

# GAGOSIAN

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Gagosian to Exhibit New Sculptures and Paintings by Sterling Ruby in Gstaad, Opening July 11

*THE MOUNTAIN* Extends Beyond the Gallery, with Installations Throughout the Town

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Sterling Ruby, *DRFTRS (8828)*, 2025, collage, paint, and glue on paper, 27 × 43 3/8 inches (68.6 × 110.2 cm) © Sterling Ruby. Photo: Sterling Ruby Studio

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**GSTAAD, June 30, 2025**—Gagosian is pleased to present *THE MOUNTAIN*, an exhibition of new works by Sterling Ruby. In dialogue with the Romantic tradition of the sublime, Ruby explores themes of germination, birth, growth, and decay, drawing upon the physical and metaphysical cycles of life. Intimately rooted in the artist’s time in California’s Eastern Sierra, these sculptures and paintings are deeply attuned to environmental transformation. On view from July 11 through September 7, the presentation will extend beyond the gallery’s walls, with works installed at locations throughout the historic alpine town of Gstaad.

*For the past two years the snowfall has been epic. At the summit of the mountain’s 11,059-foot peak, this season’s snowfall reached a base depth of 154 inches. Because of this, the surrounding lakes have been full of water, the spring flowers blossomed, the summer berries were ripe, and the pine cones that once lay dormant on the ground gave way to new saplings of conifers. I watched this transition in awe of the universal life cycle: that everything and everyone must pass through stages of unworldly contemplation only to be absorbed back into the ground.*

—Sterling Ruby, Mammoth Mountain, California, April 2025

In the gallery’s main entry, Ruby presents a monolithic wood burl sculpture adorned with puddled bronze tears. Composed into a naturalist altar, this intricate form can be attributed to the tree’s long history of stress and its struggle to cope with infection. *Crying Slab (2025)* channels Ruby’s interest in myth and mutation while echoing Surrealist animism to embody themes of trauma, resilience, fragility, and endurance. Incorporating found organic materials with sculpted elements via assemblage and direct casting, this body of work reflects a lineage of Post-Minimalist and Arte Povera strategies, where raw materials retain traces of their past lives.

New paintings on paper include collaged photos produced from the artist's mountainous surroundings. Akin to landscape paintings, these works (all 2025) from the *DRFTRS* series (2013–) combine gestural watercolor and gouache with fragments of tree bark, berries, pine cones, and fallen birds' nests, reimagining botanical documentation through contemporary abstraction. This practice of lifting directly from one's surroundings has prompted Ruby to plant extensive gardens at his studio in Vernon, far from the wilderness of Mammoth. The garden provides a source for photography and "live" burnouts (an ephemeral type of metal casting with organic material), but also endless entries into the microcosms of cyclical growth that exist in the natural world.

Cast from lumber salvaged from the artist's family barn, the totemic *Sobbing Hippy* sculpture (2025) continues to mine Ruby's youth in rural Pennsylvania. This interplay between autobiography, raw materials, and elaborate processes of production, has long been central to his practice. Characterized by braids, flowers, eyes, and appendages, the upright figure also refers to trail markers found in remote areas, vernacular objects that function as both practical guides and repositories of collective memory, bearing scars and inscriptions from previous travelers.

An extension of his *Basin Theology* works (2009–), *Canoe / Lorelei* (2025) initiates a new series of glazed ceramic sculpture. Composed of fragments from failed previous kiln firings, it exemplifies Ruby's creative reuse and archeological layering. This act of building with remnants echoes Robert Rauschenberg's inclusion of found materials in his Combines, suggesting that every fragment contains a latent narrative or mnemonic trace. Shaped like an open boat with oars, *Canoe / Lorelei* draws inspiration from canoe burials—an ancient funerary rite practiced by coastal cultures—suggesting both a vessel of passage and a metaphor for impermanence and transcendence.

An ensemble of tactilely scaled objects accompanies the exhibition both inside the gallery and peppered throughout the town of Gstaad. Flowers and nuts cast in bronze, left bound by the gating and spouts integral to the pouring process; salt-soaked, podlike skull berries made of clay; blue-flamed candles balancing on weathered wood mallets; glowing, molten ashtrays; and imagined cryptozoological specimens realized in limestone and ceramic explicitly combine the artifact and the industrial.

The exhibition coincides with the installation of Ruby's monumental sculpture *DOUBLE CANDLE* (2018) and his largest spray painting, *WALL* (2017), at MaMo by Ora Īto, the center for contemporary art located on the rooftop of Le Corbusier's Cité Radieuse in Marseille, France.

For Sterling Ruby's biographical information and exhibition history, [please visit gagosian.com](http://please.visit.gagosian.com).

#SterlingRuby

## **STERLING RUBY**

### *THE MOUNTAIN*

Opening reception: Friday, July 11, 11am–6pm

July 11–September 7, 2025

Promenade 79, Gstaad

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## **Press**

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