

## Hannah Starkey

January 5 – February 9, 2019

Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York, is delighted to present a major exhibition of new photography by Hannah Starkey. On view in the gallery's second floor exhibition spaces from January 5 - February 9, 2019, this will be the artist's fourth solo presentation with the gallery.

For more than 20 years, Starkey has dedicated her practice to representing the experiences of women in contemporary society. Blurring the lines between portraiture, documentary, and mediated reality, Starkey carefully reconstructs glimpses of interior lives capturing her subjects in moments of introspection amid ordinary urban spaces. Developing a new way to capture her gender, Starkey's photographs defy the myopic identities in which women are traditionally portrayed in the thousands of images we see every day. Eschewing the primacy of the male gaze, Starkey's subjects are presented as feminine protagonists – neither exploited nor worshipped.

Deliberately constructing her images around the scene in which she finds her subjects, Starkey collaborates closely with friends, actresses, or anonymous participants, utilizing the existing narrative while maintaining a genuine emotional proximity. Stark architectural backdrops and strong associations of color and imagery heighten the sensation of her compositions on both a formal and associative level, triggering personal interpretations and a deeper mediation on the experience of the visual world at large. Interested in the psychological truth over the photographic truth, Starkey's images provide a specific exploration of life seen and experienced from a female perspective.

Over time, Starkey's focus has evolved with the changes in her own life and the evolving cultural climate. The artist's recent series grew to focus on mothers and subsequently middle-aged women, a reflection of her own identity, but also a reaction to her realization that this portion of society is largely underrepresented in images. Inspired by the recent social climate catalyzed by the #MeToo movement, paired with the responsibility of raising two teenage daughters, the artist recently chose to document the 2017 Women's March in London. These recent widespread sociopolitical "by women, for women" efforts to push back on existing male dominated paradigms are, for the artist, a validation of her two-decade exploration of the non-invasive representation of women as the protagonists in her images.

By forming a different level of engagement with her female subjects, Starkey's visual language offers itself as a possible mechanism to deconstruct and diffuse the power of the prevailing patriarchal media definitions of femininity. Resisting a consuming gaze, the artist captures empathy and accessibility encouraging the viewer to interact with her pictures in a different way. Capturing women over two decades, Starkey's cinematic compositions begin to weave together a quiet reflection of not only the female condition but our times overall.

Starkey's Women's March series was the subject of a TateShots exclusive video filmed with the Tate, London, titled *Hannah Starkey: This is an important moment for women*. In November 2018 MACK books published the major monograph, *Hannah Starkey: Photographs 1997 - 2017*. Spanning twenty years of Starkey's career, the book includes a biographical essay by the curator and writer Charlotte Cotton and a candid conversation between the artist and the editor and writer Liz Jobey.

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Born in Belfast in 1971, living and working in London, Starkey received a B.A. in Photography and Film from Napier University in Edinburgh in 1995 and an M.A. in Photography from Royal College of Art in London in 1997. She has received numerous awards and honors throughout her career, including the Vogue Condé Nast Award (1997), the 3rd International Tokyo Photo Biennale's Award for Excellence (1999), and the St. James Group Ltd Photography Prize (2002).

Starkey's work has been exhibited at the Irish Museum of Modern Art in Dublin, Mead Gallery at Warwick Arts Centre in Coventry, Centre Culturel Irlandais in Paris, Tate Liverpool, Huis Marseille Museum for Photography in Amsterdam, Institute of Contemporary Arts in London, Musée des Beaux-Arts in Nantes, France, Victoria and Albert Museum in London, Schirn Kunsthalle in Frankfurt, and the National Portrait Gallery in London, among other museums worldwide. Starkey's photographs are represented in the collections of the Tate in London, Huis Marseille Museum for Photography in Amsterdam, Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, Seattle Art Museum, Victoria & Albert Museum in London, Irish Museum of Modern Art in Dublin, Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Castello di Rivoli in Turin, and Centraal Museum in Utrecht.