



RUSSELL TYLER
STRANGE VARIANTS

DENNY
GALLERY



Russell Tyler

Strange Variants

February 28 - April 2, 2017

Denny Gallery
261 Broome Street, New York, NY

DENNY GALLERY

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Russell Tyler: *Strange Variants*

February 28 - April 2, 2017

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A Flick of the Wrist

By Alex Bacon

Russell Tyler works in a range of modes, shuttling between fixed and loose compositional armatures for his signature accumulations of dense impasto. Equally compelled, as so many artists today are, by both of those seeming aesthetic opposites, pre-determined geometric patterns and intuitive gestural mark-making, Tyler focuses on the possibilities of painterly actions located in the range of movement of the wrist. These give rise to quick, but relatively small strokes, rather than to either the more bombastic motions that extend from rotations of the elbow or the shoulder, or the diminutive taps and swipes of the finger (either to smear paint, or to open an app on a smartphone). The basic atom of all of his paintings is thus a relatively small, but not diminutive brushstroke. Dense with pigment, but tight in terms of scope, these accrete in the stepped bands and nestled squares of his geometric paintings, or they pulse and extend, traversing the canvas to take the form of the floral analogues in his most recent series.

As such the title of this exhibition, “Strange Variants,” reflects a sense of a tropical greenhouse breeding rare, exotic species, or of an outlandish virus infiltrating a vulnerable ecosystem. One could say that, among other things, this suggests the tension Tyler establishes in his paintings between the very physical and immediate presence of his painted marks, which project, sitting resolutely atop the primed cotton duck, and the preoccupation—across the full range of his catalogue of expression—with picturing. Underscored by an unrelentingly vibrant color palette, the work always has a graphic quality, whether it is the familiarity of his geometric motifs, the ecstatic figuration of earlier work, or the floral imagery that has seeped into the most recent paintings after about five years of exclusively abstract production.

It is perhaps for this reason that Tyler has, though probably unwittingly, been rendering his pictorial space ever shallower, always in spite of the density of his paint application, reducing layering in favor of allowing passages of paint to interact both with the colors that lie next to them, and also as they interpenetrate due to the artist’s favored way of working his paint wet into wet, which means that the work never so much mixes color, as much as they collide in the space of the canvas. Tyler has thus been increasingly trading illusionary evocations of pictorial depth for the material presence of paint, with its ineluctable flatness. In this way Tyler essentially enacts the kind of shifts that an idol of his, Philip Guston, did in the late 1960s, except in reverse. Moving not from abstraction to figuration, as Guston did, rather Tyler found that the compositional armature, as well as the facture and technique that he had developed in his figurative paintings could sustain a set of formal relations that did not require recognizable imagery to function, and so he drained these out in favor of foregrounding abstract formal relations. This is most evident in Tyler’s geometric paintings, where color interactions, a la Josef Albers, are clearly on display.

One must also speak to the digital context, which Tyler acknowledges, but does not overly emphasize in his work. He resists the easy seduction of imagery that overtly references the digital, but acknowledges how painting today cannot but reference the shallow three-dimensionality that the stretched canvas shares with screens. This is most evident in the borders that Tyler always uses to frame and delimit the painted field. These serve to crop the contents of that field, giving us the sense that it could continue on indefinitely. Further, if we compare larger and smaller works we often feel as if we are encountering a more and a less zoomed in perspective of the same space. This suggests that a digital logic of cropping is at work. Such as, for example, how touchscreen devices give us control over the scalability of an image, which, with today’s technology, does not change much in resolution as we zoom in and out, simply changing the sense of the imaged scene’s proximity to us, and framing different parts of it. This can be opposed to an older phenomenological model attributed to so-called “actual” space, whereby the viewer had to literally or imaginatively penetrate a space, either with their eyes (i.e. the traditional province of painting as a primarily visual medium), or by also bringing to bear the body, by moving into it.

We can see Tyler’s intuitive fusion of a digital space, which is to say one predicated on the logics of scalability, with a painterly execution. The result is what pushed Tyler out of working in clearly delimited layers of lines and daubs of paint, to more shallow, definite spaces and forms. This has now reached a new level in Tyler’s recent floral paintings, where the foliage—though schematic in the way that Matisse’s deployment of similar subject matter in his late cut outs was—define a somewhat concrete, limited space around them, much as things do when we pull them in close, focusing our attention on the thing and what is right next to it to the exclusion of all else, forging an intimate bond in the process, an intimacy that is present in Tyler’s recent paintings in how we relate to them as viewers.

All this despite the fact that these works share the electric palette typical of all of Tyler’s paintings, and have an abstract, craggy character reminiscent of Clyfford Still. In these recent works we find that the impastoed mark—the atom, as we have seen—of all of Tyler’s paintings, has been channeled, the energy it conveys being contained within the floral device, which sits atop a flat field and around which swirl linear eddies of compressed pigment. The experience of beholding these is both as quick, and potentially impactful, as the gestures that result from the flick of a wrist.





