



ZACH STORM

COPPERTONES, MONOCHROMES, AND TOUCHSTONES



Untitled from the series *Coppertones*, 2015, enamel on copper, 9" x 12"

We romance the vision of a painter; an artist distanced from their own life. Quotidian affects are steered through surges in artistic output. A studio practice appears prescribed like medicine, a reaction to the preordained condition of daily life. Zach Storm's recent paintings and drawings, *Coppertones*, *Monochromes*, and *Touchstones* opposes this notion of a romanced struggle. Rather, his daily life emerges from a persistent studio practice. He claims, "Sometimes I feel a heavy guilt if I'm not producing work, but even in those moments it's not as though I'm not producing I'm simply not producing as much as I'd like."



Barium Field, 2015, pigment urethane and oil on canvas, 38" x 48"

Storm and I met over 15 years ago in Washington D.C. We quickly developed a friendship based on collaboration rooted in sharing ideas, discussion, critique, studio practice, and even disagreements. It seems we unknowingly made a pact: an independent commitment to remain active artists without question. Maybe it's because while painting from midnight until 5am, we were listening to MF Doom say, "Doo-doo-doo-doo-doo!," that's a audio daily double/Rappers need to fall off just to save me the trouble..." It's been a pleasure to watch Storm be a painter. With vitality, consistency, and curiosity, he's always carving a life from a place of prolific output. He's not messy, instead, he's active and concise with no waste or haste. I consider Storm to be a traditional artist, but not in the sense that he paints and sculpts from an idyllic form. He's traditional because he can approach visual quandaries with a dedicated studio regimen, and he can set up and work from anywhere. I've visited many of his studios and I've seen many traditional spaces unconventionally anointed for production. His dedicated practice surmises a collection of his time into the physical realm; a type of interspatial conjoining comprised from sources that would otherwise remain eternally unlinked.

Scrolling through NASA's Instagram page while feeding feral squirrels, Storm currently makes work from a garage in North Hollywood. With a clear beginning, middle, and end identified by his materials used, structural forms, and content depicted; distinct cycles of production define Storm's specific bodies of work. These cycles, if lined up next to one another, overlay like an interconnected meshing tying together his creative output. Storm's service to production doesn't go uninterrupted from life's courses; illness, vacations, bike accidents, love, family, housing, and employment all unwittingly become that 'interconnected meshing', the extraordinary within the guise of the ordinary. His life lived is the source providing the fodder that binds his thoughts and projects together.



Zach working in his apartment from the series *Atmosphere*, 2013, pigment and urethane on aluminum, dimensions variable

Within *Coppertones, Monochromes, and Touchstones*, Storm offers a radical effort pushed onto these surfaces. Is he painting? Is it observational? As you walk by these coated aluminum and copper sheets, the surface changes systematically, as your body does, too, walking from one side to another. A shimmering from one angle fades to flat as you move to the other side. This motion begs the material to disclose its process. Storm says, “Each time I learn about a mark, it’s something I can carry on to the next body of work...a practice that just feeds after itself.” Each mark, whether smeared, brushed, sanded, or cut away, is a recreation of a surface from focused memories brought into visibility. Color theory plays out here with the effects of patinas and paint; specifically selected for their relevance and conditioning qualities. Storm presents a machined beauty, a fine craft with these works; but don’t let that diminish your knowledge of the sentient hands constructing these impressions. He says “Working with my hands feels so much more immediate, almost like when you draw.” With his pathways to cognition exacting in implementation, Storm’s practice is honed in and practically stealth.

With equal contemplation, Storm’s drawings are just as wondrous with a combination of brush and pen work, using a practice of repetition to redefine a more thoughtful drawing of pictorial convention. These lines, horizons, wind, and rocks are not derived from *en plein air* observation. Instead Storm’s hand and eye are connected to focused meditations, mantras, and memories in which he ruminates on all the shapes and colors that compose these new works. Each rock, tree, and mountain serves as the evidence of his ability to make visible with an economic mark his intimate fixations adapted through self-studied examinations. He openly refers to his process as a direct link to the unseen—a pseudo scientific approach dedicated to the invisible. He’s guessing the way wind moves while also pulling from the way he has seen wind move. There is no specific preemptive story being told; no fable. He doesn’t know the content until it unfolds onto the surface. Even the orientation of the surface changes, as Storm works, like a mirror, his current pictorial language projects a light onto his perceived paradigm. With the rocks he remembers, the rocks he sees, the rocks of his dreams, the rocks of cartoons, and the rocks of history, lush in color and texture and minimal as a desert, he offers a tale of rebuilding. Like a cauldron, these landscapes take shape one ingredient at a time.



Untitled from the series *A Good Place To Lay Down* (detail), 2015, ink on paper, 22" x 30"



Untitled from the series *Firmament*, 2013, pigment and urethane on aluminum, 12" x 48"

and molten steel, but with “bits” in a flow of information traveling along circuits in the form of electronic impulses. The iron machines still exist, but they obey the orders of weightless bits.

Is it legitimate to turn to scientific discourse to find an image of the world that suits my view? If what I am attempting here attracts me, it is because I feel it might connect with a very old thread in the history of poetry.

The *De Rerum Natura* of Lucretius is the first great work of poetry in which knowledge of the world tends to dissolve the solidity of the world, leading to a perception of all that is infi-

Highlighted excerpt from *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*, by Italo Calvino, from the chapter on Lightness

Coppertones, Monochromes, and Touchstones is a culmination of the last two years, two years riddled with poignant uncertainties. A re-nestling into his original hometown of Los Angeles after an absence of ten-plus years, moving three times, battling a nasty strain of pneumonia; piece by piece, the wind and dust mix together to form a landscape, a surface, an expression, and a renewal enveloped from within. Storm could get secure with these marks and he knows the potential limitation of the diversity of these drawings. But we certainly can't question his dedication to the pictorial. In fact, with curatorial hands we welcome and understand this first solo presentation at SSS. We present *Coppertones, Monochromes, and Touchstones* as the inaugural offering in a series of exhibitions called SSSLOVES. These exhibitions act as love letters to our friends producing work and generating ideas that we are subjectively thrilled by. *Coppertones, Monochromes, and Touchstones* includes new works with materials such as paper, aluminum, copper, enamel, paint, ink, light and many other unseen guiding ephemeral forces.

Zach Storm was born in Los Angeles in 1983. He received his Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Corcoran College of Art + Design and a Master of Fine Arts from the Maryland Institute College of Art. His work has been included in various group and solo exhibitions and is also held in private and public collections nationally and internationally.



Untitled from the series *A Good Place To Lay Down*, 2015, enamel on aluminum, 9" x 12"

WRITTEN AND DESIGNED BY NILAY LAWSON.

BIG THANKS TO: SCOTT ARTHUR, BRECK BRUNSON, PAUL FARBER,
NALAN LAWSON, DAVID ALFARO SIQUEIROS, ZACH STORM.

PRESENTED BY SSS IN LOS ANGELES, 2015.
SSSLA.COM @-SSSLA_ #SSSLA

SSS DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE BASED ON RACE, GENDER, RELIGION, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, OR SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS.