

PRESS RELEASE

THE EYE OF AMSTERDAM

Ed van der Elsken, Bertien van Manen, Robby Müller, Johannes Schwartz, and guest artists Koos Breukel, Rineke Dijkstra, and Dana Lixenberg.

Opening: 03.07.2025, 5 – 8 PM
04.07 - 16.08.2025

Curated by Floor Wullems



Bertien van Manen, Amsterdam, 1977. *Kinderfeest.*, 1977

Annet Gelink Gallery is proud to present *The Eye of Amsterdam*, marking the gallery's 25th anniversary and the 750th anniversary of the city of Amsterdam. The exhibition is a photographic homage to the city and its many lives, bringing together iconic images by some of the most celebrated Dutch photographers.

A city full of stories, images, and memories, *The Eye of Amsterdam* takes us on a visual journey through the city. Its streets, residents, passers-by, history, and the artists who captured it are at the heart of this exhibition. How does Amsterdam inspire? How do photographers see her, and what do their photographs reveal about the city and its people?

Ed van der Elsken: The Rhythm of Dam Square

The Amsterdam of Ed van der Elsken in the late 1970s and early 1980s pulses with the city's vibrant energy. In this exhibition, we focus on a single iconic location: Dam Square. This central square—home to the Royal Palace and a recurring setting in Van der Elsken's work—served as the stage for his daily street photography, as well as projects like his column *Eds Amsterdam* in *Het Parool* (1983) and the film *Een fotograaf filmt Amsterdam* (1982). Van der Elsken captured a richly diverse cast of Amsterdammers: punks, the elderly, street musicians, Hell's Angels, and vagrants. "Amsterdam is my hunting ground," he once said—and like a hunter, he pursued and preserved its spirit through his lens.

Dana Lixenberg: Set Amsterdam

In her series *Set Amsterdam*, Dana Lixenberg presents the city as a stage. Here, it is the spaces—street scenes and interiors — that tell the story. People are absent, but traces of their lives are everywhere. The details in her images hint at the presence of residents and visitors, and an intensely lived past. Amsterdam becomes not just the backdrop, but the subject itself.

Robby Müller: Amsterdam in Light and Movement

Filmmaker Robby Müller brings Amsterdam to life through photographic studies of color, light, and movement. His work captures fleeting moments — a view of an Amsterdam that no longer exists. In his photographs, originally published in the weekly column *Amsterdams Licht* in *Het Parool* (2019–2020) and later collected in his book *Amsterdam Photos* (2023), the city becomes a frozen world, a silent witness to a lost time. His images evoke a deep sense of nostalgia and wonder.

Johannes Schwartz: The Alternative City

In his ADM photo series, Johannes Schwartz captures how residents shaped their own living environment on the former ship repair yard ADM, located on the western edge of Amsterdam—at the margins of the urban world. Squatted in 1997, the site developed into a self-sufficient space for living and working, home to artists and other residents. Schwartz's photographs document the structures that arose there — huts, towers, and communal spaces — built from recycled materials. But more than just the physical environment, his work also reflects the spirit of an alternative society, where shared living, art and resilience came together. The series was made well before the site's eviction in 2019.

On occasion of the exhibition, a new *High Series*, of the ongoing succession of publications made in collaboration with Amsterdam graphic design studio Experimental Jetset, is released.

Bertien van Manen: Women as Guests

Bertien van Manen turned her lens toward an often-overlooked group: female migrant workers who came to Amsterdam — and elsewhere in the Netherlands and Belgium — in the 1970s, often through family reunification. In her series and book *Vrouwen te gast* (1979), — revisited and published in 2024 with the title *I am the only woman there*, she gave a face to these women who were sometimes both literally and figuratively hidden from view. The work stands as a compelling example of socially and politically engaged photography from the late 1970s, where stark black-and-white imagery and clear themes intersect. Her photographs speak not only of hardship but also of strength and perseverance.

Rineke Dijkstra: The Vondelpark

In the early 1990s, Rineke Dijkstra created a series of photographs featuring young people in Amsterdam's Vondelpark. Her series not only captures public life in the city, but also highlights the subtle dynamic between photographer and subject. The openness of the park creates a compelling contrast between public space and the private inner world of its visitors.

Dijkstra portrays young people in a vulnerable phase of life — caught in the transition from childhood to adulthood.

Koos Breukel: Intimate Portraits

Koos Breukel makes a powerful contribution to the exhibition with portraits of people from his immediate circle — both well-known and unknown Amsterdammers. His images spark the imagination and offer intimate glimpses into the lives of those he photographs. In his work, Breukel subtly combines vulnerability and strength, allowing each portrait to tell a timeless human story.

Ed van der Elsken (1925, Amsterdam – 1990, Edam) captured the raw poetry of everyday life with an unfiltered, deeply human gaze.

Bertien van Manen (1942, The Hague – 2024, Amsterdam) is known for her intimate, documentary-style photographs taken during long stays with her subjects.

Robby Müller (1940, Curaçao – 2018, Amsterdam), acclaimed cinematographer, left behind a body of still images marked by light, solitude, and cinematic sensibility.

Johannes Schwartz (b. 1970, Munich) lives and works in Amsterdam, exploring spatial narratives through photography and installation.

Koos Breukel (b. 1962, The Hague) is celebrated for his powerful, psychologically charged portraiture.

Rineke Dijkstra (b. 1959, Sittard) lives in Amsterdam and is internationally renowned for her portraits that capture vulnerability and transformation.

Dana Lixenberg (b. 1964, Amsterdam) lives and works in Amsterdam and Los Angeles, and focuses on long-term documentary projects and portraiture.