

persbericht

# KUNSTHAL ROTTERDAM



## For Your Eyes Only

### Nude Photography in Bath, Woods and Surf

12 September 2020 - 7 February 2021

**For the very first time, the nude photography collection of journalist and photography collector Wim de Jong will be shown to the public. From Saturday 12 September, the Kunsthall Rotterdam is presenting 'For Your Eyes Only', featuring a selection from this remarkable collection of amateur snapshots. With women posing among the houseplants, next to the Christmas tree or in front of the fireplace; naked in the surf, on ski's, or in the back garden. Over six hundred imaginative, charming, evocative, humorous, and often also moving, images are brought together at the Kunsthall. The exhibition is an ode to all amateur photographers and their sweethearts. Although they have been making a major contribution to the history of photography for over a century, their role has never been highlighted or celebrated before.**

The phenomenon of nude photography is as old as amateur photography itself. The genre of nude photography has been passionately practiced from as early as the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, when photography was becoming increasingly accessible to the general public. Every decade has its own style: from the dreamy artistic nudes from the belle époque, and the garçonnnes and flappers from the 1920s, to nudist photography on the beach and in the dunes, striptease and domestic pinups. In ten chapters, the exhibition offers the visitors an intimate glimpse into hundreds of different, secret worlds: snapshots from around the house, garden and kitchen alternate with poses in the bath, woods and surf.

#### Collector's mania

Although these private photographs were originally meant 'for his/her eyes only', an increasing amount of copies are now ending up at fairs and (online) auctions. Collectors are falling for these gems, and unexpected snapshots, filled with hidden stories that are often recognizable and appeal to the imagination. One of these collectors is Wim de Jong, who has now brought the results of many years of passionate collecting together for this exhibition. In his own words, he is taking the visitors on a journey through the history of amateur nude photography. As an amateur photographer himself, and a lover of photography with a fascination for vintage 'found photography', this genre – that has never been disclosed in this way before – has been a major source of inspiration for his collector's mania.

The photographs from, among other places, the United States, France, and the former German Democratic Republic are not merely valuable documents of historical interest. Their mysterious aura of days long gone, the hidden stories behind them, and the secretive glimpse into other people's private domains also make these photographs irresistible.

### End of an era

With 'For Your Eyes Only' the Kunsthal is contributing to the disclosure of hidden private collections. The collection starts with photographs from around 1870 and ends at around the mid-1980s. By that time, most amateur photographers no longer disposed of their own dark rooms. Photography became a mass medium because of the emergence of photo labs, compact cameras, and ultimately digital photography. As a result, amateur nude photography is no longer a craft and appears to have lost a little of its 'innocence' along the way. Women are also assuming a different position: making a seductive selfie with your own smartphone camera is the standard these days. Furthermore, in the context of our contemporary views and the current social debate, representations of the female body are now seen in a completely different light. These photographs from a bygone era strikingly contrast with the contemporary images of idealised bodies we now see on social media. Not only the visual language, but also the convenience of capturing one's – temporary or permanent – lover with a smartphone and subsequently sharing the picture, make a world of difference.

### Press preview For Your Eyes Only

Press previews and interviews with collector Wim de Jong are possible by appointment. Members of the press can register for this by contacting [communication@kunsthal.nl](mailto:communication@kunsthal.nl).

### Publication

To accompany the exhibition, the Dutch-language catalogue 'For Your Eyes Only' will be released by Lecturis publishers, ISBN 978-94-6226-381-9, 320 pages. For sale in the Kunsthal Shop for € 30.00.

### About Wim de Jong

Wim de Jong (1957) is a writer, journalist, and collector of photographs. For many years he worked for the Volkskrant newspaper as editor and columnist, and currently writes culinary reviews for the NRC Handelsblad newspaper.

> For more press information and/or photographic material, please contact the communication department of the Kunsthal Rotterdam: Anna Kerkhoff, t. (+31)(0)10-4400323; Sabine Parmentier, t. (+31)(0)10-4400321, (+31)(0)6-52636232; [communicatie@kunsthal.nl](mailto:communicatie@kunsthal.nl)  
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Photo captions:

1. France, ca. 1920-1930, unknown photographer
2. United States, ca. 1930-1940, unknown photographer
3. Germany, ca. 1950-1960, unknown photographer

### About Kunsthal Rotterdam

The Kunsthal Rotterdam is one of the leading cultural institutes of the Netherlands, situated in the Museum Park in Rotterdam. Designed in 1992 by the renowned architect Rem Koolhaas, the Kunsthal has seven different exhibition spaces. The Kunsthal annually presents a varied programme consisting of around 25 exhibitions. As there are always several different exhibitions to be visited at any given time, the Kunsthal is able to offer an adventurous journey through different continents and art movements. Culture for a wide audience, from modern-day masters and contemporary art to obscure cultures, photography, fashion, and design. An extensive programme of activities is organised to accompany the exhibitions.

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