



Marie Cecile Thijs
(Dutch, born 1964)

Biography

Welcome to the surreal world of Marie Cecile Thijs. Portraits of people, animals, flowers and food, they all bear her specific signature. Stillness is key.

Influences reminiscent of the 17th century Old Masters are recurrent in the artist's work, simultaneously however her personal interpretation is completely contemporary. Thijs plays with her subjects by bringing them to life unexpectedly or, on the contrary, freezing them in time and space. Objects become characters. They move away from their daily destination, assuming a completely new personality. This provides intriguing creations, where tranquility, motion and sometimes also humor meet. In the works of Marie Cecile Thijs the unusual is usual. She is specialized in staged photography, and created series like *White Collar*, *Food Portraits*, *Amazones*, *Horses*, *Flowers*, *Birds & Vases*, *Majestic* and *Human Angels*. She has also taken many portraits of writers, cooks, politicians, designers and artists.

Her *Food Portraits*, contemporary still lifes with a strong surreal element, were first published in the *Financieele Dagblad* in 2012 to wide acclaim. This innovative series has since been included in multiple museum exhibitions. For this series Marie Cecile Thijs approaches the subject without any existing assumptions, resulting in unexpected and wondrous connections. Through its meticulous execution the wondrous flying objects often depicted in this series appear utterly realistic and commonplace to the viewer.

Marie Cecile Thijs primarily works in series. These continue to expand as new works are created and her series are therefore never officially concluded. Important series such as *White Collar* and the aforementioned *Food Portraits* present an insight in the compositional finesse of the artist. In combination with the contrast in the use of light and dark in her work, the result is a surrealist imagery.

In the most recent scenes *Green Scenes* the artist has created a futuristic world in which mutations have taken place between plants, animals and technique, resulting in an organic symbioses. Marie Cecile Thijs shows us fantastical still lifes from her imagined reality, a fusion between abstract and figurative elements.

Other series, such as *Horses* and *Amazons*, in which Thijs also are an indication of the profound insight of the artist in her subjects. The intimate yet direct portraits of animals and persons alike confront the viewer with a sense of familiarity and comfort. On the other hand the directness of these stylized portraits also create a sense of discomfort and abstraction. The artworks are therefore both minimalistic and vigorous. This duality - between Old & New, Light & Dark, Intimacy & Distancing - is key to the work of Marie Cecile Thijs.

Multiple series by Marie Cecile Thijs have been published in several media, most notably Het Financieele Dagblad (FD Persoonlijk) and French newspaper Le Monde. Her work has been included in the collections of the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, the Museum of Photographic Arts San Diego (MOPA), the National Museum of History and Art in Luxembourg (Mnha), the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond (VMFA) and many public and private art collections. She has published several books, including *Characters* (2013) and *Food Portraits* (2015).

Marie Cecile Thijs had her first retrospective in Museum aan het Vrijthof Maastricht in 2015. In 2016 she took part in the exhibition *Dutch Identity* in Museum De Fundatie Zwolle and *BAL!* at Soestdijk Palace. In November 2016 her 3 month during solo exhibition started at 10 Corso Como Shanghai, China, in cooperation with the Consulate of The Netherlands in Shanghai. In 2017 her works from the series *Majestic* and *White Collar* were exhibited in Kunsthal Rotterdam, in the exhibition *Cat Love, Nine lives in the arts*. In late 2018 and early 2019 her solo exhibition *Between Heaven & Earth* was on view at Museum Jan Cunen, Oss, The Netherlands.

For SmithDavidson Gallery she has participated in numerous group shows and art fairs, including TEFAF Maastricht, Zona Maco Mexico City and Art Miami. Her solo exhibitions include *Argentum* (2016), *SOLO* (2019-2020) and *ICONS* (2024).

Selected Collections

Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Museum aan het Vrijthof Maastricht, The Netherlands
Lisser Art Museum (LAM) / Vandenbroek Foundation Lisse, The Netherlands
Museum Rotterdam, The Netherlands
Museum of Photographic Arts San Diego, USA
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Richmond, USA
The National Museum of History and Art Luxembourg, Luxembourg
Public and private collections

Selected Awards

2023

Artist of the Year 2024, KunstWeek Foundation, The Netherlands

2014

1st Place, International Masters Cup, Category Food

2013

Top 3 International Masters Cup, Category Fine Art

2012

Awarded in the International, Photography Awards IPA

2011

Awarded in the International Photography Awards IPA

2010

Awarded in Masters Cup of the International Color Awards

Selected Exhibitions

2025

Le Carnaval des Animaux, SmithDavidson Gallery, Amsterdam,
The Netherlands

2024

Solo: *ICONS*, SmithDavidson Gallery Amsterdam, The Netherlands

2023

Reflections, SmithDavidson Gallery, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Permanent Collection Stedelijk Museum Vianen, Vianen, The Netherlands
Maastunnel Portraits Public exhibition, Museum Rotterdam, Rotterdam
The Netherlands

2022

The Photography Show, SmithDavidson Gallery, New York, USA
Solo: *Parallels*, SmithDavidson Gallery, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
9th Beijing International Art Biennale, Hispano American hall,
National Museum of Art (NAMOC), Beijing, China

2021

Solo: *Marie Cecile Thijs*, Museum Landgoed Fraeylemaborg, Slochteren,
The Netherlands
Solo: *A Surreal World*, SmithDavidson Gallery, Miami, USA

2019

Solo: *SOLO*, SmithDavidson Gallery, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Panorama Tulipland 3.0 - Building blocks for a new museum, Museum de
Zwarte Tulp, Lisse, The Netherlands
Glorious Delft Blue, Royal Delft, Delft, The Netherlands

2018

Solo: *Tussen Hemel en Aarde*, Museum Jan Cunen, Oss, The Netherlands
The Unusual Is Natural, Palazzo Saluzzo Paesana, Turin, Italy
WE ARE FOOD, Museum Jan Cunen, Oss, The Netherlands
FOOD!, Museum Nairac, Barneveld, The Netherlands

2017

Cat Love, Nine lives in the Arts, Kunsthal Rotterdam, Rotterdam,
The Netherlands
Solo Exposition, Casa Tua, Aspen, Colorado, USA

2016

Solo: *Argentum*, SmithDavidson Gallery, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
BAL!, Soestdijk Palace, Baarn, The Netherlands
Hemels Rembrandt, in collaboration with Rembrandthuis, Rembrandt
Tower Boardroom, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Mix and Match, SmithDavidson Gallery, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
The Animal in Photography, Museum of Photographic Arts, San Diego, USA
Dutch Identity, Museum de Fundatie, Zwolle, The Netherlands
Pavilion Chairmanship European Union, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

2015

Solo: *Lust for Light*, Museum aan het Vrijthof, Maastricht, The Netherlands

2014

Curiosité : Un Regard Moderne, Sotheby's Paris, France
Presentation Mediawall Rotterdamse Schouwburg, The Netherlands

2013

Portrait *Salinero* included in the collection of the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam,
Amsterdam, The Netherlands

2012

The Last Dance, Melkweg Gallery, Highlights by Curator Suzanne Dechert,
Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Cooks, New York photofestival Photoville, Cooks, New York, USA

2011

Exhibition Supreme Court The Hague, Legal Practitioners, The Hague,
The Netherlands

2010

Selected by the Museum of Contemporary Photography Chicago for the Art
of Photography Show 2010, *White Collar*, Chicago, USA

2007

Portraits, Melkweg Gallery, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

2005

Human Angels, Melkweg Gallery, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

1999

Photobook *Roomse Rituelen*, publisher Ad. Donker Rotterdam,
The Netherlands