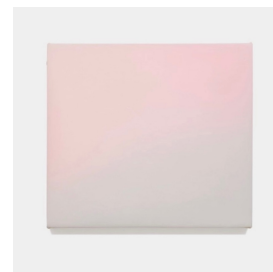
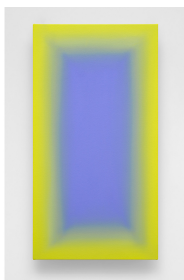
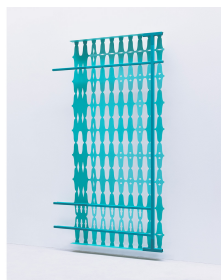


ABATTOIR



***Practically Monochrome:* Michelle Grabner, Paul O’Keeffe, Ruth Pastine, Shawn Powell, Maximillian Schubert**

September 19 - October 31, 2026

Opening reception with the artists 5:00 - 7:00 pm, Saturday, September 19

Science and spirituality, absolutism and relativity, idea and object, sensation and perception.

Artists from across the globe have explored the single-colored work for centuries, which can embrace and hold that these contrasting descriptions are equally present and plausible in a single work of art. In recent times, such image production has played a crucial role in bringing the monochrome into critical discourse on the nature of painting itself. In the Western cannon, Suprematism of Kazimir Malevich, form and function at the Bauhaus, Minimalism and Specific Objects, perception and philosophy of California Light and Space, are among these movements.

For *Practically Monochrome*, Abattoir highlights three gallery artists working in a monochrome mode with one from New York and one from Los Angeles, each motivated by diverse interests. Beyond theory, this installation is designed to activate the gallery space; to have the works interact together and therein to illuminate similarities and differences among them. What defines a painting, or a sculpture are questions that have interested artists making monochromatic works since the mid-20th century, and which are borne out in the work on view. Several artists here challenge traditional formats enhanced by the monochromatic treatment. Yet throughout the show, what seems inflexible may ultimately prove to hold both supposition and doubt.

Michelle Grabner is a multimedia artist whose wide-ranging catalog of work is supported by a rigorous conceptual base and tempered with a love of materials and techniques all her own. Her formative work in painting and sculpture lifts patterns of Americana into something other, an artwork that questions the economic valuation of an art marketplace. Repetition and difference have shaped her practice, as she deftly turns the gingham or hand crocheted blanket into something other. We are showing three works including a titanium white painting, a study in textural surface, and two glazed ceramic sculptures, one on the wall, the other propped against the wall. Her porcelain work consists of casts of quotidian objects—here a roasting pan, and a workplace Caution sign—upending the purpose of the functional object in its material fabrication.

Paul O’Keeffe is a sculptor who has in recent years moved his work off the floor to the wall, shifting a study of abstraction, weight, and verticality 45 degrees, flipping that investigation on its head. Earlier large-scale works were free-standing monochrome pieces sharing the viewer’s space, while the largest sculpture, *Pantella I*, is unapologetically

ABATTOIR

vertical, architectural, with a secondary human body reference. Its sprayed enamel surface shifts in tone from light to deeper green across the open filigreed sculpture, underscoring shifting perception. Most importantly in this context, O’Keeffe’s diffusion of the monochrome is a treatment taken up by other artists in the exhibition. Relativity and nuance, as opposed to the absolute and the certain, imbue an expansiveness into the gallery experience. O’Keeffe has spoken of his early love of Irish medieval manuscripts, of South Asian decorative architecture, iconography which intermingles with the modernist underpinnings in his work.

The Los Angeles based painter **Ruth Pastine** began her career in New York where she studied in the Hunter College MFA program, known for its strong abstract painting curriculum. She relocated to California and pursued a reductive painting practice intent upon evoking the meditative sublime through her exacting surface treatment and installations responsive to different architectural environments. She, more than the others, enlists the monochromatic palette to create different emotional and spiritual states for the viewer. Thus, Pastine provides the artistic throughline from the minimalism of New York to the California Light and Space movement prevalent during the 1960s and ‘70s. Many of the artist’s paintings are very large and filling the viewer’s field of vision physically and psychically. The oil paintings in the exhibition are on the domestic scale, encouraging close looking for an intimate experience. And, they complicate the monochrome label by shifting between two color ways, bringing the eye out from the profound center now framed by the nuanced soft glow of the lighter edge.

Shawn Powell also graduated from the Hunter MFA program but remained in New York and developed a painting practice informed by his art historical interest in 20th century abstraction. Unlike Pastine, Powell employs tongue in cheek humor to honor those artists he admires; Olivier Mosset, Niele Toroni, Daniel Buren, and the subsequent generation of geometric abstraction including Peter Halley. Powell’s uninflected monochrome paintings are the perfect foil for an intellectual, humorous interpretation of weighty arguments about the meaning of painting and the value of art. Thus, the elegant pale pink tondo assumes a layered identity as a slice of luncheon meat with the inclusion of the red border suggesting a sausage casing. Painting as object overrules painting as window, especially in these beautifully crafted shaped canvases.

Powell takes up the structuralist argument that art is sign and symbol. The surfaces are sublime in their exactitude, expanding their reach through intellectual historical references. Art and the artist’s ability to change and potentially to shape cultural understanding—how one reads art at any moment—is of paramount importance.

Maximillian Schubert, based in New York, also makes paintings as sculpture, evidenced by his Dissolves series of resin-based work. These paintings are cast, constructed by building layers of paint suspended in resin. The final effect is of a glowing field of color, absorbing and reflecting light as the viewer shifts position in front of the work. Based in a conceptual practice—Schubert works in sculpture and installation as well as painting—the Dissolve pieces gracefully capture the ethereal nature of the partially monochrome. They propose rather than declare, an experience beyond the earthbound.

Images:

1. Michelle Grabner, *Untitled*, 2025, porcelain, 19 x 13 inches. Photo courtesy Abattoir Gallery.
2. Paul O’Keeffe, *Pantella I*, 2025-26, steel, flashe paint, 69.75 x 40.5 x 3.75 in. Photo courtesy the artist.
3. Ruth Pastine, *Violet (Yellow)*, *Core Series*, 2021, oil on canvas on beveled stretcher, 34 x 18 x 2.5. Photo courtesy the artist.
4. Shawn Powell, *Pink Monochrome with Red Frame (SIDE View)*, 2025, acrylic on canvas, 36 x 36 inches. Photo courtesy the artist.
5. Maximilian Schubert, *Untitled (Dissolve)*, 2025, Cast acrylic polyurethane, acrylic, and enamel paint, 18 x 20 inches (45.72 x 50.8 cm). Photograph by Marc Tatti. Courtesy of the artist and Off Paradise, New York.