

# ARTSTALK

*Collector Supplement*

Number 33

July 2025



# ARTS TALK

## Colour Supplement

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A really mixed bag this month. June was a good month for dance with *Anima Obscura*, a new piece from Scapino Ballet in Rotterdam as part of the O. Festival and the culmination of Nicole Beutler's trilogy with *Now We Are Earth*. We are in Delft visiting the man who makes the incredible beach animals and we are at Foam and STRAAT in Amsterdam. Also part of the O. Festival was *One man Show*. All this and more in the July *Colour Supplement*

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### Cover

*One Man Show* at O. Festival  
in Rotterdam. Photo by Rosa QUIST



# Contents



***Now We Are Earth*** by Nicole Beutler projects



**Theo Jansen** in Delft



***The Underground Camera*** at Foam in Amsterdam



***Anima Obscura*** by Scapino Ballet



**Brazilian street art** at STRAAT in Amsterdam



***One Man Show*** at O. Festival in Rotterdam

# NOW WE ARE EARTH

Nicole Beutler Projects concluded its trilogy *Rituals of Transformation* with this exciting new piece. Atulya JAIN was at its premiere at the O. Festival in Rotterdam

Photos by Anja BEUTLER





Where platitudes often replace hope, *Now We Are Earth* invites us to believe in something better through our imaginations. Created by Nicole Beutler and produced in collaboration with Opera Ballet Vlaanderen, Dance On Ensemble, Opera2Day and O. Festival it is the final show in the *Rituals of Transformation* trilogy, representing the alchemical stage where gold is formed, where reformation finally blooms into reward.

This opera addresses climate change not only with positivity but curiosity. It beckons viewers to innovate, to disrupt, and puts the power in their hands. Spread across five songs, the best way to describe the production is: intuitive. The music by Gary Shepherd feels elemental, the choreography a conversation, and the overall performance highly participatory. When the choir joins the stage from the audience, it feels as though you are performing with them. In the third song, when dancers break into a celebratory rhythm, you become part of that joy. The show makes you feel the freedom that comes with taking responsibility for our climate, guided by love for one another. It doesn't preach - it simulates that reality in the theatre.



*The show makes you feel the freedom that comes with taking responsibility for our climate, guided by love for one another . . .*











The metaphor of the rat is perhaps the most peculiar element. It challenges our perception of what we know, love, and hate. During the monologue, when the rat says, "And when the gigantic rat dreams, that all the little lights are eyes of other gigantic rats in the big sky," I wondered—maybe restoring nature's cycle would make it mirror us; no superior species, just harmony. The message was strong yet comforting - not a thump but a rest, a credit to the balance Beutler achieves through her brilliant direction □











*Theo Jansen's*  
**BEACH ANIMALS'  
MORTUARY**





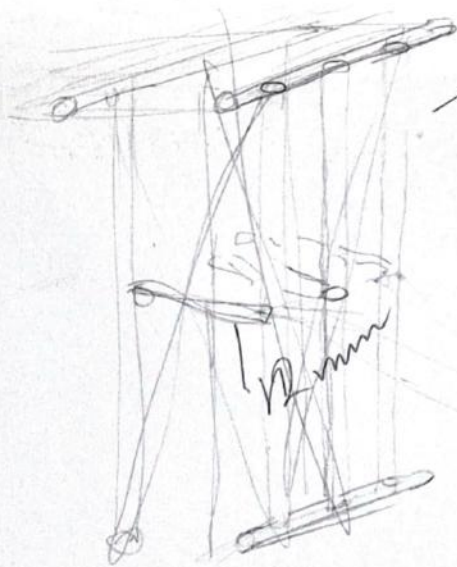
*The Beach Animals' Mortuary*, a sensational exhibition that shows the evolution of the famous giant mobile beasts created by Theo Jansen, can be seen in the Kabeldistrict in Delft. The show is an initiative of Kabeldistrict and the artist in collaboration with Museum Prinsenhof Delft.

