



CADE TOMPKINS PROJECTS

**GOLOCAL** *Prov.com*

## Studio Visit With Painter Suzanne Schireson - Inside Art With Michael Rose

Wednesday, April 16, 2025

*Michael Rose, Art Columnist*



*PHOTO: Michael Rose*

For painter and professor Suzanne Schireson, the overlap of motherhood and creativity is central to her vibrant figurative art. A mom to two children, Schireson has spent a great deal of time researching historic artists who were committed both to their studios and to caretaking. A series of recent paintings inspired by this will be on view in a solo exhibition titled *Bright Ground* at Cade Tompkins Projects on the East Side of Providence from May 3 to August 31.



CADE TOMPKINS PROJECTS

Summing up the idea behind her work, Schireson says, “My images are based on a mother or a caretaker, and I imagine a makeshift studio space for them through these invented portraits. These spaces are intended to be more psychological than physical. The paintings are not about escape; they are about a deep desire to reflect and refuel.”



*PHOTO: Michael Rose*

She goes on to say, “I also like figuring out how other mother artists make it all work. Art is so often an independent endeavor, so how do you proceed when you are involved in such intense codependency? Great artists have found ways to let those compromises into their work, to shape it, to allow for a reciprocity between life and art. I’ve been looking at intersections of caretaking, motherhood, and creative practice, and find inspiration in women in the history of the arts who were also parents.”

Schireson earned her BFA magna cum laude from the University of Pennsylvania, her MFA from Indiana University, and a Certificate in Painting from the historic Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. She has been an artist in residence at the Vermont Studio Center and has also participated in



## CADE TOMPKINS PROJECTS

residencies abroad in Norway, Korea, and China. A recipient of a Rhode Island State Council on the Arts Fellowship, Schireson has also twice received prestigious Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation Grants. For more than a decade, she has made her paintings at a converted mill in Pawtucket.



*PHOTO: Michael Rose*

If motherhood is a core narrative in work, then color is a central tenet of Schireson's craft as an artist. Her paintings are vivid. Fluorescent colors attract and retain the eye of the viewer. And in her show at Cade Tompkins Projects, she is hoping that audiences experience the depth and breadth of the color she is offering. Asked what she hopes people experience when looking at her work, Schireson answers, "I hope they feel like they're swimming in color. Like a 'color bath' version of a sound bath - rejuvenating, fresh and offering reflection. I hope that it opens up a line of thinking about the ways that all of us, regardless of being mothers or not, balance care for everything that grows in our lives. That our own solitary ambitions or creative interests are sacred and also need to be nurtured and given the space that they fill."

Schireson's work has earned acclaim at home and abroad. She has been featured in solo exhibitions at Smith College, the University of New Haven, Hollins University in Virginia, and West Virginia Wesleyan College. Her work has also appeared in other shows at the Woodmere Art



## CADE TOMPKINS PROJECTS

Museum in Philadelphia and the New Bedford Art Museum in Massachusetts, as well as at galleries in Ohio, North Carolina, Minnesota, California, New York, and Maine. Internationally, she has shown in Scotland, South Korea, India, China, Japan, and at the Carrousel du Louvre in Paris.



