

# HOOP DOOP

## M A G A Z I N E

### A PHOTO OF BARBARA

THIS IS A STORY OF THE MEETING OF TWO FRIENDS. THE ENCOUNTER OF FAY TWAN TJOA AND BARBARA WIJNVELD TOOK PLACE A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO WHEN HE WAS A STUDENT AT THE PHOTO ACADEMY IN AMSTERDAM. HE WANTED TO PHOTOGRAPH SOMEONE WHO IS VERY GOOD IN EXPRESSING FEELINGS IN AN ARTISTIC WAY. THIS IS HOW THE STORY BEGINS: A PHOTOGRAPHER, A PAINTER, A BRUSH, AND A CAMERA.

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"I like portraits, especially the ones which reveal an aspect of someone's life. This is what I try to achieve in my photographs as well." How you go about this is important. I try to get to know a person. I like working this way because it is part of who I am," says Fay Twan, sitting in a café with his "muse" and me.

Barbara is an established painter and known in both the Dutch and the international scene. She graduated from an Art Academy, attended an Art Master in New York and De Ateliers in Amsterdam. On her CV, a newspaper picture stands out with Barbara and the Dutch Queen, shot when she won the Royal Award for painting in 2004.

I ask her why she chose to start a career as an artist, a painter, and she digs back to the beginning of her art path: "I started in Arnhem, with different media, video, sculpture, drawing and then I went to Groningen for my Master Degree. Later on, I moved to New York, then to Amsterdam, to the International Institute for young contemporary artist, De Ateliers, where artists such as Marlene Dumas and Steve Mc Queen were tutors.

"As a young teenager I was a rebel, and I needed a goal, I loved drawing and being creative so I focused on going to the Art Academy in Arnhem, a big glass building I passed by often while going to high school. I wanted to feed my hunger for artistic skills and just said to myself: Start somewhere and something will follow."

We're sitting together on a Tuesday night in one of the famous cafes of the Jordaan district in Amsterdam. Now Fay Twan transformed an initial model into a collaborator.

Fay Twan and Barbara worked together this time. "I feel comfortable moving around and expressing myself. But I don't like being photographed. I find it completely x intrusive. But Fay Twan and his camera were insisting. I just could not resist and cooperated.

He smiles and replies, "It is nice to hear this; how someone perceives you and the way you work. It is beautiful when someone can be her or himself during a shoot. It makes it easier to reveal an aspect of what is going on inside that person."

When exploring the methodology of working, a main aspect stands out: knowledge comes out of movement derived from daily actions, from a person, that usually only a friend could capture.

"It begins with a reportage of several photos. Looking back, I observe movements, specific postures and what characteristic aspects stand out," says Tjoa. "Now I have a starting point, I know what I want to tell and try to find a way to express this. Despite all the conversations and preparation, it is usually only during the shoot when there is a moment I get the feeling for how I want to express this."

"I have a comparable attitude towards the canvas," adds Barbara. "I start from one blank point, then adjust it, create development on the canvas like a problem to then find the solution. I break the idea, and finally produce something that has its own life. It is like raising a little child. You need to let it go somehow, to let it grow on its own. Then, if the work makes sense it is like a stable child. It creates its life. I work, I build and build the image, and then it goes on by itself. When I don't know what to do I say, start, and you will find your way. I use any technique when I feel like it's necessary."

Barbara's paintings are a combination of color, different materials, and shapes: layers, stripes, dripping. The inspiration comes from different fields. A picture is one of them, as is music and cinema.

"I treat material as a language, I don't have a name or a technique for it.

Being an artist is maybe like being, a medical anatomist, a geneticist and an angel in one!” Barbara laughs. “I review material I start with, see the layers and the different parts as information, and as stuff to work with. If you try to see through the top layer of something, it can reveal another form inside.”

When I ask them which artist influenced them the most, he replies with names such as Paul Graham, Vermeer and Amy Winehouse, because “in their art you can really see what people experience at a particular moment and I find this a central element in my works. I get inspired as well by all kinds of art, from paintings to dance and even music. Photography is then my medium to transform them.”

Barbara mentions Stanley Kubrick as one of her main sources, “And I love old silent films,” she says. “I am interested in film because of the way it creates a story by cutting and mixing images. But there are many things that inspire me, I cannot mention them all,” says Barbara, “I enjoy watching homemade make-up tutorials on YouTube, videos of girls who put beautiful make-up on their faces in fast-forward with a matching tune. The camera as their mirror. Their free and enthusiastic way of sharing skills appeal to me. It’s the spirit of spreading inspiration that I relate to.”

“I get inspired by music, but also reading is important to me, as it requires imagination to imagine things.”

Do you work with photos? I ask her.

“Yes, I am very interested in the construction of images and I’m always on the lookout for interesting pictures and take time to research well.”

As in all good interviews, interesting things pop up at last, when the artist is relaxed and when I feel I’ve also gotten to know them, I have the story and I love my job.

I ask him, what is his perspective on this work.

“Perspective, you leave it up to people,” says the photographer, “they see what they feel in your work, which can be different from what you have felt in the beginning.”

“Last year I made a portrait of my mother. It was hanging in the Gemeente Museum in The Hague. A couple saw it there and bought it. Days later they sent me a picture of that photograph of my mother, hanging in their living room.

Then I realised it wasn’t about my mother anymore, because people use their own references looking at the image.”

“You can say what you want about your work, but in the end people experience what they see in it. And that is what stays.”

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UPCOMING PROJECT BY BARBARA WIJNVELD.

. November 30, 2012- December 4, 2012 • Art Gent: YOUNG. Flanders Expo Ghent, Belgium.  
**[www.artgent.be](http://www.artgent.be)**

. January 3, 2013 until February 9, 2013 • Solo show at Galerie Bart Amsterdam  
**[www.galeriebart.nl](http://www.galeriebart.nl)** • Opening Saturday January 5th from 4 to 7.

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**[www.barbarawijnveld.nl](http://www.barbarawijnveld.nl)**  
**[www.mamere-lafemme.com](http://www.mamere-lafemme.com)**

Photo courtesy of Fay Twan Tjoa. • Paintings courtesy of Barbara Wijnveld.













