

Now Representing Erwin Olaf

Galerie Ron Mandos is pleased to announce its representation of Dutch artist Erwin Olaf (1959). Over the past decades, Olaf has gained worldwide recognition for his highly stylized and meticulously choreographed photographs. His distinctive aesthetic invites us to enter a world in which subjects are beautifully lit, their clothing impeccably tailored, and the built stages perfectly organized. Yet, beneath this elegant façade lies a hidden reality of silent grief, solitude, and fear of losing one's hard-won rights. Olaf's diverse practice revolves around society's marginalized individuals, including people of color and the LGBTQ+ community.

Erwin Olaf has exhibited worldwide, including in Brazil, Chile, China, Spain, the UK, and the USA. Last year, Kunstmuseum The Hague and the neighboring Photography Museum presented an extensive retrospective of his work, followed by an exhibition at The Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam that included works acquired from Olaf in 2018. This year, the celebrated artist created *April Fool 2020*, a series of work that gives shape to the emotions and images that paralyzed the artist after waking up in the surreal situation of the current pandemic. Olaf's irrepressible need to respond to issues both close to home and further afield results in highly original work, delivers biting critique and shapes public debate.

Coinciding with the large retrospective exhibition at Kunsthalle München, Galerie Ron Mandos will present a solo exhibition of Olaf's work in Amsterdam in spring 2021. For both projects, Olaf will create new photographic work about the grandeur of nature and man's conceit.



Erwin Olaf, *April Fool 2020, 11.05am*, C-print, 121 x 121 cm, 2020

"For decades I have been fascinated by Erwin's activism, his fearless confrontation of discrimination and exclusion of certain groups in society. The way he creates self-awareness for the LGBTQ+ community with pride and strength and his ability to translate this fight into captivating aesthetic works is unique. I am extremely honored to work with this important Dutch artist" - Ron Mandos

"I have been following the artistic program of Galerie Ron Mandos for years. Ron Mandos and I often meet and get along very well. Working with him and his gallery gives me new energy." - Erwin Olaf

About the artist:

Erwin Olaf is an internationally exhibiting artist whose diverse practice centers around society's marginalized individuals, including women, people of color, and the LGBTQ+ community. In 2019 Olaf became a Knight of the Order of the Lion of the Netherlands after 500 works from his oeuvre were added to the collection of the Rijksmuseum. Taco Dibbits, Rijksmuseum director, called Olaf "one of the most important photographers of the final quarter of the 20th century".



Erwin Olaf, *April Fool 2020, 9.45am*, C-Print, 75 x 104,5 cm, 2020

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Erwin Olaf, *Palm Springs, American Dream, Self-Portrait with Alex*, C-Print, 100 x 178 cm, 2018

In 2018, Olaf completed a triptych of monumental photographic and filmic tableaux portraying periods of seismic change in major world cities, and the citizens embraced and othered by their urban progress. Like much of his work, it is contextualized by complex race relations, the devastation of economic divisions, and the complications of sexuality. Olaf has maintained an activist approach to equality throughout his 40-year career after starting out documenting pre-AIDS gay liberation in Amsterdam's nightlife in the 1980s.

A bold and sometimes controversial approach has earned the artist a number of prestigious collaborations, from Vogue and Louis Vuitton, to the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. He served as the official portrait artist for the Dutch royal family in 2017, and designed the national side of the euro coins for King Willem-Alexander in 2013. He has been awarded the Netherlands' prestigious Johannes Vermeer Award, as well as Photographer of the Year at the International Color Awards, and Kunstbeeld magazine's Dutch Artist of the Year.

Erwin Olaf has exhibited worldwide, including Centro de Arte Contemporáneo de Málaga, Málaga, Spain; Museu da Imagem e do Som, São Paulo, Brazil; Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin, Germany; Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, USA; and Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Santiago, Chile. In the spring of 2019, Olaf's work was the subject of a double exhibition at Kunstmuseum The Hague and The Hague Museum of Photography, as well as a solo exhibition at the Shanghai Center of Photography. In 2021, he will mount solo exhibitions at Kunsthalle München, Germany; the Suwon Museum of Art, Suwon, Korea, and will have his first solo exhibition at Galerie Ron Mandos, Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Olaf's work is included in numerous private and public collections, such as the Rijksmuseum and Stedelijk Museum, both in Amsterdam, The Netherlands; Fonds National d'Art Contemporain, Paris, France; Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Germany; Museum Voorlinden, Wassenaar, The Netherlands, North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, United States; Art Progressive Collection, United States, and the Pushkin Museum, Moscow, Russia.