Photos by Michael HASTED





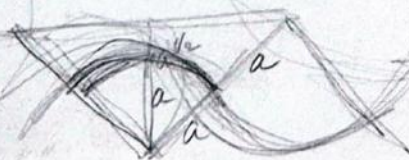
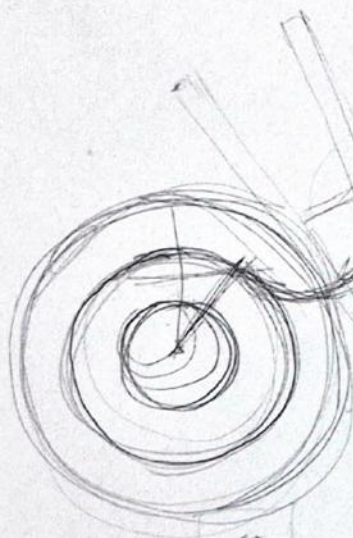




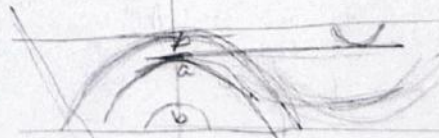
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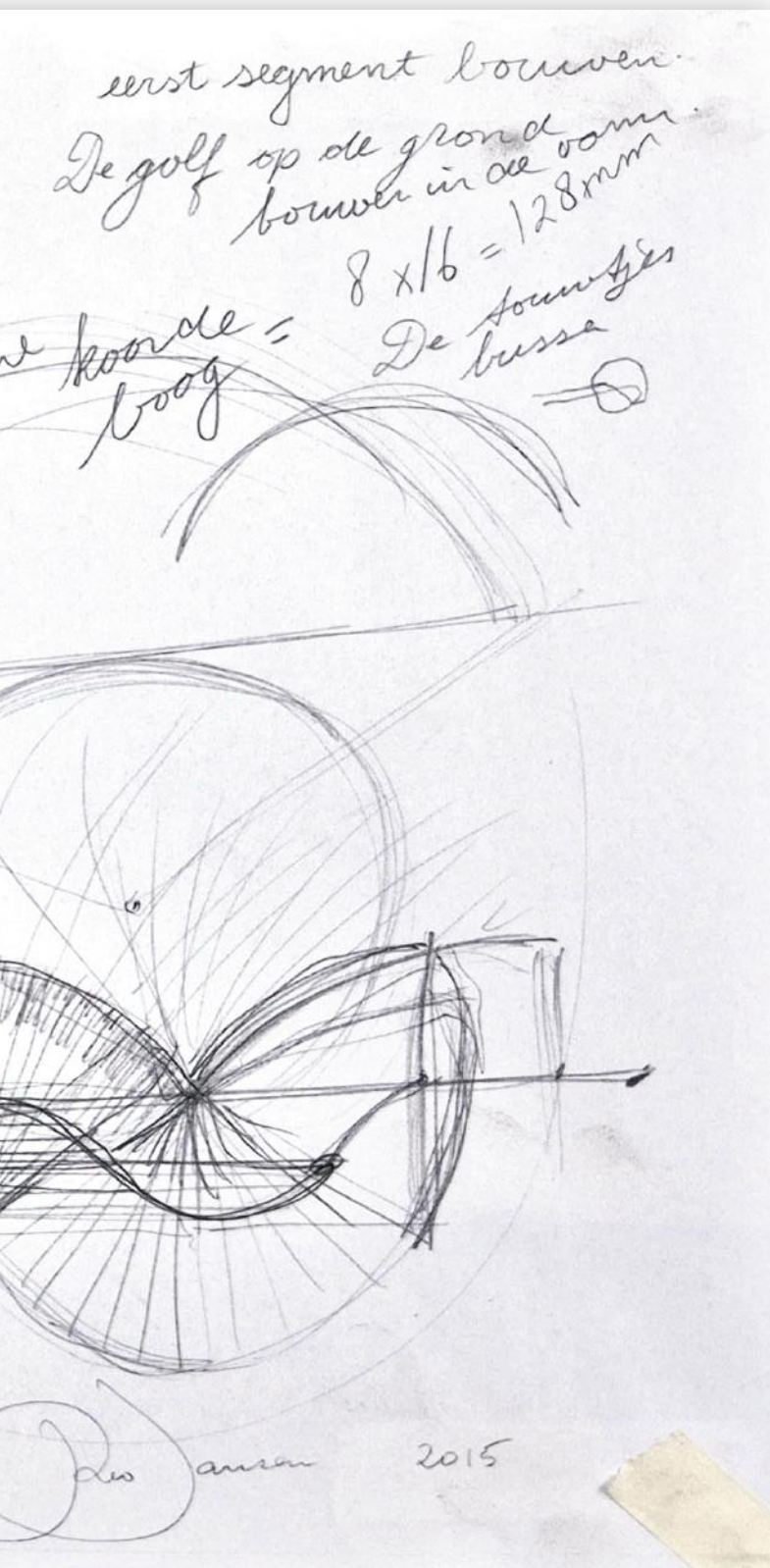
klein



Vermis 1. a x 141







*The Beach Animals* by Delft artist Theo Jansen travelled all over the world after their lives on the beach and were on display in museums in Japan, Australia, Argentina, China, France and the US, among others. The animals are the result of years of experimenting with materials and movement mechanisms. They are made of PVC pipes and uniquely combine art, science and technology.

