

ANOUK KRUIHOF

Untitled (I've taken too many photos / I've never taken a photo)

2012



**Anouk Kruijthof (AK) & Harisson Medina (HM) in conversation.**

**AK: So Harrison, you called me after you saw my poster - called 'Did you never make a photo before in your life?' which I mounted on the walls of the streets in Bed-Stuy (Brooklyn), New York... Had you really honestly never taken a single picture before...?**

HM: Well my brother asked me once if I could take a photo of him for his MySpace. It was with a phone; you could call people with it. It was a high-tech phone, his girlfriend's. It didn't really take a photo: I just aimed it at him and forgot what I had to press. It was a button. Anyone could do this.

**AK: Do you have a phone yourself?**

HM: I have no phone, because I have nobody to call. I have money to buy a phone, but when I buy one, it would be a \$ 20 phone without a camera. Do they still have those? It's not cool to have, I guess, a phone without a camera, but phones are meant to call people with and not to take pictures, though.

**AK: Why is a phone without a camera not cool?**

HM: Well everybody wants to make pictures now. I think it is just too much. It feels like we gave our lives up to technology. You've got everything on your computer: you've got your whole life on it. I have no computer, no email address and no phone. We have a house phone though at home. I just believe a world without technology is cooler.

**AK: Yes, I am completely dependent on my computer. You're right: my whole life is stored on this computer. I can't imagine life without this machine anymore...**

HM: People are putting everything on it: lots of pictures and nobody can be private any longer. Everybody knows about you, they know where you live, what you look like, what you do - and you can't be private any longer.

**AK: What is good about being private nowadays?** HM: I don't know.

**AK: Why do people take photos?**

HM: Well you know - 'A photo lasts a lifetime'. When they are having a good time, when people are having fun they want to take a picture, because they want to remember that moment.

**AK: What is a photo?**

HM: What is a photo? Oh... it's a picture I guess. That's a photo - oh no that's a mirror. I don't know... Really... It's just something like you capture a moment and you make it freeze. That's a photo I guess.

**AK: Do you think a photo shows reality?**

HM: Yes it does show reality, it shows what is happening in the world.

**AK: Did you go to an exhibition before? Like in a museum for example?** HM: No.

**AK: In a museum, you can also see photos, which are staged. Some artists make a composition of things and take a photo of it: this means that it is a staged photo. Do you still consider that as reality?** HM: That is still reality

**AK: We are going to look at 300 colour pictures on my computer screen from my snapshot archive over the last 12 years. You can say if you like the photo and we will select it for my photo installation, which will be shown in France later this month. You can also say 'out or pass' when you don't like the photo, because we need to bring the amount of photos down to 80 and when you do like the photo you can easily press: 6: red: small**

**7: yellow: medium**

**8: green: large, ok?**

HM: Ok.

HM: Is that a horse's butt?

**AK: Yes.**

HM: That has to go in: (large 8)

HM: 8, 7, 8, 8, 6, pass, pass, pass, 8,

6, 6, pass. That has to be a 7, pass,

pass... out.

HM: I like this because I like the background. It is all trash. The background looks like a dirty bathroom, so the tree comes out better



HM: 7, 7, 8, out, in... yes no I will go back to it ok? This is very nice, in and definitely 8, this one out. Medium: 7

HM: That's a masterpiece.

**AK: So... That's a compliment...**



HM: Because it makes you think forever. Here you see part of a leg. The photo makes you come back to it, spend one-to-one time with it. The picture is now your brother or sister. The picture can be your girlfriend. Like the picture is part of you now. You start a relationship with it.

**AK: Wow, ha-ha, what a philosophy!**

HM: Yes that's my philosophy about it: I will make this a 6 but it should be seen.

HM: Pass, that's got to be a 7. I am from Coney Island, believe it or not.

HM: Pass, pass, pass, 6, 8, pass, 7, 7, pass, pass, 7, 6, pass...

HM: That's just a bag, floating in the sea. It's too simple.



