

# BLUM

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Ryan Sullivan**

**BLUM Los Angeles**

**May 18–June 29, 2024**

**Opening Reception: Saturday, May 18, 6–8pm**

Los Angeles, CA, April 18, 2024—BLUM is pleased to announce the representation of New York-based artist Ryan Sullivan on the occasion of his first solo exhibition with the gallery. This presentation also marks the artist's first solo exhibition in Los Angeles.

Sullivan's work commingles painting's formal concerns and sculpture's preoccupation with materiality. Where traditional painting builds out from the canvas, covering or obscuring the gestures that preceded, Sullivan's process functions in the inverse—the first layer of resin forms the work's initial structure and, later, becomes the object's face. Thin and flat, unlike any oil or acrylic on stretched canvas ever could be, these resin paintings—with their smooth, matte surface—flaunt the duality of their station, defying art's conventionally divided medium specificities of painting and sculpture.

Using a liquid urethane, Sullivan initiates his resin casts by distributing this material within a rectangular, silicone mold on the floor. Each pour, brushstroke, or application of pigment is a unique gesture—unable to be replicated or restaged—for which the finished work, after curing overnight, becomes a receipt frozen in time and evidencing its own making. Sullivan reveals and encounters the work's composition for the first time once it sets and is no longer subject to change—each work an anomaly intuited into being. These unique circumstances—the three-dimensionality of the material, its drying speed, and the inverted image-making—all create novel problems that the artist must solve.

Once framed and hung to command the wall space that paintings have long occupied, the tonal quality, movement, and spatial tension confound expectation. With the artist's unique process, the formal properties historically attributed to painting—focal points, light and shadow, palette—remain hallmarks despite their having been produced by a vehicle less often associated with this format. Though painting might be judged for its depictions—the world it creates—Sullivan's resins are inseparable from the materiality that grants them their aesthetic qualities; in this way and within this discourse, they are paradoxically both resonant and solipsistic.

Similar to sculptors, Sullivan's work is constructed via a material that structures itself, allowing it to function in dimensional space. The artist forms elegant mass from resin—slowly compounding upon nothing in order to fabricate impossibly slim objects that are composed of their own process and appear as if suspended in mid-gesture. Painting on canvas is additive, but its core purpose is more so about what it portrays over its components. Sullivan's output acknowledges art's previously discrete ontologies relating to medium, and unflinchingly moves beyond them. Sculpting resin in a flat space is how Sullivan composes paintings—instinctually laying down an image and repeating the act until solid materiality can be achieved. These works crystallize their own spatial conjuring and behave as non-traditional paintings that, despite appearing as abstractions, categorize as material realism.

Ryan Sullivan (b. 1983, Malone, NY) studied at the Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI. Sullivan was the subject of a significant solo exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami, FL in 2015 with an accompanying catalog. The artist's work has also been featured in exhibitions at public institutions, including *Abstraction (re)creation*, Le Consortium, Dijon, France (2024); *Aspen Art Week*,

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Aspen Museum, Aspen, CO (2022); *En Plein Air*, The High Line, New York, NY (2019); *Black Hole. Art and Materiality from Informal to Invisible*, GAMeC, Bergamo, Italy (2018); *Good Dreams, Bad Dreams*, Aïshti Foundation, Beirut, Lebanon (2016); *New York Painting*, Kunstmuseum Bonn, Germany (2015); *Surface Tension*, FLAG Art Foundation, New York, NY (2015); *Empire State*, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome, Italy (2013), and *Greater New York*, MoMA PS1, Queens, NY (2010). Work by Sullivan is represented in numerous public collections including Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA; Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami, FL; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA; Marciano Art Foundation, Los Angeles, CA; Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; RISD Museum of Art, Providence, RI; Rubell Museum, Miami, FL; and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA, among others. Sullivan lives and works in New York, NY.

## About BLUM

BLUM represents more than sixty artists and estates from eighteen countries worldwide, nurturing a diverse roster of artists at all stages of their practices with a range of global perspectives. Originally opened as Blum & Poe in Santa Monica in 1994, the gallery has been a pioneer in its early commitment to Los Angeles as an international arts capital.

The gallery has been acclaimed for its groundbreaking work in championing international artists of postwar and contemporary movements, such as CoBrA, Dansaekhwa, Mono-ha, and Superflat, and for organizing museum-caliber solo presentations and historical survey exhibitions across its spaces in Los Angeles, Tokyo, and New York. Often partnering with celebrated curators and scholars such as Cecilia Alemani, Alison M. Gingeras, Sofia Gotti, Joan Kee, and Mika Yoshitake, the gallery has produced large-scale exhibitions focusing on the Japanese Mono-ha school (2012); the Korean Dansaekhwa monochrome painters (2014); the European postwar movement CoBrA (2015); Japanese art of the 1980s and 1990s (2019); a rereading of Brazilian Modernism (2019); a revisionist take on the 1959 MoMA exhibition, *New Images of Man* (2020); and a survey of portraiture through a democratic and humanist lens (2023); among others.

BLUM's wide-reaching program includes exhibitions, lectures, performance series, screenings, video series, and an annual art book fair at its base in Los Angeles. BLUM Books, the gallery's publishing division, democratically circulates its program through original scholarship and accessible media ranging from academic monographs, audio series, magazines, to artists' books.

Across the three global locations, BLUM prioritizes environmental and community stewardship in all operations. In 2015, it was certified as an Arts:Earth Partnership (AEP) green art gallery in Los Angeles and consequently became one of the first green certified galleries in the United States. The gallery is also a member of the Gallery Climate Coalition, which works to facilitate a more sustainable commercial art world and reduce the industry's collective carbon footprint. BLUM is committed to fostering inclusive and equitable communities both in its physical and online spaces and believes that everybody should have equal access to creating and engaging with contemporary art.

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