

SMART OBJECTS is delighted to present Nicholas Campbell's first solo exhibition with the gallery, *HELL IS THE SIZE OF AN APPLE*.

9.7 – 10.22

Beneath sheets of smashed silverleaf, metallic paint, and smudged pigments in gestural utterances, cavernous earthy atmospheres lurk in new paintings by Los Angeles-based artist Nicholas Campbell. Recalling the lurid depths of Campbell's previous series, the murky foundations of sunless oils precede and support the work's raffish metallic faces. Peeking out behind lustrous coverings this previous sensibility of murky turbulent forces served as a vehicle for sublimation; as dark places to commiserate alienation.

More a lateral change in perspective than progressive development, the earnest underpaintings are covered over with a reflective mask-like outer shell. Once a space to understand the *consequences* of cultural production as narcissistic production (burnout, depression, desperation) the affixed shimmering excess builds a facade that *impersonates* and *acts as* such cultural conditions – delivering us the paintings we deserve.

Reflective surfaces recall vague nostalgia for an ever-arriving future that reverberates echoes of an unanchored a-historic present. Largely lacking material ground, the unstable atmospheres surrender to the distorting effects of information overdose, as references wash over without sticking to a source. When layered and divorced from material ties, information stops informing and starts to deform. Ripples of simulacra feed culture back in on itself and accrue wear with each iteration. The pure mirror of the future is gunked with greasy nihilistic buildup and deleterious bubble-gum pop. Cycles of excess production and resulting ever-faster decay are regurgitated in zombie pastiche mashups.

Presenting as smeared digital dystopias of messy information decadence, the works identify and describe how information is misshapen, and consequently, carve space for resistance to information saturation that seduces with promises of freedom while holding a caveat of surveillance and control. Fine with being taken at surface level, the works deliberately withhold characteristics of painting to curb cravings for context. They are indifferent to teaching, explaining, directing, or informing. There's no attempt to ethically persuade, only reflect. What you see is what you get. In this sense, *HELL IS THE SIZE OF AN APPLE* is a death rattle of thing-ness.

Garnished with paint drips and indefinite signifiers more circumstantial than determined, the painting's reflective non-space denotes a continual reinvestment in non-things – information and data over material sources¹. As the physical world is increasingly substituted, reiterated, optimized, and distorted with information, *HELL IS THE SIZE OF AN APPLE* posits a reading of original sin as the loss of our animistic world-view.

¹ Han, Byung-Chul. *Non-things: Upheaval in the Lifeworld*, Polity, 2022

Nicholas Campbell (b.1995) lives and works in Los Angeles. Group exhibitions include *Agony / Serendipity*, SMART OBJECTS, Los Angeles (2023); *Inaugural Group Show*, Imperial Gallery, Los Angeles (2022); *Salon* at Amor Corp, Venice, CA (2022); *Coyote Principal*, Lupercal, Los Angeles (2021); *Siren Fort*, Final Hot Desert Ogden, Utah (2021); and *Crabs*, From the Desk of Lucy Bull, Malibu, CA (2021). His work was recently featured in Contemporary Art Review Los Angeles. He holds a BFA from Pitzer College (2018).

SMART OBJECTS

1828 W Sunset Blvd

Los Angeles, CA

213.840.9681

info@smartobjects.la

smartobjects.la