

LIVE: Amarte x Melly in Concert 2024

Since 2022, we collaborate with Amarte Foundation to co-produce *LIVE*, a major concert series at Kunstinstituut Melly during Rotterdam's Museum Night. It is a night of successive performances and concerts, weaving sound and music throughout the art exhibitions staged within our multi-story building. Over the past four years, Museum Night has become our most attended event, drawing an average of 3,500 visitors per event, who explore our institution from 8pm to 1am, making it a highlight of our annual calendar.

LIVE 2024: Amarte Foundation and Kunstinstituut Melly in Concert takes place on Saturday, 2 March, from 8 pm to 12 am within the art galleries at Kunstinstituut Melly in Rotterdam. On this special evening, audiences may be sitting-in as much as coming in and out of the galleries, flowing with the different rhythms and installations staged that night.

To program *LIVE 2024*, the partners released an Open Call for musicians and sound artists in The Netherlands. The open call closes on 31 January 2024. Especially encouraged are proposals of music sets and sound works resonating with the visual art on view at Kunstinstituut Melly in March 2024.

Exhibition on view during *LIVE 2024: My Oma*

My Oma is a project about grandmothers. It looks at how grandmothers affect personal and cultural histories, both through love and conflict. The project brings together artists, stories, art, and ideas to talk about big issues of our time like immigration, mixed heritage, and changing roles of women.

It focuses on the wisdom and small stories that grandmothers share. *My Oma* aims to encourage learning about history, stronger connections between different generations, and to celebrate the knowledge in communities spread across different places. The name *My Oma* combines English and Dutch to show a personal touch. It sees grandmothers as important figures with their own power, and also as people affected by society's views. The project looks at different ways of understanding history, traditions, and family roots. It also invites people to think differently about how culture and inheritance are linked to gender and age.

Available galleries

A



Artist Jota Mombaça created a new sculpture and sound piece about grandmothers. This work looks at how grandmothers in Brazil have been affected by racial and gender violence, seeing them as a missing presence. Mombaça considers this missing part to be a chance to explore history and forgotten memories.

The artwork uses empty ceramics placed over piles of trash, similar to the rubble outside Mombaça's family home in Brazil. It suggests that the absence of grandmothers can be a way to rediscover black female ancestors, especially through Mombaça's own experience of gender transition. The piece also highlights how rare it is for transgender women in Brazil to become grandmothers.

This artwork is very personal for Mombaça. It reflects on the artist's family history and the lack of a black grandmother figure. This absence is linked to a common trend in Brazil where black men often marry outside their race. The family story includes an enslaved ancestor named "Mombaça," but her identity remains unclear.

B



Photographs left and right wall: Liedeke Kruk is one of three Dutch artists chosen to create a photo project for *My Oma*. For *My Oma*, she created a new photo series focusing on families led by women. This series mixes new photos with her older work, showing different kinds of families, friends, couples, and individuals, and highlighting the emotional connections they share. Her work changes the usual idea of a family portrait by showing different family arrangements and relationships in each photo.

Drawings back wall: Kateřina Šedá's artworks are filled with sharp insights into the unseen aspects of how people interact with the places they live. She uses these insights to create tasks, games, and activities. When local residents take part in these activities, they connect with each other, making Šedá's works specific to those places. *My Oma* features two of her large projects, which are special because they involve tasks set by the artist and are inspired by her grandmothers, who also take part in them.

It Doesn't Matter showcases 512 drawings by Šedá's grandmother, Jana. After retiring from a long working life and living without much activity, Jana often said, "It doesn't matter" when making choices. Šedá encouraged her grandmother to draw things from her memory of working for 33 years as a tool stockroom head in a home supply store in Brno, Czech Republic. These drawings include over 500 items Jana remembered from the store. Creating these drawings helped Jana move away from saying "it doesn't matter," showing the importance of memories.

C



Mural: "A Maior" is a family store in Viseu, Portugal, owned by the parents of artist Bruno Zhu. Since 2016, Zhu has been setting up exhibitions in this store, involving the store's workers, local customers, guest artists, and his family. In line with the store's fashion seasons, Zhu worked with his grandmother Yu Yan, who lives in China, to create fashion lookbooks showcasing the store's clothes and accessories.

