

LEE WELCH

OEDIPUS

The Complex presents an exhibition of newly commissioned work by
Lee Welch

In The Gallery, 21 Arran Street East, Dublin 7, D07YY97

Preview: 23 May 6pm - 8pm
Exhibition Run: 24 May - 14 June

Gallery Opening Hours: Monday - Friday 10am - 5pm, Saturday 12pm - 5pm



Lee Welch's exhibition Oedipus spans painting, printmaking, and installation, offering an arresting meditation on how we see, remember, and relate to the world. His visual language is spare but loaded—figures, gestures, and fragments reduced to essentials that carry emotional weight. Paintings in the exhibition feature references pulled from art history, popular culture, and the mundane rituals of daily life.

In all at once (2025), Lee references Paul Atreides from Dune, imagining blindness as another form of insight, asking what it means to see with more than just vision.

In I'm just going to leave it (2025), a fleeting moment from the Golden Globes is painted of Cillian Murphy's wife wiping lipstick off his face. It becomes a portrait of care, exposure, and the quiet vulnerability that exists behind public performance.

In epochal defining while one creates beautiful problems (2025), the chess legend Vasyl Ivanchuk is caught mid-defeat, a faded figure on the brink of collapse.

In all silently concentrating (2025), tourists mime, attempting to hold up the Leaning Tower of Pisa, rendered in translucent tones on raw-edged polyester, the image resists completion. It's an illusion about illusions, collective participation in a performance in which no one quite believes.

In All is vanity (2025) nods to Charles Allan Gilbert's famous double image of a woman and skull. Lee's version trembles in and out of legibility, echoing the instability of perception in the age of deepfakes and visual noise.

In A whole string of failures (2025) a figure is buried under books, a nod to burnout and the paralysis of overthinking.

In The smallest daily chore can be humanised (2025) an empty lilac-tinted interior is depicted, saturated with absence.

In aqua seafoam shame (2025), Lee traces a long lineage of artistic influence, working from a Jasper John's painting of Lucian Freud, which itself was based on a John Deakin photograph found in Francis Bacon's studio. The result is a layered meditation on authorship, image circulation, and emotional inheritance.

In Oedipus, The Gallery space itself is interrupted by an architectural intervention, slicing the gallery into sections, creating competing sightlines. Lee uses this divide to challenge how and from where meaning is constructed, emphasising the viewer's role in shaping what they see. The paintings in the exhibition are restrained and elliptical, but their effect is long-lasting. Lee doesn't just document a fractured world within Oedipus, he recreates the textures of living in it: the disorientation, the fragility, the fleeting moments of connection that still, somehow, endure.

Lee Welch (born Louisville, Kentucky) currently lives and works in Dublin, Ireland. He received his BFA from the National College of Art and Design (NCAD) in 2009 and his MFA from the Piet Zwart Institute, Rotterdam in 2011. Welch has held prestigious residencies at the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, and the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity in Canada, supported by the Arts Council.

His work has been featured in numerous significant exhibitions both nationally and internationally, including The National Gallery, Dublin; The Glucksman Gallery, Cork; the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, Michigan State University; Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane; Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León (MUSAC), Spain; Kerlin Gallery, Dublin; and Objectif, Antwerp. In 2025, Welch received The Homiens Art Prize in New York and co-founded the arts initiative Hallahan & Welch, which debuted with a significant group exhibition at Dublin Castle's Coach House Gallery.

Welch's works are held in prominent private and public collections such as the Arts Council, Dublin City Gallery, The Hugh Lane, and the OPW - State Art Collection. His practice has also been recognised in leading art publications, including Artforum, Art Monthly, Frieze, Irish Arts Review, and The Irish Times.

Proudly supported by the Arts Council of Ireland and Dublin City Council.

Image: Lee Welch, *with everything I'm feeling right now* 2025, 50 x 40 cm.

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