

HAUSER & WIRTH

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Press Release

Sterling Ruby EXHM

Hauser & Wirth London, Savile Row

22 March – 4 May 2013

Opening: Thursday 21 March 6 – 8 pm

Los Angeles-based artist Sterling Ruby's interdisciplinary practice channels the conflicts between individual impulses and mechanisms of social control, American domination and decline, an engagement with irrationality and dysfunctional psychology, and its end result in upheaval. Ruby's works act as formally charged markers and allegories for the burdens that plague contemporary existence. Entitled



'EXHM', the artist's abbreviation for 'exhumation', Ruby's debut exhibition with Hauser & Wirth presents an installation of new ceramics, collages, fabric and urethane sculptures.

The works in 'EXHM' are acts of autobiographical, art historical and social archaeology. Ruby has turned inward, treating his studio as an excavation site where discarded, buried and collected artworks and materials are dug up and reanimated. These new series highlight Ruby's continued subversion of both material and content. They reveal a therapeutic process that embodies a site between creative utility and futility through the recycling of studio ephemera and misfired ceramic works.

In his recent ceramics, collectively titled 'Basin Theology', Ruby fills vessel-like forms with fractured pieces of his discarded ceramic work. The reuse of broken remnants becomes symbolic of an unburdening, a redemption of past mishaps and failures. The ceramic fragments, often resembling animal remains or pottery shards, are melded together through a process of repeated glazing and firing. The more times they are fired, the thicker and more vivid their glaze becomes, and the more charred and gouged the surfaces appear.



'CDCR', a large, poured urethane sculpture in the colours of red, white and blue reconfigures the artist's 'MONUMENT STALAGMITE' sculptures. 'THE POT IS HOT', with its mortar and pestle-like form, is reminiscent of the artist's earlier ceramic works.

When making poured urethane sculptures like 'CDCR', Ruby lays down pieces of cardboard to protect the studio floor. His

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EXHM collages take these cardboard pieces covered in urethane, dirt and footprints and reinvent them as formal compositions, which Ruby finalises by inserting pictures of burial grounds, correctional facilities, prescription packages and other objects found around the studio.

Ruby's fabric collages, the BC series, repurpose rags, fabric scraps, and clothing that are then applied to a ground of bleached black denim. The fabric echoes the playful patterns of traditional quilts, specifically the quilts of Gee's Bend, and the pop-like works of Rauschenberg or the formal compositions of Malevich. Both Ruby's BC and EXHM series inhabit an interstitial space between painting and craft; industry and waste.

Ruby's soft sculptural works will hang from the ceiling of the North Gallery, falling down into a pile on the floor. In the South Gallery, Ruby's gaping vampire mouths line the walls; single pillowy droplets of blood cling to each fanged tooth. Ruby's soft works take objects of comfort, such as blankets and quilts, and mould them into threatening forms, which are at once aggressive and playfully cartoonish.



Sterling Ruby lives and works in Los Angeles CA. Major recent solo exhibitions include the travelling exhibition 'Soft Work', which opened at Centre D'Art Contemporain, Geneva, Switzerland (2012) and travelled to FRAC Champagne-Ardenne, Reims, France (2012); 'Grid Ripper', Galleria d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Bergamo, Italy (2008); 'Supermax 2008', Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles CA (2008); and 'Chron', The Drawing Center, New York NY (2008). 'Soft Work' is currently on view at Bonniers Konsthall, Stockholm, Sweden and travels to Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Rome, Italy in May 2013. Ruby will also have solo exhibitions opening at Fondazione Memmo, Rome, Italy in May 2013 and Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Ghent, Belgium in October 2013.

Subodh Gupta
Hauser & Wirth London, Savile Row
17 May – 27 July 2013

Takesada Matsutani
Hauser & Wirth London, Savile Row
17 May – 27 July 2013

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Basin Theology / MMP-3FDDKG
2012
Ceramic
25.4 x 91.4 x 101.6 cm / 10 x 36 x 40 in

CDCR
2011
PVC pipe, foam, urethane, wood, spray paint and formica
162.6 x 609.6 x 168.9 cm / 64 x 240 x 66 1/2 in

BC (3935)
2012
Collage, paint, bleach, glue, fabric on wood
320 x 243.8 x 5.1 cm / 126 x 96 x 2 in