

# Juul Hondius

*Portfolio*

Juul Hondius approaches his themes of political weight after thorough research. The fact that there is a mystery around the political issue interests him most. The result, be it photography or film is lingering in-between documentary and fiction. In his new film 'To Unveil a Star', Hondius went a long way of getting into the political structures of NATO by making the monumental sculpture which stands symbol for the NATO (the NATO star) into the protagonist of his documentary narration.

In this experimental film, the maker enters into a direct dialogue with a steel star-shaped sculpture that has been standing in front of the NATO headquarters in Brussels for a lifetime. Against the backdrop of the chronology of the relocation of this iconic sculpture, there is a conversation between Hondius and the sculpture. Who made you? Do we want to keep you as a symbol? Can we still identify with the ideology you represent? *To Unveil a Star* is a poetic personal film in which the filmmaker attributes anthropomorphic qualities to an iconic sculpture that gives it a superhuman character. The structure of the film plays with cinematic conventions and is a pas-de-deux between reality and fantasy. From a contemporary perspective, *To Unveil a Star* sheds an iconoclastic light on NATO and its rituals in the media.

*To Unveil a Star* is the first feature-length film by artist Juul Hondius. As in his earlier works (photographs, installations and short films), it finds his inspiration in politics and the imagination of it in the media. The questionable status of the image in our culture is a recurring theme in Hondius' oeuvre. The work of Juul Hondius can be found in the collections of the Fonds National d'Art Contemporain in Paris, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam and Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen and has previously been shown on stages in Europe, Asia and America.

### To Unveil a Star

Link to the trailer:  
<https://vimeo.com/511078120>  
password: TUAS2021

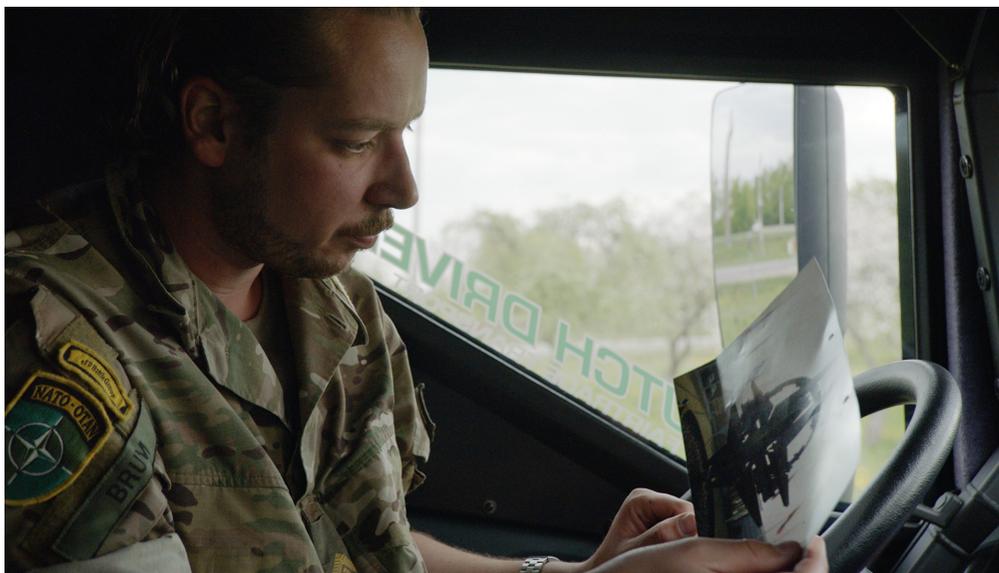
Link to the film:  
<https://vimeo.com/461459899>  
Password: TUAS2020



