



PRESS RELEASE – For Immediate Release

## Jocelyn McGregor: Mantle

16 January 2022 — 20 February 2021

Public Preview: 6pm-8pm, Thursday 13 January 2022

Slow-Saturday Preview: Saturday 15 January 2022



Jocelyn McGregor, *Shrink to Fit (table)*, 2020

*Mantle* is the first major solo exhibition of work by Jocelyn McGregor. McGregor's work involves sculpture, installation and animation. Taking inspiration from folklore, surrealism and supernatural fiction, she investigates the ways in which female identity is associated with nature, the home and the machine.

In shelled molluscs, the mantle is the organ that forms the shell. From the original Latin word *mantellum* we also get *mantle* as the name for a cloak like garment worn over indoor clothing and *mantelpiece* a shelf or structure located above a fireplace. Like the calcified layers that separate, support or protect the softer mollusc tissue, the mantel garment and mantelpiece, form boundaries or thresholds between internal habitats and external worlds. Working with domestic fabrics, beauty products, earth pigments and industrial materials, McGregor traverses the perceived boundaries

between human, nature and machine, where they meet and overlap, demonstrating the difficulty in defining their edges. The work slips and shifts between states, the recurring presence of bedsheets and soft fabric pieces references their closeness to the body and also their role in transporting us between conscious and unconscious dream worlds. As our lives are increasingly played out onscreen McGregor has been experimenting with stop-motion animation. A medium which enables otherwise inanimate objects to interact with 'real' life environments, blurring the line between the real and fantastic.

In many of McGregor's works so-called lower animals and creatures often thought to be pests, associated with infestation, disease and decomposition are enlarged and disjointed. New works for this exhibition include wearable sculptures, combing synthetic hair, natural latex and false nails which mimic nature with machine and handmade elements. As appendages they extend the human body into creaturely realms, like prostheses for limbs we didn't realise we were missing. They form a monstrous body which incorporates both the wretched of nature and artificial materials. This contact with what we may find disgusting and disturbing is a regular feature of horror films, a rich source of inspiration for McGregor and a genre with continued if not increasing mainstream appeal, perhaps not in spite of the pandemic but because of it.

Nature in McGregor's work is neither benign or simply aggressive as is sometimes the case in the sub-genre of Ecological Horror, when nature appears to take revenge on our problematic species for the damage we have done to it. Like leftovers from a dream, McGregor's works crawl and creep into the gallery, climbing over it, snaking round corners and hanging down walls. Encroaching into the space like unclipped fingernails and overgrown hair, reclaiming space like roots and vines. McGregor's work might prompt us to consider the useful roles performed by bats, snails, spiders and worms in nature and how they ultimately contribute to sustaining human life. Crucially though, this close encounter with nature does not point towards an easy resolution, a simple becoming whole again, or being one with nature. The fragmented elements in McGregor's work suggest something inconsistent and incomplete at the heart of what humans are, and of nature itself.

*Jocelyn McGregor: Mantle*, was selected from proposals submitted by Castlefield Gallery Associates by guest selector Mariama Attah curator at Open Eye Gallery, Liverpool and Castlefield Gallery Curator Matthew Pendergast.

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**For further information, images or to arrange interviews, please contact: Jennifer Dean, Communications and Audience Development Coordinator at Castlefield Gallery, on [jennifer@castlefieldgallery.co.uk](mailto:jennifer@castlefieldgallery.co.uk) / 07766046672**

**Notes to editors:**

**Jocelyn McGregor** (b. 1989, Lincolnshire) currently lives and works in Cumbria. She studied Fine Art at the Ruskin School of Fine Art, Oxford University (2010); and completed her MFA in Sculpture at the Slade School of Fine Art, UCL (2017). She was awarded the Lee Alexander McQueen: Sarabande Foundation Emerging Artist Award (2017), selected for Bloomberg New Contemporaries 2018, exhibiting in Liverpool Biennale and South London Gallery; and was Artist-in-Residence as part of the British Council SWAP UK/Ukraine Residency Programme 2019-20. Recent exhibitions include 'Trespassers Will Be Detected', Dnipro Centre for Contemporary Culture, Ukraine (2020); 'Rain Wetting Thirst', Lewisham Arthouse, London (2019); 'A Field Guide to Getting Lost', The Art Foundation, Athens, Greece (2018); and 'Mei Yahn Yu', Kaitak Centre (AVA), Hong Kong (2018).

At **Castlefield Gallery** (Est. 1984), we make new art possible. We are dedicated to the advancement of contemporary visual art. We are artist facing. We work with artists and creatives in Greater Manchester and beyond, at all career stages. We support them to develop their practice and careers, and to find ways not just to make art, but to make a living. We do this through: our gallery, and its free exhibitions and events that are open to all; through tailored career and practice development support; through our 200-strong artist Associates scheme; through the provision of low-cost studio and project space; through commissions and co-commissions; and through collaboration with universities, including annual graduate programmes that provide mentoring, coaching and more. For 35 years, we have supported young and older artists, new graduates right through to established artists, connecting them to each other, and to our international network of curators, arts organisations, artists and collectors. Castlefield Gallery's international work is focused on exchange between artists in the North West of England, and the rest of the world. We have an established track record in public art commissioning and public realm animation and activation. We are a female led organisation and a registered charity. Castlefield Gallery is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation and Manchester City Council Cultural Partner. Our Artist Patron is the celebrated Ryan Gander, OBE.

**Castlefield Gallery, 2 Hewitt Street, Manchester, M15 4GB**

Admission is FREE

Visiting information including our covid-safe measures can be found [HERE](#)

[castlefieldgallery.co.uk](http://castlefieldgallery.co.uk)

[info@castlefieldgallery.co.uk](mailto:info@castlefieldgallery.co.uk)

Opening Times: Wed to Sun, 12noon – 5.30pm

The gallery is fully wheelchair accessible, including provision of an accessible bathroom.

**Castlefield Gallery funders and supporters:**



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