

WIJNANDA DEROO

BEHIND THE WALLS OF THE HERMITAGE

SEPTEMBER 8 - NOVEMBER 5, 2022

Reception & book signing: Thursday, September 8, 6 to 8pm

Deborah Bell Photographs presents *Behind the Walls of the Hermitage*, an exhibition of new color photographs by the Dutch-American photographer Wijnanda Deroo. The exhibition opens September 8 and will be on view through November 5, 2022. A book signing and reception will take place Thursday, September 8, from 6-8pm.

Behind the Walls of the Hermitage reveals the working spaces and storage rooms in the Winter Palace and the New Hermitage of the State Hermitage Museum that Deroo photographed during four trips to St. Petersburg in 2018 and 2019. In her book, *Behind the Walls of the Hermitage* (Eindhoven: Lecturis, 2021), Deroo recalls the odyssey of discoveries she experienced in these spaces, which are off-limits to the public and therefore seem almost like secret chambers:

Imagine that behind the seemingly infinite objects on display in the galleries, completely hidden from view, are infinitely more objects of amazement -- a whole other galaxy of dazzling objects! Splendor is not an overstatement. ... The journey to reach these storage areas is an adventure in itself. To access the Western European Porcelain collections, for example, you begin with a long walk through the palace. You get the feeling of a place that was not intended to be a museum. ... When photographing, I touch nothing, alter nothing and make no adjustments to the lighting or anything else. I catch whatever I find in that particular moment, in that particular light.

Deroo's determination to photograph inside the Hermitage Museum may have been inspired by a previous, similar project for which she garnered great attention and additional respect: that of documenting the process of restoring and re-designing the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. In 2004 she was one of seven artists commissioned by the Rijksgebouwendienst (Government Buildings Agency) to focus attention on the building, its renovation, the collection, and its re-introduction to the public. Deroo returned to Amsterdam every year, from 2004-2013, in order to record the changing Rijksmuseum, gradually assembling an impressive overview of its enhanced spaces and new personality. In celebration of the opening of the renewed Rijksmuseum in 2013, Deroo and the museum produced, in association with nai010 Publishers, Amsterdam, a limited-edition book of these photographs.

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*, *New York City* (photographed during the Covid-19

pandemic), and *New York Eateries*, acknowledge human presence without showing a single person.

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 PS1 in Long Island City, NY. She has continued to live and work in New York ever since.

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; van Reekum Museum, Apeldoorn, Netherlands; among many other public institutions worldwide.

Gallery hours for the exhibition are Wednesday-Saturday, 11am - 5pm. **Please note that our new address is 526 West 26 Street, Room 411, New York, NY 10001.** 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.
