

Nicholas Campbell's paintings depart from conventional mark making. His surfaces are defined by acts of removal such as wiping, pressing, and smudging, rather than additive brushwork. In many passages, the pigment appears to have been stripped away moments after application, leaving residues of blurred stains, abrasions, and atmospheric discolouration. His repeated use of deep, oxidised tones including red, brown, black, burgundy, and copper produces a surface that withdraws from brightness and favours visual compression over expansion. This chromatic restraint cultivates a dense and muted air that sits low across the painting's register.

The works are constructed through layered gestures, producing surfaces with psychological and material weight. The use of aluminum as a support, a surface typically associated with speed, industrial production, and neutrality, intensifies the contrast between the hardness of the substrate and the instability of the painted field. As the viewer follows the residual movements of the artist's hand, the visual field becomes slippery and at times resists spatial orientation. Campbell's compositional strategies point to a shift in how painting can operate, not through iconography or narrative but through the atmospheric charge of surface and process.

Campbell developed his visual language in the mid 2010's Los Angeles, inspired and formed by rap music subcultures, motorcycle racing, and a rapidly emergent digital world that infects the psychology of the real. The intensity of speed and consumption common to those environments, often excluded from traditional visual discourse, becomes material in his work. The emotional registers of aggression, performance, and control that circulate in these spaces reappear on the canvas as formal pressure. His paintings do not present images of subculture; they restructure its affective states into a painterly vocabulary.

Painting, in Campbell's practice, becomes a carrier of condensed emotional experience. The surface collects not only pigment but also temporal accumulation, which might be understood as psychological residue. In this process, painting is stripped of theatricality or narrative ambition. The composition holds instead as a surface of interference, tension, and sedimentation.

The titles *Taurus* and *Aries* reference mythological figures such as Zeus in the form of a bull or the flying ram of Nephele, but these works offer no iconographic clues. The references function as symbolic coordinates rather than illustrations. Through them, Campbell introduces themes of desire, ritual, sacrifice, and transformation without relying on visual storytelling. These associations remain peripheral but suggest a system through which the viewer may locate the intensity that drives each painting.

In contrast, the Untitled works remove even that minimal interpretive frame. These compositions draw from urban textures such as burnt rubber on asphalt, scattered oil on corroded metal, and sonic distortion in low fidelity audio. They do not describe these references directly, but the visual logic follows their material conditions: fragmentation, repetition, and residue. The paintings resist coherence and favor instability as a structural tool.



Nicholas Campbell (1995, Los Angeles) is an artist based in New York City. Campbell holds a BA from Pitzer College (2018). Self-taught as an artist, his painting practice consists of heavily worked pieces that wrestle with a wide range of themes concerning modern pathologies attributed to social and technological change. His work considers the effects of narcissism and digital self referentiality on the contemporary subject through abstraction. Recent exhibitions include solo shows at Amanita New York, Smart Objects Los Angeles, group shows at CLEARING New York and Los Angeles, and Mammoth Gallery in London. His work has been featured in The Brooklyn Rail and Contemporary Art Review Los Angeles.

Publications

- 2025 Brooklyn Rail, *World-Honored One* at Amanita
- 2023 Contemporary Art Review Los Angeles CARLA, *Agony / Serendipity* at SMART OBJECTS

Duarte Sequeira

Nicholas Campbell (b. 1995)
Selected Exhibitions

2025	<i>Last Chance</i> at Duarte Sequeira, Seoul (solo) <i>World Honored-One</i> at Amanita, New York (solo) <i>Sonder</i> at Amanita, New York (group)
2024	<i>Paintings for London</i> at Final Hot Desert, London (solo) <i>Dark Figures Surround Me</i> at Hugo Alcantara Projects, London (group) <i>Meet me by the lake</i> at CLEARING, New York (group) <i>Where Can We Live But Days</i> at MAMOTH, London (group) <i>Chronicler</i> at CLEARING, Los Angeles (group)
2023	<i>Hell is the Size of an Apple</i> at SMART OBJECTS, Los Angeles (solo & duo) <i>Agony / Serendipity</i> at SMART OBJECTS, Los Angeles (solo & duo) <i>Gate 45</i> at Michelle Kenin Fine Art, Dubai (group)
2022	<i>Inaugural</i> at Imperial Gallery, Los Angeles (group)
2021	<i>From the Desk of Lucy Bull</i> , Malibu (group) <i>Siren Fort</i> at Final Hot Desert, Ogden, Utah (group)