

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WILLIAM MACKINNON: MODERN FAMILY



20 MAY – 25 JUNE 2022

PRIVATE VIEW: THURSDAY 19 MAY, 6–8PM

SIMON LEE GALLERY, HONG KONG

Simon Lee Gallery is pleased to present *Modern Family*, an exhibition of new works by William Mackinnon. For his first solo show in Hong Kong, Mackinnon presents eight paintings depicting trees. With this body of work, the artist continues a long-standing investigation into the motif, which takes on new meaning as the tree becomes the sole protagonist. Painted during a period of profound change in his personal life, these works are imbued with a new sense of growth and direction.

In this body of work Mackinnon directs his attention to the anatomy of the tree, zooming in on branches, trunks, and leaves. In addition to his oft-used media of oil, automotive enamel and glitter, the artist explores screen-printing techniques, a practice new to him and for which he takes sections of his own existing paintings as a starting point. Using linen, jute and copper as a support, Mackinnon then collages new painted forms into the composition, some slowly take the shape of naked trees with knotted trunks and splitting branches, others blooming with richly shimmering leaves.

While all the paintings that make up this new body of work have the same dimensions and similar compositions, each of them takes on a profoundly different timbre from the next. Employing a predominantly neutral palette of ochre, black and white, with occasional touches of blue, green and purple, the materiality and texture of Mackinnon's paintings occupies a significant presence and meaning in the work, bestowing a unique sensibility on each. The artist focuses on the act of painting itself by using formal and compositional decisions as a strategy to drive his work in unexpected directions.

William Mackinnon's work is deeply personal and emotional, his paintings start with an intimate narrative charged with history and culture and this autobiographical foundation often evolves into something more autonomous and universal. The trees depicted in Mackinnon's paintings are from places of personal significance, and for this body of work, they are inspired by the trees on a family property which was recently sold. Mackinnon's trees convey the complexity, richness and unpredictability of life, its twists and turns and its ever-rejuvenating force. The trees that inhabit his paintings are charged with meaning and evoke emotional states and family relationships. With branches and leaves competing for space and light, they speak of the human experience. Some old, scarred and twisted speak of the intimidating feeling of ageing and the fragility of family relationships. Others, new and strong, evoke feelings of regrowth, regeneration, and conscious reinvention of the self.

NOTES TO EDITORS**About William Mackinnon**

William Mackinnon was born in 1978 in Melbourne, Australia and lives and works between Ibiza, Spain, the UK and Australia. Mackinnon received his BFA from Melbourne University, Melbourne, Australia in 2000 and his MFAs from Chelsea School of Art and Design, London, UK in 2006 and Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne, Australia in 2008. He has received numerous awards and recognitions, including the Australia Council Grant in 2010. Mackinnon's solo shows include Blanc International Contemporary Art Space, Beijing, China (2021); Simon Lee Gallery, London, UK (2020); Hugo Michell Gallery, Adelaide, Australia (2020); Art Projects Ibiza, Ibiza, Spain (2019); Hugo Michell Gallery, Adelaide, Australia (2018); Jan Murphy Gallery, Brisbane, Australia (2016); Horsham Regional Art Gallery, Victoria, Australia (2013) and Morton Fine Art, Washington, DC (2012). Recent group exhibitions include 2017 Triennial, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia (2017); Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery, Victoria, Australia (2013); Milani Gallery, Brisbane, Australia (2011) and Royal College of Art, London, UK (2006). His work is included in the collections of National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia; Ian Potter Museum Collection, Melbourne, Australia; Gold Coast City Art Gallery, Queensland, Australia and Parliament House Art Collection, Canberra, Australia.

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.

Facebook, Instagram, Twitter: @SimonLeeGallery

www.simonleegallery.com

Image: Modern family (2), 2021, Acrylic, oil and automotive enamel on screenprint on canvas 110 x 90 cm (43 1/2 x 35 1/2 in.) Courtesy of the artist and Simon Lee Gallery.

For further press information, images and requests please contact Zoe Gorell: zoe@simonleegallery.com / +44 (0) 207 491 0100.