



Kid Sister Hobby, short, 2016
oil and enamel on panel
38 x 24 in
courtesy the artist, Galerie Lelong, New
York, and Anthony Meier Fine Arts, San
Francisco

Kate Shepherd

Kate Shepherd (b. 1961, New York) makes paintings that oscillate between two and three dimensions. It's a type of movement familiar from blueprints and architectural renderings, where thin lines tease out that essential paradox of drawing, the simultaneous flat and dimensional spaces suggested by a draftsman's network of interrelated marks. Her paintings are often composed of two or three enameled panels, usually of identical or nearly identical color, stacked on their edges to make a large monochromatic field. Working with an extreme economy of means to create spatial relationships – abutting panels often create their own depth – Shepherd lays down a system of white lines with an impossibly thin brush. She renders what seems to be the architecture of a situation, the schematics for a vista on the verge of fleshing itself out, but suspends development in favor of formal rigor and a type of linear concision. With such brevity, visual puns are never far away: Shepherd's paintings often exaggerate depth using only the most basic visual strategies. It's as if – and here I pull from Vladimir Nabokov, another venerable punster – she said: “look, here I'm going to show you not the painting of a landscape, but the painting of different ways of painting a certain landscape, and I trust their harmonious fusion will disclose the landscape as I intend you to see it.” In other words, Shepherd's paintings can be understood as investigations into methods of composition, strategies she knows very well, and whose conclusions she forestalls, making paintings that foreground their delightful inability to close themselves off.