

DANNY HELLER

Midcentury Spaces



Danny Heller was born and grew up in the Los Angeles area and now is recognized for his paintings of Southern California and its midcentury modern architecture and design enhanced by colorful period cars. He shows at George Billis Gallery in LA but, given the opportunity to show his work at Billis' New York gallery, he took a trip east.

"The great thing about New York," he says, "is you see so much great stuff. You don't plan for it. It just hits you. There's inspiration around every corner. Usually its unplanned. You can be walking or riding in a taxi, turn a corner and boom something's there. Sometimes I specifically seek out something like the TWA Flight Center at JFK. I visited it day and night to get as many photos as possible, to soak it up. It's like a giant sculpture. I got up close to it and underneath it.

"The building is a little monotone like New York, which is black and white and gray," he continues. One of his resulting paintings, *Flight Center*, offsets the monotone with a blue sky and a teal 1959 Olds 88. "The teal brings the blue palette down to the street level," he explains. "I tried to get a style car to fit the landscape. The Olds has a horizontal and swooping feel to it as if it's about to fly away.

"I approached New York from the point of view of an LA-based painter," he adds. "I amped up the color palette. The feeling of my California paintings is

escapist, like a vacation dream. You want to be transported and sit by that palm or that pool. In the New York paintings I've made a romantic, nostalgic version of a New York street."

While he was out walking, Heller came across the midcentury modern shop in *Artifacts*. "The shop and its Eames chairs are about as colorful as you can get in New York—the chairs and the color blocks above the windows," he says. "It was getting dark and moody at dusk and the scene was warm and welcoming. I wanted the painting to be ambiguous. Is it actually a scene from the 1960s or a vintage shop you can see today? For me, there is a bit of narrative but I don't want to direct too much."

Heller works on his photographs with Photoshop to get a sense of the final image and then transfers it to the canvas, drawing in the lines and forms in black and white. He adjusts for perspective and makes other corrections in the drawing stage before he begins to paint. Heller explains, "Paint introduces color. I might want to tweak it or not use it at all. There's plenty of editing even when the paint is still wet."

His recent paintings will be shown at George Billis Gallery in New York November 5 through December 7. ●

George Billis Gallery 525 W. 26th Street, Ground Floor • New York, NY 10001 • (212) 645-2621 • www.georgebillis.com



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1
Flight Center, oil on canvas, 25 x 48"

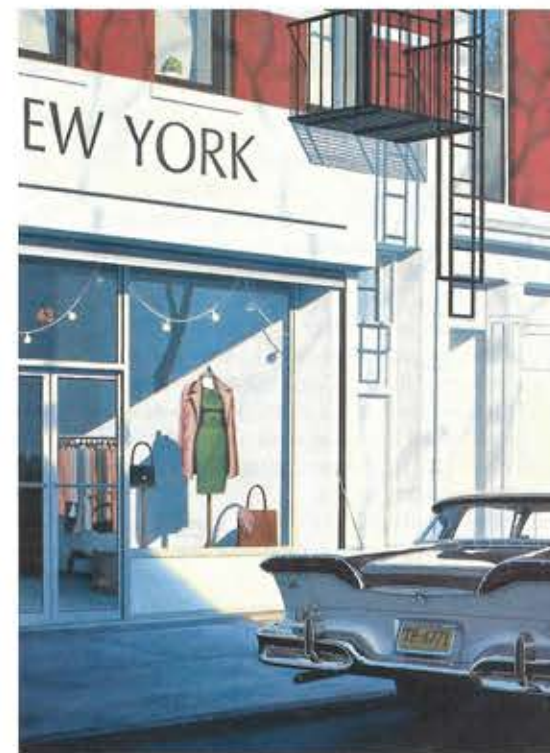
2
B&B Shoe Repair, oil on canvas, 21 x 30"

3
Artifacts, oil on canvas, 34 x 28"

3
Storefront Window, oil on canvas, 34 x 25"



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