



Discovering the Sublime with Color Field Painter Ruth Pastine

Ruth Pastine would like to share her experience of painting with you—that is, a “very vital, very current, very explosive moment of discovery,” as the artist has said. With her latest exhibition at Edward Cella Art & Architecture, titled “The Inevitability of Truth,” Pastine builds on her practice by diversifying her exploratory color field series to include new color combinations and geometric abstractions, illuminating further her creative process and philosophical concerns.



The seven oil paintings on view at Edward Cella employ contrasting hues, defined by bands of color that form concentric square or diamond patterns, or vertical gradations. Through sets of select color combinations, Pastine reveals the essential tensions that drive her work: surface and depth, light and matter, materiality and immateriality, the finite and the limitless.

Born and raised in New York, Pastine now resides in a creative community in Ojai, east of Santa Barbara, CA with her husband, artist Gary Lang. Her work—and in particular her concern with temperature, light, and spatial interplay—points to the influence of James Turrell, an integral member of the Southern California-based Light and Space movement. Her paintings contain countless brush strokes, resulting in color-saturated canvases that take several months to complete.

Perhaps most fundamental to grasping Pastine’s work is an understanding of her meditative process. “With each new series of paintings there is the opportunity to challenge my process to advance and chart new work,” she recently told Artsy. “This demands letting go, and accepting the free fall of the unknown, and risking failure. The unknown is always at the edge of discovery, and is the onramp to new work.”

Not easily captured through photographs, Pastine’s paintings have a transcendental quality when viewed in person. Her carefully chosen palette becomes energized, each hue reverberating in tandem to create an evolving and unexpected result. Indeed, Pastine insists that her process “transforms the materiality of the hand-painted surface into an optically immaterial experience.” It is in this way that her works transcend their canvases and invite discussion of the philosophical and the sublime.

-Rachel Will, September 29, 2015

