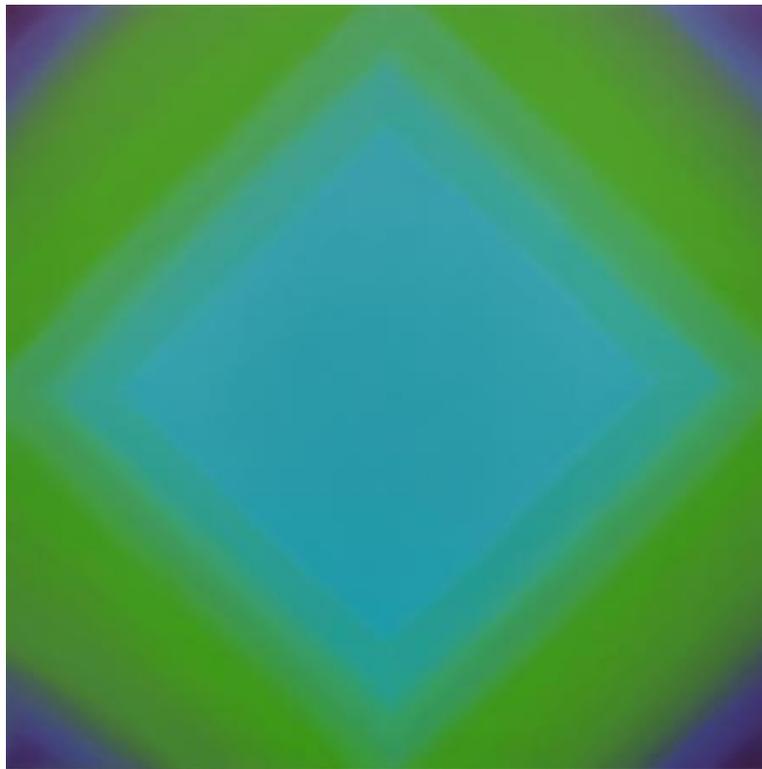


Los Angeles Times

Review: What is truth? One painter's mesmerizing new show offers an answer

By David Pagel – September 29, 2015



Ruth Pastine's "Inevitability of Truth 1-S7272 Square Diamond" (2015), oil on canvas on beveled stretcher, 72 inches by 72 inches.

At a time when the idea of truth is derided for being authoritarian, if not downright fascistic, it's refreshing to read the title of Ruth Pastine's 13th solo show in Southern California: "The Inevitability of Truth."

It flies in the face of the rabid relativism that defines so much contemporary intellectual life, which seems to have gone overboard in opposing the knee-jerk certainty of contemporary political discourse with a close-mindedness all its own.

Pastine's six oils on canvas in the main gallery of Edward Cella Art & Architecture make the world safe for truth, providing so many slippery pleasures, mesmerizing delights and stimulating ambiguities that you can't help but wonder why truth got a bad name in the first place.

Each of Pastine's paintings is a perfect square. Four measure 5 feet on a side. A wide band of aqua, blue or pink extends from the top to the bottom of each. Along the left and right edges, narrower bands of similar tints shift across the spectrum, sometimes subtly and sometimes boldly.

The compositions of the two 6-footers are built around central diamonds. Each is surrounded by concentric bands of intense color.

To stand before Pastine's paintings is to see, pretty quickly, that geometric perfection and ongoing experience do not overlap. Her vertical compositions appear to be tall rectangles, not squares. Her diamond-shaped compositions include all sorts of wonkiness, particularly in their corners, where they seem to be serenely out of step with themselves.

Pastine's paintings find truth by getting rid of preconceived ideas and making room for new ones. Over and over again.

Edward Cella Art & Architecture, 2754 S. La Cienega Blvd., Los Angeles, (323) 525-0053, through Oct. 17. Closed Sundays and Mondays. www.edwardcella.com