

# THE RAVESTIJN GALLERY

PRESENTS

## FRUITS OF LABOR



Mariken Wessels / *The Chosen One*, 2022  
Glazed ceramics sculpture, wooden pedestal  
Size 75 x 95 x 50 cm / Unique piece

### FRUITS OF LABOR / Ruth van Beek & Mariken Wessels

**Opening: Saturday 11 March 2023, 17:00 - 19:00**

**Exhibition: 11 March - 22 April 2023**

*"Everything in the world began with a yes. One molecule said yes to another molecule and life was born."*  
- Clarice Lispector, *The Hour of the Star*

The Ravestijn Gallery is proud to bring together new work by Dutch artists Ruth van Beek and Mariken Wessels. In this exhibition, their two distinct visions are brought into dialogue. Their mutual interest in exploring the act of creation, their muses and their gestures of intervening into existing material overlap in the space to form a powerful reflection on what it is to be a female artist.

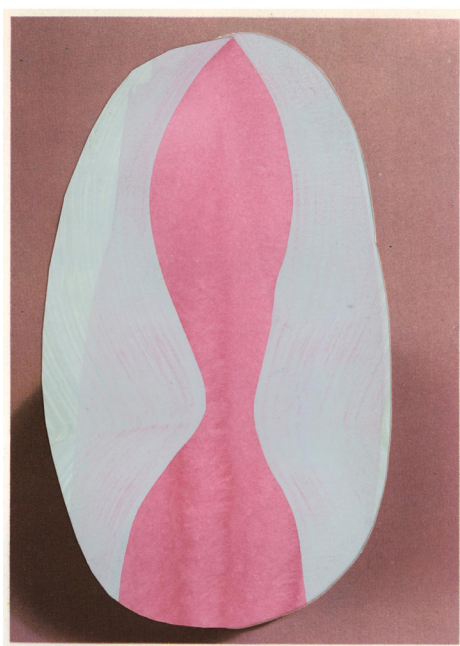
In Ruth van Beek's new book *The Oldest Thing* and spatial installation of collages *Objects from the Household*, it is ordinary objects that take on a body and life of their own. With a practice that is deeply interwoven into her everyday experience, van Beek looks inwards at how her vast archive works. In doing so, she explores the thin borders between studio and domestic life, the repetition of daily tasks and the origins of her interests in manuals and household books, tracing them all the way back to her mother's influence. In the artist's hands, images of banal objects become "moving matter," undergoing a process of deconstruction through which strange and ambiguous forms are uncovered and teased into focus. In the constellations of images on view, a visual rhyme of ovals emerges, paying tribute to the recurring tasks of the everyday while also revealing an enigmatic world that exists beyond it.

In Mariken Wessels' new series of sculptures of *Mama* and collage works *The Sculptor*, it is the female body that becomes matter. Positioning herself at the end of a long line of male artists who have produced highly-sexualised female fertility idols, Wessels' own interpretation of the female body abstracts it, liberating it from its status as muse to a male imagination. In her hands, body parts repeat, stack and morph to form monumental bronze and ceramic sculptures that exist beyond the erotic, drawing into focus instead the artist's long term interest in corporality. In *The Sculptor*, the female bodies in these 1970s porn images have been cut out and partly replaced by chunks of clay, in which fingerprints are left visible, leaving the male 'artist' alone in his arduous efforts of creation.

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Ruth van Beek / *Clock (figure 73)*, 2021  
Collage with photo and gouache painted paper, hand-stained grey wooden frame  
12 x 8,5 cm / framed 24 x 20 cm / Unique piece

### Ruth van Beek bio

Her work has been shown internationally with exhibitions at Post Books (Tokyo); The Ravestijn Gallery (Amsterdam), De Warande (Belgium), Fraenkel Gallery (San Francisco); Foam (Amsterdam), Les rencontres d'Arles and Fotomuseum Antwerp and has been featured in magazines such as De Gids, The New Yorker, Vogue Magazine, Centrefold Magazine, Foam Magazine, IMA Magazine, The British Journal of Photography, The New York Review of Books, The Aperture Photobook Review, Elephant Magazine and The New York Times.

She has published numerous artist books including *The Arrangement* (RVB Books, 2013) which was shortlisted for the Aperture Photobook of the Year Award in 2014 and *How To Do The Flowers* ( APE & Dashwood Books, 2018 ) to widespread acclaim. After her book *Eldorado* that came out in 2020 she is currently working on a second book with designer Willem Van Zoetendaal, which is expected to be released in spring 2023.

### Mariken Wessels bio

Prior to her visual practice, Wessels studied acting at the Amsterdam Theatre School, and after a decade-long acting career she went on to study visual arts at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy. Wessels' work has been widely exhibited and has held solo exhibitions at the Fotomuseum Antwerp (2016) and Fotomuseum Den Haag (2017). Wessels has published numerous books, most notably with *Taking Off. Henry my Neighbor*, published in 2015 with Art Paper Editions to international acclaim. The book was awarded an honorary appreciation at the Leipzig Book Fair (Best Book Design from all over the World, 2016), won the Author Book Award at Les Rencontres d'Arles (2016) and was included in the selection for Best Book Designs from the Netherlands and Flanders (2015). Wessels' latest book, *Miss Cox (Nude – Arising from the Ground)*, was published by Fw:Books in 2020.

Wessels' works and books have been collected by museums, libraries and private collectors worldwide including; Centre Pompidou (Paris), ICP and MoMA (New York), Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (Munich), Stedelijk Museum (Amsterdam), Fotomuseum Antwerp (Belgium), and the MACBA Barcelona (Spain).

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Cover 'Fruits of Labor', 2023

*Fruits of Labor* is a catalog with work by artists Ruth van Beek and Mariken Wessels.

Van Beek's collages and Wessels' sculptures and collages enter into a dazzling dialogue, both in their exhibition at The Ravestijn Gallery and in the catalogue (design Willem van Zoetendaal). Included are two poems by Basje Boer and an essay by Roberta Petzoldt. The publication will be available at the gallery.

Van Zoetendaal Publishers  
32 pages, 23 x 16 cm, stitched  
ISBN: 978-90-72532-55-8  
Price: € 22

### **General Information**

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