

Sarah Pillen (B)

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From the Field

There is a place where I live and work, but it is not only a place.

Since 2011, my life has been held within a mountainous region in the south of Spain. The land is sparse—almond trees, olive trees, dry soil, wind moving across open ground. Few people remain. What persists is a quiet presence, something that cannot be reduced to a landscape.

The Sierra Nevada stands in the distance, with Mulhacén often carrying snow when everything below is bare. It gives a sense of scale, of time beyond measure. Here, cycles are not abstract. They pass through the body.

The light is uncompromising. The clear luminosity of the Mediterranean reveals and erases at once. Colors are never fixed. They tremble, fade, return. What is seen is always in the process of becoming something else.

I do not work on this landscape. I work within it.

Walking is part of the practice. Returning is part of the practice.

Waiting is part of the practice. Small things are gathered—elements, tones, traces. Not as objects, but as carriers of a certain charge.

In the studio, they are not represented. They are released.

Painting becomes a place of holding presence. Forms emerge, but they do not belong to me. They appear, hold for a moment, then dissolve back into the field from which they came. Moving between figuration and abstraction, a kind of quiet alchemy takes place.

The work moves through layers—covering, revealing, withholding. Each surface holds a fragile memory of what lies beneath. What is visible is only a fraction.

There is an exchange taking place.

Between presence and absence.

Between the visible and the sensed.

In my textile works, I attune to something that cannot be named, but can be felt—the energy exchanged between body and the field.

“From the field” is not a description.

It is a position of being.

The work does not depict the field.

It unfolds from it.

Sarah Pillen