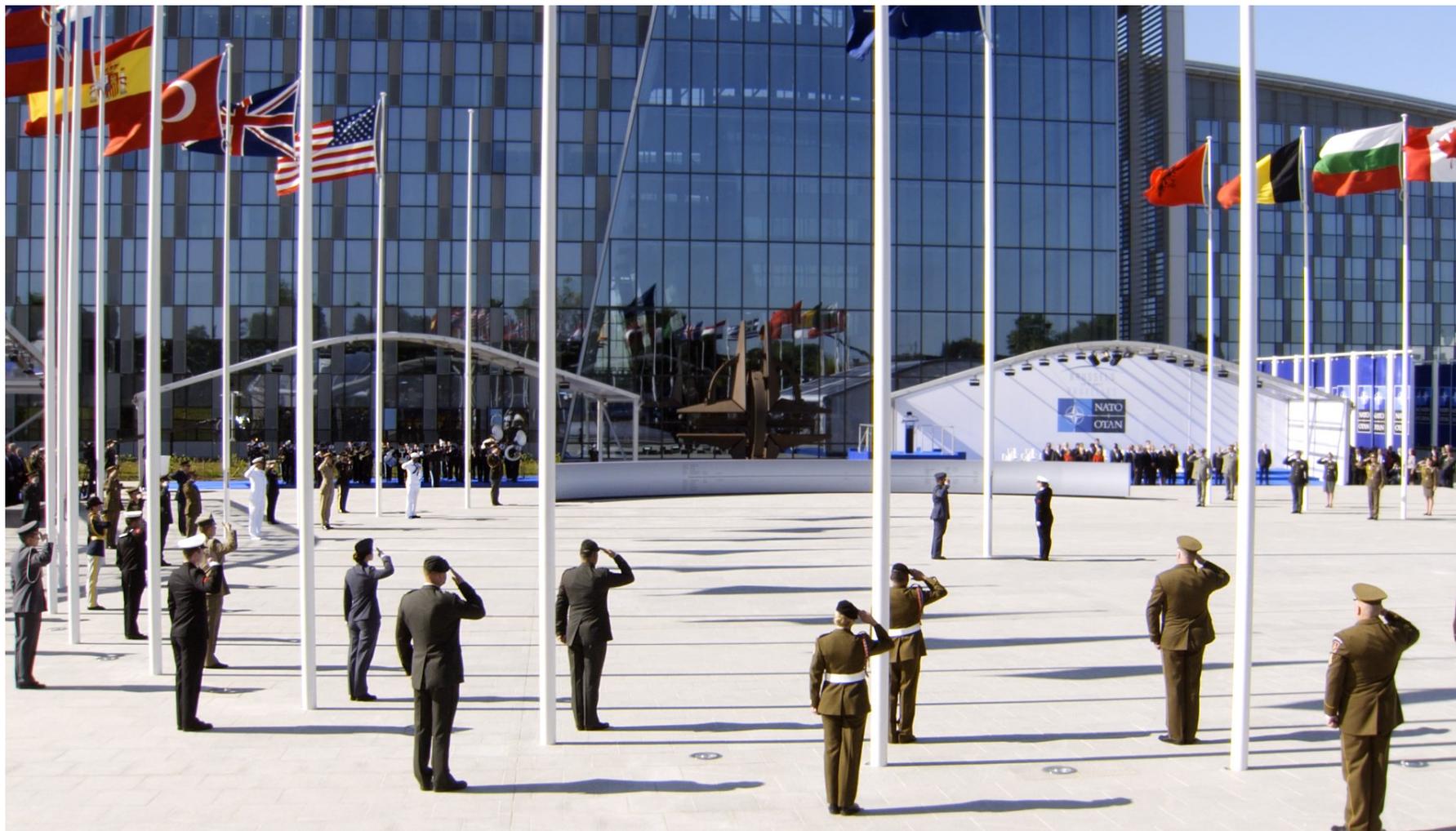
*To Unveil a Star*, 2021, 1-channel HD film, 60 min, colour, sound



*To Unveil a Star*, 2021, 1-channel HD film, 60 min, colour, sound



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## Juul Hondius

They never look you in the eye, the protagonists in Juul Hondius' (1970, Ens) photos. They stare, they gaze, their motionless glance focused on something that escapes you. Hondius' models are conscious fellow players in a game that the photographer is playing with them. His photos are not about the people in the image. Hondius enquires of the beholder not what or whom the photo is portraying, but how the beholder takes it in. Both his theoretical approach to photography as a medium and his preoccupation with the viewer's moment of realisation with regard to the image practically force Hondius the photographer to disappear from the photo that he has so carefully staged. The question that serves as the starting point in his quest for the ultimate image clarifies his ambiguous position. It is not so much: 'Which image is going to sink in?' but rather: 'What kind of image is most apt to stick with the beholder?'

