

# museum huis voor fotografie marseille

**COR WAS HERE / The adventurous oeuvre of an Amsterdam photographer, 1936–2013**

*COR WAS HERE* is a special exhibition devoted to the photographer Cor Jaring, curated by the long-time admirer and photographer Sander Troelstra, who is generations younger. Cor Jaring worked his way up from dockworker to internationally-famed photographer, and photographed life as an adventure, with his own personality as a prime example. The exhibition includes a great deal of hitherto undiscovered work from his private archive, including pictures of his journey to Japan, being shown in Huis Marseille for the first time ever.

## **Cor Jaring**

Cor Jaring (1936–2013) was a remarkable character who began working as a professional photographer in the 1950s. He came from humble origins and had started out as a dockworker. Between his working hours he started to photograph the marginal areas in which he moved, with friends, fellow dockers, gaugers and ironworkers as his subjects. He also used his kiekassie, or 'snapbox', as he called his camera, to record mass redundancies and the cold-hearted automation of harbour work. Cor was one of those working men, and made his name as a photographer only later.

Cor Jaring gained international fame mainly through his photographs of the Dutch 'non-violent anarchist' Provo movement and his portrait of John Lennon and Yoko Ono during their 'Bed-In for Peace' in the Amsterdam Hilton Hotel in 1969. These photographs, however, are only a fraction of the thrilling oeuvre that Jaring left behind, and the *COR WAS HERE* exhibition sets out to fill this gap. The fact that Jaring's beloved Amsterdam was not his sole work domain, but that he also reported – inimitably and cinematically – on the hard-working poor, transsexuals, and nude models on the other side of the world was an unexpected discovery made by the documentary photographer Sander Troelstra, after he started working with Jaring to look into his archive in 2011.

## **Sander Troelstra**

Using Jaring's camera to photograph in Glasgow cafés Sander Troelstra (1976-) began to imitate Jaring's working methods, and a friendship sprung up between the two photographers. Troelstra photographed Cor Jaring himself over a period of two and a half years, until Jaring's death in late 2013, a series of portraits for which he won a Zilveren Camera award. In curating *COR WAS HERE* Sander Troelstra has made a special selection from Cor Jaring's personal archive.

## **Huis Marseille**

Huis Marseille, founded in 1999 is the first museum for photography in Amsterdam. The museum has a long history of showing prominent photographers with an international reputation, including Walker Evans, Luc Delahaye, Dayanita Singh, Rob Hornstra, Guido Guidi, Guy Tillen, Chino

Otsuka and Viviane Sassen. Huis Marseille maintains a special interest in international art photographers with a vernacular view on the world.

### **COR WAS HERE: the exhibition**

Cor Jaring's personality helped him to cross social boundaries and come into real contact with 'underdogs' and the lives they live in the margins of society. Creative and brazen, he was unafraid to work close up to his subjects, creating a outstanding series of photographs of Japan in the late 1960s. Jaring also framed his subjects in subtle and remarkable settings, giving his figures a cinematic charisma, and this combination of the harshness of 'real' life and the audacity of film is a faithful reflection of Cor Jaring's own lifestyle. The exhibition opens with a strong selection from the classic oeuvre of his work – a quick look at the turbulent '60s with the rise of the Provo movement, demonstrations in Amsterdam, and cafe life. The viewer is then gradually drawn in to Jaring's personal life, with Cor's own letters as well as material provided by family and friends reflecting on his personality. The whole is supplemented with previously undiscovered work from Japan and nude studies from Jaring's personal archive. A number of the touching photographs that Sander Troelstra made of Cor Jaring in the last years of his life are also included in the exhibition.

### **Cor Jaring's connection to Japan**

Why should this particular exhibition 'Cor was here' be of interest to Japan? It goes without saying that Cor Jaring was a local hero, an Amsterdam photographer who was always at the right spot at the right time. His long journey to Asia in 1966 was an exception to this rule, albeit that while he was there Cor immediately turned to his usual subject matter: life on the fringe, cafés, hostesses, transvestites, gangsters, artists, protests, workers and so on. This newly discovered material of Tokyo in 1966 – never printed before – shows a Tokyo that is very different from the Tokyo of today. For many Japanese viewers it will feel like a unique historical discovery.



Cor Jaring became famous in Holland for his involvement with the counterculture *Provo* movement in Amsterdam in the 1960s. He photographed hippies and psychedelic 'happenings', and made photographs of John Lennon and Yoko Ono in their hotel bed during their 'sleep inn for world peace' (these photographs, on view at the Amsterdam City Archives, could also be added to the travelling exhibition, if desired).

