

MAUREEN PALEY.



HANNAH STARKEY

24 May – 14 July 2024

private view: Friday 24 May, 5 – 7.30 pm

at Maureen Paley, 60 Three Colts Lane, E2 6GQ

Maureen Paley is pleased to present the eighth solo exhibition by Hannah Starkey at the gallery, following her survey exhibition *In Real Life* at the Hepworth Wakefield, 2022. Her work is currently on display in two Hayward Gallery Touring exhibitions, *Acts of Creation: On Art and Motherhood* and *After the End of History: British Working Class Photography 1989 – 2024*, as well as the South London Gallery exhibition *Acts of Resistance: Photography, Feminisms and the Art of Protest* organised in collaboration with the V&A, London.

Starkey's large-scale photographs engage with how women are represented in contemporary culture. Her portraits capture moments of everyday life and an expanded female experience. Starkey reveals women in moments of private reflection or social interaction that might otherwise go unseen, the large scale of her images offering monumentality to these instances.

"You are very aware as a young woman that you are the observed, and you are expected to perform for the eye", Starkey comments, "we're conditioned to the point where we observe ourselves being observed, and we operate out of that language, or those dynamics. My work is a way of speaking to women about how you don't always need to perform for the gaze, that there is more to being female than being seen."¹

In her carefully choreographed scenes, Starkey works intimately with the women she photographs, discussing composition and poses with the sitters, continually showing them the image to establish their approval of the work. This is to overcome what she terms "the camera's consuming eye", acknowledging the hierarchical potential inherent within the act of photographing someone. *Untitled January 2023* shows young women photographing each other; the work was taken during her collaboration with female students from Wakefield's CAPA College, an initiative in which Starkey created a space of empathy and joy as a salve to the damage digital manipulation is inflicting on self-perception.

These works stagger the viewer's access to the women through Starkey's use of glass and reflections. The subjects are shown through windows and mirrors, a process which forces the eye to slow down in its comprehension of the scene. She observed "I wanted to bring the female form to that state where it is fragmented and broken up... constructing the image so that it was harder to deconstruct, blocking the consuming eye".² In the self-portraits, Starkey appears in the reflection of splintered mirrors, placing herself behind the gaze of the camera lens whilst equally becoming its subject. The act of turning the lens onto herself equally mimes the increasing prevalence and potency of self-representation spurred on by the relentless proliferation of images of ourselves within social media.

Hannah Starkey (b. 1971, Belfast), lives and works in London. In 2019, she was the winner of the Freeland Award with The Hepworth Wakefield, where she presented a major survey exhibition *Hannah Starkey: In Real Life* in 2022. Solo exhibitions include *Principled & Revolutionary: Northern Ireland's Peace Women*, Ulster Museum, Belfast, Northern Ireland, 2023; *Celebrating City Women*, Guildhall Art Gallery, Guildhall, London, UK, 2020; Centre Culturel Irlandais, Paris, France, 2016; Maureen Paley, London, UK, 2015; Mead Gallery, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, UK, 2011; Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, Ireland, 2000; Castello di Rivoli, Turin, Italy, 2000 and Cornerhouse, Manchester, UK, 1999.

Selected group exhibitions include *Acts of Resistance: Photography, Feminisms and the Art of Protest*, South London Gallery, London, UK, 2024; *Acts of Creation: On Art and Motherhood*, Hayward Gallery Touring, Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol, UK, travelling to: Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, UK; Millennium Gallery, Museum of Sheffield, Sheffield, UK, 2024; *After the End of History: British Working Class Photography 1989 – 2024* *In the Now: Gender and Nation in Europe*, *Selections from the Sir Mark Fehrs Haukohl Photography Collection*, LACMA, Los Angeles, USA, 2021, travelling to Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, New York, USA; *Fiction and Fabrication: photography of architecture after the digital turn*, MAAT Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology, Lisbon, Portugal, 2019; *209 Women*, Portcullis House, London, UK, 2018, *A Place in the World*, East Gallery, Norwich University of the Arts, Norfolk, 2018; *Transparency*, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, UK, 2017 and *Adventures of the Black Square: Abstract*

^{1&2} "The Practice of Everyday Life: Hannah Starkey and Lauren Elkin in Conversation", in *Hannah Starkey: In Real Life*, Hepworth Wakefield, (2022)

For further information please contact Lauren Williamson: lauren@maureenpaley.com

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Art and Society 1915 – 2015, Whitechapel Gallery, London, UK, 2015. In 2018, MACK published *Hannah Starkey: Photographs 1997-2017*, and a monograph of Hannah Starkey's work was published alongside her exhibition *In Real Life* at The Hepworth Wakefield in 2022.

^{1&2} "The Practice of Everyday Life: Hannah Starkey and Lauren Elkin in Conversation", in *Hannah Starkey: In Real Life*, Hepworth Wakefield, (2022)

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