

Press Release

Cologne, July 30, 2025

German Photographic Society (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Photographie, DGPh) grants the 2025 DGPh Manfred Heiting Medal of Curatorial Excellence in Photography to Dutch curator Mattie Boom and the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam

Cologne - The German Photographic Society (DGPh) is awarding the 2025 **DGPh Manfred Heiting Medal of Curatorial Excellence in Photography**, to the Dutch curator Mattie Boom and the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam. The award recognizes Mattie Boom for her ongoing commitment to photography and for her outstanding curatorial achievements at the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam. Over the past decades - and under her visionary Leadership - the Rijksmuseum has built a remarkable collection, has mounted numerous important exhibitions and has published extensive catalogues and study series spanning the 19th and 20th century, with additional focus on contemporary trends. In addition, the Rijksmuseum has established one of the leading conservation departments to include educational, scientific research on photographic paper.

The Rijksmuseum photographic collection started with Mattie Boom

As the first curator of photography at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, Mattie Boom began building up on the museum's photographic collection in 1994 and played a key role in developing the profile of the photography collection in the years that followed. Together with her colleagues, she has established one of Europe's most important photography collections at the Rijksmuseum.

Today, the Rijksmuseum collection comprises more than 200,000 items. Spanning the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries, it offers a representative selection from the entire history of the medium, with acknowledged masterpieces by Dutch and international photographers alongside advertising, fashion, journalistic and scientific work including iconic photographs by Diane Arbus, Isaac Asper, Richard Avedon, Samuel Bourne, Ed van der Elsken, Robert Frank, Nan Goldin, Dorothea Lange, Man Ray, Paul Strand, Linnaeus Tripe and Charles Watkins, as well as works by amateur photographers. In addition, there are more than 20,000 photo books from the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. Mattie Boom has not only constantly expanded the photo collection in the Rijksmuseum, but she has also contributed to establishing photography as an independent art form in the context of museums in general.

Geschäftsführender Vorstand:

Ruediger Glatz – Roy Hessing – Michael Kaune
Rainer Schlautmann – Stephan J. Schulz
Frank Schumacher – Ira Stehmann

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Exhibitions and publications

Outstanding exhibitions under the direction of Mattie Boom and her colleague Hans Rooseboom include *Modern Times - Photography in the 20th Century* (2014), *New Realities - Photography in the 19th Century* (2017), *New Horizons - Contemporary Photography in Focus* (2023) and the most recent exhibition *American Photography*, that opened in spring 2025. The internationally acclaimed exhibitions are characterized by their precise scientific research, socio-political relevance and their visually powerful presentation. Together with her colleague Hans Rooseboom, she was the first non-American curator to receive the *AIPAD Award in 2023*.

In 2017, Mattie Boom received her PhD from Erasmus University Rotterdam for her research on the rise of amateur photography in the Netherlands. The research took over ten years. Her research resulted in the book *Everyone a Photographer. The rise of amateur photography in the Netherlands* and the eponymous exhibition in the Rijksmuseum.

"The art and craft of photography are carefully researched, collected, conserved, archived, exhibited, described, and documented across countless private and public museums and cultural institutions. The curators and experts behind these efforts stand at vital crossroads – safeguarding our history and identity, enlightening audiences, and serving the greater good. They are truly worthy of our highest admiration and respect." Manfred Heiting, Los Angeles, 7-17-2025

In addition to her work as a curator, Mattie Boom's work as an author should also be emphasized. Her publications, including the first publication on Dutch photobooks, *Photography Between Covers. Dutch Documentary Photobook After 1945* (1989), *Dutch Eyes* (2007), *Modern Times* (2014) and *New Realities* (2017), are internationally recognized as benchmark works and have received several awards, including the *Paris Photo-Aperture Foundation Photobook Award*.

Moreover, under the guidance of Mattie Boom and Hans Rooseboom, up-and-coming curators from the Netherlands and abroad were able to do research on the basis of the Photography Collection in the Rijksmuseum and publish their results in publications. These series are known as the Rijksmuseum Studies in Photography and were made possible by the Manfred & Hanna Heiting Fonds

Mattie Boom was one of the founding members of the Netherlands Photographic Society in 1992 and was its president until 2002, providing important impetus for the development of a strong, networked and professional photographic infrastructure in the Netherlands.

The **DGPh Manfred Heiting Medal of Curatorial Excellence in Photography** - initiated and sponsored by the internationally renowned photography expert Manfred Heiting (DGPh) - will be awarded for the first time in 2025. The award recognizes an

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institution and the extraordinary achievements of a personality of international reputation who has established a high-quality photographic collection and made it accessible to an interested public through exhibitions, publications and additional research, and thereby contributed to developing the perception of photography.

The award ceremony will take place on September 27, 2025 at the Stiftersaal of the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum in Cologne.

Please find press material for download here (DGPh website)

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