

Kate McCrickard's Parisian images come from fugitive, observational pencil sketches made in Belleville's cafés and in the street, on the metro, the bus, and at home, in a diaristic manner. The cosmopolitan subjects – barflies, Chinese prostitutes, smokers, children in parks – are familiar types, both historical and contemporary, full of grittiness and quintessentially French.

McCrickard was awarded an MA Honours Degree in Fine Art with first class honours at the University of Edinburgh in 1998, and for 4 years was a Director of David Krut Projects in New York. She now lives and works in Paris, where she continues to write and to review, alongside her studio practice. In 2012 her monograph on William Kentridge was published by Tate.

McCrickard's work is held in the British Museum, the Royal Scottish Academy, and in notable collections in New York, Los Angeles, Johannesburg, Paris and London.



Drinking Lady

2018

Oil on Japanese paper, offset drawing & monotype

64 x 57 cm

£2,300



Drinker with specs

2015

Oil monotype with offset drawing

32 x 24 cm

£850



Café
2019
Oil monotype with offset drawing
47 x 63 cm
£2,300



Butcher, Café, Belleville
2018
Offset drawing with monotype
63 x 47 cm
£2,300



Anxious Anglo-Saxon
2018
Oil on canvas
30 x 24 cm
£2,000



Smoker, Belleville, 2018
2018
Oil on canvas
30 x 24 cm
£2,000



Sanders
2019
Oil on canvas
46 x 56 cm
£3,750



Swimmers
2019
Oil on canvas
46 x 56 cm
£3,750



Boiled Egg
2014
Acrylic on canvas
23 x 28 cm
£1,700



Thief
2014
Acrylic on canvas
40 x 50 cm
£3,000



Spaghetti
2013/14
Monotype
21 x 26 cm
£700

The subjects that appear in these figurative works are close to home. Drinkers prop themselves up at the zinc, smoking, sipping on tiny espressos or a demi-pression beer, one eye fixed across the room on the horses, bets in hand. The butcher comes in from the charcuterie next door. Black puffer coats are the generic uniform, disguising anatomy and throwing up a formal challenge. A teenager of indeterminate sex on a train stares at the world through his phone. Street walkers linger on a corner in pvc thigh-high boots and cat-fur coats; Parisian globe street lamps and grime; children sit on a seesaw in a scrubby city playground.

Scenes and sitters are captured in quick line sketches, worked up back in the studio into off-set drawing or mixed-media multi-pass monotypes, and oils on canvas. Shapes are made to fit into a frame giving free reign to scale. The French premise continues with figures observed obliquely from behind, inspired by the audacious prints of Jacques Bellange, mysterious court painter to the Duchy of Nancy at the end of the 16th century. Lacking Bellange's elegance, the grittiness of the street subjects is reflected in the treatment of surface. Corrections, scrapes, tears, finger prints and irregularities are left alone. Heavy pentimenti is obvious on oil canvases that show a struggle to "bring out" the image from the paint.

Such lack of polish rubs against the taste for beauty in art, so traditionally French, but leaves (I hope) a certain vigour in the work. Call this an old-fashioned "picture show" where a catholic approach to what might hang on the walls is embraced. Subject and media jostle for attention in a deliberate working against repetition and a conscious looking back to an older art world where style was not the subject, and image - making was simply a way of attending to the world.

Kate McCrickard, 01/2016