

Jon Pestoni

*More Bermuda Than Pizza*

April 11 - May 9 , 2026

*Show up in a tux. Wear the tux like athletic shorts: casually, comfortably, inconspicuously. Be stylish and blend in with the house-plant. Jon Pestoni's first Los Angeles solo exhibition in nearly ten years superimposes incongruous modes. Any embarrassment regarding meticulous labor is tempered by a mysterious effervescence. It's hard to be this easy.*

*A complex network of rules help Pestoni reach results just beyond his eyesight. There's a consistent logic to the beginning of each painting, but then the material takes over. When one compositional component becomes too dominant, it must be off-set. Pestoni perpetually reinvents each work with disruptions, formal boundaries, and mistakes. Any figuration is an unintended arrival, painted in and then painted out again. His approach contains both truth telling and avoidance of accountability. We can't really know who is responsible for what -- Pestoni or the paint.*

*With one size brush, regularly replaced as the bristles wear down, Pestoni limits himself to the gesture of the wrist. No mark exceeds beyond this range. Large gestures are made of tiny increments, slowed down and transparent. The wrist gesture contains an intimacy like handwriting or watercolor. Built up through deductive lines, each mark is immediate. Visual rhymes emerge accidentally. Sometimes layered brushwork starts to look like fingerprints. Sometimes it is fingerprints.*

*Maybe the wrist isn't about truth, but accuracy. Many of these works are monochromatic. You can buy these colors. They've been applied directly from the jar. Instead of mixing on the palette, Pestoni eliminates any forethought. His restricted color range enhances subtleties of line, gesture, and luminosity. The monochrome doesn't make the paintings more minimal, instead they are*

*instead they are more detailed, elaborate, and alive. He's looking for expansiveness through focus. Green on red, white over yellow -- all the mixing recorded onto the surface itself.*

*These paintings feel like a whole world. The experience is immersive and generative, like scenes unfolding in the mind of a reader. The ground is as important as the subject, it's not just the thing that's behind. There are hundreds of underpaintings on each panel, but they function like a bit of turmeric residue in the kitchen, a barely there aftertaste or golden tinge.*

*Pestoni preserves an acidity that works as a throughline to his older work. These paintings aren't overly gestural, you don't know what they're about at first glance. They're not overly restrained, in a way that shuts out interpretation. Pestoni doesn't want gesture, but he wants discursiveness. He doesn't want the future, but he wants the past to be the future, drenched in a tropical hue.*

— Ruby Elliott Zuckerman

Jon Pestoni (b. 1969, St. Helena, CA) lives and works in Los Angeles. Pestoni holds an MFA from the University of California, Los Angeles and a BA from University of California, Berkeley. Recent solo exhibitions include Jon Pestoni at Broadway Gallery, New York (2022) and Some Years at the Cleveland Museum of Art (2016). Selected two-person and group exhibitions include Pure Abstractions with Kent Familton at Le Maximum (2022), Rosebud, Matthew Marks Gallery, Los Angeles (2019), and Trace of Existence, Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing (2016).