



Through their almost unreasonable color palette and off-kilter geometry, Ann Pibal's paintings command their surroundings in a way that belies their intimate scale. Unusual and sophisticated, her distinct sensibility for color is evidently the result of a deep and ongoing investigation, for which she draws inspiration from sources as diverse as Joseph Albers, digital design, and American and French textiles. The logic of each of Pibal's compositions develops organically and hinges on a subtle asymmetry. The work makes a confident claim for a territory between by-the-book, hard-edge painting and a Blinky Palermo wonkiness of form. The nuanced calibration of strange geometry and strange color opens a pictorial space that is far richer than one would at first expect to encounter with these seemingly straightforward paintings.

Central to Pibal's practice is the concept of painting as a way of thinking: "Rather than settling on certain motifs, the work develops as a rolling question." She sets up certain parameters which frame this ongoing question, and in which she works through problems, tests ideas, considers choices, and attempts new solutions. She responds to, creates, and navigates these issues using the particular language of abstraction that she is continually developing. She always paints with acrylic on aluminum panel, but selects a panel with new dimensions for every piece. Within these self-imposed limits, Pibal finds remarkable new variations and possibilities, continually creating surprising compositions and color combinations. In her most recent paintings, she allows a more gestural brushstroke to enter the lexicon of her work. The introduction of this technique to her characteristic masked edges and smooth monochromatic fields creates a charged juxtaposition that collapses into compact but explosive battlefields, two opposing poles of abstraction: a sharp minimalist order and a vivid expressionist emotion.

Without privileging one source over another, Pibal's work alludes to abstract painting's robust history, architecture, and landscape, as well as the sublime. These paintings also draw from the natural world in their sense of infinite space and references to the line of the horizon, as well as in the transitional, crepuscular sense of light that Pibal attempts to capture. In all its facets, the work implies a shifting, non-settling, ongoing process. Each painting offers a wealth of possibilities, forever opening up into a world larger than itself. One might think of their intersecting lines, their flat and varied spaces, as maps – ones leading us, as the poet E.E. Cummings wrote, to "somewhere [we] have never travelled, gladly beyond..."

- Donald Johnson-Montenegro