The series implicitly formulates a critical perspective on those same media images on which the individual photos are based. The ways in which politically precarious themes are depicted, linked for example to the policy on refugees or to the treatment of diseases or the struggle against violence or natural disasters, but also the ways wars are represented – they are all grounded on identical principles. 'architypal images' keep coming back. Think of the age-old image of mother-and-child that has lost very little of its dramatic eloquence. But more recent examples would also fall under this category. The image of the collapsing Twin Towers has been indelibly impressed upon our collective retinas, for example. And who has not seen the photo of the Abu Ghraib prisoner, standing on a crate, the wires on his fingers and the black hood covering his head? These more or less

contemporary archive images are the models for Hondius' photos. In that sense, he has joined the ranks of what we by now can call a movement of photographers and filmmakers who reflect penetratingly on the images in the media and on their consequences.

Hondius deconstructs the media image and subsequently recontextualises it. Dubious, or in the case of Hondius: ambiguous, forms of reporting enter into the foreground. But Hondius does not show us his source material. After all, the emphasis in his work lies not on the sender of the message but on its receiver. The one who views it is the co-creator of the image. The viewer is likewise responsible for the image that has been constructed for him or her. Not only the media image serves as a frame of reference but also the language of cinematographic imagery.

These formally charged photos ultimately creates, time and again, the momentum that is denied by the staring characters. That is the eloquence of the photographic works of Hondius. And the visual paradox.

Text extracted from: 'Hondius — Individuals'  
 Author: Ilse van Rijn  
 Publication: Foam Magazine #18, 2009



*HaYarkon #1*, 2013, C - print on dibond, 50 x 72 cm

### ***Brilliant Punitive Raids***

*Brilliant Punitive Raids* include[s] a film composed of photographic images, new photographic works as well as printed matter with collected research material. Together these works tell the story of a brutal yet hitherto little-known event in the complex history of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict.

The exhibition *Brilliant Punitive Raids* springs from the artist's fascination with the as equally adored as detested PLO leader Khalil-al-Wazir, better known as Abu Jihad, and his assassination in 1988 in Tunis. The attack on his life instantly made Abu Jihad into a martyr and hero, however, as Hondius discovered, images of Abu Jihad are relatively hard to find. Nor was there much public information on the assassination, until last year, when the Israeli government revealed more details after 25 years of secrecy. The military ploy to kill the PLO leader reads like a film script: strategically brilliant and spectacular, yet controversial.

The absence of media images of both Abu Jihad and the attack sparked Hondius' imagination and inspired him to create these images himself. In his characteristically filmic and highly stylised imagery—and with a degree of freedom and imagination—the artist reconstructed and staged the event leading up to the assassination, frame by frame. However, *Brilliant Punitive Raids* is not intended as a historically correct reconstruction of events. Rather, the sequence of still photos zooms in on the personal experience of the Israeli soldiers involved, even evoking sympathy, and the unsettling contradiction between their make-believe play of two people in love and the cold-blooded killing of a man.

As in his previous photographs, Hondius' work centres on the status and impact of media images and the ways in which they enter and determine our collective memory. Hondius deconstructs the plethora of images that reach us on a daily basis, critically analysing the different visual strategies and styles of image-making that frame the subject. In earlier works Hondius staged realities, creating an arche-typical image, condensing as it were a variety of similar stories, often with urgent political subject matter, into one image. In *Brilliant Punitive Raids* the artist worked the other way round: presenting different sides and different perspectives to one story starting from an absent image.