In the exhibition you can follow Theo Jansen's years of research into realising his dream: animals that can live independently on the beach. The extinct specimens are displayed as natural history objects, in chronological order. From the Gluton era (1990: the period of adhesive tape) to the Tenerium (2023-2024: the period of holding each other). The exhibition starts with the story of the origin of the Beach Animals in the workshop and ends with videos in which the animals can be seen alive.

A lively Delft city district will be built on the site of the former Dutch Cable Factory in the coming years, where living, working and staying are combined. There are plans for approximately 3,200 homes and 1,250 jobs in the area. Kabeldistrict, where innovation and experimentation are central, is the perfect setting for this special exhibition. In the enormous former Expedition Hall, visitors to the *Strandbeesten Mortuarium* will be surprised by the combination of art and technology.





*The Strandbeest*  
Museum Prinsentuin  
is closed due to the  
previous on display  
*Universum Theatrum*  
exhibition before

*The Strandbeest*  
between 13:00 and  
Admission is free





st Mortuary is part of the programming of  
hof Delft during the period that the museum  
the major renovation. Theo Jansen's work was  
display in the museum in the solo exhibition  
Jansen and during *De KunstParade*, the last  
the renovation □

en Mortuary can be visited on Thursdays  
and 21:00 in Kabeldistrict, Schieweg 15 in Delft.





*Two women on their way back from a hunger march, beginning of 1945* © Cas Oorthuys / Nederlands Fotomuseum



# THE UNDERGROUND CAMERA

**It was eighty years ago that The Netherlands was liberated from Nazi occupation. Rosina Lui went along to Foam in Amsterdam to see the exhibition of photographs from the *Hunger Winter of 1944/5***

**T**his year marks the 80th anniversary of The Netherlands' liberation. In honour of this occasion, Foam's *The Underground Camera (De Ondergedoken Camera)* showcases images captured by a group of photographers who became known by the same name. Sombre, disquieting, heart-wrenching – with an occasional dash of humanity's warmth in harsh times – this collection takes viewers on a journey through the "Hunger Winter" of 1944-1945 in Nazi-occupied Amsterdam. These historical records honour the resistance group's role in documenting persecution, famine, and celebration alike, and invite us to consider how the past, present, and future bleed into one another.





*Closure of the Jewish Quarter at the Waag, Nieuwmarkt, Amsterdam, 1941* © Charles Breijer / Nederlands Photo Museum.

The exhibition is a clever combination of media, featuring mostly primary sources from the wartime period, but also videos and text that contextualise the historical background of particular sections. Such comprehensive presentation welcomes history noobs such as myself, while the extensive capillaries of books, photographs, and letters encased in glass-topped tables will surely satisfy the avid researcher.

