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San Francisco Days
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Kate Shepherd at Anthony Meier Fine Arts

By the time I got to **Anthony Meier Fine Arts** I was back in my element. Meier relocated his gallery last year into a stately mansion designed by **William Jefferson Polk** and built in 1911. On view during my visit were works by painter **Kate Shepherd**.

Shepherd's mature work emerged in the mid-1990s. Since 1995 she's had a solo show every year; her last in San Francisco was in 1999, also with Meier. Shepherd is known for her sensitivity -- with line and color, weight and space. Her new works don't break stride, though there is some personal innovation going on here.

This is the first time Shepherd has taken a palette (in this case dominated by blues and a powerful maroon) to multiple paintings. We can imagine the load that puts to bear on a painter of such discrimination, whose work is so finely tuned.

The gallery's main room is dominated by three large paintings, each comprised of several panels butted together in signature style. Surfaces are either flat planes of color or they are patterned with polygons receding into the distance. They depict geometricized exteriors whose titles leave little ambiguity as to their inspiration: *Sea and Sky (White Boat)* and *Tall Sea, Cliff* (all works 2004).

Don't over-think these paintings -- to do so is to pass over the softer, more radiant physical experience of them. The three big works are hung low to the floor and present a unified horizon. They materialize the viewer's body like a **Barnett Newman** zip, only instead of feeling diminutive, we feel tall and graceful. There is something Mediterranean in all that blue, and leaving the room I felt calmer than I had entering. For those who want to take a piece of the action home but can't afford the wall space or the \$15,000 plus price tags, there are smaller paintings and a few beautiful drawings available, starting at \$2,500.