

ARTS TALK

Cal supplement

Number 46

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Colour Supplement

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A slightly smaller edition this month as things tend to be a bit quiet in the summer. Nevertheless, we have some great reviews and photographs. We were in Rotterdam to attend the opening of the *Wild Summer of Art* at Brutus; to see *Quicksan 3* at the Fotomuseum and to visit the Zoo. We covered several events at the Holland Festival and our reviews are here.

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Cover

Cover is a photo by Jan Hoek from the series
@jantje666huntedportraithouse, 2025/26 on show
at Nederlands Fotomuseum in Rotterdam

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Alberto Giacometti *Seated Woman* 1956 Bronze . Foundation Giacometti. In the background Rui Chafes *What You See When You Close Your Eyes* 2026. Brionze.

RUI CHAFES
ALBERTO
GIACOMETTI

Gris, Vide, Cris III

at Museum Beelden aan Zee in Scheveningen

Photos and text by Michael HASTED

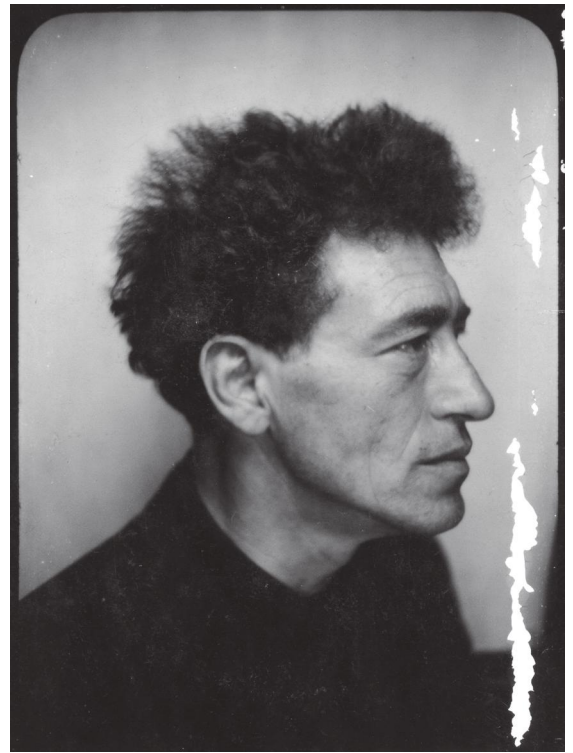


The third exhibition in the international series Gris, Vide, Cris, is being staged by Museum Beelden aan Zee in collaboration with Fondation Giacometti in Paris and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon

There have been some changes at Beelden aan Zee. It is always a pleasure to visit this museum on the beach at Scheveningen and the new layout was the first thing we noticed when we were there. The entrance area is re-vamped with the desk moved and the café enlarged. On the open sculpture terrace at the top of the building efforts have been made to integrate it (even more) with the dunes and the beach which anyway is less than a stone's throw away. Some sandy flower beds have been installed with dune-suitable plants.

Good though it was to see the changes, we were there to see the work of Alberto Giacometti. I have always been a fan of the Swiss sculptor because of his links to Cubism and, more especially, Surrealism so I was particularly looking forward to it. Third in the museum's *Gris, Vide, Cris* strand which mixes and matches/contrasts and compares the work of two different artists, Giacometti's work has been paired with Portuguese artist Rui Chafes. The exhibition's title, translated as *Grey, Emptiness, Scream*, is borrowed from the poem of the same name by Giacometti,

One the face of it the work of the two artists does not have much in common – Chafes all smooth and abstract, Giacometti rough and figurative, but it was this very contrast that created a sort of unity and harmony like a fruit with a rough skin and tender flesh inside. The work of the two artists' merged with Chafes's *La Nuit* with Alberto Giacometti's *Le Nez*. Chafes's piece is like a giant bird skull, or one of those sinister Venetian plague masks, with the Swiss artist's small white plaster figure suspended within the head.





