

GAGOSIAN

February 15, 2017



STERLING RUBY

Opening reception:
Wednesday, March 1, 6–8PM
March 1–April 15, 2017

980 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10075

I am smashing all of my previous attempts and futile, contemporary gestures, placing them into a mortar, and grinding them down with a pestle. If I put all of these remnants into a basin, and it gets taken away from me, then I am no longer responsible for all my misdirected efforts.

—Sterling Ruby

Gagosian is pleased to present new ceramic sculptures and paintings by Sterling Ruby.

In his paintings, collages, sculptures, and videos, Ruby infuses the formal with the abject, allowing materials to melt and overlap in biomorphic and geomorphic aggregations. Ruby's current exhibition features the largest basins that he has produced to date in the *Basin Theology* series, as well as figurative and totemic ceramics that recall common artifacts. Ceramic cradles bear an eerie resemblance to graves, evoking the cyclical nature of human life, and otherwise abstract totems stand upright, like soldiers in formation. These deep, textured vessels contain studio remnants and discarded fragments set beneath viscous glazes. Their variegated surfaces feature coloristic effects resulting from different stages of kiln-firing. In the layered glazes that engulf shards of ceramic debris, vibrant, often eerie, landscapes appear. Entropy gives rise to an entirely new archeological form.

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A similar interplay between organic deterioration and artistic reclamation takes place in Ruby's new paintings. He imposes the past onto the future, and vice versa, adding swathes of oil paint directly over the earlier *YARD paintings*—which he painted in the grounds of his studio, producing littered impressions and cartographic representations. Ruby introduces cardboard and fabric scraps—readymade refuse from the studio—within painted areas of red, white and blue; pale pinks and peaches; bright yellows and oranges; and frosty whites set against charred blacks. Expanding upon themes of horizons, grids, prison bars, and window panes, splattered and stained graphic bands and blocks bisect the paintings, forming vantage points and quadrants that advance and retreat. The smaller scale of the works allows for intimate encounters, while their spatial ambiguity disorients as to whether one is looking out or looking in.

Sterling Ruby was born on an American military base in Bitburg, Germany in 1972, and currently lives and works in Los Angeles. Collections include Museum of Modern Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; MOCA, North Miami; MOCA, Los Angeles; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Montreal Museum of Fine Arts; Tate, London; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; and Moderna Museet, Stockholm.

Solo exhibitions include “CHRON,” The Drawing Center, New York (2008); “Supermax 2008,” MOCA, Los Angeles (2008); “Grid Ripper,” Galleria d’Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Bergamo (2008–09); “Soft Work,” Centre d’Art Contemporain, Geneva (2012, traveled to FRAC Champagne-Ardenne, Reims; Bonniers Konsthall, Stockholm; and Museo d’Arte Contemporanea, Rome); “CHRON II,” Fondazione MEMMO, Rome (2013, traveled to Kunsthalle Mainz); “Droppa Blocka,” Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Ghent (2013); Baltimore Museum of Art (2014); and the Belvedere Museum, Vienna (2016). Ruby participated in the Taipei, Gwangju, and Whitney Biennials in 2014; and “Made in L.A. 2016: a, the, though, only,” the Hammer Museum’s 3rd biennial. A survey show of his ceramics will open at the Des Moines Art Center in 2018. The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA will present the recently acquired *SOFT WORK* installation in April 2017.

Image: *ENGULFED COROLLA*, 2017, acrylic, oil, elastic and cardboard on canvas, 57 × 43 1/2 inches (144.8 × 110.5 cm) © Sterling Ruby Studio. Photo by Robert Wedemeyer.

For further information please contact the gallery at newyork@gagosian.com or at +1.212.744.2313. All images are subject to copyright. Gallery approval must be granted prior to reproduction.

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