

Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo

Wendelien van Oldenborgh

unset on-set

Saturday, 12 November 2022 — Sunday, 19 February 2023

unset on-set is the first solo presentation in Japan of the Dutch artist Wendelien van Oldenborgh. In an artistic practice now spanning more than twenty years, van Oldenborgh has been exploring cinema as both form and a method of production that enables collective dialogue. People of various backgrounds participate in her filmmaking as cast and crew members, never with prewritten scripts, often (re)visiting and conversing on artistic and cultural practices, or sociopolitical events of the past or present. In this way, the works capture myriad subjectivities, perspectives, and relations, surfacing various issues that resonate in the present.

The exhibition presents five existing works and a new work. Among the earlier works are *Maurits Script* (2006), in which archival documents of Johan Maurits, the governor of seventeenth-century Dutch Brazil, are recited and discussed among individuals with various backgrounds living in Dutch society, and *No False Echoes* (2008), which captures various forms of dialogue regarding the cultural and political implications of early radio under Dutch colonial policy, intertwined with a voice reading aloud “If I Were a Dutchman,” written by the Indonesian nationalist Soewardi Soerjaningrat. *Maurits Script* was filmed at the Mauritshuis Museum, Maurits’s former residence in the Hague, and *No False Echoes* was filmed at the former radio station that delivered programs to the Dutch East Indies. As such, the film locations offer specific historical contexts to the dialogue and the imagery, mediating—yet not encapsulating—the articulation.



1. *Maurits Script*, 2006, film still



2. *No False Echoes*, 2008, film still

Van Oldenborgh’s filmmaking also often integrates music, film, poetry, and their histories. *Two Stones* (2019) features the German architect Lotte Stam-Beese and the Afro-Caribbean political activist Hermina Huiswoud, both of whom absorbed socialist ideology in the Soviet Union in the early 1930s and later lived in the Netherlands to pursue their political ideals and struggles. Filmed in two locations—Rotterdam, the

Netherlands, and Kharkiv, Ukraine—with a group of architects, artists, and residents of housing projects planned by Stam-Beese, the work unravels the two women’s ideals and various dissonances through the dialogue.



3. *Two Stones*, 2019, film still



4. *Two Stones*, 2019, film still

Many of van Oldenborgh’s works address women’s issues in various ways, as for instance in the recent *obsada* (2021), whose title means “cast” in Polish. Consisting of footage taken by a group of women involved in the Polish film industry, it captures their open conversations on how patriarchal power, which the earlier Polish avant-garde movement failed to recognize and still persists today, deeply influences their subjectivities and aspirations in the cultural field. In *Hier.* (2021) (Dutch for “here”), members of a young all-female band and two female writers living in the Netherlands weave out a delicate interplay of their emotional realities, memories, and political reflections on colonial history, race, gender, and sexuality inside the under-renovation Museum Arnhem, a former gentlemen’s club for Indo-Dutch men.



5. *Hier.*, 2021, film still



6. *obsada*, 2021, set photography by Jakub Danilewicz

The new work in the show was filmed in Tokyo and Yokohama and casts light on two female Japanese writers, Fumiko Hayashi and Yuriko Miyamoto, both active from the early twentieth century until the immediate postwar period. The power and contradictions in both these women’s words reverberate in dialogues and images of an intergenerational cast moving through various spaces of knowledge, memory, and culture, reflecting today’s struggles around gender, politics, and love.

Van Oldenborgh will create a site-specific setting for viewing the film works as well as for communication,

so as to facilitate intersections among the works, the audience's bodies, their gazes, and their voices— intersections that complicate and critique normalized frames for understanding identity, discourse, and power.

Wendelien van Oldenborgh | Profile

Born 1962 in Rotterdam, currently lives and works in Berlin. Van Oldenborgh develops works, whereby the cinematic format is used as a methodology for production and as the basic language for various forms of presentation, collaborating with participants in different scenarios, to co-produce the script. Her recent solo exhibitions include *work, work, work (work)* at Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź (Poland, 2021), *tono lengua boca* at Fabra i Coats (Barcelona 2020) and CA2M Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo (Madrid, 2019-2021), and *Cinema Olanda* at the 57th Venice Biennale Dutch Pavilion (Venice, 2017). She has also exhibited in numerous international group shows, including Sonsbeek 20->24 (Arnhem, 2021), Chicago Architecture Biennial (Chicago, 2019), *bauhaus imaginista* at the House of World Cultures (Berlin, 2019), Singapore Biennial (Singapore, 2019), Aichi Triennial (Aichi, 2016), and Kyiv Biennial (Ukraine, 2015).

Related events

Gallery talks, book readings, and other related programs will be held during the exhibition. Details regarding participation will be posted on the museum's website on a later date.

Information

Exhibition Period	Saturday, 12 November 2022 — Sunday, 19 February 2023
Open Hours	10:00 – 18:00 (Tickets available until 30 minutes before closing.)
Closed	Mondays (except 2 and 9 January), 28 December – 1 January, 10 January
Venue	Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo Exhibition Gallery 3F
Admission	General – 1,300 yen / University & College Students, Over 65 – 900 yen / High School & Junior High School Students – 500 yen / Elementary School Students & Younger – Free *The exhibition <i>MOT Collection</i> is also available for viewing with this ticket.
Organized by	Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo operated by Tokyo Metropolitan Foundation for History and Culture
Contact	050-5541-8600 (Hello Dial)

Welcome Back Ticket

Visitors who wish to revisit the exhibition can receive a Welcome Back Ticket in exchange with a purchased ticket (valid one-time only). Please ask our staff in the gallery.

Concurrent Exhibitions

Christian Dior: Designer of Dreams (21 December 2022 – 28 May 2023)

Collection Exhibition MOT Collection Rewinding the Collection 2nd (3 November 2022 – 19 February 2023)

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- 1 Wendelien van Oldenborgh, *Maurits Script*, 2006, film still
- 2 Wendelien van Oldenborgh, *No False Echoes*, 2008, film still
- 3, 4 Wendelien van Oldenborgh, *Two Stones*, 2019, film still
- 5 Wendelien van Oldenborgh, *Hier.*, 2021, film still
- 6 Wendelien van Oldenborgh, *obsada*, 2021, set photography by Jakub Danilewicz