

Sterling Ruby

ECLPSE, SCALES

24 April – 23 May 2015

Press Release

Xavier Hufkens is pleased to announce two exhibitions of new work by Sterling Ruby. Running concurrently in the two gallery spaces, *ECLPSE* (6 rue St-Georges) features the artist's collages, while a series of recent sculptures are presented in *SCALES* (107 rue St-Georges).

Sterling Ruby is known for the multifaceted nature of his practice, which encompasses painting, ceramics, collage, video and photography, textiles, sculpture and installations. Working in a wide range of media, from the traditional to the unconventional, Ruby has created an oeuvre that, while remarkably diverse, is firmly rooted within a complex and coherent artistic strategy.

Often drawing upon autobiographical, art historical or sociological sources, Ruby's work is frequently referred to as 'post-humanist' – a term that broadly describes a society which, thanks in part to technological advancement, has evolved beyond fixed categories of being (e.g. time/place), or predetermining classifications (e.g. animal/human). The seemingly 'incomprehensible' visual range of Ruby's practice thus embodies a schizophrenic, 'post-everything' state of perpetual fragmentation and synthesis. A world in which, according to Ruby, 'there is just too much information for anything to be coherent or whole.' His practice involves a combination of philosophical enquiry and material investigation, the latter involving the seemingly endless repurposing, combining and recombining of different techniques and media. This too mirrors a shifting condition of constant deconstruction and reconfiguration, and the idea of a non-hierarchical, boundary-less universe.

For this exhibition, Ruby has created a new series of collages entitled *ECLPSE* (the artist's abbreviation for the word 'eclipse'). Made from cardboard salvaged from the floor coverings in the artist's studio, the collages reflect a newfound sense of simplicity and formality. The abstract shapes, which are reminiscent of suns, moons and overlapping landscapes, are painted in bright, primary colours. Ruby has said of these compositions: 'They continue with themes, theories and concepts that have been central to my previous work, but I have been trying to make them abstract and formal, my attempt to connect to the historical lineage of Suprematism.' The contrast between the reclaimed 'artistic' waste and the richness of the paint highlights a dynamic tension between Ruby's contemporary practice and the early-modern belief in the supremacy of 'pure artistic feeling' over the visual depiction of objects.

Ruby will also be exhibiting a new group of mobiles in the series known as *SCALES*. These monumental sculptures, which the artist views as three-dimensional manifestations of his collages, feature identical monochrome shapes to those evident in the *ECLPSE* series, but this time juxtaposed with identifiable scraps of materials and objects from his studio. These elements lend the works a more narrative aspect. Whilst Ruby is well known for his collages, and has also constructed mobiles in the past, the works presented in *ECLPSE* and *SCALES* bear witness to a shift in perspective. Says Ruby: 'These works are pared down to their basic formal elements. In the past I've insisted on seeing the conceptual element, as opposed to feeling confident that it is there even when it is not evident at first glance. They are also playful, in a way, which feels new to me.'

Sterling Ruby (b. 1972) lives and works in Los Angeles. In 2014 his work was included in the Whitney Biennial, the 10th Gwangju Biennale and the 9th Taipei Biennial. Major solo exhibitions include: *Sterling Ruby*, Baltimore Museum of Art, USA (2014), *Droppa Blocka*, Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Ghent, Belgium (2013), *Chron II*, Kunsthalle Mainz, Germany (travelling exhibition, 2013), *Soft Work*, Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève, Switzerland (travelling exhibition, 2012-2014) and *Supermax 2008*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, USA (2008).