

P A I N T I N G S

C L A I R E   S E I D L

P H O T O G R A P H S

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PAINTINGS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

ROSENBERG + KAUFMAN FINE ART  
DORSET ROAD BOOKS  
NEW YORK 2004

The first impression, on encountering Claire Seidl's work of the past few years, is of extraordinary diversity. Some pictures are constructed out of looming masses; others depend on calligraphic gestures. Some hold back, demanding that we navigate dense accretions of paint that seem to have been slowly accumulated; others reveal their material selves more quickly. Some appear to have been generated by geometric imperatives, others, to have evolved organically. Surfaces can be transparent, implacable, or anywhere in between. Scale is ambiguous. Conceptions of pictorial space seem subject to change. And if this weren't enough, there is also a dramatic change in disciplines to contend with. Seidl is not only an accomplished, experienced painter, but a serious, inventive photographer. To compound the problem, her photographs, at first acquaintance, seem to explore rather different notions than her paintings.

First impressions, however, are often wrong. The longer we spend with Seidl's work, the less significant its apparent variousness becomes. Instead, a sense of stubborn individuality and of singleness of purpose begin to make themselves felt. "Families" of pictures start to announce themselves, often rather extended ones. The edges of Seidl's largest, densest shapes, for example, quietly begin to declare their kinship with her calligraphic swoops and loops, reminding us that the boundaries between masses can also play the role of drawing. We begin to glimpse abrupt linear structures underneath delicate all-over expanses, reminding us that what is visible at any given moment is only one stage in the history of a picture's evolution. And more.

We soon become less conscious of the differences between Seidl's works – which is not to deny the existence of those differences – and instead, become increasingly aware that they are united by the thoughtful exploration of a single dominant theme. If we pay attention, it is plain that this unifying motif manifests itself in everything Seidl does, no matter what her chosen medium or discipline. Quite simply, in both her paintings and her photography, Seidl investigates the most fundamental aspect of making and responding to art: the act of seeing itself. The diversity of her recent work reflects both the largeness of her theme and the fact that that multiplicity is not only permitted, but demanded by her self-imposed task of inventing (and/or discovering) visual equivalents for a host of ways of seeing.

Seidl's images force us to consider the essential characteristics of different qualities of attention. They make us aware of things we usually ignore, such as the way we routinely, even unconsciously, employ different focal lengths in order to make sense of the world around us. Seidl's paintings and photographs pose wordless questions about the difference between looking at something directly or catching a glimpse of it from the corner of an eye. In her paintings, Seidl does this metaphorically. Some pictures executed over the past few years are seamless, subtly inflected expanses of soft-edged hues that appear to have been built of slow impositions of thin layers of paint. Previous states and underlying incidents are often veiled, like distant recollections or like things seen briefly long ago and now largely forgotten. These earlier pictorial events can remain more or less visible through the layers of paint on the canvas, but they can also be completely obscured,

buried under the results of new campaigns of painting, so that only the memory – if that – of a previous state exists. Paintings of this type compel us to consider surface and density in fresh ways, turning the attempt to penetrate an expanse visually into a recapitulation of the experience of finding our way through daily life with the aid of (sometimes misleading) visual clues. The many ways we can see something – as opposed to interpreting or identifying what is seen – have equivalents in Seidl's range of painting languages, from broad, brushy masses to tangles of animated lines, from accumulations of multiple gestures to sweeps of translucent washes.

It's tempting to say that in her photographs, Seidl investigates similar territory more literally, although the results are anything but literal and certainly not predictable – not even for their author, who approaches photography with the same wish to remain alert to things that happen in the course of making that informs her paintings. Many of Seidl's most arresting photographs are shot at night, with little available light, so that they require long exposures. The resulting images reveal things that elude normal vision. The passage of time required to make the photo leaves its visible traces on the image. The camera dispassionately records movement of all kinds, making evident even movement so slow, so inconsequential, or so sporadic – shifting stars, passing vehicles, stirring foliage – that it would escape not only ordinary attention but often ordinary modes of seeing, even if attention were paid. The camera's vision can be paradoxical; Seidl's photos about reflections in windows bring front and center things that are, in reality, behind her, in her choice of viewpoint, and so implicitly physically out of her sight.

