

**Blouin Artinfo** : 'How Blair Thurman's Warhol Pop-Art Vision, Toy Cars Inspired «Mature Blonde»', by Mark Beech, 6th April 2016



*Blair Thurman and works: Left, Everyone Gets the Boot...Even-tually, 2016 Acrylic and canvas on wood 183,83 x 72,71 x 9,53 cm 72 3/8 x 28 5/8 x 3 3/4 inches;  
center, the artist at work;  
right Zardoz, 2016 Acrylic and canvas on wood 121,9 x 140,9 x 6,3 cm 48 x 55 1/2 x 2 1/2 inches  
(Gallery photos Photos: Melissa Castro Duarte, Courtesy of the artist and Almine Rech Gallery;  
portrait courtesy and copyright Blair Thurman )*

Blair Thurman, who has a new show in London, is a pop minimalist whose blazing-color sculptures, neons and wall works recall American iconography, Andy Warhol and automobiles. New York-based Thurman's exhibition, at the Almine Rech gallery until May 14, is titled "Mature Blonde."

Thurman was born in 1961 in New Orleans. As a boy, he was often behind the scenes of the Boston Institute of Contemporary Art, where his mother was director, looking up to many artists who came to visit.

Blouin Artinfo met Thurman and asked him a few questions about his work.

### **How do your art forms come into shape?**

The forms sometimes come from found objects and sometimes from other paintings, what I call 'derived from production.' I love it, for example, when I have to cut out from the middle of a piece and it becomes another work - a different shape born out of the other canvas.

### **What is the production process?**

I have assistants to help me stretch the canvas. Some of the cutting is done by a computing router program, because it is much easier if you are cutting a sort of oval or circle. Even so, it still takes three or four weeks to do each individual work, so when we do a show it's still about three

or four months to do all the structures and then it's something like a month to do all the painting. It is time-consuming: You spend many days doing the assembling, priming and filling, then it is stretched and there is even more priming and sanding. By that time, you have had a lot of contact with the work. All that time you are thinking 'what color?' and 'what color were the other ones?' You've had all this time to come up with an idea, and that's why the painting is often sketchy and quick. If I were to lay on many layers and make it like a kind of automobile paint, it would be quite different, so that's the reason for the thin surface.



*Installation shots of Blair Thurman, Mature Blonde at Almine Rech Gallery London until  
May 14 2016*

*Photo: Melissa Castro Duarte, Courtesy of the artist and Almine Rech Gallery*

### **You can still see the automobile theme; some of these works could be part of a car...**

Yes, the automobile reference has been a little overstated a bit. I am very jealous about the subject matter for the work, I feel like it should be a very personal thing. When I first came up with this sort of painting, I was thinking about my childhood. I was trying to return to a time before art school when I was inspired by things like the paint on my toy cars, the Scalextric track and Hot Wheels. These had the Spectra-flame color which was a miniaturized version of metal flake. In the daytime, I was going to the gallery and looking at Warhol and Judd and pop art. The Hot Wheels would do a car such as a Mustang and then reissue it in different paint, and so I have returned to some of my works, customizing them in the same sort of way.

### **Were you too young or did you meet any of the famous artists?**

Oh yes I met many of them, I remember Warhol... walking around at the private views, the smell of the drinks..

**After high school you moved on to other things but when you were a kid, did you expect to be an artist when you grew up?**

Oh, I had no other plan. A very lucky thing that happened to me or I think I would have been a dilettante. I came up with the kind of a theory. When it corresponded with the nostalgia for the childhood shapes, that was the breakthrough. I realize that I could get the same affinity from a single surface – like an oval, or I could go around a circle like a bracelet.

The individual titles are interesting: 'Avengers,' 'CCKSCKR (Safe Cracker),' 'Ten Fucking Years (Ticket to Ride)' and 'Day-Glo Tripper.' I wonder whether you are a Beatles fan...?

Especially for Mayfair! I had all that in mind.



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**There are a number of what you call 'business card' works, how they came about?**

I made a bunch of business cards in the late 1980s. I am sure a businessman would get the cards made in the right place but for the average artist you would design it and take it to the Xerox store and get it copied onto a page of A4. My card was oval when I saw all the ovals arranged slightly off, not quite straight, I really liked that. Another 10 years went by and that gave birth to a painting, so there is a lineage of those works.

**Does the title of the show say a lot?**

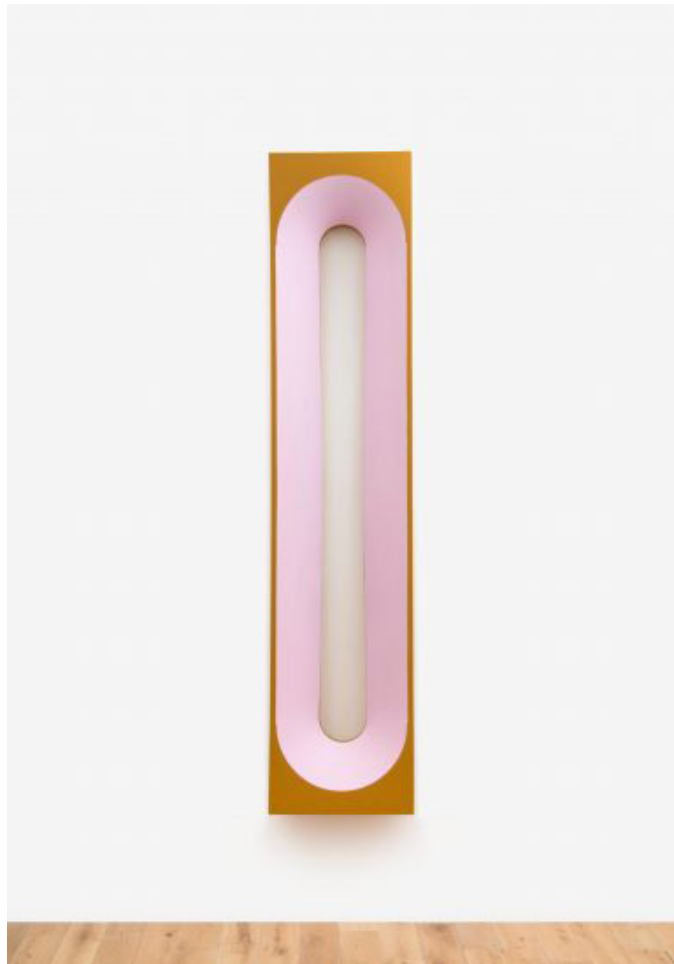
Yes! Well I'm a blonde, I am mature - and at the same time it is like from an Internet porn category! It is an honest way of saying how you are at age 55.

Blair Thurman's "Mature Blonde" is at Almine Rech Gallery, 11 Savile Row, London W1S 3PG until May 14, 2016

Information: <http://www.alminerech.com/>



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