

Artist Resources – Sterling Ruby (American, b. 1972)

Ruby at [Xavier Hufkens Gallery, Belgium](#)

Ruby at [Gagosian Gallery, New York](#)

[The New York Times blog](#) talked with Ruby in 2014 about the complexities of a trendy art market, the difference between LA and New York, and his interest in fashion.

“I wanted to work with materials that were already existing...I wanted to work with my hands and make things, and I wanted to push these things together and make work about the kind of psychological experiences that I felt I had already dealt with in my life and was potentially going to deal with in the future,” Ruby explained in a [2016 video interview](#) about his introduction to art and art history, taped while Ruby was at work at his LA studio.



Ruby, 2017 Photograph: Melanie Schiff

“To be an instinctive artist was completely at odds with how I was taught, my generation was told to have a premeditated concept, an already answered theoretical question before making anything. Using clay became a way to just make something, it represented the gesture I was longing for. I started to see my ceramics as monuments to my desire to make a sincere gesture,” Ruby reflected in a [2017 interview](#) about his ceramics practice.

Ruby discussed a duet of [exhibitions](#) at [Xavier Hufkens](#) gallery in 2018 in [a video interview](#), reflecting on the legacy of Abstract Expressionism and avant-garde collage. “The burden of art historical time has given most artists my age this set of baggage. I’ve always been interested in this very early modernist trajectory of collage. The collage of Schwitters or Picasso. Things that had all these diverse elements...when you fuse these things together you get these kind of illicit hybrids. I always thought that was key to everything I did. That there was a lineage to collage that meant you try to put things together than weren’t necessarily meant to go together.”

[Architectural Digest](#) visited Ruby’s sprawling studio in Vernon, California in 2018. The heavily renovated 122,000 square-foot space houses individual studios for Ruby’s diverse practices in painting, drawing, ceramics, and textiles, facilities for woodworking and welding, and a 10,000 square-foot gallery where he can plan the layout and installation of his shows. The artist was in preparation for ceramics exhibitions at the [De Moines Art Center](#) and the [Museum of Art and Design](#) in New York.

Ruby launched his own fashion brand – S.R. – with a [breakout runway show in 2019](#), building on decades of experience at a sewing machine (beginning when he was 13) and his first foray into design [with Raf Simons in 2014](#).

In February 2020, the [Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston](#) and the [ICA, Miami](#) co-produced the first museum survey of Ruby’s work, bringing over 70 objects spanning two decades of his career and his relationship with material, craft, and culture.



Ruby, 2012
Photograph: Frazer Harrison



Sterling Ruby (American, b. 1972)

WIDW. TERROR TEARS., 2020

Acrylic, oil, elastic, cardboard, and treated fabric on canvas

Private Collection; L2020:34.1

Sterling Ruby's multidisciplinary practice explores the symbiotic relationship between the elements of destruction and creation that underlie modern society. Moving freely between painting, sculpture, collage, and ceramics, Ruby's artistic strategy is rooted firmly in a physical dimension cultivated while working in construction before attending the Art Institute of Chicago in the late 1990s. **WIDW. TERROR TEARS.** comes from Ruby's ongoing WIDW series – an acronym for Window. Cardboard and fabric additions bisect the center of the canvas and create a sense of dimension at its base, placing viewers at the plane of the titular window looking toward a collision of color. Characteristic of his recent work, the assorted materials are unused or discarded fragments collected by Ruby from the recesses of his LA studio. As he has explained, "I realized that I could use my own history and older bodies of work as this kind of archaeological legacy." Ruby's artistic history is on full display here, exploring the perpetual evolution, revolution, and fragmentation of modern life, as is his belief that art is an opportunity to make and remake again and again.

On view July 8 – October 11, 2020

Extra Resources:

[WIDW series at Xavier Hufkens Gallery, Belgium](#)