

Rebekka Macht

Fragile Wings of Motherhood

Thursday 16th January 2025 – 2nd March 2025

Gallery II, Accra



Rebekka Macht, amor fati/ not a pity, 2024, Oil on Canvas, 84 x 140 cm. Courtesy of the Artist and Gallery 1957

Gallery 1957 is delighted to present 'Fragile Wings of Motherhood,' our first solo exhibition of 2025 by Rebekka Macht. This new body of work is curated by Azu Nwagbogu and follows a five-month residency with the gallery in Accra.

For her first solo exhibition in Accra, Ghana with Gallery 1957, artist Rebekka Macht offers a reflective body of work that embarks on a personal and profound exploration of motherhood—an institution revered yet fraught with complexities often left unspoken. Through her evocative practice, Macht captures the multifaceted essence of maternal existence, weaving together themes of protection, vulnerability, and societal entanglement.

Motherhood, as rendered in her art, emerges as both a solitary and collective experience. It is a realm of veritable paradoxes: the mother is never alone yet lonely. The denial of self is refreshed in the nurture and selfless act of love and devotion to others. There is a slow transfiguration of identity, and

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& Galleria Mall
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Gamel Abdul Nasser Avenue
Ridge – Accra
Ghana

info@gallery1957.com

Gallery 1957, London
1 Hyde Park Gate
London, SW7 5EW
UK

london@gallery1957.com

Instagram: [@gallery1957](https://www.instagram.com/gallery1957)
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the metamorphosis of body, mind, and soul is a collective and wholly intangible process that finds artistic expression in abstract expressionist art, in which Macht has found solace. The underlying sensibility that drives this creative energy is fear. Fear is a much-maligned yet endlessly renewable energy source when ordered and channeled. In "Fragile Wings of Motherhood," Macht recognises the anxieties of raising two Black children. She internalises those fears, refines and articulates them, and thereby finds creative freedom in expressing herself. Macht's work is deeply personal, drawing from her experiences as a single mother of boys. Her paintings navigate the complex terrain of raising biracial children, addressing the anxieties and unique challenges that arise from this intersection of identities. The artist's self-portraits offer a female gaze perspective on depictions of women and single motherhood, while her androgynous portrait paintings question traditional notions of gender and identity.

Her reflections traverse the terrains of racial and cultural identity, particularly the layered experiences of raising Black children in disparate geographical contexts. Macht's art challenges viewers to reconsider preconceived notions of motherhood, particularly single motherhood. By focusing on alternative narratives of masculinity and motherhood, she creates a space for dialogue about the evolving nature of family structures and gender roles in contemporary society. The exhibition invites viewers to contemplate the myriad ways in which mothers navigate their identities, fears, and aspirations in an ever-changing world.

Through Macht's deconstructed yet evocative imagery, we are challenged to piece together a new understanding of motherhood – one that embraces complexity, vulnerability, and strength. For the family, and her sons in particular, there is an evolved sense of masculinity; one that embraces maternal fragility and care. There is a constant dance, and a chameleonic shift in identities to belong. The question of belonging is a universal challenge. In Ghana, there is a semblance of safety, a protective cocoon. But the spectre of belonging and societal prejudice looms large beyond Africa. For German citizens who may one day return to a Europe laden with its own historical burdens, the Fragile Wings of Motherhood require extended spiritual wings. This tension—the limits of a mother's influence and the inevitable independence of her offspring—is a recurring motif that reverberates through Macht's oeuvre.

Visually, her works are acts of discombobulation, formal detonation, and fragmentation where human bodies, particularly those of her children, are meticulously positioned to articulate the fragility and resilience of familial bonds. The central architectural installation in the exhibition has an arch-like protective dome over the fragmented figures. This is symbolic of safety and evocative of the nest for children who will eventually metamorphose, grow wings, and fly. It is not the change that comes with age that holds fear for the mother, but rather the wings that unfold on the children's backs just before they set out to fly.

Macht's grappling with faith adds another dimension to her narrative. Raised within the structures of Christianity, Macht recalls formative experiences of choir practices and church plays, moments that imparted both spiritual enlightenment and creative outlets mixed with an enduring sense of guilt. The evolution of self catalysed a reevaluation of these inherited beliefs, pushing her toward a more critical stance on the intersection of religion, feminism, and colonial history. This questing, though deeply personal, manifests in her art as an inquiry into the broader legacies of faith and its impact on identity formation. It is non-judgmental, non-hierarchical, and unprejudiced, presented as a sort of evidence without a need for judgment or sentence.

