

HERE COMES LOVE

Justin Fitzpatrick, Vanessa Jones, Sam Keogh, Jennifer Mehigan, Sarah Pichlkostner, Tai Shani, Lee Welch

14 July – 26 August 2023

Kerlin Gallery is excited to present **HERE COMES LOVE**, an exhibition by seven artists – Justin Fitzpatrick, Vanessa Jones, Sam Keogh, Jennifer Mehigan, Sarah Pichlkostner, Tai Shani, and Lee Welch.

Justin Fitzpatrick presents us with elaborate and fantastical paintings of mysterious figures and mutating forms; sinewy lines evoke art nouveau detailing, fused with elements of the gothic, macabre, and even body horror. In a portrait of the surrealist artist Pavel Tchelitchew, highly stylised musculoskeletal structures seem visible through the skin, while ornate, vegetal forms and insects link his subject to the earth, to burial, perhaps a resurrection of sorts. Born in Dublin and based in France, Fitzpatrick works with sculpture and text in addition to painting. His work is informed by metaphysical poetry, mythologies and archetypes, often viewed through a lens of class and sexuality. In 2021, Fitzpatrick had his first institutional exhibition, Alpha Salad, at The Tetley, Leeds.

Vanessa Jones is a figurative painter who often uses self-portraiture to engage the viewer in cross-cultural ideas around myth, beauty and replication – playing with the subversive elements of beauty and its relationship with instinct and danger. For **HERE COMES LOVE**, Jones builds upon classical themes and subject matters, including Cupid and Psyche, Danaë and the shower of gold, and the winged foot of Kairos, a motif that represents the ‘right moment’. Her portraits feel distanced and otherworldly – steeped in

Renaissance tradition, but also medieval and primordial symbolic associations, using traditional techniques to render anew the feminine, maternal and horticultural spheres. Born in Tennessee and based in Dublin, Jones has won numerous awards for her painting practice, including Next Generation, Elizabeth Greenshields, the RDS Mason Hayes & Curran LLP Centre Culturel Irlandais Residency, the R.C. Lewis-Crosby Award and a ‘Highly Commended’ award in the Zurich Portrait Prize.

Sam Keogh’s *The Unicorn Surrenders to a Maiden Cartoon* is a large-scale figurative collage, part of an ongoing series referencing the 16th-century Flemish tapestry series The Hunt of the Unicorn. Badly damaged during the French Revolution, the surviving fragments of the Unicorn tapestries act as a material index of revolutionary events in Europe. Presented as a ‘cartoon’, or 1:1 scale production drawing, Keogh’s work is densely layered, detailed and intricate, with collaged elements, gold lettering, masked creatures, flaming hearts, galloping animals, tangled limbs and Frankensteined figures – making it difficult to tell where distinct bodies begin or end, and whether they are building or destroying the world they inhabit. Born in Dublin and based in Glasgow, Keogh works with installation, sculpture, performance, drawing and collage. His work has been shown at the Pompidou Centre, the 15th Lyon Biennale, CCA Goldsmiths, the Douglas Hyde Gallery, and GoMA as part of Glasgow International.

Jennifer Mehigan's prints and paintings fuse diverse media and sources, including 3D scans of her garden, images of plants growing on the graves of strange Irish women, the archive of the Victorian portrait photographer Lady Clementina Hawarden, four-dimensional drawings by the Cork-born mathematician Alicia Boole, and an encrypted Renaissance codex known as the Voynich manuscript. Using paint, inkjet, graphics cards, neural networks, pearl powder and gel, her works blend new and old methods of making and processing the world – a relationship the artist views as a ‘strained mother-daughter bond’. Mehigan’s wider practice also incorporates CGI, sculpture, perfumery, writing, parties, artificial intelligence and horticulture, deploying sensory experience to explore queerness and femininity. Recent exhibitions include *Nightbloom Chokehold* at Douglas Hyde Gallery 2 and *Creamatorium 2* at transmediale, Berlin. Born in Singapore in 1988, Mehigan is based between Belfast and Limerick.

Sarah Pichlkostner's delicate but piercing metal sculptures evoke jewellery or scientific, perhaps surgical, apparatus. Curving strips of polished aluminium are embellished with glass beads; brass chains are draped over the cast of a finger, inserting a bionic element and a sense of human touch into this technical domain. Through such sculptures and environments, Pichlkostner investigates the representation of invisible processes: the transmission of energy, the passage of time, and our psychological responses to materials and objects. Born in Austria in 1988 and based in England, Pichlkostner has shown widely in Europe, including a two-person exhibition with Donald Judd curated by Rudi Fuchs at the Arnulf Rainer Museum, Baden.

In **Tai Shani's** *Unresurrectable Biologies* – *Un-undead 1* and *2*, visceral and haunting female heads with white hair and glowing eyes are trapped inside the glass baubles of candelabra-like sculptures. Channelling the divine feminine, occult practices, witchcraft, and mysticism, Shani’s sculptural installations, films and performances construct alternative narratives of collective bodily histories. The artist harnesses the ‘feminised aesthetic modes’ of the floral, trippy and gothic ‘in a register of utopian militancy’ Born in London, 1976, Shani is the joint 2019 Turner Prize winner together with Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Helen Cammock and Oscar Murillo. Her work has been shown extensively internationally, including at the Tate, Serpentine Gallery, Manchester International Festival, Grazer Kunstverein, and Temple Bar Gallery.

In **Lee Welch's** paintings, figures, objects and their environments are stripped back to their most essential details: semi-abstract forms that are suggestive of a wider narrative. Often based on existing images, the works make allusions to the history of art, architecture, literature and cinema, as well as to Welch’s personal photographs – but these reference points are always abstracted, distilled, removed and recast in the artist’s distinct aesthetic universe. Welch’s handling of materials is spare but sensuous, carrying a tension between intimacy and restraint. Born in Kentucky and based in Dublin, Welch’s work has been featured in numerous institutions including Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, Michigan State University; The Hugh Lane Gallery, Dublin; Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León (MUSAC), León, Spain and Objectif Exhibitions, Antwerp.

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