

GAGOSIAN

Gagosian to Present Paintings by Mark Grotjahn in New York

Out of Country Opens at 980 Madison Avenue on September 10, 2024

Press Preview and Artist Tour on September 9 at 10:30am



Mark Grotjahn, *Untitled (Backcountry 55.89)*, 2023, oil on cardboard mounted on linen, 74 3/8 × 94 inches (188.9 × 238.8 cm) © Mark Grotjahn. Photo: Douglas M. Parker Studio

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NEW YORK, August 26, 2024—Gagosian is pleased to announce *Out of Country*, an exhibition of new and recent paintings by Mark Grotjahn at the gallery’s 980 Madison Avenue location in New York. Opening on September 10, *Out of Country* represents the culmination of the *Backcountry* series that has occupied the artist since 2021, and features never before exhibited paintings on white grounds, alongside a single black-ground painting. A press preview and tour with the artist will take place at 10:30am on Monday, September 9.

In his paintings, sculptures, and works on paper, Grotjahn investigates color, perspective, seriality, and the sublime. The concluding entries in the *Backcountry* series featured in this exhibition see him again draw inspiration from the experience of rural American landscapes, specifically those from his ski and fly-fishing tours in the remote backcountry of western Colorado. While the works contain an

element of pictorial representation, hinting at a snowy mountain descent or starlit nocturnal pass, their primary commitment is still to abstraction, specifically the nuanced layering of line, tone, and texture. Continuing to produce variations on an identifiable style and format, Grotjahn builds on a dynamic rhythm that transcends simple visual record to achieve a unique formal and emotional complexity.

The richly expressive paintings in *Out of Country* are dominated by Grotjahn's broken arcs and partial ellipses—as well as by his bold red, yellow, green, and blue coloration—and the centers of their weblike compositions tend to be more densely active than the edges and corners. The artist further disrupts the surfaces with “slugs,” small rolls of paint created from excess impasto. But while still suggestive of an abstracted signature, these additions are applied more sparsely, signaling a shift away from their previously gridlike arrangement and toward a more camouflaged embedding. Grotjahn also continues this work on cardboard mounted on linen—a support that he first employed in his *Face* paintings (2003–17)—using the material as a base to carve into as well as paint on. The cardboard also contributes a distinctive texture of its own that is visible intermittently depending on the thickness of the paint that covers it, occasionally lending the facture a striped, “ploughed” appearance.

As an evolution of the *Capri* series, which Grotjahn began painting in 2016, the Backcountry paintings see him move to clarify his subject, stripping back his line at times while also more densely and aggressively obscuring the picture. In these final paintings of the series, Grotjahn continues his use of structural and gestural strategies rooted in Abstract Expressionism and Minimalism on a robust scale creating a direct, visceral relationship to the form. Through this process he is able to convey a sense of awe of the natural world and an impression of his own discrete experience within it.

Mark Grotjahn was born in Pasadena, California, and raised in Northern California. He 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; 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; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Tate Modern, London; Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam; Pinault Collection, Venice; and Dakis Joannou Collection, Athens. 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

Out of Country

Press preview and artist tour: Monday, September 9, 10:30am

Opening reception: Tuesday, September 10, 6–8pm

September 10–October 19, 2024

980 Madison Avenue, New York

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