

ANNIE ERNAUX & MARC MARIE
ELLEN CANTOR

BEDROOM, CHRISTMAS MORNING

22 FEBRUARY – 5 APRIL 2025

Galerie Isabella Bortolozzi
Schöneberger Ufer 61
10785 Berlin
+49-(0)30-26 39 76 229
info@bortolozzi.com

Galerie Isabella Bortolozzi is pleased to announce *BEDROOM, CHRISTMAS MORNING* an exhibition showing original hand-printed colour photographs by Annie Ernaux & Marc Marie, alongside *If I Just Turn and Run* (1998), a video by the late Ellen Cantor. The series of fourteen images shot by Ernaux & Marie formed the basis for their book *L'Usage de la photo* (Gallimard, 2005; English translation: *The Use of Photography*, Fitzcarraldo Editions / Seven Stories Press, 2024); this is the first time they have been exhibited.

Taken by Ernaux & Marie in tandem, these images trace the prolonged affair between the authors that started when they met in January 2003. Ernaux had been undergoing chemotherapy for breast cancer in the preceding three months, causing her to lose her hair and have a catheter implanted under her skin. Their affair began during her surgery and radiation therapy; first in Brussels and continuing primarily in Paris, where both lived. From the start of their relationship Ernaux describes how she became fascinated with what she saw in the morning: their clothes, thrown on the floor while making love; chairs out of place; and the remains of a meal left on the table from the night before. It struck her as painful to destroy this landscape by putting everything back in its place. She was compelled to pick up a camera, thinking, “this arrangement born of desire and accident, doomed to disappear, should be photographed.” When she told Marc Marie what she had done, he confessed that he had felt the same desire. The resulting fourteen photographs by Ernaux & Marie served as the basis for each to write a short response to accompany their images. These texts were only shared with one another after the final photograph was taken, a year later, on 7th January 2004.

“[...] as if making love were not enough and we needed to preserve a material representation of the act, we continued to take photos. Some we took immediately after lovemaking, others the next morning. The morning pictures were the most moving. These things cast off by our bodies had spent the whole night in the very place and position in which they'd fallen, the remains of an already distant celebration. To see them again in the light of day was to feel the passage of time.”¹

Despite Ellen Cantor making *If I Just Turn and Run* in 1998, the work would not be discovered until after the artist's death in 2013. While Cantor's other videos hinge on metatextual and appropriation-based strategies, this work focuses on herself as its subject. Shot in Cantor's bedroom in London, she speaks candidly, in a stream of consciousness to her stationary home-video camera, touching on topics of love, sexuality, and the troubles of her childhood. Much of her dialogue describes an unnamed lover. She recounts their first encounter on the street, becoming girlfriends, scenes of erotic intimacy, and her turmoil of uncertainty—suggested by brief expressions of doubt: “We can't be together, we're too much the same—we're like the same person.” We never learn what transpires between them. Bookended by glimpses of London streets, the video ends with a brief interruption: a knock on the door and a conversation with an unseen man. She writes down a phone number and tells him that she will be going to Berlin for the weekend.

¹ Annie Ernaux in Annie Ernaux & Marc Marie, *The Use of Photography* (Trans. Alison L. Strayer), Fitzcarraldo Editions, 2024.

ANNIE ERNAUX & MARC MARIE
ELLEN CANTOR

BEDROOM, CHRISTMAS MORNING

22 FEBRUARY – 5 APRIL 2025

Galerie Isabella Bortolozzi
Schöneberger Ufer 61
10785 Berlin
+49-(0)30-26 39 76 229
info@bortolozzi.com

Born in 1940, Annie Ernaux grew up in Normandy, studied at Rouen University, and later taught at secondary school. From 1977 to 2000, she was a professor at the Centre National d'Enseignement par Correspondance. Her books, in particular *The Years* and *Happening*, have become contemporary classics in France and are also internationally renowned. In 2022, she was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature.

Marc Marie was a French photographer and journalist. Born in 1962, after studying modern literature, he divided his time between writing and freelance journalism.

Ellen Cantor was born in Detroit, Michigan in 1961; she lived and worked in London and New York City until her death in 2013. Her work has been exhibited internationally, with exhibitions and screenings at Cabinet, London; Galerie Isabella Bortolozzi, Berlin; Künstlerhaus Stuttgart; CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Art, San Francisco; Feigen Gallery, Chicago; Institute of Contemporary Art, London; Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna; MoMA PS1, New York; Participant Inc, New York; Postmasters, New York; Serpentine Gallery, London; Transmission Gallery, Glasgow, and White Columns, New York, among many other venues.