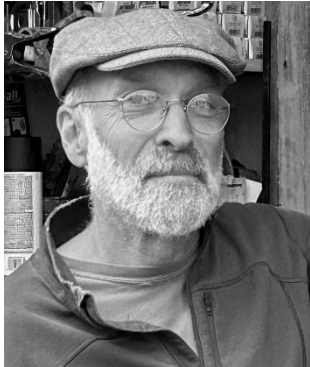


Juror for the 2025 Summer Juried Exhibit at Blue Mountain Gallery

Stuart Shils (b. 1954, Philadelphia) painted from direct observation, either outside or looking through windows for 30 years and is still engaged with the idea of or feeling for landscape, only now it's not so much about looking out as with looking in.



I'm native to the northwest corner of Philadelphia and currently live 10 minutes from where I grew up. Passion for the visual world was shaped while looking out the train windows riding the Chestnut Local through Germantown and North Philadelphia in and out of Center City as a regular activity beginning quite early in childhood around 1959. The way that windows condensed light into magical surfaces was theological and that visual presence was the seed that later influenced and fueled a lifetime of observation.

But the origins of my visual curiosity are also located within other mysteries of even earlier childhood. As a very young boy I took naps after lunch. My mother darkened my bedroom by closing the long, lined curtains and on sunny days a thin sliver of sunlight would pass through the vertical crack between the curtains, piercing the darkness, illuminating the tiny pieces of dust floating in air, planetarium like. Early on, the hypnotic spell of light, dark and pattern, emerged as presiding and compelling motifs, almost a nascent visual theology. Having recently turned 70, I can say for sure that in studio life I've become someone I could never have imagined being, and for that I am very grateful.

There were solo shows in New York, Philadelphia, Tel Aviv, Boston, Scottsdale, Richmond, LA, San Francisco, Stuttgart and Cork (Ireland). Shils is the recipient of a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant, a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, a Ballinglen Arts Foundation Fellowship for Residency in Ballycastle, Ireland, and an Academy Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

Critical review and commentary appeared in newspapers, journals and magazines, including: The New York Times, The New Yorker, The New York Sun, Ha'aretz, The Jerusalem Post, The Brooklyn Rail, artcritical.com, The Wall Street Journal, The Boston Globe, The Boston Phoenix, The Philadelphia Inquirer, The Irish Times, Art in America, The New Republic, The New Criterion, Art New England, The Hudson Review and The Philadelphia Daily News.

For more than a decade Shils was an annual visiting critic at the Vermont Studio Center (VSC) and for 15 years was a weekly critic at Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA)

where he also taught painting classes. Years ago he worked with the master class at the Jerusalem Studio School (JSS) in Italy and Jerusalem. Between 1994 and 2006, Shils spent 13 long summers on the northwest coast of Ireland, an extended painting campaign described in the PBS film documentary, “Ballycastle,” which was presented internationally and won numerous awards, including First Place for Documentary Excellence, Society for Professional Journalists.

Shils studied at The Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts with Arthur de Costa and Seymour Remenick and at the Philadelphia College of Art (UARTS) with Francis Tucker, Doris Staffel and Eugene Baguskas. He also attended Drew University and Temple University.

www.stuartshils.com

