

ERWIN OLAF

DUSK

10th September – 10th October, 2009
Flatland Gallery, **Utrecht**

12th September – 12th October, 2009 (+ works from other series by Erwin Olaf)
Flatland Paris / Magda Danysz Gallery, **Paris**

19th November – 22nd November, 2009
P A R I S PHOTO, **Paris**

As a **sneak preview** before the launch of this years international photography fair P A R I S PHOTO, Dutch photographer **Erwin Olaf** is presenting his new series **DUSK** in September this year at **Flatland** in Holland and at **Gallery Magda Danysz** in Paris, in conjunction with **Flatland Paris**. In **DUSK** Olaf has created portraits of African-American families of the early 20th century.

Seeing **DUSK** is as arriving at the enlightened end of a silent road towards a liberated world; a social paradise. With **DUSK** Olaf "delivers velvet-gloved emotional impact with his highly stylized mode of image making and offers a blend of mid-century modern and noir aesthetics seen through a contemporary, fashion-inflected lens" (quote Aperture Foundation).

Because of the force of aesthetics – his exaggerated styling, the balance in his scenes, the dominating darkness, Olaf makes us involuntarily aware of our subjective historical notions, modern general prejudices and psychological mind frames. For one, his choice to portray people with dark skin colour is also (just) his preference because of the beauty of the dark skin. And although at the outset we are thinking this may be a shared social paradise, it is Olaf who makes it believable, yet deliberately not quite; his characters seem to be trapped somewhere in their notion of a widespread bourgeois, suffocating environment. The long length of the Victorian dress of the 'Mother', the position of her hands, neatly folded in her lap, the tightness of the collar of the officer's uniform, the American eagle that is stuffed; everything is locked.

Intuitively and ironically, with **DUSK** Olaf demonstrates how we all are servile to a kind of censorship we have swallowed voluntarily, a central theme in his work.

Erwin Olaf (1959): In Holland as well as abroad Erwin Olaf is known as one of the most sensational contemporary photographers. With sublime irony he exposés our bourgeois liberty as an illusion. Olaf also produces films and video, and is asked by media such as the *New York Times Magazine*, *London Sunday Times*, *Elle* and *Vanity Fair* for his talent. Recently the prestigious Aperture Foundation published the monograph simply called *Erwin Olaf*. His work is shown in important group – and solo shows, like The Museum of the City of New York, The Chelsea Art Museum, New York, The Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art and Maison Europeenne De La Photographie, Paris, to name just a few.

Exhibitions Erwin Olaf in 2009 (selection)

Institute Néerlandais, Paris, France (solo)
Domus Artium 2002 (DA2), Salamanca, Spain (solo)
Photo Museum Antwerp, Belgium (solo)
The Grand Manege, Moscow Biennale of Fashion and Photography, Russia(solo)
Museum of the City of New York, USA (group)
Kunsthalle Winterthur, Switzerland (group)
The Hague Museum of Photography, Netherlands (solo)
MuHKA (Museum for Contemporary Art) in Antwerp, Belgium (group)
Seoul Art Centre, Seoul, Korea (group)
Museum Forma, Milan, Italy (solo)

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'Portrait 1', DUSK, 2009

gelatin silver print

121 cm x 74 cm

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'The Mother', DUSK, 2009

gelatin silver print

... cm xcm

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