

ANNA GASKELL

SOFTWHORE

April 10 – May 24, 2025

Galerie Gisela Capitain is pleased to announce its seventh solo exhibition of new works by American artist Anna Gaskell (*1969 in Des Moines, Iowa).

In her new exhibition *SOFTWHORE*, Anna Gaskell creates a quiet, haunting world of images in which inner states take shape. These are scenes between dream and reality, delicate and abysmal at the same time, which do not fully reveal themselves to the viewer - rather, it allows them to slip into a memory that is not their own.

The exhibition title *SOFTWHORE* unfolds a tension between two terms: "Soft" - gentle, subtle, adaptable - meets "Whore" - a figure often associated with abandonment, compromise and a negotiation of the self. Gaskell understands this as a metaphor for a present in which quiet yielding, skillful bending, has become the currency of society. Her paintings tell of these quiet, often unnoticed moments of self-negotiation - not accusingly, but with a deep sense of ambivalence. Her works are deeply personal - they are mirrors of inner experiences: longing, loss, transformation, love, shame.

A woman stands on a bed in a geometrically distorted room, her pose self-confident, her posture firm - but her eyes do not look forward; instead, they seem to wander in a distant, indeterminate direction. Pale, abstracted animal figures are grouped around her, looking like shadows of themselves. The animals seem to be observing, but the woman also appears like an observer, as if she herself were frozen in a state of pausing.

Another work shows a reclining man with closed eyes, naked except for a striking pearl necklace that is draped over his body like a gentle shackle. The pose is calm, almost pleasurable - but also enraptured, as if he were not quite there. The intimacy of the moment is palpable, and at the same time it remains unresolved.

And then there is this dark scene: a small woman looks up at a larger-than-life, menacing-looking bear. Its appearance is powerful, almost monstrous, while the woman appears small, almost submissive. The composition seems like a distorted dream, an inner echo of power and powerlessness.

Gaskell's works reject clear narratives. Her painting style is soft and open, full of permeability. Yet behind her works, there is always an element of storytelling, translating stories into forms and moments without relying on a clear plot. In all her works, something solid lingers: a resonance, a discomfort, an understanding that settles in only later.

Anna Gaskell had recent solo exhibitions at Des Moines Art Center 2020, Kunsthalle Giessen 2018, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart 2016 and Städtische Galerie Bremen 2015. She won Best Film in the Art Category at the Kunst Film Biennale in 2005. For her film *Replayground*, Gaskell received the award for Best Documentary Short Film at the Los Angeles Film Festival in 2009, and in 2010, she received grants from NYFA, Artslink, and The Bohen Foundation.