The camera collapses distance; in actuality, the eye would need to change focus in order to see, sequentially, the reflection, the surface on which it is reflected, the real things in front of the reflective glass surface, and the distant things beyond, visible through the glass. In these photographs, the camera brings everything up to single plane – testimony to yet another kind of seeing.

For some years, Seidl has kept her activities as painter and photographer parallel, but essentially separate. Her choice of motifs for photographs is not easily equated with her painting images and she doesn't make paintings that derive directly from her photographic images; when she has made an occasional move in that direction, she has not been entirely happy with the result. Each practice is quite specifically about the characteristics of each medium: what are the properties of paint? how can the painter impose herself on those properties? what can the camera do? and since Seidl prints her own work, what can the photographer do at each stage of process? Each body of work remains unmistakably distinct, but it is also apparent it is the product of the same highly individual sensibility, the same vision, the same obsession with the permutations of the act of looking, and by extension, with perception itself. With longer acquaintance, not only do the differences between Seidl's works in a single medium seem of less import than they did at first, but the connections between even her most disparate efforts in different disciplines become more and more evident. Once we attune ourselves to Seidl's voice – to change metaphors – its clarity and singularity seem obvious.

Karen Wilkin  
New York City 2004

P H O T O G R A P H S





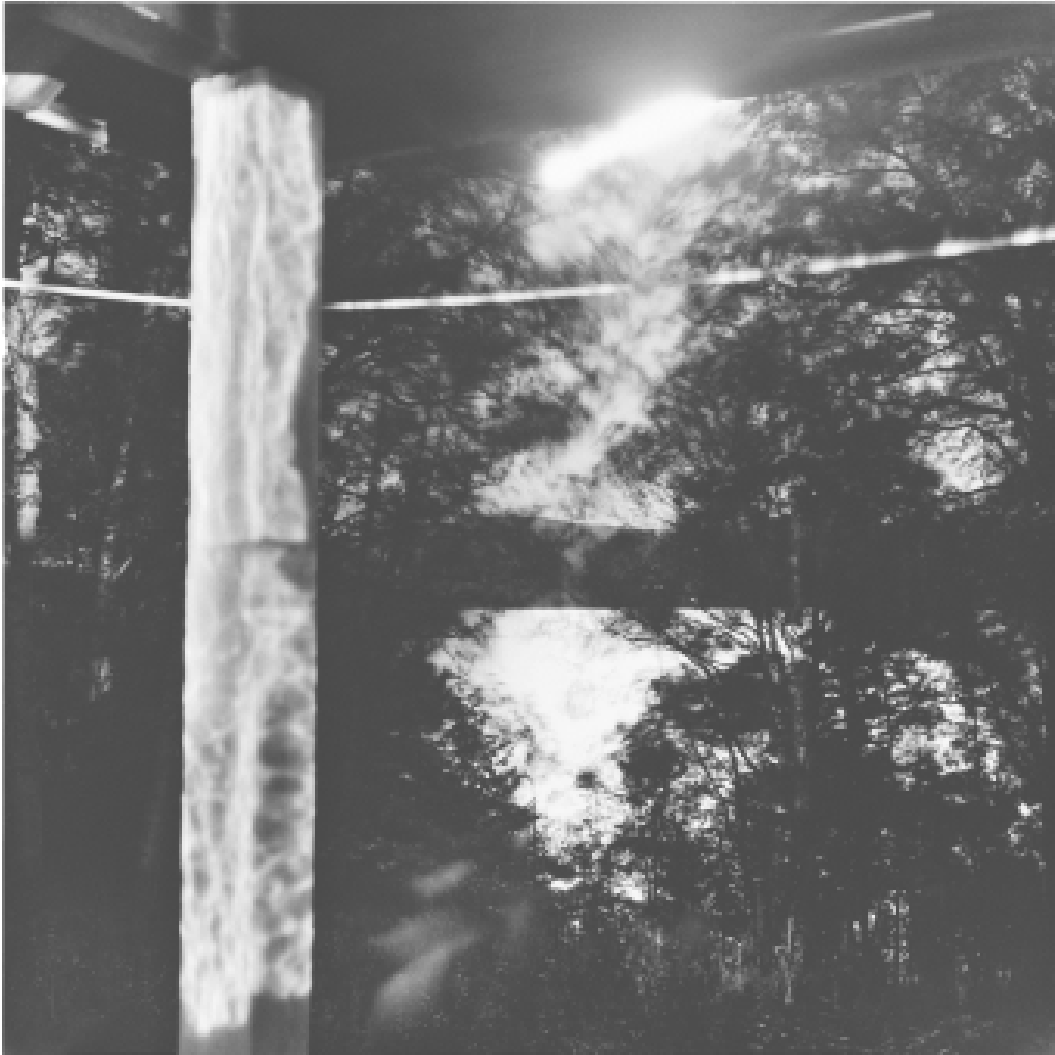


















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Claire Seidl and her family live in New York City and Rangeley, Maine.  
She is represented by Rosenberg + Kaufman Fine Art in New York City,  
and by Icon Contemporary Art in Brunswick, Maine.



#### **SOLO EXHIBITIONS**

- 2004 - Rosenberg + Kaufman Fine Art, New York City  
2003 - Kristen Frederickson Contemporary Art,  
Project Room, New York City  
2002 - Icon Contemporary Art, Brunswick, ME  
2001 - Rosenberg + Kaufman Fine Art, New York City  
2000 - Icon Contemporary Art, Brunswick, ME  
1999 - Claudia Carr Gallery, New York City  
1999 - Rosenberg + Kaufman Fine Art, New York City  
1996 - Rosenberg + Kaufman Fine Art, New York City  
1994 - Stephen Rosenberg Gallery, New York City  
1990 - Stephen Rosenberg Gallery, New York City  
1988 - Stephen Rosenberg Gallery, New York City  
1986 - Stephen Rosenberg Gallery, New York City  
