

Sofia Leiby (b. 1989, St. Paul, MN) is concerned with handwriting. She populates her paintings with curlicues and squiggles, ones that approximate language but resist legibility. We're left instead with gesture, and the personal forms born of cursive script. But Leiby works to complicate a notion of personal form; for some time, she's collected pen-test pads from art supply stores, which she mines for compelling gestures to use in her work. Leiby is a printmaker by trade, and her familiarity with screen-printing allows her to reproduce and scale her gathered source material into her own compositions. She often makes screens from the test-pads, but she's omnivorously appropriative, often cannibalizing portions of her own work into sections of new paintings. Subtle logics of repetition vie for attention in this portion of Leiby's work, where she deliberately confuses responsibility for visible gestures. Handwriting, her continued subject, is improved with exercise and repetition, and screen printing exists to repeat; but by screening a cursive gesture on a single painting, Leiby's penmanship doesn't get better, and her image isn't mass produced. Rather, her compositions get better, and curvilinear admixtures of imported marks begin to work in tandem with marks of Leiby's own.



– Zach Fischman, 2016