**AK: Yes I know it's simple, do you think it's beautiful or not?** HM: No not really... **AK: Why not? I get a bit mad now...** HM: Because it is too simple, leave it out please. It is nothingness, it is blank and it is blue. I'm trying to explain this to you to the best of my ability.

HM: I have to pass this. And this...

too, this one is too simple too. I have to pass, pass, pass, pass, pass...

**AK: Ok.**

HM: This should be small: 6. HM: mmm... this is nice: 7. It looks like a refrigerator, but also like a toy rock. This takes me back to my childhood; it might take a lot of people back to a good place, so it's a good picture: 7!



HM: A classic! The desert: Vegas. Like Las Vegas

Looks like somebody's house in Africa...



I like all your photos, I am mad, because I like all of them. The colours of the clothes. I guess I like bright colours, because they bring me back to childhood. Right now, life is a little hard, because I have to help my mother out with money. She relies too much on me; I am the only one who has a job.

**AK: You have to be more critical ok?**

HM: Critical thinking huh?

HM: 2 people in one. Ha-ha you can't tell if it's a girl or a boy, but a girl's butt does not look like that, but it has slippers on. So you don't know who this is. It's another one which makes you think. This is one of the pictures you fall in love with. I make this a 7.

HM: This is a 6. I don't know if I should keep it in though. I should keep it because of that window opening up there in the left corner. Without this, it would be a prison, but that part is a sign of fresh air. A sign of relief. It makes you breathe... Openness.



**AK: The fact that you see that - You have a very detailed eye.**

HM: You know they did an experiment where they painted a whole room blue and invited a bunch of people. The people suddenly felt colder. Because of the colour. They painted another room purple and people felt bored. Another one, they painted white, and people felt ill, because it reminded them of a hospital. So it's all about the colours

reminded them of a hospital. So it's all about the colours

**AK: Do you really believe this kind of things?**

HM: Purple is in depending colour. It depends where you are in. If you are wearing orange: you are friendly. If you see people wearing all black, they might be depressed or something, they are going through a hard time.

**AK: And why is it you are wearing a t-shirt marked 'I've never taken a photo?'**

HM: Ha-ha, that means you never have taken a photo ha-ha-ha and I still never took a photo, I am just looking at photos ha-ha.

**AK: What is a professional photographer?**

HM: The nonprofessional does things that others do, he's a copycat - and the professional does things he really wants to do.

**AK: Do you think many people are copycats?**

HM: Too many. There are no originals any more.

**AK: Do you think a photo is art?**

HM: A photo is art when you have to think about it. It's just a picture when it's taken quickly and when people just want to collect money with it real quick. That is when it is not art. To make art... That costs a lot of time; you have to take a bunch of them before it can become art. It has to become perfect.

**AK: In or out?**

HM: Out, and this one too: out, let's skip this. Oh all your photos are good, I wish I could put all of them in, but I have to choose: so out. I saw too many pictures like this before: out.

**AK: Good reason.**

HM: Out, we don't want to fill it up with deserts...

HM: This one out too. It has to be out: it looks like a wedding and that's not good.

HM: Out, it's too confusing...

HM: That's nasty: out!



HM: Definitely got to be in: I'll make that an 8. Oh man: out....

Mud? It is mud isn't it? That's way too confusing - out - out looks like hands, feet... I like the top part of it... oh man that's way too confusing too: out uhhhhmmmm out, out.

HM: Oh that's real nice. Oh yeah I get this right now: those are 2 eyes right here and there is a hole right there: that is his mouth. Isn't it?

**AK: It is just the wall of a house.**

HM: It's the face of a wall.

He is surprised: he is like this...

He is surprised you're taking a picture of him.

So he is basically speaking to you. He is screaming, so you put that thing over his mouth so

he'll be quiet, right? Yeah it has to be in; we could not make this too small: 8!



HM: This is too regular, because there are people in it: out.

