

## **GALLERI URBANE**

vs

April 1 – May 6, 2023

Public Reception: April 1 from 5 – 7:30 p.m.

Galleri Urbane is pleased to announce *vs*, an exhibition of artworks by Loring Taoka. Following his recent solo installation at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, this represents the fifth solo exhibition by the artist at Galleri Urbane.

Taoka's work takes as its bases a pseudo-"X" shape, which the artist duplicates, layers, and takes apart until it dissolves, losing inherent meaning. As sequences of forms which gain abstract potential, viewers are "forced to sit on the threshold, on that precipice of knowing versus not-knowing," Taoka says. The viewer is immersed in symmetries: the works hang in deliberate sets, "conceptually engaging [the viewer] with being inside the space of a mirror, using that as a parallel to how I see myself versus how someone sees me as a queer person of color." It is an exercise in "not filling people's expectations," he says, but rather forcing one to look back and forth amid more than one reality.

Brightly colored UV prints on plexiglass meld transparencies and hard edges. Opposite them, white impastos on white panels replicate the negative space of the plexiglass pattern, the surface itself proffering a game of subtle whites and grays that confound spatial depth. Several fragile, matte gouache paintings on paper oppose artworks of acrylic on panel. The contrasts of colors and surfaces elicit unsettling visceral responses. Taoka welcomes the push-pull, joining hues that force the viewer to respond, even recoil. "I'm [more] interested in challenging our notions of what is good or what is correct or what is proper," Taoka says, rather than executing epitomes of harmony.

Placing others and the self in a mirror requires dedicated unpacking and patience. The grid functions as the origin of pattern but also an embodiment of rigidity. Taoka likes "having [the works] fall off the grid or undo the grid in some way." Embracing a practice of risk-taking, the exhibition unites more varied media than previous ones, reveling in zones of ambiguity. It challenges preconceived aesthetic notions, ideas of authenticity, and truth.

Also, it is a show of ravishing absence: both negative space and former versions of a pattern hold weight. Taoka conceptually and aesthetically expands the potential of an image: "what it could be, what it was, what it is." Ultimately, *vs* deftly unites and extends the artist's ongoing vision and plumbs the new possibilities of mirroring.

**Loring Taoka** (b. 1986) is a visual artist utilizing a variety of approaches and techniques to explore perception and experience. Through their work, Taoka examines what happens when we are presented with precise, yet ambiguous information. Recent solo exhibitions include *Fingers Crossed* at the Sahara West Library (Las Vegas, NV), *Kick me under the table* at Curiouser & Curiouser in 2022 (Kansas City, MO), and a museum exhibition,  $\pm$ , at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art.