

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FRANCE-LISE MCGURN: PERCUSSIA



24 JANUARY – 22 FEBRUARY 2020

PRIVATE VIEW: THURSDAY 23 JANUARY, 6 – 8 PM

SIMON LEE GALLERY, LONDON

Simon Lee Gallery is proud to announce *Percussia* a solo exhibition of new work by Glasgow-based artist France-Lise McGurn. This is the artist's debut exhibition with the gallery and the first in London since *Sleepless*, her 2019 solo exhibition at Tate Britain. The artist will present new paintings, works on paper and site-specific wall paintings across both gallery floors. The exhibition coincides with a major site-specific commission by the artist on view at Tramway in Glasgow. Subsequently, McGurn will also be participating in Glasgow International in April.

The atmospheric practice of France-Lise McGurn transports the viewer from the public realm of the gallery and into the most personal quarters of the artist's life: her studio, her bedroom, her mind and musings. McGurn's figurative practice delivers a wholly immersive experience, launching the viewer into a three-dimensional world of the intimate and relatable. The sensual and physical nature of the works on display here are echoed in the exhibition's title *Percussia*. A derivative of the word percussion or its Latin origin percussio, the title suggests power and strength while simultaneously alludes to the lyrical femininity of her figures that move rhythmically through the space bringing harmony to the exhibition.

The figures that occupy McGurn's world belong to her imagination. These archetypal women and men, often portrayed in states of undress, whether in groups, in pairs or alone, recline in both ecstasy and agony. At times they appear bare and exposed, huddled in tense tableaux, seemingly withdrawn in defence. Elsewhere, McGurn's characters are languid, bathed in an air of euphoria. Individually the figures are quiet and subtle, symbols of the interiority of the body and self, while collectively we see a congregation of figures evoking a sense of belonging and power. For McGurn, humanity – in all its excitement, intimacy, poignancy, boredom and disappointment – is worth uncovering.

Fluidity distinguishes McGurn's practice. Her capricious compositions are, in their freedom of form and expression, unrestrained, while her application of paint transcends the canvas, bleeding onto the gallery walls. Charged with a sense of urgency, the loose outlines of her figures escape the boundaries of the traditional picture plane, while the bare backgrounds of her canvases gives a further sense of weightlessness and abandonment to her compositions. Presented alongside the paintings is a new suite of works on paper in which fragments of the drawings spill out of their frames that have been uniquely crafted by the artist. Like their painted counterparts, these works emanate a sense of freedom, a loss of inhibition and illustrate an exploration of the ephemeral and transitory qualities of both art and life.

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To coincide with the exhibition, there will be an artist talk at the gallery:

France-Lise McGurn in Conversation with Katy Hessel, Curator, Art Historian, @thegreatwomenartists

Saturday 25 January

12pm, Simon Lee Gallery, London

Please note this event is free to the public, but booking is required: events@simonleegallery.com

NOTES TO EDITORS

About France-Lise McGurn

Born in 1983, France-Lise McGurn lives and works in Glasgow, UK. After completing her studies at the Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art, Dundee, UK she obtained her masters at the Hunter College of Art, New York, NY and the Royal College of Art, London, UK both in 2012. In 2005, she was awarded the John Kinross Scholarship to Florence by the Royal Scottish Academy. She has also received the John Milne Purvis prize (2005) and the Jeremy Cubbitt prize (2010). Her work has been the subject of multiple solo museum and gallery exhibitions, most recently *Art Now: France-Lise McGurn, Sleepless*, Tate Britain, London, UK (2019); *Archaos*, Alison Jacques Gallery, London, UK (2017) and *Mondo Throb*, Bosse and Baum, London, UK (2016). Recent group exhibitions include *Mark Making: Perspectives Of Drawing*, Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow, UK (2019); *A Weakness For Raisins*, CCA, Glasgow, UK (2018); *Foundation Painting Show*, Glasgow International, British Heart Foundation, Glasgow, UK (2018); *Virginia Woolf: An Exhibition Inspired By Her Writings*, Tate St. Ives, St. Ives, UK (2018); *Wall-Sun-Sun*, Une Une, Perpignan, France (2017); *(X)A Fantasy*, David Roberts Art Foundation, London, UK (2017) and *Le Nouveau Voyeurisme*, Hotel Contemporary, Milan, Italy (2017).

About Simon Lee Gallery

Founded in London in 2002, Simon Lee Gallery represents artists of diverse generations whose practices explore a wide range of media, from sculpture and painting to video and photography, and who share a broad interest in an exploration of the conceptual. Aiming to provide a significant international audience for its artists, the gallery also regularly punctuates its programme with historical exhibitions and curated group shows, which present shifts in contemporary art practice and thought, whilst broadening the dialogue with artists outside of the gallery's core programme. In addition to its UK activity, in 2012 the gallery opened a space in Hong Kong, which introduced its artists to a wider public in Asia, with a fully independent programme. In 2014, Simon Lee Gallery opened an office and private viewing space in New York. In 2017, this space was re-launched with a year-round programme of exhibitions and events, showcasing the work of emerging and established artists in dynamic group and solo exhibitions.

Facebook, Instagram, Twitter: @SimonLeeGallery

www.simonleegallery.com

Image: France-Lise McGurn, *Heart*, 2019, 40 x 35 cm (15 3/4 x 13 3/4 in.) Courtesy of the artist and Simon Lee Gallery.

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