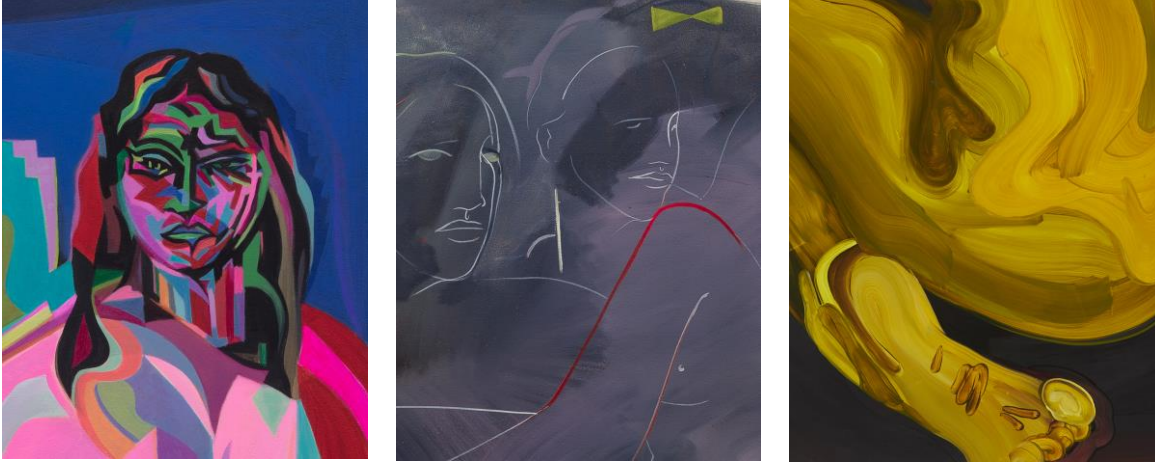


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MIRA DANCY, FRANCE-LISE MCGURN & CLARE WOODS



4 MARCH – 25 APRIL 2020

OPENING RECEPTION: TUESDAY, 3 MARCH, 6–8PM

SIMON LEE GALLERY, NEW YORK

Simon Lee Gallery, New York, is pleased to announce a group exhibition featuring new works by Mira Dancy, France-Lise McGurn, and Clare Woods. Connected through an interest in figurative representation, the exhibition brings together three artists who present the body in unconventional ways, each exploring contemporary issues surrounding gender, sexuality, society and politics, as well as addressing the long and problematic history of the male gaze. The submissive female subject typically depicted reclining, seated or kneeling, is one of the most recognizable motifs in art history. As seen in this exhibition, Dancy, McGurn, and Woods respond to this convention through disparate methods presenting the figure as alternatively dominant, vulnerable, playful, or even androgynous, restoring to their subjects a sense of agency and recontextualizing the trope for our contemporary moment.

New York-based artist Mira Dancy's practice often directly references the poses and gestures of 19th century figurative painting, reclaiming the female subject as part of a confrontational oeuvre that simultaneously investigates the aesthetics of advertising and #Girlboss-style feminism. Rendered in saturated, vespertine hues, Dancy's paintings portray determined subjects seemingly incapable of concealing their interiority or, as the *New York Times*' Roberta Smith once wrote, "female nudes who don't have time for the male gaze."

UK-based artist Clare Woods destabilizes the canonical notion of an idealized model. Since Woods's pivot from landscape painting in 2011, her practice has become increasingly concerned with the human form, drawing from a wide array of source material: the art historical canon, media images and medical textbooks, among others. Her use of figuration stems from a preoccupation with the fallible quality of the body – its inclination toward weakness, illness, even death. A sense of alienation from the corporeal form pervades her work, as does a particular form of estrangement, emphasized by her use of brightly coloured abstraction and compositional distortions.