This is not a large exhibition and in no way does it claim to be any sort of retrospective, but I was a little disappointed that there were only nine pieces by Giacometti. One of them was just a few millimetres high and six of them were hidden away in a dark tunnel in a huge white box which dominated the gallery. These small clay/plaster figures were visible only through narrow vertical slots at waist height and one had to stoop in order to see them. I thought this an unnecessary device from which the work did not benefit.

Nevertheless, it was good to see the Swiss master's work and the compare and contrast exercise with Chafes worked well enough.

In the small vaulted gallery in the middle of the museum I was pleased to discover the work of Dutch artist Femmy Otten in her small exhibition, *Birthland*. This was more obviously surrealist with a couple of very nice paintings and sculptures, the most impressive of which was a life-size female nude and baby quite roughly carved from raw wood, lying prone on the ground.

Giacometti/Chafes continues until 10th January 2027 and the Femmy Otten exhibition until 1st November 2026



Alberto Giacometti *Standing Woman* 1961-2 Bronze
and, in the background, Rui Chafes' *Tremor* 2018 Iron



HOLLAND FESTIVAL

This June Amsterdam hosted a global convergence of artists, musicians, choreographers and directors from every corner of the world. They brought distinct languages, traditions and perspectives to share at The Holland Festival, the Netherlands' premier international performing arts festival and one of Europe's most venerable.

Founded in the aftermath of the Second World War, the Festival emerged from a conviction that cultural exchange was not mere indulgence, it had to be treated as a vital necessity. The original intent was to reunite artists and audiences. Nearly eight decades later, that founding principle endures.

Over the years, the Holland Festival has unveiled ground-breaking figures in modern performance to Dutch audiences, including Maria Callas, Igor Stravinsky, and Pina Bausch. Yet its legacy transcends prestige. The Festival remains a vanguard of innovation, consistently showcasing avant-garde works across Amsterdam's stages. This year's edition carried forward that legacy.

