

NAAKT // NU

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Curator: Martijn van de Griendt

Jesse van den Berg

Reconstructing Queer Intimacy, 2020-2021

“I grew up as a very prudish child. This was noticeable through the fact that I always showered with my swimming trunks on when I was younger. This started a very alienated relationship with the naked body and me. As I got older, I slowly realized that I identified with the label queer. Growing up in an environment where there was barely any representation of queer intimacy around me was confronting. The whole society is based on a heteronormative way of thinking. When queer people got represented it was often in stereotypical and problematic ways. Queerness is not there to entertain the straight gaze. This lack of queer intimacy where I could identify with caused a second moment of feeling alienated.

The label ‘queer’ gives my models and me the most freedom. It does not assume that gender and sexuality are binary or fixed. Through my experiences I gained a certain fascination on the topics of intimacy, sexuality, the naked body and how they relate to my being. It created a specific way of looking at the human body in an intimate context. With lens-based media I research my definition of queerness and intimacy and explore how intimacy can be present in the process of making. While carefully exploring the power dynamics that evolve around the lens.

My project demands that queerness is part of the normative discussion around intimacy and it broadens the representation of queer and trans bodies. ‘Reconstructing Queer Intimacy’ is a visual experience of intimacy between the audience, the models and the maker. Through the queer lens I hope my work can give a sense of empowerment to every single person because everyone has the right to love themselves.”

Jesse van den Berg (1996) got a master's degree in Fine Arts & Design at St. Joost academy in 's-Hertogenbosch with 'Reconstructing Queer Intimacy', a project that is still being continued. His photos have been published in Volkskrant Magazine, Vogue Italia, Curatedbygirls, Pornceptual, Winq & Wül Magazine.

Martijn van de Griendt

“I got my first girlfriend when I was 17. It was 1987. I lived in Woenselse Heide in Eindhoven. Her name was Anouk and I made my first nude photo. It started with a photo at home when she came from the shower, the towel around her body. A little later a photo of her lying in bed, with only her underwear on. Just as exciting for me as it is for her. A year later I was allowed to go on holiday to Italy with her and her parents and there I took this photo through the mirror, perhaps my very first selfie, although the word did not exist then.

After two years, the relationship broke up and the photos disappeared in a shoebox. I got other girlfriends and I photographed them too. Along with the photography hobby that became more and more serious, the number of girls I photographed in front of the camera also grew. I was now at the School of Journalism and photography became

professional. The love for capturing my loves was just as great as the love for photography. Maybe I could call it both an addiction.

I am showing something else for the first time: men in the photo. I challenged myself and tried to photograph them the way I normally shoot the girls, intimate and vulnerable.”

Martijn van de Griendt (1970) studied at the School for Journalism and the KABK in The Hague. He became famous with his documentary projects about youth cultures. He published ten photo books including *Hassan & Hoesein* (2005), *Forever Young* (2014), *Exit Wounds (as if)* (2014), *Ik ben zeventien* (I am seventeen) (2016), *Maria I Need Your Lovin'* (2017), for which he also made a documentary. In 2019 his exhibition *ON/OFF* was shown in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, the result of the documentary assignment Document Nederland. The accompanying book *U bevindt zich hier* (You are here) was published.

Tara Fallaux

Lova Love (2021)

“In 2018 I lived in Xiamen, China for 5 months to work on an art project. Lova was introduced to me as an interpreter and assistant. We were together a lot and we became friends. From the beginning we talked a lot about art, but even more about love, relationships and the feeling of loneliness. Lova is now studying at the Rietveld Academy and now also lives in Amsterdam, not far from where I live. These portraits reflect her doubts and insecurities about the search for love and about being lonely.

Emotionally and narratively I am interested in looking at human ties, both physical and mental: love relationships, family, friendship, youth, getting older, physical vulnerability, sensuality, courage, desire and hope. I acknowledge that these are very broad themes. But it is this universality that creates a bond, touches us as we recognize common existential questions and feelings. The stories I tell through my pictures or movies do not answer these questions. Hopefully they work as moments of reflection and recognition.”

Tara Fallaux (Amsterdam, 1972) studied Film and Photography at the Netherlands Film & TV Academy, Gerrit Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam and Carnegie Mellon Academy in Pittsburgh USA. In her autonomous work she combines photography and film installations for exhibitions. In addition, she has been working for magazines and advertising agencies for many years as a freelance photographer and director. Tara is also an audiovisual teacher and coach. Her first photo book, *Perfect Pearl*, will be published soon.

