

**HOME TRUTHS: PHOTOGRAPHY,
MOTHERHOOD AND IDENTITY
11 OCTOBER 2013 - 5 JANUARY 2014**

17 July 2013

The Photographers' Gallery presents *Home Truths: Photography, Motherhood and Identity*, an exhibition exploring representations of motherhood through the works of eight contemporary artists.

The exhibition will aim to challenge long-held stereotypes and sentimental views of motherhood by addressing issues such as gender roles, domesticity, the body and the identity of individuals within the family unit. The work of the eight artists tends to be autobiographical in focus and sits within the documentary genre. Large in both scale and scope, many of the projects span over several years with some still ongoing. *Home Truths* is curated by Susan Bright.

The eight artists and projects taking part in the exhibition are:

Janine Antoni (b. 1964, Bahamas) has, for many years, explored the role of mothering through her relationship with her own mother and subsequently her daughter. In *Inhabit* (2009) we see Antoni suspended in mid-air wearing a dress designed as a house. The photograph is part of a performance piece in which, over the course of five hours, a spider slowly begins to weave its web inside the rooms of the house. The spider stands for Antoni's daughter while she is the supporting structure it needs for its web. *Inhabit*, and other images in the series, reflect on the complex role of the mother requiring her to be flexible yet reassuringly constant, a dominating presence but one that is able to provide for the space needed for her child to grow.

In her series the *Annunciation* **Elina Brotherus** (b. 1972, Finland) records herself through years of failed IVF treatments. Full of art historical references, Brotherus' images stand in sharp contrast to the traditional scenes and symbolism of Annunciation paintings. While the Virgin Mary receives the news that she is to give birth to the son of God, Brotherus pictures herself month after month in-front of a succession of negative pregnancy tests. Feelings of elation and abundance are replaced with those of sorrow and loss. Brotherus' photographs question the term 'mother', suggesting that it can stem from intention rather than being bound to biology or the physical act of having a child.

In **Elinor Carucci's** (b. 1971, Israel) series *Mother* (2004-2013) we see the artist, known for her intimate portraits of her family, extend her practice by working with her children. Through her photographs Carucci expresses her fears of motherhood – that it would result in the loss of her creativity and sense of identity. What she discovered however, were new layers of depth and intensity within herself and her work. Carucci confronts viewers with candid depictions of motherhood - from her changing body to moments of annoyance, frustration and exhaustion but also those of great joy and tenderness.

Ana Casas Broda's (b. 1965, Spain) desire to have children was intense. She spent five years in fertility treatments before she was able to conceive her first son.

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With the birth of her second son she began exploring motherhood through photography and writing. For Casas Broda having children triggered memories and fears from her own childhood which exacerbated her post-partum depression. Using photography as a form of therapy, she was able to work through these dark periods and come to terms with her past. A selection of twenty-five images from this project, titled *Kinderwunsch* (2006 - 2013), is to go on display. Focusing on Casas Broda's games with her sons, the photographs depict a series of complex interactions between the children's developing identities and her own profound transformations.

Fred Hüning's (b. 1966 Germany) work is comprised of a diaristic trilogy of books, *Einer* (2010), *Zwei* (2011) and *Drei* (2011). Starting in 2005, the books document, in a non-linear way, Hüning and his wife's journey of love and loss as reflected in everyday moments alongside extraordinary and tragic family events. *Einer* tells the story of the birth and death of their first child and the struggle which followed as they try and cope with their loss. *Zwei* shows the couple's healing process as they attempt to rebuild their relationship and Hüning's wife discovers she is pregnant again. *Drei* is a celebration of life and love as the family is made whole again by the arrival of their second son.

Leigh Ledare's (b. 1976, USA) project *Pretend You're Actually Alive* (2002 - 2008) is largely comprised of explicit photographs of his mother, Tina Peterson, interspersed with ephemera. The project, which was originally conceived as a book, will be presented as a series of seventeen images. Once a ballerina and model, Peterson later worked in amateur pornography. Her sexually aggressive behavior, combined with her fragile psyche, was the catalyst for collaboration between her and Ledare. The work results in a safe environment in which they are able to explore slippages of Peterson's identity as well as confound and question conventional boundaries, ethical lines and taboos associated with mother/son relationships. It is a complex investigation into authorship, subjectivity, performance and portraiture which acutely undermines stereotypical attitudes towards the mother figure.

