

***In Dialogue: Catherine Opie & Anna Park***  
October 17 – November 9, 2024  
New York



Catherine Opie, *Crystal Cross*, 1989 (detail)



Anna Park, *Bewitched*, 2024 (detail)

Lehmann Maupin is pleased to announce *In Dialogue*, a new series placing artists from the gallery's program and beyond in an intimate conversation through the lens of their respective approaches to artmaking, often with a focus on foregrounding and contextualizing intergenerational discourse. For the series debut, Lehmann Maupin will present *In Dialogue: Catherine Opie & Anna Park*, on view October 17 through November 9 in New York, with an opening reception on Thursday, October 24 from 6 to 8 pm. Following this inaugural exhibition, the gallery will present *In Dialogue: Robin Rhode & Rogelio Báez Vega* at the gallery's London location, opening November 20.

*In Dialogue: Catherine Opie & Anna Park* considers two significant approaches to contemporary portraiture, through photography and charcoal and ink on paper, respectively. Throughout art history, portraits have been used to memorialize, admire, and convey individual narratives; the genre is by nature intimate and mandates a humanistic encounter with the subject matter. Formally, portraiture is often harnessed to mark moments of transition in a subject's life. This iteration of *In Dialogue* looks at Opie and Park's approach to the portrayal of others, and themselves, through a visual language that is distinctly their own.

Opie is known for her powerfully dynamic photography that examines the ideals and norms surrounding the culturally constructed American dream and American identity. In Opie's signature series, *Portraits* (1993–1997), the artist employs a traditional approach to portraiture—by staying in deep conversation with the formal qualities and approach to Baroque painting—to depict friends from the queer community in Los Angeles and San Francisco. Opie's subjects give a strong voice to those historically less centered in portrait photography, providing representation to her friends and the community at large. Using dramatic staging, Opie presents queer and trans bodies in intimate photographs, which compositionally are images of immense power and respect. In her portraits, Opie establishes a level of ambiguity of both identity and place by exaggerating masculine, feminine, or non-normative gender characteristics, while honoring these identities. Additionally, *In Dialogue: Catherine Opie & Anna Park* comes on the heels of Opie's first solo exhibition in Brazil, which is on view at The Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP) through the end of October.

While Opie's portraits foreground her community and friends, Anna Park's depiction of the figure in her work serves as a vehicle for understanding her own experience of the American

dream and American culture. Park's large-scale, satirical self-portraits comment on the cultural construction and perception of identity, sexuality, and power in an increasingly media saturated world. Beginning each drawing as an improvisational mark-making dance, Park composes scenes that are snapshots of an over-exposed and self-aware human condition—universal moments and interpersonal exchanges she often laces with signifiers of today's zeitgeist, while also showing a deep emotive range of the human subject. In black-and-white works that hover between figuration and abstraction, Park's compositions recall the vigorous energy of the graphic novel and the radical fragmentation of Cubism or even Pop Art; moments collapse into speed streaks, limbs grasp for one another, and glimpses of familiar faces emerge.

Here, Park's new works are informed by the current moment, in which a younger and "chronically online" generation is reaching back to and glorifying traditional values and gender roles. Park was born in Korea, but spent formative adolescent years in Utah; she has noted similarities between Korean and Mormon values around family and a woman's role, which she noticed overlap with the recent internet phenomenon of the "tradwife." "Tradwives," among other similar online depictions of women, are focused on the portrayal of heteronormative marriage, family rearing, homemaking, and demure femininity. Park has often said that her work functions as a way to unpack and understand her subconscious. In the works on view, Park grapples with and ultimately resolves a flawed version of the American dream.

Following her recent exhibition, *Look, Look*, at the Art Gallery of Western Australia, Park continues to play with the dimensionality of drawing. Text boxes in relief, or "excavations," appear as thought bubbles akin to the interjections that occur when dreaming. As is typical of Park's work, inspiration is culled from a wide range of popular media, including social media trends, the 1960s sitcom *Bewitched*, and the 1960s cult classic *Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill!*, which follows three sadistic go-go dancers on a revenge spree. Concurrent with this exhibition, Park's work is included in *Get in the Game: Sports, Art, Culture* at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) through February 18, 2025.

In this exhibition, Opie and Park prompt us to question the nature of subjectivity in portraiture by challenging societal norms and expectations around gender and sexuality. *In Dialogue: Catherine Opie & Anna Park* harnesses the power of portraiture to exceed traditional notions of the genre.

**CATHERINE OPIE**

Catherine Opie (b. 1961, Sandusky, OH; lives in Los Angeles) is known for her powerfully dynamic photography that examines the ideals and norms surrounding the culturally constructed American dream and American identity. She first gained recognition in the 1990s for her series of studio portraits, photographing gay, lesbian, and transgender individuals drawn from her circle of friends and artists. Opie has traveled extensively across the country exploring the diversity of America's communities and landscapes, documenting quintessential American subjects—high school football players and the 2008 presidential inauguration—while also continuing to display America's subcultures through formal portraits. Using dramatic staging, Opie presents queer and trans bodies in intimate photographs that evoke traditional Renaissance portraiture—images of power and respect. In her portraits and landscapes, Opie establishes a level of ambiguity of both identity and place by exaggerating masculine or feminine characteristics, or by exaggerating distance, cropping, or blurring her landscapes.



Portrait by Heather Rasmussen

**ANNA PARK**

Anna Park (b. 1996, Daegu South Korea) makes charcoal drawings that teeter between abstraction and figuration, with imagery that homes in on the turbulent and frenzied contemporary experience. Beginning each canvas as an improvisational mark-making dance, Park composes scenes that are gestural snapshots of an over-exposed and self-aware human condition—universal moments and interpersonal exchanges she often laces with signifiers of today's zeitgeist. In black-and-white works that recall the vigorous energy of the graphic novel and radical fragmentation of Cubism, moments collapse into speed streaks, limbs grasp for one another, and glimpses of familiar faces emerge.

Park is from South Korea but spent her formative years in the US state of Utah—an experience that often positioned her on the outside, looking in. This early lesson in observing from a voyeur's distance permeates Park's works today, with an interest and sharp eye for the deep emotive range of the human subject. With visual allegory, recurrent archetypes, and trips of Americana, Park articulates inner conflict, shame, longing, growth, and mortality within her swirling abstracted tableaux.



Photo by Duncan Wright

**LEHMANN MAUPIN**

Rachel Lehmann and David Maupin co-founded Lehmann Maupin in 1996 in New York. Since inception, Lehmann Maupin has served as a leading contemporary art gallery with locations in the U.S., Europe, and Asia. For over 25 years, Lehmann Maupin has been instrumental in introducing international artists in new geographies and building long-lasting curatorial relationships. Known for championing diverse voices, the gallery's program proudly features artists whose work challenges notions of identity and shapes international culture. Today, the gallery has permanent locations in New York, Seoul, and London, as well as team members based in Hong Kong, Shanghai, Singapore, and Palm Beach. In recent years, with growing opportunities in new markets, the gallery has opened seasonal spaces in Aspen, Palm Beach, Taipei, and Beijing.

**NEW YORK**

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