

## ARTIST BLAIR THURMAN BRINGS HIS POP MINIMALISM TO GENEVA

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The artist brings his geometric pieces to the Gagosian Gallery in Geneva.

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An abstract artwork's untamed privilege lies in its ability to let interpretation run wild. What's more, even a full-blown, real-life classic representation can echo abstraction without realizing it—zoom in on Monet's *Water Lilies* series, and you might find your mind meandering through violet hues, lilac haze, and purple fog. When the work in question is a canvas dressed as a sculpture, the effect is even more tantalizing.

Here in Geneva, we're in the thick of winter. The temperature is well below freezing and the wind caresses skins with what feels like raw ice. But past the cobblestones on Place de Longemalle and through the dramatic tinted windows, Gagosian Gallery Geneva feels warmer than ever. It's the opening reception of American artist Blair Thurman, his first in the country (one he "adores") with the gallery and it would be foolish not to recognize him, with his curly, platinum blonde hair, light blueish eyes, expressive lines, a chunky, distressed leather jacket, mega, mega smile—sporadically wearing an ushanka hat.

Thurman is here to present a series of new works, and invites you to rethink the canvas medium: "And now, a bubble burst, And now, a world" (2017) for instance, an acrylic on canvas on wood piece, painted in a warm orange dust color, can symbolize more than one idea: the sun, a racetrack (a common theme in many of Thurman's work), the letter O or the number zero, but also Gustave Courbet's "The Origin of the World" (1866), which sees a naked woman in bed. In fact, this isn't the first time Thurman has alluded to the female form. A lot of his previous works, such as "Calamari Trilogy" (2016), featuring bubble gum pink with lamé traces, are prime examples.

Many art aficionados, a few clueless minds here and there, connoisseurs and collectors alike, gathered to get a feel of the Louisiana-born artist, and the Pop minimalism he delivers quite effortlessly. "There's something fresh and positive about his pieces," said a dark brown-eyed beauty while looking at a cosmic-looking canary yellow, white, and silver imposing canvas. "Circles in circles going round and round. You think it ends but it never does. Infinity," she muses.

Amidst the minks and sables parading up and down and back and forth, it was easy to spot the ones who tried to decipher the many geometrical shapes adopted by Thurman, who has always favored and looked to childhood memories for ingenuity. He is, after all, a "Pop sensitive," according to artist Steven Parrino: many of his trompe l'oeil works echo the likes of Frank Stella and Andy Warhol.

"Is 'Nite Owl' a mask?" one young man wondered while looking at the masquerade-like acrylic-on-canvas-on-wood piece (no, really). Well, that's the beauty of abstract art. When the obvious becomes obsolete, that's when you know you're in the presence of something good.

*Blair Thurman at Gagosian Gallery Geneva runs through March 17, 2017.*

