

France-Lise McGurn

DEE-TOUR

15.06.2026

21.06.2026

MASSIMODECARLO presents *DEE-TOUR*, France-Lise McGurn's first solo presentation in Basel. On view during Art Basel 2026, the exhibition is hosted at DOMUSHAUS - a postwar modernist building that once housed Switzerland's first museum for architecture.

The title is taken from *Deetour*, a 1982 track by Philadelphia-born singer Karen Young - a song about a man who closes his eyes, rises, and finds his place somewhere out in space. It's about escape as a state of mind, the detour not as a wrong turn but as the only route worth taking. McGurn first heard it played by a DJ at a Glasgow hotel bar where she worked in her twenties. Pop music, film and the city have always been central to her practice - and ideas of intimacy, freedom, solitude and motion are worked through new approaches to collage, painting in oil and marker directly onto digitally printed canvas. The collage holds things still; the painting pulls them back into motion.

The figures in *DEE-TOUR* inhabit the city through its texture of intimacy - present and absent at once, close to other bodies and entirely sealed inside themselves, the way one is on a dancefloor, a crowded train, or in the particular solitude of being among people. *The Tube* (2026) makes that condition almost uncomfortably precise - departing from a photograph taken on the London Underground, its darkness and compression of bodies in transit, onto which McGurn paints a sprawling yellow figure, luminous and unhurried. *Ford Escort* (2026) moves from the underground to the street, spray paint returning to McGurn's practice after an absence. Two figures are brought together within a loosely architectural frame - recalling Bacon in the way it simultaneously encloses and exposes - their proximity tender and unresolved, while looping black marks and bursts of pink and green press in from the edges with the directness of graffiti. The car of the title is mundane and loaded in equal measure, its name alluding to a vehicle, police protection and paid companionship.

Postcards from the Edge (2026) takes its title from Mike Nichols' 1990 film - the canvas divided into four, like a postage stamp on the back of a postcard, an object that exists only in motion, always between

one place and another. Both this work and *Big Plans* (2026) enter into dialogue with R.B Kitaj (1932-2007), a painter McGurn consistently returns to - another artist for whom moving between registers, between high and low, painted and collaged, literary and popular, was never a contradiction but a method.

As she has done at previous MASSIMODECARLO spaces and institutional exhibitions, McGurn will paint directly onto the walls and windows of DOMUSHAUS - the figures moving beyond the canvas and into the building, out toward the street.

DEE-TOUR was made alongside new work for a solo exhibition, *The Charm Offensive*, at Dundee Contemporary Arts, Scotland, opening on 22 August 2026. She will also have a two-year commission at the Rodin Museum in Philadelphia in early 2027. The detour always knew where it was going.

France-Lise McGurn

France-Lise McGurn was born in Glasgow, UK, in 1983.

Evading the boundaries of the traditional picture plane, McGurn often eschews the limits of her canvases by extending the imagery directly onto the gallery walls and furniture brought into the space, displacing her subject and creating an immersive environment. Instead of approaching a static painting, the artist activates the composition, allowing the figures and forms to be seen as though in a field of vision. Occasionally confrontational, sometimes passive, sometimes ecstatic, these characters shift through these emotions constantly reforming their personas.

Key themes in McGurn's work include music, dreams, memory and popular culture. Her visual sources have included 70s film stills, Janus fetish magazine, Botticelli prints and celebrity autographs. The works are developed intuitively via the artist's use of swift calligraphic brush marks and attention to the human form. Repeated lines and movement recall antiquity but are similarly influenced by Glasgow's post-industrial city aesthetic. With her paintings, McGurn builds loops through pastel colours, speed and fluid motion. Playing with ideas around circadian rhythms and familiarity, her works un-stagnate and are experienced rather than seen.

McGurn lives and works in London. She received her MA in 2012 from the Royal College of Art, London, UK. In 2026, McGurn has a solo exhibition, *The Charm Offensive*, at DCA Dundee Contemporary Arts in Scotland, and in early 2027, she will unveil a two-year commission for the Rodin Museum in Philadelphia, USA.

"I Only Have Apple Juice...", a group exhibition co-curated by France-Lise McGurn and John Douglas Miller, opened at Bonny Don't Live at Home, Glasgow, Scotland, in June 2026

Recent notable solo and two-person exhibitions include: Bad TV, MASSIMODECARLO, Hong Kong (2025); Margot Samuel, New York (2023); Glasgow

International, Glasgow (2021); Tramway, Glasgow (2020); Kunsthaus Pasquart, Biel (2020). Recent group shows include: Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow (2022); National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh (2021). McGurn's work is held in prominent public collections such as K11 Art Foundation, Hong Kong; David Roberts Collection, London; New Hall Art Collection, Murray Edwards College, Cambridge; TATE, London; Zabłudowicz Collection, London; Dallas Museum of Art Foundation, Texas; USA Hill Art Foundation, New York and Stiftung Kunsthaus-Sammlung Pasquart, Biel.