

PRESS RELEASE

LONDON ART FAIR: EDIT 2021: www.londonartfair.co.uk

Art First is delighted to present five artists for this first online edition of the London Art Fair:

Luciano Bonomi, Simon Lewty, Kate McCrickard, Jack Milroy and Mimei Thompson are all artists whose work is held in museum and other public collections, and their exhibition and publication history can be explored on their mini-sites on www.artfirst.co.uk.

Four works by each artist are visible for the fair. New paintings by **Kate McCrickard** take us into the interior of the Café de Folies, her local in Belleville, with its regulars and timeless ceremonies of service. Then to the elegantly caged monkeys romping around in the Jardin des Plantes - two aspects of summer 2020 in Paris. The contrasting pair show us *Alice Reading* from a veranda with the sea beyond, and then *Sanders* another timeless scene of children building sand-castles on Arcachon's golden beach with boats bobbing in the azure water behind them.

Mimei Thompson's bug parties appear in luminous high octane colour, brushed in continuous strokes to reveal moths, caterpillars and other insects on sinuous plants from her *Metamorphosis* series – here we see *Cotton Bush* and *Pomegranate*. Her London urban closeups present *Chain Link Buddleia* and *Tree Trunk Dusk* closely observed but treated in a reductive manner with silken brushstrokes to create a botanical calligraphy that is refined, decoratively pleasing and minimal. Hers is a fresh, contemporary take on flower painting, still life and landscape.

Also looking at things botanical is **Jack Milroy**, who brings a scalpel to books about cottage flowers, and a book on regimental uniforms and the colourful regalia of medals from around the world. The unlikely combination results in *Dressed to Kill*, a 150 x 120cm cut paper construction housed in a Perspex box, with the cottage blooms in a blast of colour placed centrally, surrounded by a row of black silhouettes of themselves and finally the printed pages of the military regalia book. Edited and re paginated, they tell a wry story of people dressed in military uniforms to kill other people in wars that devastate the natural environment.

The Librarian's Parrots (86 x 98cm) creates a paper aviary out of a French bird book where feathered friends are cut from their pages to observe one another in the artist's lively re-edit. *Renaissance Motorway*, (80 x 50cm) on the other hand is made of torn and reconstructed maps of Italy, collaged around an 'internal sea' shaped as the silhouette portrait of a woman after Pollaiuolo's famous portrait.

Text, words, imagery and paper are put to very different use by **Simon Lewty** in four works ranging from 1988 to 2014. All of his work comprises drawing and his mastery of the calligraphic, graffiti and scripts of many hands is matched by his own poetic content, for he is a writer too and his chosen mark is largely the written word. In the earliest work, *Badly Frightened*, 1988, human figures appear randomly in an open field, accompanied by a narrative text that has little relationship to them. Mysterious and moving, they resonate somehow with the strangeness of Covid-19 and were created shortly after his major exhibition at the Serpentine Gallery in 1986 which launched his career.

The three accompanying drawings are more recent and demonstrate the beauty of different scripts – abstract, journalistic hand-writing and, in *Notations of a Script from a Phonetic Play*, 2012, he uses 'tachygraphy' a now obsolete system of 17th Century shorthand used by Samuel Pepys in his famous Diary.

Finally, we present once again after a break of ten years, work by **Luciano Bonomi**, with a selection of brass wire and mesh sculptures set in Perspex boxes. Trained at the Brera Academy of Fine Arts in Milan (1969-75), Bonomi moved to the Midlands in the UK in 1986 and continued exhibiting in museums in the West Midlands, joining Art First in 1992. Mythological, historical and other narratives from the everyday abound – here we include *The Dream of Raymond Carver*, *Fisherman in Front of Vesuvius* and *The Discovery of America*. He embraces wit, assurance and ingenuity in works that are beguiling and appropriate to our times.

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Kate McCrickard
Café au Folies, 2020
Oil on canvas, 82 x 50 cm, £3,000



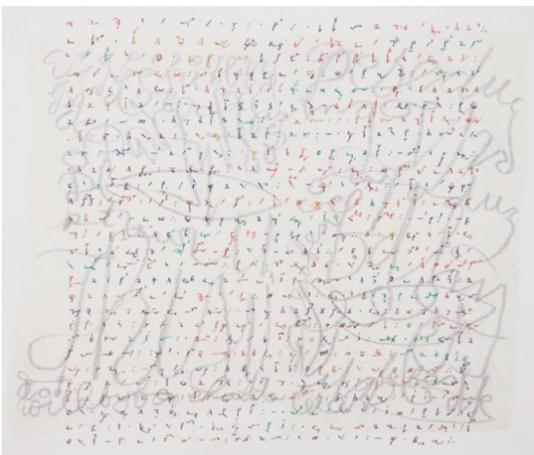
Kate McCrickard
Alice Reading, 2020
Oil on canvas, 73 x 92 cm, £4,800



Mimei Thompson
Metamorphosis: Cotton Bush 2019
Oil on canvas, 70 x 60 cm, £2,700



Jack Milroy
Renaissance Motorway (after Pollaiuolo), 1998
Torn & reconstructed map pages, 80 x 50 cm, £5,000



Simon Lewty
Notations from a Script for a Phonetic Play (1), 2012
Acrylic and graphite, 46.5 x 56.5 cm, £5,000



Luciano Bonomi
The Discovery of America, 2006
Brass and wood in a Perspex box, 45 x 66 x 18 cm, £3,000