1985 - John Davis Gallery, Akron, OH  
1984 - Stephen Rosenberg Gallery, New York City  
1983 - John Davis Gallery, Akron, OH  
1982 - Leubsdorf Gallery, Hunter College, New York City  
1981 - 22 Wooster Gallery, New York City  
1979 - Freedman Gallery, Albright College,  
Reading, PA  
1975 - Contemporary Arts Gallery, Loeb Center, NYU,  
New York City

#### **SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS**

- 2003 - Interior / Exterior: Five Perspectives on  
Landscape Photography, The Lamont Gallery,  
Philips Exeter Academy, Exeter, NH (curated  
by Karen Burgess Smith)  
2003 - Celestial, The Work Space, New York City  
(curated by Lesley Heller)  
2003 - Gallery Artists, Icon Contemporary Art,  
Brunswick, Maine  
2003 - Capital to the Mountain Counties, Maine Arts  
Commission, Blaine House, Augusta, Maine  
2002 - Toyland, Alsyia Duckler Gallery, Portland, OR  
(curated by Sean Elwood)  
2002 - Four Maine Treasure Troves-The Astrachan  
Collection, University of New England Gallery,  
Westbrook Campus, Portland, Maine  
2002 - Intrepid, Rosenberg + Kaufman Fine Art,  
New York City  
2002 - Eye of the Beholder, Fredericksburg Center  
for the Creative Arts, VA  
2002 - Fairy Tales – Photographs, Rosenberg +  
Kaufman Fine Art, New York City  
2001 - Claire Seidl and Anna Marie Danenburg,  
a Ramona Studio, New York City  
2001 - Land, Photography, Rosenberg + Kaufman  
Fine Art, New York City  
2001 - Sun Signs, Rosenberg + Kaufman Fine Art,  
New York City  
2000 - Ethan Cohen Fine Arts - Photographs,  
New York City  
1999 - Spatial Relations - Photographs, Rosenberg  
+ Kaufman Fine Art, New York City  
1997 - Icon Contemporary Art, Brunswick, ME  
1997 - Painting, Rosenberg + Kaufman Fine Art,  
New York City  
1996 - Icon Contemporary Art, Brunswick, ME  
1995 - The Language of Art: Res Ipsa Loquitur,  
Art Initiatives, New York City  
1995 - Paint and Paper, Rosenberg + Kaufman Fine  
Art, New York City  
1993 - The Tenth Summer, Stephen Rosenberg  
Gallery, New York City  
1992 - Contemporary Abstraction, O'Farrell Gallery,  
Brunswick, Maine  
1992 - Works on Paper, Frick Gallery, Belfast, Maine  
1992 - Apocalypse and Resurrection, The Gallery  
Three Zero, New York City  
1991 - Paper Trail, Stephen Rosenberg Gallery,  
New York City  
1991 - New Currents in Watercolor, The Noyes  
Museum, Oceanville, NJ  
1991 - Indiana Collects - Works on Paper by  
Contemporary Women Artists - The Steven G.  
Conant Collection, Emison Art Ctr., DePauw  
Univ., Indiana  
1990 - Arthur Cohen / Sharon Gold / Claire Seidl,  
Stephen Rosenberg Gallery, New York City  
1990 - The Painted Line, Stephen Rosenberg Gallery,  
New York City

