



Kate McQuillen, *A Thief With No Loot*
February 3, 2023 - April 1, 2023

Massey Klein Gallery is pleased to present *A Thief With No Loot*, a solo exhibition of new paintings by Kate McQuillen. The exhibition will be on view from February 3rd through April 1st. An opening reception will be held on Saturday, February 4th from 4-7pm. This is the artist's second solo exhibition with the gallery. For press inquiries or questions regarding works available, please email info@masseyklein.com.

A Thief With No Loot presents new paintings by Kate McQuillen that explore the transfer of ideas across time. Drawing from a wide range of influences, and coaxing images from specific source material, the artist creates works that firmly establish their own situational reality rather than acting as easily identifiable depictions of figures and scenes. McQuillen's paintings speak for themselves and create endless intangible and fleeting moments for the viewer to recognize and reminisce while simultaneously forgetting and misregistering.

McQuillen playfully uses each picture plane as a portal, a two-dimensional space to fool the eye, creating illusions of depth and space. Speed, conflict, and confidence are ubiquitous elements in her work and provoke ideas that dissolve as quickly as they have emerged, producing a spatial dislocation that catapults the viewer into an almost dreamlike state. For this new series, McQuillen sourced inspiration from a wide range of historical and contemporary contexts, from Greek Attic potters and painters, to French crime fiction from the early twentieth-century, to the music and lyrics of post-punk bands. The inspiration for McQuillen's work is well-disguised, referencing the artist's interest in unpredictable primary material. While recognizable elements exist within each work, McQuillen deliberately delivers only remnants of her source materials to her viewers, producing abstract imagery with an unknown familiarity.

A photograph of Exekias's Vatican amphora, one side depicting Ajax and Achilles engaged in a game of dice, informed McQuillen's use of positive and negative spatial relationships, notably through bitmapping the image, and inspired her exploration into the roles of heroes and her examination on the presence of objects through their functionality. The famed French crime fiction character Fantômas, known to be responsible for almost any unsolved crime of the time, appears in McQuillen's work as a personification of malleability and inconsistency, referencing his strategy of impersonation to escape capture. The lyrical delivery of musicians Florence Shaw and Shalita Dietrich, and the innovative filmmaking techniques of Werner Herzog have informed McQuillen's straightforward yet elusive, and always distinctly individual, way of communicating ideas and emotions.

McQuillen's imaginative and unmatched technique combines methods found in acrylic painting, watercolor and screen printing. The artist sets up scenarios where intention and chance can collide, forcing quick decision making and reliance on intuition, resulting in works with an unpredictable and mutable nature. McQuillen begins by selecting imagery that embodies specific concepts. She then premixes carefully chosen pigments and paints, layer after layer, a thin and precise application of acrylic through silkscreen. By alternating the direction of the screen and manipulating the application of the paint by wiping with sponges, scratching and scraping, the artist cultivates imperfections that achieve organic imagery, championing and magnifying elusive moments. She paints on an absorbent ground to create highly expressive marks with no

impasto, resulting in hyper-matte works filled with expressive painterly forms and visually tactile textures and colors. Each work is therefore a physical vehicle to communicate and explore deep space, deep time and the complex transitions that exist within.

Kate McQuillen graduated with a BFA in Fine Arts, 2D and Printmaking from the Massachusetts College of Art, where she won the Master Printmaker Award & 2D Fine Arts Award and was granted a travel scholarship to China. She was awarded her MFA in Visual Arts and Print Media from York University, where she attended as a full scholarship recipient and received the York University Stong Farmhouse Award. McQuillen has been the recipient of numerous grants such as the Illinois Arts Council Professional Development Grant and the Individual Arts Program Grant from the City of Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs & Special Events. She has completed artist residencies at MASS MoCA in North Adams, MA; The Center Program at the Hyde Park Art Center in Chicago, IL; Ragdale in Lake Forest, IL; Frans Masereel Center at the Flemish Center for Graphic Arts in Kasterlee, Belgium; the Center for Book & Paper Arts at Columbia College Chicago, IL; and the Open Studio Fine Art and Printmaking Center in Toronto, Canada; to name a few. McQuillen has lectured at various institutions including The Cooper Union, MassArt, Tyler School of Art and Architecture at Temple University, Columbia College Chicago, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and XPACE Cultural Center and has written for publications such as *Art in Print*, *Graphic Impressions* and *POWER WASHER*.

Kate McQuillen has exhibited internationally including recent exhibitions in New York City, Brussels, Chicago, St. Louis, Cleveland, and Toronto. She has been included in numerous group exhibitions at institutions across the United States including IPCNY (NY), Riverside Arts Center (IL), Chicago Athletic Association (IL), The Poetry Foundation (IL), Utah Museum of Contemporary Art (UT), Columbia College Chicago (IL), North Illinois University Art Museum (IL), and the Hyde Park Art Center (IL). Additionally, McQuillen's work has been presented at art fairs including Future Fair (NY), Expo Chicago, and Art Toronto. She has been interviewed for and has work featured in *Brooklyn Rail*, *Art in Print*, *Hyperallergic*, *The Chicago Reader*, *Art Spiel*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Chicago Magazine*, *The Globe and Mail*, *Time Out Chicago*, and *Poetry Magazine* (cover image), amongst many others.

Her work resides in the permanent collections of Temple University Libraries (Philadelphia, PA), the Saks Fifth Avenue Corporate Collection, TD Bank Group (Toronto), Anchor Graphics at Columbia College Chicago, Lake Forest College (Lake Forest, IL), Columbia College Center for Books & Paper Arts (Chicago), and the Open Studio Fine Art and Printmaking Center (Toronto), and in 2022 the artist's work was permanently installed in the lobby of the prestigious 225 W. Wacker Drive in Chicago, IL. McQuillen was a founding member of Super Dutchess, an artist-run project space on the Lower East Side in New York City. The artist currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.