The Dutch photographer Ed van der Elsken (1925-1990) left us a great body of work that he made in Japan, and he is well known in Asia for it. The Japanese photographer Daido Moriyama has a certain eye for subjects and a style that is rather comparable to that of Cor Jaring. In a way Cor Jaring has similarities to them both.

The complete exhibition 'Cor was here' also offers the story of the friendship between two photographers: one old (Cor) and one young (Sander Troelstra). The many layers – autobiographical, emotional, about friendship, generations, sickness and health – that Troelstra brings to the exhibition gives it an appeal that goes beyond a straightforward retrospective; it becomes a story that transcends time and subject matter. Sander Troelstra has published a dedicated book *Cor was hier* – to accompany the exhibition, which is a 'photographic biography' – that contains text about Cor's remarkable life by the prize-winning author Joris van Casteren. Those texts were adapted as gallery text for the exhibition and could be used as such, if so desired.

All the photographs of the exhibition, 105 in total, were printed for the first time especially for the exhibition in Huis Marseille (14 March – 28 June 2015). They have been produced to museum standards, as pigment archival prints, silver gelatin prints and chromogenic colour prints, and are set to travel partially or as a whole after 28 June 2015.

**Japan selection, a first impression**









[Telegraph]

## Beatniks, dockworkers and nudes: the forgotten photos of Cor Jaring

Two new exhibitions explore a Dutch master who captured the surreal and seamy sides of his city



Yoshio Nakayima arrested during a 'happening' at the Lieverdje statue 1964, by Cor Jaring Photo: Cor Jaring

By [Christian House](#)

8:00AM BST 07 May 2015

### [Comment](#)

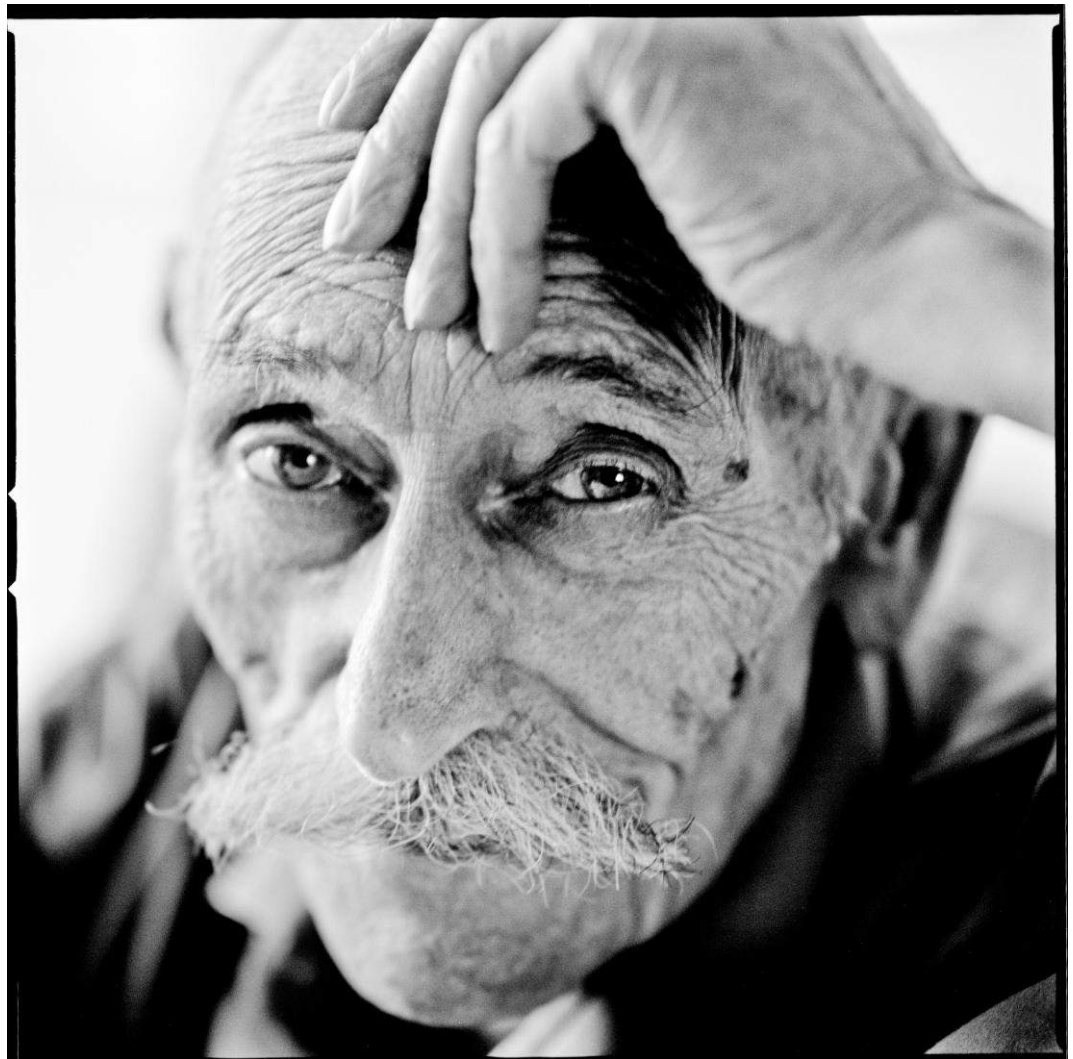
Cor Jaring's life changed in Room 702 of the Hilton Hotel in Amsterdam. On a spring day in 1969 he joined a couple in their honeymoon suite and took a handful of photographs that, in modern parlance, went viral. The compliant couple were John Lennon and Yoko Ono.