- 1989 - Space, Scale, Structure, Ben Shahn Galleries, William Paterson College, NJ
- 1989 - Artists at Hunter College, Voorhees Gallery, New York City
- 1988 - Contemporary Abstract Painting, Yeshiva University, New York City
- 1988 - Soho Comes to Bethesda, Partners Gallery, Bethesda, MD
- 1987 - Waterworks, Lintas: Worldwide, Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, New York City
- 1987 - Chandler / Lieberman / Seidl, Stephen Rosenberg Gallery, New York City
- 1986 - One and One: A Study of Scale, Stephen Rosenberg Gallery, New York City
- 1986 - Recent Acquisitions, Aldrich Museum, Ridgefield, CT
- 1986 - Black, White and Gray, Stephen Rosenberg Gallery, New York City
- 1986 - Twentieth Anniversary Survey, McNay Art Museum, San Antonio, TX
- 1986 - Holland Cotter, Art Now, New York
- 1985 - Painting 1985, Pam Adler Gallery, New York City
- 1985 - The Art of the 1970's and 1980's, Aldrich Museum, Ridgefield, CT
- 1985 - Passionate Abstraction, Stephen Rosenberg Gallery, New York City
- 1985 - Four Painters, Wallace Wentworth Gallery, Washington D.C.
- 1984 - Collectors Gallery, Columbus Museum, Columbus, OH
- 1984 - Avida Dollars Gallery, Milan, Italy
- 1984 - John Davis Gallery, Akron, OH
- 1984 - Selections from Alumnae, Leubsdorf Gallery, Hunter College, New York City
- 1983 - New York - New Work, Newcastle Polytechnic, Newcastle, England (curated by Ellen Price)
- 1983 - John Davis Gallery, Akron, Ohio
- 1983 - The Painting Show, Stephen Rosenberg Gallery, New York City
- 1983 - Nature Transformed, Anderson Gallery, VA Commonwealth Univ., Richmond
- 1982 - A Look Back - A Look Forward, Aldrich Museum, Ridgefield, CT
- 1982 - Four New Painters, Soho Center for Visual Artists, New York City (curated by Larry Aldrich)
- 1982 - John Davis Gallery, Akron, OH
- 1982 - Biff Elrod / D. Jack Solomon / Claire Seidl, Root Art Center, Hamilton College, NY
- 1981 - Current Memories: Painters Who Use Their Dreams, Small Walls Gallery, New York City
- 1981 - Haber Theodore Gallery, New York City
- 1981 - 22 Wooster Gallery, New York City
- 1980 - Art in Public Spaces, Brooklyn Federal Courthouse, Cadman Plaza, Brooklyn
- 1980 - Ten Years of Ten Downtown, Arte Fiera, Bologna, Italy
- 1978 - Ten Downtown - Artists Open Studios, New York City

#### SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 2004 - Karen Wilkin, Catalogue essay, Rosenberg + Kaufman Fine Art
- 2003 - Karen Marzloff, "Interior / Exterior", The Portsmouth NH Wire, Nov. 26
- 2003 - Barbara Millstein, Catalogue essay, "Interior/Exterior - Five Perspectives on Landscape Photography"
- 2003 - Joseph Valentini, Interview, Abstract Art Online, September
- 2003 - Fotophile, Issue #44, September
- 2003 - Joseph Valentini, Abstract Art Online, February 21
- 2002 - Philip Isaacson, "Paintings and Photos: The Twain Do Meet", Maine Sunday Telegram, August 4
- 2002 - Bobbie Hanstein, "Images Remembered", Lewiston Sun Journal, ME, July 22
- 2002 - Jane Halliwell, "Where Paintings, Photos Meet", Galleries, Portland Press Herald, July 25
- 2001 - Joseph Valentini, Abstract Art Online, November, Artist Profile
- 2001 - Mario Naves, The New York Observer, June 25
- 2001 - Joseph Valentini, Abstract Art Online, June 6