Text by Christel Vesters, critic and curator

*Brilliant Punitive Raids* online: [vimeo.com/75556166](https://vimeo.com/75556166) (password: Khalil\_Al-Wazir)



*Bus line 129 Passenger*, 2013, C-print on dibond, 50 x 72 cm



*HaYarkon #2, 2013, C-print on dibond, 50 x 72 cm*



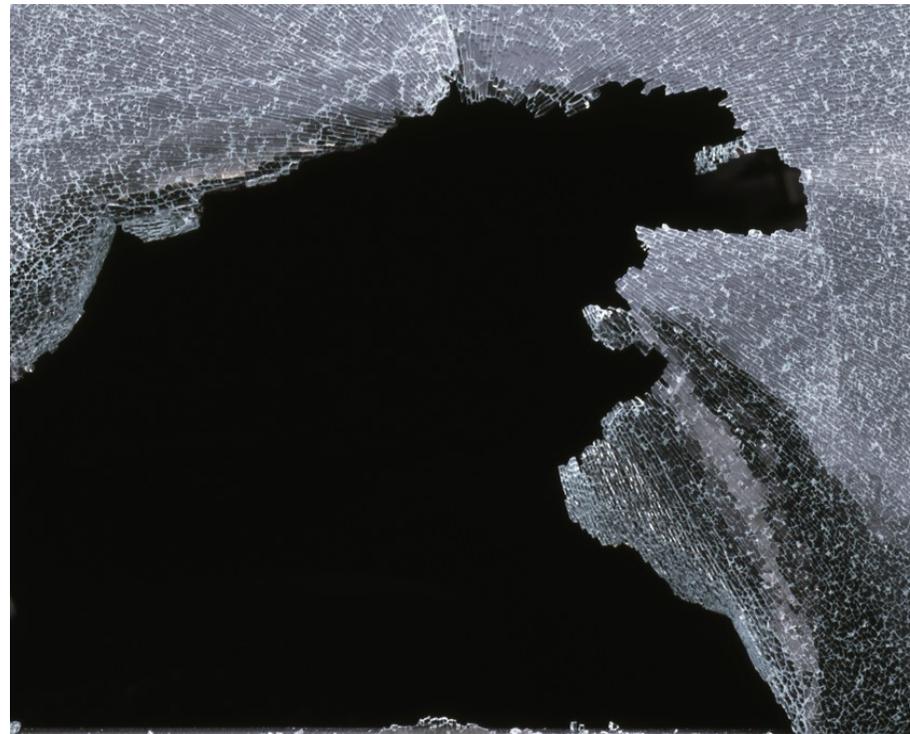
*HaYarkon #4*, 2014, C-print on dibond, 50 x 72 cm



