

France-Lise McGurn

Bad TV

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“If this was a film script, you wouldn't believe it”

MASSIMODECARLO is pleased to present *Bad TV*, the first solo exhibition in Asia by Scottish artist France-Lise McGurn. Taking the title from a painting in the show, *Bad TV* plays with the tension between what's considered culture and what's dismissed as noise. “Fine art, high art, bad TV,” McGurn says, folding them all into the same frame.

McGurn grew up in Glasgow in the 1980s and 90s, when the television was never off. “The TV was company,” she says. “It was just there, always on, like the fire.” That constant hum, that low-level companionship, has soaked into her work. Her paintings behave like screens: things happen across them. The figures loop, fade, reappear; the colour drifts in and out.

For years, McGurn has mined film and television for visual cues - what she calls “shit TV,” the everyday cultural detritus that lodges deep in the psyche. But *Bad TV* is the first time that source material appears literally in her work. Two new printed canvases, *Credits* and *MOvie sTills*, shown here for the first time, are made using bootleg reprints of vintage movie posters - fragments from *The Goodbye Girl* (1977), a film she watched on repeat as a teenager. These off-cut credits, the “directed by...” and “starring...” that usually scroll past unnoticed, now become the backdrop for her painted figures.

Other works tune into the visual texture of pop culture's past. *Test Card F* recalls the eerie BBC image of a young girl and her toy clown, once broadcast during off-air hours and now a kind of national subconscious.

McGurn also leans into repetition, the daily rerun, the loop. Sometimes life feels too strange to accept, and people say, “It's like a bad film.” Tropes in TV, soap opera and film are used as a ‘bail out’, a dissociation to reality in all its complexities.

Other works echo that push and pull between the screen and the body. *Levis*, painted on denim, captures a cultural attitude, and what she calls “the iconography of cool and rebellion” - her first time painting on the material. *Living Apart Together*

includes collage made with her daughter's leggings printed with Elsa from *Frozen*, sealed in bio-resin. Its title is borrowed from a 1982 Scottish film by Charlie Gormley, shot partly in McGurn's family home. The work ties generations together through the domestic: TV, repetition, and memory.

Elsewhere, *Frog* depicts a woman crouched close to the ground. The title comes from the French translation *grenouille*. Striking a dialogue with Rodin's *The Crouching Woman* (1882), it's a quiet nod that also connects to her upcoming two-year commission with the Rodin Museum in Philadelphia.

McGurn's world is made of these cultural layers - sitcoms, films, pop lyrics, overheard fragments, flashes of Glasgow interiors, and everyday popular culture. She takes what's nostalgic and pulls it back into the present, half-faded and still alive. *Bad TV* gathers all that background noise - the images that raised us, the screens that shaped how we see and feel - and leaves them running, cracked but still glowing.

France-Lise McGurn

France-Lise McGurn was born in Glasgow, UK in 1983.

Evading the boundaries of the traditional picture plane, McGurn often eschews the limits of her canvases by extending the imagery directly onto the gallery walls and furniture brought into the space, displacing her subject and creating an immersive environment. Instead of approaching a static painting, the artist activates the composition allowing the figures and forms to be seen as though in a field of vision. Occasionally confrontational, sometimes passive, sometimes ecstatic, these characters shift through these emotions constantly reforming their personas.

Key themes in McGurn's work include music, dreams, memory and popular culture. Her visual sources have included 70s film stills, Janus fetish magazine, Botticelli prints and celebrity autographs. The works are developed intuitively via the artist's use of swift calligraphic brush marks and attention to the human form. Repeated lines and movement recall antiquity but are similarly influenced by Glasgow's post-industrial city aesthetic. With her paintings, McGurn builds loops through pastel colours, speed and fluid motion. Playing with ideas around circadian rhythms and familiarity her works un-stagnate and are experienced rather than seen.