

# pipe|line

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Leon Scott-Engel

*Handle With Care*

22 June - 5 August, 2023



*Vanitas*, 2023

Leon Scott-Engel (b.1999) invites a vulnerability and tenderness into his work whilst undermining conventional ideas surrounding masculinity and arbitrary gender roles. Playing off stereotypes, Scott-Engel borrows the structures of boxing equipment such as sparring pads or kick shields to create canvases that serve a safeguard function. Disregarding the rigidity of traditional painting frames, his canvases bend and shield. In doing so, they soften the physical architecture of the gallery itself. Some behave like bodies, slumped on the floor or wrapped around a wall like a protective arm or a lap to lie

on. Occasionally resembling mattresses, Scott-Engel also considers place and the privacy of one's bed as a site for vulnerability.

Presented in the main gallery are paintings morphed into sculpture, the artist's multi-disciplinary practice sharing a common figuration. His paintings which depict scenes of romance and solitude within softened frames, are contrasted with paintings on wood that are hard and rigid. In the end room hangs a sculpture resembling a boxing bag. Naked and exposed, it is built up with softly painted bruises and inhabits a space on its own. *Tender to the Core* (2023) closely resembles a figure beckoning to be held, intensifying the human quality in Scott-Engel's work. Downstairs is an installation titled *Beacons*, made of wax casts of the artist's own head that blinker 'SOS' in morse code.

Scott-Engel's work shifts between content and form, between painting and sculpture. Across his work there is a reciprocal relationship between object and viewer. As equally as the viewer is inclined to hold and protect the objects before it, the work itself has its own protective tendency as it interacts with the space and enfolds the viewer. Reflected in his practice is the process of maturing and an ability to be increasingly generous and forgiving with oneself. For his debut solo exhibition, Scott-Engel endeavours to bring further softness into his work. A central consideration for the artist has been to embrace a tenderness that transcends stereotypes and dissolves any line of defense, making room for a mutual respect between viewer and object.

Leon Scott-Engel (b.1999, London, UK) lives and works in London. He completed his BA at Glasgow School of Art in 2022 and was awarded the Richard Ford Award and Research Residency at the Museo Del Prado, Madrid. Scott-Engel's work has been included in a number of group shows including The Split Gallery, London (2023); Liliya Art Gallery, London (2023); Warbling, London (2022); Black White Gallery, London (2022); Transmission Gallery, Glasgow (2022) and D Contemporary, London (2022).

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