

## Marie Cecile Thijs: Stills in Motion

On show from November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2016 to February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2017

10 Corso Como Shanghai Gallery

**10 Corso Como Shanghai in collaboration with the Consulate General of the Netherlands presents *Stills in Motion, Being Still, Being Powerful* by famous Dutch photographer Marie Cecile Thijs**

The Photo Exhibition of Marie Cecile Thijs: Stills in Motion will soon land in Shanghai. It will be held in the renowned 10 Corso Como Gallery, on the top floor, from November 17<sup>th</sup> 2016 to late February 2017. Thijs is also the No. 2 of the "Dutch Artists in Shanghai" series. The vernissage is held on November 17<sup>th</sup> with the artist Marie Cecile Thijs and curator Shi Hantao present.

Marie Cecile Thijs's portraits and still life photography are extremely rich in imagination, and full of vitality. Her photography is a nuanced look and depiction of ordinary people and everyday objects. She uses light with caution, bringing forward rich and heavy colors, thus creating an atmosphere that is more often seen in the still life paintings of the Northern Renaissance – a quiet and mysterious power, which is conceived and transcends everyday life. Of course, the Medieval and Renaissance still life paintings bore both moral and educational metaphors and functions. From the various representations of flowers (references to the Virgin Mary, virginity, faithfulness, and divine love), to the implied meanings of musical instruments, the hourglass, open books, skeletons and other elements (indicating time, transience, mortality), one can trace back the sources of Christian doctrine. Even though Thijs' fresh fruits, vegetables and food are wrapped in a quiet and mysterious atmosphere of the whole, there is no religious dimension. What they bring to people is still nourishment and delight in a secular sense. Even more interesting is that the artist uses intelligent light to bring these objects to life, and at the same time, using a surrealistic approach, places them in the frame. We can see not only René Magritte's iconic backs and domed hats, but

also surrealist' s practices and elements such as juxtaposition, dislocation, floating, throughout the vast majority of works, and thus creating unexpected, irrational, and dreamy effects.

Whether it is surrealism, or the above-mentioned daily allusion to non-everyday feelings, these are part of the essential character of photography. From the Paris captured by Eugene Atget and Brassai, to the America of Walker Evens and William Eggleston, photography artists are often in the daily landscape to capture or construct a surrealistic image. Of course, Thijs however does not take to the streets. She is a studio artist using computers in a subtle way to expand her unique visual narrative. Her works let us see some of the new possibilities that can be practiced in today' s still life and portrait photography. In the past few decades, when a very clear distinction of subject and theoretical studies of the characteristics of photographs were implemented in the documentation, materiality, indexability, and the various natural and social fields of empirical function, we have not been concerned with the spiritual dimension of the picture itself for a long time. Although Walter Benjamin is considered to be the first to point out that the reproduction of photography made the aura of traditional art disappear, he also admitted that in some portrait photography as well as the early photography process, the photos still shine with a fascinating and hard-to-explain aura. Benjamin's contradiction more or less reflects that there is a mysterious force beyond the process of the photographic reproduction. This can also be read in Andre Bazin's "Ontology of the Photographic Image," that is, people are obsessed with the kind of "automatic" process, as it seems to carry forces beyond nature.

Today, the advances in science and technology have allowed photography to be a process of constructing and manipulating the "real" , but our anticipation to see this

mysterious power hidden in a picture has not diminished. What is so fascinating about Thijs' work is that we see the existence of that power. While her subjects in these still life works should have been at rest, they are unwittingly arranged into a little nervous suspension or in a landing state; They seem to be static in the picture, but apparently are frozen in a moment of a dynamic process; They are in the beginning or end of a process of critical transition, or they are in a motion hidden in the stasis of an act we will not know. The fruits, vegetables, vases, or small animals, which are very beautiful in shape and color, are suddenly pushed into a marvelous situation, such as a fairy tale, giving the viewer both visual and spiritual pleasure. This is the inheritance of the surrealist spirit, which is entirely dependent on the intuitive visual narrative. It is also grounded in the experience of modern life – what is around us is occasional and accidental, worn down to blandness through our daily routines. Sybille Ebert-Schifferer once said in "Still Life: A History" , that each still life is emblematic of a specific time and place but carries a certain metaphysical perspective. Still life resides in a paradox: life is never still.

On November 17th, Marie Cecile Thijs: Stills in Motion will be presented in 10 Corso Como Shanghai. A must see exhibition for photography lovers. Come and experience the power of being still.

### **About 10 Corso Como**

Launched in 1990 in Milan, Italy by Carla Sozzani, 10 Corso Como is a network of spaces rolled into one experience and was the world's first concept store. It is dedicated to Art, Fashion, Music, Design and Cuisine and has been designed as a multifunctional area, where customers and visitors are encouraged to meet and exchange culture, ideas and experiences. Named after its location in Milan in an industrial building, today 10 Corso Como has locations in Milan, Seoul, Shanghai and Beijing.

Opening time for top-floor gallery: 10:00 a.m. – 22:00 p.m.

### **About Marie Cecile Thijs**

Marie Cécile Thijs, originally a lawyer, decided more than fifteen years ago to follow her love for the camera. She is specialized in staged photography, and created the series White Collar, Food Portraits, Cooks, Horses and Human Angels, which are still in progress to this day. She also made many portraits of writers, politicians, designers and artists. Most recently she made still life series Asia > Amsterdam in cooperation with Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, and EU 2016 Mementos in assignment of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Her work has often been published and exhibited, her photos have repeatedly received international acclaim and are included in the collections of the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, Museum Rotterdam and many public and private art collections. She published several books, most recent Characters (2013) and Food Portraits (2015).

### **About Shi Hantao**

Born in 1973, Shanghai

He received his master degree of Arts Administration and Policy from the School of

the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC).

He worked for Rockbund Art Museum, Chronus Art Center, EPSITE etc, being involved in the curating and organizing of artistic exhibitions and public programmes. His extensive works include writing and translating on photography, contemporary art and study of art institutions.

### **About “Dutch Artists in Shanghai”**

Initiated by the Consulate General of the Netherlands in Shanghai, the Dutch artists in Shanghai” series first launched this September, is an on-going program to introduce and promote both established and emerging Dutch visual artists from various disciplines to the Shanghai public.



Kingdom of the Netherlands

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