

INNER WORKINGS

WORKS ON PAPER BY DAVID HUMPHREY AND MEDRIE MACPHEE

Curated By Karen Wilkin

January 25 - February 28, 2021



Medrie MacPhee and David Humphrey both make insistent, confrontational work, yet at first, they seem like very different kinds of artists. Humphrey's brash configurations include recognizable images that collide with self-sufficient elements, presented in a wide range of pictorial languages. MacPhee's solemn compositions are abstract, tense conversations among generous shapes that seem autonomous, mutable, and vaguely anthropomorphic. Over time, however, we discover increasing common ground between the two artists. In formal terms, both deploy a vocabulary of suave curves and expressive drawing, played against the edges of the support, and both elicit maximum expression from contrasting textures, varied paint applications, unpredictable patterns, and encounters between line and expanse.

In terms of content, MacPhee and Humphrey are also close. Humphrey pulls his motifs and images from vernacular culture and media of all kinds, transforming references to current events and popular icons by shifting scales, collapsing space and forms, and changing types of representation, conflating popular references with the history of recent painting. In her paintings, MacPhee challenges paint with deconstructed clothing from 99 Cent stores, collaging with fabric and sometimes incorporating buttons, zippers, and other fragments of actuality, transubstantiating them by their new context. Her works on paper share this collaging aspect, with more isolated, personable shapes engaged in inchoate dramas.

Both artists build potent metaphors for our difficult present. Humphrey's compositions trigger recollections of horrifying current events, while MacPhee's brooding abstractions echo the stresses of the past year. The intimacy of their works on paper intensifies the resonance of their inventions.

-Karen Wilkin, 2021

David Humphrey lives and works in Long Island City, and teaches in the MFA program of Columbia University. He is represented by Fredericks & Freiser Gallery, New York.

Medrie MacPhee lives and works in Ridgewood, and is artist in residence at Bard College. She is represented by Tibor de Nagy Gallery, New York, and Nicholas Metivier Gallery, Toronto.

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Images:

(L) David Humphrey, *Struggle*, 2020, acrylic on paper, 14 x 11 in.

(R) Medrie MacPhee, *Jack*, 2020, mixed media on paper, 22 x 30 in.

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