



Taka Ishii Kyoto
Gallery

123 Yada-cho Shimogyo-ku Kyoto #600-8442, Japan
tel: 075 366 5101 fax: 075 366 5327
email: tigkyoto@takaishiigallery.com
www.takaishiigallery.com

Sterling Ruby “SPECTERS KYOTO”

Dates: Nov 25, 2023 – Jan 20, 2024

Location: Taka Ishii Gallery Kyoto

Opening Reception: Saturday, Nov 25, 16:30 – 18:30

Taka Ishii Gallery Kyoto is pleased to present “SPECTERS KYOTO,” a solo exhibition by Sterling Ruby running from November 25th, 2023 to January 20th, 2024. This exhibition is in conjunction with two other solo shows running concurrently at Taka Ishii Gallery (TERRADA ART COMPLEX II) and at the Sogetsu Plaza in Tokyo, all featuring new work by the artist.

In this new exhibition, Sterling Ruby builds on themes explored during his participation in *Desert X* in 2019, stepping into the world of folk magic and the supernatural. The artist draws influences from both Japanese and Euro-American myth and legend as well as from the artist’s own early interactions with colonial folklore. Raised a few miles from an infamous local spot known as “Hex” Hollow, the history of Ruby’s hometown in Pennsylvania was steeped in notions of witchcraft, hauntings and local legends. After a trip to East Asia in September 2014, Ruby also became interested in the ghostly tales deep-rooted in Japanese-Buddhist tradition, particularly *kaidan*, a genre of Japanese ghost stories, which evoked a greater curiosity in the artist in what comes after death.

Taking advantage of the earthen aesthetic and unique architectural features of the traditional wooden residence that now houses the Kyoto gallery, the artist presents works that “haunt” the space. Ruby makes use of found organic materials that hold deep symbolism within Japanese and Euro-American horror tales, from hair and wood, to animal bones and dried gourds. Inspired by the *kaidan* stories of Greek-Japanese writer Lafcadio Hearn, his sculptural and collaged works make direct reference to the Japanese *yōkai* spirits *rokurokubi*, the spirit whose neck stretches like a water well’s pulley, and *tsuzura no bakemono*, literally the “demon in the wicker hamper.” From his own American viewpoint, Ruby also explores common horror tropes like the “ghost bride.” The exhibition further features the artist’s works on paper that evoke undertones of the otherworldly, with their delicate yet ghostly pen markings forming skeletal objects and body parts.

The selection of paintings, ceramics, sculptures and works on paper gracefully weave throughout the inner and outer spaces of the *machiya* townhouse in the artist’s exploration of the life and afterlife of the “specter.”

[Concurrent Exhibitions]

Sterling Ruby “Heat. Minthe. Swells.”

Dates: November 23 – December 23, 2023

Location: Taka Ishii Gallery (TERRADA ART COMPLEX II)

Sterling Ruby "SPECTERS TOKYO"

Dates: November 23 – December 23, 2023

Location: Stone garden "Heaven," The Sogetsu Kaikan 1F

Born in 1972, Sterling Ruby works with a wide range of aesthetic and material strategies from sculptures made of saturated, glossy, poured polyurethane, bronze, and steel, to drawings, collages, richly glazed ceramics, paintings, photography, and video, as well as textile works that include quilts, tapestries, garments, and soft sculptures. His work is a balancing act, maintaining a constant tension between a multitude of elements. It deals with issues related to the violence and pressures within society, and art history, even as it also reflects his personal history. In all of his work, he vacillates between the fluid and static, the minimalist and expressionistic, the pristine and the defaced.

Ruby's solo exhibitions include Galleria Doria Pamphilj, Rome (2021); Museum of Cycladic Art, Athens (2021); the ICA Miami (2019) which traveled to the ICA Boston (2020); Museum of Arts and Design, New York (2018); Winterpalais, Belvedere Museum, Vienna (2016); FRAC Champagne-Ardenne, Reims (2012) which traveled to Centre D'Art Contemporain, Geneva (2012) and to Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Rome (2013); Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2008). In 2014 he participated in the Gwangju Biennale, Taipei Triennale, and Whitney Biennial.

Ruby's sculpture DOUBLE CANDLE (2018) is installed permanently at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC. His works are included in the collections of Museum of Modern Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Tate Modern, London; Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Moderna Museet, Stockholm among others.

For further information, please contact:

Exhibition: Elisa Uematsu / Press: Shunji Noda, Misa Namai (press@takaishiigallery.com)

123 Yada-cho Shimogyo-ku Kyoto 600-8442 tel: +81 (0)75 366 5101 fax: +81 (0)75 366 5327

e-mail: tigkyoto@takaishiigallery.com website: www.takaishiigallery.com

Thu – Sat 10:00 – 17:30 Closed Sun – Wed and National Holidays



Sterling Ruby
"Crystal Nails", 2023
Glass crystals, latex
6.3 x 24.1 x 29.2 cm

© Sterling Ruby
Photo: Robert Wedemeyer



Sterling Ruby
"DRFTRS (8484)", 2023
Collage, paint, and glue on paper
25.4 x 19.7 cm

© Sterling Ruby
Photo: Robert Wedemeyer