

Maureen Elizabeth Dougherty

***New Portraits***

31 October — 21 December

Opening on Halloween, New Art Projects is delighted to present a special project by New York-based painter and filmmaker Maureen Elizabeth Dougherty. Focussing on her recent studio practice, this show will explore a selection of her extraordinary recent portraits. Dougherty returned to figuration during the isolation of the COVID-19 pandemic following her long painterly enquiry into decorative and abstract art.

Taking recent inspiration from both Instagram and onlyfans Dougherty observes the human condition through her cunning and insightful representations. Her 'sitters' differ from aspirational online re-touching and filters, instead, they are exaggerated, manipulated and contrived to look beyond, below and through our online aspirations. By doing so they examine what motivates current identity politics, desire, longing, role and representation with a light touch, and some remarkable visual juxtapositions.

The paintings themselves are a delight to see. Worked in oils on canvas or linen with jewel-like colours Dougherty places figures on sumptuous grounds, or in pattered and decorative fantasy settings. The fluidity of board brush strokes recalls the Nice period of Matisse's interiors and odalisques where his figures were placed with 'exotic' oriental fabrics. For Dougherty, her forms and colours are informed by a recent trip to Morocco where the jewel-like tiles and warm pink light have informed her glowing, seductive palette and repeated geometric forms.

For her New Art Projects show Dougherty plays with scale, figuration and exaggeration. A life-size woman poses, based against a flowering Japanese cherry tree, in a pair of recent paintings, two girls pose in front of a 'en grisaille' scene of pattered geometric tiles, a boxer, naked to the waist proffers flowers. A series of 'head and shoulder' portraits depict lipstick smears, and bold makeup, as her 'sitters' push their 'best selves' forward into view.

Maureen Elizabeth Dougherty (b. 1958, Schenectady, NY) studied painting at Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, and at the New York Studio School. Her exhibitions include *Some People* at Cheim & Read in 2022, "Borrowed Time" Cheim & Read in 2023 and TFAF NYC 2024 curated by Alison Gingerous with Blum Gallery who also presented her works at Tokyo Gindai Art Fair. Her 2024 solo show at Blum Gallery LA also curated by Alison Gingerous. Her recent painting "Young" 2022 is on currently included in the Alex Katz collection at the Portland Maine Museum

The first monograph published on the artist, *Maureen Dougherty: Women*, was released in conjunction with her recent exhibition at BLUM Los Angeles 2024. Published by Blurring Books, with over forty artworks, a conversation between the artist and curator Alison M. Gingeras, contributions from Joe Fyfe, David Rimanelli, and John Cheim. As a documentary filmmaker, Dougherty runs her own production company, Mojo Films. She lives and works in New York.