

'MARIA FARRAR', *Known Unknowns*, Saatchi Gallery, London, 2018

Maria Farrar was born in the Philippines in 1988 and lives and works in London. She graduated with an MFA from the Slade School of Art in 2016 after completing her BFA in Fine Art at the Ruskin School of Art, Oxford University in 2012.

Farrar's paintings are deeply connected to her biography and personal narrative. Her work emerges from her experiences in both the East and West – she lived in Japan until the age of 16, before moving to England. The weightlessness of pictographic Japanese storytelling; the economy of calligraphy, manga, and the kawaii of emojis are a clear influence in her work, and contrast with the heft and gravitas of the twentieth century Western modernism. Recently, Farrar has found a neutral playing-field of large format, raw-linen canvases over which her cross cultural characters search for forms that transcend the confines of a single culture. Swiftly drawn lines are shown alongside deliberate display errors: smudges, stains, occasional redactions, that joyously deconstruct the visual trickery of paint.

"I like when there is something funny and tragic in bread you can't eat and shoes you can't wear. There is a lot of leeway with shoes, as long as it has a heel or a shoe lace, it manages to be a 'shoe', whereas taste and smell of bread demands more from paint, a representation of appearance over invention of sign. I like how puzzling it is when there is no such thing as bread on the canvas and at the same time there is. In particular situations, rather than describing something literally, colour, line and form alone contain more emotion, more story. For me, it's a series of emotionally made line and colour that make representation more convincing."