

Art in America

Review of Exhibitions

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James Hayward at CUE Art Foundation.

This was California painter James Hayward's first solo exhibition in New York in 16 years. The show, curated by fellow artist Mike Kelley, consisted of 12 monochrome paintings, each titled *Abstract* and assigned a number. All the works are oil on canvas backed on wood panel.

The paintings are made up of individual brushstrokes that cross each other, delineating short arcs. Hayward builds up his compositions layer by layer, with each new brushstroke canceling out the one underneath. The result is a relief-like surface of heavy impasto. Hayward is a subtle colorist, working with a palette that ranges from muted olive gray to mustard yellow and reds and blues that are close to primary. The variation of surface effects, with scoops and furrows accented by shadows and highlights, brings further nuance to the monochrome format.

Like others before him, Hayward has reduced painting to its most basic means. In his hands the canvas becomes a kind of experiment, an investigation of the possibilities engendered by the piling up of individual acts across the painting's surface. As you study one of his works, a certain logic emerges from the seemingly spontaneous marks. Individual brushstrokes work like fractals to yield an overall pattern. The result can

appear somewhat disheveled, but these process-oriented paintings ultimately resolve into a satisfying and elegant balance, reinforced by their iconic frontality. Hayward has made a significant contribution to the art of pure painting.

- Donald Lindeman

James Hayward: *Abstract #95*, 2005, oil on canvas on wood panel, 58 x 48 inches; at Cue.