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Technically, her practice is a dialogue between memory and innovation. The deliberate, almost ritualistic setups of her compositions reflect an intuitive understanding of form and function, honed by her background in art and mathematics. Macht's paintings are imbued with a sense of contemporary timelessness, an immediate sense of Homeric metaphor, transcending the immediate to engage with enduring questions of human existence: How do we reconcile the protective instincts of motherhood with the inevitability of separation? How does one articulate the weight of societal constructs on the intimate sphere of family life?

In contemplating these questions, the artist offers a poignant commentary on the intersection of personal and political realities. The images she crafts are both tender and unflinching, capturing the raw essence of a world where the personal is inextricably linked to the collective. Through her lens, motherhood is not merely a biological or social role but a profound act of resistance and creation, a testament to the enduring spirit of care in the face of uncertainty. Through "Fragile Wings of Motherhood," we begin to sense that identity—home, gender, race—as constructed by society, dissolves into one big pot of our collective humanity.

- Curatorial Text by Azu Nwagbogu

About the Artist

Rebekka Macht

(b. 1989, Düsseldorf. Lives and works in Accra and Berlin.)

Rebekka Macht is a visual artist based between Berlin and Accra. Her primary medium are large-scale portrait paintings. Her work relates to issues around gender. Furthermore, it speaks about human connection—to the self, to those around us, and to broader society. Through portraiture, she forms an emotional connection between the subject and the viewer, which serves as an entry point for the audience to engage with the complex underlying topics the works address.

She invites her viewers into ambiguous spaces such as in between suffering and growth, pain and pleasure, strength and vulnerability, secular and etheric, societal constructs and breaking free. She is interested in how individual experiences and societal constructs shape our psyche and in exploring avenues for transcending them.

Her recent works center around alternative narratives of masculinity and (single) motherhood, topics both deeply personal as well as societally relevant and interconnected for the artist as a mother of boys. Rebekka Macht studied in Essen, completing her state examination in portrait painting under Prof. Jörg Eberhard in 2014. After taking time to raise her two sons, her debut solo exhibition 'growing' opened in Cologne 2019. Her first Berlin solo exhibition 'Womanhood' at the SLP Gallery opened in 2021. This was followed in 2023 by the solo exhibition 'The Realms of In-Between' at Soho House Berlin.

Group exhibitions include 2021, 'Human Electricity' at MaHalla Berlin, 2022 'Collateral Beauty' at Reinbeckhallen, both for Berlin Art Week, and 2023 "Cumulus" at Bethanien Berlin, 'Studio Talks' at ARTCO Gallery and 2024 'Liaison' at BetterGoSouth Gallery, Stuttgart, as well as 'Constellations Part2: Figures in Webs and Ripples of Space' at Gallery 1957 in Accra.

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In 2022 she received the Berlin Fellowship Award of the international Soho House Fellowship Program and in 2024 was an Artist in Residence at Amoako Bofo's dot.ateliers in Accra. She is currently in residency at Gallery 1957. In addition to private collections, her works are also represented in the SohoHouse collection in London and Berlin.

About Gallery 1957

Gallery 1957 is a contemporary art gallery with spaces across Accra, Ghana and London, UK.

It dedicates its programme to spearheading international exchanges between art practices from these communities and the rest of the world, presenting artists who interrogate concepts of belonging and identity, cultural exchange, and social history beyond Western narratives.

Launched by Marwan Zakhem in 2016 on Ghanaian Independence Day, Gallery 1957 has since expanded across three gallery spaces in Accra. Originally set up to promote Ghana and West Africa's presence in the arts scene, it now encompasses the Global South and its diaspora. Gallery 1957's London space opened in October 2020, providing a further platform for artists to build dialogues with its growing network of international collaborators.

Gallery 1957 presents exhibitions, installations, and performances by celebrated artists, fostering connections between local and international audiences. The Gallery's global gallery partnerships and ongoing artist residency program have attracted numerous international artists and arts professionals to Ghana. The Gallery's annual Cultural Week in September serves as a platform for encouraging deeper engagement with Ghana's vibrant contemporary art scene.

In 2021, Gallery 1957 launched the Yaa Asantewaa Art Prize for female Ghanaian artists, the first ever dedicated art prize of its kind. The prize aims to further strengthen the gallery's commitment to supporting and promoting emerging and established artists.

Gallery 1957's work expands beyond the gallery walls through a public programme that includes local and international art fairs, talks, off-site projects, and site-specific installations as well as the publication of books and catalogues – continuously supporting cultural initiatives in Ghana, Africa and beyond.

Artist: Rebekka Macht

Title: Fragile Wings of Motherhood

Dates: 16th January 2025 – 2nd March 2025

Artist & Curator Talk: Thursday 16th January 2025 5pm

Opening Reception: Thursday 16th January 2025 6pm-9pm

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