

**Hellen van Meene: *The years shall run like rabbits***  
 November 8 – December 21, 2013  
 Opening Reception with the artist: Friday, November 8, 2013, 6-8pm



Yancey Richardson is pleased to present ***The years shall run like rabbits***, the fourth solo exhibition at the gallery by Dutch artist **Hellen van Meene**. Best known for her portraits of young girls in various stages of adolescence, van Meene's photographs are characterized by their exquisite use of light, formal elegance and palpable psychological tension. Recently, the artist's portraiture projects have explored the use of animals as subject, whilst retaining the signature style and formalism of previous work.

In *The years shall run like rabbits*, van Meene presents a new series of portraits, often juxtaposing girls and dogs within the same frame, shifting the loci of the compositions to the spatial and psychic relationship between subjects. Not only does the combination of dog and girl evoke well-known motifs from art history – such as Velasquez's *Las Meninas* or Gainsborough's *Cottage Girl with Dog and Pitcher* – it also plays with the dialectics of familiarity and distance, protection and weakness and the boundaries between human and animal.

The title of the exhibition refers to a lyric from W.H. Auden's poem, *As I Walked Out One Evening*, an elegiac ballad lamenting the inescapable passage of time: *The years shall run like rabbits / For in my arms I hold / The Flower of the Ages, / And the first love of the world*. Fittingly, girls from all stages of adolescent and post-pubescent maturity are represented here, and the portraits hint at a deeper psychological weight emerging in van Meene's older subjects. Throughout the series, girls are often presented alone, seated or leaning on a single chair against an ecru toned wall. Van Meene's younger subjects often engage the camera directly, displaying all of the hopes and confusions of youth. The artist's older subjects are knowingly more guarded in their gestural vernacular, often facing the camera while eschewing its directness, a complexity of mercurial energy teeming just below the surface.



Born in Alkmaar, The Netherlands in 1972, Hellen van Meene lives and works in Heiloo, The Netherlands. Her work has been exhibited internationally and is held in the collections of major museums worldwide including the Guggenheim Museum, New York, the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, the Victoria & Albert Museum, London, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Brooklyn Museum, MoCA Los Angeles, and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. A retrospective of van Meene's work will be on display at The Hague Museum of Photography, Spring 2015. She is the subject of four artist monographs, including *Hellen van Meene: Japan Series* (The Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago and De Hallen, Haarlem, the Netherlands, 2002), *Hellen van Meene: Portraits* (Aperture, 2004), *Hellen van Meene: New Work* (Schirmer/Mosel, 2006), and *Hellen van Meene: tout va disparaître* (Schirmer/Mosel, 2009).

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