

# 'Yellow Squares' opens in Newport

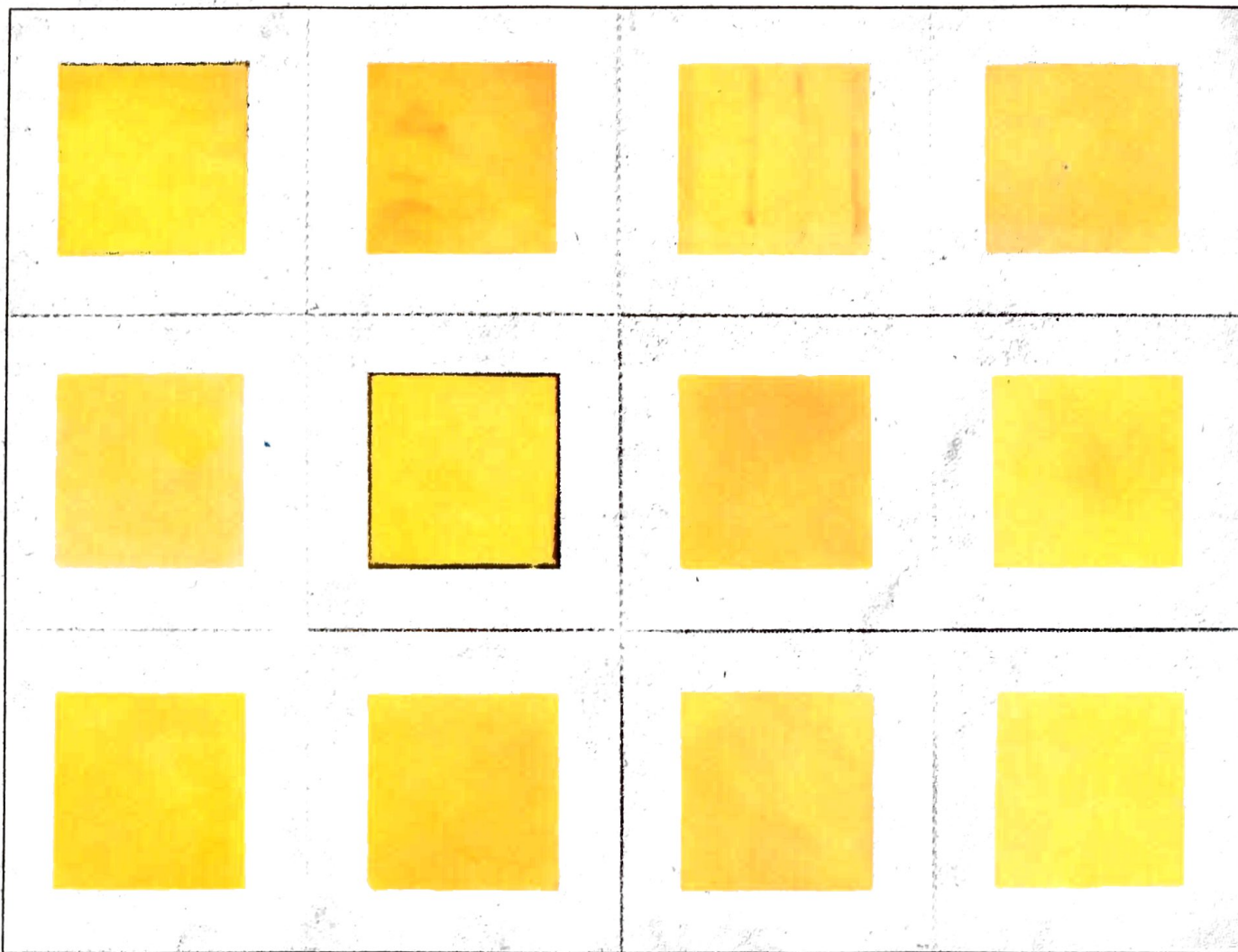
The Oregon Coast Council for the Arts welcomes Mathew's Boulay's exhibition, "Yellow Squares, or the Opposite of War," from May 4-26 in the Upstairs Gallery at the Newport Visual Arts Center.

Boulay's exhibition will include a series of oil and acrylic paintings on canvas, featured in an installation-like setting. A First Friday opening reception will be held on May 4, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., with the artist talking about his work at 6:30 p.m.

Boulay has studied in Baltimore, New York and Madrid, and his work is informed by his experiences as a Marine in Iraq. He holds a Ph.D. from Columbia University's Teachers College, has led the campaign for a new G.I. bill, and is the founder of the nonprofit National Summer Learning Association.

"Why paint a square?" Mathew Boulay asks. "Because the square is simple and straightforward and honest. The square doesn't deceive us — the square simply is what it is, and that's encouraging."

Boulay's exhibition and in-



**"Yellow Squares, or the Opposite of War,"** by Mathew's Boulay, is the name of a new exhibition in the Upstairs Gallery at the Newport Visual Arts Center. (Courtesy photo)

stallation references the place that the painted square holds in the history of contem-

porary art. Boulay harkens back to the Russian avant-garde artist Kazimir Malev-

ich, who, in 1915, unveiled a

YELLOW SQUARES on Page B2

# YELLOW SQUARES

Continued from page 1

radically abstract painting of a black square on a white canvas. Malevich's "Black Square" was a dramatic break from the hundreds of years of representational painting, and historians still refer to it as the first abstract painting, says Boulay. "Malevich himself boasted that it represented the 'zero point of painting.'"

Boulay also references the minimalist artist Robert Ryman, who painted a series of "white squares," which the artist described as not being about anything other than what's right before your eyes.

More recently, Boulay sug-

gests, the Iranian-born artist Shirazeh Houshiary created Veil, a black square that she presents as a protest against knowing, a kind of commentary on how difficult it is to perceive the nature of reality.

"And so my yellow squares? I came home from the war in Iraq confused and angry," Boulay said. "I came home – that's just it: I came home. A square is just a square, and yet my yellow squares are more than that. My yellow squares are an expression of gratitude, a celebration of the life I get to live."

Boulay lives and works in Salem. His work is typified by his exploration of issues such as collective memory and the experience of war, and his use of materials that are tactile and complicated. He works in multiple media, including

painting and large-scale installations, and frequently engages in inter-textuality with other works from the visual arts, literature, and history.

"As a veteran, I see the present through the lens of our complicated and contradictory history of warfare," he said. "I aim to create art that is interactive, visually appealing and intellectually challenging, and I try to pose questions such as: What is the difference between a piece of art and a monument or memorial? Or, what do we collectively choose to remember and what do we allow ourselves to forget?"

The Upstairs Gallery is open Tuesday through Friday, from noon to 4 p.m. The Newport Visual Arts Center is located at 777 NW Beach Drive.