

Installation by Sterling Ruby  
New art space by collector Berggruen opens in Venice

April 23, 2022



Photo: Simone Padovani / Getty Images for Berggruen Arts & Culture  
Sterling Ruby and his relief sculpture *HEX*, mounted on the façade of Palazzo Diedo, the headquarters of Berggruen Arts & Culture

The US artist Sterling Ruby has realized a gigantic relief sculpture on the facade of the Venetian Palazzo Diedo. This marks the opening of the new art house of collector Nicolas Berggruen

The sculpture, titled *HEX*, marks the first phase of Ruby's project in four acts and will be on view throughout the 59th Venice Biennale until the end of November. The title refers to "hex symbols," geometric, hand-painted signs of the zodiac that have been found on Dutch barns in Pennsylvania, the U.S. state where the artist grew up, since the early 19th century. They are thought to protect against supernatural dangers as a defensive charm, but also represent an understanding of a natural order and an agricultural interest in the stars as an expression of the annual passage of the seasons.

Sterling Ruby's *HEX* is an assemblage of objects such as a rusted truck frame and recycled steel pipes from Los Angeles, as well as a bright red circle and a bright yellow flag. The artist wanted to create a sort of badge for the palazzo.

After its renovation, the palazzo will host exhibitions as the headquarters of the newly founded institution Berggruen Arts & Culture, some of them with works from the personal collection of investor Nicolas Berggruen. There will also be symposia and an artist-in-residence program. Nicolas Berggruen is the son of art collector Heinz Berggruen and a collector himself. In Berlin, he serves as chairman of the board of the Förderkreis des Berliner Museums Berggruen. In Germany, he hit the headlines in 2010, among other things, when he bought the insolvent Karstadt department store group with the aim of turning the chain around.