

PRESS RELEASE

BECAUSE, BEFORE, WHY

28th January – 18th March 2022

An exhibition showcasing works by artist Marenka Gabeler on the subjects of Motherhood and Memory



Marenka Gabeler at home during lockdown and in her studio

London-based Dutch artist **Marenka Gabeler** has been invited to exhibit her work at the Knapp Gallery, Regent's University London. **Because, Before, Why – Motherhood and Memory** has been curated by four art history majors from the Liberal Studies programme at the university, Lidia Militero, Georgina Vartan, Kyla Watkins and Elizabeth Weinberg.

Gabeler's most recent work explores how she and her young sons experienced the pandemic together. These paintings, drawings and photographs reflect the sensations of holding onto something precious. Gabeler confronts the anxiety of lockdown and parenthood together with the memory of special family moments. The exploration of memory is of particular interest to the artist because her own grandmother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. She is interested in how we not only remember but forget, and how that brings out moments of peace and chaos. She reflects on the joys of life, through being a mother and a granddaughter, but alongside that explores how one can lose one's memory or indeed, one's mind.

The exhibition opens with an exploration of motherhood, and in particular the experience of being a parent during the pandemic. It explores life inside and outside of the home and the quietness of life during lockdown. Her love for her children manifests itself through a sense of anxiety and disorder, as Gabeler reflects on parenthood during lockdown. Her works are realistic reflections of what most parents went through as they themselves became overloaded with uncertainty of the pandemic.

The second section of the exhibition turns to the work of memory, and in particular the memory of Gabeler's grandmother. In these works, Gabeler reflects on remembering. She is not only remembering her grandmother but also the difficulties of dealing with Alzheimer's. Her very personal works take on the power of memory in shaping one's identity and focus on the individual experience of memory. It is not an attempt to rewrite the past, but instead

come to terms with one's personal history, and the history of people who helped create it. Gabeler's memories of her grandmother are carefully recollected and forever immortalised in her works.



Marenka Gabeler, *Grandmother's Orchids*, 2018



Marenka Gabeler, *Hanging in There*, 2021

Looking closer at Gabeler's works, the digression of remembering becomes apparent in her painting strategy. The way the panels and canvases are painted varies and the processes of dementia, from remembering to forgetting, is highlighted through the different painting methods. Gabeler's techniques such as applying and erasing paints and images, obscuring and layering, dissecting imagery all connect her works to dementia. There is a contrast of application from opaque to transparency. The colour choices she uses, often using colour mixed with white to create a blank/bleached down space where colour and image are reduced in intensity, highlight the process of dementia where there is a sense of loss of oneself.

The exhibition will include a video from the artist, *Isolation Art – Green Every Day*, which will be played during the exhibition.

Marenka Gabeler received an MA Painting with Distinction from the Royal College of Art, London in 2006 and in the same year won the Parallel Prize for painting. Since then, Gabeler has exhibited her works internationally in solo and group exhibitions. Gabeler's work has been held in collections such as Alison Jacques Gallery, Caldic Collection and Torch Gallery. Her recent group exhibitions include 2020 online exhibition with TLG, 2021, The London Group Christmas Exhibition. Alongside being an artist, Gabeler works closely with various charities including the Imperial NHS Charity and BlindAid Charity, where she runs art sessions for hospital patients. In 2021, Gabeler ran a Reminiscence project with dementia patients on zoom with RYCT and Greenwich Carers. She has also run art lessons for children, *My Arty Kids*, was held in 2021 on zoom to provide a time for children to express their artistic identities. Her works with charities highlights Gabeler's interest in the mental support art can provide as a wellbeing activity. Gabeler has written various articles highlighting the links between health care and art for The London Group.

For further information and to make an appointment please contact:
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