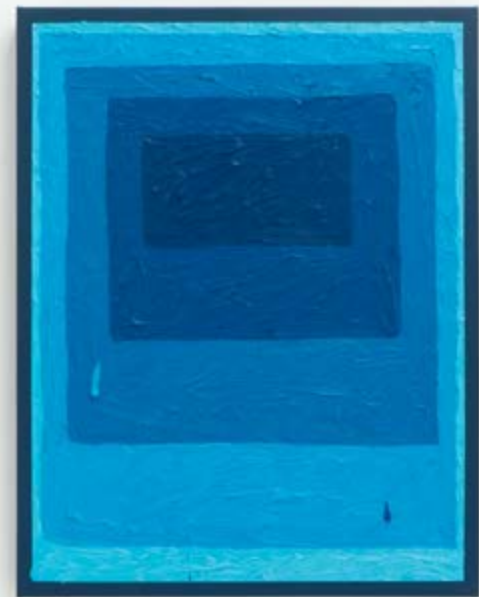
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LBEP, 2016
Oil on canvas
60 x 54 in/152 x 137 cm



TYBP, 2017
Oil on canvas
60 x 54 in/152 x 137 cm



AGGP, 2016
Oil on canvas
60 x 54 in/152 x 137 cm



5TLOB, 2017
Oil on canvas
60 x 54 in/152 x 137 cm



OPGP, 2016
Oil on canvas
60 x 54 in/152 x 137 cm





RX5, 2016
Oil on canvas
60 x 54 in/152 x 137 cm



TGPP, 2016
Oil on canvas
60 x 54 in/152 x 137 cm



B3G, 2017
Oil on canvas
50 x 46 in/127 x 117 cm



BLYP, 2016
Oil on canvas
32 x 28 in/81 x 71 cm



B5LB, 2016
Oil on canvas
28 x 22 in/71 x 56 cm



RUSSELL TYLER CURRICULUM VITAE

Lives and works in Brooklyn, New York
Born 1981 in Summertown, Tennessee

EDUCATION

2010 MFA, Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, NY
2006 BFA, Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2017 *Strange Variants*, Denny Gallery, New York, NY
T.B.D., Ribordy Contemporary, Geneva
2016 *Russell Tyler*, Galerie Bernard Ceysson, Saint-Etienne, France
Collision Course, Richard Heller Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
2015 UNTITLED., with Denny Gallery, Miami Beach, FL
Radiant Fields, Denny Gallery, New York, NY
Lo-Fi, Alon Segev Gallery, Tel Aviv, Israel
Lo-Fi, Gordon Gallery 2, Tel Aviv, Israel
2013 *Analogue Future*, DCKT Contemporary, New York, NY
2012 *Bad Paintings*, EbersMoore Gallery, Chicago, IL
2010 *Decomposing in the Land of Paradise*, Freight + Volume Gallery, New York, NY

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2017 UNTITLED., with Denny Gallery, San Francisco, CA
2016 BOSCO, Simovac Projects, Brooklyn, NY
The City & The City, Denny Gallery (Pop Up), New York, NY
Né un 2 Juillet, Galerie Derouillon, Paris, France
9999, The Fireplace Project, East Hampton, NY
Grafforists, curated by Max Presneill, Torrance Art Museum, Torrance, CA
Art Brussels, with The Hole, Brussels, Belgium
Two on Two, The Hole, New York, NY
2015 *Matthew Feyld & Russell Tyler*, Ampersand Gallery, Portland, OR

Between the Lines, Two-person exhibition with Matt Mignanelli, Anonymous Gallery, Mexico City
Trudy Benson/Russell Tyler, Retrospective Gallery, Hudson, NY
Metamodern, Denny Gallery, New York, NY
Trudy & Russell, East Hampton Shed, East Hampton, NY
New Digs, Ober Gallery, Kent, CT
Complex Decisions, CES Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
Spat Spell, Thierry Goldberg Gallery, New York, NY
Linear Abstraction, SCAD Gutstein Gallery, Savannah, GA
On the Benefits of Delayed Gratification, Ana Cristea Gallery, New York, NY
2014 *This One's Optimistic: Pincushion*, New Britain Museum of American Art, New Britain, CT
OK Great THANKS this is SO RIDICULOUS, ACME., Los Angeles, CA
OK Great REALLY this is ALSO RIDICULOUS, DCKT Contemporary, New York, NY
I [Heart] Paint, Angell Gallery, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
Second Sight, Brian Morris Gallery, New York, NY
Sunscreen, James Graham & Sons, New York, NY
New Tenets in Geometric Abstraction, Paris London Hong Kong, Chicago, IL
Graphic Thoughts, CES Contemporary, Los Angeles, CA
2013 *Windows*, Denny Gallery, New York, NY
Acid Summer, DCKT Contemporary, New York, NY
Against Nature: Hard Edge Abstraction, James Graham & Sons, New York, NY
Surfacing, Mark Wolfe Gallery, San Francisco, CA
Tectonic Drift, Brian Morris Gallery, New York, NY
SPRING/BREAK Art Show, Ballast Projects, Old School, New York, NY
2012 *Aggro Crag*, Bosi Contemporary, New York, NY
Gastspiel Paris Munich, Galerie van de Loo Projekte, Munich, Germany
Embassy of Painters, Appels Gallery, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