For the *My Oma* project, Bruno Zhu presents new work celebrating Yu Yan. This includes one of two photo-murals in the exhibition, where Yu Yan is modeling the store's seasonal cosmetics. Zhu's sister Jessica Zhu did the styling. The images are dramatic, similar to famous fashion ads, and are paired with pictures showing Yu Yan's everyday life filled with style and art, like a shelf full of cosmetics or a shiny silver curtain.

Sculpture: Buhlebzwe Siwani often uses performance, installation, and sometimes photography or video in her work. She explores how her body fits into the world of contemporary art, drawing from her life in South Africa and her family's women.

For *My Oma*, Siwani has made a new sculpture based on an old black-and-white photo of her great-grandmother, grandmother, and mother. All these women played a part in raising her, and she was the first great-grandchild of her great-grandmother.

Her sculpture, called *Isaziso* 1996, shows four generations: her grandmother, mother, herself, and her son. It's a life-size, three-dimensional group portrait made from green soap. This soap, which has a strong smell and is common in rural and poorer areas in South Africa, has been a theme in Siwani's art for years. She remembers her grandmother using it to wash her when she was a child. The sculpture, with its noticeable smell, is shown with an apricot tree, referring to one her grandmother had. Siwani compares the passing of an elder to a tree falling.

D



Wallpaper: Kateřina Šedá's and her maternal grandmother, Milada, wanted to do an art project together. This led to *A Normal Life*, a book Milada wrote and illustrated about her life in the Czech Republic during communism. The book, full of memories, is dedicated to her great-grandchildren.

For *My Oma*, Šedá created a wallpaper using Milada's drawings. There's also a photo of Šedá's daughter, Julia, holding Milada's book in her great-grandmother's apartment. Milada's wallpaper illustrations might look childlike. This might be true when compared to a professional artist's work. But Šedá's projects focus on engaging with others, and on reflection, memory, and imagination, rather than on artistic skill.

Paintings: Sawangwongse Yawngkhwe is a painter born in the Shan ethnic state of Myanmar, now living in Zutphen, Netherlands. In *My Oma*, Yawngkhwe presents two sets of paintings about his grandmother, Sao Nang Hearn Kham, who started the Shan State Army in 1964.

These paintings show Hearn Kham in private moments, based on family memories. They feature broad brushstrokes and are mostly in yellow and gray colors. The three paintings depict different times in her life: one shows her as a schoolgirl at Saint Agnes college, another has her barely visible, coming out of a river barge in 1948 – the year Burma became independent of English rule.

A new, large painting (centered in the image above) for *My Oma* shows Hearn Kham eating with her children before they went into exile in 1969. Yawngkhwe also explores Hearn Kham's more public side in two other paintings displayed on the second floor.



Silvia Martes is an artist who creates surreal scenes with characters and performers. She uses a mix of fiction and real-life stories to explore personal and broader societal themes. Martes is involved in all parts of making her films, including building sets, filming, acting, directing, editing, and post-production.

In her new work, *Heru Ku Heru pt. 1. (Iron With Iron pt. 1.)*, Martes focuses on the travel paths of herself, her grandmother, and her family. The video installation has real interviews with Dutch people of Caribbean background, set against a fictional story in a diner in Curaçao. It moves between reality and fiction, different worlds, and two locations, reflecting on her ancestors' move from Curaçao to the Netherlands and the lives of people from the Caribbean living in other countries today.

Martes shows complex ideological and political issues by blending different and often conflicting stories in a dreamlike way. She uses photos, voice-overs, and quick cuts in her videos to suggest that understanding one story requires knowing others, many of which are forgotten or never told.

F



Charlie Koolhaas is an artist who uses photography, architecture, and writing to tell stories about the places she lives and visits. She grew up in London and now lives in Rotterdam. Koolhaas is one of three Dutch artists chosen to create a photo project for *My Oma*. Her work in the exhibition focuses on her late grandmother, Wilhelmina Eybergen, better known in the Netherlands as Harriët Freezer.

Freezer passed away just before Koolhaas was born. Over the past year, Koolhaas has been exploring her grandmother's life, career, and her role as a public figure, author, and feminist. She collected Freezer's scrapbooks, memorabilia, and oral histories from interviews. Koolhaas also visited cities and towns in the Netherlands with streets named after her grandmother's pseudonym. Since the 1990s, sixteen streets have been named after Freezer. Koolhaas photographed women living on these streets, sometimes with their partners, friends, or colleagues. These portraits represent the everyday women Freezer wrote for, and with whom Koolhaas recently spoke. Two of Freezer's book covers are also enlarged and displayed on a light panel in the gallery.