

Exhibition of new shaped canvas works by Blair Thurman on view at Gagosian, Geneva



Installation view. © Blair Thurman. Courtesy of the artist and Gagosian Gallery. Photography by Annik Wetter.

GENEVA. - [Gagosian](#) is presenting new shaped canvas works by Blair Thurman. This is his first exhibition with the gallery in Switzerland.

Thurman's influences range from Pop art and Minimalism to relics from childhood, popular music, and 1970s cinema. His standardized forms, pulled from slot-car racetracks, architectural frameworks, and found shapes from daily life take on a nostalgic register, the fascinations of boyhood working to render abstract geometries more idiosyncratic and accessible. Thurman transposes the formal details of these everyday objects into the subliminal realm of abstraction.

Repeating previously used motifs and introducing new ones, Thurman produces dimensional paintings recalling the pleasures of the road or the silver screen of his childhood era. He enlarges the concave slots of model racetracks and paints them in bold colors that recall the Spectraflame paint and decals of Hot Wheels cars. These recurring references, however, also begin to resemble unrelated forms, to which he alludes in his titles—including *Shades of Pemberton* (2016), *Nite Owl* (2016), and *Hippie Car Spin-Out #3* (2017). *Nite Owl*, a new motif born from the abstracted form of a hubcap, which evolved from one of the "mask" works, is comprised of both flat 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 eccentric references and private jokes coincide with his serious motivation to give painting an inside edge.

Thurman allows feeling to pervade objectivity. Artist Steven Parrino called him a "Pop Sensitive." Influenced by Parrino, as well as Frank Stella, Andy Warhol, and Nam June Paik, he participates in a dialogue about the limits of image-making by seeking out subjects that have been left out of art history, and presenting them through formal techniques of repetition, light, and contour. His works are static, yet their slopes and junctures brim with latent energy, causing the eyes to move quickly around them—the active gaze standing in for absent racing cars. Thurman refers to the style and significance of his work as its "signature-content" as he investigates the intersection between our cultural environment and our imagined fantasies, examining the memory and poetry embedded in the very act of looking.

Blair Thurman was born in 1961 in New Orleans, Louisiana, and currently lives and works in New York. He received his B.F.A. from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Canada, and his M.F.A. from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. His work is featured in the collections of the Centre national des arts plastiques, Paris; Fonds régional d'art contemporain, France; and the Syz Collection, Switzerland. Recent solo exhibitions include *Le Magasin—Centre National d'Art Contemporain*, France (2014); and *"Honeybadgers,"* Oklahoma City Museum of Art, Oklahoma (2015). Thurman's work was included in the 46th Biennale di Venezia in 1995.