



**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 stylised 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 (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) and *SOLO* (2019-2020).

## Awards

2023

Artist of the Year 2024, KunstWeek Foundation, NL

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 Collections

Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, NL

Museum aan het Vrijthof Maastricht, NL

Lisser Art Museum (LAM) / Vandenbroek Foundation Lisse, NL

Museum Rotterdam, NL

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 Exhibitions

2024

Solo exhibition SmithDavidson Gallery Amsterdam, NL

2023

*Reflections*, SmithDavidson Gallery, Amsterdam, NL

Permanent Collection Stedelijk Museum Vianen, Vianen, NL

Maastunnel Portraits Public exhibition, Museum Rotterdam, NL

2022

*The Photography Show*, SmithDavidson Gallery, New York, USA

Solo: *Parallels*, SmithDavidson Gallery, Amsterdam, NL

9th Beijing International Art Biennale, Hispano American hall,  
National Museum of Art (NAMOC), Beijing, China

2021

Solo: *Marie Cecile Thijs*, Museum Landgoed Fraeylemaborg,  
Slochteren, NL

Solo: *A Surreal World*, SmithDavidson Gallery, Miami, USA

2019

Solo: *SOLO*, SmithDavidson Gallery, Amsterdam, NL

*Panorama Tulipland 3.0 - Building blocks for a new museum*,

Museum de Zwarte Tulp, Lisse, NL

*Glorious Delft Blue*, Royal Delft, Delft, NL

2018

Solo: *Tussen Hemel en Aarde*, Museum Jan Cunen, Oss, NL

*The Unusual Is Natural*, Palazzo Saluzzo Paesana, Turin, Italy

*WE ARE FOOD*, Museum Jan Cunen, Oss, NL

*FOOD!*, Museum Nairac, Barneveld, NL

2017

*Cat Love, Nine lives in the Arts*, Kunsthal Rotterdam, NL

Solo: *Exposition, Casa Tua*, Aspen, Colorado, USA

2016

Solo: *Argentum*, SmithDavidson Gallery, Amsterdam, NL

*BAL!*, Soestdijk Palace, Baarn, NL

*Hemels Rembrandt*, in collaboration with Rembrandthuis,  
Rembrandt Tower Boardroom, Amsterdam, NL

*Mix and Match*, SmithDavidson Gallery, Amsterdam, NL

*The Animal in Photography*, Museum of Photographic Arts,  
San Diego, USA

*Dutch Identity*, Museum de Fundatie, Zwolle, NL

Pavilion Chairmanship European Union, Amsterdam, NL

2015

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

2014

*Curiosité : Un Regard Moderne*, Sotheby's Paris, France

Presentation Mediawall Rotterdamse Schouwburg, NL



2013

Portrait *Salinero* included in the collection of the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, NL

2012

*The Last Dance*, Melkweg Gallery, Highlights by Curator Suzanne Dechert, Amsterdam, NL

*Cooks*, New York photofestival Photoville, Cooks, New York, USA

2011

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

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, NL

2005

*Human Angels*, Melkweg Gallery, Amsterdam, NL

1999

Photobook *Roomse Rituelen*, publisher Ad. Donker Rotterdam, NL

#### Selected Art Fairs

Photo London, London, UK

KunstRAI Amsterdam, Amsterdam, NL

PAN Amsterdam, Amsterdam, NL

Paris Photo OVR, Paris, France

MIA Photo fair, Milan, Italy

Fresh Eyes Photo Fair, Amsterdam, NL

Zona Maco FOTO, Mexico City, Mexico

Art Miami, Miami, USA

EXPO Chicago, Chicago, USA

Art New York, New York City, USA

TEFAF Maastricht, Maastricht, NL

Palm Beach Modern + Contemporary, Palm Beach, USA

Art Silicon Valley / San Francisco, San Francisco, USA