Katie Murray's (b.1974, USA) video performance *Gazelle* showcases the artist as she tests her limits of endurance during a workout session. Following the birth of her second child Murray attempted to lose weight by using the *Gazelle* – Total Body Workout Exercise Machine. Frustrated by her family's constant interruptions she began exercising with her two children strapped to her back and front. Serving as a running commentary is the voice of Tony Little, "America's Personal Trainer", blaring out sexist motivational clichés. The video is intercepted with nature footage of a mother gazelle suckling her young and escaping an attack by a pair of young cheetah cubs. Murray's piece is a metaphor for her failed attempts at balancing the demands of a wife, mother and artist all at the same time.

Hanna Putz's (b. 1987, Austria) photographs raise questions about today's surfeit of images and the need to perform for the camera in an age of social networking and permanent surveillance. By photographing young mothers and their babies she aims to create a feeling of intimacy and closeness, but without exposing anyone. The mother, solely focused on her child, is oblivious to the camera's presence and unconcerned about 'posing' for it. Composition and colour are of great importance to Putz, adding a layer of anonymity to her subjects by transforming them into sculptural forms.

Susan Bright said: *The work in this exhibition is at times subtle, at times bold. Highly subjective, it can also be contradictory. It displays a sense of seriousness and intense reflection, often with a haunting quality. It has the ability to move, but also to question and disrupt assumptions without being judgmental. Like photography itself, the expectations and demands of motherhood are in flux; both subject and medium grapple for new meaning in a changing world. My hope is that the work featured here will open up debates about the continued representation and place of the mother figure, while raising questions about the identity and display of photography at this pivotal moment in which we find ourselves – at a crossroads between the singular photographic object and the sprawling nature of the networked image.*

Home Truths is a collaboration with the Foundling Museum, London and the Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago. The exhibition is showing across the two London institutions, with artists at the Gallery addressing issues of motherhood and identity and those at the Foundling Museum considering motherhood and loss. Both exhibitions are curated by Susan Bright. Artists showing work at the Museum are Ann Fessler (b. 1950, USA), Tierney Gearon (b. 1963, USA), Miyako Ishiuchi (b. 1947, Japan) and Annu Palakunnathu Matthew (b. 1964, Britain).

Following its display at The Photographers' Gallery *Home Truths: Photography, Motherhood and Identity* will tour to the Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago (MoCP) where it will be exhibited from 25 April - 13 July 2014. The exhibition will be accompanied by a major publication co-published by The Photographers' Gallery, Art / Books, The Foundling Museum and The Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago.

Notes for Editors

Janine Antoni

Janine Antoni (b. 1964, Bahamas) received her BA in 1986 from Sarah Lawrence College and her MFA from Rhode Island School of Design in 1989. Janine Antoni employs a variety of mediums including performance, sculpture, photography, installation, and video. Antoni's work has been included in exhibitions including the Venice Biennial, the Whitney Biennial, the Johannesburg Biennial, the Istanbul Biennial, the Kwangju Biennial, the SITE Santa Fe Biennial, and the Prospect.1 Biennial in New Orleans. She received a MacArthur Fellowship in 1998, the Larry Aldrich Foundation Award in 1999, the New Media Award from the Boston Institute of Contemporary Award in 1999, the Joan Mitchell Painting and Sculpture Award in 1998, the Irish Museum of Modern Art/Glen Dimplex Artist Award in 1996, the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship in 2011, and the Creative Capital Grant in Visual Arts in 2012. Janine Antoni lives in New York and is represented by Lühring Augustine Gallery. www.luhringaugustine.com/artists/janine-antoni

