

• FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE •

**Leon Benn**

*Lion in the Kitchen*

June 28 – July 27, 2019

Opening Reception: Friday, June 28th, 6 - 8 pm

Free and open to the public/ Artist in Attendance



Image: Leon Benn, *Lion in the Kitchen*, 2019, oil, oil pastel, and fabric dyes on Moroccan linen, 64 x 54 in. (162.56 x 137.16 cm)

David B. Smith Gallery is proud to present *Lion in the Kitchen*, a solo exhibition by Portland, Maine-based artist Leon Benn.

In his second solo exhibition with the gallery, Benn reflects on the textures and potential narratives of domestic space. After spending a season indoors with mind adrift on the frozen winds of the East Coast winter, Benn found refuge in the pages of the Sunday comics. In what he calls a form of “poetic freestyle,” commonplace conditions of modern living such as artificial light, parking lots, and plastic-wrapped groceries set the stage for imagination.

In Benn’s works, with the winter snow melted and gone, great patches of wildflowers explode into life on kitchen walls while yawning creatures buoyantly emerge from their hibernation. The embodiment of the rites of spring, in carefully cultivated layers of pattern, color, and meaning, Benn’s compositions treat domestic life as a microcosm for universal experience. Whimsical imagery on canvas contrasts with the weight of increasingly dire news headlines, making evident the exuberant state of being Benn cultivates from the depths of cultural winter. Similar to reading the Sunday funnies, well aware of the gravity of current events on the other side of the newspaper page, Benn’s works playfully extend themselves into metaphor, offering respite and absurdity when needed most.

Built on a sturdy foundation of curiosity, to the tune of birdsong after the night, Leon Benn’s *Lion in the Kitchen* creates space for joy and wonder amidst the harshest of modern conditions, where self-reflection transforms into revelation; uncertainty into awe.

**About Leon Benn**

Leon Benn (b. 1981, Philadelphia, PA) received his B.F.A. in Illustration from Rhode Island School of Design and his M.F.A. in Painting from University of California, Los Angeles. Benn’s work has been featured in solo exhibitions at Roberts & Tilton in Los Angeles, CA, Stems Gallery in Brussels, Belgium, and Carter & Citizen in Los Angeles, CA. Benn currently lives and works in Portland, Maine.

**About David B. Smith Gallery**

David B. Smith Gallery is committed to presenting intelligent and culturally relevant exhibitions in its Denver location, featuring the region’s most important emerging talent alongside internationally recognized artists. Through its curatorial program, participation in art fairs, and extensive media coverage in publications such as *Art in America* and *ARTnews*, David B. Smith Gallery has cultivated a strong regional, national and international collector audience. *The New York Times* hailed the gallery as offering “an exciting contrast of cutting edge works” and *The Denver Post* declared that it is the “premiere commercial space” in Denver. The gallery also maintains an active publishing division, which produces exhibition catalogues and editions.