Jay MANSILLA was there for ArtsTalk



Mirage Photo by Marina Chef



Mirage Photo by Marina Chef



MIRAGE at the Internationaal Theater

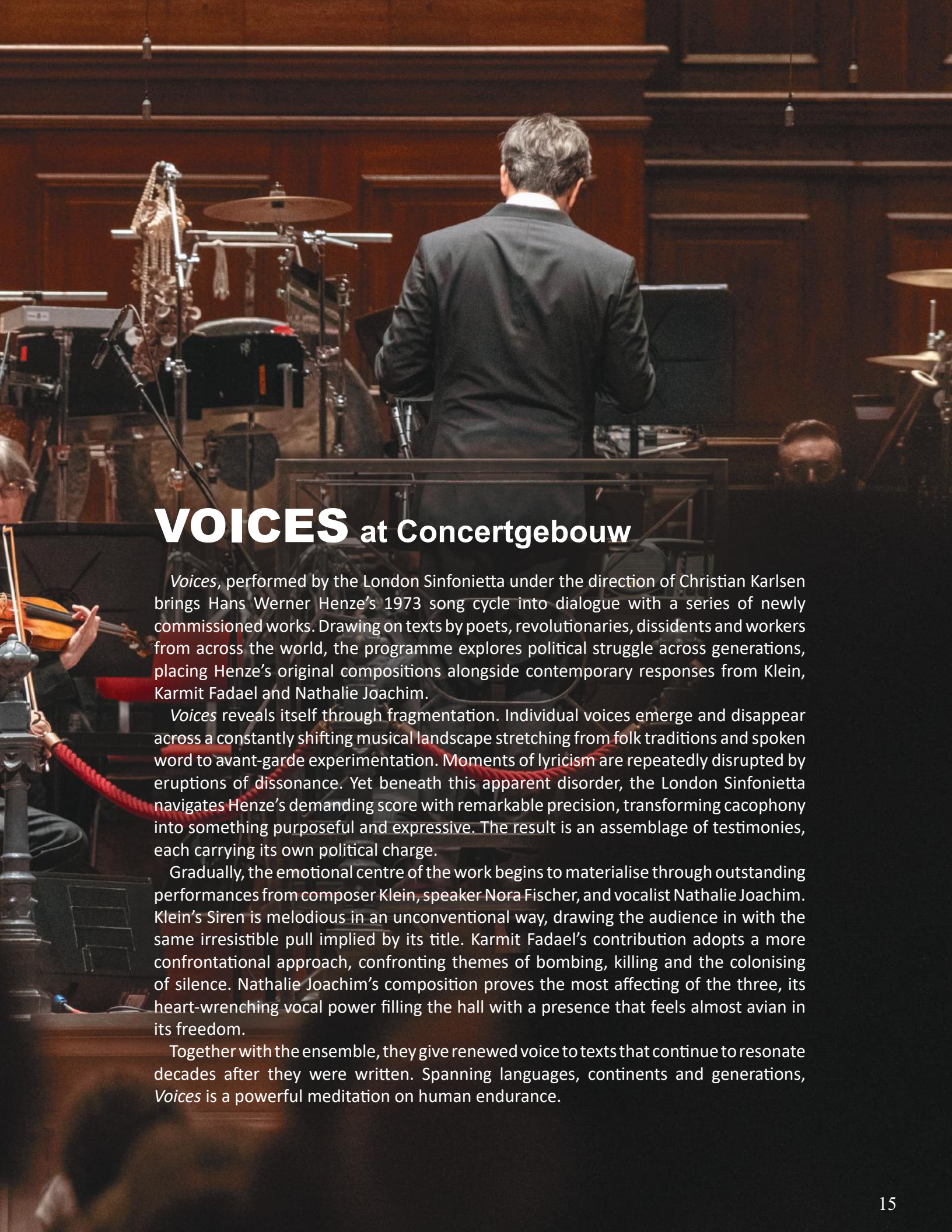
Created by Damien Jalet and Kohei Nawa and performed by Ballet du Grand Théâtre de Genève, *Mirage* is a dance work inspired by mirages and *fata morganas*, deceptive horizons conjured by shifting layers of light and air. Set upon a slanted stage engulfed in fog, the performance follows a group of dancers moving through a series of physical and emotional states.

There is no denying the technical excellence on display. The stage design and visual effects are beautifully executed, and the dancers demonstrate remarkable precision and control throughout. Yet *Mirage* often struggles with its own pacing. Some sections remain excessively slow, and while the work finds greater momentum in its bridging passages, it repeatedly returns to long stretches of repetition that dilute its impact.

While the programme describes a journey towards the essence of humanity, what emerged even more clearly was a meditation on time itself. Movements shift between stillness and acceleration, bringing time into the conversation from the very beginning. From there, the dancers move from walking and isolated poses into increasingly collective formations. The work appears to trace a path through different stages of human history, from solitude to society.

The choreography often takes on an aggressive tone, reflecting the conflicts of the present. What follows feels like an omen for the future, with different forms of richness and essence emerging separately before ultimately converging in a moment of unity.





VOICES at Concertgebouw

Voices, performed by the London Sinfonietta under the direction of Christian Karlsen brings Hans Werner Henze's 1973 song cycle into dialogue with a series of newly commissioned works. Drawing on texts by poets, revolutionaries, dissidents and workers from across the world, the programme explores political struggle across generations, placing Henze's original compositions alongside contemporary responses from Klein, Karmit Fadael and Nathalie Joachim.

Voices reveals itself through fragmentation. Individual voices emerge and disappear across a constantly shifting musical landscape stretching from folk traditions and spoken word to avant-garde experimentation. Moments of lyricism are repeatedly disrupted by eruptions of dissonance. Yet beneath this apparent disorder, the London Sinfonietta navigates Henze's demanding score with remarkable precision, transforming cacophony into something purposeful and expressive. The result is an assemblage of testimonies, each carrying its own political charge.

