



ART-PREVIEW: Blair Thurman



Blair Thurman is an artist who uses paint to capture vibrations from reality and then give them form. Using shaped canvases, a technique Frank Stella initiated in the '60s, Thurman is searching for "A pure way to paint". Upon meeting Steven Parrino in 1988, he was confronted with his work, rectangular paintings, some of which were emptied out, forming the ovoid shape of a motorcycle belt, in which he observed speed, movement, but also a perfect representation of in!nity.

By Dimitris Lempesis
Photo Gagosian Gallery

Blair Thurman in his solo exhibition at Gagosian Gallery in Geneva presents works recalling the pleasures of the road or the silver screen of his childhood era. Blair Thurman combines his personal iconography and his passionate collecting of model cars with an acute awareness of the inherent challenges of painting, resulting in a Pop-Minimalist sensibility infused with tribal patterns and American car culture. His shaped canvases exist on the periphery of both painting and sculpture simultaneously. These recurring references, however, also begin to resemble unrelated forms, to which he alludes in his titles like: "Shades of Pemberton" (2016), "Nite Owl" (2016), and "Hippie Car Spin-Out #3" (2017). "Nite Owl", is a new motif born from the abstracted form of a hubcap, which evolved from one of the "mask" works, is comprised of both "at and curved planes, its clean angles protruding from the wall. With panels in orange, white, and black, it simultaneously evokes Constructivist painting and the graphics of racing, while its title and visible brushstrokes encourage imagining the two circles on either side as the wise bird's eyes. Thurman's work is evidence to the evolution of Abstraction in the '80s and its context, through a double dynamic, both opening the pictorial and symbolic #eld and distancing itself from '60-70s Abstraction and Minimalism. Thurman's abstract work is in line with his visual take on the senses that originated in the theory of vibrations. Just like sound, the light spectrum emits waves that the artist observes in nature and translates subjectively in his work. "Life is characterised by vibration. Without vibration, there is no life. The world in its entirety obeys this law. As individuals, we form complete entities, our organisms are operated by a single engine and this engine's degree of sophistication determines how much we can vibrate, and therefore feel". In car culture, as a part of the contemporary world, Thurman found a formal, living and vibrant form of purity. Although abstraction is based on reality, it simultaneously recodes reality using simple forms. This subjectivity manifested in Thurman's work is also re"ected through his titles, often linked to personal facts, movie references or puns.

Info: Gagosian Gallery, 19 place de Longemalle, Geneva, Duration: 25/1-17/3/17, Days & Hours: Tue-Sat 10:00-18:00, www.gagosian.com