Elina Brotherus

Elina Brotherus (b. 1972, Finland) is a photographer and video artist. Brotherus has a MSc in Chemistry from University of Helsinki (1997) and an MA in Photography from the University of Art and Design Helsinki (2000). She has been in numerous group shows and solo exhibitions since 1997, including, most recently, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek, Denmark (2012), Bozar Palais des Beaux - Arts, Brussels (2012), Saatchi Gallery, London (2012), Lianzhou Photography Festival, Lianzhou, China (2012), The Wapping Project, London (2010, 2009, 2004, 2001), MAXXI Museo nazionale delle arti del XXI secolo, Rome (2010, 2003) and ARTER, Istanbul (2010). She has published four monographs, including, most recently, *Artist and her model* in 2012. Brotherus has received, among others, the Finnish State Prize for Photography (2008), the Prix Niépce of Gens d'image, France (2005), and was shortlisted for the Citibank Photography Prize in 2002. She lives and works in Finland and in France. www.elinabrotherus.com

Elinor Carucci

Elinor Carucci (b. 1971, Israel) Attended the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design for photography in Israel. Carucci has had solo shows at Ricco Maresca, NY (1997, 1999, 2002, 2005); The Gagosian Gallery, London (2003); Edwynn Houk Gallery, NY (2006); James Hyman Gallery, London (2010) and Sasha Wolf, NY (2011). Her photographs are included in collections at The Museum of Modern Art, ICP, The Brooklyn Museum in New York and The Houston Museum of Fine Art. Her work has been published in a range of magazines and journals including: The New York Times Magazine, The New Yorker, W, Aperture, and ARTnews. She was awarded the International Center of Photography's Infinity Award for Young Photographers (2001); the Guggenheim Fellowship (2002) and NYFA in 2010. Carucci has published three monographs: *Closer* (2002); *Diary of a Dancer* (2005) and most recently *Mother* due to be published in autumn 2013 by Prestel. She currently lives in New York City and teaches on the graduate program for Photography at the School of Visual Arts. www.elinorcarucci.com

Ana Casas Broda

Ana Casas Broda (b. 1965, Spain) Studied photography, painting and history at Casa de las Imágenes, Escuela Activa de Fotografía, the National University of Mexico, UNAM, and the National School of Anthropology and History, ENAH and dedicated herself to photography in 1983. For 14 years she worked on *Album*, beginning with a series of images with her grandmother and later developing an exhibition that included texts, diary entries, archive photographs, audio and video. A book of the project was published in 2000 in English, Spanish and German. Since 1991 she has had several solo exhibitions in Spain, Austria, Germany and Mexico, as well as participating in group exhibitions and publications. Since 2007 she has been in charge of designing the public programmes at Centro de la Imagen, Mexico City. In 2013 La Fabrica published her book *Kinderwunsch* and it will be exhibited at PhotoEspaña and the Antiguo Colegio de San Ildefonso, Mexico in 2014. www.anacasasbroda.com

Fred Hüning

Fred Hüning (b. 1966) Graduated in 2007 from Ostkreuz School for Photography in Berlin. His photobook trilogy *Einer*, *Zwei* and *Drei* was published between 2010 and 2011 by Peperoni Books. His work concentrates on his familial and intimate surroundings. In 2007 he received the Art Prize for Photography by the Lotto Foundation Berlin-Brandenburg for *Einer*. His work has been shown in photography festivals including Leipzig, Lodz, Kaunas and Arles. Solo exhibitions include *Personally* at

Gallery Brotfabrik, Berlin (2011). Group shows include *Wahlverwandtschaft* at Museum Dieselkraftwerk, Cottbus (2011) and *Together in Motion - Contemporary Art from Germany and China* at Art Museum Wuhan, China (2009). www.neunplus.com/members/fred-huening