*Bus line 129 Couple*, 2013, C-print on dibond, 50 x 72 cm



*Moiré 1*  
2010, C-print, diasec, dibond, 110 x 137 cm



*Terranova 2*  
2010, C-print, diasec, dibond, 110 x 137 cm



*Seahawk 1*  
2009, C-print, diasec, dibond,  
110 x 137 cm



*Busfront # 1*  
2007, c-print, diasec, dibond,  
124 x 163 cm



*Whiteout*  
2006, C-print, diasec, dibond, 124 x 154 cm



*Rainbow*  
2007, C-print, diasec, dibond, 124 x 163 cm



*Richy*

2007, C-print, diasec, dibond, 124 x 163 cm



*Noordergesig*  
2006, C-print, dibond, perspex, 100 x 125 cm



*Newtown*  
2006, C-print, dibond, Perspex, 100 x 125 cm



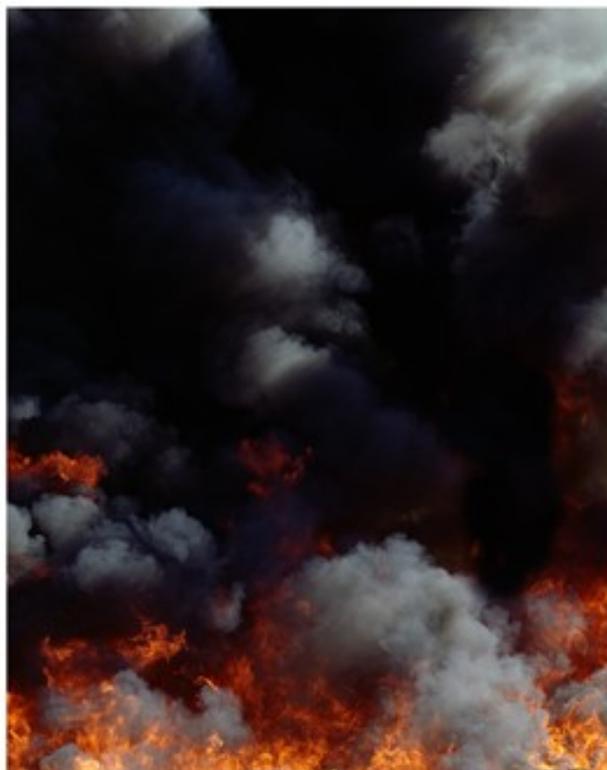
*May 24*  
Installation view , 2004  
Museum Boijmans van Beuningen Rotterdam, NL



*May 24, 8 minutes ago*  
2004, c-print, diasec, rynobond, 200 x 162,5 cm



*May 24, 40 minutes ago*  
2004, C-print, diasec, rynobond, 200 x 162,5 cm



*May 24, 5 hours ago*  
2004, C-print, diasec, rynobond, 200 x 162,5 cm



*May 24, 8 minutes ago*  
2004, C-print, diasec, rynobond, 200 x 162,5 cm



*H15.1 Nagoya (Project Harmless)*  
2003, C-print, diasec, dibond, 175 x 110 cm



*H12.6 Moscow (Project Harmless)*  
2003, C-print, diasec, dibond, 175 x 110 cm



*H15.4 Amman (Project Harmless)*  
2003, C-print, diasec, dibond, 175 x 112 cm



*H13.1 New York (Project Harmless)*  
2003, C-print, diasec, dibond, 175 x 106 cm



*H14.2 Bangkok (Project Harmless)*  
2003, C-print, diasec, dibond, 175 x 112 cm



*H14.4 Tokyo (Project Harmless)*  
2003, C-print, diasec, dibond, 175 x 112 cm



*Maboge #7*  
2003, C-print, diasec, dibond,  
125 x 160 cm



*Motion*  
2001, C-print, diasec, dibond,  
125 x 160 cm



*Bus*  
2001, cibachrome, dibond, perspex,  
123 x 162 cm



*Plastic*  
2001, C-print, diasec, dibond,  
125 x 160 cm



*Canal*

2000, cibachrome, dibond, perspex, aluframe, 115 x 145 cm



*Crossing*

2000, cibachrome, dibond, perspex, aluframe, 98 x 120 cm



*UN/Defender*  
2000, cibachrome, dibond, perspex, aluframe,  
125 x 158 cm



*Man #1*  
1999, C-print, diasec, dibond, 165 x 117 cm



*Man #2*  
1999, C-print, diasec, dibond, 124 x 165 cm



*Auto*

1999, C-print, dibond, perspex, aluframe, 125 x 164 cm

## Delay — Old and New Europe: artists investigate the transit zone

In large colour photographs Hondius depicts the travellers who file past, day in day out, in the news: migrants, exile-seekers and seasonal workers, from all over the world. From the newspapers and television we have become quite familiar with them, these aliens among the individuals. Hondius focuses on the other side of the advancing Europeanization: on the outsiders, denied freedom of movement, who still try to find their way. They come in the back way. On foot, clambering up the banks of a stream, presumably through a border region (Crossing, 2000). Or else huddled in a cart under a sheet of plastic wearing headscarves or thick knitted hats (Plastic, 2001). The uncomfortable aspect of Hondius' pictures is primarily their familiarity, their demonstration of the fact that we have become accustomed to someone else's desperation. But they contain more: several striking incongruities, which make it difficult to place these photos.

