

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hellen van Meene
tout va disparaître

September 17 – October 31, 2009

Walk-through with the artist September 17, 2009 5.30 – 6.00 pm

Reception for the Artist and Book Signing 6 - 8 pm

Project Gallery: Esko Mannikko: *Organized Freedom*

The Yancey Richardson Gallery is pleased to present *tout va disparaître*, an exhibition of recent work by Dutch photographer Hellen van Meene comprising a selection of work made in New York City, the American South, Russia, and the Netherlands between 2007 and 2009. The exhibition coincides with the release of an eponymous book by Schirmer/Mosel. Known for her intimate, intense portraits of children and adolescents, van Meene's recent work explores different modes of portraiture such as role-playing, collaboration and documentation. In addition, with this work the artist has placed a new importance on the environment. Deviating from her unvarying use of a square format camera, the artist has also used a panoramic camera to emphasize the relationship between her subjects and their setting.

Van Meene's American work has the bite of gritty realism. New York children face the camera, standing on rubbish-heaped sidewalks or at abandoned piers while African American youth, photographed on van Meene's 2007 road trip between Florida and New Orleans, strike poses in front of dilapidated houses or in a wooded lot. These are poignantly revealing: one young woman stands against a tree wearing a ladylike dress and matching accessories; another reclines odalisque-like on a rusted car hood; and three boys stand shoulder to shoulder, each projecting a distinct attitude that hints at their individual destinies.

By contrast, van Meene's European work suggests a fictional world of literary origins, one imbued with a somber mood of psychological introspection. In the 2008 series *Pool of Tears*, made in an abandoned house in Holland, children wander the hushed rooms like ghosts, pinned to the walls by shards of light. Made the same year, the Russia work is infused with a melancholy, introspective mood accentuated by a palette of deep blue, magenta and mustard yellow. Whereas the American youth confront the camera directly, the Russian and Dutch subjects appear captive to their own private anxieties and dark musings.

Born in Alkmaar, Holland in 1972, van Meene has exhibited internationally. Her work is currently on view at the Museum of the City of New York in *Dutch Seen: New York Rediscovered*; at the Brooklyn Museum of Art in *Extended Family: Contemporary Connections*; and at the Kunsthalle Wien in *The Portrait Photography as Stage: from Mapplethorpe to Nan Goldin*. Her work is held in the collections of major museums worldwide including the Stedelijk Museum, the Victoria & Albert Museum, the Art Institute of Chicago, MoCA Los Angeles, the Guggenheim Museum and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. In 2001 she was short-listed for the Citibank Photography Prize. Previous publications include *Hellen van Meene: Portraits* (Aperture, 2004) and *Hellen van Meene: Japan Series* (The Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago and De Hallen, Haarlem, the Netherlands, 2002).

535 WEST 22ND STREET
NEW YORK CITY 10011

646 230 9610 FAX 646 230 6131

INFO@YANCEYRICHARDSON.COM

WWW.YANCEYRICHARDSON.COM



Hellen van Meene, Untitled #331, St. Petersburg, Russia, 2008



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Upcoming exhibitions:

Andrew Moore *Detroit*
November 5, 2009–January 7, 2010

Barbara Kasten *Studio Constructs*
January 14 – February 20, 2010

Laura Letinsky *After All*
February 25 – April 10, 2010

For additional information or visuals, please contact Tracey Norman-tnorman@yanceyrichardson.com