



Hellen Van Meene 2005

Hellen van Meene / New Works

22 March – 14 May 2006

Artist Talk 21 March 5.30 - 6.30pm (Free)

Private View 21 March 6.30 - 8.30pm

Open: Wed, Thur, Sun 11– 5 / Fri, Sat 11– 4

Closed Mon & Tues **ADMISSION FREE**

This will be the first major solo presentation of work in London by Dutch photographer Hellen van Meene since 1999. Known for her intimate fictional portraiture of adolescent girls and androgynous boys, which blur the line between fact and fiction, Pump House Gallery has commissioned van Meene to make new works in London, which will be shown alongside recent works made in Japan, Russia, Germany, Latvia and Holland.

In recent years, van Meene has increasingly moved from working with familiar models in her hometown in Holland, to working overseas and spontaneously with strangers. She does not see her work as portraiture but as creating a mood and exploring “adolescent situations and attitudes, which represent the type of ‘normality’ we don’t usually share with others, but keep to ourselves” (the artist). She is drawn to what has been termed ‘eccentric but captivating detail’; light falling on the hairs on an arm, a bruise or hair tangled in branches.

Her fascination with the grace and awkwardness that are the physical and psychological hallmarks of this age is developed in her newly commissioned work made with young people and teenage parents in South West London. Here van Meene delves into the territory of socially engaged documentary and a sense of her subjects being caught or confined between two lives is apparent. In common with earlier works more sensual and painterly qualities emerge: the subject’s “state of peculiar absorption” and the invocation of historical painted portraiture (Vermeer, Rossetti, Manet).

Van Meene approaches and disturbs the problems inherent in the relationship between the photographer and the subject in a deliberate and productive way. Though rooted in documentary territory, her work remains closer in feel to Francesca Woodman than to Diane Arbus, combining documentary language with elements of fantasy, performance and psychological space to create a powerful and beguiling concoction

Van Meene was born in Alkmaar, Holland in 1972. She has already received international critical acclaim and has shown in numerous group and solo shows internationally. Since a solo showing in 1999 at The Photographers Gallery, van Meene she has shown work extensively including in The Citibank Private Bank Photography Prize 2000 at The Photographers Gallery.

The exhibition is accompanied by a public programme including Hellen van Meene in conversation with Curator Susie Gray, a seminar event exploring issues around contemporary portrait photography and consent at the National Portrait Gallery on 6th May, family workshops and a teenage parents photo project.

For more information, images or to arrange interviews please contact:

Susie Gray, Curator Manager on +00 44 (0)20 7350 0523, sjgray@wandsworth.gov.uk

A Pump House Gallery Touring Exhibition travelling to Open Eye Gallery, Liverpool 21 July / 2 Sept 2006 and Focal Point Gallery, Southend-on-Sea 16 Dec 2006 / 3 Feb 2007. Supported by the Arts Council England, Mondriaan Foundation, Dutch Embassy and Sadie Coles HQ.

Pump House Gallery, Wandsworth Borough Council, Battersea Park, London SW11 4NJ

Tel: 020 7350 0523, Fax: 020 7228 9062, Email: pumphouse@wandsworth.gov.uk www.wandsworth.gov.uk/gallery