

HUXLEY – PARLOUR

45 MADDOX ST/
3–5 SWALLOW ST

Catherine Repko

Gatherer

15 October – 19 November 2022



CATHERINE REPKO

Huxley-Parlour is pleased to present *Gatherer*: an exhibition of work by London-based artist, Catherine Repko. Using an emphasis on reduced forms and negative space, Repko explores the intersection between documentary and painting, memory and obfuscation, to create nostalgic and painterly tableaux. The exhibition title, *Gatherer*, references the archaic practice of gathering as a framework through which to understand practices of care, worldbuilding, and relating to others within storytelling. It will be the artist's first solo exhibition with Huxley-Parlour.

Catherine Repko's exhibition is made using archival reference material, and is developed in particular from home videos of the artist and her three sisters growing up in Italy. Working from pixelated stills, Repko casts digital memories in an earthen palette, using the process of attrition to simplify, flatten, and subtract from the documented compositions. In doing so, Repko's painting mythologises memory, translating ephemeral footage into tangible objects. Her use of reduction, her relentless commitment to line, and the choice to obscure her subject's faces both anonymises personal, family memories, and opens up her compositions to become universal tableaux. Repko describes the works as having 'one foot based in reality', but as 'missing something that maybe wasn't even there to begin with'.

The title of Repko's exhibition, *Gatherer*, is in part inspired by science fiction writer, Ursula K. Le Guin's 1986 essay 'The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction'. Le Guin opposes the archaic trope of the hunter - often touted as a fiction of heroism, combat, and triumph, to that of the gatherer - a story of those who gather from nature, who carefully plan, stock inventory, and care for communities with a quiet realism. With acerbic wit, Le Guin describes the carrier bag - alongside all other vessels for containment - as a yonic foil to the phallus, and presents the bag as a metaphor for an alternate way of relating to civilisation.

Using this conceptual framework, Repko's paintings are replete with several, meaningful motifs: baskets, open hands, plain clothes, and anonymous horizons. Her works create fresco-like scenes of care, nurture, and tacility, and use the idea of home as a central pivot for worldbuilding to create gentle and universally alluring compositions. Home, as Le Guin writes, being 'another, larger kind of pouch or bag, a container for people'.

Gatherer will open on the Friday of Frieze week.

Catherine Repko was born in the United States in 1990. She completed a foundation in Art and Design at Chelsea College of Art, London in 2010 before obtaining a BA in Illustration from the University of Brighton in 2013. She graduated with an MA in Painting at the Royal College of Art in 2021. Repko was the recipient of The Triangle Network Fellowship from The Arts Council England in 2016, The Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation in 2020, and more recently was The Valerie Beston Artists' Trust prizewinner for 2021-22. She lives and works in London.

Notes to Editors

Catherine Repko

Gatherer

Private View: 14th October, 6-8pm

Huxley-Parlour, 3-5 Swallow Street, W1B 4DE

Opening hours Monday to Friday, 10:00am - 5:30pm

Additional information can be found online at www.huxleyparlour.com