

PAUL SIETSEMA

18 October – 20 December 2025

79 rue du Temple, 75003 Paris

Opening Reception: Saturday 18 October, 6 – 8 pm



Paul Sietsema, *Arrangement*, 2025. Enamel on linen; 48 x 48 x 1 1/8 in. (121.9 x 121.9 x 2.9 cm).

Marian Goodman Gallery Paris is pleased to present Paul Sietsema's second solo exhibition in France from 18 October to 20 December 2025. This exhibition brings together new works and older works, including two 16mm films. As seen throughout the exhibition, Sietsema's work navigates the complex status of representation, exploring how meaning is constructed at the intersection of image and material. If art is a type of cultural language, Sietsema takes a dialectic approach that negates, disables, or redirects the natural flow of communication.

Seven new works created over the past year will be shown on the ground floor gallery. At first glance, the subject of each is a rendering of something familiar—a telephone, coin, paintbrush, et al—and yet, through the many layers of distance intrinsic to Sietsema's process, these images behave as ghosts or containers of those very representations. These reliquaries reflexively stretch to relocate their relationship to function as time progresses them through an evolving system that fluctuates based on cultural and secular value. In *Object painting*, 2025, an obsolete machine physiologically designed for the human body to process labor into language is emblemized. The unplugged rotary telephone represented in *Arrangement*, 2025, defaults to the metaphysical plane of painting while picturing an out-of-reach potential for actual transmission and exchange.

In these works, Sietsema either depicts or presents raw materials: metal, natural fabrics, and paint in their most direct forms. In line with this, reflecting on the symbolic value of paint, *Gray painting*, 2025, is an abstract, monochromatic composition riffing on concrete materialism that leaves parts of the primed canvas exposed. This piece looks back to a former work by Sietsema as well as abstract painting in the mid-twentieth century, in which painting evolved from the realm of the spiritual and political into a cultural currency with symbolic value. Similarly, *Action painting (black line)*, 2025, and *Action painting (white on black)*, 2025, draw upon the iconic status of the autonomous painterly gesture in Western abstract painting and the value attributed to it. *Action painting (black line)* features the painted image of a coin smearing paint across the surface of the canvas, likening the commerce and exchange value of painting to a material action.

Both *Action painting (black line)* and *Figure ground study (white on white)*, 2025 were painted on the versos of knockoff Jackson Pollock paintings purchased from online auction aggregators, complete with forged provenance stamps. In *Figure ground study (white on white)*, 2025, and *Arrangement* (2025), we find shards of broken compact discs and LPs soaked in paint, the former objects are literally and metaphysically “muted” by the various interventions upon them, marking their transformation from object to image.

On view in the basement of the gallery are a selection of past works from 2009-2020. The date paintings 1992, 2015, and 1994, 2015, are created using brushed-on latex masking fluid and a broken airbrush, among other pre-digital photo retouching tools and methods, to depict minimal slabs of stone. The presentation of the dates on the stones conveys the scale of a personal rather than a collective history. Similarly, *Collection 5*, 2016, stages personally collected museum coat check tags made of enamel paint on paper, embedded with dust from the artist's studio. Over many visits, the artist routinely exchanged a garment of clothing for a coat check tag, often inscribed with the museum's name. At first, a garment was left accidentally, and later the artist deliberately abandoned various articles of his own clothing, in effect seeding museums around the world with Sietsema's 'works.'

In another work that derives in part from the effects of studio labor, *Anticultural Positions*, 2009, is a silent, black-and-white film displaying images of residual marks found throughout Sietsema's workspace. This imagery is paired with subtitles taken from a 1951 lecture by Jean Dubuffet in which he champions formlessness and ambiguity as vital to the artistic process. This film was first screened at The New School in New York and presented as an unannounced replacement for an artist lecture while Sietsema was on a plane back to the West Coast.

Both 16mm films on view exemplify the artist's original medium of choice when examining the constructs of materiality and their larger relationship to media. In *Telegraph*, 2012, found shards of wood are used to form and embody language. Connected through a series of dissolves, the scraps of wood are configured and reconfigured within a repetitive, minimal structure that eventually spells out the phrase "L/E/T/T/E/R/T/O/A/Y/O/U/N/G/P/A/I/N/T/E/R." The work explores the idea of an artwork as a transmission by diminishing the order of linguistic legibility and emphasizing the inherent abstraction of each letterform.

A precedent to the pieces on the ground floor, *Action painting (1977)*, 2017, and *Action painting (City National)*, 2016, are composed of a single gesture made with an object scraped or swiped through a bed of paint, respectively a coin and a credit card. The physical article remains embedded in the dried paint, leading the monetary subject to simultaneously lose and gain certain value in its transference into an artwork. For *Blue Picasso*, 2020, Sietsema silkscreened an original Guggenheim poster onto the canvas and then overprinted it with the color of the original border to create a monochrome mask over the image. This digital technique suggestively quiets the image, slowing or even stopping the original function of the poster.

Paul Sietsema (born 1968 in California) lives and works in Los Angeles. He graduated from the University of California, Los Angeles in 1999 and the University of California, Berkeley in 1992. Numerous institutions have organized solo exhibitions devoted to Sietsema's work, including Nouveau Musée National de Monaco (2015); Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver (2014); Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (2013); Wexner Center for the Arts in Columbus, Ohio (2013); Mercer Union, Toronto (2013); Kunsthalle Basel (2012); The Drawing Room, London (2012); Schinkel Pavilion, Berlin (2010); Cubitt, London (2010); Midway Contemporary Art, Minneapolis (2010); Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid (2009); Museum of Modern Art, New York (2009); San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2008); de Appel Foundation, Amsterdam (2008); and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2003).

Press Contact
 Raphaële Coutant, Director of Communications
raphaele@mariangoodman.com
 +33 (0)1 48 04 70 52