

For Immediate Release

Nathan Vincent

Teach a man to...

6 January – 2 March 2024

Opening Reception: Saturday, January 6th, 5:00 – 8:00pm

Walter Maciel Gallery is pleased to present *Teach a man to...* by Nathan Vincent kicking off our 2024 exhibition program. The show will include sculptures made of crafted yarn and is a continuation of Vincent's recent installation of *Locker Room* which will remain on view in Gallery 4.

Vincent's knit and crocheted sculptures explore gender roles and the challenges that arise from straying from prescribed norms. Having grown up the son of a conservative pastor in the Midwest, he learned to crochet as a young boy. Despite his interest, his mother initially hesitated to teach him what she considered to be a feminine craft. Vincent's art career started in New York as a figurative painter, but as he became frustrated with finding his painterly style, he picked back up with knitting as a medium to explore soft sculpture and soon added crochet, often combining both stitch techniques in one artwork. Vincent's deliberate selection of these stereotypically gendered mediums questions our assumptions around objects and activities, calling to attention the impact our beliefs have on the way we define ourselves and others through the lens of what is culturally appropriate based on the gender we were assigned at birth.

The exhibition includes a series of works that explore the validity of masculinity and traditional gender roles placed on young boys in our culture. A group of oversized toy soldiers made with either green or tan yarn in keeping with the colors of the original toys are presented directly on the floor as if preparing for combat. All the soldiers are handling their weapons, some shown upright in position for attack, others lying on the ground taking aim. The figures are child sized, approximately four feet high, highlighting the relationship to our children to whom we give these traditional toy figurines. Vincent brings attention to the dichotomy of war in our society: a dangerous, aggressive, and violent act that is at once reviled and yet also celebrated through plastic toys that exploit our base nature and encourage young boys to play in ways that enshrine these behaviors in a sense of masculinity and worth. On the opposite side of the gallery, an installation of bright red dynamite sticks is gathered in a pile, each bundle tied together with black yarn. The handle on the detonator box can be seen on top of the stack as a reminder that we are vulnerable, just one move away from an explosive situation. Other war-like objects such as hand grenades and missiles are presented as individual sculptures but made with pastel colors and enlarged or deflated to evoke a playful and less threatening appearance. The exhibition welcomes the viewer to consider how the concepts of safety, vulnerability, aggression, strength and agency all collide.

Vincent studied art at Purchase College, State University of New York and received his BFA in 2004. He relocated to from New York to Los Angeles in 2017 Vincent has exhibited in group shows throughout the Northeast and Western US including the recent iteration of *Queer Threads* curated by John Chaich at the San Jose Museum of Quilts and Textiles, *Sew What?* curated by WMG artist, Jil Weinstock at the Children's Museum of the Arts in New York, *Role Play: Changing Ideas about Gender* at the Sun Valley Museum of Art in Idaho and *The Mysterious Content of Softness* at the Bellevue Arts Museum in Washington. In 2012, he participated in a residency at the Museum of Art and Design (MAD) in New York.