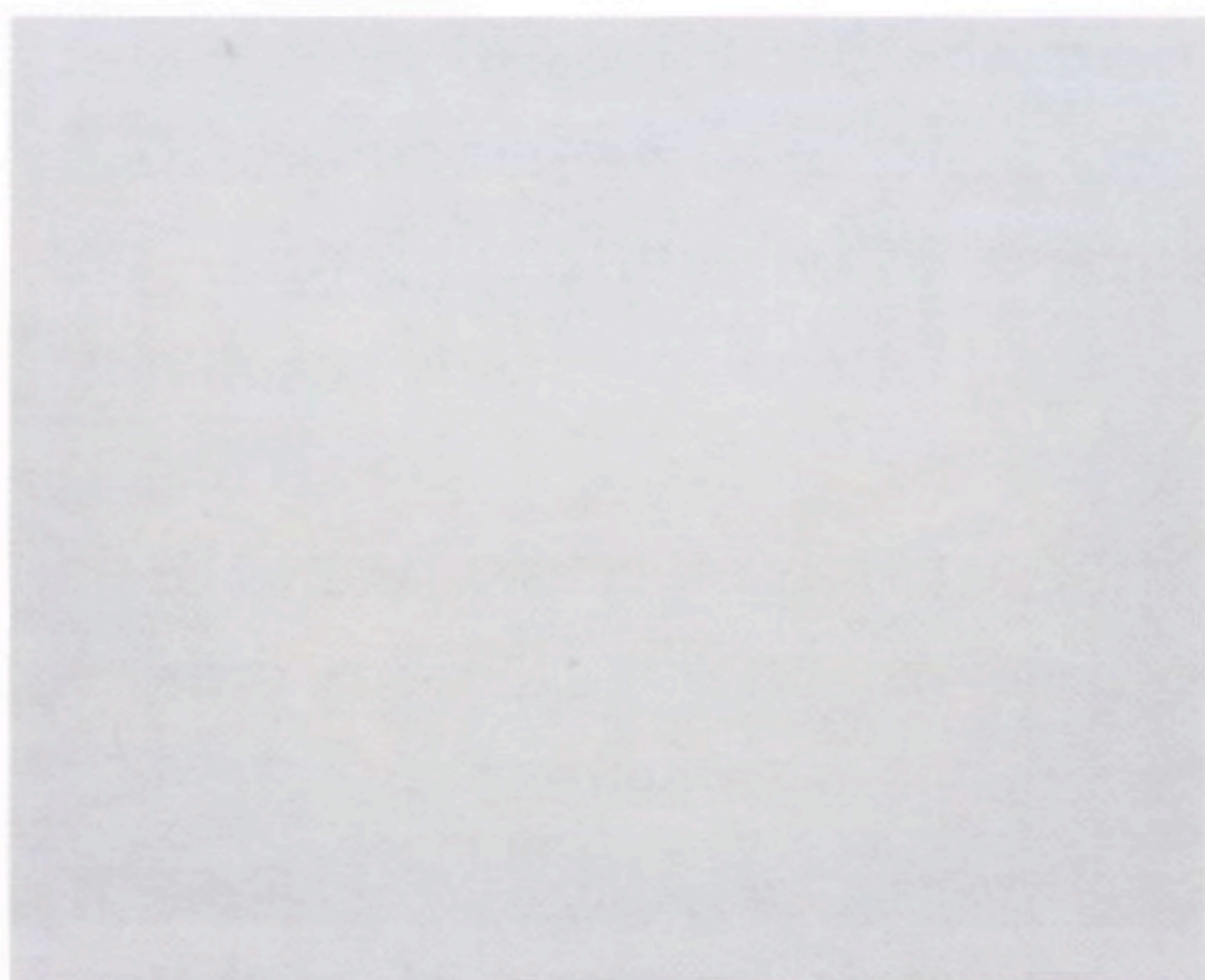


TOM CHAMBERLAIN

Aurel Scheibler, Berlin



TOM CHAMBERLAIN, *No Matter*, 2008. Acrylic on canvas, 165 x 180 cm. Courtesy Aurel Scheibler, Berlin.

Tom Chamberlain's first solo exhibition in Germany offers two large color-field paintings and three meticulously executed drawings. At first the paintings *No Matter* and *Lapse* (2008) read as gray and white respectively — but look longer and you find myriad coalescing colors that resonate with such kinetic energy that spots dance before your eyes.

Chamberlain's paintings appear to possess an inner light — an effect born from their painstaking process of formation and execution. First Chamberlain prepares the ground, painting and sanding hundreds of

times until the surface is almost a non-surface, so devoid of tooth and materiality. Only when he has come as close as he dares to erasing this ground does the artist begin to paint. The process becomes a philosophical exercise in working out what it means to bring something or take something away.

Chamberlain plays with our perception: we can't focus on his paintings because their surfaces are almost translucent and our eyes struggle for somewhere to land. The feeling is comparable to looking out to sea on a foggy day; depth of field and horizon are unfathomable. In his drawings, Chamberlain again succeeds in wrong-footing us. *That was Then I* (2008) consists of hundreds, if not thousands, of tiny watercolor dots. The minutiae of detail demands we draw close, but once we do this we are lost, the dots tracing a pattern we cannot follow, constantly evading our desperate desire to count, trace or order them. Chamberlain's work is mesmerizing because it's paradoxical. Though executed with the utmost control and precision, it pertains to anarchy.

Jane Neal