The work is seemingly documentary, yet too slick for that. Although we can again picture the hordes of refugees who left their homes during the ethnic cleansings in the former Yugoslavia, the photo Plastic which triggers that memory was clearly not taken there or in those circumstances. It is precisely stage-managed image. The cart is spotless, the makeshift plastic cover equally spotless and the colours of the bags and coats attractively coordinated. The stereotype of impoverished misery has been spruced up with the gleaming aesthetics of the advertising world and the film industry. It is an effective strategy. The 'cross-breeding' of worlds, which are hard to unite, ethically and aesthetically, harsh reality mixed with skin-deep beauty, produces a picture which differs from past images- and which is a critical reflection of them. The gleaming photos mirror the clichés in the mass media and the people who are caught up in them, as tragic protagonist rather than as individuals.

The result of that crossbreeding is sometimes extremely oppressive. UN/Defender (1999) is the title of a photo showing a man leaning, exhausted, against the bonnet of an olive drab Land Rover. Although the vehicle is covered in mud, the man is squeaky clean. As handsome as a film star, definitely, but considering his clean hands and elegant sunglasses, this dreamed-up saviour is not of this world when it comes to the crunch. Within seconds, UN/Defender has turned from a supposed press photo or film still into a personification: the hero stands for the failing peacekeeping mission of Dutch troops in Srebrenica, where in 1995 the greatest massacre in Europe since World War 2 took place. Serb nationalists murdered seven- to eight thousand Muslim men, although the United Nations had declared the Bosnian town a safe refuge in 1993.

Reality creates obligations, in Hondius' opinion, and in art too. With his work he rips open a world-view of safety, harmony and solidarity. His photos are fantasies based on facts- but facts made up of complex relations. Take the answer to the question of where Europe starts and ends: the edges can be delineated, but are not enough to go by. When the alliance is part of transnational networks it oversteps the boundaries. Europe is also present in the Middle East, where Dutch military personnel are part of occupation force in Iraq until the end of January 2005. 'Europe is in a state of war and its denial', Hondius observes. In his recent photos of billowing clouds of smoke, he brings a spirit nearer which we would have preferred to leave to haunt at a distance. The photos are painterly, black-grey marbled monochromes, in which tongues of orange flames flash, though otherwise smoke smothers the entire view.

Text: Wilma Sütö

**Curriculum Vitae****Juul Hondius**

1970 Born in Ens, NL  
 92-96 Royal Academy of Fine Arts, The Hague, NL  
 94-95 Famu, Film & TV School, Prague, CZ

**Exhibitions (selection):**

2015 Palestine Film Festival, Barbican Center, London  
 LOOP Art Fair, Barcelona

2014 Stedelijk Museum Schiedam 'Brilliant Punitive Raids', Schiedam, NL  
 Dutch Doc Award Nominaties, Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam  
 PLUGIN Contemporary Art Fair, Istanbul  
 LUMC, 'Souvenir de Voyage', met o.a. R. Villevoye/M.Bonajo/A.Steketee, Leiden

2013 Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, 'Works in the collection', Rotterdam  
 International Documentary Film Festival IDFA, Amsterdam, screening  
 World Art Museum/Milennium Art Centre, 'Post-Aura', i.s.m. Paradox, 1th Photo Beijing  
 Istanbul Art International, 'Video on Stage'  
 Moti Museum of the Image, 'Verdwijnend Paradijs - Moti Hotel - De Designpolitie', Breda  
 AKINCI, 'Brilliant Punitive Raids', Amsterdam

2011 Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, 'Raumproduktion', Düsseldorf  
 Joan Miro Foundation, 'You Are Not Alone', Barcelona  
 Galerie Akinci, 'Melting Point', Amsterdam  
 Yours Gallery, 'Juul Hondius', Warsaw solo

