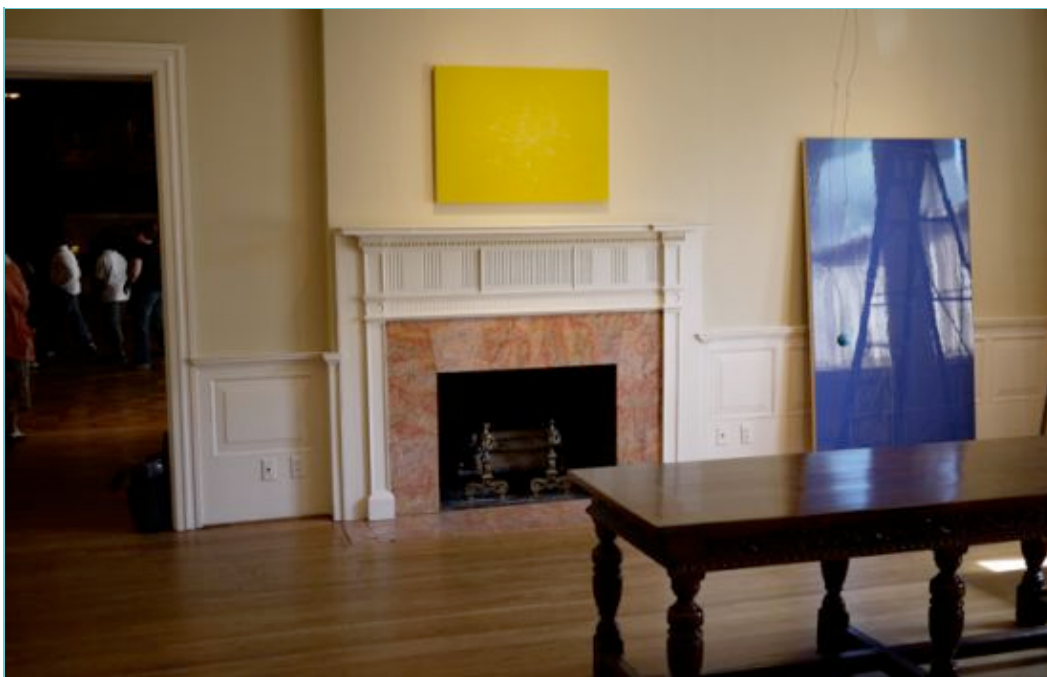




08.11.2010

## Relation to and yet not (homage to Mondrian)

by [Tara Heuser](http://www.pinklineproject.com/artchat/author/tara) (<http://www.pinklineproject.com/artchat/author/tara>)



Kate Shepard explores the art of Piet Mondrian in her solo exhibition entitled “Relation to and yet not (homage to Mondrian)”. The former dining room of the Phillips house is the destination of Shepard’s current show. Back in the 1920’s Piet Mondrian established a movement called neo-plasticism which supported geometric abstraction as the most virtuous, non-objective visual language. Neo-plasticism emphasized the essential principles and universal equilibrium of art, shunning any type of individual expression or realistic symbolization. Shepard’s “Relation to and yet not (homage to Mondrian)” examines Mondrian’s work and how it relates to contemporary society while questioning some of his artistic principles.

“Composition No. III” and “Painting No. 9” are the two paintings by Piet Mondrian that are part of the Phillips Collection and are subsequently incorporated in “Relation to and yet not (homage to Mondrian)”. Kate Shepard’s exhibited works were specifically created for this show. Four large paintings are displayed around the dining room. Each one painted a vibrant, primary color surrounding a web of geometric shapes that embody Mondrian’s statement, “All painting-the

painting of the past as well as the new painting present-shows that its essential plastic means are exclusively line and color”.

Shepard’s four paintings were built using several pieces of wood and coated with high-gloss enamel paint. Bright colors, fragile lines and multiple perspectives establish patterns and structures that join forces to form a three-dimensional space. “Relation to and yet not (homage to Mondrian) further expounds on the relationship between line and color in Kate Shepard’s sculptural work. Several sculptures made from coat hanger wire, wooden balls and enamel paint hang from the ceiling of the dining room. The wooden balls are also painted bright, primary colors and appear mobile-like, creating movement to the three dimensional space. Sitting on top of a table between two large paintings are three wooden reliefs; one painted black, one white and one red. Each relief contains geometric lines that create puzzle-like pieces. Similar to the three-dimensional hanging sculptures, each wooden relief is divided into many parts but is displayed as a whole entity.

Kate Shepard’s “Relation to and yet not (homage to Mondrian)” is a wonderful tribute to the art and theoretical writings of Piet Mondrian. However, while Mondrian’s work exudes an unnatural sense of control and order, Kate Shepard’s art is refreshingly energetic and warm. Both artists observe the relationship of parts in a whole, but Shepard’s work goes beyond the grid-like compositions of Mondrian to encompass the notion of chance.

“Relation to and yet not (homage to Mondrian)” showing at The Phillips Collection through September 5, 2010, 1600 21st Street NW, Washington, DC 20009, [www.phillipscollection.org](http://www.phillipscollection.org)