HM: Another one of these thinkers. Where are you? On a train? In a plane or just insane? Uhhmmmm... out. This looks like an 'out' too.

HM: We'll have to put it in, because it so weird. It's so beautiful as art because it's weird.

HM: This is a depressed picture: 'I have to work... Where am I? What am I working for? I am working for free. They hardly feed me...' He's like... 'What am I doing here? What position am I in? How can I get out of here?' That's what he's thinking. They don't care about my feelings anymore... This picture relates to society. Lots of people are stuck in a bad position, sort of like myself. This is one of my favourites, because it is me on the picture. I am that donkey and a lot of people can relate to the donkey and also feel like he feels. He thinks: 'I am not getting paid human dollars... I don't have a family and what if I want to venture out? ... Meet a donkey wife, make donkey kids, become a donkey grandfather.' This donkey is stuck in a position he can't escape from. Just like me, so let's make it an 8.

HM: Pass it: looks like a zebra.



This is nice: 6, 7, 6, pass, pass, that has to stay, this is real nice: Great wall of China: isn't it?

**AK: No.**

HM: Pass.. pass it's funny. Haha, the girls are crocodiles: they eat you raw.



**AK: Do you see girls as crocodiles?** HM: Yes, some girls can be like crocodiles: like my friend, she's real mean. It has to be in: size 7

HM: I don't get the concept of this: out, out, no it has to go in: 8. I take both of them out. Nice: 6, out, out, out, 6, out, uhhmmmm

7: out, out!

HM: Nice! Like a piece of bread, hotdog bread, ah it's so nice because it has eyes: it looks like an alien. Ahhhhhh it's sort of as if you brought it to life: 8.



HM: Small, jail.



**AK: Why do you think I take pictures of buildings you constantly call jails?**

HM: I think it's about what you are feeling: maybe you were a bit depressed when you took these pictures of all these isolated buildings.

HM: Oh these colours, they just go so good together. Happiness. I would call it: happiness in the photo. The white van, the hearts, it seems like you were in love when you made this picture...



**AK: Yes, true. This was a trip with a boyfriend; this was our little house for a while.**

HM: Did you live there in the car?

**AK: Yes!** HM: Definitely has to be in there. I put this as an 8: big!

HM: Out, out, out...

HM: This man looks like a Mexican who's fighting for his freedom to work in this country. There is the gate and he is behind the gate, the only thing he could do is swim to the other side: and that is probably the land of the free. This photo feels like giving him an opportunity.



HM: A sort of low-budget Disneyworld.

HM: A ghost. That in the back over there looks like a nose and a mouth and from here it looks like a frog. The ghost is with the frog, but why are they together? Like a platypus, which is a dog and a beaver. No beaver. It's a dog and a squirrel. You just don't know what it is, so we'll put it in. Just like the platypus, because you don't know exactly what it is.



HM: Nice - I like the black and white on it; to me those are vibrant colours. White, grey and black: it puts you in a happy mood.

HM: 6, 8, out, out, out, State Penitentiary, 7, 8, 6, out, out, pass.

Astonishing, I put that as an 8. I make this one a 6 and skip the other one. I don't know what it is; I don't like it so much out. This looks like the perfect moment - in: 8. 7 - that has to go in, out, out, out... Man that's nice. Out, out, out, out, out, ssssss 6 oh no 7, make that an 8. And that's a 6.

HM: It looks provocative, it's nice though.



**AK: Why does this picture make you laugh?**

HM: Well, he's a good-looking guy, he looks like a drag though: 'I am what I am you know, I am not that happy right now with my blue lips but I am confident'. He's got the long hair, the grey hair as well so he's been around for a little while, he must be like 37 years old.

**AK: Ha-ha, oh no... he was maybe 27 or 26 at that time.**

HM: I probably give him a 6: small.

HM: I like this concept; it feels like you can shoot right through. It gives you a lot of possibilities: 'Where should I go? Shall I go that side or that side? You can go in all those directions. It's like a labyrinth. What's behind this door, what's that door? What's behind me?'