Leigh Ledare

Leigh Ledare (b. 1976, USA) lives and works in New York City. Ledare gained his BFA from Rhode Island School of Design and attended Columbia University for his MFA, graduating in 2008. Whilst attending Columbia he started his project with his mother, which became the book *Pretend You're Actually Alive* (2008). This book is a combination of photographs, writing and ephemera of their intimate, complicated and complicit relationship. His work continues to examine inter-relational drives using photography, archives, film and text. Recent solo and group exhibitions include: WIELS, Brussels, (2012); The Box, Los Angeles (2012); *Double Bind*, The Garage Centre for Contemporary Culture, Moscow (2011); *Pretend You're Actually Alive*, Les Rencontres de Arles, Arles (2009); Swiss Institute New York (2009); Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin (2008); International Center of Photography, New York (2008); and Prague Biennale (2009)

Katie Murray

Katie Murray (b. 1974, USA) is a photographer and video artist. She received her BFA in 1997 from the School of Visual Arts and her MFA from Yale University School of Art in 2000. Murray's work concerns itself with the primal and mythological. She has exhibited in solo and group shows to include: Chasma, NY (2013) College of the Canyons Art Gallery (2012), Home Front Gallery, NY (2011), World Class Boxing, Miami (2010), Kate Werble Gallery, NY (2009), International Center for Photography (2008) White Columns, NY (2004) Jen Bekman Gallery (2004), Queens Museum of Art, NY (2004), and The Yale Art Gallery, CT (2000). She received the New York State Residents Grant for Excellence in Photography in 1996, the Robin Forbes Memorial Award in Photography in 1997, the Barry Cohen Award for Excellence in Art in 2000, and a NYFA grant in 2012. Murray's work has been published in various magazines, books and catalogues. Murray's first monograph, *All The Queens Men*, published in 2013 by Daylight Books, is a decade long investigation into masculinity. Murray is a faculty member at Hunter College, New York University and School of Visual Arts. www.katiemurray.com

Hanna Putz

Hanna Putz (b. 1987, Austria) Self-taught, Putz devoted herself to becoming a visual artist in 2009. In 2012 she was selected as one of the 10 finalists at the Hyeres Contemporary Photography Prize, shortlisted for the 1000 Words Photography Award and nominated as 'one to watch' for the BJP (British Journal of Photography) Emerging Photographers feature. Exhibitions in 2011 and 2012 included: *Wald* (Pavlovs Dog Gallery, Berlin); *Make Me Like It* (Vacant Galleries, Austria); and *No Fashion, please!* (Kunsthalle Wien, Austria). In 2013 her work featured in *Somatography* (Penindaplinena Gallery, Cyprus) and *Another Austria* (Austrian Cultural Forum, London). She lectures in photography at the University of Art and Design in Linz, Austria and her work has been published by Zeit Magazine, New York Magazine and Dazed & Confused. She lives and works between Vienna and London. www.hannaputz.com

Susan Bright

Susan Bright is a curator and writer based in New York. She was formally Assistant Curator of Photographs at the National Portrait Gallery (London), Curator at the Association of Photographers and Acting Director for the MA at Sotheby's Institute of Art in London. Recent exhibitions include: *Something Out of Nothing*, Fotogalleriet, Oslo (2007); *How We Are: Photographing Britain* (co-curated with Val Williams) Tate Britain, London (2007); and *Face of Fashion*, National Portrait Gallery, London (2007). Her books include: *Art Photography Now* (Thames and Hudson, 2005) and *Auto Focus—The Self Portrait in Contemporary Photography* (Thames and Hudson, 2010). She has written for *Aperture*, *Source*, *Ojodepez* and *Foam* amongst others. She has lectured internationally at museums and universities and is currently pursuing a PhD in Curating at Goldsmiths College (University of London). www.susanbright.net

The Photographers' Gallery

The Photographers' Gallery opened in 1971 in Great Newport Street, London, as the UK's first independent gallery devoted to photography. It was the first public gallery in the UK to exhibit many key names in international photography, including Juergen Teller, Robert Capa, Sebastião Salgado and Andreas Gursky. The Gallery has also been instrumental in establishing contemporary British photographers, including Martin Parr and Corinne Day. In 2009, the Gallery moved to 16 – 18 Ramillies Street in Soho, the first stage in its plan to create a 21st century home for photography. Following an eighteen month long redevelopment project, the Gallery reopened to the public in 2012. The success of The Photographers' Gallery over the past four decades has helped to establish photography as a recognised art form, introducing new audiences to photography and championing its place at the heart of visual culture. The Gallery's Chair of the Board of Trustees is Sir Brian Pomeroy, CBE. www.thephotographersgallery.org.uk

