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KUNSTHAUS
CENTRE D'ART

Press release

FRANCE-LISE MCGURN

19.9.-22.11.2020

France-Lise McGurn (b. 1983) is a Scottish artist, living and working in Glasgow, who paints on canvases as well as directly on walls, floors and the ceilings of exhibition spaces, creating an immersive and mobile experience. In her work she draws on a collected archive of images from films, club flyers and magazines and other platforms for popular culture, as well as her own experiences. These range from life in a city, partying and dreams to motherhood and female sexuality.

The found materials that McGurn collects are usually from past decades and have lost their original, immediate function. She makes drawings on paper loosely based on themes in her archive. Certain motifs that emerge from this become a repeated subject in a work, so that when the artist starts producing a wall painting, she has a bank of gestures, shapes and forms in her memory to source from. Because of this process, she feels she knows the figures and understands their context. The artist likens the viewer's relationship with her figures to the experience in a club environment, where other people are unfamiliar yet close.

McGurn drew and painted for a long time before she started working on canvas, initially making huge collages on paper that covered walls, before working directly on the walls. This allows the canvases to expand in the making, but the intervention in the space itself also feels animated, perhaps even more so because it is ephemeral. She works intuitively from the drawings she makes in response to her collected images, using swift brushstrokes and repeated marks to create abstract areas of wash, on which fluid line drawings of figures drift through the linear forms of minimally delineated objects or spaces. Individual body parts float unrestrained across the surface, connecting the canvases with the wall painting they are placed directly on.

France-Lise McGurn's work is not directly narrative, conveying rather a general impression of continual motion and the layered quality of contemporary experience. The paintings are inherently sexual, but in a non-explicit and ambivalent way. The elegant pose of a thigh or the intertwining of bodies exude a languid sexuality that has not yet been consummated, the suggestion of pleasure enhanced by the paint spilling freely across canvas onto walls, floors and ceilings. Her figures are usually portrayed naked, whether in groups, in pairs or alone. At times, they appear exposed, seemingly withdrawn in defence; elsewhere their languid pose and air of euphoria recalls the decadent atmosphere of Art Deco. McGurn's take on sexuality is highly contemporary, her abstracted figures suggesting both the strange intimacy of urban connection and the distance of city life. She observes large congregations of people, like parties and clubs, but is also interested in the more subtle signs of human life registered in the proximity with neighbours or people on the street. The figures appear archetypal, but they have a presence and together they form a whole.

McGurn moved back to Glasgow after completing a Master at the Royal College of Art in London in 2012. Following a solo show at Tate Britain as part of the Art Now series in 2019, she had exhibitions at Simon Lee Gallery in London and Tramway in Glasgow in 2020. Her exhibition at Kunsthaus Pasquart is the first presentation of France-Lise McGurn's work outside the UK and her largest exhibition to date.

Curator of the exhibition

Felicity Lunn, director Kunsthau Centre d'art Pasquart

Publication accompanying the exhibition

A publication accompanying the exhibition with exhibition views, a text by Michael Bracewell and an interview between the artist and Felicity Lunn will be released by the Verlag für moderne Kunst.

Press conference	Friday, 18.9.2020, 10:30 am
Opening	Friday, 18.9.2020, 6:30 pm
Children's preview	Friday, 18.9.2020, 6:30-8 pm
