



KING'S LEAP

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Michelle Uckotter

Frieze London

Sins of the City

October 15 to October 19, 2025

For her Frieze London Focus presentation, *Sins of the City*, Michelle Uckotter has created desolate landscapes and portraits that reveal the tensions at stake in her radical formalism. In two large scale paintings Uckotter has rendered dilapidated buildings that collapse spatial perception and representations of the American Midwest, referencing Modernist painting and her own oeuvre.

Inspired by mid-century photography of Appalachia and Ohio (where she herself is from), Uckotter's wastelands are pertinent in this moment of political and cultural decay. They present a psychological and societal allegory of the home, which her figures have stalked in the attics and basements of her previous paintings. Out of the labyrinth of her past interiors, viewers are now granted a vantage from the outside, at once materially dense, pictorially artificial, and suffused with details.

Like a film editor in a cutting-room, Uckotter splices these frames with portraits of musicians. Frozen and staged like a Manet, these musicians assume a fictitious role to play for Uckotter's paintings. Their music, silent dirges, must be imagined by the audience when scanning between them and the landscapes. The shifts in her paintings create a psychological montage of transgressive female perspectives, making Uckotter's work at once timeless and urgent.

Next to the paintings Uckotter will build a room within the booth, making reference to *Étant donnés* by Marcel Duchamp, where viewers can peer inside via a camera viewfinder on the outside wall. Through the viewfinder, visitors will be voyeurs to the recording of a durational video piece, with live actresses passively performing in a set made to look like a messy studio apartment. Juxtaposing the American landscape with the claustrophobia of city-dwelling melancholia, Uckotter creates a mise-en-scene that fixes the viewers gaze upon a private world on the verge of collapse.