If Woods's works are rooted in source imagery and the realities of the body, Glaswegian artist France-Lise McGurn's works feature figures that spring from the artist's imagination. McGurn eschews gender binaries and solitary subjects in favor of layered compositions brimming with the elegant contours of bodily forms: limbs, faces, and other sly suggestions of anatomy. Archetypal figures, often portrayed in a state of undress, whether in groups, in pairs or alone, recline in both ecstasy and agony, while collectively these languid figures invoke a sense of social belonging. Employing ecstatic brushwork and bright, bold colors, these works posit the model foremost as a desiring body – active, even if at rest. Fragmented, morphed, merged and remade, the bodies depicted by these artists push the notion of what figurative painting can be, expanding and destabilizing fixed ideas of identity and representation.

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NOTES TO EDITORS**About Mira Dancy**

Mira Dancy was born in 1979 and lives and works in New York, NY. In 2001, she received a BA from Bard College, NY and in 2009 received an MFA from Columbia University, School of the Arts, NY. Recent solo exhibitions include Night Gallery, Los Angeles, CA (2018); Lumber Room, Portland, OR (2018); Chapter NY, New York, NY (2017); Yuz Museum, Shanghai, China (2016); and Galerie Hussenot, Paris, France (2015). Dancy has participated in many group exhibitions at venues including Cooper Cole Gallery, Toronto, Canada (2018); The Journal Gallery, Brooklyn, NY (2017); König Galerie, Berlin, Germany (2016); Rubell Family Collection, Miami, FL, and National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C. (2015); and MoMA PS1, New York, NY (2015). Her work is held in the collections of The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, Los Angeles Country Museum of Art, Los Angeles, and the Yuz Museum, Shanghai, China.

About France-Lise McGurn

France-Lise McGurn was born in 1983 and lives and works in Glasgow, UK. After completing her studies at the Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art, Dundee she obtained her MA at the Hunter College of Art, New York and the Royal College of Art, London, 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). Recent solo exhibitions include: *Percussia*, Simon Lee Gallery, London (2020); *In Emotia*, Tramway, Glasgow (2020); *Art Now: France-Lise McGurn, Sleepless*, Tate Britain, London (2019); *Archaos*, Alison Jacques Gallery, London (2017); *Mondo Throb*, Bosse and Baum, London (2016). Recent group exhibitions include *Group Drawing Show*, Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow (2019); *A Weakness For Raisins*, CCA, Glasgow; *Virginia Woolf: An Exhibition Inspired By Her Writings*, Tate St. Ives, St. Ives. This exhibition travelled to Pallant House Gallery, Chichester, UK and The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (2018); and *(X)A Fantasy*, David Roberts Art Foundation, London (2017).

About Clare Woods

Clare Woods was born in Southampton in 1972 and lives and works in Herefordshire, UK. She received her MA from Goldsmith's College, London and her BA from Bath College of Art, Bath. Woods' work has been shown extensively internationally and recent solo exhibitions include: Mead Gallery, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, UK (2018); Dundee Contemporary Arts, Dundee, UK (2017); Pallant House Gallery, Chichester, UK (2016); Oriel Davies Gallery, Wales (2014), which travelled to Oriel-y-Parc, Wales (2015) and Oriel Plas Glyn-y-Weddw, Wales (2014); The New Art Centre, Salisbury, UK (2013); Southampton City Art Gallery, Southampton, UK (2012); The Hepworth Wakefield, Wakefield, UK (2011) and The Chisenhale Gallery, London, UK (2006). She has been included in major group exhibitions at venues including Pier Art Centre, Stromness, UK (2016); The Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter, UK (2014); The National Museum Wales, Wales, UK (2014); ARKEN Museum of Modern Art, Denmark (2014) and Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY (2009). Her work is in major and private collections including the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY; ARKEN Museum of Modern Art, Denmark and Arts Council Collection and British Council, London, UK.

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.

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www.simonleegallery.com

Images: Mira Dancy, *Sun Swallower*, 2020, (Detail). Courtesy of the artist and Chapter NY; France-Lise McGurn, *Jellies*, 2020 (Detail); Clare Woods, *Forget Myself*, 2020 (Detail). Both courtesy of the artist and Simon Lee Gallery.

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