

DUNCAN MACQUARRIE
next Him. Him. Him. Him.

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Duncan MacQuarrie has developed a semi-professional poker career. The experience gained through this work has had a strong impact on his artistic practice.

In the exhibition *next Him. Him. Him. Him.*, a selection of five paintings by MacQuarrie offer insight into the daily concerns that preoccupy the artist: process and strategies and their relationship to the self as a rational agent.

Duncan MacQuarrie's concentrated approach and commitment to painting spans nearly two decades. For him, it is a vocation; one that is integral to his process of thinking. An almost fanatical urge relentlessly drives MacQuarrie to interpret the things he sees and imagines through his work – egomaniacally 'claiming them for himself.' A romantically exalted form of appropriation is MacQuarrie's necessary organising principle.

His formal vocabulary incorporates a range of antiquated conventions counterbalanced through awkward anecdotes and an idiosyncratic chain of associations. MacQuarrie's paintings show a dynamic play between subject and execution. This play, a mix of tension and ambiguity, provides open interpretations often furthered by a narrative quality. Works are exclusively acrylic on small to medium format paper or canvases. A modesty of means rife with dry humour and poetic symbolism extend a personal and sensitive relationship to the viewer.

The first painting in the show recalls the controversial advertising images of American Apparel. A male model from an advertisement is depicted alongside the inscription "Dov Charney net worth." – a popular Google search. Dov Charney is the former CEO of American Apparel. His narcissistic self-dramatisation through the use of overtly sexualised advertisements lead to numerous charges of sexual harassment, and eventual sacking by the board of his own company.

The following two canvases are depictions of two successful poker players from Germany: Fedor Holz and Christoph Vogelsang. These highly articulate, elegant men each employ different strategies: Holz' use of skill and 'high variance', has gleaned winnings in excess of \$10M in recent months. Vogelsang, a quiet young man, lives in London where he studies the financial market.

Poker is characterised by exceptional concentration employed in the service of a long-term, profit-making strategy and offers a playful paradigm of strategic action. It is an understanding of human behaviour in the context of mathematics. In order to win, one has to reckon with heavy financial losses and disregard results. Live poker especially, resembles a theatrical performance with the players' finessed body language. A successful player must constantly muster up a high threshold of tolerance towards factors that are beyond their control.

The painting with the faint Swiss flag references an advertising strategy by Bodum. This table wear and kitchen wear company relocated from Denmark to Switzerland in 1978 and have incorporated the Swiss flag into their design. MacQuarrie was drawn to it as a strong, formal graphic and also a symbol that, to him, represents neutrality.

The protagonist in MacQuarrie's last portrait is a caricature of a man asserting "Je suis une bombe sexuelle!!" (I'm a sex bomb!!). As an eight year old, MacQuarrie spent all his pocket money on the first day of his summer vacation in France on a t-shirt bearing the same design. This naïve assertion of sexuality and lack of foresight perhaps recalls something of Charney's activities. For the artist, it recalls his own infantile immaturities, which he hopes to have now overcome.

- Inci Yilmaz

Duncan MacQuarrie, born 1977, lives and works in Glasgow.

His work has been shown at the following galleries and institutions: The Modern Institute/Toby Webster Ltd, Glasgow; Galerie Krinzinger, Vienna; Transmission Gallery, Madrid; Project Room, Glasgow et al.