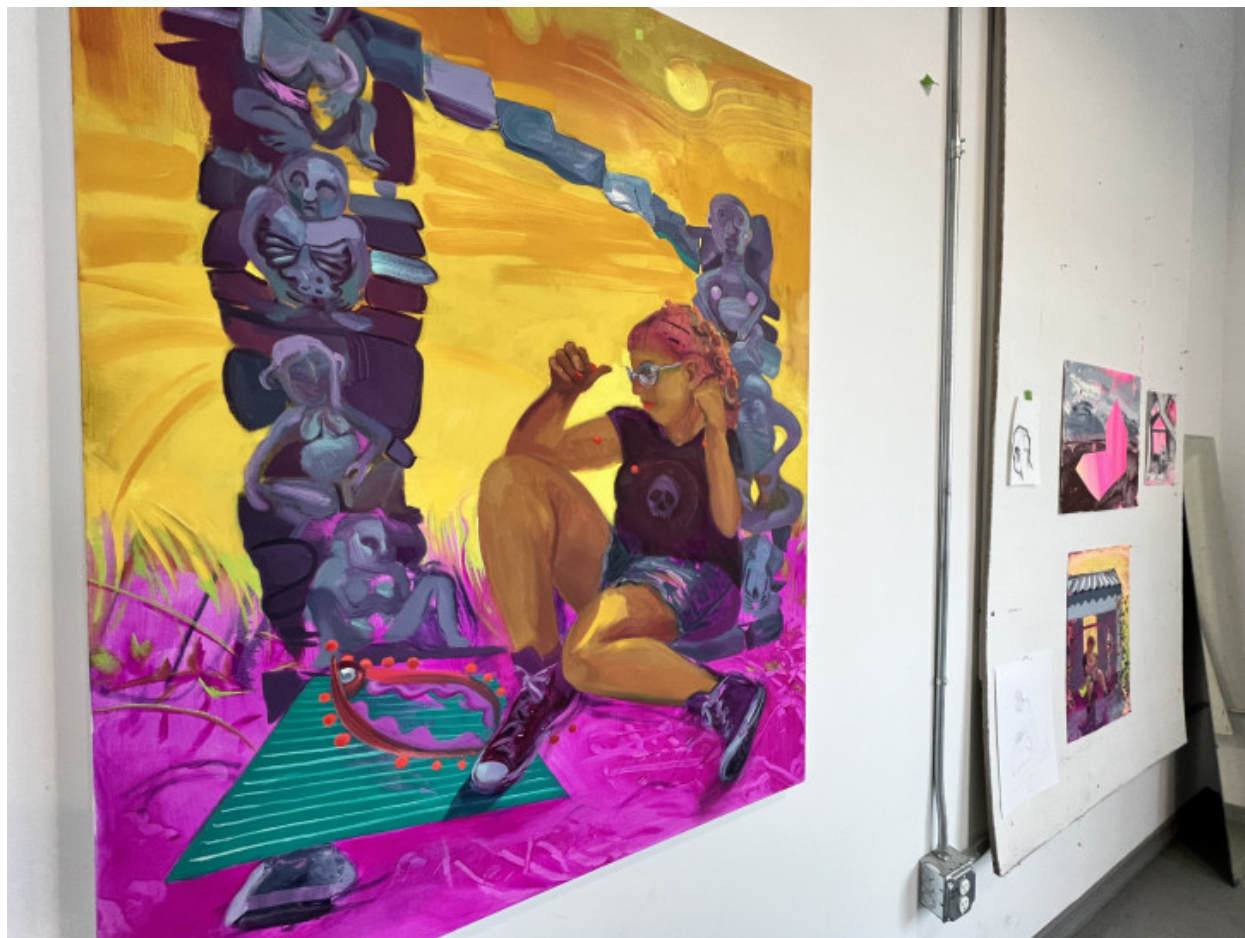
*PHOTO: Michael Rose*

Since 2012, Schireson has taught at the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth, where she is currently a Professor of Art and Design. Prior to UMass, she was on the faculty of the University of New Hampshire. Considering the role her teaching and her students play in her practice, Schireson says in part, "I am eager to adapt what I teach to help them answer new problems they want to solve creatively. It keeps me on my toes, always on the lookout for new artists to share with them or material combinations that I may not use in my own practice. Working with graduate students increases this engagement because our exchange of ideas feels like working in a lab together, and then alumni become colleagues, so it grows exponentially. Teaching at a research university like UMass Dartmouth gives me access to new ideas across disciplines which is such a benefit."

Schireson is an impressive contemporary artist and academic whose paintings reflect her signature sense for form and color as well as her art historical research. Her solo show promises to impress.



CADE TOMPKINS PROJECTS



*PHOTO: Michael Rose*

Schireson's solo exhibition, *Bright Ground*, will be on view at Cade Tompkins Projects at 198 Hope Street (entrance on Fones Alley) from May 3 to August 31, 2025. There will be a reception with the artist on May 3 from 12-5 pm.