

LEILA HELLER.

Nick Moss
STEEL SHAPES
January 10 – February 15, 2020



From the series *Steel Shapes* (2019) by Nick Moss

Leila Heller is pleased to announce *STEEL SHAPES*, an exhibition of new work by New York–based artist Nick Moss. On view December 10, 2019, through January 23, 2020, the exhibition marks the artist’s second solo show at Leila Heller New York. The gallery will host an opening reception for the artist on January 10 from 6 to 8 pm.

Moss’s new body of work marks a significant transition from figuration to abstraction while still employing the artist’s signature cut-steel canvases and industrial tools to explore materiality and color. At the center of this exhibition is his series *Steel Shapes*, in which Moss uses a blowtorch and unique patinas to test the limits of color on various shaped steel canvases welded together, recalling modernist tropes such as color-field painting, hard-edge abstraction, and assemblage. In these works, traditional linen and wood have been replaced with steel, the brush with a torch, and paint with patina.

In addition to the *Steel Shapes* series, the artist will debut three wall-mounted steel works, in which he applied the blowtorch to explore the tactility and textures of the material. He relied solely on the raw essence of the steel and the soot particles caused by burning acetylene, resulting in a subtle contrast of shape and shadow that evokes painterly abstraction in monochromatic hues. Moss inserts the powerful element of fire and the rawness of steel into a dialogue of subtlety and restraint within the framework of traditional minimalism.

Within all elements of his work, Moss deploys steel as a deliberate substitution for the traditional canvas while at the same time rejecting its historical use to create large-scale monolithic structures. Rather, as critic Lilly Wei notes, Moss “has searched for ways to present his ‘steel paintings,’ ultimately devising an elegant structural solution” to the past.

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ABOUT THE ARTIST

Nick Moss (b. 1985) was raised in Metamora, Michigan, and currently lives and works between upstate New York and New York City. Working as a self-taught artist, Moss is represented by Leila Heller Gallery, which presented his debut solo exhibition, *Rigorous Perception*, in 2018. He has been part of several group exhibitions at Leila Heller, including *Double Vision*, curated by Jane Holzer (2019); *Exemplary Bodies* (2018); and the gallery's summer group show in 2018. His solo exhibition *Nick Moss: Substitute for Words* debuted in Aspen, Colorado, at Casterline Goodman Gallery in winter 2019, and later traveled to Nantucket due to its overwhelming success.

Having worked on an intensive crop farm and with an industrial contracting company, Moss studied welding and metal fabrication before relocating to New York in 2007. In 2008, he joined Traeger Grills, where he led the creation, concept, manufacturing, product development, and industrial design, including re-engineering, of pellet grills made primarily of steel. By 2014, Moss had moved toward pursuing his artistic practice based in industrial steelwork. He continued to experiment with welding and steel, which developed into his current process of art fabrication.

Moss works primarily with various composites of raw steel, which he hand-welds into a canvas. Working entirely by hand, he uses industrial tools including a blowtorch, a MIG welder, and sanding implements, with unique patinas applied directly to the steel to create various abstract motifs. He also employs plasma cutting, oxyacetylene torching, water-jet cutting, laser cutting, and two-part clear coating in his practice.

ABOUT THE GALLERY

Since its establishment over three decades ago in New York, Leila Heller Gallery has gained worldwide recognition as a pioneer in promoting creative dialogue and exchange between Western artists and Middle Eastern, Central Asian, and Southeast Asian artists. It has garnered a reputation for identifying and cultivating the careers of artists leaving a lasting impact on contemporary art and culture. Currently representing a diverse roster of Western and Middle Eastern artists, the gallery is also active in the American, European and Middle Eastern secondary art markets. In November 2015, Leila Heller Gallery opened its first international location, in Dubai's Alserkal Avenue. At 14,000 square feet, the state-of-the-art gallery features three exhibition spaces, making it the largest gallery in the UAE. Showcasing leading regional and international artists, many of whom will be presenting their work in the Middle East for the first time, the gallery is dedicated to supporting the evolving practices of established artists.

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