2010 Museum de Fundatie, 'Louvre in Heino', Collectie Reyn van der Lugt, Heino  
 Lagos Photo International, EkoHotel Victoria Island, Lagos, Nigeria  
 Fotomuseum Den Haag, 'Photography! A Special Collection at Leiden University, Leiden, NL  
 Projectstudio Janowitzbrücke, 'Works in progress', Berlin solo

2009 Kunsthalle Mannheim, 'Images Recalled', Fotofestival Mannheim/H'berg/L'hafen, curated by Esther Ruelfs & Tobias Berger  
 Galerie Tanja Rumpff, 'Found images', Haarlem, NL  
 Deutsches Architektur Institut, 'Becoming Istanbul', groupshow, Frankfurt

2007 Platform Garanti, 'The Photographers', curator Vasif Kortun, Istanbul solo  
 Galerie Akinci, 'Layers', Amsterdam solo  
 Centraal Museum, The Suspended Moment, H+F Collection, Utrecht  
 Open Eye Gallery, 'Bound', Liverpool  
 Institute Neerlandais, "Choix d'Artiste", Paris  
 Stedelijk Museum Prinsenhof, 'Continuïteit', curator J.H.Sassen, Delft

- 2006 Crac Alsace, 'So close/So far away', H+F Collection, curated by Hilde Teerlinck & Han Nefkens, Altkirch, F  
 Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, IDFA: Paradoxs II, 'The Reality in Scenes'.  
 Leeds City Art Gallery, 'Paranoia', Leeds  
 Freud Museum, 'Paranoia', London  
 NP3, 'Supermerk', Groningen
- 2005 Maison Europe ene de la Photographie, L' Ecole du Nord', Paris  
 The Chicago Art Institute, 'In Sight', curator Hripsime Visser, Chicago  
 TENT, 'Documentary Now', Rotterdam  
 Photo-London, 'New Photography', curator Mario Testino, London  
 Quarantine Series, 'Juul Hondius', curator N. Folkersma, Amsterdam, solo  
 CBK Dordrecht, 'Making Public', curator Gert J. Kocken/A.Mevis, Dordrecht
- 2004 Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, 'Delay', curator Wilma S ut o, Rotterdam, NL  
 Galerie Akinci, 'Factions', Amsterdam, solo, NL  
 Busan Biennale, 'Chasm', curated by M. Park/T.M. Choi, South-Korea  
 De Appel, 'Potrc, Hondius/Bekirovic, Castro/Olafsson', curated by Theo Tegelaers, Amsterdam, NL
- 2003 'Juul Hondius, Huis Marseille, Amsterdam solo, NL  
 Nai, 'Reality Machines', curated by Linda Vlassenrood, Rotterdam, NL
- 2002 Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, 'Life in a Glass House', Municipal Art Acquisitions 2001/2002, Amsterdam, NL  
 Musee des Beaux-Arts de Nantes, Acquisitions Fonds National d'Art Contemporain 2001/ 'Objects du desir', Nantes, FR

#### Work in collections:

APT Artist Pension Trust – APT London  
 Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
 Dutch Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations  
 H+F / ArtAids Collection  
 Prentenkabinet Universiteit Leiden  
 Stichting ABNAMro Bank Kunstverzameling  
 Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam  
 De Nederlandsche Bank, Amsterdam  
 Fonds National d'Art Contemporain FNAC, Paris  
 Paleis van Justitie, Arnhem  
 Gemeente Haarlemmermeer  
 Rabobank Nederland  
 Royal Dutch Embassy in South Africa, Pretoria SA

#### Assignments:

- 2009 National Monument Concentrationcamp Vught- Portraitserie Detinees  
 - EBI - Extra Secure Detention Center, Vught
- 2007 Assignment for ArtAids/H+F Collection, 'Stigma', Johannesburg, NL/SA
- 2004 Atelier Rijksbouwmeester/Rijksgebouwendienst. Permanent installation  
 OCW Hoftoren, Den Haag, NL

**Awards:**

2012	Sem Presser Stichting
2011	Mondriaan Fonds
2002	Charlotte Köhler Prize, Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds
2001	Encouragement Award, Amsterdam Fund for the Arts

