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In Sight: Contemporary Dutch Photography from the Collection of the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam

March 26–May 8, 2005
Regenstein Hall

Overview: *In Sight* concentrates on the work of a select group of photographers who are vital to the image of Dutch photography. This core consists of Hans Aarsman, Wout Berger, Wijnanda Deroo, Rineke Dijkstra, Gerald van der Kaap, Bertien van Manen, and Hans van der Meer. Their work represents a wide range of approaches that advance the importance of contemporary photographic trends and genres.

A strong constant in Dutch photography is its very dynamic handling of the documentary aspect of the medium. Within this focus, attention to traditional social orientation has been given two radically different forms in the work of Bertien van Manen and that of Rineke Dijkstra. Dijkstra poses questions about the meaning of identity and the human condition in monumental portraits. The more lyrical reportage by Van Manen has been able to sketch an image of people during the dramatic changes in the former Soviet Union and Chinese culture.



In a country where centuries of claiming land from the sea is the norm, nature is often completely ‘man-made’ and under human control. Hans Aarsman’s Dutch scenes refer to the theater of an overstructured reality, and Wout Berger’s photographs to the deceptiveness of ‘natural’ beauty in photographs.

Of the core group, the most abstract in her approach is Wijnanda Deroo, for whom research into the significance and effect of light, space, and--for several years now--geometric motifs and color are constants. She concentrates on strongly formal photographic aspects, while a photographer such as Van der Kaap has constructed his oeuvre by interrogating the function, place, and effect of the photographic image. Since the early 1990s, investigation of digital possibilities for the taking and manipulation of images has played a central role in his work.

Hans van der Meer records various cultural phenomena with a sharp, and at the same time, humorous eye. In recent years his most important subject has been amateur soccer games, which he pictures as human theater, the suggestive

representation of human shortcoming.

Alongside this core of seven photographers, the exhibition samples the work of others, a younger generation, who have shown themselves inspired anew through various genres and approaches such as the portrait, landscape, social analysis, and research into the documentary significance of the photographic image. They include Celine van Balen, Koos Breukel, Elspeth Diederix, Marnix Goossens, Juul Hondius, and Hellen van Meene.

The photography collection of the Stedelijk museum was started in 1958 and is the oldest established collection in a European museum for modern art. Initiated by the then director Willem Sandberg, the Stedelijk's collection was modeled after the one begun by the Museum of Modern Art in New York before the Second World War. Under the various directors in the second half of the 20th century, the photography collection continued to grow, both as a reflection of developments intrinsic to photography and in its relation with other forms of visual art. Although the collection is internationally oriented, it naturally has a founding in and superlative examples of the contributions Dutch photographers and artists have made to the field.

Organizer: *In Sight: Contemporary Dutch Photography from the Collection of the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam* is organized by the Art Institute of Chicago and the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.

Sponsor: The Chicago presentation of *In Sight: Contemporary Dutch Photography from the Collection of the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam* is generously sponsored by LaSalle Bank.



Curator: David Travis, curator of photography, the Art Institute of Chicago; and Hripsimé Visser, curator of photography, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.

Elspeth Diederix. *Azalea* (detail), 1988. Collection of the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. Copyright 2003 Elspeth Diederix, courtesy Galerie Stigter, Amsterdam.

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Questions?
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