Gradually, the emotional centre of the work begins to materialise through outstanding performances from composer Klein, speaker Nora Fischer, and vocalist Nathalie Joachim. Klein's *Siren* is melodious in an unconventional way, drawing the audience in with the same irresistible pull implied by its title. Karmit Fadael's contribution adopts a more confrontational approach, confronting themes of bombing, killing and the colonising of silence. Nathalie Joachim's composition proves the most affecting of the three, its heart-wrenching vocal power filling the hall with a presence that feels almost avian in its freedom.

Together with the ensemble, they give renewed voice to texts that continue to resonate decades after they were written. Spanning languages, continents and generations, *Voices* is a powerful meditation on human endurance.



Rave-L Photo by Raffaella Allegra

RAVE-L by Les Apaches! and DJ Parrish Smith at Muziekgebouw

Rave-L surpassed the conventions of a concert by metamorphosing into an audiovisual odyssey that paid homage to Maurice Ravel's 150th anniversary. A reverent exploration of *Bolero*, evolved into a synaesthetic revolution, fusing the disciplined elegance of orchestral composition with the raw, pulsating energy of jazz and electronic music. Spearheaded by the avant-garde collective Les Apaches! and DJ Parrish Smith, the performers gather at the boundaries of contemporary composition, crafting an immersive experience that was as intellectually stimulating as it was viscerally exhilarating.

The performance wove classical material with jazz and contemporary electronic rhythms, creating a soundscape that was intricate and infectious. The colour-coded tone and mood of the evening were mirrored in the performers' attire: relaxed, casual clothes deliberately marked only by red or blue stripes, unified in the composer's uniform. The only exception was DJ Parrish Smith, who stood apart in a black blazer, a deliberate contrast.

Behind him, the screen, a digital canvas of CGI animations. It guided the audience through a visual journey from animated technological structures to dancers leaping from the screen, embodying the joy of movement. Through these animations and the emotional depth of Les Apaches!'s performance, the audience was led through a progression of contrasting blue and red tones and hues, culminating in a vibrant pink, a symbol of emotional liberation and the full expression of human experience.

The symbology extended beyond the individual, touching the collective and the cosmic, a feat made possible by Les Apaches!'s refreshing and innovative emotional approach. The melody's power peaked when the DJ joined in, though the title's wordplay - *Rave-L* - didn't fully deliver on the promise of a true rave, whether in structure or musical fusion.

As music evolves, its audience expands, creating spaces where diverse music lovers coexist. This performance was a refreshing and innovative fusion of classical orchestral music with the contemporary worlds of techno and rock. Together, the elements forged an emotional bond between music, listener, and dancer, a powerful lens for the Muziekgebouw audience to experience □





Summer of Art

**Atulya JAIN reports from Brutus in Rotterdam
with photos by Laura SILIQUINI**

Wild Summer of Art 2026, *Treasure Hunt* edition, opened at Brutus in Rotterdam, swiftly transforming the industrial exhibition space into a landmine of art. The format, where you navigate the space with a map, read up on the artists beforehand, and try to make sense of what you're seeing, is highly interactive, of course. Still, more than that, it is a thoughtful attempt to let our imagination guide our interpretations, allowing for a more authentic and personal understanding of the artwork, rather than one shaped by what it is perhaps supposedly meant to be.

Listing every work I managed to decipher would be impractical, and more importantly, I wouldn't want to spoil the treasure hunt for those still planning to go. However, a few pieces have stubbornly stayed with me.

The works of visual artist Inge Aanstoot, using slogans, banners, activism, and layered imagery to create deeply emotive pieces, spoke to me as an exploration of how activism functions for communities whose voices are often overlooked, existing within layers of communication and deeply complex experiences, yet still present through the small acts and stories that we often fail to notice.