Ehlana Polgara

Daughter of Helios (2020)

“I constantly hear his voice inside my head,
Judging right from wrong.
The Oppressor,
Demanding his family to represent love and freedom.
However on the inside, it was cramped and fearsome.”

Art was my first love; it allowed me to be seen and heard. My work emerges like a visual diary, in which I explore themes concerning identity, boundaries and

disconnection through mixed media artworks, using photography as a sketch-like base.”

Ehlana Polgara (1998) graduated cum laude from the Fotoacademie in Amsterdam, in 2020 with her project ‘Daughter of Helios’. ‘Daughter of Helios’ is about the influence of parental narcissism, and the process of breaking free from the silenced and toxic environment that I was brought up in. She published two photobooks: *1518* (2017) and *Daughter of Helios* (2020). Her photos were published in a.o. Focus Magazine en GUP.

Lana Prins

Through her photography Lana Prins researches, questions and visualizes subjects such as love, lust, gender and the female body. Through her work she tries, together with the women around her, to investigate what it means being a woman these days, and to reclaim the female body. Lana uses her camera to get closer to others – both literally and figuratively. Her oeuvre consists of intimate photos, which are characterized by the many close-ups of bodies and nature. For Lana, photography is not only a form of documentation, but also a means of experiencing the most intimate expressions of human emotions.

Lana Prins (1993) studied at Willem de Kooning Academie, Rotterdam.

Cornelie Tollens

‘The Golden Room’ (2021)

“The photos were commissioned by the Volkskrant with the theme of long-lasting love, love in old age. Never before have I photographed older people naked. This

has really given me so much love for this theme, a rich addition to my oeuvre. Never before have I seen BEAUTY in a whole new way.”

Artist Cornelie Tollens sees with her eyes, her camera and all of her senses. The hidden room in her brain opens up when looking at the world. This room beholds a secret force, descending from old and forgotten times, that wishes to bond with the now. It longs to share its fairytale storylines, colours and shades of light – dark until bright - and find access to those souls that have been searching for this ancient friend, this force, this fire.

Cornelie Tollens has worked for Vogue, Elle, Dutch, Spoon, Esquire, Penthouse, Playboy, Tank, Soup, Art View, Volkskrant Magazine, among others. She has published the photo books *Weird Nature* (2001) and *Hard Love* 2008.

Dylan van Vliet

Verwandlung (2021)

“The naked body, it’s the most important tool in telling my stories. It fascinates me that every tiny difference in posture, in movement, tells me something different. There’s both strength and vulnerability in it.

My project ‘Verwandlung’, which means transformation in German, focuses on the vulnerability that comes with having a mental illness. The difficulty in showing your true self.

I asked myself the question, how do I let others be part of my life without lying about myself?”

Dylan van Vliet (1989) studied at the Fotoacademie in 2012, from which he

graduated with honours in 2017. While studying, Dylan was diagnosed with what they call a personality disorder. This creates the constant question of who he is, and what his place in today's society is. Through his photography Dylan wants to show the difficulties that a mental illness entails. Themes such as identity, isolation and sexuality find an important place in his work.

Prins de Vos

Boys do cry (2014-2021)

For 'Boys do cry', Prins de Vos photographed Levi, the Amsterdam artist and man with trans history, who dares to expose himself literally and figuratively in front of the camera. It is a glimpse into the life of a boy who is fighting an embodiment of his identity, with all the pains that come with it.

For Prins de Vos, photography started as writing in a diary. By recording his own life, relationships and friends, he was able to look at it with distance and perspective. This highly personal way of documenting has always remained his point of departure for Prins. As a participant observer, he photographs people in his immediate environment with whom he identifies and who are often part of his immediate circle of friends. That is why people sometimes dare to expose themselves literally and figuratively.

Prins de Vos (1991) studied at the Minerva Academie for Pop Culture in Leeuwarden.

Lova Yu

Boys and badminton, 2020

Boys boys boys and
Mysterious and dangerous
How to understand the world through
looking at boys?
I have to love everything about them.

Lova Yu (1996) is artist and writer. She studied Image and Language at Gerrit Rietveld academie. With her background in Philosophy, she decided to use the analytical method as a handy tool for having fun. She kept wondering on the edges of them, and tempting people to do the same. She approaches storytelling in a very personal, informal way, in search of the original magic of human emotions. Her themes: urban life, human emotions, sexuality, gender, religions, existence.

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