

# ‘Everybody Knows...Elizabeth Murray’ Looks Back at an Unpretentious Groundbreaker on the Downtown Art Scene

BY REN JENDER

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**At one point during *Everybody Knows...Elizabeth Murray*, the new documentary from director Kristi Zea (who is also a well-known production designer), painter Chuck Close, one of many artists interviewed, reminisces about the downtown art scene in 1970s Manhattan, so small that all its denizens showed up at each other's gallery openings and afterward would discuss the work at Max's Kansas City.**

Then we hear the subject of the film, post-minimal painter Elizabeth Murray, who could never go to the after-parties, even though her work had already been exhibited at the Whitney. She explains that as a single mother she didn't have the money to buy drinks — or to hire a babysitter. Murray's three adult children talk about the eight hours their mother spent in the studio every day, even when they were very young, which eventually led to her being one of a handful of women artists to have a career retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art.

#### **FILM DETAILS**

*Everybody Knows... Elizabeth Murray*

**Rating:** NR

**Genre:** Documentary Running

**Time:** 58 min.

Zea's sharp eye for detail is evident when Murray speaks of being inspired by rural upstate New York (where she had a second home), and we see the same bright colors in tree trunks and a barn that are in the fractured, turning, twisted pieces that make up Murray's canvases, many of which seem to bubble — in both the dimensional and comic-book sense — from the wall.

Murray herself sums up her work in a diary entry (voiced by Meryl Streep): "It's the one instance where I don't give a shit what anyone thinks." (This Film Forum presentation screens with Alison Klayman's *The 100 Years Show*, a thirty-minute film about Carmen Herrera.)

Everybody Knows...Elizabeth Murray  
Directed by Kristi Zea  
Opens January 11, Film Forum