

JACKSON FINE ART

ATLANTA

Jackson Fine Art
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RUUD VAN EMPEL

Inventing Van Gogh & Landscapes

VEE SPEERS

Phoenix

In the viewing room

André Kertész

Media Contact:
coco@jacksonfineart.com

March 19 – April 30

Opening Reception
March 19, 11am-4pm

Artist Talk with Vee Speers
March 19, 11am

Jackson Fine Art is excited to present **Ruud van Empel's *Inventing Van Gogh & Landscapes*** and **Vee Speers' *Phoenix***.

Ruud van Empel has reinvented Van Gogh's portrait. Nobody knows exactly what Van Gogh really looked like as an adult as there are no portrait photos of him after his 19th birthday. We base our idea of his appearance mainly on his painted self-portraits, which differ greatly from one another. Van Empel has attempted to reconstruct Van Gogh's portrait based on photographs of various look-a-likes. He used the nose and ears of one, the eyes and hair of another. He has placed the parts on well-known self-portraits by Van Gogh. He uses no paint, but only digital photos which he combines to create a fully formed vision. For those who don't know any better, you might think that unknown photos of Van Gogh have resurfaced. He has situated the new Vincents in scenes that recall places in his life, such as the Borinage, Provence and his studio. Van Empel also produced a series of photographic works based on landscapes and floral still lifes by Van Gogh. They remind us of the region of Brabant where both Van Gogh and Van Empel grew up and demonstrate the photographer's strong affinity with Van Gogh. Also on view are selections from the artist's additional landscape series, demonstrating his prowess in digitally combining found natural elements into fantastical surreal scenes, transporting us to a new land.

Vee Speers' series *Phoenix* is a powerful and evocative story about women. Never afraid to push boundaries, Speers takes us on an emotional journey with portraits and landscapes that are at once nostalgic and contemporary, hues faded, marking the passage of time. Like some kind of illusion that seems suspended in the memories of a dramatic event, hope rises like a phoenix from the ashes. At once powerful and vulnerable, Speers' portraits are timeless symbols of transformation between life and loss and the renaissance of a new identity. The women of Phoenix are styled against the backdrop of an imperfect world, empowered with strength and emotion.

Also on view will be a selection of vintage and modern prints by **André Kertész**, simultaneous with the High Museum's exhibition *André Kertész: Postcards from Paris* (through May 29, 2022). Considered one of the seminal figures of photography, Kertész is not only regarded as being one of the fathers of photojournalism and street photography but is also known for his groundbreaking contributions to photographic compositions using unorthodox camera angles, distortions, and style. Additional works will be on view in an Online Viewing Room concurrently.

On **Saturday, March 19th from 11 am - 4 pm** we will host a public opening to celebrate the exhibition. The opening will begin with an **artist talk by Vee Speers at 11am**.

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About Ruud van Empel

Ruud van Empel was (born in Breda, Netherlands, 1958) studied at the St. Joost Academy of Art, graduating in 1981. He is known for his intricate collage process, often merging a number of images through photo editing software and other digital approaches. His work blends Surrealism with classic Western portraiture, resulting in pictures that are both dreamlike and familiar. An early career in graphic design as well as designing for theater productions and television informed his approach to photography, greatly focused on technology's influence on the modern world. His series *World Moon Venus* published in conjunction with an exhibit at the Museum Het Valkhom, Nijmegen in 2006. The book was considered an international breakthrough, diverting from Ruud van Empel's more dreamlike-inspired work to more detail-oriented classic forms. He is the recipient of many awards, including the St. Joost Prize (1981), Charlotte Köhlerprize (1993), H.N. Werkmanprize (2001), Municipality of Breda Oeuvre-prize (2013) and 2017 Artist of the Year/American Friends of Museums in Israel-NYC (2017). Ruud van Empel has had works appear in museums and galleries throughout the Netherlands as well as Tel Aviv Museum, Sir Elton John Photography Collection and Arne Zimmerman Collection, among others. He has previously been exhibited at Jackson Fine Art in 2014 and 2017.

About Vee Speers

Vee Speers (born in Newcastle, Australia, 1962) has established herself in the art world with her unforgettable portraits for over two decades. The immediacy of Vee Speers' imagery is overwhelming. Vee Speers' most recent work, *Phoenix*, is a powerful and evocative story about women. Never afraid to push the boundaries, Speers takes us on an emotional journey. Her carefully choreographed images are painterly and ethereal, with a visual and metaphorical ambiguity which challenges established narratives. Her work has been exhibited in museums, galleries, art fairs and festivals around the world, and been published in features and on covers of more than 60 international magazines, with 3 sold-out monographs of her work. Her photographs have been acquired by Sir Elton John Collection, Michael Wilson Collection, Hoffman Collection U.S., Carter Potash Collection, Morten Viskum Collection, Alan Siegel, Lawrence Schiller, DZ Bank, Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Museum 21C, Kentucky, George Eastman House, Beth Rudin Dewoody, Hudson Bay Company Art Fund, CB Collection, Tokyo. She has previously been exhibited at Jackson Fine art in 2009, 2011, 2018 and 2020.

About André Kertész

André Kertész (born in Budapest, Hungary, 1894-1985) started to develop his passion and eye for photography while working as a Budapest stock exchange clerk; he purchased his first camera and made his first photograph in 1912. After 13 years dabbling in amateur photography in Hungary, he packed up and moved to Paris where he changed his name and kickstarted a career shooting freelance. There, not knowing much of the language, André Kertész befriended fellow artist Brassai and got to work honing his own observational style that highlights the bizarre in otherwise ordinary routines with his 33mm Leica camera. Over time he became an accomplished photojournalist, applauded for his criticism of government scrutiny and as "one of photography's greatest pioneers," among other highlights. Photographer André Kertész published three books between 1933 and 1936, just before settling in New York where he'd go on to freelance for legacy publications like *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Life* and others. He became a United States citizen in 1944 and in 1948, Conde Nast's Alexander Liberman hired him on an exclusive contract for the company's entire roster of publications. Credited as one of the artists responsible for the advent of photojournalism, André Kertész diverged from this in the American media, instead spending 25 years making fashion and still-life photos for magazines. By 1960, he'd returned to his original visions, capturing life as it unfolded around him in a very candid way. André Kertész's photography — which paved the way for documentary photography at large — has been displayed by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Getty Museum and at Jackson Fine Art in 2004 and 2018. He died at 91 in his home in New York City.

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Contact

To request high resolution images, please contact Coco Conroy: coco@jacksonfineart.com.

Jackson Fine Art is located at 3115 East Shadowlawn Ave. NE, Atlanta, GA 30305. For more information about Jackson Fine Art and our artists, visit jacksonfineart.com.