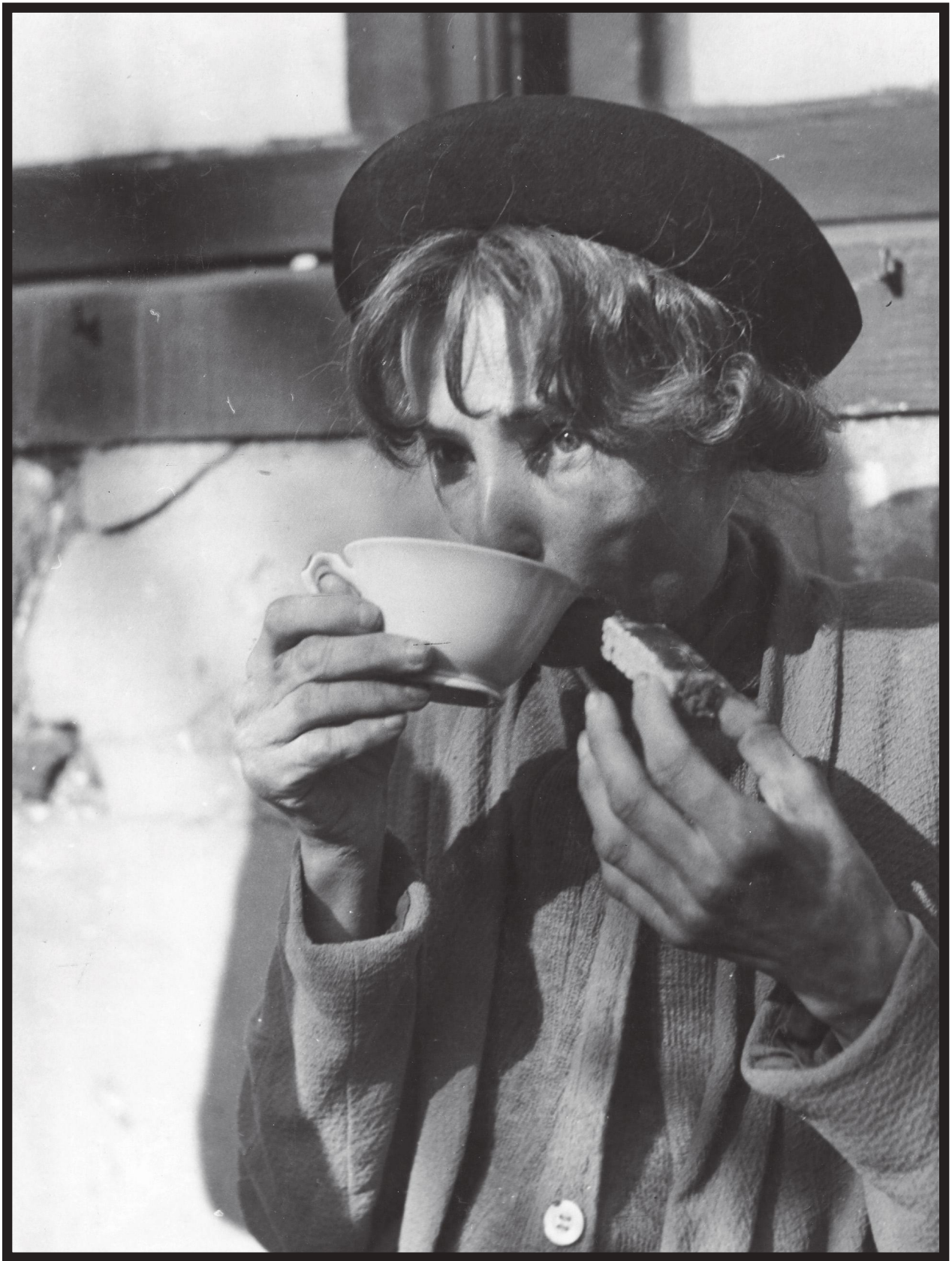




*On the way to the soup kitchen.* Emmy Andriessse, BBWO2 / Leiden University Library

The saying, “A picture is worth a thousand words” is old, perhaps a cliché, but it certainly rings true in this collection. Within the suffocating silence that began in the spring of 1942, amateur photographs served as capsules of truth, carefully tucked away from the oppressors. In the nest of Michelangelostraat 36, the photographers later known as *The Underground Camera* recorded the isolation, deportation, and concealment of Jewish Dutch residents under persecution. The





*Hunger* © Marius Meijboom, NIOD.



six-pointed star – a symbol of imposed inferiority, marking individuals for deportation; a baby stroller – used to transport weapons by resistance fighters; bread – so scarce that it required police to guard.

Records of lived realities by Cas Oorthuys, Charles Breijer, Ad Windig, and numerous other photographers reflect the many co-existing layers of a time named mostly in its suffering. Even amongst chilling displays of starving children and bodies in carts, light was still possible. A huge grin spreads on the face of a woman picking up spilled coal – a valuable resource – at the ferries across the IJ. The mischievousness glimmering from the eyes of children who noticed the photographer as they removed tram blocks from the tracks to use as fuel. Strength, love, and play persist even – or perhaps more than ever – during the darkest of ages, enduring communities in and through adversity.

Once again strolling by the Museumplein, the IJ, and other corners whose ghosts the exhibition offers glimpses of, one becomes aware that the scars of the past may be rendered obscure in the day-to-day life. But the land, the city, the air remember. And do we remember? What do we do with this remembrance? The present feels at once so far and so close to the past. As much as it seems that we are losing our footing, *The Underground Camera* presents an observation of the power we hold in powerlessness □

*The Underground Camera* continues at Foam in Amsterdam until 2nd October 2025.







