Take a peek through ‘The Keyhole’

By Lee Woo-young
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Dutch photographer Erwin Olaf’s first exhibition in Korea features his latest series ‘The Keyhole’ and ‘Dawn & Dusk’

Whether through a window or through Facebook, everyone has his share of experiences peeking into others’ lives.

Dutch photographer Erwin Olaf captured a boy sitting on a table and peering through a keyhole to portray the urge to peek and the curious state of the mind.

The photo is part of his latest “The Keyhole” series completed in 2011. Subjects in the series are all turned away from the camera as if they are looking at something secretly.

The award-winning photographer, who enjoyed a successful career as a commercial photographer, also made a successful debut in fine art photography with his “Chessmen” series in 1988.

“It’s rare for a commercial photographer to succeed in fine art photography. But Olaf keeps in mind how to appeal to the public from his experience as a commercial photographer and creates his own distinctive style,” said Hong So-hee, the curator of Gallery Kong which is holding Olaf’s first solo exhibition in Korea.

Olaf also introduces a beautiful photography series “Dawn and Dusk” released in 2009 and 2010.

He shot two different photos which have the same setting, but in different colors — “Dusk” in shades of black and “Dawn” filled with white. Women in each of the photos sit expressionless, giving off an awkward atmosphere in a beautifully decorated room and costumes.

“Olaf tried to talk about the social problems people thought were solved but still remain today by using the 19th-century-style setting and clothes,” said Hong. “He explores social issues and taboos through highly stylized images, which makes him a distinguished photographer,” Hong added.

The exhibition runs through Oct. 21 at Gallery Kong in Samcheong-dong, Seoul.

For more information, visit www.gallerykong.com or call (02) 738-7776.