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Artist Nick Moss Creates Steel Paintings

By: Angelika Pokovba



American artist Nick Moss prefers to work with stretched out steel sheets, in lieu of traditional canvas, manipulated under extreme temperatures with a welding gun-kind of “brush” to create 85-90 lb. paintings in his upstate New York studio. His latest work is now on view at Leila Heller Gallery, in a solo exhibition, *Rigorous Perception*, which includes nine nudes, three abstract pieces, and four of the artist’s emoji works.

I asked Moss if he ever wants to experiment with other materials and his answer was quite simple. “There’s all kinds of steel.” He was essentially cast into a steel-involved career path since childhood, growing up on a Michigan farm and fixing heavy-duty equipment. His favorite material then became his obsession at a barbecue equipment company that he founded and worked as a design engineer. But his relationship with steel was always a deeper metaphoric one — Moss loved the challenge in working with something so unwilling to be manipulated.

“Steel is very temperamental. You have to fight with it,” he says. “You have to know it. It’s like a love-hate relationship and when you understand it, you can manipulate it, but it also manipulates you.” Easily affected by light and atmosphere, the material warps in often unpredictable ways. Even after Moss welds an image onto his canvas, before it is framed on a steel frame, it can roll up into a U-shape. It is then a rigorous job to achieve the desired result.

With his collection of nudes welded directly onto the steel, there is no margin of error. Hours of meticulous work then turned into flawless silhouettes of the female figure, looking seemingly lightweight from afar. However, upon closer look, they are textured and dimensional. Moss’ abstract patina on steel pieces is a bit more forgiving because they offer him a chance to manipulate color and distort design.

<http://www.essentialhommemag.com/artist-nick-moss-creates-steel-paintings/>

Moss is also exhibiting his older pieces of texting emojis. While so ephemeral and lightly used in our realm of the online, here those “emotions” are set in steel, literally. The artist admits that his favorite might be a smirk.

With an unusual material and approach, Nick Moss remains entirely in his own league.



Photos: Courtesy of the artist