Jaring's shots of their famous "Bed-In for Peace" were circulated around the world. Now, two years after his death, the images feature as part of two concurrent exhibitions of his work in Amsterdam, at the Huis Marseille museum and the City Archives

museum  
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The title of the Huis Marseille exhibition, *Cor Was Here*, alludes to Jaring's ability to bluff his way into the most salubrious receptions or seedy Soho cellars. "Cor was like a stray dog. He'd sniff everyone and hang out with anyone," states Sander Troelstra, the young Dutch photographer who befriended Jaring at the end of his life and has curated the show.



Cor Jaring at home in 2013 (Sander Troelstra)

Troelstra met Jaring through a scheme that placed cameras belonging to renowned 20th-century Dutch photographers into the hands of their contemporary counterparts. By the time they collaborated Jaring was already frail. "He started to get smaller," says Troelstra. His spirit, however, remained undiminished. "He was cursing sometimes, really cursing." In the light rooms of Huis Marseille, overlooking the drizzle-flecked Keizersgracht canal, Troelstra talks me through the prints selected for the exhibition. Jaring's complex character emerges. He was, variously, a boxer, cyclist, teacher, painter, and, perhaps most of all, teller of tall tales.





Cor Jaring in the workshop below his atelier (Sander Troelstra, 2013)

He is best known in Holland for his photographs of the Provo movement, a loose gaggle of counterculture figures who staged headline grabbing “happenings” in the squares, streets and studios of Amsterdam during the mid-1960s. Jaring captured beatniks blowing up “freedom bombs” in handbags, setting fire to pianos and seeking enlightenment by drilling holes in their heads. “You could give a cultural tone to the craziest capers,” observed Jaring. And it wasn’t just Lennon who was attracted by Amsterdam’s reputation for free thinking and loose living: Jaring photographed the Rolling Stones and Maharishi Mahesh Yogi as they arrived in town to savour the vibe.



Janus 'The Polisher' in café Hans en Grietje 1958 (Cor Jaring/Amsterdam City Archives)

Jaring taught himself photography in the late Fifties, and honed his art in the city's port, taking photographs of welders and riveters working on the ships laid up in the dry docks and the cargo men labouring deep in their holds. He then took his immersive eye to the coffee houses and clubs, where he photographed the barflies and strippers. It was in these smoky working-class cafes, and afterwards in his atelier, he also pursued a lifelong struggle with the bottle.

