

SARAH McENEANEY

Morning Noon Night

March 15 – April 26, 2024

Reception and Artist Talk: Friday, April 5, 5pm – 7pm

L
O
C
K
S
G
A
L
L
E
R
Y



Sarah McEneaney, *Morning Ritual Summer*, 2024, acrylic and collage on wood,
47 3/4 x 47 3/4 inches



Locks Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of new paintings by the Philadelphia-based artist **Sarah McEneaney** (b. 1955).

Since the 1970s, Sarah McEneaney has composed diaristic paintings depicting many areas of life with an unmatched intimacy and reverent vulnerability. Everyday moments are rendered with a powerful sensitivity and love for the mundane, revealing subtle changes over time. This temporality is suggested by acute visual cues McEneaney embeds in each painting: the burial of her passed dog in the ground outside her house, early paintings hung on her bedroom walls, glowing traffic cones scattered across the streets of her rapidly developing neighborhood. These narratives connect historical specificity with the artist's radical intimacy, connecting the imaginative world-making of an artist to the life of an activist engaged with the city. As put by curator Ingrid Schaffner, McEneaney's work "aligns itself with those artists who have been drawn to envisioning the personal and the particular in terms that lend themselves to popular reading. Whether on the level of scale or disclosure, this kind of intimacy may yield a revelatory form of social commentary."



Recent acrylic paintings by McEneaney expand these personal narratives and draw from public themes such as the changing landscape of her Callowhill neighborhood and her observations of national political milestones since 2022. These painted scenes, though seemingly quiet and desolate at times, suggest a kind of optimism and space for reflection through details of her surroundings: foliage on the trees, the warmth of an indoor light, a glowing red full moon.



Sarah McEneaney, *Election Blood Red Moon Day*, 2022-23, acrylic and collage on wood, 48 x 28 inches

Solitude and emotional attentiveness are a recurring theme in McEneaney's paintings. In *Election Blood Red Moon Day* (2022-23), the artist portrays herself towered by the skyline of a developing urban street, which she saturates with vibrant color and detailed brushstrokes imbuing wonder into an otherwise unsettling instance. In works such as *Panel Prep Hearing* (2023) and *Sleep Away* (2022), McEneaney embeds her earlier paintings within the walls of her interiors, building upon the rich storyline of her five-decade studio practice as artist living in Philadelphia.

"An anecdote or story is the impetus to make the painting. But I like to think that people read into the work the way they want, that they can enter and even change the story to suit them," says the artist.

This exhibition of new works expands upon the rich world of McEneaney's environment, characterized by her love for simplicity, and deep commitment to her artistry and community in Philadelphia.

Sarah McEneaney works as both an artist and community activist in Philadelphia. She received her certificate from the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 1979. That same year, she was included in the exhibition *Philadelphia New Talent* at Locks Gallery, which was her first gallery show. Since then, she has had solo museum shows at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia; Mills College Art Museum, CA; and the List Gallery, Swarthmore College, PA. She has been in over seventy group shows throughout the Mid-Atlantic region and had consistent solo exhibitions in New York and Philadelphia over the last twenty years. McEneaney is the recipient of the Yaddo Fellowship (2006, 2005, 1997, 1995), the Pew Fellowship in the Arts (2002, 2001, 1993), the Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant (2000), the MacDowell Colony Fellowship (1998), and the Chianti Foundation Residency (2009), among others. Her work is in numerous public collections including the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, and the Mills College Art Museum.