The Foundling Museum

The Foundling Museum explores the history of the Foundling Hospital, the UK's first children's charity, and celebrates the ways in which artists of all disciplines have helped improve children's lives for over 270 years. The Foundling Hospital, which continues today as the children's charity Coram, was established in 1739 by the philanthropist Captain Thomas Coram, as 'a hospital for the maintenance and education of exposed and deserted young children'. Instrumental in helping Coram realise his vision were the artist William Hogarth and the composer George Frideric Handel. In doing so, they created London's first public art gallery and set the template for the way that the arts could support philanthropy. The Foundling Museum celebrates their vision and continues their work, by enabling today's artists, musicians and writers to work alongside vulnerable young people and to cast new light on the histories it tells. www.foundlingmuseum.org.uk

Museum of Contemporary Photography at Columbia College Chicago

Founded by Columbia College Chicago in 1984 as the successor to the 1976 Chicago Centre for Contemporary Photography, the Museum of Contemporary Photography is a stimulating and innovative forum for the collection, creation, and examination of lens-based art and an expanded vocabulary of digital processes. Being one of only three photography museums in the United States accredited by the American Association of Museums, and the only museum in the Midwest devoted to collecting and exhibiting contemporary photography, the museum considers all elements of its mission *to promote a greater understanding and appreciation of the artistic, cultural, and political implications of the image in our world today*, within the context of public service and responsibility to the community and museum profession. The museum's permanent collection of over 12,000 objects by over 1,100 artists focuses on photography with strength in American and emerging artists' works, and contains a growing number of works by international photographers. The museum's exhibitions and programming focus on innovative and provocative contemporary works in recognition of photography as a medium of communication and artistic expression. www.mocp.org

Art / Books

Art / Books is a London-based publisher of quality art, photography, architecture and design books. It works with leading artists and writers from across the visual arts and contemporary culture to produce publications for readers of all ages. Its list includes monographs, exhibition catalogues, biography and memoir, and academic and scholarly publications. www.artbookspublishing.co.uk

Home Truths: Photography and Motherhood Publication

Published to coincide with the exhibitions at The Photographers' Gallery and the Foundling Museum and touring to Chicago Museum of Contemporary Photography, *Home Truths: Photography and Motherhood* examines historical and contemporary interpretations of the mother figure. The works in the book challenge traditional and sentimental views of motherhood and explore how photography is used to address changing conditions of power, gender, domesticity, the maternal body and female identity. The publication includes the following essays: curator of the exhibitions and volume editor Susan Bright traces the history of photographs of motherhood from the nineteenth century to present day; Simon Watney outlines the narrative of the Madonna figure through the centuries; Nick Johnstone looks at the presentation of the mother from the perspective of the father; while Stephanie Chapman lays out the moving history of London's Foundling Museum through photographs. Co-published by The Photographers' Gallery, Art / Books, The Foundling Museum and The Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago, the publication will be available from The Photographers' Gallery bookshop and all good bookshops and online retailers for £24.99

Talks and Events

Coinciding with the exhibition is a series of talks and events. These include a two-day event entitled *The Story of Mum*, with a performance by spoken word poet Hollie McNish; a film programme presented at both the Gallery and the Museum; a panel discussion on 'Representations of Motherhood'; a talk with curator Susan Bright as well as a variety of daytime child friendly events, and much more. For further information visit www.thephotographersgallery.org.uk

Home Truths is supported by FRAME Foundation, the Austrian Cultural Forum London and The "Home Truths" Exhibition Supporters Circle

Visitor Information

Opening times: Monday - Saturday, 10:00 - 18:00, Thursdays, 10:00 - 20:00, Sunday 11:30 - 18:00. Admission: Free

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