

annet gelink gallery

161 | PRESS RELEASE

LIZZY DEACON *Heavenly Beauty*

2 April – 16 May 2026



Annet Gelink Gallery is proud to present *Heavenly Beauty*, the first exhibition by Lizzy Deacon in its project space, The Bakery. Rooted in a framework of portraiture, Deacon's practice explores social dynamics, systems and displays of value and class in contemporary life. Working predominantly in moving image, drawing and performance, Deacon develops long-term, character-driven investigations, drawing on the specific behaviours and individual histories of the real people she interacts with, both in physical environments and online spaces.

Mining YouTube, tabloids, social media and internet forums, she reconstructs her findings into characters that expose the surreal and absurd dimensions of everyday life. Scenes of 'petty' violence, betrayal and embarrassment sit alongside images of excess, spectacle and glamour. Central to her work is an inquiry into the performance-of-self and aspirational individualism. Often adopting a DIY approach to filmmaking, Deacon enters 'real' situations alone to observe, magnify and participate in the rituals of self-presentation that define contemporary culture.

These themes are explored in her latest work *Heavenly Beauty*, first presented at the conclusion of the artist's residency at De Ateliers, Amsterdam in 2025. The film traces the artist's attendance at an exclusive high-net-worth networking gala at which ultra-wealthy adults live out their childhood fantasies by assuming the roles of princes and princesses. Attending the event alone, Deacon films herself and her surroundings as she navigates this surreal environment. Dealing with questions of intimacy, fantasy, class and aspiration, she attempts to infiltrate a clique of princesses — forcing her way into a dance circle, edging onto the stage to blend in with performers, asking another guest to slow-dance with her. These gestures reveal a strategic vulnerability: improvising simultaneously as participant, observer and intruder. The work was filmed using several cameras, all of which had to fit into a postcard-sized clutch bag, alternating between 4K footage captured on a 360-degree camera and low-quality, grainy images filmed covertly from a spy cam embedded in the wristwatch Deacon wore throughout the event. The resulting visual language oscillates between the polished aesthetic of contemporary social media and the raw, nostalgic grain of early 2000s blogs and digital photography. The stylistic friction exposes the frailty of influencer-capitalism, transforming a high-society gala into a surreal stage. At once comic and sharply critical, the work captures today's social dynamics with an almost merciless gaze: a document of performance that implicates its maker as much as its subjects.

Lizzy Deacon (1999, United Kingdom) is an Amsterdam-London based artist. Her work has been exhibited internationally, including The British Film Institute, London (2026); Bozar, Brussels (2026); Eye Filmmuseum, Amsterdam, (2025); Mascara Film Club, Amsterdam (2025); Cubitt Gallery, London (2024); 243 Luz, Margate (2024); The 60th Ann Arbor Film Festival, Michigan (2022); Museum Ludwig, Cologne, (2022); the Millennium Film Workshop, New York (2022); LUX Moving Image, London, (2018). Deacon studied at De Ateliers in Amsterdam and holds a BA in Fine Art from Goldsmiths, University of London.