

ELLEN VON UNWERTH

The Provocateur

March 8 - May 25, 2024

Opening Reception

May 7, 2024

6-8 PM

The Provocateur is Ellen von Unwerth's fifth solo exhibition at Staley-Wise Gallery. The photographs included in this exhibition, several of which have never been seen before, reflect a liberated and irrepressible engagement with her subjects that the photographer has championed for her entire career. Von Unwerth notes "I know what it's like when you feel really uncomfortable, so I do everything in my power to make them feel at ease – and to live and laugh and move." These exhibition images reflect a winking provocateur; not so much the object of lust but the playful instigator - both innocent and naughty. While eroticism is in the forefront of many of these images, fantasy and humor unite von Unwerth's vision of her subjects simply having fun - with each other, and with the viewer who they tease, taunt, and provoke.

Ellen von Unwerth was born in Germany. She worked in the circus as an assistant to the knife-thrower before being discovered as a model in Munich and beginning her interest in photography. Her work has been published in the world's leading magazines and she has photographed the album cover artwork or directed music videos for artists including Rihanna, Janet Jackson, Courtney Love, Duran Duran, and Beyoncé, as well as commercials and campaigns for brands including Ralph Lauren, Christian Dior, L'Oréal, Thierry Mugler, Uniqlo, and most notably, Guess (featuring a young Claudia Schiffer). In 2018, she launched *Ellen von Unwerth's VON*, a creative magazine to express her modern and edgy approach to photography. Nine books of her work have been published and a solo exhibition of her work inaugurated the New York space of Fotografiska in 2020. Most recently, the SCAD FASH Museum of Fashion + Film in Atlanta, Georgia opened her retrospective exhibition in 2023



Afterparty, 2010



Unmasking, Demi Moore, 1996

Press images available on request.

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