

Deborah Bell Photographs

WIJNANDA DEROO

OUT ON THE STREET:
THE DINING SHEDS & EMPTY STREETS OF NEW YORK
2020-2024

November 21, 2024 - February 1, 2025
Opening reception Thursday, November 21, 5:30-7:30pm



BAM, Brooklyn, 2022 / archival pigment print / paper 17 x 22" (43.2 x 55.9 cm)

Deborah Bell Photographs presents **Out on the Street: The Dining Sheds & Empty Streets of New York, 2020-2024**, an exhibition of color photographs from two series made in New York City during the COVID-19 pandemic by the Dutch photographer Wijnanda Deroo. This is the photographer's second exhibition with the gallery.

Deroo is well known for her meticulously composed photographs of interiors, in which people are usually absent. Her earlier series from the 1980s-early 2000s, such as *Amsterdam Hotels*, *Artists' Studios*, *Atlantic City*, *Brooklyn Night*, *Curaçao*, *Disappearing Houses*, *Lower East Side*, *Mobile Homes*, and *New York Eateries*, acknowledge human presence without showing a single person.

The art historian and curator Molly Kalkstein aptly describes Deroo's recent work:

Deroo presciently embarked on her systematic documentation of New York's dining sheds at what turned out to be a transitional moment, a few months before the city began demolishing abandoned sheds and formulating a more permanent plan to regulate and standardize outdoor dining. Deroo's photographs...thus stand as documents of an era that is already receding, and of a landscape on the cusp of another transformation....Trees, scaffolding, and apartment buildings loom over the sheds' roofs. Shop fronts and yellow cabs

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peep through their windows. Locked bikes, signposts, mailboxes, and parking meters vie for space outside the sheds' entryways, while parked cars nose up to their walls. The dining sheds appear as rooms within rooms, floating stage sets squeezed into a few feet of available space as the city continues to jostle around them....Even uninhabited, early in the morning or late at night, these sheds take on a range of personalities, and embody the spirit of their respective neighborhoods.

The absence of people also takes on a new valence in the wake of the pandemic. At its height, COVID-19 emptied the streets of pedestrians and vehicles alike....Deroo documented this moment as well, in her 2020-21 series of New York streetscapes eerily deserted in broad daylight.

Kalkstein explains Deroo's choice of instrument for photographing the dining sheds instead of using the medium-format camera with which she had photographed New York's empty streets:

...she worked this time only with her iPhone. This approach afforded her more agility and discretion, the ability to make her pictures quickly on New York's busy streets without attracting attention....The resulting images evince Deroo's characteristic formality, her unerring eye for composition, the poignant or humorous detail....Deroo's photographs seem to capture something of this shifting moment, to adroitly document the remnants of an era, with all of its hopefulness and contradictions, before it vanishes for good.

Wijnanda Deroo was born in the Netherlands in 1955. She received a liberal arts degree from the Academy of Fine Arts in Arnhem, where she later became a professor. In 1989 Deroo was awarded an artist's residency at MoMA P.S. 1 in Long Island City, NY. She continues to live and work in New York.

Deroo's photographs have been exhibited internationally since the early 1980s. Her work can be found in the permanent collections of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; Brooklyn Museum, New York; Central Museum, Utrecht; Gemeente Museum, Amsterdam; Groninger Museum, Netherlands; Jewish Museum, New York; LaSalle Bank Photography Collection (Bank of America Collection), Chicago; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Moderna Museet, Malmö, Sweden; Musée Nationale d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Museum Arnhem, Netherlands; Museum of the Jewish Diaspora, Tel Aviv; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Noord Brabants Museum, 's-Hertogenbosch, Netherlands; Printenkabinet, University of Leiden, Netherlands; Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, among many other public institutions worldwide.

Gallery hours for the exhibition are Thursday-Saturday, 11am - 5pm. For further information please contact the gallery at 212-249-9400, or by email at info@deborahbellphotographs.com.

High-resolution scans are available to the press.