

# GAGOSIAN

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## STERLING RUBY

### ACTS + TABLE

Opening reception: Wednesday, October 2, 6–8pm  
October 2–December 14, 2019  
6–24 Britannia Street, London

Sterling Ruby, *ACTS/OSIRIS-REx*, 2016 (detail), clear urethane block, dye, wood, and formica, in 3 parts, overall: 67 × 175 1/2 × 35 inches (170.2 × 445.8 × 88.9 cm) © Sterling Ruby. Photo: Robert Wedemeyer

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August 13, 2019

*I use many different media as a kind of schizophrenic labor strategy. It seems very easy now to say it, but it has taken me years to convey that this scattered routine belongs within a coherent trajectory. . . . There is a lineage that links everything that I do together.*

—Sterling Ruby

Gagosian is pleased to present sculptures by Sterling Ruby at Britannia Street. This is his first solo exhibition with the gallery in London. On view will be works from two series, *ACTS* (2006–18) and *TABLES* (2015–19).

In an oeuvre spanning sculpture, ceramics, painting, drawing, collage, video, and garments, Ruby continually returns to themes of societal and art historical friction, generating feelings of anxiety and agitation by contrasting clean lines and recognizable objects with coarse and uncanny forms. *ACTS + TABLE* lays out Ruby's critique of the authoritarian, exclusionary ideological underpinnings of Minimalism. He begins with familiar shapes valued by the Minimalists—simple tables and rectilinear blocks—but subverts them by defacing their smooth surfaces and exposing their physical means of production.

In *ACTS*—short for “Absolute Contempt for Total Serenity”—Ruby captures liquid dye inside clear urethane and balances these pure prisms atop scuffed, inscribed, and spray-painted Formica bases. These works expand upon his earlier Formica sculptures such as *Big Grid/DB Deth* (2008), a scratched-up monolith that exudes a cold, prisonlike institutional menace. In *ACTS*, the juxtaposition of unfeeling laminate slabs against vibrantly pigmented urethane is a potent one; it transforms the urethane from a passive, glassy vitrine into an active agent of incarceration that suffocates the blossoming furls of dye.

The exhibition also includes *TABLE (DOUBLE LAST SUPPER)* (2019), the culminating work of Ruby’s *TABLES*, a series that explores the concept of personal and cultural archaeology. In 2015, Ruby moved into a gargantuan studio outside of downtown Los Angeles and salvaged the welding tables left there from the building’s erstwhile function as a manufacturing warehouse. By affixing jutting metal pipes, faucets, and frying pans to the tables and covering them with tumorous masses of solder, Ruby stratifies and memorializes every act of labor that once took place on their surfaces, whether by the hands of workers from the building’s previous life, or of the artist and his studio. The table—whose name and adornments reflect Ruby’s own rural upbringing in a faith-dominant area of Pennsylvania—becomes a hulking, organic archaeological remnant from some unnamed human history.

This exhibition will also include a fully illustrated catalogue with essays by curator and critic Jenelle Porter.

Concurrently with *ACTS + TABLE*, Gagosian will present *HELIOS*, a solo booth displaying works from *WIDW*—Ruby’s ongoing series of colorful, thickly coated, window-like paintings—at Frieze London from October 3 through 6.

**Sterling Ruby** was born in Bitburg, Germany, in 1972, holds American and Dutch citizenship, and lives and works in Los Angeles. Collections include the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Tate, London; Centre Pompidou, Paris; and Moderna Museet, Stockholm. Solo exhibitions include *SUPERMAX 2008*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2008); *GRID RIPPER*, Galleria d’Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Bergamo, Italy (2008–09); *DROPPA BLOCKA*, Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Deurle, Belgium (2013); *STOVES*, Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature, Paris (2015); *Belvedere*, Vienna (2016); and *Ceramics*, Des Moines Art Center, Iowa (2018, traveled to Museum of Arts and Design, New York). A comprehensive survey of his work will be exhibited at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami (November 2019–February 2020), and the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (February–May 2020). Ruby participated in the Taipei Biennial, Gwangju Biennale, and Whitney Biennial in 2014; and *Made in L.A. 2016: a, the, though, only*, the Hammer Museum’s third biennial. In June 2019, Ruby launched his ready-to-wear clothing label, S.R. STUDIO. LA. CA., after debuting at Pitti Uomo Immagine 96 in Florence, Italy.

#SterlingRuby

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