NEU!, EbersMoore Gallery, Chicago, IL
The Double Dirty Dozen (& Friends), Freight + Volume Gallery, New York, NY
2011 *Mr. Killer & Lady Paranoia. Act I*, Galerie Polad-Hardouin, Paris, France
Behind the Green Door, DNA Gallery, Provincetown, MA
2010 *Ah, Wilderness!*, EbersMoore Gallery, Chicago, IL
Dead Cat Bounce, ArtLexis, Brooklyn, NY
2009 *Heartbreak Hotel*, Freight + Volume Gallery, New York, NY
Giver, Union Gallery, New York, NY

PRESS AND PUBLICATIONS

2017 Bray, Nicole. "Finding Vitality and Stillness with Russell Tyler." *art | Real*. February 2.
2016 Schneider, Hans. "Last Chance: 'Russell Tyler Exhibition' at Galerie Bernard Ceysson, Koerich, Luxembourg," *Blouin Artinfo*, December 4.
"Collectors Susan and Michael Hort's Picks from Art Brussels 2016," *Artspace*. April 23.
Kerr, Dylan. "I Know What You Did Last Spring/Break: Fair Founders Ambre Kelly and Andrew Gori's 9 Most Memorable Booths," *Artspace*. February 26.
Herriman, Kat. "How Five New York Artist Couples Share Space," *New York Times Style Magazine (Online)*. February 11.
2015 "Susan and Michael Hort's Picks From Miami Art Week 2015," *Artspace Magazine*, December 4.
Kopel, Dana. "Tangible Textures: Trudy Benson and Russell Tyler at Retrospective Gallery." *Modern Painters*, web September 17, print November.
Stopa, Jason. "Russell Tyler Radiant Fields." *The Brooklyn Rail*, June 3.
2014 Micchelli, Thomas. "The Pursuit of Art, 2014." *Hyperallergic*, December 27.
Laluyan, Oscar. "PICTURE THIS: Sight Un-Scene at Brian Morris Gallery." *Arte Fuse*, June 25.

2013 Sengbusch, Mark. "Muted Beauty: Russell Tyler at DCKT Contemporary." *NY Arts Magazine*, Jan. 15.
Micchelli, Thomas. "At Play in the Fields of Paint: Russell Tyler's 'Analogue Future.'" *Hyperallergic*, January 11.
Micchelli, Thomas. "Painting, Perception, and the Emphatically Handmade." *Hyperallergic*, December 14.
Donayre, Aylah. "11 Must See Works at Miami Project Art Fair" *Complex.com*, December 5.
Rivers, Tina. "'Windows': Denny Gallery", *ARTFORUM.com*, November.
Micchelli, Thomas. "Stay Cool: Art, August, and Acid", *Hyperallergic*, August 24.
McKinney, Kathryn. "Review: 'Surfacing' group exhibition at Mark Wolfe Contemporary Art, San Francisco", *San Francisco Arts Quarterly*, August.
Keeting, Zachary. "Russell Tyler, June 2013", *Gorky's Granddaughter*, July 2.
Micchelli, Thomas. "Running the Gamut: Trudy Benson's Flamboyant Restraint", *Hyperallergic*, May 4.
"Fresh Air from Ballast Projects at SPRING/BREAK Art Show", *Babes at the Museum*, March.
Eberhart, Jennifer. "Art fair highlight: SPRING/BREAK", *Examiner*, March 10.
2012 Crowley, Huey. "Studio Visit: Trudy Benson and Russell Tyler", *Beautiful Decay*, December 25.
Perrine, Forrest. "Russell Tyler's Goopy Shapes", *Beautiful Decay*, October 23.
Kimball, Whitney. "Four Shows: NYC", *New American Paintings*, September 21.
Meier, Allison. "Three Summer MFA Shows Tackle Painting and its Discontent", *Hyperallergic*, July 26.
Quinn, Bryony. "Russell Tyler", *It's Nice That*, March 30.
Stopa, Jason. "30 Artists to Watch in 2012", *NY Art's*, February.
2011 Dagen, Philippe. "Mr. Killer and Lady Paranoia", *Le Monde*, July.



Rusell Tyler, February 26, 2017.

