

# whangarei art museum

te manawa toi

www.whangareiartmuseum.co.nz

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For immediate release

**6 September – 15 November 2015**

The Whangarei Art Museum presents *Hendrik Kerstens + Erwin Olaf*. An exhibition featuring the works of two leading international contemporary photographers.

Since 1995 Hendrik Kerstens has been photographing his daughter, Paula, beginning as a series capturing the fleeting time of childhood. A moment of revelation occurred for Kerstens, which would later lead him to develop a series of portraits emulating the style of the Dutch masters: "One day Paula came back from horseback riding. She took off her cap and I was struck by the image of her hair held together by a hair-net. It reminded me of the portraits by the Dutch masters and I portrayed her in that fashion. After that I started to do more portraits in which I refer to the paintings of that era. The thing that fascinates me in particular is the way a seventeenth-century painting is seen as a surface which can be read as a description of everyday life as opposed to the paintings of the Italian Renaissance, which usually tell a story. Northern European painting relies much more on craftsmanship and the perfect rendition of the subject. The use of light is instrumental in this."

At first glance the style of the photographs distinctly speak of the works of Johannes Vermeer, depicting portraits of Paula seemingly dressed in 17<sup>th</sup> Century Dutch costume. On closer contemplation Kerstens' original moment of revelation is echoed when the viewer discovers the



costume is made up of everyday modern objects, often announced in the title of the works, such as *Bag* – portraying Paula with a headdress styled from a plastic bag.

Erwin Olaf's *Keyhole* series was centred around his first 3D installation *The Keyhole* (2011/2012). Exploring the themes of intimacy, shame and feelings of guilt, each of the photographs show a solitary figure – either turned away or with their gaze downcast in a private moment of their own internal world.

In 1987 Olaf began working with film, which has been an important influence on his art practice. His perfectly crafted scenes are strikingly composed, yet leave much to the imagination. His technique delivers a dramatic visual impact while often leaving the visitor curiously unsettled by the unspoken conclusions.



Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands  
in New Zealand

Exhibition supported by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Image credit left: Erwin Olaf, *Keyhole 6*, *Keyhole series*, 2012, chromogenic print, image courtesy of the artist

Right: Hendrik Kerstens, *Cosy*, 2012, ultrachrome print, image courtesy of the artist

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## Visitor Information:

OPEN Daily – 10am -4 pm

Closed Christmas Day | Boxing Day | Good Friday

## Press Enquires:

Dent St | Town Basin | Whangarei

whangareiartmuseum@wdc.govt.nz | 09 4304240