

A Group Show at Edward Cella's New Location Allows Painting to Be Itself

ARTSY EDITORIAL

MAY 14TH, 2015 8:35 PM

At “Unbound,” the new group show at L.A.’s Edward Cella Art & Architecture, there’s a double entendre at play. The show’s title encapsulates the idea that each of the painters in the show represents a sort of non-traditional style of painting, and are therefore “unbound” to a historical link—and it also refers to the gallery’s large new location in Culver City, where it recently moved following six years in the Miracle Mile area.



Ruth Pastine *Blue Orange 4-S7272 Square Diamond*, 2015, oil on canvas, 72 x 72 inches

Perhaps the one thing that unites the paintings in “Unbound” is their size. The show features new large-scale works by eight artists. Highlights include Mara De Luca’s *Ramona 3* (2015), which shows an abstract landscape-like image that resembles a fiery L.A. sunset; Ruth Pastine’s *Blue Orange 4-S7272 Square Diamond* (2015), a beautiful optical color study in glowing blue; and Spencer Lewis’s *Une étude de femme d’après nature (After Villers)* (2015), a massive canvas propped up by a structure that on the verso reveals a scene straight from an artist’s studio, complete with an art magazine on a paint splattered chair.

The other works in the show serve to underscore the variety in the program, which is a sophisticated group of artists that represent a strange middle ground in painting today. The show as a whole, feels monumental and disorienting, the artists using every inch of their canvases to create abstractions, representational works, and something in between.

Jeffrey Vallance’s work *McCarran* (2015) is a sort of symbol for the show—the Los Angeles artist, who is legendary for his spiritual performances and conceptual work, has painted a panel that is mysterious and appealing at once. A piece of the Caesars Palace casino logo peaks out from behind a swirling, woodgrain-like coat of paint, while a talismanic triangle—painted in white in a way that the triangle drips all the way from the top—sits symbolically on the surface.

It’s an unconventional painting, for sure, but amongst the grouping of artists all creating on different wavelengths, it feels just like another intriguing piece to a puzzle that isn’t forced make a picture.

—Maxwell Williams

“Unbound” is on view at Edward Cella Art and Architecture, Los Angeles, May 9–Jun. 13, 2015.