HM: Out, in, 8, out. What's in the box? Out, out... 7. That's typical, nice: In - make it a 6. In, but we'll take it out later, because I've selected too many anyway. Make them both medium please; they've got to be side by side. Because they go together so well.

HM: Out, out.

**AK: Too cliché?**

HM: What does cliché means?

**AK: It means when something is overused, like far from original anymore.** HM: Oh yeah like a picture of a sunset?

**AK: Yes, could be.**

HM: Dirty bar of soap. That's not soap is it? It looks like an oyster, this is nasty too. 'Don't use this soap, 'cos you come out dirtier than you came in'.



The moon, how do you call these things?

**AK: Planets?** HM: Yeah like that one: that's Saturn, I put Saturn in: 6



HM: That looks so good...



HM: Whose hand is that? Is that you with the cigarette?

**AK: Yes.**

HM: Definitely got to go in.



HM: 6... out, out, out. This one in, because this shows that computers have taken over.



HM: People who love their mother would enjoy these pictures - that shows why they both have to be in side by side: 7



HM: XTC!! Wow he's really into it! He's a lunatic, is he? Did you pour water over him?

**AK: No, he's sweating hard-core... His name is John Maus, he's performing.**



HM: That should be in. I call this photo 'Exhaustion'. I put it in as a 8 - oh no, a 7.

Out, out, cliché, cliché, out, 6, out, out, out, out, out, out, out, out, out... That's nice, just that one, I put that as a 6.

Out, out, out, out, out...

**AK: Oh no I love this one.** HM: Oh yes sure let's put it in: 7...

**AK: No, you said out.** HM: No Anouk I'm putting it in, I was just thinking, my head was swinging really... Let's make it a 7.

**AK: No, you have to be honest and not listen to me: when you want it out, it goes out.**

HM: I just like colourful stuff so much, I just like it: 6 6 6 6 6! Wow nobody takes pictures of bathrooms and especially not when the toilet is pink. I have never seen this before. This is real 'eye candy': it's fun to look at!



HM: No, no, no.

HM: This is special. It's a picture of a picture. You ripped the guy's head off and took another picture of it. It is very articulate. Too articulate maybe so let's say: out.

Oh no: in... yes in...!



HM: Where is that?

**AK: I don't know, can't remember anymore...**

HM: Oh yeah... because you took too many photos, you don't even know where you took them anymore, oh man ha-ha... In, in, in, in, oh it's all so good though, I just wished it wasn't all so good. The pizza can go out though.



HM: Out, out, out, out...

HM: That's got to stay, because the cups all have personalities, this one is sharing his drink with that one, the other one is offended... and turns his back, and the middle one is happy and wants to join the left ones.



**AK: You have a lot of fantasy. Many people would say about this picture: 'That's a pink wall and some plastic cups'... I guess...** HM: This has got to go out. This one out too - how many do we have? Do I have to take more out?

**AK: I think we are there...**

HM: Phew! Those were too many photos, definitely.

**AK: Ha-ha, thank you so much Harrison.**

HM: It was fun to do.

**AK: Why?** Because you can eat it and I am hungry...

**AK: Are you hungry?** HM: Yes.

**AK: OK, shall I make you something to eat?** HM: Yes please.

**AK: OK, let's take a break and I'll make you a sandwich.**

(after the break)

HM: Oh yeah, we were here with this piece of bread and now I'm not hungry anymore. That bread you gave me was just too dry, sorry: out.

**AK: Oh.** HM: I got to get back in the mood...

**AK: Large, medium, small or out remember? 8,7,6.**

HM: I like it, oh now I like this one better, you take the other one in, no I don't like them both, take them out. Aluminium foil: out. No I think I'll take the other one out and this one in. Out for now, out, 7, 8... 7, out cause it's the same thing. I like this one better.

**AK: Sure you think this one is better?**

HM: Party-girl-drunk. This is a drunken girl. Who is that?

