

TINA KIM GALLERY

Davide Balliano: Abacus

February 5 – March 7, 2026

Tina Kim Gallery is pleased to announce *Abacus*, an exhibition featuring new paintings and works on paper by New York-based artist Davide Balliano (b. 1983, Turin, Italy). On view from February 5 through March 7, 2026, the exhibition marks Balliano's fifth solo presentation with the gallery and a significant moment in the evolution of his practice, with the debut of works in color and new series of gouaches on paper.

Long defined by his monochrome palette, Balliano has for the first time introduced shades of red and ochre into his signature geometric paintings, reflecting his ongoing exploration of the tension between order and organic flux. The arches and curves that anchor his compositions, as well as the newly introduced earthy hues, explore the idea of entropic decay and the passage of time while also drawing parallels with the architectural landscape of the artist's native Turin. The exhibition shares its title with a poem by Sandy Florian, whose meditation on how mathematical instruments can be used to present and represent (or produce and reproduce) the natural phenomena of our world served as a conceptual point of departure for this show.

Balliano's geometric motifs stem from a sustained interest in the arch, a form he understands as a universal, distinctly human geometry. As an architectural structure determined by human scale, the arch operates as a bridge between the figurative and the abstract. While arches may recall the Roman ruins around his native Turin, Balliano's interest lies less in their historical specificity than in what ruins symbolize: the passage of time and the inevitability of transformation. These ideas are further explored in the artist's new gouaches, whose oxidized pigmentation suggests corroded metal or eroded stone. Balliano's weathered surfaces evoke nature's inevitable pull toward chaos, even within systems that appear rigorously ordered. The mechanical patterns of his paintings hover on the brink of collapse, only to be reabsorbed into the structure—a tension that expands into a richer chromatic and material vocabulary in this exhibition through the introduction of color and his foray into works on paper. Balliano's recent incorporation of warm tones was prompted by the friction he perceived between his precise geometric systems and the entropic forces that threaten them. He saw a kind of energetic heat generated by this clash, embodied in the deep reds and ochres seen in this exhibition. The rust oxide pigment, in particular, carries a dual resonance as both natural and man-made, binding human construction and natural decay into a single visual register.

Despite the seemingly mechanical precision of his paintings, Balliano's process is intensely manual and gradual. The artist begins each work by hand-sketching geometric patterns onto the canvas with the aid of a compass. He underpaints these forms in dark acrylic before meticulously rendering each curve in thin layers of white plaster. After this rigorous, careful stage of painting, Balliano boldly embraces chance: he sands, buffs, and scores the surface, unveiling the stratified layers beneath. In this way, the artist's approach moves beyond conventional painting, approaching a kind of sculptural excavation. Lastly, he applies diluted washes of paint to sections of the background, whose gravity-driven drips ultimately

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determine the work's orientation. Foregrounding the role of natural phenomena, these cascading drips anchor the work in physical experience and bring a sense of lived reality to a visual language that might otherwise feel abstract or detached from the human realm. This extended approach results in entrancingly organic, painterly surfaces, with the artist's hand evident in the scratches and scores incised into the picture plane.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Davide Balliano was born in 1983 in Turin, Italy. He received a BA in Photography from C.F.P. Riccardo Bauer in Milan and a BA in Graphic Arts in Turin. After moving to New York in 2006, he transitioned from photography to painting, developing the materially-focused and geometric approach that defines his work today. Balliano has presented solo exhibitions at institutions including Museo Novecento, Florence (2019); Bottega Veneta Maison, NY (2018); and MARCA – Museo delle Arti di Catanzaro, Italy (2018). His work has been featured in numerous group exhibitions, including Assembly 3 in Monticello, NY (2022); The Cumulative Effect at Songwon Art Center, Seoul (2020); Homemade at Magazzino Italian Art Museum, NY (2020); and MoMA PS1, NY (2010). His work is held in permanent collections including The Margulies Collection and Magazzino Italian Art Museum. Tina Kim Gallery has represented Davide Balliano since 2017.

ABOUT THE GALLERY

Tina Kim Gallery is widely recognized for its unique programming that emphasizes international contemporary artists, historical overviews, and independent curatorial projects. The gallery has built a platform for emerging and established artists by working closely with over twenty artists and estates, including Pacita Abad, Ghada Amer, Tania Pérez Córdova, and Mire Lee, amongst others. Our expanding program of Asian-American and Asian diasporic artists, including Maia Ruth Lee, Minoru Niizuma, and Wook-Kyung Choi, evince the gallery's commitment to pushing the conversation beyond national frameworks. Founded in 2001, the gallery opened the doors to its ground-floor Chelsea exhibition space in 2014. The gallery was instrumental in introducing Korean Dansaekhwa artists such as Park Seo-Bo, Ha Chong-Hyun, and Kim Tschang-Yeul to an international audience, establishing public and institutional awareness of this critically influential group of Asian Post-War artists. The gallery partners regularly with prominent curators, scholars, and writers to produce exhibitions and publications of rigor and critical resonance.

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