

# GAGOSIAN

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Gagosian to Present New Paintings by Mark Grotjahn Inspired by Ski Touring in Colorado

*Backcountry* Opens in Gstaad February 13, 2023

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Mark Grotjahn, *Untitled (Backcountry Capri 54.89)*, 2022, oil on cardboard mounted on linen, 55 1/2 × 68 1/4 inches (141 × 173.4 cm) © Mark Grotjahn. Photo: Douglas M. Parker Studio

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**GSTAAD, February 6, 2023**—Gagosian is pleased to announce *Backcountry*, an exhibition of new paintings by Mark Grotjahn opening in Gstaad on February 13, 2023. The works on view represent a continuation of those in Grotjahn’s identically titled 2022 exhibition at Gagosian London.

In his paintings, sculptures, and works on paper, Grotjahn interweaves various modes of abstraction, applying an expansive vocabulary of motifs and techniques to the investigation of color, perspective, seriality, and the sublime. In *Backcountry*, he continues to draw inspiration from rural landscapes and his ski touring and fly-fishing adventures in the backcountry of western Colorado. In several works, he uses white paint—suggesting, perhaps, the feeling of a snowy mountain descent—while darker-toned compositions allude to nocturnal ventures. The scale of the works places them in a direct, visceral relationship to the bodies of both painter and viewer, conveying the unique atmosphere of their inspiration and a sense of awe at the overwhelming grandeur of the natural world.

Rather than aiming to capture a sense of place, Grotjahn’s project here is to communicate the essence of a fleeting but powerful experience, both in nature and in the studio. Through bold, expressive movements and strong carving strokes, the artist prompts the paintings to embody the feeling of his physical actions. The results are emotionally charged and ripe with layers and textures. Grotjahn often disrupts the surfaces of these works with small rolls of paint created from excess impasto—bulbous staccatos within the dense arcs of color.

In the *Backcountry* paintings, Grotjahn demonstrates his ongoing commitment to abstraction; while loosely derived from personal observation of landscape and the natural world, the works do not represent it objectively, confronting viewers instead with a total involvement in varieties of application—line, tone, and texture—and their vivid results. Thus, the artist’s choice of a horizontal format might be seen as reflecting not only the broad visual perspective of a skier, but also as alluding to an ever more complete immersion in his formal process as a whole.

**Mark Grotjahn** was born in Pasadena, California, and raised in Northern California. He lives and works in Los Angeles. Collections include Tate Modern, London; Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam; Pinault Collection, Venice; Dakis Joannou Collection, Athens; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC; Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh; Cleveland Museum of Art; Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Des Moines Art Center, Iowa; Rubell Family Collection, Miami; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; the Broad, Los Angeles; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; and Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Solo exhibitions include *Drawings*, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2005); Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2006); Kunstmuseum Thun, Switzerland (2007); Portland Art Museum, Oregon (2010); Aspen Art Museum, Colorado (2012); *Circus, Circus*, Kunstverein Freiburg, Germany (2014); *Mark Grotjahn Sculpture*, Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas (2014); and *50 Kitchens*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (2018).

#MarkGrotjahn

## **MARK GROTJAHN**

*Backcountry*

Opening reception: Monday, February 13, 12–8pm

February 13–April 1, 2023

Promenade 79, Gstaad

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### **Press**

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