

PRESS RELEASE

HELEN VERHOEVEN

Opening: 22.05, 5 – 9 PM
23.05 - 28.06.2025

Annet Gelink Gallery is proud to present *Because*, the first solo exhibition by Helen Verhoeven at the gallery. The exhibition opens during Amsterdam Art Week's Festive Gallery Night and showcases a new body of work by the artist.



Helen Verhoeven, *purple mask*, 2025

Working across painting, ceramics, stained glass, printmaking, film, and installation, Verhoeven's practice spans from very small to monumentally large and from simple and iconic to crowded and chaotic. Sometimes finely rendered, other times crude, her work concentrates on the human experience: the turmoil of the individual and the hysteria of the group.

In these new paintings, Verhoeven revisits themes she explored in her earlier *Mother* series (2013), yet the works reveal a distinctly different attitude. Rather than a more idealized stillness, the tone is manic, fractured, and overextended, more aligned with the contradictions and tensions in the world today, and within contemporary structures of responsibility and expectation. In *Because*, this manifests in compositions in which beauty and horror, sense and senselessness coexists.

The figures appear in a trans-historic space, some dreamy and mythological, others more estranging and cartoonish. Yet, all scenes evoke feelings such as rapture, despair, indifference, lust and aggression. As often in her paintings, Verhoeven appropriates and inverts the traditions of religious and mythological painting, the muse, the nude, the fantastical and the mundane.

The title *Because* acts simultaneously as an attitude and provocation. As a statement, it celebrates the liminal, irrational and free space the artist holds for painting. *Because*, in that sense, could be a declaration of autonomy and artistic freedom. At the same time, it gestures toward a question, an unspoken *why*. This simultaneous holding of contradictions lies at the heart of *Because*, and perhaps of painting itself—as a form that makes space for doubt, multiplicity, and questions without answers.

Helen Verhoeven (1974) is a Dutch/American artist based in Berlin who grew up in the Netherlands and moved to the US in 1986. She received her BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute in 1995 and in 2001 her MFA from the New York Academy of Art under Eric Fischl. In 2005-2006 she attended the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam and since 2009 she lives in Berlin. In 2021 Verhoeven became an advisor at the Rijksakademie and since April 2023 she is a painting professor at Dresden University of Fine Arts. Verhoeven was a recipient of the Dutch Royal Painting Prize in 2008, the Wolvecamprijns in 2010 and the ABN-AMRO Art Prize in 2019. Her work has been exhibited internationally in institutions such as the Bonnefantenmuseum in Maastricht, The Kestnergesellschaft in Hannover, Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, Gemeentemuseum in Den Haag, The Museum of Contemporary Art North Miami, Museum Nikolaikirche in Berlin, The Saatchi Gallery in London, the FLAG Art Foundation in New York and Kunstmuseum Bonn. Her work is currently on view at Centraal Museum, Utrecht as part of the exhibition *Good Mom/Bad Mom*, Kirche Dannewalde in Brandenburg, Germany (solo show), Museum More in Gorssel and Limburgs Museum in Venlo.