

Erik Madigan Heck; The Garden

4 September – 21 November 2020

Christophe Guye Galerie is thrilled to announce Erik Madigan Heck's second solo exhibition *The Garden* at the gallery. *The Garden* is an ongoing body of work depicting primarily Heck's family in a variety of richly colorful surroundings. The photographs draw upon diverse sacred and mythical pictorial traditions to develop a color-based narrative that pushes the aesthetic possibilities of a photograph. The exhibition at the gallery focuses on works at the intersection between photography and painting. These works highlight the artist's relationship with color, which stems from a life-long love affair with painting. 'For me painting was always more about the color,' he says. 'And I think that's where my photography crosses over; how you can push color in a way that a painter can with a brush.'

Erik Madigan Heck, born in Excelsior, Minnesota in 1983 and now based in Connecticut and New York City, is an acclaimed artist and fashion photographer working primarily in photography, painting, and film. His unique style causes his works to oscillate between photography and painting on the one hand, and between fashion photography and fine art on the other hand.

The series *The Garden* moves through a singular world – a fairytale in which figures and settings become tableaux for hyper-concentrated tonal arrangements. Images are composited and oversaturated with color to create painterly and surreal compositions in which the familiar and fantastic are merged. Completing its aesthetic fantasy through lavish clothes, gestures of dreamlike poignancy, and an Edenic environment, *The Garden* expresses the supramundane innocence and spontaneity that art makes possible – a life lived in the direct, immediate experience of beauty.

The Connecticut forest backdrop of his home isn't quite nature as we know it: woodland greens become turquoise blues and blushing pinks become coral peach. 'Color has always been one of the most important things for my work — and up here it's the changing of the seasons too,' Heck says. 'So, I'll take what's already there and I'll elaborate. I'm not inventing things that aren't there, just pushing them in certain directions.'

Shot predominantly at the family's home in New England, the series initially elicits comparisons with other contemporary photography confronting family life, such as Sally Mann's *Immediate Family*, or the work of Elinor Carucci. But though the subjects of Heck's photographs are ostensibly his family, *The Garden's* real subject matter is color and the aesthetic possibilities of photography to create what it captures.

Erik Madigan Heck is the recipient of the International Center of Photography's Infinity Award, the FOAM Fotografiemuseum talent award, the Forbes' 30 under 30 award, and The Art Director's Club Gold Medal for his Old Masters Portfolio published by The New York Times Magazine. In 2019 Heck had solo museum exhibitions at The Musée des Beaux-Arts in Le Locle, Switzerland and The Multimedia Arts Museum in Moscow, Russia; public installations at The Houston Museum of Fine Arts, Paris Photo, Photo London, and Photo Shanghai; and relaunched *Nomenus* – a printed journal focusing on the intersection between photography and painting, where he collaborates with an array of artists and institutions. Heck is a regular contributor to The New York Times Magazine, TIME, Vanity Fair, The New Yorker, and Harper's Bazaar amongst others; and is the author of *Old Future*, published by Thames & Hudson in 2017. A book of his ongoing series, titled *The Garden*, will be published by Damiani in Fall 2020.