

Karl Haendel

Blind Faith, Hope, Pandora's box, Messiahs

Opening: 8 November 2025, 3 – 7 pm

Exhibition: 8 November – 20 December 2025

Wentrup is pleased to present *Blind Faith, Hope, Pandora's box, Messiahs*, Karl Haendel's fourth solo exhibition with the gallery. The LA-based artist is known for his commitment to drawing, using scale, installation, materiality and photorealism to advocate for the medium's importance. Speaking to Haendel about the exhibition, he said the following, and instead of translating his words into press release form, sharing them directly works just as well:

"The show will be made up of drawings. I guess this is no surprise—all my shows are drawings. It's an undervalued and unexplored medium, humble and human. I want to connect with viewers, make them think and feel and laugh and cry, so drawing is great for this. They see the marks of my hand, and they know another human is on the end of the artwork. I'm present and I care. The works will range in size, some large, some small, hung all over the space, up high, down low, over corners. People will have to bend their necks and knees to see it all. We won't do much framing; I think that gets in the way of the drawings' immediacy. I want people to feel every mark, so most works will be pinned or stapled to the wall.

Why am I here? What is my purpose? Can I make somebody's day better? Can I be a better person? A better father? A better community member? A better steward of the planet? This is the tape playing in my head. So that's where the themes of this exhibition come from. Lately, I've been thinking a lot about patriarchy and how it has fucked up not just women and children, but men too. The emotions I'm not supposed to show, the bravado I'm supposed to embody. So, I've made alternative images of maleness, where men parent, are unashamed of their emotions, admit faults, laugh at themselves, and love their male friends. That's where the drawing of football players come in. The way Mbappé and Giroud look at each other is so tender – if only men could always be this vulnerable instead of punching people.

Fear. Men aren't supposed to show it. But I'm scared. More now than ever. Aren't you? In the show, there's a really big drawing with a perfect modernist interior, but through the windows, all hell is breaking loose. End times shit. I've been

trying to recognize my fear and comfort myself, instead of acting upon it. There's a work where the top of my body is clad in armor while the bottom half wears only undies and socks. I wanted to portray myself as nonthreatening, vulnerable and transforming, the kind of fearlessness that comes from accepting there will be pain. I'm aware it's silly—look at my goofy black socks—so I'm hoping people will laugh. Contemporary art is rarely funny, but mine is, and I think laughter is necessary. So, there will be jokes. There's a talking dog. A mouse with a hidden identity. And Max Bechmann's Tinder profile.

It's no accident I arrived at drawing as my medium. Drawing is the slow accumulation of small, thoughtful marks on a receptive surface. It's intrinsically human, soft-spoken, relatable, and unpretentious. The medium complements my project—I hope I'm performing a novel masculinity by insisting that the unassuming act of drawing be valued as the end result, not just as sketches for works in more 'substantial' mediums. For me, drawing isn't just a vehicle to present a new masculinity; the medium itself is doing the work of modeling the qualities of humility, openness, and care that men need to embrace."

Karl Haendel was born in 1976 in New York and lives and works in Los Angeles. He has had solo shows at Frederick R. Weisman Museum of Art, Los Angeles, the Kimball Art Center, Park City, Human Resources, Los Angeles, Locust Projects, Miami, Museo de Arte de El Salvador, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, and Utah Museum of Contemporary Art, Salt Lake City. He has been included in the Biennial of the Americas (2015), Whitney Biennial (2014), Biennale de Lyon (2013), Prospect New Orleans (2011), and California Biennial (2008, 2004). His work can be found in the collections of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Oslo, Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College, New York, Colección Jumex, Mexico City, Collection Lambert, Avignon, Deutsche Bank Collection, Frankfurt, Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, Henry Art Gallery, Seattle, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Kunsthalle Bielefeld, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, Museum of Modern Art, New York, Pérez Art Museum, Miami, Rubell Family Collection, Miami, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.