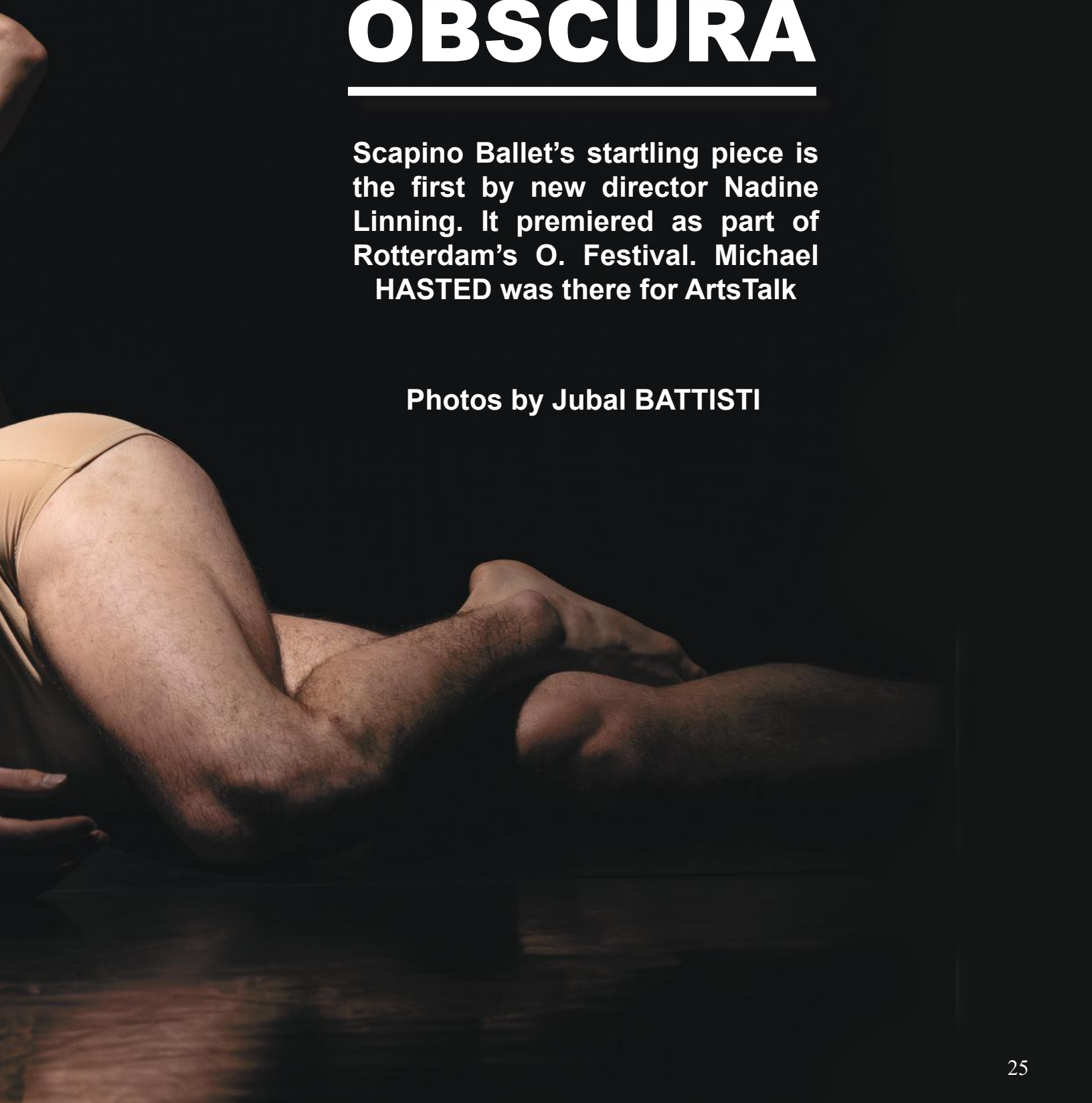
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# ANIMA OBSCURA

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Scapino Ballet's startling piece is the first by new director Nadine Linning. It premiered as part of Rotterdam's O. Festival. Michael HASTED was there for ArtsTalk

Photos by Jubal BATTISTI









Two things have engaged the human mind for centuries – developing a formula for turning base metal into gold and discovering the elixir of eternal life. Now while the desire for gold continues, they have generally given up on the idea of making it - although who knows what AI will come up with? The lust for eternal life, though, continues. *Anima Obscura* is a thrilling rollercoaster ride exploring man's obsessive quest for everlasting life, tracing the desire for immortality through different periods of European culture. Bringing together an international team of artists, scientists and philosophers, director Nadine Linning has created a multi-faceted work of immense depth and imagination.

