

James English Leary | Half a Mississippi Steamboat

Opening: 18 May 2018

Bredgade 28, Copenhagen

Andersen's is delighted to announce *Half a Mississippi Steamboat* by James English Leary in the project space at Bredgade 28. The exhibition presents a corpus of old and new works that play with shaped canvases, which are then arranged standing in the space. Leary constructs his works out of the different parts that make up a painting; stretchers, canvas, and colour – in that order. The paintings depict fingers, a face, an animal, a pair of lips and populate the space as actors on a stage, giving the works both scenographic and performative components.

Leary's practice is inspired by the artist's extensive research at the intersection between art, film and education. His sculptural paintings have a bodily presence and interact with the viewer, inviting them to ironically acknowledge the ambiguity between the figurative and the abstract. The artist installs the paintings so that they lean on the floor and against the wall, conceiving them like tired bodies that require support in order to recover from fatigue. As the works lean into the walls so too does the character depicted, which in turn stimulates a yearning in the viewer to lean into and to experience the work. Rather than being merely 'figurative', Leary's paintings posses their own physicality and in this exhibition become almost 'show of bodies'.

Like the brain in the human body, Leary's canvases develop into a landscape of memories, where details can be dated to specific moments in time and history. When placed close to each other in an exhibition space, Leary's body-like paintings appear as a crowd of people exploring different modes of communication whilst squirming, lurching, fox-trotting and sparring with each other around the room. This interaction creates intimate and sometimes awkward situations where some parts of the paintings overlap; inquiring, kissing, caressing, sniffing and craning to see.

James English Leary (1982) lives and works in New York, NY. Recent solo shows include: *The Bursting Grape*, Galerie Lisa Kandlhofer, Vienna, 2017; *James English Leary and André Azevedo*, Galeria SIM, Curitiba, 2017; *Family Romance*, Galerie Leyendecker, Santa Cruz de Tenerife, 2016; *James English Leary and Aine Vonnegut*, Safe Gallery, Brooklyn, 2015; *Lady Chatterley's Lover's Lovers*, Four A.M., New York, 2016; *The Joys of Mortgaging Your Future*, Boyfriends, Chicago, 2016; *Triple Motherfucker*, Vito Schnabel Projects, New York, 2015 and *Smoked Fruit*, Ray Smith Studio, Brooklyn, 2015. James English Leary's work has been included in Greater New York at MOMA Ps1, The 2010 Whitney Biennial and The Sundance Film Festival.