



HELLEN VAN MEENE PORTRAITS

13 April – 9 June 2013

Press conference on Friday, 12 April 2013, 10 a.m.

Opening on Friday, 12 April 2013, 7 p.m.

Hellen van Meene will be present!

Die 1972 Hellen van Meene, who was born in the Netherlands in 1972, has become known for her photographs of adolescents that radiate a quiet and powerful beauty. Girls lost between childhood and adulthood – a time of often painfully experienced changing bodies and stormy emotions – who are torn between the need for security and the desire for freedom.

For the first time in Vienna, Galerie OstLicht is presenting a large selection of works by van Meene. The artist's photographs have already been exhibited in institutions such as the Art Institute of Chicago, the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam and the Museum Folkwang in Essen.

Hellen van Meene's portraits are marked by a sympathetic cooperation between the photographer and the models, who were found by the artist at home in Holland or during her journeys to England, Lithuania or Russia. The pictures tell about the insecure, transitory nature of youthful identity and act as a form of homage to the emotional vulnerability and psychological complexity of youth.

Besides the portraits of girls, the newly produced photos of dogs will be on show. Even though the animals selected appear to be naturally talented posers, the images are reminiscent of staged shots of classical studio portrait photography. Not only does the combination of dog and girl on van Meene's pictures evoke well-known motifs from art history – such as "Las Meninas" by Diego Velasquez or Thomas Gainsborough's "Cottage Girl with Dog and Pitcher" – it also plays with the dialectics of familiarity and distance, protection and weakness and the boundaries between human and animal.

Despite their visual presence and atmospheric density, the around one hundred portraits comprising the exhibition seem to be ephemeral and strangely disconnected from reality, making it possible to trace the melancholy and the secret of a soon to be lost youth.

Curator: Dr. Gerald A. Matt



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Opening hours gallery: Wed–Sat 12:00–6:00 p.m.

Opening hours library: Wed–Fri 12:00–6:00 p.m.

Public holidays: closed.

Directions:

Galerie OstLicht can be reached by public transport by the U1 to Reumannplatz or by the U3 to Enkplatz and tram line 6 to the stop at Absberggasse.

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