

BLUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Maureen Dougherty

BLUM Los Angeles

July 13–August 30, 2024

Opening Reception: Saturday, July 13, 6–8pm

Los Angeles, CA, June 21, 2024—BLUM is pleased to present New York-based artist Maureen Dougherty's first solo exhibition with the gallery and in Los Angeles.

Dougherty plays with the push and pull between innocence and maturity—deliberately blurring the two in renderings that serve as commentary on the state of media and contemporary culture. The painter draws imagery from platforms like Instagram or OnlyFans—known for its proliferation of social media archetypes and amateur pornography—and reflects these commonplace representations back upon themselves with eloquent mimesis rendered with sensual brush strokes that selectively reveal the artist's hand. Hyperbolizing the peculiarities of her chosen scenes, Dougherty isolates her figures in monochromatic backgrounds with compositions that reference the work of more recent artists such as Alex Katz or Pablo Picasso as well as classical artists of the High Renaissance such as Raphael.

The artist's images deal with human intimacy and connection, though Dougherty intentionally omits a certain level of detail to encourage the viewer to become curious about or even impose themselves on the painting's subject. *Women on the rocks* (2024) sees three women sitting seaside, together atop an ornate tapestry—a painterly moment which allows Dougherty's previous explorations of abstraction to peak through. The ocean behind the artist's figures has been rendered as a simple rectangle of cobalt below a block of lapis sky. This hyper-simplified background allows the viewer to focus more intently on each otherworldly figure. With lanky, toothpick legs that dissipate toward the bottom of the canvas and pristine profiles atop proudly exposed breasts, Dougherty notes that these women are served up to onlookers "on the rocks"—a sly commentary on the pervasive objectification of the female body.

Dougherty's paintings emphasize the female gaze as well as the agency of those who are gazed upon. These figures are empowered to exploit their own assets for personal gain. Subjects such as those in *Grey Wall* (2024), *Green Sucker* (2023–2024), or *Blonde* (2022) stare directly at the viewer as if daring their perceivers to look away—the latter doing so with baby Yoda in hand, in a true nod to the online culture from which the image was culled. Dougherty's bodies are perfectly imperfect. Inflating chests and lips while shrinking and elongating spindly legs, the artist exposes the impossibility of body ideals that circulate across the internet.

A technically skilled painter, having pursued colorist principles and narrative painting at the New York Studio School, Dougherty returned to figuration during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic after a decades-long fixation with decorative abstract motifs. It is perhaps this body of work's origination in a moment of isolation for the artist that continues to imbue Dougherty's paintings with such a unique and introspective humanity. Flattening her subjects to great effect, Dougherty critiques, examines, and thoughtfully reduces the pervasive post-internet imagery that binds us.

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The first monograph published on the artist, *Maureen Dougherty: Women*, will be released in conjunction with this exhibition. Published by Blurring Books, with over forty artworks, a conversation between the artist and curator Alison M. Gingeras, contributions from Joe Fyfe, David Rimanelli, and John Cheim, this title will be available at BLUM Los Angeles or via blum-gallery.com. Dougherty will sign copies of the publication on opening night: Saturday, July 13, at 6pm.

Maureen Dougherty (b. 1958, Schenectady, NY) studied painting at Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA, and at the New York Studio School, New York, NY. As a documentary filmmaker, Dougherty runs her own production company, Mojo Films. Dougherty lives and works in New York, NY.

About BLUM

BLUM represents more than sixty artists and estates from eighteen countries worldwide, nurturing a diverse roster of artists at all stages of their practices with a range of global perspectives. Originally opened as Blum & Poe in Santa Monica in 1994, the gallery has been a pioneer in its early commitment to Los Angeles as an international arts capital.

The gallery has been acclaimed for its groundbreaking work in championing international artists of postwar and contemporary movements, such as CoBrA, Dansaekhwa, Mono-ha, and Superflat, and for organizing museum-caliber solo presentations and historical survey exhibitions across its spaces in Los Angeles, Tokyo, and New York. Often partnering with celebrated curators and scholars such as Cecilia Alemani, Alison M. Gingeras, Sofia Gotti, Joan Kee, and Mika Yoshitake, the gallery has produced large-scale exhibitions focusing on the Japanese Mono-ha school (2012); the Korean Dansaekhwa monochrome painters (2014); the European postwar movement CoBrA (2015); Japanese art of the 1980s and 1990s (2019); a rereading of Brazilian Modernism (2019); a revisionist take on the 1959 MoMA exhibition, *New Images of Man* (2020); and a survey of portraiture through a democratic and humanist lens (2023); among others.

BLUM's wide-reaching program includes exhibitions, lectures, performance series, screenings, video series, and an annual art book fair at its base in Los Angeles. BLUM Books, the gallery's publishing division, democratically circulates its program through original scholarship and accessible media ranging from academic monographs, audio series, magazines, to artists' books.

Across the three global locations, BLUM prioritizes environmental and community stewardship in all operations. In 2015, it 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 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 is committed to fostering inclusive and equitable communities both in its physical and online spaces and believes that everybody should have equal access to creating and engaging with contemporary art.

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