AN-MY LÊ
Dark Star/Grey Wolf
10 January – 22 February 2025
Opening reception: Friday, 10 January, 6-8 pm

Marian Goodman Gallery is very pleased to announce a solo exhibition of new work by An-My Lê, *Dark Star/Grey Wolf,* which will be on view from 10 January to 22 February 2025.

The exhibition follows on two important solo museum exhibitions in the United States including her recent 2023 career retrospective, *Between Two Rivers/Giữa hai giòng sông/Entre deux rivières* at MoMA, and the exhibition *On Contested Terrain*, at the Carnegie Museum, 2020-2021, which traveled to the Milwaukee Museum, WI, and the Amon Carter Museum, in Fort Worth, TX.

In this exhibition, An-My Lê presents two new series of recent photographs, *Dark Star* and *Grey Wolf,* continuing her exploration of the contradictory nature of the manifest and the sublime within the contemporary American landscape, and the latter as a present-day locus of technology, power and ambition. In Lê's work, scale is both temporal and historical, encompassing themes of displacement, war, memory, and resilience. These are present in her earliest black and white pictures of Vietnam (1994-1998) in which she returned to a scarred homeland as a political refugee, to her pictures of war re-enactors in the southern U.S. (*Small Wars*, 1999-2002), to staged military training exercises in the American desert (*29 Palms*, 2003-04), to her more recent lens on polarization in the United States through a series of historical fragments (*Silent General*, 2015 to today). With extraordinary consideration of history and culture, Lê's view onto her subjects often incorporates an elevated perspective to achieve its signature precision and ethical neutrality. In zooming out to look closer, her stepped back 'proscenium framing' brings into crystal clear vision her observations and stories not unlike layers of a history painting.

This strategy expands in the current exhibition in which two new series of photographs, both cinematic in their depiction of the constructs of war, explore a new geopolitical gravity, and what Lê defines as the nexus between photography and the post-atomic world. Establishing a thin line between reality and fiction, what is visible and unknown, each begins from reverse points of view: *Dark Star*, presents starscapes taken in Mesa Verde, and *Grey Wolf*, aerial views in Montana. While embarking on the latter, Lê discovered her interest in documenting the stars, as well as the evolution of a contemporary and paranoid sublime.

In *Grey Wolf*, Lê's eye is trained on the farmlands and mountains in Montana from an aerial perspective. Presented here as a series of seven photographs in a cyclorama — a circular arc with 360-degree views often used to represent the sky —this once-idealized panoramic device gives mythic sculptural form to Lê's images of vast terrains of seemingly everyday rural American life, from backyards and farm fields to mountains which surround it. Depicted are areas housing furtive nuclear missile silos surrounding an air force base and missile launch control centers, woven into the quotidian backdrop of the American West. A plain spoken and austere meditation on the fragility of life, these pictures point to hidden catastrophic dangers that lurk beneath, and to our collective unease.   An uncanny, insidious reminder of nuclear threat, they conjure an eerie presence that is both fictive premonition and fact.

The *Dark Star* series was taken in Mesa Verde National Park, in Colorado, a landscape dominated by cliff dwellings and mesas of the Ancestral Pueblo people who built thriving communities in the 13th century.   The photographs, created close to the time of the New Moon on the last cycle of the year when the Milky Way is still visible in the Northern Hemisphere, capture the night skies from ground up. They summon wonders of the unknown, and ancient lands in which cosmology and astronomical observations once guided rituals and beliefs, or enlightened sacred sites and ceremonial chambers. Informing a once agrarian society, the stars

ground what is incomprehensible or unfathomable in science and the rational. If Lê's photographs bring to light past and present moments of war, instability and despair, they also seek awe and comfort in acts of immersive viewings and communing with the cosmos and nature.

An-My Lê was born in Saigon, Vietnam, and currently lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. She was educated at Stanford University and at Yale University and has been the recipient of numerous awards including the Mac Arthur Foundation Fellowship (2012); the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Award (2009); and the Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship (1997), amongst others. Lê is currently the Charles Franklin Kellogg and Grace E. Ramsey Kellogg Professor in the Arts at Bard College, New York.

As a teenager Lê fled Vietnam with her family in 1975. They eventually settled in the United States as political refugees. Her work often addresses the impact of war on culture and on the environment. Lê says her "main goal is to try to photograph landscape in such a way that it suggests a universal history, a personal history, a history of culture."

In 2023 Lê presented *Between Two Rivers /Giữa hai giòng sông/Entre deux rivières* at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. In 2021 a major exhibition opened at the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and traveled to the Milwaukee Art Museum, WI, and the Amon Carter Museum of Art, TX. Other solo exhibitions of Lê's work have been presented at the Sheldon Art Museum, Lincoln, Nebraska (2017); Hasselblad Foundation, Gothenburg, Sweden (2015); Baltimore Museum of Art, Maryland (2013); Dia: Beacon, New York (2008); San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, California (2008); and MoMA PS1, Long Island City, New York (2002).

Her work has also been included in the Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2017) and the Taipei Biennial (2014 and 2006). She has been included in numerous international group shows including at the Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minnesota (2019); Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (2017); the Museum of Modern Art, New York (2016); National Museum of Art, Osaka, Japan (2015); Tate Modern, London (2014); Brooklyn Museum (2012); and the Guggenheim Museum, New York (2010) amongst others.

Marian Goodman Gallery champions the work of artists who stand among the most influential of our time and represents over five generations of diverse thought and practice. The Gallery's exhibition program, characterized by its caliber and rigor, provides international platforms for its artists to showcase their work, foster vital dialogues with new audiences, and advance their practices within nonprofit and institutional realms. Established in New York City in 1977, Marian Goodman Gallery gained prominence early in its trajectory for introducing the work of seminal European artists to American audiences. Today, through its exhibition spaces in New York, Los Angeles, and Paris, the Gallery maintains its global focus, representing some 50 artists working in the U.S. and internationally.

Please join us at the opening reception for the exhibition on Friday, 10 January 2025, from 6-8 pm. For further information, please visit our website: mariangoodman.com, or contact Linda Pellegrini, Head of Communications and Events, at linda@mariangoodman.com or (212) 977-7160.