**Residencies:**

2010	Projektstudio Janowitzbrücke Fonds BKVB, Berlin
2009	Cité des Arts / Atelier Holsboer, Paris
2007	The Bagfactory, project for ArtAids, Johannesburg
2006	Platform Garanti CAC, Istanbul

**Reviews & Publications:**

2016	Artpress # 438, Between Art and Politics, Jong Chul Choi
2014	NRC Handelsblad, 14 feb, Lucette ter Borg
2014	H Art Magazine, Jorre Both
2013	NRC Handelsblad, 13 juni, Tracy Metz
	Avro Kunstuur, 4Art: Hedendaagse kunst, 22 juni, Bart Rutten
2013	Parool, 20 juni, text Kees Keijer
2012	Foam Magazine, portfolio, tekst Ilse van Rijn
2011	'Afterwards. 'Contemporary Photography Confronting the Past', edited by Nathalie Herschdorfer, published by Thames & Hudson
	'Photography!'. A Special Collection at Leiden University
2010	'Afterwards', Contemporary Photography confronting the Past, Nathalie Herschdorfer, Published by Thames & Hudson
2009	'Images Recalled', text by Christiane Kuhlmann, Kehrer Verlag
	Fotografie in het Stedelijk-De geschiedenis van een collectie. Nai Uitgevers
2007	'Photo Art', Fotografie im 21.Jahrhundert, Uta Grosenick & Thomas Seelig, Dumont Verlag
	'Eigenlijk Eigentijds', Art Collection De Nederlandsche Bank
	'Dutch Eyes', A Critical History of Photography in the Netherlands, NL/ENG
	'The Lost Moment', BikvanderPol/Fatosh Uztek
	'Choix d'Artistes/Artists' Choice, Institut Neerlandais

**Teaching / lectures (selection):**

2012-16	Commission member at the Mondriaan Foundation, Amsterdam
2009-16	St.Joost MA teacher on Documentary Concepts & Strategies, Breda
2014	Artez Arnhem, extern gecommiteerde eindexam., Fine art Dept.
2010	Lecture at Parsons MA Fine Art Dept, The New School, NYC
2010	Lecture at African Artist' Foundation, Lagos, Nigeria
2007	Lecture at Market Photo Workshop, Johannesburg, South Africa

- 2006 'So Close/So Far Away', H+F Collection, text by Hilde Teerlinck  
 L'Ecole du Nord/Netherlands Now, Editions du Regard, Willem van Zoetendaal / Maison Européenne de Photographie  
 Paranoia, Paranoia Publishing London, interview with Christel Vesters
- 2005 Reflect#4, Documentaire Nu!, Nai Publishers
- 2004 Oponthoud/Delay, Nai Publishers.  
 In sight, Contemporary Dutch Photography from the Collection of the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, text by Femke Lutgerink & Hripsimé Visser  
 Les cahiers du Fonds National Art Contemporain #1, text by Catherine Francblin  
 Life in a Glass House, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, text by Renske Janssen  
 Quarantine Series, concept Nina Folkersma, design Luna Maurer
- 2003 Kunst in de Hoftoren, Ministerie van O.C.&W., Atelier Rijksgebouwendienst  
 Reality Machines, Mirroring the Real in Contemporary Dutch Architecture,  
 Photography and Design, Nai Publishers
- 1997 Vrij Nederland, 'Een zigeunermeisje ontroert niet', text Kees Schaepman

**Artist's publication / portfolios (selection):**

- 2009 'Displaced', FOAM Magazine, text Ilse van Rijn
- 2007 'Turkije/Turkye', De Gids#12, portfolio & text Lex ter Braak
- 2002 'A Complex Newspaper, Concept/Design by Thomas Buxo, Texts by C. Vesters and Patrice Joly, Published by Artimo, Amsterdam
- 2001 'Trafikant, icw De Designpolitie, Zoogalerie, Nantes, FR