

Jack McConville
Helium Quality
The Modern Institute, Osborne Street
18th November 2023 – 19th January 2024
Preview: Friday 17th November 2023, 6-8pm

Helium Quality is Jack McConville's third solo exhibition at The Modern Institute. For this expansive new body of paintings, McConville combines his interest in art historical painting – from late medieval to Renaissance – with a consideration of our contemporary absorption of fragmented and ephemeral imagery. The works move between abstraction and figuration, with objects and figures often reduced to elegantly curtailed silhouettes or calligraphic motifs. His kaleidoscopic use of colour and immediacy of mark-making give the works the appearance of glitching. This means McConville can move between different subjects, allowing moments of recognition to emerge from the fluid, shifting tableaux.

The paintings depict ambiguous, crowded scenes mostly situated outside, in an almost pastoral imaginary. Each begins with a set of instinctive marks, from which the artist then begins to intuitively pull a set of figurative elements – a head, a hat, horses, trees, a lake or cloud. This lends the works their sense of flux – and a kind of weightlessness that the title of the exhibition speaks too. The surfaces of the pieces are filled with echoes and correspondences between lines and forms, and McConville produces flowing compositional movements through the gestures and gazes of the figures.

The paintings are consciously untethered from dates and events but titles such as, *Occurrence*, *Distant thunder* and *Debutant*, lend them a certain antiquated drama. There is a sense of intense sociality but also a dissolution of form within the works. Things hold together in McConville's compositions but there is a feeling that the moment before and after the one depicted in each work is chaotic and action filled. Their unfinished quality defines their sensibility and quality as imaginative spaces – lines and images are completed in the viewer's mind. Fundamentally, they are receptive rather than didactic works. They point to the way the eye organises the world, seeks out order and creates meaning from the material before it.

Recent solo exhibitions include: 'Grown Electric', Saigon, Athens (2021); 'Jack McConville', The Modern Institute, 3 Aird's Lane, Glasgow (2019); The Modern Institute, 14—20 Osborne Street, Glasgow (2016); Authentic Spiritual Spray, Ibid Gallery, Los Angeles (2014); Tutti Fertitti, Tramway, Glasgow (2013); We Have No Bananas, Intermedia Gallery, CCA Glasgow (2012); New Work Scotland, Collective Gallery, Edinburgh (2012).

Selected group exhibitions include: 'A Scattering of Salts', American College of Greece, Athens (2023); 'Comme Otto Dix', Saigon, Athens (2022); 'Interiority', Hunter Whitfield, London (2018); 'honey;love;phermones', Dio Horia, Mykonos (2016); Full of Peril and Weirdness; Painting as a Universalism, M WOODS, Beijing (2015/16); 24/7, MONTE CARLO, 6551 Collins Avenue, APARTMENTS #1206 & #606, Miami (2015); Service Entrance, Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Deurle, Belgium (2014); All Masters at the Swing Door, ReMap4, Athens (2013); and Public Displays of Affection, Glasgow (part of Glasgow International 2012).