

FOTO- FESTIVAL

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KNOKKE- HEIST

GRATIS

International Photography Festival Knokke-Heist 2014: Celebrating photography

One stunning venue, six free exhibitions, for ten weeks.

Knokke-Heist, 28 March 2014 – From 30 March up to and including 9 June 2014, Knokke-Heist will once again focus on contemporary photography. The [International Photo Festival Knokke-Heist 2014](#) ensures that there is something for every visitor, with six free exhibitions offering various perspectives. One of the highlights is the outdoor exhibition, entitled “Haute Africa”, in which international leading artists and photographers such as Martin Parr, Wangechi Mutu, Zanele Muholi, Viviane Sassen, Yinka Shonibare and many others offer an alternative perspective on the contemporary African continent.

But Knokke-Heist also gives lesser-known talent a platform. In the Scharpoord Cultural Centre, you can visit “Unknown Masterpieces”, an artistic free exhibition that highlights the photos of tomorrow’s trendsetters. And finally, the photo festival is also the first opportunity to see this year’s “World Press Photo” travelling exhibition in Belgium.

“Haute Africa”

The Photo Festival’s main exhibition, “Haute Africa”, highlights the work of several leading international photographers in various locations in Knokke-Heist’s public space. Photos have been beautifully integrated in the intimate Zoute Church as well as along Zeedijk and in the dunes of the J. Stübben Park, for example.

“Haute Africa” focuses on the work of photographers who are not interested in African fashion per se but who choose instead to conduct an anthropological study of contemporary African clothing culture. Several African countries, including Ivory Coast, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania and Zambia have a flourishing economy. South Africa’s economy is the largest in Africa, making it a major global player. These countries primarily owe their progress to the exploitation of the minerals in Africa’s rich soil, but creative and sustainable economies are also seeing growth.

The fashion industry is a good example of such a creative industry. Many African designers, entrepreneurs and photographers inspire the world with new designs that convey and renew African identity. Their creations find their way to the West, through the Internet, during international fashion weeks and thanks to several initiatives aimed at promoting fashion. Artists and photographers soon also noticed this development. They use clothing cultures to better understand the convictions, thoughts and feelings of the wearers or the history of a particular place. They examine such topics as Westernisation, post-Colonialism, race and gender equality, religious beliefs or political power.

The participating artists/photographers are: Martin Parr, Wangechi Mutu, Viviane Sassen, Zanele Muholi, Jodi Bieber, Jim Naughten, Phyllis Galembo, Héctor Mediavilla, Sabelo Mlangeni, Jehad Nga, Hassan Hajjaj, Nontsikelelo Veleko, Baudouin Mouanda, Daniele Tamagni, Namsa Leuba and Yinka Shonibare.

Some highlights:



Magnum photographer **Martin Parr** uses his *Luxury* series to showcase the life of the super rich who travel to art fairs, horse races and fashion shows all around the world. The African elite prance around at the *Durban July*, the biggest horseracing event in South Africa, wearing eccentric Western outfits and design sunglasses with a glass of champagne in hand. This new South Africa in a sense is almost grotesque.

But Western designer clothes do not always degenerate into boring conformism, as is illustrated in the photos of **Daniele Tamagni**, **Héctor Mediavilla** and **Baudouin Mouanda**. They chose to document the life of an elite group of dandies in Congo-Brazzaville, who call themselves “Sapeurs”. Their refined taste for Western tailor-made suits and accessories starkly contrasts with their impoverished existence.



Not all Africans appreciate the Westernisation of African clothing culture. Some complain about these Western trends, regretting that traditional clothing practices are lost in the process. In his work, **Jim Naughten** zooms in on the history of the Herero tribe’s style of dressing. These Namibian women copied these Victorian-style dresses from Western missionaries and merchants, but added African elements.

In his photos, **Yinka Shonibare** illustrates that even Africans have the wrong idea when it comes to their traditional clothes and symbols. He uses colourful Dutch wax fabric in many of his photos. This textile was originally manufactured in the Dutch East Indies, but there was no market for it there. It was eventually copied by the English, who sold it to the West Africans. And so a colonial invention, for Africans and Westerners, became a misleading symbol of African identity.



The book *Haute Africa*, published by Uitgeverij Lannoo, accompanies the exhibition. The book provides a picture of African fashion through the eyes of international artists. Not just the photographs of the Photo festival Knokke-Heist exhibition are shown; the book offers an even broader picture. *Haute Africa* shows a different Africa; a place where creativity produces prosperity. African artists, designers, fashion designers, entrepreneurs and photographers inspire the world with new designs which promote and renew the African identity. This book provides an overall picture of this.

Title: *Haute Africa. People - Photography – Fashion*, Authors: Christophe De Jaeger & Ramona Van Gansbeke (for the Photo festival Knokke-Heist 2014), Price: € 39.99, Language: NL-ENG, Available in bookstores from 28 March 2014, Uitgeverij Lannoo, www.lannoo.com

You can find a complete overview of all the installations in annex 1.

The introduction to “Haute Africa” is in annex 2.

The biographies and the list of exhibiting photographers are in annex 3.

You can find more information about the catalogue in annex 4.

