

Frieze London 2021

mother's tankstation
Main | Booth D13

Press release

mother's tankstation's Frieze London 2021 presentation features major new works by eight highly distinctive artists, that together articulate the philosophical and polemical complexities of the gallery's programme over two venues, Dublin & London, located in two increasingly different countries that share an entangled history: Ireland, resolutely European/global in outlook, and an increasingly 'introspective' UK. Coincidentally 2021 marks both the practical implementation of *Brexit*, and the one-hundredth anniversary of the signing of the Anglo-Irish treaty, triggering the independence of the Republic of Ireland from Great Britain. Geographically speaking both countries *remain* inextricably linked – married by culture and history, but as the popular adage goes; are increasingly separated by a shared language. To acknowledge this, a curated presentation looks towards artists who exhibit complex relationships with the idea of 'nationhood' and foregrounds works that observe the outward/inward dialectic of the world. Matt Bollinger's (USA) paintings empathetically depict the disengagement of white, working-class, Middle America. Prudence Flint (AUS) and Atsushi Kaga (JP), very differently, look at culture, isolation and self-containment. Hannah Levy (USA) makes sleek anthropomorphised objects that equally repel and attract. Yuko Mohri's (JP) kinetic sculptures mimic irregularities in infrastructures in post-Fukushima Japan. Noel McKenna (AUS), explores the psychology of 'interior' domesticity, Yuri Pattison (IE) questions the veracity of provided information and queries 'universalities' we once took for granted. Mairead O'hEocha's (IE) paintings reflect the specifics of (non)place, simultaneously affirming and negating the unique and universal.

Atsushi Kaga's recent paintings look poetically at loneliness and companionship. They merge the forms and symbolisms of 17th century European 'Vanitas' and the decorative, natural stylisations of the Kyoto Rinpa School – which during the exclusionist Edo period was thought to be too open to western influence. The paintings turn inwards to Kaga's archetypal 'self-portraits' via his alter ego, *Usacchi*, who in keeping with Manga story-telling tradition, is a roguish rabbit 'trickster'. Púcaí (ancient Irish) are shape-shifting folkloric creatures, common through ancient Egypt and Greece, to Africa and America, where it reappears as the Brer Rabbit stories, passed through generations of African American slaves. In all iterations, the 'underdog' betters its masters.

Matt Bollinger is a painter of evident socio-political conscience, who according to the poet John Yau, captures the disenfranchised, purposelessness white, working class, middle American "like no other artist of his generation". The problem of purpose-torn societies, demonstrating increasingly narrow world-views is hardly exclusive to Middle America but common across the globe. With uncommon sensitivity, Bollinger respectfully depicts his subjects with empathy rather than satire.

With a relevance heightened by the imposed isolations of a global pandemic, **Prudence Flint's** paintings depict a disengaged, insular world populated solely by women, wrapped in small daily activities, located in pastel coloured interiors or formal outdoor spaces. Alone or in small groups, but always isolated, Flint's women pass time in seeming anticipation for something that may not happen. Never making eye contact with the viewer or each other, art historically they look sideways to different temporal worlds, perhaps previously inhabited by Fra Angelico, Modigliani or Botero, the magical realism of Frida Kahlo or the waking dreams of Dorothea Tanning.

Hannah Levy's surrealist sculptures revisualise the formal language of classic, modernist design furnishings into extraordinary and alluring anthropomorphic forms. Handrails, medical equipment, etc., and other mundane, mass-produced items are mined for their likenesses and mutated into singular things that embody human characteristics and emulate personality. For Frieze London 2021, Levy has produced a pair of what she terms, "semi-functional" stilts in sleek nickel-plated steel, that meet the ground as tensed, clenched bird claws.

Influenced by the state of infrastructural supply/decay in post-Fukushima Japan, **Yuko Mohri's** kinetic sculptures recast everyday items into self-contained ecosystems. Often powered by the electromagnetic forces of invisible and inaudible sound, ordinary objects are "left to their own devices" to produce subtle kinetic actions that flicker and twitch, reminding us of the fragility, the frailty, of things.

Noel McKenna's paintings show us the environments we construct for ourselves to feel safe 'at home'. Behind the closed doors of McKenna's sparse interiors, furniture, objects and 'pets', and their relative disjunctions are given 'humanised' identities beyond designated purpose. For Frieze London 2021, McKenna shows a rare large format painting, depicting the exterior of a sort-of 'normal' house, a lonely blue building on a desolate suburban Sydney street, darkened by an ominous sky and an over-exaggerated power supply, which lends a curious atmosphere of threat or portent.

Mairead O'hEocha is one of Ireland's most respected painters, whose subject matter has varied over the years but has always orbited a conscious intellectual and cultural specificity to national identity. Recent works have looked closely at the colonial legacy of 'natural history' exhibits in a Dublin museum idiomatically and chillingly known as "the Dead Zoo".

Inherently 21st century, **Yuri Pattison's** practice is informed by layering artificial and material realities and signifies human interaction in an increasingly technocratic society. Underpinned by an elegant wry humour, his work demonstrates the 'political' potential of communication by using technologies intended for surveillance, productivity-assessment, data collection and archiving. In a recent work from his acclaimed museum exhibition, *the engine*, at Dublin's Douglas Hyde Gallery, Pattison creates the HD illusion of digital clock submerged in Dublin's River Liffey on a screen horizontally placed on a sleek, super-hygienic aluminium pallet. The work titled, *Dublin Mean Time (UTC-00:25:21 : 2000 – Now)*, unpicks the relativity of social control in an equation of time-zoning to colonial influence. Conversely, Pattison's *blursday*, a digital wall clock, conflates the hours of the day with days of the week, into a lockdown soup that blends indistinguishable time.

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