

KATE MCCRICKARD

"I'm in a constant battle between abstraction and figuration; I avoid depth of field and look for the balance of an animated line drawn in paint that works like a lariat around and through passages of tone. I often think of Bonnard and his images of people who aren't really doing anything. Mine are active, but his dictum that it is not a matter of painting life, but a matter of giving life to painting – is one I hold dear."

In Kate McCrickard's paintings subject and media jostle for attention in a deliberate working against repetition and a conscious looking back to an older art world where style was not the subject, and image-making was simply a way of attending to the world. In recent works, the artist takes the real into the imaginary, letting ghosts and phantoms creep in to replace or surround observed figures. Unintentionally, the theme of memento-mori has crept in – perhaps fitting for our times, or all times – but approached with a sense of humour. The medieval Dance Macabre, an artistic motif from the late Middle Ages popular in times of plague and pandemic, discreetly informs works built around the domestic sphere and McCrickard's quartier of Belleville, Paris, that has long provided an arena for image-making.

New developments focus on edgy relationships in the *New Romantics* series where passionate young adults with coloured hair, tattoos and body piercings, often only partly dressed, embrace one another with tender abandon. At times a third presence is just visible through an extra arm or in the surprising form of a skeleton inserting itself like a memory. So called witches appear in the form of funky contemporary figures, accompanied by monkeys or taking their place nonchalantly in cafés. What is interesting is how convincing the imaginary figures are, blending easily with the real, and always as beautifully observed.

McCrickard's art is rooted in drawing, in sketches made after life in a local café, in transit, on the beach, at home. In the studio she works up her fugitive line sketches into prints and paintings. The subjects may seem disparate, but these are all people displayed on different stages, sometimes busy and in action, sometimes still. Her spontaneity and intuition keep the work moving apace. She can take us by surprise and it is thrilling to watch her soaring to new heights in the way she engages with the times we live in, informed simultaneously by her city's dynamic art historical tradition.



La Fumeuse, 2017, oil on canvas 35 x 28cm, £2,800



Bar au Folies, 2020, oil on canvas, 72 x 96cm, £6,000

ART FIRST

Art First, The Forge, 15 St. Mary's Walk, London, SE11 4UA

E: clare@artfirst.co.uk | T: +44 (0) 7711 945098 | I: [@artfirstlondon](https://www.instagram.com/artfirstlondon) www.artfirst.co.uk



Ghosts at the Heartbreak Hotel, 2022, oil on linen, 116 x 89cm, £6,750

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New Romantics, 2022, oil on linen, 96 x 72cm, £6,000

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Table Ghosts, 2022, oil on linen, 162 x 130cm, £9,000

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Witch with Yellow Monkey, 2022, oil on canvas, 60 x 45cm, £3,800

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Anxious Anglo-Saxon, 2018, Oil on canvas, 30 x 24cm, £2,500

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Spooks, 2022, oil on linen, 73 x 92cm £5,000

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Drinking Lady, 2018, oil on Japanese paper, offset drawing and monotype, 64 x 57cm £2,800

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Café, 2019, Oil monotype with offset drawing, 47 x 63cm, £2,600

McCrickard was awarded an MA Honours Degree in Fine Art with first class honours at the University of Edinburgh in 1998, and for 4 years was a Director of David Krut Projects in New York. She now lives and works in Paris, where she continues to write and to review, alongside her studio practice. In 2012 her monograph on William Kentridge was published by Tate.

For further information please contact Clare Cooper : clare@artfirst.co.uk

For more extensive information about McCrickard's exhibition history and publications please visit www.artfirst.co.uk