Another standout was *Dark Days in Doggerland* by Koen Taselaar, a woven jacquard tapestry haunted by the memory of birds and landscapes that once existed between the Netherlands and England. The craftsmanship alone is astonishing. Imagining the sheer amount of time required to produce something this intricate only deepens the appreciation, not just for the work itself, but for the dedication behind it and the story it carries.



*The space is lit up with a celebratory spirit,
with artist takeovers happening every
Friday throughout the summer*

There is an abundance of different art mediums to discover throughout the exhibition. A documentary feature by Luca Tichelman waits for you as you move through the space, while a mixed-media installation by Natalia (Nika) Sorzano sparks curiosity around themes of gender differences and human connections. I won't claim that all of this is immediately obvious to your eyes and brain the moment you walk in, there would be little purpose in a treasure hunt otherwise, but the beauty of the format is that it stays with you. I am still looking artists up, trying to understand what they displayed, and carrying their work well beyond the gates of the exhibition.

All of this aside, it is a fun evening full of art, conversations if you seek them, and brilliant music. The space is lit up with a celebratory spirit, with artist takeovers happening every Friday throughout the summer, giving you yet another reason to come back after your first expedition □







Blijdorp

Rotterdamsche Diergaarde, Rotterdam's zoo, has some outstanding architecture with no fewer than twenty-one national monuments on it's 34 hectares site - oh, and lots of animals too . . .

Michael HASTED paid it a visit and took some photos . . .



The original entrance to the giraffe enclosure



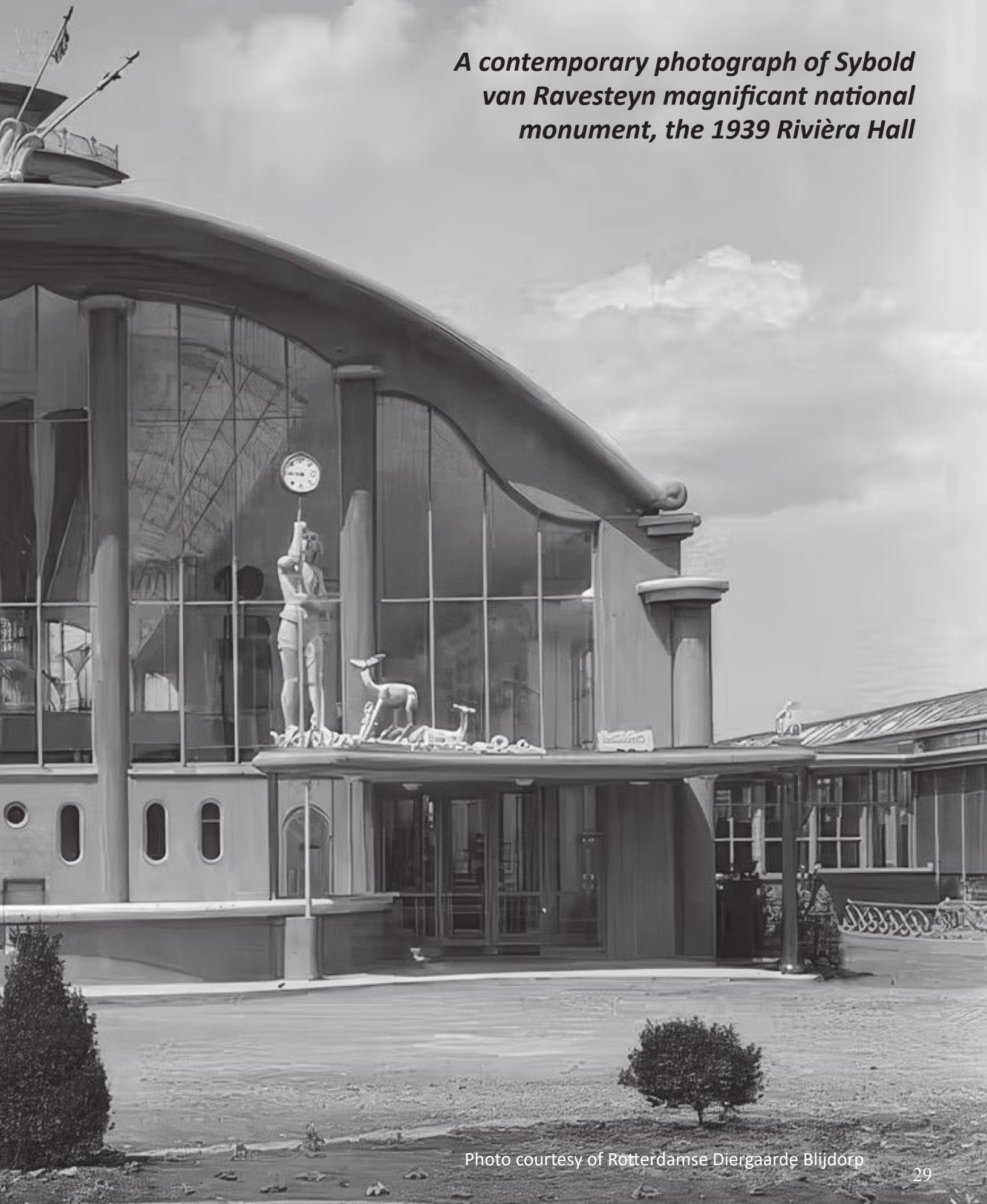
On the face of it an article about a zoo would seem to be outside the remit of an arts magazine. But zoos are not just keepers of exotic animals, they are sites of cultural interest and Blijdorp, Rotterdam's zoo, is particularly interesting from an architectural viewpoint with no fewer than twenty-one national monuments.

