

Press release

Paul Graham | *Mother/Sightless*

13 November, 2020 – 23 January, 2021

Opening: Friday, 13 November, 2020, 11 – 8 pm

carlier | gebauer is pleased to announce the European premiere of new works by photographer Paul Graham, opening November 13, 2020. *Mother/Sightless* is Graham's sixth solo exhibition with the gallery.

For nearly 40 years, Paul Graham's work has presented an unflagging commitment to depicting life as it unfolds. He first established his reputation in the early 1980s by introducing the practice of color photography into the classic genre of "social documentary." Since then, Graham has turned his lens towards seemingly incidental, fleeting moments, capturing life in passing as an endless flow of time rather than an isolated or static instant. Graham himself has claimed that the photography that he most respects "pulls something out of the ether of nothingness" and over four decades of his rich and layered practice, Graham has cultivated this ethos.

Paul Graham's most recent series, *Mother*, bears witness to the elastic, malleable quality of time—particularly as it relates to matters of the heart. His most personal work to date, *Mother* depicts the artist's own aging mother in the last years of her life dozing in various positions in her chair at an English retirement home through a series of thirteen photographs. Depictions of artists' mothers are iconic in the history of art—from Whistler through Freud, Cézanne, Hockney, Ingres, Gauguin, or Durer, whose brutally honest portraits of his mother insisted that "even the smallest wrinkles and veins must not be ignored." Yet Graham's extended portrait doesn't merely evince tenderness for its subject, but also through its attentive, almost painterly approach, conveys a kind of stretching and unraveling of time—the looping and fragmentary nature of experience and perception when life closes in and one's world shrinks to the space of a single room.

Parallel to *Mother*, Graham will also present *Sightless*, a never-before exhibited series of small portraits made fifteen years ago on 42nd street in New York. Inverting the conventions of portraiture, according to which an image of the subject blinking would be rejected, each individual depicted in the works in this series has their eyes closed. Whether blinded by the sun, enjoying a moment of silent reverie, delving into a musical trance, or blocking out the rest of the world to dwell in one's own thoughts, the subjects of *Sightless* navigate between two worlds—that of the city and the imagination.

Paul Graham was born in 1956 in England and lives and works in New York. He has been awarded the Hasselblad Foundation International Award in Photography 2012, the most prestigious international award for photography. His work has been the subject of more than eighty solo exhibitions in internationally renowned institutions including the Whitechapel Gallery, London; Museum of Modern Art, New York and Tate Gallery, London. Paul Graham's work is included in such important public collections as the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; the Centre Pompidou, Paris; the Museum of Modern Art and Metropolitan Museum, New York; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Arts Council England, the V&A Museum and the National Museum of Photography, London; the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, Germany; and the Louisiana Museum, Humlebaek, as well as in significant private collections worldwide.