

**Ian McKeever**  
*Gerlinde*



***Gerlinde No 5***, 1995-2023

**IAN MCKEEVER - *Gerlinde***  
**2 June – 5 August 2023**

HackelBury is pleased to present '*Gerlinde*', a solo exhibition of new work by Royal Academician Ian McKeever. This new body of work, his most personal to date, is the portrait of a woman, a love letter to his wife. Drawing on abandoned drawings and his archive of photographs which capture everyday objects in a domestic setting, his black and white photographs are filled with light and shadow, providing evocative glimpses of the human presence which merge with silhouetted objects and structures from their home.

McKeever's emphasis on an abstract language fosters ambiguity. His interest is in pushing the conventional notion of photography as a literal, figurative representative of reality away and establishing a visual language providing only transitory glimpses of reality. This invites the viewer to focus on the compositional elements such as the quality of light and balance of shadow, the drawn line and

assembled object, the 'aura' of the edge between gouache and photograph, the silhouetted form and the gestural mark.

McKeever is intrigued as to 'where the image begins and finishes' and the glimpse of a fleeting moment in which nothing is fixed. His work explores the meeting point between the 'truth' of photography and the language of painting. The gap between the photograph's instant reality and the slow incremental process of mark-making in painting.

In some of the work, McKeever has photographed objects against strong sunlight to evoke an almost gestural painting imbued with a calligraphic quality reminiscent of Japanese Shoji screens which were traditionally used to provide visual privacy.

The artist's exploration of the domestic setting could also be said to be as a meditation on such artists as American photographer Charles Sheeler, whose work in the 1930s, after documenting local buildings for architects, took a new direction when he began photographing the interior of his home, drawing out compositions of solids and spaces. Also, in his use of torn or cut papers, McKeever draws on the poetic language of Matisse's 'cut-outs', to explore the balance and boundaries between abstraction and representation, photography and painting, edge and space, and shadow and light. This new body of work has a cinematic quality in which the artist captures the essence of someone's presence through objects in the space around them. As Marcel Proust wrote,

*'...I am myself again. Pleasure in this respect is like photography. What we take, in the presence of the beloved object, is merely a negative, which we develop later, when we are back at home, and have once again found at our disposal that inner darkroom the entrance to which is barred to us so long as we are with other people'.*

In Search for Lost Time, Volume II



**Gerlinde No 7**, 1995-2023

There is poetry in ordinary things. Each object has its own story. To see is one thing, to look is another. If we are mindful, if we are quiet we might find something of ourselves in the net of shadows on the kitchen floor, in the wind lifting the edge of a lace curtain or the outline of an orchid silhouetted against a white wall by a ray of morning sun. The poet William Blake claimed we could find 'the world in a grain of sand'.

A house is a place of daydreams. To look is to be present. To be in the world. It is a sort of love. Each room, each nook and cranny has its own tale, is a calendar of those moments that make up our lives. The dress thrown casually over a bedroom chair that suggests both desire and rest. The fallen petals of a flower scattered on a tablecloth that remind us of the brevity of existence. In his haunting, barely-there images Ian McKeever creates visual haiku from domestic objects. Information is distilled to its essence. Objects appear through veils of light, through whispered suggestions that, like a cello concerto, open doors onto lost memories and small corners of the world where, if we are still, we might find something intimate, something important, something of ourselves.

Sue Hubbard, London 08.04.2023

There will be an in-conversation event with Sue Hubbard and Ian McKeever on Saturday 3rd June from 12:00 to 13:00.



**Gerlinde No 3**, 1995-2023

## About Ian McKeever

Ian McKeever (born 1946) is primarily known as one of the leading British painters of his generation. However, photography has always played an important part in his practise. His early work grew out of a conceptual interest in landscape leading in the mid-1980s to his engaging more fully with the practise of painting. Concurrently over the last twenty years, he has pursued his commitment to photography in such groups of works as *Eagduru* and *Against Architecture*. The new *Gerlinde* series takes further this exploration between photography and its affinity to painting.

In 1989, McKeever received a DAAD scholarship to live and work in Berlin. In 1990 he had a major retrospective at the Whitechapel Art Gallery, London. Since 1971 he has exhibited extensively including major exhibitions at the Kunstverein Braunschweig in 1987, the Porin Taidemuseo in 1997, the Kunsthallen Brandts Klaederfabrik, Odense in 2001 and 2007, the Morat Institute, Freiburg in 2005 and 2007, the New Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen in 2006, the Royal Academy of Arts, London in 2010, the Sønderjyllands Kunstmuseet in 2011 and the Josef Albers Museum, Quadrat Bottrop in 2012.

McKeever has taught extensively in Great Britain, Germany, and the USA. He has held several teaching positions including Guest Professor at the Städelschule Akademie der Kunst in Frankfurt, Senior Lecturer, Slade, University of London and Visiting Professor at the University of Brighton. In 2003 he was elected a Royal Academician. He has also published many texts and essays primarily concerning the nature of painting.

Ian McKeever's work is represented in leading international public Collections, including Tate, British Museum, Royal Academy of Arts, London; Museum Moderner Kunst, Vienna; Museum of Fine Art, Budapest; Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk; Glyptotek, Copenhagen; Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki; Brooklyn Museum of Art, New York; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Boston Museum of Fine Art and Yale Center for British Art, Connecticut.

## About Sue Hubbard

Sue Hubbard is a British art critic, novelist, poet, lecturer, and broadcaster. Her writing draws on the incidental and peripheral, the often overlooked parts of daily life. Memory, absence, presence, and reminiscence are her subjects and her work is filled with a Proustian nostalgia. With these tools, she constructs narratives of intimacy and identity.

She has published four collections of poetry, and a book of short stories. Her fourth novel, *Flatlands*, is due from Pushkin Press this June and is published in translation by Mercure de France. Her new collection of poems on Gwen John, *God's Little Artist*, is due from Seren in September. She was commissioned by the Arts Council and the BFI to create the public art poem *Eurydice at Waterloo*, now carved in stone and placed in the Crypt at St. John's Waterloo. She has also held multiple workshops at institutions such as the Barbican Centre, Tate Britain, and the V&A.

[www.suehubbard.com](http://www.suehubbard.com)

## About HackelBury Fine Art

Established in 1998, the London gallery in Launceston Place is committed to nurturing long-term relationships with both artists and clients. It continues to evolve and progress through an expanding program of gallery exhibitions, museum projects and publishing ventures.

The small group of artists with whom HackelBury work, represent a diversity of practice, pushing the boundaries of various media. The work and practice of these artists encompasses the worlds of photography, painting, drawing, sculpture, architecture and performance. Each artist, whether emerging or established, creates work defined by a depth of thought and breadth and consistency of approach.

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Camilla Cañellas – Arts Consultancy & PR  
E: [camilla@culturebeam.com](mailto:camilla@culturebeam.com) M: +34 660375123

Phil Crook – HackelBury Fine Art  
E: [phil@hackelbury.co.uk](mailto:phil@hackelbury.co.uk) T: +44 20 7937 8688

Instagram [@hackelburyfineart](https://www.instagram.com/hackelburyfineart)