Unknown Masterpieces



The photo world has a lot of hidden talent, including close to home. In the exhibition entitled “Unknown Masterpieces”, the curators, Stephane Verheye and Freddy Van Vlaenderen, highlight contemporary home-grown photography. “*We want to give emerging photo talent that is not very well known the opportunity to put themselves in the spotlight with work that strays off the beaten path. We mainly focused on prospection and innovation. The intention is to encourage a debate in our rapidly changing digital society, which undoubtedly also leads to uniformity, about various themes such as love, confusion, coldness, simplicity, war, injustice and oppression*”, the curators said.

Unknown Masterpieces showcases the work of Julie Scheurweghs, Jef Paepen, Aaron Lapeirre, Martine Laquiere, Dirk Janssens, Arno de Pooter, Veerle Scheppers, Jamie-Lee Sienes, Dieter Vanfraechem, Maroesjka Lavigne and Danny Van der Elst. These photographers are considered trendsetters because of the composition, impact, symbolism and power of their work.

You can find the biographies of the exhibiting photographers in annex 5.

Practical information: free exhibition from 30 March up to and including 9 June in the Scharpoord Cultural Centre, upper hall, 32, Meerlaan, 8300 Knokke-Heist. Open every day from 10 a.m. until 7 p.m.

Leopold Lippens, Mayor of Knokke-Heist: “*We are delighted to be able to organise the International Photography Festival Knokke-Heist yet again and to transform our town into a free open-air museum for ten weeks. We will take you on a journey to “Haute Africa”, the world of the creative inhabitants of the African continent who share their passion and knack for fashion. In the Scharpoord Cultural*

Centre, you can also visit the free exhibition “Unknown Masterpieces”. An exhibition full of emerging talent! We invite all photo enthusiasts and fashionistas to discover these stunning photo series for free.”

World Press Photo 2014

Every year World Press Photo organises the world’s biggest and most prestigious photo competition. In early February, a prominent jury, chaired by Gary Knight, selects the award-winning photos. After the competition, the photos travel around the world in an exhibition that is seen by one million people in forty different countries. Traditionally the Belgian première of the World Press Photo Exhibition is always at the International Photography Festival in Knokke-Heist.

Practical information: free exhibition from 11 May 2014 up to and including Monday 9 June in the Scharpoord cultural centre, Downstairs Hall. Open every day from 10 a.m. until 7 p.m. (opening 11 May at 11 a.m.)

Photo View – Centre for Visual Expression

For several years the Centre for Visual Expression (*Centrum voor Beeldexpressie*) has succeeded in putting the power of individuality in the spotlight in Photo View. This annual exhibition showcases several photo series with a soul. Traditionally the exhibition premieres at the International Photography Festival in Knokke-Heist, after which it tours Flanders.

The photographers that were selected for Photo View encourage spectators to look just a bit longer and deeper, forcing them to briefly step out of their comfort zone even. The selected series tell fascinating stories and often require more than just a brief glance. They make you think about photography and gladly experiment, eschewing the traditional approach to certain topics.

Practical information: free exhibition from 30 March up to and including 9 June 2014 in the Scharpoord Cultural Centre, Downstairs Hall, 32, Meerlaan, 8300 Knokke-Heist. Open every day from 10 a.m. until 7 p.m. More information at www.beeldexpressie.be.

Local photo and film club Knokke-Heist & Diagonaal

A selection of works by the members of the local photo clubs Diagonaal and kFFkh (Koninklijke Foto- en Filmclub Knokke-Heist) are on show in the Scharpoord Cultural Centre. They have participated in the photo festival since the start. In fact the kFFkh already organised photo exhibitions in the Scharpoord Cultural Centre in 1979.

Practical information: free exhibition from 30 March up to and including 4 May 2014 in the Scharpoord Cultural Centre, 32, Meerlaan, 8300 Knokke-Heist. Open every day from 10 a.m. until 7 p.m.

Pierre ‘KODAK’ Meyers

Pierre Meyers, a photographer and former ship mechanic, was born in 1930. Given that his ancestors had all worked in the shipping or fishing trades, he also chose a life at sea. In 1946 he started out as a shipmate on board the Z.524 and soon started documenting nice shops and special events in



fishermen's lives. The exhibition clearly illustrates the evolution of photography between the Fifties and Eighties, as we navigate across the white crests on the waves of the North Sea in the small black and white photos and subsequently in the stunning colour photos, made with a Leica camera. Step back in time and experience life in the fishing community of Heist and Zeebrugge, to the ebb and flow of sound and vision.

Practical information: free exhibition from 30 March up to and including 15 September 2014 in Sincfala, Museum of the Zwin Region, 140, Pannenstraat, 8300 Knokke-Heist. Open every day from 10 a.m. to 12 noon and from 2 p.m. to 5.30 p.m.

You can find all the information about the International Photography Festival Knokke-Heist 2014 on our [website](#) and on our [Facebook page](#).

Maps can be obtained from the Tourist Office or the Scharpoord Cultural Centre and Sincfala, Museum of the Zwin Region.

End of the press release

All images may only be used for illustrating an article about the Photo Festival. The photographer and the photo must be properly credited.

List of curators:

Christophe De Jaeger, Curator Haute Africa
Ramona Vangansbeke, Assistant Curator Haute Africa
Freddy Van Vlaenderen, Curator Unknown Masterpieces
Stephane Verheye, Curator Unknown Masterpieces

Organiser of the International Photography Festival:
Scharpoord Cultural Centre, Knokke-Heist
Town council of Knokke-Heist

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