTIL 2018 w.a.c.  
 VISIT OUR SHOWROOM AT  
**AMAZINGSIDING & WINDOWS...LLC**  
 751 Port America Place #810  
 Grapevine, TX 76051  
 800-804-8377

## Profound? No, but definitely fun

Nasher's Shapiro show a delightful must-see

By RICK BRETTELL  
 Art Critic  
 rbrettell@dallasnews.com

When Jeremy Strick, director of the Nasher Sculpture Center, introduced New York artist Joel Shapiro to journalists and supporters at a preview event last Thursday, he stressed the continuity of collaboration between the Nasher family and the artist over decades.

The Nasher decided to celebrate five decades of the sculptor's work not by mounting a retrospective (not enough room for that) but by commissioning him to create a gallery-size installation in its prime exhibition space.

Shapiro has been experimenting with floating sculptural forms, held aloft by various kinds of almost invisible strings, since 2010, and this is his most ambitious, and most buoyant and joyful, installation of this type. Instead of using the thin, lightweight rectangular forms that he employed in 2010, he instead has made larger, irregular geometric forms that are heavier, bulkier and, for that reason, more difficult to suspend.

These are arranged with supreme precision in the naturally lit space — only one sits on the floor like traditional sculpture — and each is painted its own color varying from intense primaries to a subtle celadon green. The effect is simply stunning, and it seems on entering the room that the forms literally float as if lifted by the gallery air.

Watch out for the strings! In fact, most viewers feel so lightweight themselves that they forget to look for them. I almost felt like an astronaut in a space station in which gravity was suspended. The colored shapes seem so

weightless that we want to join them in flotation.

To embody each of the decades of work purchased by or made for the Nashers, there are works by Shapiro in the entrance gallery, the lower-level gallery, the space next to the administrative offices and the permanent collection gallery. In effect, it is a retrospective without being oppressively so, and we like both the Nasher and Shapiro better for this lightness.

There is a truly spectacular piece that has come downtown from its North-Park Center perch to stand as a colorful sentinel of sculptural gesture in the Nasher's lobby. It mimics what traditional sculptors deal with when making heavy bronze equestrian sculpture: balancing heavy forms on three legs (any good equestrian sculptor has one of the horse's front legs lifted). In his dizzy concoction of painted wooden boxes, Shapiro balances all on three points as if a master of illusion.

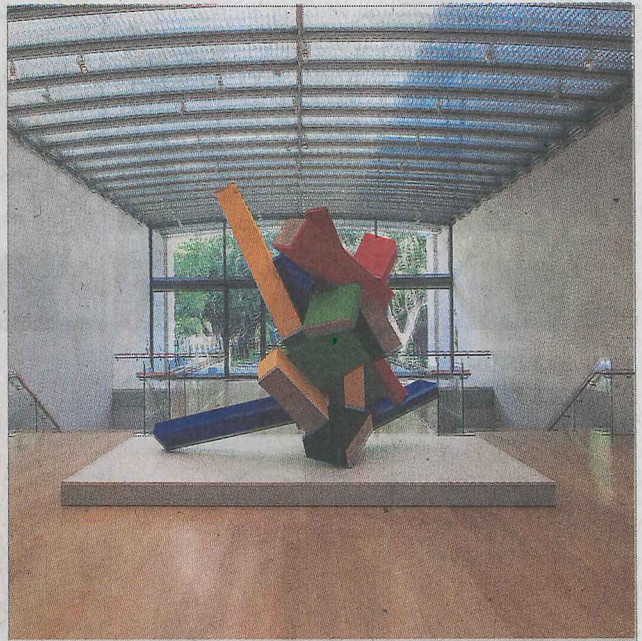
The Nasher has also included a large group of recent works on paper by Shapiro, some of which are blobby masses of black ink, while others are joyful explorations of color. They have little to do visually with the sculpture, but they show another side of the artist's sensibility.

I enjoyed myself so much in the galleries that I began to wonder whether Shapiro's art is really more delightful than profound. My mind also raced back to memories of the work of one of America's greatest masters of geometric sculpture — now long dead — James Rosati, whose work, if you scour Google for it, looks startlingly like Shapiro's.

Maybe someday, the Nasher will let us see a Rosati or two.

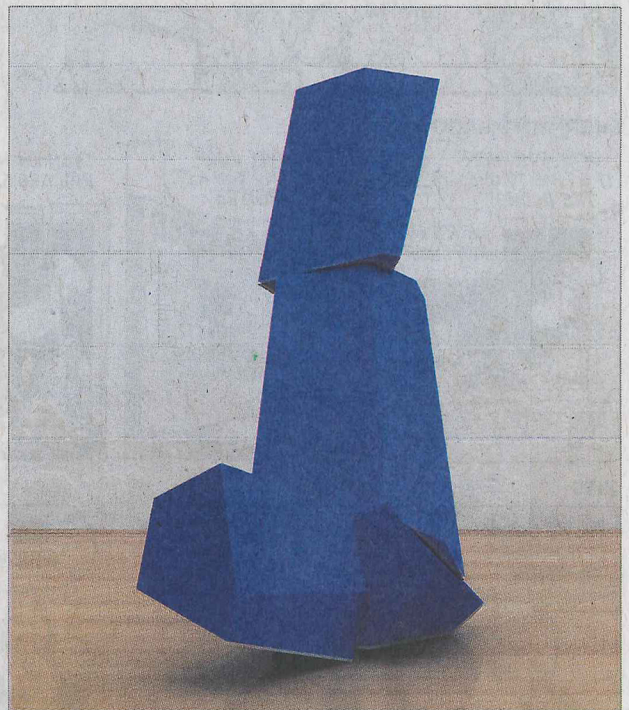
*Rick Brettell is a former director of the Dallas Museum of Art.*

### ART



Photos: Joel Shapiro

Joel Shapiro's colorful *20 Elements*, usually seen in North-Park Center, stands in the Nasher's lobby.



While many of the Shapiro works are in primary colors, such as *Really Blue (After All)*, others are in gentler shades.