

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Anna Park
Mirror Shy

Blum & Poe, Los Angeles
November 5–December 17, 2022
Opening reception: Saturday, November 5, 6–8pm

Los Angeles, CA, October 27, 2022—Blum & Poe is pleased to present *Mirror Shy*, Brooklyn-based artist Anna Park's second solo exhibition with the gallery and her first in Los Angeles. This presentation coincides with Park's first solo museum exhibition *Last Call*, on view at the SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah, GA.

Depicting her alter ego in a series of urbane, pared-down portraits, Park's newest work strains her distinct style through the visual vernacular of film and advertising. A New Yorker by way of Utah, Park channels perceptions of the cultural output of Los Angeles for this presentation, her first ever solo exhibition in the city of angels. The resulting illustrative works on paper on panel are confidently succinct in composition and rich in reference as they play with cultural perceptions of the body in relation to agency, voyeurism, and humor—tools Park uses to address topics that are otherwise difficult to broach.

In *Business as Usual* (2022), Park's alter ego—with her heels on, nails done, and clothes seemingly off—drags the lifeless body of a massive hotdog into the composition's frame. She stands against the checkerboard background of a picnic blanket beaming: it's mealtime. This sausage, the same one depicted cradling *Mirror Shy*'s protagonist in *Sweet Nothings* (2022), serves as a place holder for male figures and a foil to the main character, revealing her struggles with intimacy and her ongoing journey to find personal empowerment. *Sweet Nothings* captures Park's female lead in an ambiguous position—in a scene evoking Carl Theodor Dreyer's *Master of House* (1925), she stares at a wiener in a hat and suit with a look that calls her agency into question. Is she being seduced or is she the seducer? In a vignette that recalls and subverts Roy Lichtenstein's *Drowning Girl* (1963), *This Could Be Us* (2022) reveals that *Mirror Shy*'s main character has the capacity and intention to overcome her challenges as she floats atop what remains of her frankfurter.

As a subset of Park's exploration of agency, other works presented in *Mirror Shy* expand upon notions of pervasive voyeurism. Park investigates how one's daily presentation can open the self up to scrutiny stemming from the impossible body standards pop culture constructs. In *Smells Like Roses* (2022), Park's alter ego returns as a vessel that the artist puts through a test of self-exposure. Appropriating a pose from vintage exercise photographs, this painting postures a woman, hips on hands and legs toward the sky, for examination by a larger-than-life, ominous figure. Park presents this work as an analogy for body anxieties, with the background character representing the consistent social pressure that hangs over women.

Although it deals with difficult topics, *Mirror Shy* never loses its levity. A dark humor resonates throughout the exhibition by way of surrealism and hyperbole—a comedic effect is created when expectations are upended and impossibility replaces them. This is certainly the case with the character of the hotdog, but it is also present in *It's Called Show Business* (2022), in which the central figure is trapped amongst several parading women's legs. These repeating legs, a flashy yet unfeasible method for containment, are used by the artist to reference the setting of a culture where one is taught to assimilate or blend in.

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Bringing the language of advertising into the fold of her practice, Park furthers her self-aware investigations into a society of commodity and surveillance. In moments of stillness that originate from a perspective rooted in empathy for her subjects, *Mirror Shy* signals to the viewer a newfound sense of control while continuing to address overarching themes in the artist's oeuvre such as inner conflict, longing, and the one amongst the many. This exhibition marks a shift in Park's narrative voice—arriving at the center of a world that she had previously looked in on from afar, she is now a participant in that which she actively critiques.

Anna Park lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. Her first solo museum exhibition, *Last Call*, is currently on view at the SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah, GA. She has been featured in numerous group exhibitions, including *52 Artists: A Feminist Milestone*, Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, CT (2022); *Fire Figure Fantasy: Selections from ICA Miami's Collection*, Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami, FL (2022); *100 Drawings from Now*, The Drawing Center, New York, NY (2020); *Art on the Grid*, Public Art Fund, New York, NY (2020); *Drawn Together Again*, Flag Art Foundation, New York, NY (2019); among others. She received her BA from Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, NY and her MFA from New York Academy of Art, New York, NY. She is the First Prize Winner of the AXA Art Prize (2019) and the Grand Prize Winner of Strokes of Genius 11: Finding Beauty (2019).

About Blum & Poe

Blum & Poe was founded by Tim Blum and Jeff Poe in Santa Monica in September of 1994 as a space to show local and international contemporary art in all media. Blum's extensive experience in the Japanese art world combined with Poe's keen knowledge of emerging artists in Los Angeles resulted in an international program of influential artists. Throughout a twenty-seven-year history, Blum & Poe has shaped the trajectory of contemporary art by championing artists at all stages of their careers—cultivating the lineages that run between emerging and established practices and working with artist estates to generate new discourse surrounding historical work. Currently, Blum & Poe represents fifty-one artists and nine estates from sixteen countries worldwide.

In 2003 the gallery moved to a larger space in Culver City, and in 2009 Blum & Poe purchased and renovated its current 22,000-square-foot complex on La Cienega Boulevard. In this location the gallery has since staged museum-caliber surveys, examining the historical work of such movements as the Japanese Mono-ha school (2012); the Korean Dansaekhwa monochrome painters (2014); the European postwar movement CoBrA (2015); Japanese art of 1980s and '90s (2019); a rereading of Brazilian Modernism (2019); and a revisionist take on the 1959 MoMA exhibition, *New Images of Man* (2020). To produce these exhibitions, Blum & Poe has worked with celebrated curators such as Alison M. Gingeras, Sofia Gotti, Joan Kee, and Mika Yoshitake.

In 2014, Blum & Poe opened galleries in New York and Tokyo to focus on intimately scaled projects in new contexts. These expansions tie into the gallery's wide-reaching program that includes exhibitions, lectures, performance series, screenings, and an annual art book fair at its base in Los Angeles. Blum & Poe's publishing division democratically circulates its program through original scholarship and accessible media ranging from academic monographs, audio series, magazines, to artists' books. In 2020, the gallery launched Blum & Poe Broadcasts, an online platform showcasing artists' projects in conjunction with physical installations or as standalone digital endeavors.

Across the three global locations, Blum & Poe prioritizes environmental and community stewardship in all operations. In 2015, Blum & Poe was certified as an Arts:Earth Partnership (AEP) green art gallery in Los Angeles and consequently became one of the first green certified galleries in the United States. The gallery

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is also a member of the Gallery Climate Coalition, which works to facilitate a more sustainable commercial art world and reduce the industry's collective carbon footprint. Blum & Poe is committed to fostering inclusive and equitable communities both in their physical and online spaces and believes that everybody should have equal access to creating and engaging with contemporary art.

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