1999 - Grace Glueck, New York Times, February 5  
 1999 - Dominique Nahas, REVIEW, January  
 1997 - Lilly Wei, Art in America, January  
 1997 - Judith Hunger, Rangeley Maine Highlander,  
 June 27 and July 25  
 1996 - Sue Scott, ART News, September  
 1996 - Mario Naves, New Art Examiner, September  
 1996 - Karen Wilkin, Partisan Review 3  
 1996 - Tiffany Bell, Catalogue Essay, Rosenberg +  
 Kaufman Fine Art  
 1992 - Ken Greenleaf, Maine Sunday Telegram,  
 June 28  
 1992 - Edgar Allen Beem, Maine Times, June 26  
 1991 - Vivien Raynor, Review - New Currents in  
 Watercolor, New York Times, August 4  
 1989 - Robert Morgan, ARTS Magazine, February  
 1988 - Stephen Westfall, Catalogue Essay, Stephen  
 Rosenberg Gallery  
 1988 - Sister Wendy Beckett, Contemporary Women  
 Artists, Phaedron Press, England  
 1987 - Vered Lieb, ARTS Magazine, February  
 1987 - Stephen Westfall, Art in America, January  
 1985 - Benjamin Forgey, The Washington Post, July 20  
 1985 - Dorothy Shinn, The Akron Beacon Journal,  
 July 11  
 1985 - Stephen Westfall, Arts Magazine, February  
 1984 - John Yau, ARTS Magazine, December  
 1983 - Marina Vaizey, The London Sunday Times,  
 October 30  
 1982 - Jacqueline Moss, The New York Times,  
 CT edition, March 21  
 1982 - Glenn C. Tomlinson, Arts - The Spectator,  
 Hamilton College, February 25  
 1980 - Joseph P. Fries, The New York Times, May 30  
 1978 - Valentin Tatransky, Arts Magazine, September

#### **SELECTED PUBLIC COLLECTIONS**

Albright College, Reading, PA  
 Aldrich Museum, Ridgefield, CT  
 The Astrachan Collection, Portland Maine  
 Chermayeff and Geismar, New York City

Citibank, New York City  
 Cohen & Lord, Marina del Rey, CA  
 Steven G. Conant Collection, DePauw University, IN  
 Continental Insurance, New York City  
 General Instruments Corp., New York City  
 Integrated Resources, New York City  
 Sidney Lewis, Best Products Corp., Richmond, VA  
 Miller, Anderson, Sherrard, MOMA Tower, New York City  
 (Commission)  
 Mobil Oil Corp., New York City  
 Oxford Hills Comprehensive High School, So. Paris,  
 ME (Percent for Art Commission)  
 Pfizer, Inc, New York City  
 Portland Museum of Art, Portland, ME  
 Reliance Insurance, New York City (Commission)  
 Robins, Kaplan, Miller and Ciresi, Minneapolis, MN  
 Sanco General Delaware Corp., New York City  
 St. Regis Monarch Beach Resort and Spa,  
 Dana Point, CA (Commission)  
 Yankee Resources, Inc., Columbus, OH

#### **TEACHING POSITIONS**

2003-04 - Hofstra University, Adjunct Assistant  
 Professor  
 1990-95 - Hunter College, City University of New York,  
 Adjunct Assistant Professor  
 1985-90 - Hunter College, City University of New York,  
 Adjunct Lecturer  
 1985-86 - Syracuse University, Visiting Artist  
 1984 - Illinois State University, Visiting Artist  
 1980 - Fairleigh Dickinson University, NJ, Instructor  
 1978 - College of New Rochelle, NY, Instructor

#### **EDUCATION**

1996-99 - International Center of Photography,  
 New York City  
 1982 - MFA, Hunter College, CUNY  
 1973 - BFA, College of Visual and Performing Arts,  
 Syracuse University  
 1972 - Sir John Cass College of Art, London  
 Polytechnic University

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