ROB ROMBOUT

ON THE ROAD

from 18th september
to 28th october

monday to
saturday from
2pm to 7:30pm

Rob Rombout, the filmmaker, traveler, and teacher, has undertaken an artistic journey that transcends geographical and temporal borders. His photo series **On the Road** reflects this ongoing movement, unbound by time and place. Rooted in the act of traveling, this series lands now in Lisbon to continue its path across places and contexts.

As an independent documentary filmmaker, Rombout considers it his mission to "foresee the unforeseeable." It's a sensibility solidified in his photographs, which linger on what is often left behind or overlooked. Each image captures moments that resist conclusion, remaining unplanned, unpredictable, and enduring. Referred to as a "late" photographer, Rombout invites spectators to look more slowly, quietly, and attentively. Like his films, this series carries a kind of self-awareness, existing as fragments and traces of encounters.

The photos in **On the Road** were taken in various places, across different countries and landscapes, but its aesthetic value does not derive from its place or moment. What unites these images is a particular way of looking, of capturing the invisible, and the impossibility inherent in that approach. Rombout's camera gets close when needed and stays back when it must. It catches the glance of an eye, shades of a portrait full of past, the blur of a city through a car windshield, a lone figure running from the waves. These moments, fleeting, in-between, are what Rombout frames. Or rather, what he almost doesn't frame, letting them remain open and unresolved.

Fittingly, the exhibition itself takes the form of a journey. **On the Road** is traveling, tracing a similar path to the one the artist took when capturing these images. At each stop, it will unfold a little differently, shaped by its surroundings and by who is looking. It's a reminder that the work is never finished, that photography, like filmmaking and travel, is about what happens along the way, in the things we didn't expect to see, in the encounters we couldn't have planned.

Faranak Nateghi



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Rob Rombout was born in Amsterdam, but made travelling a way to question the world through cinema. With a career as a documentarist that began in the final years of the 1970s, Rob Rombout produced more than three dozens of films, that assume different postures and approaches, according to the themes, characters and contexts in which they were made. His work includes politically slanted documentaries (L'HOME QUI EN DISAIT TROP [1985], about the trade unionist Roger Vandermeiren), biographical portraits (of both refugees and diplomats), but it is composed mainly by "travel cinema".

Over the last few decades, Rombout has divided his life between Brussels and Lisbon, having travelled around the world, always with a camera in hand. From the Kerguelen Islands, in the far south of the Indian Ocean, in LE PIEGE DE KERGUELEN (2000), to China, particularly the city of Canton [Guangzhou], in CANTON, LA CHINOISE (2001), passing through the French Northeast in LES PASSAGERS DE L'ALSACE (2002), or the Ural Mountains in the city of Perm, Russia, in PERM-MISSION (1999). Eventually, it is the journey itself that becomes the subject of his films. First in NORD EXPRESS and TRANSLANTIC, QUEEN ELIZABETH 2, two documentaries about colossal means of transport that cross the globe. Then, with QUEEN MARY 2, REINE DES MERS (2004), which describes the design, construction, and operation of what would become the longest, largest, and most expensive ship ever built. Later, with the monumental project that is AMSTERDAM STORIES USA, a six-hour movie that spans the United States coast-to-coast, in search of places (raging from cities to small villages) named "Amsterdam".

The name of this film retrospective, "A mise en scène do real" derives from the title of the book by Marc-Emmanuel Mélon, *Rob Rombout, la mise en scène du réel*, published in May 2022. This book was presented in October of that year at Cinemateca, at the Linha de Sombra bookstore (with a reading by José Bogalheiro), having been screened, in that context, what was then the director's most recent documentary, dedicated to the diplomat, professor, and successful writer Robert van Gulik (1919-1967), ON THE TRACK OF ROBERT VAN GULIK (2016). This book stems from the awareness – made evident by the cinema of Rob Rombout – that every documentary contains elements of fiction and that every fiction has a documentary dimension, which is why the work of this director serves as a means of examining the different modes of staging, organizing, and dramatizing the world in front of the camera.

The programme proposes a brief show of Rombout's work as a director – screening the entirety of AMSTERDAM STORIES USA in the year that marks the 750th anniversary of the founding of the city of Amsterdam, along with two short/mid-length films, in particular the one he dedicated to the Portuguese band Madredeus, filmed in the Azores – in parallel with his work as a professor (and founder of the joint master's program DocNomads) and as a "late-blooming" photographer. In this context, an open class is proposed, focusing on the methods of documentary film as understood by Rob Rombout, followed by a screening of films directed by DocNomads students, under the guidance of Rob Rombout. All of this comes to dialogue with the exhbition **On the Road**, which stands as a syntesis of his roving gaze. The sessions will be preceded by an introduction by the director and guests, in English.

Ricardo Vieira Lisboa

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A MISE EN SCÈNE DO REAL

ROB ROMBOUT,

Thursday [18] 18pm

EXHIBITION OPENING

On the Road

Saturday [20] 15:30pm | Sala Luís de Pina

AMSTERDAM STORIES USA - 1, 2
by Rob Rombout, Rogier Van Eck
Belgium, United States, 2012 - 180 min

Saturday [20] 20pm | Sala Luís de Pina

AMSTERDAM STORIES USA - 3, 4
by Rob Rombout, Rogier Van Eck
Belgium, United States, 2012 - 180 min

Tuesday [23] 19pm | Sala M. Félix Ribeiro

ZOO
by Bert Haanstra
Netherlands, 1962 - 12 min

ENTRE DEUX TOURS
by Rob Rombout
Belgium, 1987 - 16 min

LES AÇORES DE MADREDEUS
by Rob Rombout
Portugal, France, 1995 - 40 min
Total duration of the projection: 68 min

Thursday [25] 17:30pm | Sala Luís de Pina

AULA ABERTA: A MISE EN SCÈNE DO REAL E O ENSINO DO DOCUMENTÁRIO
Total duration: 90 min

Thursday [25] 19:30pm | Sala Luís de Pina

SI ESTAS PAREDES HABLASEN
by Miguel López Beraza
Spain, Hungary, 2013 - 11 min

HISTÓRIAS DE LOBOS
by Agnes Meng
Portugal, 2018 - 22 min

NANU TUDOR
by Olga Lucovnicova
Belgium, Hungary, Moldavia, 2020 - 20 min
Total duration of the projection: 53 min