Now, it must be said, this was not your average Scapino production. Under the mantel of Rotterdam's O. Festival, *Anima Obscura* assembled not only the entire Scapino company of dancers but the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, a fifty-strong choir, a baritone, a soprano and what seemed unlimited technical resources.

The ubiquitous black box set in which many contemporary dance pieces take place can get a bit boring, lacking the ability to create more visual impact in a show. The black box in this production was like that of a magician out of which untold wonders and surprises were conjured up. The walls were a screen onto which images were projected, giving context and creating visual impact throughout the piece. Like Dantés *Divine Comedy*, the setting was somewhere between heaven and hell with inspiration taken from Gustave Doré's amazing illustrations.

The piece started with waving arms projected on the wall with a harpist the sole occupant of the stage. His almost constant presence on an instrument that is always associated with heaven formed the link in an ever changing kaleidoscope of often breath-taking imagery. He was seated on a mobile plinth enclosed in a cube frame reminiscent of many Francis Bacon paintings.



*One of the recurring elements of Scapino over the years has been unisex costumes, often skirts, and one of the most powerful early sequences was when the entire ensemble were dressed in fine white dresses forming an unlikely troupe of angelic vestal virgins . . .*













One of the recurring elements of Scapino over the years has been unisex costumes, often skirts, and one of the most powerful early sequences was when the entire ensemble were dressed in fine white dresses forming an unlikely troupe of angelic vestal virgins.

But, we have to remember that this production was under the umbrella of Rotterdam's O. Festival. The O stands for Opera so obviously that had to take a significant part in *Anima Obscura*. Brahms' majestic *A German Requiem*, music that offers comfort to the living, was enhanced and augmented by Yannis Kyriakides' *Ein Schemen*, a digital re-composition for choir, harp and electronics. Performed live by the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Giuseppe Mengoli, with baritone James Atkinson, soprano Aphrodite Patoulidou, the Laurens Symfonisch choir and harpist Remy van Kesteren, the music created a goose bump, overwhelming religious experience.

The final sequence, the *dénouement*, in *Anima Obscura* was the most powerful thing I have seen on a stage in a long time. On the side wall virtually naked figure writhed and squirmed like an horrific mass crucifixion which put me in mind of Doré's illustration for *The Divine Comedy, Inferno, Canto 29: The falsifiers and forgers tormented with itching*. The amplified harp had ceased to be an angelic instrument and was bashing out violent discordant sounds. The figures, released from their torment, slid from the wall and the stage was filled with twisting bodies which were echoed on the walls like Doré's *Paradiso* illustrations of a heavenly horde heading skywards. Brilliant.

There was some concern that when, over the past year or two, three of its charismatic leading dancers and its long-time director left Scapino, things would never be the same. In her first production since taking over Ms Linning has not only picked up the baton, she seems to have upped the pace. *Anima Obscura* is one of the biggest and most ambitious pieces I have seen from Scapino and the new director has set out her stall for a future that bodes well. Now, while Scapino may not have yet found the secret to eternal life, this production and its new director can be sure of a very long and healthy one □



# ONE MAN SHOW

The absurdity of a notion unravels with each “why keep asking?” and soon collapses under the weight of its own logic. Two women explain what it is to be a man.

Atulya JAIN was also at the O. Festival in Rotterdam for ArtsTalk to find out more . . .

Photos by Rosa QUIST









**T**he *One Man Show*, presented by VOX Muziektheater and conceptualised and performed by Linde Schinkel and Martine van Ditzhuyzen, is a satirical take on what it means to be a man, especially from a woman's perspective. The best part of the show was how curiosity-driven it was, it is narrated with a child-like innocence. The performers, enacting women from an older time, play out every stereotype of masculinity they come across, not just because they think it is better, but because they truly want to feel what it is like to be a man. Sometimes, the challenges or limitations of a certain position become clearer when you explore the privileges and freedoms of the other side.

They use toys, male dolls, and parts of mannequins, and try to experience the power, wishes and desires that men must experience. The humorous tone makes the commentary digestible.

