

LEFT FIELD

Christina McPhee
Saints and Supernaturals

Performing Arts Center
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Christina McPhee

Christina McPhee (b. 1954, Pomona, CA) lives and works in central coast California. Following the intensities of line and an intuitive textuality, drawing becomes a vehicle for ephemeral effects in the work of Christina McPhee. “One gets the sense that the image conjured up is all at once a particular, individual, material composite (colored ink, graphite, paper, the slip of a hand) and a precarious, temporary, expression of forces for which no adequate, human language exists...” (Ina Blom). Her paintings, initially acquiescing to a sense of graffiti on walls, swerve into an event-space that recalls the strange gatherings of unknown characters on the edge of a city, like the Scherzi drawings of Tiepolo. Goddess Athena allows a glimpse: did she just reach down to undo the knot on her sandal? She’ll go barefoot on her own sacred ground. Up from the underworld, Persephone will have caught some rays on the beach at Morro Bay, mud in her hair. Images manifest as partial views or the fleeting shadows of a performance. As dramas of erasure and recursion, the drawing-to-painting matrix sustains a mood of temporal pathos, recalling the eighteenth century meditation on the clown Pierrot Lunaire, by the French painter Jean-Antoine Watteau, as well as the ambiguous figuration of body and event in the paintings of the twentieth century American surrealist Dorothea Tanning. Stigmata as scraps of paper, flying debris, and the parti elements that might stand in for something too large to fully perceive, indicate a generous scope of possibility for painting as a lived experience on the threshold of theatre.

Recent solo exhibitions include Feast Day at Left Field Gallery, Los Osos, 2024; KinoSaito Art Center, Verplanck, New York, 2022; and Irenic Projects, Pasadena, 2020. Recent group exhibitions include Atmosphere of Sound, Art|Science Lab at UCLA’s Nimoy Theatre and the Center for Nanosystems Technology, in association with the Getty’s PST ART Art-Science Collide in southern California, 2024; Echoes of Voynich at Wonzimer Gallery, Los Angeles, 2024; Here in a Homemade Forest: Common Reading Connections, Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, Washington State University, Pullman, 2023-2024; Beta Epochs, Los Angeles, 2022; Otherwise|Revival, Bridge Projects, Los Angeles, 2021; and Swerve|Collide, with TL Solien, at Left Field Gallery in 2021.



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Stigmata in Search of Saint Francis (After Giovanni Bellini)

Oil, oil stick, collage of ink-drawn wash, oil pastel, and ink on canvas
60 x 60 x 2.5 in // 2024



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*She Said, If I Could Just Touch The Hem of His Garment
I Know I'll Be Made Whole (after Sam Cooke)*

Oil, oil stick, graphite, and ink on canvas
65.5 x 65.5 x 2.5 in // 2024



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*Hymn to Saint Cecilia Gentili by Popular Acclaim at
Saint Patrick's Cathedral on the Theme of Dream Girl*

Oil, oil stick, lipstick, collage of ink-drawn washi and
sheet music, and ink on canvas
52 x 52 x 2.5 in // 2024



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Saint Lucy in the Sky with Mothra on the Turri Road (Eggs and Eyes)
Oil, oil stick, collage of ink-drawn wash, oil pastel, and ink on canvas
65.5 x 54 x 2.5 in // 2024



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Athena Nike Loosens Her Sandal
Oil, collage of ink drawing and found magazine fragments, ink, and dye on canvas,
65.25 x 48.5 in // 2023



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Mudheads Persephone
Oil, collage of metallic leaf and found magazine fragments, ink, and dye on canvas
65.5 x 54 x 2.5 in // 2023