

blair thurman

GRENADINE DREAMS

May 13th - June 25th, 2022

Opening on May 12th, 2022 from 5 pm to 9 pm



Blair Thurman, *Skull Island* (detail), 2021, acrylic on canvas on wood, 214 x 135 x 16 cm, ©Brian Barlow

Xippas Gallery is pleased to present for the first time an exhibition of the American artist Blair Thurman. Entitled *Grenadine Dreams*, the exhibition will bring together his most recent works, including a new installation created especially for the event.

« Everyone has already experienced that strange feeling of belonging, sometimes in a faraway place without any connection to our place of origin. Blair Thurman says he has this feeling with the French-speaking part of Switzerland. And though he spends most of his time in New York State, perhaps he is just in a state of exile.

For several years, he has remained attached to an abstract practice derived from pop art which naturally seems to lead him back to Geneva and Lausanne. It is true that he has many friends here, he has participated in numerous exhibitions, he has true admirers, he is a reference for young artists, but this does not explain anything. If abstraction as such does not exist, why should it have a particular territory.

Blair Thurman is chasing a bygone dream, and he knows it. His forms have the fragmented elegance of an industry that once offered us room for our projects. These vehicles, these tracks, these engines, these frames, these chassis, these stickers, these spare parts are images slumbering in the back room of our nostalgia. Far from the speedways, in a suspended moment of reflection on our way of life, Blair Thurman's works have the melancholy of a dream already badly battered by the avant-garde.

Similarly, Switzerland and the Swiss have a self-image attributed by others. To some extent, our space of identity is that of a projected mirror. We are mere inhabitants of a romantic vision, of a potential elsewhere. We appear in the photographs, perhaps despite ourselves, alongside the mountains, vineyards, and lakes.

At a time when the effects of environmental degradation painfully reveal the uselessness of our tourist infrastructure, one might say that this space does not exist any more than the assembly lines of Detroit. To make art here is perhaps not to expect an elsewhere. If this is a painful observation, it is, I believe, like the historical claim that allowed some artists of Blair Thurman's generation, in the New York of the late 90s, to reflect on the end of painting, or even the end of art. But dreams fortunately also have the color we give them.

In this large exhibition, occupying both spaces of Xippas Gallery in Geneva, Blair Thurman plays with artists' ability to master their space and their chronology. The energy emanating from his works does not change. The bright colors displace the structures and explode the volumes. He undoubtedly articulates new dreams and desires. Like an old friend, he makes us feel like we are picking up the conversation where we left off ».

Samuel Gross

Blair Thurman creates multi-dimensional paintings that recall the pleasures of the road or the big screen of our youth. His influences range from pop art to minimalism, popular music, 70's cinema and his childhood memories. Standardized figures from small race car tracks, architectural settings and compositions from everyday life take on a nostalgic quality. The artist probes the intersection between our cultural environment and our fantasies, examining the memory and poetry embedded in the very act of looking and offering us a work that goes beyond the field of art history, which he inscribes in a broader cultural history, at the crossroads of cinema, literature and industrial design.

Blair Thurman, born in 1961 in New Orleans, Louisiana (USA), currently lives and works in New York. He received his B.F.A. from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Canada, and his M.F.A. from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Blair Thurman's work has been exhibited in several solo and group exhibitions.

Recent solo museum exhibitions include, among others, Le Magasin-Centre National d'Art Contemporain, France (2014) ; Oklahoma City Museum of Art, Oklahoma, USA (2015).

Thurman's work is listed in several permanent collections, including the Centre national des arts plastique, Paris ; Le Consortium, Dijon ; Fonds régional d'art contemporain, France ; and the Syz Collection, Switzerland. Thurman's work was included in the 46th Biennale di Venezia in 1995. In October 2022, FRAC Normandie Caen will present a solo show by the artist.

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Tuesday - Friday: 10am-1pm and 2pm-6:30pm

Saturday : 12pm-5pm

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