Baroque singing adds to the whimsical nature of the performance because, while the question is serious — what is it like to be a man or a woman? — The way it has been answered is through laughs, great comedic timing and a playful wink thrown towards the audience, every now and then. The show's intimate setup deepens the connection between performers and audience, especially in moments when the performers lock eyes with us while embodying the exaggerated mannerisms of a male construction worker, blurring the line between those on stage and the ones in front of it. The usage of props is brilliantly hilarious — the use of an ironing table to create a construction site, the use of mannequin legs to make a forest. It makes you realise that these notions we've built around masculinity and femininity are, at their very core, a product of our construction. The electric guitar, played by David Mackor, is another refreshing take on the more popularly perceived classical art form of opera. Towards the end, the acceptance dawns on the two characters as they do what women "do best", set a beautiful table for dinner, but what's served is a bed of perceptions - on what is taught - and what should be questioned. The table is set with a bouquet of male action figure dolls, and a tray of their heads, and they sit down to feast on it!

The show is a refreshing conversation starter and incredibly relevant, for in this age, as important as the rage is the need to dive deep and truly see what we chase when we try to dismantle power dynamics and gender inequalities □









# Pixação

*Resistance and Rebellion and NaLata X STRAAT bring Brazilian street art to Amsterdam*





Dolores Esos  
Photo by Henrique Cabral

**STRAAT Museum brings the big names of Brazilian street art to Amsterdam with the exhibitions *Pixação: Resistance and Rebellion* and *NaLata X STRAAT*. Both projects highlight Brazil's unique influence on urban art, offering cultural, political and historical perspectives that deepen understanding of the global movement through a distinctly Brazilian lens. In particular, street art from São Paulo, has influenced contemporary artists and street art movements worldwide**

**T**he Brazilian summer at STRAAT opens with an exhibition that provides in-depth insight into pixação, a radical and raw Brazilian style of street expression that is seen as both protest and cultural expression. The exhibition explores the world of pixação culture with a comprehensive look at its socio-political significance and unique aesthetic approach. It features important, original work by prominent pixadores, including Cripta Djan, Eneri and LIXOMANIA!.zé, focusing on their different styles and the evolution of the movement. Archival footage, photographs and newspaper clippings from the featured artists' personal collections provide historical context. The exhibition also presents original artworks from different series by the featured artists, alongside original pieces by other pixadores from various regions of Brazil highlighting the aesthetic diversity of styles across the country. Two new large-scale canvas additions including one from Eneri and one from LIXOMANIA!.zé will be added to the main hall collection joining the existing collection piece of Cripta Djan. There will also be an audio tour, public talks, and a range of clothing and educational materials to further immerse visitors in the rich and evolving culture of pixação.

