

Artsy: 'At Almine Rech, Blair Thurman Revs Up the "Look of Kool" and his Hot Wheels Inspiration', by Lara Monro, 03rd May 2016

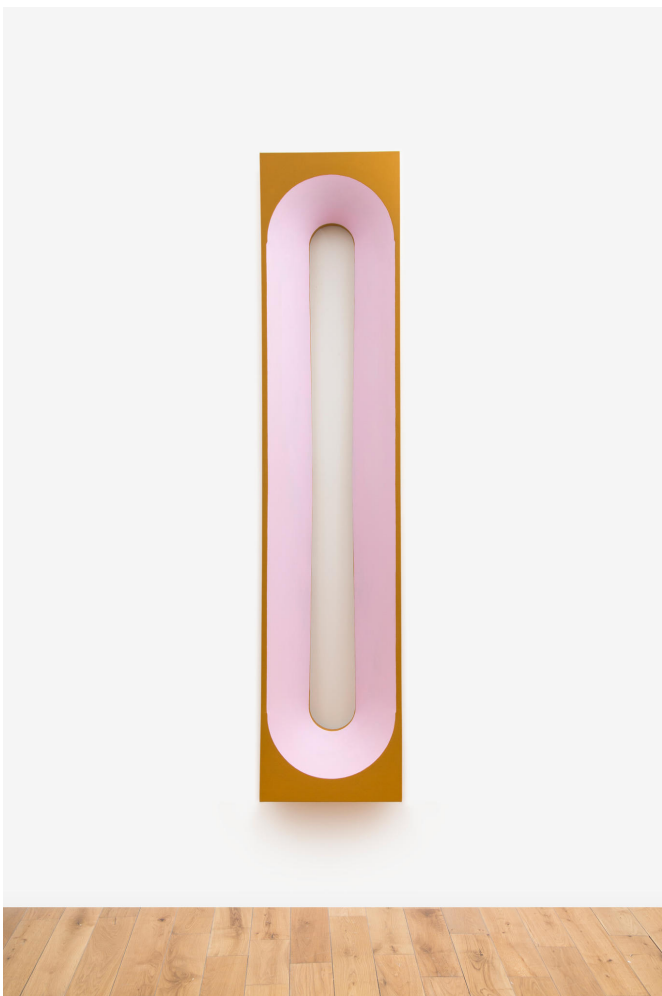


Blair Thurman
DAY-GLO TRIPPER, 2016
Almine Rech

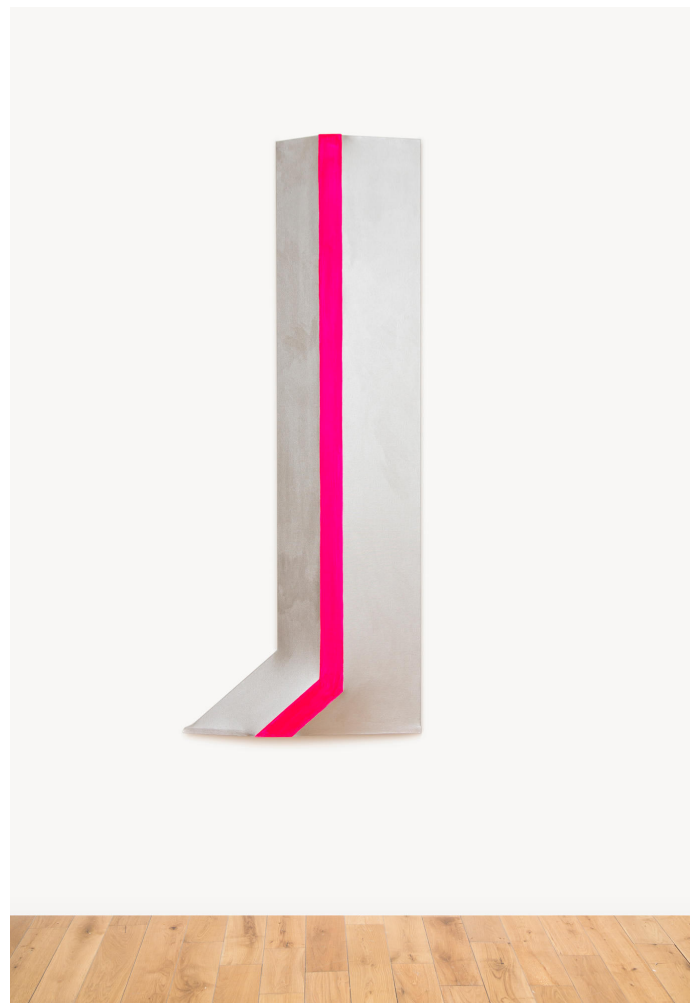
Drawing from the Warhol school of Pop Art, American artist Blair Thurman explores consumer culture and the relationship between art and modern living. As he blurs the line between painting and sculpture, Thurman combines his deep interests in pop culture and familiar forms to create works that straddle the abstract and the representational. At Almine Rech, a selection of the artist's new work is on display in "Mature Blonde," the artist's first solo show at the London gallery.

Amid the larger pop-culture landscape, Thurman's personal iconography is at play in what Steve Parrino has called "a haphazard reclaiming of the 'Look of Kool.'" The micro and the macro are integral to Thurman's process, which leads to his drawing inspiration from a number of consumer products, including the automobile. During childhood, for example, as he played with his Hot Wheels toys, Thurman witnessed the constant evolution, modification, and rebranding of their colors and designs.

"[E]very season, every new series would be painted or customized, modified in some way," he told the art critic and curator Nicolas Trembley, "so it's like different ways of handling the same painting." That method, Thurman said, carried over to his own works, which are often sculptural in their monumentality. "[A] lot of my work in painting is layered on previous works. If I make a painting and I like it, I want to relive that because I enjoy painting." He calls the result "a natural lineage," not unlike the the iterations of automobile models big and small.



Blair Thurman
Avengers, 2016
Almine Rech



Blair Thurman
Everyone Gets the Boot...Eventually, 2016
Almine Rech

The new Almine Rech exhibit sees the fruits of Thurman modifying and adjusting his own works, customizing each piece in an iterative process. For instance, Noxon Wood (2016), from the current show, is an updated version of Cafe Racer (2014) from his 2014 show at Galerie Frank Elbaz in Paris. In these bold, vibrant works, the visual similarities and differences are readily apparent—evidence of the artist’s adaptations and redesigns. The new work embodies this iterative process, which, as Thurman shows, simultaneously supports both the artistic and consumer realms.



Blair Thurman
Zardoz, 2016
Almine Rech



Blair Thurman
Dynamic Friend (Night Owl), 2016
Almine Rech