

Lucy McKenzie – Prime Suspect

10 September 2020 - 21 February 2021, lower level

TEXT EXHIBITION FLYER

She paints, writes, designs – sometimes alone, sometimes as part of a team. Her works create unexpected connections between genres and times. She combines painting with interior design, illustrations, and even shop window design. She explores how art, fashion and design are linked, and addresses as much the staging and iconography of international sport as the political dimension of murals, which bear a connection to the contemporary practice of art in public space. She takes pictures, objects and motifs from history, redesigns them and thus creates a convincing oeuvre that defies simple classification. In short: Scottish artist Lucy McKenzie (born 1977) operates according to her own rules, quite in the sense of a “prime suspect”, playing with our expectations and patterns of perception.

Nor does her biography follow straight lines, instead exploring productive detours. In the noughties, as an internationally sought-after young artist, she preferred to go back to school rather than concentrate on her career. In Brussels, her adopted home, she studied trompe-l'œil painting, an Old Master technique that imitates surfaces and structures so convincingly in three dimensions that they literally deceive the eye. Over the last two decades she has also run a bar, managed a record company and founded the design and fashion label Atelier E.B with designer Beca Lipscombe.

Museum Brandhorst is showing the first international overview show of Lucy McKenzie's oeuvre, with around 80 works dating from 1997 to the present. The title “Prime Suspect” also alludes to the way in which her artistic experiments and research often resemble a detective story: Like Miss Marple, as McKenzie herself describes it, she follows various clues with the aim of connecting historical and contemporary epochs and people, and discovering how ideas and ideologies develop over time. So what connects the comic figure Tintin with the Olympics, with Art nouveau and trompe-l'œil painting? “It's a real mystery, but it's my mystery. It's great to be able to put all these elements together with the exhibition and maybe solve it that way.”