

ABATTOIR

Headspace—a painting show

March 4 – April 15, 2023

Abattoir presents a show of painters addressing the canvas as a site for inquiry and personal reflection. Headspace suggests an indeterminate atmosphere offering opportunity to focus minutely or expand universally. As applied to painting, it can address the relevance of traditional canvas painting and the viewer's experiential relationship to a painting (as opposed to large-scale art and public space). It eschews contemporary technology and presentation formats, slowing down the immediate nature of image consumption. As an uninflected region, it can be a political or philosophical space. It can be a place for artists to make paintings about nothing at all.

The six artists are all working beyond the boundaries of the New York-Chicago-Los Angeles art centers, geographically focused on the gallery's Cleveland location as a base. The artists, three working in Ohio, one in central Pennsylvania, one in upstate New York, one in northern Connecticut—all use their work to explore states of interiority, posing questions rather than seeking fixed solutions or the absolute. They have the luxury of spending time on various questions—how does their painting define them as individuals and, in turn, how can they locate themselves in relation to history as well as to the present moment.

Eleanor Conover, who teaches at Dickinson College, (PA) makes shaped paintings on handmade beveled stretchers formed into polygons, bringing the painting/object dichotomy to the fore. Her canvases are tied to the land in layered histories--material, geological, and construction. Those histories bring new interpretations of mid-20th century abstraction to a new moment.

Georgia Elrod works in upstate New York. She contemplates the meaning of individual, physical identity in her paintings, which explore these ideas in compositions of overlapping snippets of bodily forms and abstract passages. In *Frosti*, a framed window/notebook page reveals cartoonish breasts/mountains, covered with falling snow. Brushed dry paint and abrupt changes in scale draw the viewer directly into her material vision.

Fox Hysen is a painter and teacher based in Norfolk, CT. Excerpts from her essay, *Groups are like clumps of dirt*, 2021: "An art object has the ability to transform an environment, to condition the space

phenomenologically and affectively – in other words art can change the mood of space, it can bring up different thoughts and feelings.”

Matthew Kolodziej, Professor of Art at University of Akron, combines analog and digital scaffolding in his paintings, whose compositions taken from observation are filtered through the computer and reconfigured into virtual spaces on the canvas. *“Combining walking and collection is a means of using chance encounters with artifacts to define and disrupt compositional choices.”*

Scott Olson, based In Kent, reinvigorates the history of abstraction in work which comprises painting on wood, canvas, and paper. Known for his adoption of Renaissance painting preparation, he uses framing and presentation to foreground scale and emotional tonalities in his practice.

Emil Robinson, based in Cincinnati, paints from life, yet his compositions are assembled in such a way as to make the literal appear wondrous and imaginary. His subject matter may mine subjects common in 19th century art--still-life, the tamed landscape, the artist’s studio-- but invokes a strangeness and contemplation that would never be mistaken for historicism. *“It is the mutability of space through careful observation [that] takes working from life in a new direction.”*