

The Seattle Times

Ayers, Robert. "A Rare Chance: Robert Storr Paintings at Seattle's Francine Seders Gallery." *The Seattle Times*, The Seattle Times Company, 13 Apr. 2012, <https://www.seattletimes.com/entertainment/a-rare-chance-robert-storr-paintings-at-seattles-francine-seders-gallery/>.

A rare chance: Robert Storr paintings at Seattle's Francine Seders Gallery

A group of paintings by Robert Storr, Yale School of Art dean and former MoMA curator, is hanging at Francine Seders Gallery in Seattle through May 6, 2012. Also on show: works by Denzil Hurley and Gerard Mossé.

Seattle is hosting one of the most important figures in contemporary art, and showing him in unusual circumstances.

Robert Storr boasts what *New York* magazine calls an "unmatched résumé." He's the current dean of Yale School of Art (and the Yale master's of fine arts is considered the direct route to a successful career as a contemporary artist these days). From 1990 to 2002 he was curator of prints and drawings at New York's Museum of Modern Art. In 2007 he was artistic director of the Venice Biennale, a position that no other American has held.

Along the way he has curated dozens of exhibitions and written books and catalogs on Chuck Close, Gerhard Richter, Louise Bourgeois, Willem de Kooning, Nancy Spero and many other artists and topics.

But Seattleites can now experience Robert Storr in his much less familiar role as a painter. The Francine Seders Gallery on Phinney Ridge is showing a grouping of four of his paintings, S.P. #1, 2, 3, and 4, alongside paintings by Denzil Hurley. Works by Gerard Mossé are in the upstairs gallery.

Storr is far more than a hobbyist painter: "In fact, I started out as a painter more than 35 years ago," he explained, "and I've never stopped; I've never become an ex-painter."

So how does working as an artist connect with everything else he does? Although he insists he tries to keep his worlds separate, he admits that "I certainly know how difficult it is to make art."

And more than that, he says, "Making art has made me a better curator. Whether or not being a curator has made me a better artist remains to be seen."

The chance to decide for ourselves is rare indeed. Storr hasn't gone public with his paintings for something like a quarter-century. The little group at Francine Seders leaves plenty of room for interpretation. In many ways they could not be simpler: four different arrangements of black and white bands, a clipped edge between them, and a pair of red circles sitting in the white

field. But once you begin to consider those differences, and the different rhythms they set up, and the way those rhythms are given counterpoint by the three pictures around them, then you begin to realize that these pictures are beautiful demonstrations of the old axiom that less is more.

It may be that Storr will eventually be considered a great painter who also did some curating and teaching on the side.

We should celebrate the fact that he found Hurley's invitation to show with him here "so friendly and so supportive," that, in his words, "I thought I'd be stupid not to say yes."