Now, I am not going to get into a discussion about the moral rights or wrongs of keeping wild animals in captivity but I appreciate that there are strong arguments for and against. In fact, in this piece I will hardly mention the animals, concentrating of the site as a whole and its historic buildings. But first, a little history.

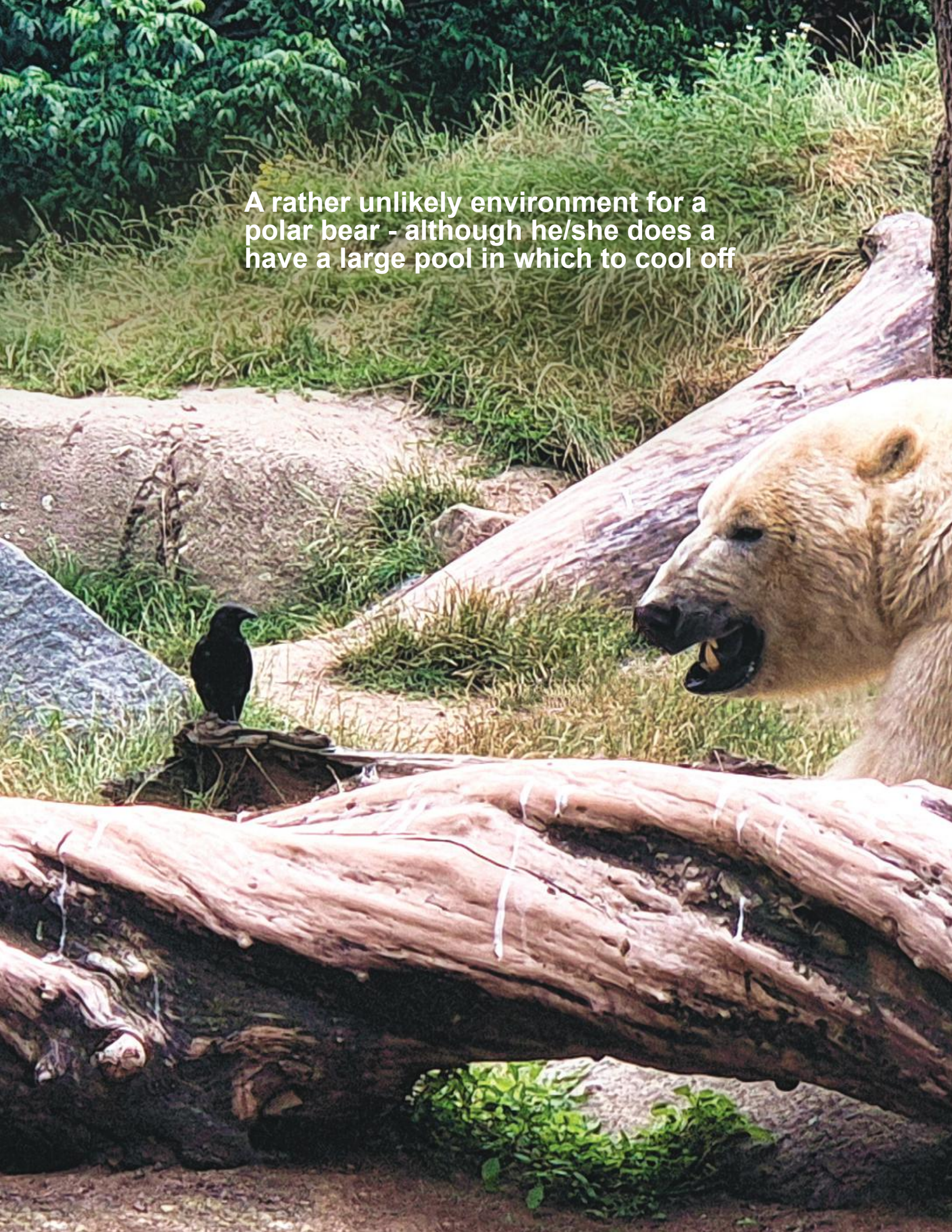
Established originally to display pheasants and waterfowl in the centre of Rotterdam near the Kruiskade it officially became Rotterdamsche Diergaarde, the Rotterdam Zoo, in 1857. Major redevelopment was undertaken in 1932 and five years later it moved to a new thirteen hectares site in the Blijdorp district north east of the city centre. The original zoo was badly damaged by German bombing in 1940 but some street names in Rotterdam city centre, such as Diergaardesingel (Zoo Lane), still bear witness to the old zoo. After two years of planning and construction the new zoo, designed by Dutch architect Sybold van Ravesteyn, who also designed Rotterdam central railway station, opened to the public on 7th December 1940. The zoo expanded, almost doubling its size, on the other side of the railway in 2001 and was declared a *Rijksmonument* – a national monument - in 2007



***A contemporary photograph of Sybold
van Ravesteyn magnificent national
monument, the 1939 Riviera Hall***



A rather unlikely environment for a polar bear - although he/she does have a large pool in which to cool off







Possibly the most outstanding building in van Ravesteyn's grand design is the Riviera Hall, now the zoo's main restaurant, and the former entrance to the giraffe enclosure. A lake and Chinese tower are at the heart of the original park while the newer part is dominated by the aquarium. Classic urban planning elements such as squares, boulevards and greenery established a unique environment with the main gate on Van Aerssenlaan being another iconic and recognisable image of the zoo.

The first thing the visitor notices when they enter the zoo is the greenery. The myriad trees and bushes create a leafy environment in which to stroll through the various areas. Now covering 34 hectares, the zoo is divided into several geographical regions and is home to nearly six hundred species. So, you have the African Jungle next to the African Plains with its giraffes, zebras and hyenas while further on is the Asian Corridor with the elephants next to the Himalayan Peaks. One thing you will not see is cages. Every animal has a large enclosure, matched as much as possible to its natural environment - although the polar bear looked a little out of place amongst grass and tress. The long and winding tiger compound is so lush and jungle-like that we never actually saw the tiger.