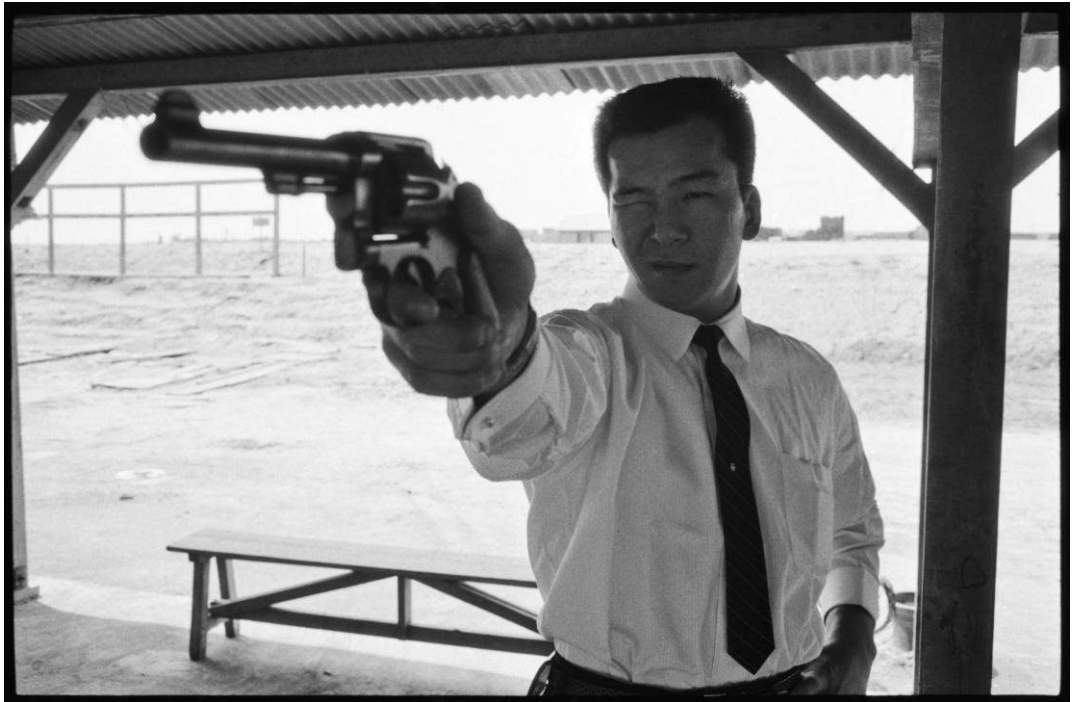
His Provo photographs, along with the pictures of Lennon and Ono, became iconic providing Jaring with an income with which to carouse and travel. Surprisingly they also brought him a respectable day job: for two decades he ran a rather chaotic photography course at the AKI art school in Enschede in the eastern Netherlands.



One of Cor Jaring's secret nude studies (Cor Jaring)

"He was a classless human. It didn't exist for him," says Troelstra. "I saw pictures with him drinking champagne with our Prince Claus at that time. After that he was probably helping a junkie with something." Jaring looked as anarchic as his subjects; and myths – most of them self-perpetuated – swirled around him. He grew a flamboyant handlebar moustache to hide a scarred lip (having crashed his car while attempting to roll a cigarette at the wheel) and boasted of evenings spent dancing with Nancy Sinatra and drinking with the president of Indonesia.

The exhibition attempts to excavate the man beneath the bluster. Jaring's letters to his wife hint at a buried insecurity while Troelstra's elegiac portraits of him capture the dying embers of a once fiery talent. And Jaring's archive produced surprises. A rarely seen series chronicled his trip to Asia where he documented Tokyo's neon-lit nights, "he-she" bars and "hostesses".



Policeman at a firing range, Tokyo 1966 (Cor Jaring/Amsterdam City Archives)

There was also a secret cache of nudes taken in Amsterdam's leafy corners - even in the gardens of the Rijksmuseum. "What a fantastic atmosphere, there in the garden! Misty, grey weather. A bit damp. Those mysterious statues," recalled Jaring. "I shot a set of really beautiful pictures. The girl lying there, with her backside in the wet grass." The shoot was interrupted by two unimpressed policemen. "He had this talent for making things happen," laughs Troelstra. "For photography that's a gift."

**Cor was here is at Huis Marseille, Amsterdam ([huismarseille.nl](http://huismarseille.nl)) until 28 June**

**Magisch Centrum Amsterdam is at the Amsterdam City Archives ([stadsarchief.amsterdam.nl](http://stadsarchief.amsterdam.nl)) until 12 July**

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/photography/11583854/Beatniks-dockworkers-and-nudes-the-forgotten-photos-of-Cor-Jaring.html>



[Tableau Fine Arts Magazine]



COR WAS HERE

Cor Jaring (1936-2013) worked his way up from dockworker to internationally-famed photographer. He photographed life as an adventure. The exhibition in Huis Marseille includes a great deal of hitherto undiscovered work from his private archive, including pictures of his journey to Japan. Simultaneously the Amsterdam City Archives is showing the exhibition *Amsterdam Magisch Centrum*, including work by Cor Jaring from the Provo years. *Huis Marseille, Amsterdam, until 28 June, [www.huismarseille.nl/](http://www.huismarseille.nl/) Amsterdam City Archives, until 12 July, [stadsarchief.amsterdam.nl](http://stadsarchief.amsterdam.nl)*