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Gagosian New York to Exhibit Work by Sterling Ruby

Exhibition Features New Painting Series, *TURBINE*



Sterling Ruby, *TURBINE. CICADA KILLER.*, 2022, acrylic, oil, and cardboard on canvas, 126 × 96 inches (320 × 243.8 cm) © Sterling Ruby. Photo: Robert Wedemeyer

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I wanted these paintings to feel turbulent, frenetic, and convulsive. I keep asking myself, how can I make something that inevitably reflects the charged time in which we live, to evoke a political tension, without being explicitly bound to that interpretation?

—Sterling Ruby

NEW YORK, November 1, 2022—Gagosian is pleased to announce *TURBINES*, an exhibition of new abstract paintings by Sterling Ruby that represent a convergence of several bodies of work, using different mediums to expand the definitions of painting and collage.

Started in 2021, the *TURBINE* series incorporates the same materials that characterize Ruby's earlier *WIDW* paintings (2016–)—the title is an abbreviation of *window*—yet abandons their stark vertical

divisions in favor of energetic, intersecting diagonals. Making reference not only to turbines and windmills, but also to hurricanes, explosions, fires, war, and geographical boundaries, cardboard components are blasted across the canvas, suggesting that elemental forces are pushing them toward the edges of the frame. Rather than implying the observation of action through a window, the combination of oil paint with bright cardboard swatches is tumultuous, as if a storm has blown the window apart and set its elements in motion.

The *TURBINE* paintings are born from Ruby's desire to make works that are not pictorial, figurative, or didactic, but that still contain recognizable and thought-provoking elements. In its elicitation of speed and devastation—specifically self-destruction—*TURBINES* inevitably evokes the Futurists and Russian Constructivism. Ruby has cited the influence of various works, including Giacomo Balla's painting *The Spell Is Broken* (1920) and El Lissitzky's *Prounenraum (Proun Room)* (1923), which belongs to a series of immersive abstractions that radically reconceive material and space as a metaphor for the societal changes Lissitzky expected from the Russian Revolution. In *TURBINES*, Ruby employs abstraction as a response to contemporary ills, using formal relationships as broad allegories for social and ideological frictions.

Ruby makes the *TURBINE* paintings horizontally, an approach that links them to earlier series such as *BC* (2011–15) and *YD* (2015–16). Borrowing a washing technique he has employed previously in producing textile works, the artist overdyes the canvases in luminous colors before using them to cover his studio floor and allowing them to become crisscrossed by footprints and other marks. Ruby's use of cardboard has similarly evolved; the material first appeared in his practice in the *EXHM* series (2011–14), in which sheets that had functioned to protect surfaces were "exhumed" to become the grounds of collages. In *TURBINES*, the hard edges of the canvases' cardboard fragments are juxtaposed and combined with passages of feathered and smudged paint. The characteristically vibrant palette produces a multihued, sometimes kaleidoscopic effect. The paintings present a sense of flurried motion, which contains indexical traces of Ruby's movements, alongside materials that seem to revolve in a cyclonic state.

Sterling Ruby was born in 1972, holds American and Dutch citizenship, and lives and works in Los Angeles. Collections include the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Tate, London; Centre Pompidou, Paris; and Moderna Museet, Stockholm. Ruby's sculpture *DOUBLE CANDLE* (2018) is installed permanently at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC. Exhibitions include *DROPPA BLOCKA*, Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Deurle, Belgium (2013); *STOVES*, Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature, Paris (2015); Belvedere, Vienna (2016); *Ceramics*, Des Moines Art Center, Iowa (2018, traveled to Museum of Arts and Design, New York); and Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami (2019–20, traveled to Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston). In 2014 he participated in the Gwangju Biennale, Taipei Triennale, and Whitney Biennial. Garments from Ruby's S.R. STUDIO. LA. CA. were included in the Costume Institute's survey of American fashion, *In America: A Lexicon of Fashion*, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (2021–22).

Ruby was named the first artist-in-residence by the Berggruen Arts & Culture initiative as the Nicolas Berggruen Charitable Trust renovates Palazzo Diedo in Venice, for which Ruby will produce a multiyear site-specific installation, *A Project in Four Acts*, culminating in an exhibition in 2024. A solo exhibition of Ruby's work will take place at Concrete at Alserkal Avenue, Dubai, in November 2022.

#SterlingRuby

STERLING RUBY

TURBINES

Opening reception: Thursday, November 10, 6–8pm

November 10–December 23, 2022

522 West 21st Street, New York

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