



Kate Abercrombie
*True Like a Lake, Lie Like
the Moon*, 2023
Gouache on paper
19 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 15 in
(50.5 × 38.1cm)
KAB 97

Kate Abercrombie: Some Lives

November 16, 2023 – January 6, 2024

Opening reception: Thursday, November 16, 6–8pm

Kate Abercrombie (b. 1978, Rochester, NY, lives and works Philadelphia) reinterprets the still life tradition creating a symbolic universe based on images and objects of personal resonance interwoven with dense patterning. Her gouache on paper board paintings look like collages if we can stretch the definition of collage into the realm of painting: layering and juxtaposing imagery with paint instead of cutting and pasting with paper and glue. The body of work presented in *Some Lives* is Abercrombie's most personal yet. Many of the featured paintings show Abercrombie grappling with the issue of womanhood, and in particular, how our culture perceives women as they age—as the artist relates, she is exploring “pre-old cronedom.” But the paintings are not didactic treatises on sexist tropes regarding female aging. Rather, they are highly subjective and at times arcane ruminations on how Abercrombie co-exists with her former, present, and future selves.

A parallel idea braided throughout the paintings is the notion of spiritual belief drawn from both folk and organized religion: clairvoyant power objects; objects of faith and devotion like ex-votos; references to martyred female saints; playing cards; and a range of both objects and images that have symbolic meaning in Western art's still-life and genre traditions, which Abercrombie transforms to make her own. Painstakingly detailed images are also inspired by the artist's encounters with the detritus of daily life in Philadelphia and metamorphose under the spell of Abercrombie's hand—syringe caps are transformed into mandalas and hex-signs, for example.

Abercrombie has an MFA from University of Texas at Austin and a BFA from Tyler School of Art, Temple University, Philadelphia. She has been included in exhibitions in Philadelphia at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Vox Populi, Fleisher/Ollman, Little Berlin, and Black Floor. She has also shown at the Creative Research Laboratory, Austin, TX. In 2005, she received an Independence Foundation Fellowship in the Arts. In 2009, she was awarded a residency at the Vermont Studio Center, Johnson, VT. Her work is in the collections of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and the Fabric Workshop and Museum.