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Taka Ishii

Gallery

Yann Gerstberger “URUBU NOIR”

Dates: Sep 26 – Oct 24, 2026

Location: Taka Ishii Gallery Kyobashi

Opening reception: Saturday, Sep 26, 17:00 – 19:00

Taka Ishii Gallery Kyobashi is pleased to present “URUBU NOIR,” a solo exhibition of the work of Yann Gerstberger, on view from Saturday, September 26 to Saturday, October 24. The exhibition, his second solo show at Taka Ishii Gallery since 2023, will feature approximately eight new paintings.

For “URUBU NOIR,” Gerstberger has made a new series of paintings that can be seen as fragments of one large mural. Each painting can stand on its own, but together they form a single composition. The idea comes from the great fresco cycles of fifteenth-century Italy, where scenes were painted separately but were meant to be experienced as part of a larger image.

The starting point for the series is the black vulture (*Coragyps atratus*), also known as the American black vulture, Mexican vulture, zopilote, urubu or gallinazo. The bird is found across much of the Americas and is common throughout Mexico. Gerstberger became interested in the way groups of vultures gather and stand with their wings open, facing the sun. This behavior, known as sunning, allows the birds to expose their dark feathers to the sun. It helps them warm and dry their bodies and may also help reduce parasites and microorganisms.

For Gerstberger, this simple daily ritual became the starting image for the exhibition. A group of black birds standing together, opening their wings to the sun, becomes almost like a painting in itself. The wings create repeated shapes, while the bodies form a collective landscape. The image also carries a sense of transformation: the birds take in the sun and turn it into something useful for their bodies.

The paintings are made with a new technique. Gerstberger begins by covering the canvas with layers of filtered sand collected from the Mexican Pacific. He then builds up layers of industrial paint before working with oil paint. The process creates a rough, heavy surface that feels closer to stone, concrete or the wall of a cave rather than to a traditional canvas. He approaches each painting as if he were working directly on a wall, building the surface slowly until it has the presence of a mural.

The series also marks a change in Gerstberger’s use of color. Instead of the brighter and more varied palettes found in some of his earlier works, “URUBU NOIR” is built around silver, grey, blue and black tones. Light moves across the sandy surfaces, making some areas appear metallic while others remain dark and absorbent.

Gerstberger’s practice has long moved between painting and textile, craft and industrial materials, abstraction

and representation. He has worked with cotton fibres, mops, industrial fabrics and other everyday materials, transforming them through color, stitching, weaving, painting and collage. His images often bring together things that do not belong together: elements from nature, popular culture, art history and his surroundings in Mexico.

In “URUBU NOIR,” these different interests come together through the figure of the vulture and the idea of the mural. The individual paintings are like pieces of a larger wall, while a vulture's daily movement toward the sun becomes a simple image of gathering, exposure and transformation.

Yann Gerstberger (b. Cagnes-sur-Mer, France, 1983) currently lives and works in Cuixmala, Mexico. He studied painting and sculpture at École des Beaux Arts de Marseille and received his Master's degree in 2007. Gerstberger had institutional exhibitions at Museo Tamayo, Mexico City (2020); Museo MATE, Lima (2019); Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne (2018); Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Querétaro (2018); Le Consortium, Dijon (2018); MO.CO., Montpellier (2016-17); Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris (2013); Power Station of Art, Shanghai (2013); and Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2010). Recent projects include “A Mangrove at Dusk”, NGV Triennale, Ian Potter Centre, Melbourne (2020-21). His works are held in public collections such as Collection Mario Testino, Lima; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; Pérez Art Museum, Miami; Fond national d'art contemporain, Paris; Alumnos 47, Mexico City; and Fundación Calosa, Irapuato, among others.

For further information, please contact:

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Tue – Sat 11:00 – 19:00 Closed on Sun, Mon and National Holidays



Yann Gerstberger

“soak up the sun”, 2026

Oil pastel, chalk, enamel paint and sand on canvas

216 x 170 cm

© Yann Gerstberger

Photo: Yann Gerstberger