

WIDEWALLS

Erwin Olaf: Volume I & II

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The first book containing the works of Dutch photographer Erwin Olaf, titled *Erwin Olaf: Volume I*, was released in 2008. The follow up, *Volume II*, came out in November 2014. Now, the images from both Aperture collections are being exhibited at the Hasted Kraeutler Gallery in New York, along with recent series, *Waiting*, and a related video installation with the same name.

Waiting

The photographs and the video examine the concept of waiting – a psychological state that Olaf has described as occupying “an odd place in between two emotions that is quickly disappearing, as everybody now has a phone or an iPad that connects them to the world.” The video installation that occupies a room conceived specifically for it, features a poignant musical score created in close collaboration with a composer over the course of six weeks. We see an attractive woman sitting at a restaurant, apparently waiting for someone. The two screens show different angles and aspects of the wait, and as time passes and there is no sign of her companion, her elegant posture and high self-esteem begin to dissolve. The viewers are experiencing her impatience too, as they have no choice but to tarry with her and witness the inevitable change of scenery and mood while the disappointment and melancholy take over.

High fashion, high quality

In this presentation of his most recent work, Olaf expands on his established, well-known style of highly polished and stylized color studio images. His thought-through and elaborated scenery usually deals with bourgeois conventions, addressing social issues and taboos. The portraits are often explicit, provocative, unconventional and dramatic, often reminding us of the 1950s way of life. His razor-sharp aesthetic intuition made his work instantly recognizable and linked back to him, never missing to deliver dramatic visual and emotional impact. The photographs he takes evolved throughout his career, starting off as classical black-and-white portraiture and vividly colorful chaotic parties, he arrived to being the master of flawless, sophisticated and utterly curated oeuvre, capturing the very essence of contemporary life.



Keyhole 7, 2012

The artist

Erwin Olaf worked with many famous brands, such as Heineken, Louis Vuitton, Nokia and Microsoft. Not a stranger to provocation, one of his most famous pictures includes a nude model with a bag of a famous fashion brand on his head, having an erection. Needless to say the work caused a lot of controversy, but it also pointed out to the still relatable state of fashion, as the title of the series was *Fashion Victims*.

The exhibition at Hasted Kraeutler Gallery opens on January 8th and runs through February 28th, 2015.