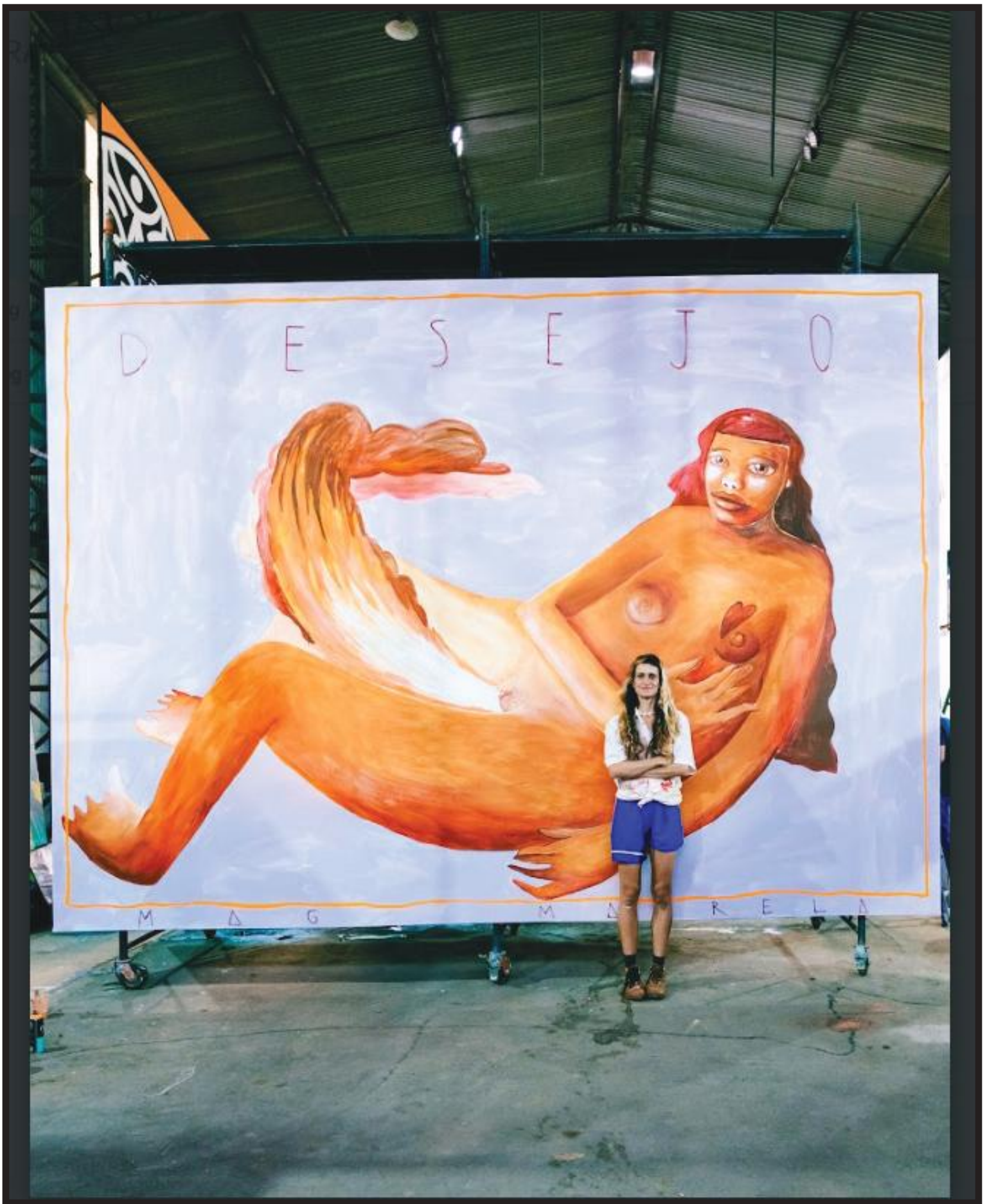


With *NaLata X STRAAT*, the STRAAT Museum is bringing São Paulo's international street art festival NaLata to Amsterdam from August 15 through October 31, 2025. The festival, one of the largest in South America, has been around since 2020 and is best known for inviting leading international artists - including Okuda, PichiAvo and Shepard Fairey - to paint side walls of skyscrapers. In addition to art, the festival offers free lectures, workshops and music, highlighting all parts of the street art community. The NaLata X STRAAT exhibition features seven artworks from the 2024 edition in São Paulo in the museum's main hall. They are large canvases by Enivo, Magrela, Dolores Esos, Priscilla "Pri" Barbosa, Deco Treco, Lobot and Mundano. Two other Brazilian giants, namely Speto and Tinho, are invited to the museum to create new work for STRAAT's collection.

The Embassy of Brazil in The Hague is a proud partner and sponsor of both exhibitions and emphasizes the relevance of *pixação* and graffiti as organic and powerful forms of artistic expression, deeply rooted in Brazil's urban culture. Far beyond aesthetic manifestations, these art forms carry strong elements of social critique, serving as visual testimonies of the complexities present in Brazilian society. Urban art in Brazil transcends its visual impact, acting as a dynamic platform for dialogue, reflection, and reclaiming of public space.

Although all three forms of expression involve markings in public spaces, they differ in style, intent and social reception. Graffiti is a bold form of visual expression, often rooted in lettering styles, vibrant colours and connected to the rise of hip-hop culture. It is often seen as rebellious, and also illegal if applied without permission. Street art covers a wider range of visual art forms, including murals, stencils and installations. Street art often conveys social or political messages and, in the case of murals, is sometimes created with owners' permission, leading to more favourable public appreciation. *Pixação* is almost exclusively text-based, distinguished by its monochromatic, angular writing. As an emphatic social and political protest, the texts are usually done illegally. *Pixação* artists often take significant risks to make their messages seen, sometimes scaling or abseiling down skyscrapers as part of their bold process □

*Pixação: Resistance and Rebellion* opened on 27th June and *NaLata X STRAAT* will open on 15th August. Both continue until 31st August 2025



Magrela Photo by Henrique Cabral



# ARTS TALK

## *Radio*

THE ARTS IN HOLLAND

NEWS, REVIEWS, PREVIEWS & INTERVIEWS

