

Mireille Mosler, Ltd.

Press release

(New) Amsterdam

4-26 May 2023

Mireille Mosler Ltd. is pleased to present *(New) Amsterdam*, an eclectic mix of views from New York and Amsterdam from the sixteenth through the twenty-first centuries.

Almost four-hundred years ago, in 1624, on the southern tip of Manhattan, New Amsterdam was a designated provincial extension of the Dutch Republic. The story of the Dutch presence in America began in 1609 when Henry Hudson tried to find a shortcut to Asia, discovering the island of Manhattan instead. For forty years, Dutch settlers traded mostly beaver and otter skins, while defending the Dutch colony against European competitors. In 1664, New Amsterdam was reincorporated under English law and renamed New York. Nevertheless, the spirit of the early years of Dutch New Amsterdam with its cultural diversity, tolerance, and open mindedness is presumed to be the birthplace of the American Dream making New York the remarkable city it is today.

In the middle of this Dutch colonial expansion, in the 1640s, Rembrandt depicted a view of burgeoning Amsterdam, portraying civic success in the prosperous nation. On a copper plate, the most celebrated artist in Holland at the time, eternalized his hometown with a few strokes of the burin. Regardless of Rembrandt's substantial artistic output in paintings, it is the intimacy of the depiction of Amsterdam that informs us how he observed his surroundings in graphic delineation.

Rembrandt's contemporary Jan van Goyen was also drawn to Amsterdam, depicting the town in a pocket-size notebook he carried with him on his trips. In 1651, Van Goyen visited Amsterdam in search of inspiration. Back in his studio, quick sketches would provide endless imagination, combining different motifs of topographical elements into newly compiled compositions. Seven drawings from a now dispersed sketchbook record the old Town Hall and the disaster of the infamous breach of the Saint Anthony's dike. Traveling by boat, the sketchbook drawings follow the scenery in pre-photographic fashion from the water.

Inspired by Rembrandt's etchings, American artist James McNeill Whistler visited Amsterdam in 1863 to study the master in the Rijksmuseum's print room, financial means restricting him to visit more often. After marrying the wealthy artist Beatrice Godwin in 1888, Whistler set off on a European honeymoon, bringing thirty-four copper plates along. In 1889, Whistler finally treads in the footsteps of Rembrandt, channeling his predecessor's hometown in *Bridge, Amsterdam*, an extinct bridge on the Boltensgrachtje, torn down around 1930.

Using Amsterdam as a stage for his conceptual art, Bas Jan Ader plunges on his bike into the seventeenth century canal. Four vintage photographs from 1970 chronicle Ader's celebrated film *Study for Fall 2, Amsterdam*, equivalent to the serial preliminary drawings of Jan van Goyen's Amsterdam.

Ed van der Elsken's views of Amsterdam in the 1960s is quintessential in our perception of the era, while his impressions of New York are lesser known. Like Whistler's desire to create work in Amsterdam, Van der Elsken journeyed Stateside on his quest to discovering new horizons. Visiting the just opened Guggenheim Museum in 1961, Van der Elsken emphasized in his reportage photography the importance of cultural institutions in the fabric of the city.

New York's underground appears in Duane Michals' *The Human Condition* (1969), revealing the city's subway, intricately interwoven as Amsterdam's canals and waterways. As the subway moves out of the station, the protagonist vanishes in a subterranean galaxy. While Bas Jan Ader disappears in the water of the city below sea level, Michals dissolves his earthlings in the celestial cosmos below ground.

Karen Kilimnik's painting *the gold statue, Columbus Circle, winter, snowstorm in N.Y., guy wiggins*, channels American impressionist Guy Carlton Wiggins' idea of New York: a snow-covered Columbus Circle. Revealing Kilimnik's inspiration and witty interaction, it is her fictitious phantasy of this pastiche that culminates in her own reality of the 1892 statue of Christopher Columbus. In Kilimnik's world, shiny gold replaces the marble of the statue dedicated to the iconic Italian explorer of European colonization of the Americas.

(New Amsterdam) will take place at 4 East 81st Street #1B (Jill Newhouse Gallery), 4 to 26 May 2023. For more information or high res images, please contact info@mireillemosler.com.



Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1669)
View of Amsterdam from the Northwest, c. 1640
 Etching
 4½ x 6⅞ inches (11.3 x 15.5 cm)



Karen Kilimnik
the gold statue, Columbus Circle, winter, snowstorm in N.Y., guy wiggins, 2009
 Water soluble oil color on canvas
 11⅞ x 14⅞ inches (28.3 x 35.9 cm.)
 Courtesy the artist, Galerie Eva Presenhuber, and Sprüth Magers / © Karen Kilimnik



Bas Jan Ader (1942-1975)
Study for Fall 2, Amsterdam, 1970
 Black & white vintage photographs (4)
 3½ x 5 inches (8.9 x 12.7 cm.) image size (each)



James Abbott McNeill Whistler (1834-1903)
Bridge, Amsterdam, 1889
 Etching printed in brown ink on thin laid paper
 6½ x 9½ inches (16.5 x 24.1 cm.)