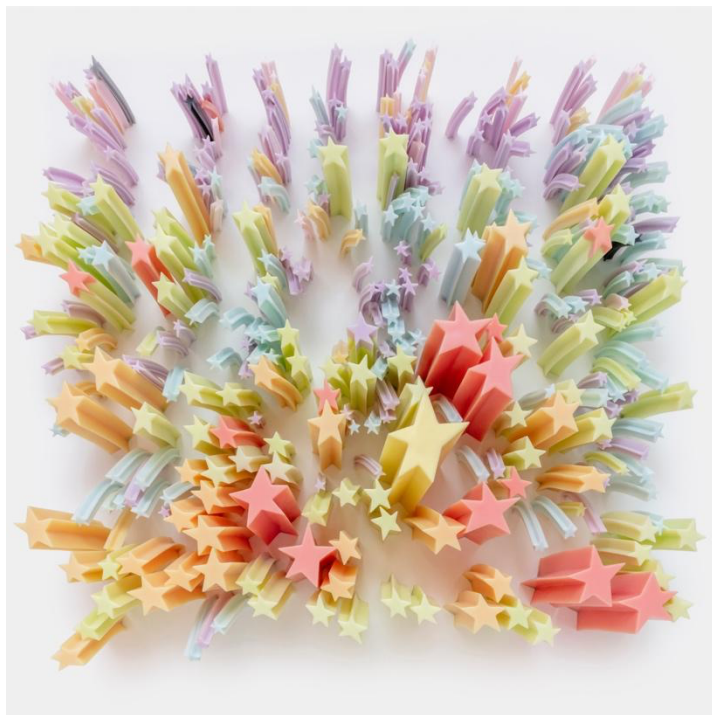


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Press Release

Sean Shim-Boyle My Heart Says Bang

3 December 2022 - 14 January 2023
Galerie Marguo, 4 rue des Minimes, 75003 Paris



Galerie Marguo is thrilled to present *My Heart Says Bang*, an exhibition of new and recent work by Los Angeles-based artist Sean Shim-Boyle.

Shim-Boyle's practice explores the politics of self-identity through rigorous experimentation with material and form. For his first solo exhibition with the gallery and in France, the artist hones in on the invisible biomechanisms to which we are beholden, that not only shape one's identity but dictate their literal existence. The new and recent works gathered here take as their starting point the abject experience of living with chronic cardiac disease, which first presented in Shim-Boyle's early twenties.

Following various surgeries and hospitalisations, building a studio, and a sculptural practice in particular, became a sort of rehabilitation for the artist. The desire to work with materials to find their structural integrity, to figure out how to "make things stand," deeply meshed with his own need to restore an autonomous sense of self. A fixation emerges in Shim-Boyle's work with the armatures of sculptures, the invisible mechanisms that underpin their physical constitutions. Silicone forms protrude, drip and droop, clinging to the walls they're attached to for dear life, suspended in interminable moments of collapse.

According to the artist, identity is registered at every scale, “from the subatomic, then the atomic, cellular, biological, chemical, physiological, psychological, mechanical, architectural, political, racial, geological... Each scale has a unique vocabulary, organization of knowledge and mechanics.” As such, the micro can inform the macro and vice versa. Moving between the paintings, sculptures, and installations gathered here, a sense of sliding between these different registers is evoked by the shifting dynamics of scale between object and viewer.

Standing before a suite of massive encaustic paintings into which “LUB DUB” has been etched repeatedly, it is easy to imagine we are facing the inner walls of a freshly ablated heart from a laparoscopic perspective, taking them in as one might do before the drawings at Lascaux. A 3.5-meter-long electrical wire thrashes unpredictably from the ceiling and traces invisible forms above the floor, possibly evoking the surgical tool associated with the paintings, or standing in for the artist’s heart itself, with its erratic electrical impulses. Nearby, in the site-specific installation *Flowers from the Giftshop*, we are inversely thrust into something subtly oppressive, like a garment one size too small. The clinical dropped-tile ceiling, cool lights, and walls covered with a pediatric astral motif simulate the pressurized, and psychologically stifling, space of the hospital, echoing Shim-Boyle’s previous forays into architectural space as metaphor for the body or identity.

The quotation of visual culture and appropriation of collective narratives to navigate private ones similarly contributes to this telescoping effect. Roy Lichtenstein’s painting *Explosion* is rendered in red fascia-like wax. Lichtenstein himself lifted his compositions from the onomatopoeic language of popular, anodyne comic books to furtively express his anti-war views and the pervasive anxiety around nuclear conflict. Likewise, in *Flash in the Pain*, Shim-Boyle mobilizes the cutesy Looney Toon lexicon of disaster—bulging hearts protruding from walls and cascades of rainbow silicone shapes or letters—in an attempt to draw a line between the inarticulable experience of feeling one’s heart “exploding,” of “living between the hammer and the nail,” and ubiquitous cartoon tropes such as treading air on borrowed time after running off the edge of a cliff or getting electrocuted and seeing stars.

The bricolage of ideas, materials, and referents in this exhibition expand the artist’s vocabulary, pulling focus to an architecture of flesh and muscle and electrical impulse. And then further, to the shock and awe, the severance of body and mind peri-cardiac arrest and defibrillation—to a body of work that insists upon an identity borne of imagination, recombination, and resurrection where and when system and strength fail.

About the Artist

Born in Vancouver in 1986, Sean Shim-Boyle is a Canadian artist living and working in Los Angeles. He received a MFA in Sculpture from the University of California, Los Angeles and a BFA in Graphic Design from the California Institute of the Arts in Valencia, California.

Sean’s work centers around an insistence that identity is borne of imagination, recombination and resurrection at times and in places where and when systems and strength fail. Engaging in macro-scale inquiries—his race as a biracial Korean-Canadian, 1.5/second generation individual; as well as micro-scale contemplations—his experience of being diagnosed with and living with a serious cardiac condition, the artist continues to explore and critique narratives of site and self.

Shim-Boyle has presented solo exhibitions in institutions across the United States including Project Rowhouses in Texas, Laxart in Los Angeles, and SSSignal and Jane Lombard Gallery in New York. His work is in various public collections including the collection of Los Angeles County Museum of Art. He was awarded the Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters and Sculptors Grant in 2013.

Press Inquiries

Maud Cartron
maud@marguo.com
+33 7 66 14 91 25

#SeanShimBoyle #SeanShimBoyleParis
#SeanShimBoyleMyHeartSaysBang
@galeriemarguo
marguo.com

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Sean Shim-Boyle
439 BPM, 2022
Silicone
182.9 x 182.9 x 35.6 cm