But, of course, like every zoo, what goes on behind the scenes is as, if not more, important than just showing the animals to the public. Diergaarde Blijdorp has extensive research facilities and participates in about 70 worldwide breeding programmes and studbooks acting as coordinator for a number of these, including the international breeding programme for red pandas, Asian elephants, Komodo dragons and many more □



Part of the zoo's main entrance on Van Aerssenlaan

QuickScan3

PHOTOGRAPHY NOW

Quickscan 3: Photography Now at the Nederlands Fotomuseum in Rotterdam traces the shifting terrain of Dutch photography and visual creative communication over the past decade

Text by Atulya JAIN



Esther Hovers & Raphaël Dallaporta,
from the series *Trompe l'Oeil*, 2026
© Esther Hovers & Raphaël Dallaporta



Xiaoxia Xu, from the series *Spider, Snake, Turtle and Dragon*, 2026

The exhibition opens with a mirror, a fitting invitation to self-reflection. Rather than treating photography as a fixed discipline, Quicksan 3 shows how the practice has evolved through its subjects, mediums, processes, and the politics shaping images today.

Curated by Guinevere Ras and Ruben Lundgren, the exhibition brings together the work of over twenty artists whose practices collectively map the transformations that have taken place in photography over the last ten years. What struck me most was not simply the diversity of the work on display, but how thoughtfully it had been arranged. Each thematic section felt like an exploration of how artists are approaching photography itself. Increasingly, the emphasis seems to have shifted away from the final image and towards photography as a process, one that is fluid, interdisciplinary and deeply personal.

This is evident in works like Xiaoxiao Xu's, where collage, old family photographs, and Chinese symbolism transform childhood memories into reconstructed narratives, making photography an act of remembering rather than recording. Another body of work that stayed with me was Peter Pflügler's *Hans: Don't Bury Me in the Grave of My Father*, which uses family archives to reflect on inherited trauma, identity, and the silences surrounding suicide and homosexuality, revealing how personal histories continue to shape the present.

During a conversation with one of the exhibition's curators, Guinevere Ras, the subject of change naturally came up. She noted that from a distance, the last decade of photography may not look especially radical. But step closer, and the picture shifts. Artists have been prising apart the medium's old rules, borrowing, bending, and cross-pollinating until familiar forms start to look strangely new. The transformation is slower, subtler, and all the more interesting for it.

The exhibition also confronts questions that feel impossible to ignore today. Works engaging with artificial intelligence, surveillance, and digital image-making ask what authenticity even means in an era where seeing is no longer synonymous with believing. Whether through Jan Hoek's explorations of AI-generated imagery or the investigations into surveillance and manipulated realities by Esther Hovers and Raphaël Dallaporta, the works consistently return to the same unsettling question: what images can we trust, and who gets to decide what is real?

Amidst these conversations about emerging technologies, I found it refreshing that the exhibition also devoted space to photo-books, a medium that social media has, in many ways, pushed into the background. Ultimately, *Quickscan 3* magnifies the seemingly mundane realities that shape our everyday lives, always filtered through the distinct perspectives and positionalities of the artists themselves. The issues it grapples with, ethics, climate change, political conflict, identity, memory, and technology, are not presented as grand statements but as lived experiences that quietly permeate contemporary image-making. More than anything, the exhibition encourages viewers to question not only what they see, but also what they instinctively overlook. In a world increasingly comfortable with ready-made narratives and algorithmically curated perspectives, *Quickscan 3* offers the space to think independently, to sit with ambiguity, and to arrive at meanings that are entirely one's own. For that reason alone, it is an exhibition well worth spending time with □

QuickScan 3 continues until 22nd November 2026



ARTSTALK

Radio

THE ARTS IN HOLLAND
NEWS, REVIEWS, PREVIEWS & INTERVIEWS
LINK ON THE FRONT PAGE OF ARTSTALK MAGAZINE

