

MEET Kaat Stieber

Kaat Stieber is a fine art photographer who blends modern surrealism with Dutch renaissance art in her images. Employing a broad set of creative skills – including an internationally acclaimed background in theatre and costume design – her photos are a display of keen cultural awareness and craftsmanship. Every picture tells a story. Memories of a classic Dutch childhood and experiences of the artist as a grown woman are told through landscapes, still lives and portraits.

This series is an introduction to the work of Kaat Stieber and an ode to the rich history and the distinctive beauty of the Netherlands.



Artist part 1



THEATRE

For over 20 years, Kaat Stieber told her stories through theatre, her first love. She toured throughout the Netherlands and abroad, both performing on stage and working in costume design. Eventually, this resulted in Kaat establishing her own theatre production company. Her extensive background in drama continues to play a key role in all her work.

Artist part 2



PHOTOGRAPHY

When Kaat Stieber discovered her second great love, photography, she soon decided to take the leap and focus her creativity entirely on this new medium. By designing the costumes, directing the models and digitally manipulating the images herself, Kaat sees endless possibilities. Photography allows her to tell any story that comes into her mind.

JOURNEY THROUGH MY HOLLAND

Shooting for this series, which was 4 years in the making, Kaat Stieber made use of various locations and a variety of different media. Photos of objects, still lives and people are shot at her studio. The scenery is found on her travels and on walks through nature. Kaat carries her camera with her wherever she goes. A beautiful sky, a lonely tree or a solitary cow, she captures the images to add them to her private collection. Whenever a story starts to dawn on the horizon, she starts sketching. This way, she is able to visualise what is needed and which elements she would like to add to the image. Then, she can start adding images from her own database to the composition. If necessary, she goes out in search of any missing elements. Any photographic image is therefore often composed of several different photos, which Kaat adds to by digitally painting over it. Her pieces are often made up of twenty or more layered images.



Dutch Mondays - 2021

The story begins







Dutch Tulips - 2018

DUTCH TULIPS



Individually, we are one flower. But together, we make a field. Life is about holding on and letting go. Humans need each other, complement one another. The vase is empty without its tulips; the tulips die without their vase.

DUTCH MOUNTAINS

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We may be a small country, but we are great in our own right. However, in the Netherlands, we don't like to make mountains out of molehills. Dutch sobriety keeps us with both feet firmly planted on the immaculately flat ground.



Dutch Mountains - 2018



Dutch Celebration - 2021

DUTCH CELEBRATION

We are a nation of many freedoms. A country enjoying an unprecedented period of peace. My grandmother would tell stories about the horrors of the Second World War and the hunger winter she suffered in Rotterdam. Now that her generation is slowly fading away, it seems at times as though their legacy fades along with them. We start to take the privileges of our freedom for granted, focussing instead on trivial troubles we create for ourselves.

STILL LIFE HANGOVER

A semi-sequel to Rembrandt today, the other way around this time.
What if the young lady gone wild had lived in the 17th century?

I imagine her sleeping off her hangover, right in the middle of this still life. Just like the still lifes from the Dutch Golden Age, this work is full of symbolism – covert indications to the girl's supposed sins. She herself symbolises the frivolities of youth;

something that never changes.





Butterfly Bush

When spring arrives, everything emerges from the dark soil, cocoon or cave in which it had been asleep. This work expresses that feeling, more than anything else.
Bursting with life, you unfurl your wings to ride the breeze like a fluttering flower.



The old masters meet modern techniques

Not only does Kaat Stieber pay homage to the 17th-century painters in the techniques she employs, but also in her subjects. Famous works are often referenced, brought into modernity through the art of digital photo manipulation and mixed media, blending perfectly to create new and inspiring pieces. In a sense, the old works take on a new life.

“In this day and age, it is easy enough to create something beautiful, even with little means. The old masters required much more in the way of time and materials especially. Using modern devices, I ‘paint’ digitally, without the smell of the canvas or the patience required to let it dry. The cloud grants me all the storage capacity I could every wish for. My truest friend: Ctrl+Z . One wrong brush stroke does not mean anything is ruined; it is swiftly erased at the press of a button.”